



HCQU Staff

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Healthy Connections

Community Health Connections

TROPIC THUNDER AND OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE

By Pam Erdos, Intern

“...I’ll love you forever, I’ll like you for always, as long as I’m living, my baby you’ll be.”

As I finished singing my little made-up chorus to the words of one of my favorite children’s books, I stroked Tara’s hair, and I watched as she searched for my eye contact with her soft, innocent, hazel eyes. When she connected with my loving gaze, she squealed with delight as I told her I loved her for the millionth time. We have gone through this same little ritual - our little ritual - for the past ten years. It is one of my favorite times of day because I spend a few minutes of love with one of

my favorite people in the world, my 28 year old daughter who has PDD-NOS, identified in the past as profound mental retardation. I share our special moment with you to give you some background to my life’s journey as I give my reaction to the controversial language in the movie Tropic Thunder.

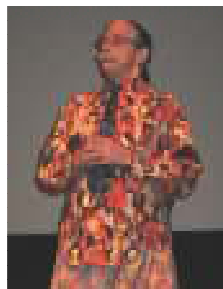
Am I offended by people using the word mentally retarded? For our purpose, it only describes a disability that my daughter experiences. It does not take away the fact that she is beautiful, pleasant, appreciative, and a great joy to our family. Unlike the movie, “Tropic Thunder”, in which they make fun of people with intellectual disabilities as well as many other human characteristics - just for a laugh, most people do not intend to be cruel by using the word mentally retarded. I have researched the term PDD-NOS, and it usually refers to autism

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EXTREME EXTROVERT: PATCH ADAMS, THE MAN BEHIND THE MOVIE

By Mary A. Nau, Director

Community Health Connections hosted Dr. Patch Adams in an event designed to re-energize direct support professionals. No shy violet, Patch informed me behind stage within 30 seconds of meeting him that he wanted to start a revolution to overthrow our “fascist government” and start a new government based on love. Admittedly, this was not typical of my everyday conversations. But,



Patch Adams, MD

if he was able to re-energize those on the front lines of service, then we really didn’t care about his politics. Besides, how does one argue with someone who loves love? Patch did inspire. Patch also made some sink in their seats at times, especially when an audience member asked him what he thought about the upcoming elections. In light of Patch’s outspoken opinions, let me state plainly that his views did not

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TROPIC THUNDER AND OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE

and does not describe the disability that my daughter experiences. Regardless of the negative connotation that retardation may infer, it is the term that most people use when they are describing a person with intellectual disabilities. The average person whose life has not been touched by someone with intellectual disabilities has no idea what the proper terminology is, no more than we know the latest terms in the field of computer technology or science. It is our job to educate people, starting in elementary schools and changing research material that our college students are using so that no one is offended by disrespectful terms. In movies such as "Tropic Thunder", the entire subject matter is in such a low cultural state, the writers, producers, and actors will stoop to any low, label it comedy, and they won't care who they offend; they just want to make a lot of money. Thankfully, we have the choice not to patronize such offensive movies, in which their language consists of many offensive words, and it becomes a detriment to be exposed to such ignorant material.

Remember the little children's poem at the beginning of this

article? Some people would be horrified to think that such age inappropriate exchanges would take place between my daughter and me, but you could not take those precious moments from me for any price. We all have different opinions and that is fine. We cannot nor should we force people to think a certain way. Hopefully, through education, we will encourage people to understand pain that some endure, simply by using an offensive term such as retarded. Maybe, by bringing to light the fact that through an illness or an accident, they too could experience a disability and how would they deal with someone using an offensive term in reference to their condition.

Empathy, education...all could lead to a change in the level of respect we all need to use in interacting with and describing individuals with intellectual disabilities.



Tara and Pam

EXTREME EXTROVERT: PATCH ADAMS, THE MAN BEHIND THE MOVIE

necessarily reflect those of Community Health Connections' staff or management. Apart from politics, Patch did have a message that was universal. That message was that love and compassion are irresistible and healing forces. He told stories of changed lives through the power of caring. His caring is unhurried. His caring is reflected in the fact that he answers every letter that anyone writes to him...which amounts to about 600 letters a month. His caring is fun and focused on the individual, and not on what he can get in return for giving. He believes and lives out his belief that if you focus on loving and

caring, then a sort of "Karma" returns wonderful rewards back to you...all without your effort to get those rewards.

Patch is building a new clinic that will be operated by a staff of committed doctors and nurses. The clinic will be free and not accept third party re-imburement. Care will be based on the principles of compassion and friendship. The well-being of the staff will be as important as the well-being of the patients and the atmosphere will be infused with fun. May the message of caring be one of joy and inspiration for all of us, no matter our profession or politics.

JOE DID IT!!

By Robin Rearick, RN; HSC and Carol Oslosky, RN; HSC

Talking to Joe H. was a pleasure! You can see the pride he has in losing 20 pounds since February. In February Joe attended a training on "Healthy Eating" given by the HCQU and decided to change his eating habits.



Joe

He started by eating more fruits and vegetables and no more seconds at buffets! He now chooses 100 calorie snacks.

Joe is exercising more.

He has just recently obtained a Nintendo Wii and enjoys using

this daily. He also uses a treadmill and finds he can go faster, stay on longer, and is not as short of breath.

Joe attended SNAP (Special Needs Athletic Program) at Indiana University this summer and enjoyed swimming and other physical sports. He is planning on attending again this fall.

Joe still wants to lose more weight and knows it's all about making healthy food choices and being fit with exercise. The staff at Evergreen Homes is very supportive and proud of what he has accomplished.

We know Joe can do it - he is the #1 Steeler fan!

ACCESSIBLE DENTAL SERVICES

By Karen Noah, Regional Health Manager - Passavant Memorial Homes and Subsidiaries

ACCESSIBLE DENTAL SERVICES

Accessible Dental Services, Inc. is a new program designed to serve individuals with disabilities by increasing the availability of accessible, affordable, quality dental services. As a subsidiary of Passavant Memorial Homes, Accessible Dental seeks to benefit the everyday lives of consumers in a unique, specialized way.

DESCRIPTION OF THE NEED

Many providers and families alike are well aware that dental care for their individuals needs improvement. Recent studies and health reports identify a close relationship between oral health and overall good health. Sometimes, simply gaining access to dental care for individuals with disabilities is a struggle. Accessible Dental was established out of this need!

PILOT PHASE

In December 2006, Accessible Dental began as a pilot. The pilot phase included monthly facility-based clinics from a local, handicapped accessible dental office. Dentists, anesthesiologists, nurses and dental support staff that have the desire and expertise with special needs population run the clinics. Individuals receive IV sedation, if necessary, in order for dentists to ensure a complete and thorough dental examination, including deep scaling, root planning, extractions and any needed restorative work.

MOBILE CARE

To make the dental care even more accessible within the



Mobile Dental Unit

region, Passavant Memorial Homes Foundation began fundraising for a mobile dental unit.

The mobile unit will allow transportation concerns, which is a common barrier to individuals in need of oral health services, to be greatly reduced or eliminated. Accessible Dental will work to remove transportation as a reason for poor dental care by taking the service directly to the need! The mobile unit is designed to be accessible to persons with physical disabilities including those who are non-ambulatory and will be equipped with a lift to allow for wheel chair access.

The mobile unit will ensure the opportunity to reach a broader market and thereby address the widespread need for proper oral hygiene and dental care. Accessible Dental will provide services at community centers, provider organization day support service facilities, and other locations where the mobile unit can be staged.

Accessible Dental accepts Access, UPMC, Gateway, and Unison. If your organization is interested in scheduling dental appointments, please contact Karen Noah at (412) 820-1010 Extension 633.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS - FOR COMPUTERS!

by Leslie Dollman, MIS Administrator

We all practice standard infection control precautions in order to keep ourselves, and each other safe from infection and disease. In the information age, it is also important to practice **standard computing precaution** in order to keep our computers free from malicious programs (viruses, worms, Trojan horses).

Email is the main delivery source for malicious programs, because it's the weakest link in the computer security chain. Opportunistic virus writers take advantage of security flaws built into Outlook/ Outlook Express to infect a computer and subsequently spread their nasty little worms to others via an attachment to a message. A simple mouse-click is all that is needed to start a devastating chain reaction, which could have catastrophic



Leslie Dollman, MIS Administrator

results for your hard drive.

So how can you protect yourself? First and foremost, **use an antivirus program** and update the virus data file on a regular basis. **Always** check programs downloaded from the web with an antivirus program. **Never** open attached executable programs sent to you via email, even if the sender is known to you - the file could be infected without the sender's knowledge. **Executable programs** are files that cause a computer to "perform a task" according to the encoded instructions as opposed to a file that only contains data. One must actually cause the program to run to activate the malicious code within the program. These files typically end with the file extension of **.exe; .com; .bat; .pif; .vbs; and .scr.**

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INFECTION CONTROL AND THE FLU

By Mary A. Nau, Director

At a recent meeting under the leadership of ODP Medical Director, Jill Morrow, every HCQU Director was charged with an important duty. That duty is to deliver an increased level of emphasis on the importance of infection control. We'd like to begin with a direct discussion about the flu.

Did you know that the flu is a serious contagious disease killing 36,000 people annually and hospitalizing more than 200,000? As flu season approaches, we'd like to urge everyone to follow the Center's for Disease Control recommendations to take the following three steps to protect ourselves and those we care for from the flu:

1. Vaccinate: CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine, especially for those at greater risk for complications such as those who are over 65 years old, and those with chronic health conditions like diabetes or heart or lung disease.

2. Stop Germs: Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Wash hands often with soap and water. And, if sick, stay home to limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
3. Antiviral Drugs: If you or someone in your care does get the flu, antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. This could be especially important for people at high risk.

For more information about flu, visit www.cdc.gov/flu or call your local HCQU. In fact, your local HCQU likes to spread something very widely: good information that keeps us all living well! So, always feel free to give us a call or email us with your questions or information requests.

UNITY IS STRENGTH. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

By Natalie Symons, Clinical Services Coordinator



In July, I had the opportunity to attend the Livestrong Summit in Columbus, Ohio. I was nervous to attend. I wasn't quite sure how I

would fit into this whole event. After all, I've never had cancer and neither had any of my immediate family and friends. But I wanted to go; I wanted to learn; I wanted to be open to a new experience. The one question I was asked over and over during those days was, "Are you a survivor?" not, "Are you a victim?" or, "Do you have cancer?". Survivor: a person who continues to function or prosper in spite of opposition, hardship, or setbacks. I have thought a lot about that word. The people I met are not labeled by their diagnosis but are in direct opposition of it. They are fighters and warriors, students in perseverance, mentors in hope that each day will be better than the last. In talking with many of survivors, they only wanted one thing...a cure for cancer. Not only for themselves, but for the generations to come so they will not know the effects of chemo, bureaucracy of HMO's, or the quiet despair of wondering how your life will turn out. Curing cancer will not

be easy. Scientists have been working on it since 1971, but there are new break throughs and drugs occurring. I met one woman who has had cancer five times, and each time her life was saved by a new drug. I met another gentleman named Johnny Imerman, he is a testicular cancer survivor. During his treatment, he noticed a lot of other people did not have the same support from friends and family that he had. From that realization he has created Imerman's Angels, a non-profit organization that will put someone who has a recent cancer diagnosis in touch with another person who has had that same diagnosis and has successfully beaten it. To learn more, please go to www.imermanangels.org. Another person I met was Jen Hoeger. Her son Jack was diagnosed with cancer at a young age. Get to know Jack at www.youtube.com/Livestrongjack. The Lance Armstrong Foundation's website, www.livestrong.org, can be a useful tool in learning more about cancer and survivorship.



HCQU HAPPENINGS

Dr. Gregory Cherpes

Date: November 20, 2008

Time 1pm - 3pm

Location: The CDC

112Woody Drive

Butler, PA 16001

Topic: Prader-Willi Syndrome



David Hingsburger Conference

Date: June 11 - 12, 2009

Time: To Be Announced

Location: Succop Theatre Butler County Community College

107 College Drive

Butler, PA 16001

More information to follow at a later date.



Erin Guay

Date: December 3, 2008

Time 9am - 12pm

Location: The CDC

112Woody Drive

Butler, PA 16001

Topic: Understanding Medical Assistance in Our Region: How to

Help Consumers Access Services and Navigate the System, Emphasis: Dental

Spring 2009 Syllabus

February—May

Be watching in the mail for your copy of our Spring 2009 Syllabus in January or check our upcoming training schedule at www.hcqu.org.

Family Living Provider Resource Guide

This resource guide is now available on our website, www.hcqu.org to download. Go to the Resource page, Downloadable Fact Sheets, Manuals & Forms, then choose Manuals.



Our Future, Our Lives...Endless Possibilities

Date: May 8, 2009

Time: 9am - 3pm

Location: Lutherlyn Camp

PO Box 355

Prospect, PA 16052

More information to follow at a later date.

Psychiatric Resources

This resource guide is now available on our website, www.hcqu.org to download. Go to the Resource page, Downloadable Fact Sheets, Manuals & Forms, then choose Manuals.



To register for any of our syllabus classes or any of the above trainings, please visit our website at www.hcqu.org or call **(724) 283-0990**.

STANDARD PRECAUTIONS - FOR COMPUTERS

Finally, if using Microsoft products for browsing and/or email, download the latest security updates directly from the Microsoft website.

Most owners of compromised computers are unsuspecting victims. They have unintentionally allowed unauthorized access and use of their computers as a vehicle to facilitate other crimes. The worm may not destroy a computer, but it does link it as part of a massive network of computers on the internet. Those computers are then used for sending spam,

spyware, or harvesting information from computers such as email addresses or financial information. Protect yourself and practice safe computing!



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A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

By **Mary A. Nau, Director**

Dear Valued Readers,

It is a great thrill in my life and the lives of those who serve at Community Health Connections to host our Special Speaker Series. We have the opportunity to host leading experts in the field of ID/DD and learn from them together with all of you. Like you, we find ourselves continually inspired by their insight and motivated to apply all that we learn. One of our recent guest speakers was Dr. Beth Barol. I had the opportunity to meet her about 10 years ago when I was new to the field and learning about Dual Diagnosis. She was teaching a 10-day Institute on the Biographical Timeline; and my boss at the time thought it would be a good idea if I attended. So, I did. The first thing I noticed about Beth those many years ago was her very quiet and measured pace. For some reason that took me by surprise, maybe because I often tend to operate akin to the Tasmanian Devil. Not Beth. Like she was ten years ago, I found her to be once again. Quiet, measured, powerful. I am learning that the power to be a truly effective teacher is not simply the ability to communicate a message, but to live it. Maybe that is what makes Dr. Barol such a unique, effective, and inspirational figure. As she unfolds stories in her life's



Beth Barol and Mary Nau

experience that illustrate her message, she leaves no gaps in credibility, no questions regarding her commitment, and no doubts that what she teaches is worthy of our best efforts to put into practice.

Best regards,

Mary A. Nau, Director