

THE CAPITOL LETTER

SPRING 2010

FOR FRIENDS OF CAPITOL SCHOOL OF AUSTIN

Student Spotlight: Charlie

When our son Charlie was born, the doctors and nurses in the room were breath-taken. He weighed in at 9 lbs 1 oz... and was perfect – big, fat, and healthy. Having him as our second child, we felt so confident in our parenting abilities and our calm-natured baby that we checked out of the hospital a day early. I should have known then that nothing is ever that easy.

Within the first 15 weeks of Charlie's life, he had four ear infections. He was constantly on antibiotics and constantly screaming. At 16 weeks old, we took him to the ENT and had a hearing test. They told us he couldn't hear anything under a loud yell... and likened his hearing to that of being at the bottom of a ten-foot deep pool and hearing people talk above you. We immediately had tubes put in – and wow, what a difference it made. He came alive – he could hear.

At around 18 months, we really started to notice some differences in Charlie. He still wasn't talking, wasn't walking, and couldn't follow directions – in fact, we really wondered if he understood anything we said. At his regular well check, the doctor had concerns and suggested that we head back to the ENT for another

hearing test and to the neurologist for an exam. The hearing came back okay – with some frequencies testing better than others. The ENT suggested speech therapy. The neurologist recommended speech and occupational therapy, and school for socialization. We enrolled him in a Montessori school that had great



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SAVE THE DATE

Mark your
calendar for next
year's events:

Casino Night

Sat. Nov. 13, 2010

*Golf and
Tennis Classic*

**Sat. April 16,
2011**

CONTINUED ON P. 7

The Capitol School Program

Capitol School of Austin is a non-profit organization devoted to the needs of children with developmental learning differences who have average to above-average learning potential. Founded in 1990, Capitol School of Austin offers an individualized language-based program presently serving children from two years old through third grade. Developing a strong language foundation is the focus of the program at Capitol School of Austin. The curriculum includes training in oral language, reading, arithmetic, writing, spelling, and social skills. In addition, many children with developmental learning differences need as much help with the mechanics of learning, as with the actual content of a lesson. To meet this need, Capitol School helps children develop the self-regulation skills that are important to successful classroom performance. Capitol School of Austin offers licensed Speech-Language Pathologists and Special Education Teachers, who work to meet the individual needs of each child, utilizing a range of multi-sensory methods. For more information about the Capitol School Program, please call (512) 467-7006.



NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Capitol School of Austin does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs or other school-administered programs.

www.capitolschool.com

EASY FUNDRAISERS

Below is a list of ways you can raise money for Capitol School with very little effort. Please share this information with your friends and families!



Randalls Good Neighbor Program

If you shop at **Randalls**, present your Remarkable Card to customer service and indicate that you want to donate to Capitol School; you'll have a short form to fill out. Write in our number (3826) and a portion of your purchase will be sent directly to us!



Target – Take Charge of Education

When shopping at **Target**, visit customer service and designate Capitol School of Austin to receive a percentage of your purchase when you use your Target Guest Card. Again, it's easy for you and rewarding for us!



Soup Peddler – 5% to CSA

If you like to order food from The Soup Peddler, use souppeddler.com/capitolschool (you'll see our logo) every time you order and TSP will donate 5% of the sale to Capitol School.



United Way

Several current and past parents designate Capitol School as the recipient of their United Way payroll contributions through their place of employment. If you participate in United Way, please consider designating your contributions to "Texas Language Learning Alternatives, Inc. - Capitol School" to benefit our programs.



Thank You, Donors!

In addition to the hundreds of local businesses who donated items to our silent and live auctions, Capitol School would like to thank the following people for financially supporting our 20th Anniversary fundraisers:

★ Casino Night Sponsors

Deborah Cartwright
Scott & Karie Cole
John and Ann Edwards
Debbie & James Omiya
John & Dixie Paulos
Jeff & Anna Stewart
Brenda Tworoger

★ Golf & Tennis Sponsors

3M
Dr. & Mrs. Astarita
Central Texas Valet
Coro Health
CSA Board of Directors
Cuatro Benefits
Dell
The Ely Family
Geico
H-E-B
Broadus Spivey & Dicky Grigg Law Offices
Gary & Mary Keller
Lake Plaza
Lexus of Austin
My Obstacle Course
NeuroTexas
PricewaterhouseCooper
The Yerly Family
Z-Non Electric

Campus News

The New Main Office

January brought a big change for the CSA office. When Mr. Rob and Ms. Jeannette responded to the alarm going off at the school early on a Saturday morning, they found a flooding office. As each member of the administrative team arrived, they were stunned at the damage caused by a frozen water pipe that burst in the ceiling. Everything was drenched. After two days of removing wet carpeting, ceiling tiles, and years of accumulated files, the office was gutted. Our friends at Wetzel Construction saved the day by removing debris and starting immediately on the reconstruction. After weeks of working from the hallway, the office was reopened with fresh paint, new carpet, and all new cabinetry. As it turned out, the flooding could be considered a blessing in disguise... the office has never looked better. Stop by and take a look.

Front Entry Facelift

Last fall during Casino Night, we continued our successful "Paddles Up" event where guests raise their paddles to donate money in support of a campus improvement project. This year, the front walkway got a new look. A new arbor now graces the front flower bed, some walkway columns have new stone bases and others were reinforced with steel support collars, and new bright orange benches were installed. The final step will be the installation of our name in letters on the building, making a nice first impression for our very special school.

Adios, Mr. Rob

Rob Hoffman, our Business Manager for the last several years and longtime friend of Capitol School, will be relocating to Barcelona, Spain at the end of this school year. Rob will continue to work remotely on a part-time basis, but we will greatly miss his friendly face and can-do attitude on campus.

MORE CAMPUS NEWS ON P. 6



Bella and Evelyn try their hands as Julie and Julia.

Level A

Emily & Charlotte's class: The Level A Turtles had a wonderful winter and are off to a wonderful spring! One of our favorite group activities is "Cooking and Food Exploration." We have made lots of yummy snacks such as "Elephant Sandwiches" for zoo week and "Good Teeth Food" for dentist week. We love to feel the textures of foods, mixing ingredients, and tasting yummy foods!

Language Stimulation

Niki, Bethany & Chelsea's class: Language Stimulation CARS have been zooming into



our springtime units! We've made beautiful butterflies, hopped like bunnies and frogs, observed caterpillars and pill bugs, and counted down to our "Five Little Ducks" song as we waddle around. We've made colorful flowers to brighten our classroom wall and soon will be flower hunting as our bright sunny days and light rains have set flowers to bloom outdoors! Language Stimulation kids say, "Hooray" for springtime outdoor play!

Level 1

Kathrin, Christen & Sarah's class: The Caterpillars have been enjoying this spring weather as well as learning about spring-related units such as gardening, bunnies, and bugs. We have enjoyed learning new spring vocabulary while singing thematic songs and reading our storybooks! Last week the Caterpillars were highly engaged by our storybook, The Little Bunny Foo Foo. They enjoyed acting out the story as we read, targeting sequencing of events. A few of the favorite activities over the past few weeks have been making bunny ear hats to wear during dramatic play, painting terra cotta flower pots, and playing "Bunny, Bunny Hop" (a.k.a. Duck, Duck Goose) to work on our cooperative play skills! We have enjoyed watching the Caterpillars grow and look forward to the remainder of the year!



Level 1 gardeners Steele, Aidan, and Maya help with the geraniums.

Level 2

Karen, Amanda & Hannah's class: The Level 2 Explorers have been studying ponds this week. Over spring break, they all visited ponds to collect water samples. We examined water droplets under a microscope. Students practiced drawing pond animals like ducks and turtles. They enjoyed finding the missing duckling in the story "Have You Seen My Duckling?" by Nancy Tafuri. They are all working hard to learn 10 important facts about themselves and their families to earn a class party.



Tally said "bleck" to her handful of Oobleck.

Level 3/4

Terri & Jennifer's class: Level 3/4 had a fabulous time celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday in March! We read many favorites such as The Lorax, Horton Hears a Who and Bartholomew and the Oobleck. During science, we made our own oobleck and discovered whether it was a solid or a liquid. We were surprised to find that it had qualities of both!

Level 5/6

Sharon, Angela & Latrice's class: Level 5/6 are loving books! The kids are really enjoying the Magic Tree House series, even bringing their own copies of the books to follow along while Ms. Sharon reads to them! Through this series, they learn about different times in history and different places around the globe. It's fun for them to use the internet to look up information about the places in the stories. They also loved the recent Dr. Seuss unit! They were enthusiastic about taking many Seuss books home to read to their parents. At this age, they can really use their knowledge about life to figure out what Dr. Seuss was trying to teach in his stories – there was

usually a great "life lesson" to be learned!



Ms. Kathrin and John ponder produce on their field trip.

Level B

Eleanor, Kat & Devon's class: Level B studied fruits and vegetables and they went on a field trip to CSA's neighborhood HEB store. All the students had fun seeing the fruits, vegetables, meat and milk as well as buying fruit for a fruit salad! We have used the pictures from the trip to give us ideas for our daily writing time.

CAMPUS NEWS

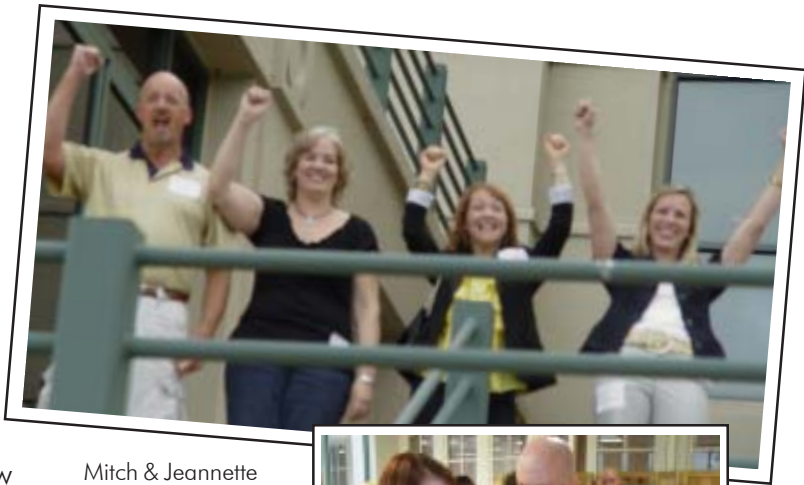
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20th Anniversary Events

Capitol School began a new fundraising tradition this year by hosting two new events – a Casino Night in the fall and a Golf & Tennis Tournament in the spring. The tennis tournament was rained out, but the golf tournament went ahead as planned and was a blast.

Together these events raised more for our program than our typical annual gala. Thank you to the Capitol School families, old and new friends, board members, and staff who made our 20th year celebrations such a success. Here's to the next 20 years!

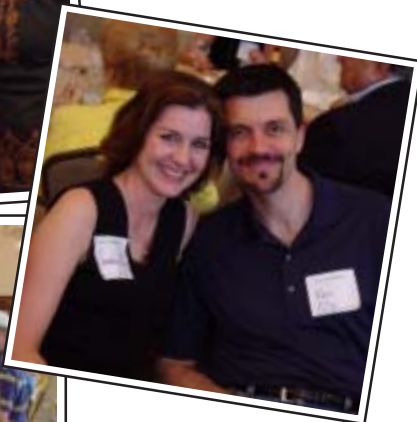
School founder Amy Cunningham and longtime staff members Ellen Pokorny Roberts, Jeannette Young, and Sharon English are applauded by the crowd. (Hallie Cunningham sticks close to mom.)



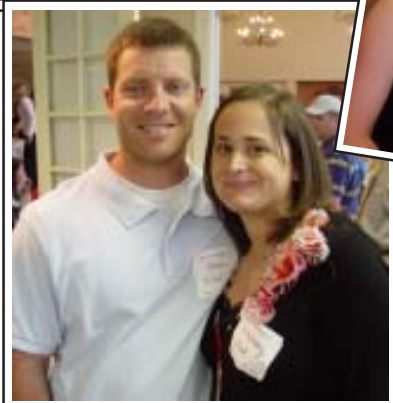
Mitch & Jeannette Young, Rebecca Yerly, and Ysidra Williams cheer on the golfers.



Nicole & Mike Uhlik consider bids on jewelry at the silent auction.



Sandra & Ken Ely (above) and Peter & Whitney Kral (left) at the tournament dinner.



Cathy Hale, Bill Smith and Beverly Dunn inspect the chocolate basket at the silent auction.



Student Spotlight

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reviews. We thought we'd let that work for a bit, and give him more time to grow up – as we kept being told, “boys are slower to develop than girls”.

At 2 years old, we had our first visit with a therapist and whoa, did that alarm us. She told us things like “at least his eyes are level”, and “he may never make it in a typical school setting”. We felt sick. What we had decided was just a ‘boy’ thing was now turning into something so much more complicated. We immediately started ST, OT and Developmental therapy. We kept him at the Montessori for a few more months before realizing that it wasn't the right fit for him. They didn't have patience for him nor the training to help him. So we pulled him out, hired a nanny, and increased the therapy through a home service. I thought, if we focus on this, *we can fix him...*

By 2.5 years old, he was noticeably different from other kids his age. We were still without a solid diagnosis. He still wasn't talking, was very off balance – falling down frequently – and would bite and hit his sister for no reason. At the same time, Charlie was the happiest child on the block. People would ask us all the time if he was always that happy. He was quiet, but always had a smile.

We realized after a few months at home with therapy, that it just wasn't enough. We heard about Capitol School through a neighbor – she mentioned that it would probably be a perfect fit for Charlie. I called that day and the following Monday we were in to visit. After just a couple of hours there, we knew THIS was the place that would help Charlie. We were so thrilled that we cried when we found out he was accepted. After so much worry, it was the first sigh of relief we had in months... we thought, “*they can fix him*”.

Fast forward to present. We've realized that Charlie doesn't need to be fixed – *he's not broken*.



Charlie (center) enjoying his class at Capitol School.

At 3.5 years old, with a more defined diagnosis of Sensory Processing Disorder, coupled with a significant language delay and motor in-coordination, Charlie is about to complete his first year at CSA in the Language Stim class. He is not the same boy that toddled in there just nine months ago. He still has the constant smile – but now has a few words, waves, hugs and high-fives to go with it. He has made incredible progress. The simple things that most parents take for granted are major accomplishments in Charlie's world... for example – he is able to follow most directions now (when he wants to), and now able to protest when he doesn't want to follow, able to climb a playscape, put his own shoes on, and has so many new words. Though still unintelligible, he now is beginning to learn that language has power – and how to use it.

CSA, and in particular, his teachers, have been nothing short of amazing. They have compassion, patience, understanding, determination, and incredible teaching abilities – all of which we see coming through in Charlie. We can't say thank you enough to this amazingly kind group of people – not just for teaching Charlie, but for not changing him... for embracing him in every bit of perfect that he is.

–Sean and Mindy

From the Director's Desk

Spring has sprung around the CSA campus and it's time to gear up for an exciting finish to the 2009-2010 school. The time between the winter holidays and spring break seemed to zoom by, but not without lots of language learning taking place across all classes on campus. (See *In and Around the Classrooms.*)

A favorite event of mine this spring was the PJ Night that accompanied our annual Scholastic Book Fair. I always see kids get excited about coming to school, but it doesn't compare with the sheer glee I saw on kids' faces that night. Many students showed up in their pajamas to snuggle up with their classmates and watch a movie, eat popcorn and compete in a coloring contest while their parents, grandparents and friends shopped for books. Students received many new books for their homes, and thanks to our generous families, every book on the teachers' wish lists was

purchased to grow classroom libraries. Book sale profits benefited our Booster Club which used funds to fulfill teacher wishes for items such as new puzzles, a preschool science curriculum unit, basketballs and math manipulatives. Thank you Booster Club parents for your support!

The end of school promises even more enriching fun through class field trips, a school play put on by our kindergarten through third grade students and graduation in conjunction with Family Fun Day. Ms. Sharon and Ms. Angela's class will be performing *Dona Nobis Pacem* at graduation, something you won't want to miss.

—Jeannette Young, Director



Texas Language Learning Alternatives Corp., Inc.

Capitol School of Austin

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**If you need to update your address,
please call CSA at (512) 467-7006.**