

A publication of  
Wheeler Clinic  
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**HelpLine:**  
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*Central Connecticut  
Hartford Area*

Wheeler Clinic is a non-profit behavioral health agency serving Central Connecticut and Greater Hartford. The clinic provides mental health, substance abuse treatment, early childhood, prevention/wellness and special education services to children, adolescents, families, adults and the elderly.

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Sign up for E-Update, our new electronic newsletter! Contact Lisa Dietrichson, Public Relations Specialist at (860) 793-4404 or e-mail [ldietrichson@wheelerclinic.org](mailto:ldietrichson@wheelerclinic.org).

## Exergaming: Making Exercise Fun

Students at The Academy and Middletown Extended Day Programs are getting fit thanks to a grant from The Fund for Greater Hartford (formerly the Hartford Courant Foundation). The children now enjoy a variety of high-tech fitness games such as Dance Dance Revolution and Nintendo Wii Fit that keep them motivated and moving.

"Engaging students in physical activity improves self-esteem and body image and decreases depression," said Kevin McCarthy, physical education teacher at The Academy. "Recreational activities teach students the value of courtesy, self-control, relaxation, concentration, cooperation and teamwork. The addition of the Exergaming: Making Exercise Fun initiative has given our students the physical outlet they need to improve health and self-esteem."

The program promotes a healthy and active lifestyle through a variety of physical activities, and heart rate monitors and pedometers are used to measure student progress.

"We are thrilled to see more students participating in our weekly sports programs and weight training classes," said Kevin.

How do the students like the new activities? "It doesn't seem like exercise because it's so much fun," said one student. "The Wii is for me!"



Academy students enjoy a game of virtual short track ice skating as part of the school's new exergaming health and exercise program.

## Olivia's Story



Olivia with Northwest Village School clinician Paige Quotap, LCSW.

Olivia is a cute, bubbly red head who came to Wheeler Clinic who had trouble communicating with others and managing her anger. She first came to the clinic through the Safe Home, eventually moving into the clinic's Farm Hill congregate care group home. Although her grandparents were caring for Olivia's brothers, they were not sure they could manage her special needs.

Farm Hill clinician Leslie Matos-Jubrey, MSW, began working with Olivia and her grandparents, educating, educating and building trust. Leslie

worked with the Department of Children and Families and other behavioral health agencies to break down barriers and find the most effective ways to treat Olivia.

Over time Olivia began to make tremendous strides. An introverted girl who expressed herself through physical aggression became more social with her peers and learned to use more effective ways to communicate her feelings.

After two years of case management, advocacy, comprehensive family therapy and parental skills training, Olivia reunified with her grandparents and brothers. She attends Northwest Village School where she is making great progress in her academic and daily living skills. The dedication of Wheeler Clinic staff coupled with the love and commitment of her family have transformed Olivia into a happier and healthier teenager.

## A Message from the President



Susan Walkama, LCSW

From high-tech fitness to cutting edge health information technology, we've made a commitment to employ the latest technological advances to enhance the quality of care we provide across all of our programs and services. Support from community partners, including the Fund for Greater Hartford, Hartford Foundation and Main Street Community Foundation, has been essential as we've integrated technology into each service and business platform.

Our electronic health record (EHR) increases family engagement in treatment planning, allows our staff to access critical information in remote locations and enhances compliance with increasingly complex health care regulations. Our integrated financial system will increase billing efficiencies and reduce operating expenses. Our networking solutions ensure our staff can deliver effective, evidence-based interventions in a client's home, school or community. We've established new systems to support our workforce, manage our payroll and enhance our recruitment efforts. We've significantly expanded our communications tools using low cost e-newsletters, Facebook and other social media.

Wheeler Clinic has always embraced new technology trends that offer opportunities to provide better care and operate more efficiently. We'll continue to invest in interactive software to support the individualized learning styles of special education students, expanded social media campaigns, web-based professional development strategies and even new lighting technology to optimize our energy utilization.

Our goal is to provide the highest quality of care to the individuals with the greatest need in a rapidly changing health care environment. Efficient implementation of the right technologies, and your support, will ensure we'll continue to lead the way.

See you on Facebook!



## Local Stores Help Raise Awareness During Child Abuse Prevention Month

Wheeler Clinic and Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut (PACT) helped raise public awareness of the importance of healthy family relationships during Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. PACT partnered again this year with Kohl's and Price Chopper stores to inform the community about the importance of preventing child abuse and building stronger families.

Price Chopper stores throughout the state continued their commitment to PACT by raising funds through their annual pin-up campaign. "Price Chopper believes in giving back to the community where our customers live and work," stated Barbara L. Page, community and public relations manager of Golub Corporation. Every dollar collected supports PACT's Parent Warmline, public education initiatives and parent support efforts like the Circle of Parents network.



A girl chooses her beads for a bracelet at one of the activity tables during "Kohl's Cares for Kids Day" April 24.

For the fourth year in a row, Kohl's stores hosted the "Kohl's Cares for Kids Day" at their Orange and Rocky Hill locations. The event provides families an opportunity to enjoy a variety of fun activities together and obtain information on keeping kids safe, happy and healthy.

Cathy Sisco, program coordinator for PACT, said, "We are very grateful for the continuing partnerships we have with Kohl's and Price Chopper. They are invaluable

to helping us connect with the community, raise awareness and let families know there are resources to help."

Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut is a statewide program of Wheeler Clinic dedicated to the prevention of all forms of child abuse, with an emphasis on promoting healthy family relationships. The program collaborates with community partners to strengthen and educate families. Pinwheels for Prevention is a nationwide campaign to raise awareness and support of the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect. Nearly 900,000 pinwheels have been displayed nationwide since April 2008. Join us by bringing Pinwheels for Prevention to your community! For more information, call Prevent Child Abuse Connecticut at 1-800-CHILDREN.



Pinwheels for Prevention are available to show your support of the prevention of childhood abuse and neglect.





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## Lisa Helming Receives Libassi Scholarship

Lisa Helming, (second from left), was this year's Libassi/Wheeler Clinic Scholarship recipient. Mary Fran and Peter Libassi (pictured far left and far right) established the scholarship to be awarded each year to a graduating Masters of Social Work student from the University of Connecticut who is interning with the clinic. Lisa interned in the Adult Services department with Nic Scibelli, LCSW, vice president of adult services (second from right). Lisa said, "I am extremely grateful for Mary Fran and Peter Libassi, and their commitment to social work education. Their kindness has inspired me." Lisa is now working as a full-time clinician with the clinic's DOMestic Violence Offender Intervention Program.



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