

# Growing Times



## June 2024 Newsletter

*Promoting the maximum development of the whole child and adult through innovative, individualized, and comprehensive brain-centered programs and services.*

### 2023 Annual Report: Available Now!

We're delighted to announce the release of our 2023 Annual Report! This was a big year at A Chance To Grow, with innovations and program expansions that helped us make an even greater difference! With your help we improved the lives of more than 1000 children and families in schools, at home and in our office. Thank you for being a part of our ACTG community for another successful year!

*Read the 2023 Annual Report at [www.actg.org/annualreport](http://www.actg.org/annualreport)*



### ACTG's Biggest Fundraiser Of The Year

A Chance To Grow is thrilled to host its 33rd annual Race For The Children fundraiser on August 11, 2024!

For a \$65 adult ticket, \$20 children's ticket, and free admission for children 4 and younger, participants enjoy:

- A fantastic BBQ Buffet for lunch
- Fun activities for children
- Live Horse Races from ACTG's beautiful open-air event space
- Amazing Silent Auction items and baskets
- Raffle Prizes and Wine Pull
- Private Horse Betting and Drink Windows

*Join the fun! Get your tickets at [actg.org/raceforthechildren](http://actg.org/raceforthechildren)*



## *S.M.A.R.T. in Bermuda: BSMART*

Throughout her 16 years as a highly regarded elementary educator in Bermuda, Allison Figureido noticed that something was hindering the success of her students. Children who came into the school high functioning left the school high functioning, and the children who came in low functioning, left low functioning. She realized that children were expected to pass tests, without receiving the individualized support needed to grow in the areas in which they struggled. Says Allison, “There is a lot of pressure to reach life milestones quickly. But if you force that, there are areas that get missed. The developmental piece is so important.”



When Allison discovered SMART, things started to make sense. SMART outlined the root issue of the problem she was noticing in the public education system. Children start school lacking important learning skills such as visual perception, listening and speech, hand-eye coordination, attention span, ability to follow directions, and more, for a variety of reasons. These skills are foundational, and when overlooked, children are denied the equal opportunity to learn at their best.

Allison says, “The future of too many young students is jeopardized because they are expected to learn prior to being physiologically and neurologically ready; not all young minds and bodies are prepared for the stress of school at age five.”



Allison knew that SMART is what students in Bermuda were missing. With SMART’s multi-sensory approach, students would receive the tools they needed for academic success.

The SMART program is unique because it centers on the important relationship between the brain and the body. By practicing intentional, movement-based activities at the proper frequency, intensity, and duration of practice, children become better prepared to learn. SMART activities focus on the growth and enhancement of balance, coordination, reflex integration, body awareness, and visual and auditory skills, because these are the foundations to learning. Whether a child is behind in specific developmental milestones for their age, or meeting each milestone, SMART makes learning easier for all children.

Allison implemented Bermuda’s first and only SMART program in 2009 with elementary students, and it proved to be of huge benefit. But school administration eventually proposed that SMART transition to a gifted and talented program. This conflicted with what Allison knew to be true: SMART is for all children, no matter their ability or learning level. So she chose to go her own path – leaving the public education system to bring the SMART program to more children in Bermuda. Thus came “BSMART.”

Allison launched the BSMART Development Foundation in 2011, with support and guidance from A Chance To Grow’s founders and S.M.A.R.T. staff. BSMART is the only neurodevelopmental facility in Bermuda that utilizes brain-centered techniques to increase learning readiness. Infant and toddler development programs, S.M.A.R.T. programming, S.M.A.R.T. holiday camps, and workshops for parents and professionals who work with children are all offered by the foundation. BSMART is wildly successful, supporting children from 14 different schools in Bermuda. The program continues to make a positive impact on the island’s children, especially among at-risk populations of economically disadvantaged and racial minorities.



## Finding Relief After Long Covid

Landy Anderson, a wife and mother of four children, was desperate for change. She has been struggling with Long Covid for four years and realized that her symptoms were getting worse each year instead of better.

Gone was the energetic Landy who worked out, coached softball and led an active and busy social life. She now spent her days sitting on the couch, too exhausted to move or do simple everyday tasks. The body pain was unbearable and the brain fog compromised simple pleasures such as reading and conversing with friends.



During the last few years, Landy was active in seeking answers for health concerns. She joined a Long Covid group and sought out many services. In the process, another provider mentioned neurofeedback and Landy contacted A Chance To Grow.

The sessions had a rocky start because Landy had a blood clot in her leg, one of the many complications of her diagnosis, and spent time in the hospital. But she was determined to keep seeking answers and started brain training twice a week as soon as she was released.

Cautious, Landy wondered out loud, "What if I am too scared to go back to feeling good?" It felt like a foreign concept, feeling well. But as Landy trained, she noticed changes. "I could tell I had a bit more energy after the first session." A couple sessions later she found she could meditate easier and her anger was melting away. She was able to read for a few minutes, and by the 10th session, Landy announced, "I feel so good!"

After session 13, Landy experienced something she never had before, even pre-Covid. "For the first time in my life, I felt calm. I have never experienced this level of calm!" And, Landy went on to have three awesome and energetic days in a row. This was not normal.

By session 15, Landy started working with a personal trainer, had gone to the grocery store and completed several household tasks and projects. "Neurofeedback has made a huge change in my central nervous system and autonomic functions. I definitely feel improvement in both my physical and mental health."

Over Memorial Day weekend, Landy was able to take a road trip to visit her newly born grandson. "It was the best road trip ever. I wasn't upset about everything like I used to be. I can see how I have changed. And, I had energy and even swam with the kids in the pool!"

While Landy is still managing the many complications of Long Covid, neurofeedback has given her hope. "I feel totally different: stronger, healthier and not as stressed about things. I can't believe how neurofeedback has changed my life for the better."

Learn how Neurofeedback can help you too!  
Visit [actg.org/neurofeedback](http://actg.org/neurofeedback)



## A Starry Night at A Chance To Grow!

This May, A Chance To Grow transformed into A Starry Night Prom, for Family Fun! The kids of our Turnquist Child Enrichment Center, their parents, and siblings all enjoyed the DJ, dancing, food, and lots of fun and games! Everyone looked fabulous in their Prom Night attire!



# A S.M.A.R.T. Summer!

Did you know that S.M.A.R.T. Workshops aren't just for Elementary and Pre-K teachers?

*S.M.A.R.T. welcomes all professionals who work directly with children:*

- Paraprofessionals
- Early Intervention Specialists
- Special Education Teachers
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Education Teachers
- School staff



Join The Fun! Take Our 3-Day S.M.A.R.T. Training to earn continuing education units and learn how movement-based teaching develops and enhances learning. Give students the skills they need to be life-long learners!

### Upcoming SMART Pre-K Workshops

- July 16-18 (Minneapolis, MN)
- August 6-8 (West Salem, WI)
- August 6-8 (New Ulm, MN)
- August 13-15 (Owatonna, MN)

### Upcoming SMART Workshops

- June 25-27 (Minneapolis, MN)
- July 9-11 (Minneapolis, MN)



Know someone who may be interested? Help us spread the word! Learn more and at [actg.org/workshops](https://actg.org/workshops).

## What is Auditory Processing Disorder?

Auditory Processing is the natural process of our ears taking in information that then goes to the brain to be interpreted. When this process doesn't work correctly, it's called an Auditory Processing Disorder or delay (APD). This can happen even if a person has normal, healthy hearing.

For someone with APD, their ears can hear sounds and words, but their brain has trouble making sense of them. The sounds can get mixed up or confused, making them difficult to understand.

APD means that a person has a harder time recognizing, understanding, or telling apart sounds. This is especially difficult when the sounds are not clear, or if there is background noise. A noisy classroom is an example of an environment where a child with APD would struggle more to understand the teacher.

A Chance To Grow's Dr. Sara Cook specializes in identifying and treating Auditory Processing Disorder in children and adults, and assists clients in reaching their fullest potential in social communication, academics, and workplace settings.

To learn more about Audiology services at A Chance To Grow, visit [www.actg.org/audiologyservices](https://www.actg.org/audiologyservices).



### Signs of APD:

- Difficulty understanding verbal information
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty with spelling and reading
- Difficulty in social interactions
- Difficulty with memory tasks given verbally
- Slow or delayed responses to verbal information
- History of multiple ear infections