

# The Growing Times NEWSLETTER



October 2024



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR Erica Dickerson

Thank you for attending our annual Race For The Children fundraiser and making it a huge success! Your generous support and presence meant the world to us. Your contributions are helping us make a real difference, and we couldn't achieve our goals without you. Together, we're changing lives and creating hope!



## UPCOMING EVENTS >>>

**NOV 19**  
Calm Your Mind  
Workshop  
(6:00-7:30PM)

**NOV 21**  
Give To The  
Max Day!  
★

**NOV 28-29**  
ACTG Offices  
are closed

**DEC 11**  
Calm Your Mind  
Workshop  
(11:00AM -12:30PM)

## CALM YOUR MIND WORKSHOP



Calming your mind is made easier with brain training. Our clients are often surprised by how they feel after just one session!

### In this interactive workshop you will:

- Learn how AVE can improve mood and focus
- Receive an individual assessment for best results
- Enjoy a custom session catered to your needs

[SIGN UP](#)



Visit [actg.org/calmyourmind](https://actg.org/calmyourmind) to Register



"Wow! My mind has never been this clear and focused."

## CONGRATS PRE-K GRADS!



This fall our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center celebrated six stellar graduates! These 5-year-olds are off to Kindergarten and we couldn't be more proud of them. We even had one student graduate at 4 years old because she excelled developmentally, emotionally, and academically!

To celebrate this important milestone, family, friends, and staff came together to congratulate the students! At the graduation ceremony, each child's name was announced and they received their Pre-K diploma along with a backpack filled with Kindergarten school supplies! This year we even had a decorate-your-backpack station, temporary tattoos, and food for everyone!

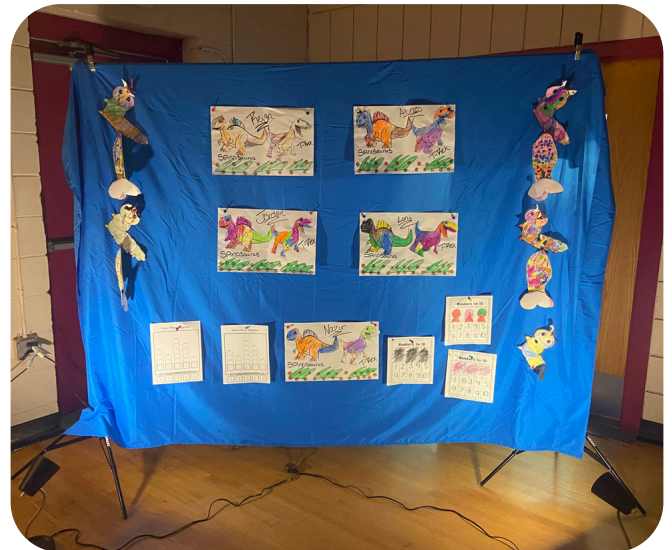
Liz Ruzek (Director of Turnquist) shares:

**"Many of the children have gone to Turnquist since they were an infant or toddler. Staff remember the kids from when they were small and form really tight bonds with them and their families. It's tough to see the kids go!"**



Graduating from Turnquist means transitioning to a much larger school, not only for the child but for their parents too. With this change comes some nerves, so Turnquist's Parent Coordinator, Carla Yeager, works with each family to help them get enrolled at their new school and ensure they are registered for any services they need for a successful school year.

We are excited for our graduates and know they will do wonderfully in Kindergarten and beyond!



**The graduates were proud to show off their artwork on the gallery wall!**

# THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LEARNING: S.M.A.R.T. IN ACTION!

“Every district needs S.M.A.R.T.. Before they do anything else, schools need this program because S.M.A.R.T. is the foundation of learning,” shares Maxine Perko, retired First Grade Teacher, and now Rock Ridge Elementary’s S.M.A.R.T. Educator. According to Maxine, S.M.A.R.T. changed her entire outlook on education.

When Maxine first brought S.M.A.R.T. to Minnesota’s Eveleth-Gilbert school district, she began teaching in an empty room, creatively using her resources. When the district merged with Virginia schools and Rock Ridge Elementary was created, S.M.A.R.T. remained a priority. Now, after years of growing the program, Maxine teaches in a spacious room dedicated to S.M.A.R.T. learning! Students enjoy an array of fun and enriching activities.

A Chance To Grow’s “Stimulating Maturity Through Accelerated Readiness Training” (S.M.A.R.T.) program is designed to bring brain stimulating, developmentally rich movement activities to Pre-K through 3rd grade learners. As noted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, “physical activity is crucial to the development of a child’s brain. Movement helps to enhance neural connections, supports cognitive development, and improves overall learning outcomes.”

**Laurie Hipple-Jam, First Grade Teacher, has the following to share about S.M.A.R.T.:**

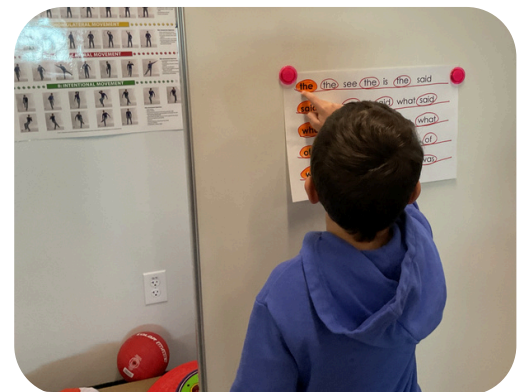
**“I have had other trainings that claim to improve student performance, but none of them have been as effective as designing our curriculum with S.M.A.R.T. components in place.”**



**“What used to be a struggle, and would take ALL week for my kids, was now accomplished in ONE day! I was shocked and amazed at how such a simple exercise could so dramatically help my students.”**



**“Kids, especially in today’s ‘screen’ world, need more and more of this in school if we want them to be focused, well developed kids that are ready and able to learn.”**





Students identify vowel sounds while practicing hand-eye coordination

Maxine describes S.M.A.R.T. as *the building blocks of learning success*. This can be seen in the “Cross Patterning” S.M.A.R.T. activity. Cross Patterning integrates both sides of the brain which is essential for a child to read, write, and perform motor movements! Since Cross Patterning can be done while walking, it is a great activity that students can practice during transitions to the classroom and playground, or with music which the children love!

Maxine often works with children as they progress from Pre-K to 2nd grade, which allows her the opportunity to watch their learning skills grow exponentially with the help of S.M.A.R.T.!



## S.M.A.R.T. WORKSHOP CALENDAR:

A Chance To Grow’s Minnesota Learning Resource Center is excited to be hosting the following S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K and Elementary Workshops! Do you know an educator or early-childcare professional? They won’t want to miss out on this interactive 3-day workshop! Help us spread the word!



- November 12-14, 2024
- February 4-6, 2025
- February 11-13, 2025

All held at A Chance To Grow!  
Learn More: [actg.org/workshops](http://actg.org/workshops)



## THANK YOU NEIGHBORS!

We are honored to be voted a 2024 Nextdoor Neighborhood Fave! This means so much to us because it helps us reach families in the community who need our services!

Help us grow  
Leave us a recommendation on  
Nextdoor!

