



Growing Times April 2021

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

Different Ways of Knowing, Different Ways of Growing

A Chance To Grow provides a wide range of services designed to help people at all levels of ability reach their optimal growth. Our focus on brain function affords us the opportunity to offer many approaches that are designed to complement each other and improve quality of life. One family has been with ACTG since its beginnings, and their journey with us – beginning with Boost-Up, the program that is the basis for most of our programming, to clinical services, to PCA services. Their story provides insight into the impact of everything we do.

Michelle Schutt first brought her son Scott, who has serious developmental delays, to Boost-Up when he was 11 years old. Doctors had been unable to tell her what was causing his delays, and their prognosis for him was bleak. She heard about Boost-Up from a friend. "I'm the kind of parent who thinks 'okay, he is what he is' but if I can find something to help him that's not intrusive, okay." While Scott participated in the program, she availed herself of the resources in our Kretsch Library, named for a family whose son had serious head injuries and who devoted their lives to finding research that could help him. Her reading showed Michelle that there were alternatives to the Special Education teachers who she felt were "not helpful" for her son. "My understanding is that they don't have much training in brain-based approaches." After observing its benefits, she became a Boost-Up teacher.



Michelle's son, Scott

When ACTG began to explore the use of neurofeedback, a brain-training approach, Michelle was excited, and before long, she launched what became our Neurotechnology Program.

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What is Neurotechnology?

Neurofeedback and Audio-Visual Entrainment are two holistic brain-training programs offered at ACTG that are designed to balance a person's brain-waves to help regulate emotions or behaviors. Used regularly, a person can re-train their brain to overcome a variety of health problems, including poor sleep, memory, focus or hyperactivity.



April is OT (and SLP) Appreciation Month!

The staff of A Chance To Grow would like to recognize our amazing team of Occupational Therapists and Speech-Language Pathologists who have worked so hard throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to continue to provide essential services to children, adults and families in need. We are very grateful for everything you bring to the organization. Thank you for your passion, professionalism, and commitment to our clients. You are truly the best and we are so lucky to have you all at A Chance To Grow!

Michelle's grandchildren Michael (born in 1994), and Kyrie (born in 2003) also had a genetic disorder that caused significant delays. Her daughter (their mom) was working full time. "I knew ACTG so I said I think they'll pay grandma to be a PCA, so they did." She has been Mike and Kyrie's PCA ever since, helping them manage self-care and other tasks.

What are Home-Based Services?

Many families require additional help in order to care for a loved one with special needs. We provide in-home Personal Care Assistants (PCA) to children and adults living with physical, mental, emotional or behavioral needs. PCAs assist with routine tasks of daily living, including dressing, bathing, hygiene, eating, transportation and related household tasks, to help those in need of care become as independent as possible.

In addition to being a PCA for her grandsons, she serves as a support person for her son Scott, now in his 40s, checking in with him twice a day, taking him on Sunday walks, shopping, and to appointments.

Michelle has made sure that her son and grandchildren participated in everything ACTG had to offer them. "Scott had auditory therapy, vision therapy and speech-language therapy here. Mike and Kyrie too, and also OT. And Summer Boost-Up." She also made sure they got a lot of neurofeedback. "I think it built more brain pathways. All the things ACTG does is trying to encourage brain pathways, Neurofeedback was one way to try that."

Scott, Michael and Kyrie will always have challenges, but the therapies received thanks to Clinical Services, Home-Based Services and Neurotechnology have had a substantial impact. Scott initially was very slow in speech, and while he still has trouble, his ability to pick up vocabulary increased. Michael, who was visually impaired at birth, has improved, thanks to the stimuli provided in vision therapy. Both Michael and Kyrie thrived in good school programs and continue to learn. ACTG helped all three build the foundation for continued growth. "You say 'developmental delays' but I say 'delay.' Because they are still making strides," says Michelle.

Because of her experiences providing Boost-Up, Neurofeedback and PCA services for her family, Michelle does not think about them in terms of their limitations. "If you have a child with a disability, you have to use their strengths."

She notes, "It's just a matter of standing back and giving them room to be who they are. Talk to them, give them the opportunity, that's really important to them. Respect different ways of knowing, give them the opportunity to learn."

When he was in school, "Scott was so curious about so many things that I could never get anybody to understand. He couldn't read the stuff, he couldn't take the test, but he learned. He learns by listening. He had all these difficulties with our traditional ways of getting information. For example, he can look at a number, he can't tell you the name of that number, but if I were to put a 5 and a 3 on the paper, he couldn't write the 8, but if I put 7,8,9 underneath, he could circle the 8, he knew the concept. It's the same with letters. Now he is a fount of information, he learned to get himself around the Internet without being able to read and write. Now he's reading better than he ever has."



Scott and Michael

Like Scott, Mike and Kyrie keep on growing and learning, albeit in nontraditional ways. They love sports and have participated in Special Olympics, honing their skills with hours of practice. Kyrie, now 18, is still in a project-based school that allows him to explore his natural interests at his own pace, and where he can stay through transition. Mike, now 27, is interested in cooking. As with Scott, he knows a lot, but is less communicative than Kyrie. "His receptive information is much more than his expressive," says Michelle.

Thanks to ACTG's Clinical and Neurofeedback Services, all three have continued to make gains, and thanks to our PCA services, they have been able to do so with the love and support of those who know them best, exploring the world around them and enriching the lives of everyone around them.

The 2021 Summer S.M.A.R.T. Workshop dates are here! Boost your students' learning readiness skills and prepare them to become life-long learners with our amazing S.M.A.R.T. program! Our experienced instructors will help you understand how to easily implement these brain-stimulating activities in your classroom. If you are an educator working with Pre-K - 3rd graders, this program is for YOU! **Register today at [ACTG.org/workshops](https://actg.org/workshops).**

S.M.A.R.T. Workshops

- June 22-24, 2021
- July 20-22, 2021
- October 26-28, 2021
- February 22-24, 2022

S.M.A.R.T. Pre-K Workshops

- June 15-17, 2021
- July 13-15, 2021
- October 19-21, 2021
- March 1-3, 2022



Additionally, we have scheduled a 1-day **Bridging the Gap** workshop for Wednesday, September 29, 2021. This is a great workshop for educators working with small groups, including reading specialists, intervention teachers, Title I, special education teachers and paraprofessionals.

All workshops will be held at A Chance To Grow in Minneapolis, MN. Register two weeks in advance and save \$25! S.M.A.R.T. Workshops are following all the safety guidelines provided by the Minnesota Department of Health. Training room is set for social distancing so space is limited. **Register today to ensure your spot!**



SMART Steps for Family Child Care Providers

We are excited to introduce **S.M.A.R.T. Steps** - a pilot project designed to bring the S.M.A.R.T. program to Family Child Care providers. This new program will provide children ages 0-5 years with fun, play-like activities that promote natural, healthy brain development, making them ready to succeed in school. The activities are designed to be low-cost and easy to implement in any setting. Generous funding from Fred C. and Katherine B. Andersen Foundation and the Otto Bremer Trust has supported the planning for this new program. We recently began training Family Child Care providers from Brown County, MN, and plan to offer additional opportunities in the coming months for new providers to experience the S.M.A.R.T. Steps program - stay tuned!

Vision Clinic: Now Accepting Most Insurances

ACTG's Vision Clinic now accepts most health insurance plans, including Aetna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Hennepin Health, HealthPartners, Medica, Medicare, PreferredOne, Tricare, UCare, United Health Care and MN DHS Health Care Programs. We understand that health care billing can be confusing, but our experienced staff is here to help walk you through the process. We recommend you contact your provider to see if we are in your network, but for all other questions, please call us at (612) 789-1236.



Instagram



@achance2grow

A Chance To Grow is excited to announce that we will be holding our **30th Annual Race for the Children** event on Sunday, August 22, 2021 at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, MN. Event attendees will receive a complimentary racing form and buffet lunch in the Longshots Party Area. Additionally, the event will feature a silent auction, raffles with amazing prizes, a pick-six event, a wine pull, fun activities for the whole family and great live racing! Proceeds from the event support ACTG's essential programs which serve children, adults and families struggling with learning difficulties, brain injuries, developmental delays and more.



Registration is now open at ACTG.org/RacefortheChildren, as well as additional details on sponsorship opportunities. ***Notice:** The date of this event is dependent on COVID restrictions at Canterbury Park, which are subject to change. ACTG will communicate instructions should the date or availability of the event change.

Space Available at Turnquist - Schedule a Tour Today!

The Turnquist Child Enrichment Center currently has space in our infant and preschool rooms. Turnquist is an NAEYC-accredited and 4-star Parent Aware certified daycare center for children ages 6-weeks to Kindergarten age. Our dedicated staff provides a nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional & cognitive development of each child. If you or someone you know is seeking child care, we invite you to call (612) 789-1236 to schedule a tour of our facility and see if Turnquist is a good fit for your family!



Spring Forward MN - May 1-11 at GiveMN.org

GiveMN will be hosting a statewide giving campaign running from Saturday, May 1- Tuesday, May 11 to help Minnesota nonprofits power what comes next. Each gift you make during SpringForwardMN provides ACTG with a chance to have a bonus grant added to your gift! If they randomly select your donation, ACTG could receive additional funding from a \$50,000 grant pool! Please visit GiveMN.org between May 1-11 to make a donation to A Chance To Grow and help us continue providing life-changing programs and services to children and families in need. Thank you!

Will you support A Chance To Grow's programs and services?

Visit ACTG.org, click on the "Donate" tab on the homepage and fill out the form. Your contribution makes a difference in the lives of children and adults with learning disabilities, developmental delays and brain injuries. All donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for your generosity!

Want to view our newsletter online? Visit ACTG.org and sign-up to receive news and updates from A Chance To Grow.

Equal Employment Opportunity

A Chance To Grow provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants. Employment is based upon personal capabilities and qualifications without discrimination because of race, color, ancestry, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, national origin, disability, gender identity, genetic information, service in the military or any other protected characteristic as established by law. This policy of Equal Employment Opportunity applies to all policies and procedures relating to recruitment & hiring, promotion, compensation, benefits, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, training and all other terms and conditions of employment.



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