

THANKFUL

NOVEMBER 2020



rcghealthnetwork.com



Recognizing Children's Gifts
Behavioral Health Network

IN THIS ISSUE:

- What's New at RCG?
- RCG Team Member Spotlight
- CARE Team
- Family Engagement
- Let's Hear from the Clinical Team

Also throughout the newsletter: See what RCG team members are thankful for.





I AM THANKFUL FOR...

I am thankful for the mercy of GOD to keep my family, all of my loved ones and every person that I know out of harm's way during this turbulent moment in the world.
- Sherman

I am thankful to experience life with my other half.
- Nicholas T.

I am thankful for my family, Friends and my career path!
- Sarah T.

I am thankful for our amazing clients, their families, and team. It is truly an honor to work alongside such dedicated people and to see growth happening every single day!
- Amanda

I am thankful for my Alverser 1 and 2 coworkers. They have continued to help keep my spirits up with everything that has gone on this year.
- Samara

I am thankful to the Early Childhood Development Team is thankful for our clients family's trusting us with the growth and development of their children, the opportunity to work alongside one another and witness the success and positive change that our RCG community see's in our clients every day.
- Roger

I'm thankful for the team of hard-working, dedicated professionals that I'm proud to call my teammates!
- Aaron

WHAT'S NEW AT RCG

Welcome to the RCG Team:

- Sybil Kettle
- Morgan Price
- Justin Stevenson
- Christina Womack

Look who is celebrating a birthday in November:

- Ben
- Sarah
- Ariana
- Blanca
- Christine
- Emily
- Sybil
- Dezma

Happy RCG-versary to:

3 years

- 11/13 - Kara Herring
- 11/13 - Brittany Lamm

4 years

- 11/14 - Eric Townsend



RCG TEAM MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Erin McWethy

Q: How long have you worked at RCG and what is your position?

A: I am a Behavioral Therapist at the School Prep Center. I have worked at RCG since July 2019.

Q: What is an act of kindness that has made the greatest difference in your life?

A: The greatest thing that someone has ever done for me that I am most grateful for is when a family member offered me a helping hand without conditions nor did I need to ask for the help. They proved that they would be there for me no matter what; and for that I am extremely grateful.

Q: What abilities do you have that you are most grateful for?

A: I am grateful for my ability to adapt to difficult situations, and my dedication to tasks that are important to me.

Q: What around you are you most grateful for?

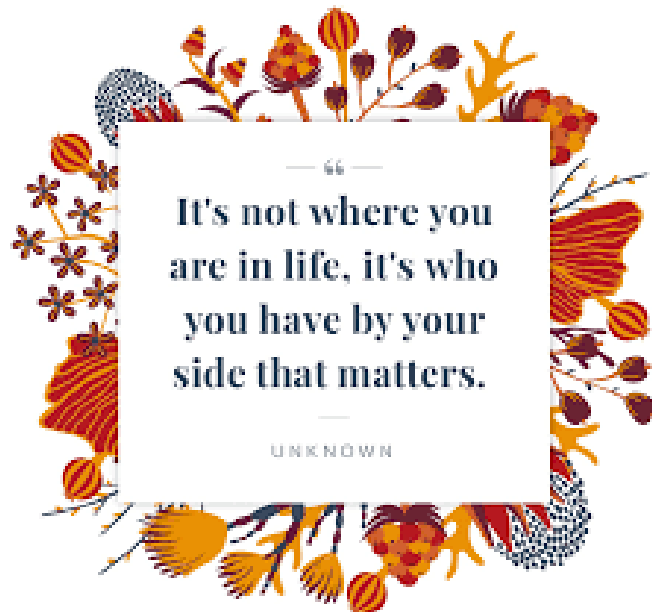
A: I am most grateful for my family and friends, who continue to be there for me during this trying year.



CARE TEAM

Greetings RCG Team and Families,

As we embrace the chilly weather and enter into Fall, RCG wants to remain "THANKFUL" for everything. We will show our appreciation for our team by celebrating/hosting a Fall Fest Spirit Week. We are beyond grateful to be able to have this event with our team. We will be able to enjoy everyone's presence while staying physically distant and socially connected. As always, follow our social media platforms for pictures. We are extremely "THANKFUL" for our clients, families, team members, and the entire RCG community!



RCG's CARE team continues to CARE by staying Committed to Assisting our team and families with their needs while providing Realistic Expectations.

- LaDonna Branson, Supervisor of Administrative Services
- Leo Rodriguez, Operations Analyst
- Angel Williams - Administrative Specialist



CARE TEAM

Phone: 804-897-1753 option 9 Fax: 888-857-8088
careteam@rcghealthnetwork.com

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

As we embark upon the holiday season which may look very different for most of us. Let us pause, breathe and take a moment to reflect on the positive aspects of our life.

What being thankful means to me:

T - togetherness

H - help

A - appreciation

N - network

K - kindness

F - family

U - unity

L - learning



Family Engagement Is Here to Serve You:

As the Family Engagement Coordinator here at RCG my role is to serve as liaison between our families and Clinical Team.

To our clients and families, I am here to support you with advocating for your child in the school system (IEP meetings and navigating through the process) as well as in the community, connecting you with community resources and agencies and providing family training based on your child and family needs.

I will be in contact with each of our families on a quarterly basis to gather information and work on ways we can continue to serve our clients and families with excellent communication and service.



Jamilya Brown
Family Engagement Coordinator

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES & SELF-CARE TIPS FOR FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS

FUN & AFFORDABLE Family Self-Care Tips (click for link)

Learning & Activities for School Aged Children (Virginia Institute of Autism)

- **Live Stream Schedules** (click for links)
 - Daily, 10am - [Atlantic White Shark Conservancy story time](#)
 - Daily, 12pm - [Pete the Cat Story Time](#)
 - Daily, 1pm - [Doodle with Mo Wilems](#)
 - [Daily, 3pm, Cincinnati Zoo Live Stream](#)

November Family Fun Activities:

- [30 Activities Perfect for Family Bonding in November by Red Tricycle](#)
- [November Activities for Kids on Pinterest](#)

Richmond Virginia Local Support Groups

- [List of local support groups, provided by ASCV](#)





I AM THANKFUL FOR....

I am thankful for God's
Grace!
- Ronnie

I am thankful for the
opportunity to do come to a
job I love and am truly
passionate about each day.
- Nicholas K.

I'm thankful for life! I'm thankful for my
family and my children. I'm thankful for the
RCG Family, I'm thankful for my tribe.
- Lori

I am thankful for my RCG family.
- LaDonna

I am thankful for my fiancé, my
stepson and my dog!
- Kaitlyn

Waking up everyday in good spirits and health
is my biggest blessing, so I am very thankful
for that. I am thankful for strength and my
support system as I continue to fulfill my
purpose in life.
-LaKendra



LET'S HEAR FROM THE
CLINICAL TEAM

Training/Assessment - Early Childhood - School Age - Life Prep - Speech - OT



TRAINING & ASSESSMENT



Thankful for autism related assessments

'Tis the season of giving thanks! And this season (and every season) I am grateful for assessments. Every client we see at RCG is unique and has a different skill set. The first step towards developing an individualized treatment plan that addresses the specific needs of each client is conducting an assessment of their current abilities and deficits. To identify strengths, areas of growth, and the root causes of challenging behavior, RCG conducts a variety of assessments at least bi-annually. There are many assessments that can be used with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Different assessments will assess different areas that could include: communication, daily living skills, vocational skills, recreational/leisure skills, social skills, visual performance, academic skills, and motor skills. Some commonly used assessments at RCG include the following:

- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills- Revised (ABLLS-R)
- Verbal Behavior- Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)
- Promoting Emergence of Advanced Knowledge (PEAK)
- Socially Savvy Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)
- Essential For Living (EFL)
- Social Skills Checklist Early Start Denver Model (ESDM)

Based on the information from these assessments, your clinical supervisor is able to analyze data collection that monitors your child's growth and progress. Now that's something to be grateful for! For me, nothing beats the power of celebrating the small wins. So what if we focused on gratitude all year long by remembering to celebrate the small successes on our "journey of trying" to reach the greater goal? I am thankful for assessments that allow us to evaluate and celebrate that progress being made!

Tara Dailey, B.S., RBT
Assessment and Intake Coordinator



EARLY CHILDHOOD



Thankful for client outcomes

Client outcomes are the foundation of everything we do at RCG. We know that we are succeeding as a company when our clients are succeeding with their goals. In the Early Childhood Development Program we work on skills related to school readiness, attending and listening, toilet training, and behavior reduction to name a few. These outcomes and more are developed and modified for our clients, with help from their families/caregivers, to begin the path that they will follow for the rest of their lives.

Our team of incredibly dedicated clinicians and therapists has the privilege of watching and helping children use language functionally for the first time, read their first words, go to their first day of school and maybe even play with their first friend. The science of Applied Behavior Analysis is one that focuses on using interventions based in research and data to drive our decision-making toward successful outcomes for each client individually.

Early intervention programs for children on the autism spectrum have been shown to produce long term developmental gains (Koegel, Koegel, Ashbaugh, Bradshaw, 2014), more inclusive educational placements (Harris & Handleman, 2000), and a decreased need for behavioral intervention over the course of their lives (Dawson, Rogers, Munson, Smith, Winter, Greenson, Donaldson, Varley, 2009).

As we look ahead to growth at RCG and the Early Childhood Development Program, we will continue to focus on outcomes that help children achieve so many of the firsts that they will carry with them throughout their lives. We are proud of the numerous outcomes our clients achieve and are thankful for the opportunity to support them throughout their development.

Amanda Wells, M.Ed., LBA, BCBA
Director of Training and Professional Development



SCHOOL AGE



Thankful for social skills telehealth programming

I am extremely thankful for Telehealth services. Not only does it make it possible for us to see clients during these uncharted times, it also led to us being able to help our clients improve their social skills in new ways! Through the use of Telehealth communication, I have been able to successfully have clients come together for an hour each week for a social skills group.

Together we practice conversation skills with peers, work on following instructions, learn new coping strategies, play cooperative games, and more. There are many cooperative games online that allow us to play together. Classic games like Simon Says, scavenger hunts, or charades are also available online. Since everyone has access to a camera the kids are able to see each other perform these steps or share items they found on a scavenger hunt. Playing games helps promote turn taking, recognizing when it's your turn, and tolerating loss. Thanks to more people taking advantage of remote access we've been able to draw together with famous illustrator Mo Willems or express our emotions through art while listening to Yo-Yo Ma. We are all going through this tough time together and Telehealth is a great tool to help one another.

Virtual social skills sessions have allowed clients, who might be too shy in person, to be more confident and use the screen to communicate with their friends. They are able to safely have the peer interaction they've been missing while still adhering to the Governor's Stay at Home Orders. I'm beyond thankful knowing that when I turn my camera on I'm guaranteed to see five to six smiling faces back at me. They are so happy seeing their friends and engaging with them. Even though it's virtual, it means the world to them and that is the very reason to be thankful for our Social Skills Telehealth services.

Kristen Keys, BCaBA, LABA
Clinical Supervisor



LIFE PREP



Thankful for Community Partners

A core value at RCG Behavioral Health Network is Caring for our Community. We are thankful to work with other organizations to make our Richmond community an even more caring and inclusive place. This month, we reflect on how grateful we are to have relationships with **Comedy Sportz Richmond Theater** and the **Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation**.

Comedy Sportz Richmond Theater is a 501(c) non-profit organization that enriches lives by creating and providing professional and positive improv education, training, and entertainment through collaboration, inspiration, gratitude, and fun. Comedy Sportz has provided workshops for our Life Prep and Social Skills Groups, which was a hit among the kids and adults! Comedy Sportz also offers after-school programs, improv training, shows for Autism & sensory needs, training for dementia caregivers and so much more.



They are currently offering Live Improv shows online at pay what you can rates. Check them out at <https://www.cszrichmond.com/>. We could all use more fun and laughter in our lives during this wild time!

The **Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation's** mission is to fulfill Cameron's dream and legacy by being a positive force that works to cultivate awareness and understanding of teenage depression and anxiety. RCG's Life Prep program has volunteered with The CKG Foundation on multiple fundraisers and to say the positive energy shared by those with CKG is contagious would be an understatement!



Anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges are common among teens. Having an organization working to raise awareness and prioritize mental health is such a positive force in our community. Visit <https://www.ckgfoundation.org/> to learn more or join in to help fulfill their mission!

Jamie Bass, M. Ed., BCBA, LBA
Life Prep Senior Clinical Supervisor





Thankful for Flexibility

Joining in the 'Thankful' season, I am thankful for there being many paths to get to the same place. We are currently faced with many dilemmas and challenges as we approach each day and it is helpful to remember that there is more than one way to do just about everything! It is so easy to get bogged down in the details and keep trying to do the things we have always done in the same way we have always done them. If 2020 has taught me anything, it is that flexibility is one of the most important skills to have! The ability to be able to consider the different ways to solve a problem falls into a type of thought process called cognitive flexibility, or flexible thinking.

Cognitive flexibility helps people to change the way they are thinking about something and look at it in a different way. It can help you see something from another perspective, consider the needs of others and find a different idea to solve a problem. Flexible thinking can also help people handle changes. This kind of thinking can be a challenge for individuals with autism, who tend to be more likely to be rigid thinkers. However, supporting and developing flexible thinking is a challenge worth attempting!

Here are a few ways to address flexible thinking at home: [7 Tips for Building Flexible Thinking](#). One idea to try at home is to find more than one way to do everyday things. Your child may be used to doing things in a certain order, so making a small change may help to teach that there are different options. This could be turned into a game where the child helps to come up with ideas for different ways to complete activities or tasks. Additionally, there are tips for [cognitive flexibility in younger children](#) as well.

For more literal or concrete thinkers, here is an activity to try that may help to illustrate the concept of flexible thinking. Thinking Flexibly Demonstration

Sarah Shreckhise, MS CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA
Lead Speech-Language Pathologist



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



Thankful for expansion of research into sensory processing and autism

I am thankful for the increase in research about sensory processing and how it relates to autism. It's estimated that 90% of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) demonstrate atypical sensory behaviors (1). It wasn't until 2013 that the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V) included a sensory component in the diagnostic criteria (2). The publication of articles about autism and sensory processing has significantly increased since 2010(3).

With this increase in research, we now have imaging evidence that there are structural and connectivity differences in the brains of those diagnosed with ASD (4). Atypical sensory responses were originally thought of as an underlying impairment associated with Autism.

However, recent research has hypothesized that sensory processing may actually be a primary component of autism which then impacts language, social skills, and cognition (5).

Another exciting prospect is that sensory symptoms could be an earlier indicator of ASD. "Sensory symptoms have been clinically documented as early as 6 months of age in infants later diagnosed with autism — considerably earlier than children reach key developmental milestones in social cognition... Sensory symptoms not only precede but also are predictive of social- communication deficits and repetitive behaviours in childhood, as well as eventual diagnostic status "(6) I am very thankful for the possibility of an earlier indicator as it could mean earlier access to resources. More information can be found in the citations below.

1,2 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6997554/>

3 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6468444/>

4,5,6 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320085064_Sensory_perception_in_autism.

Lindsey Olsen, MOT
Occupational Therapist





I AM THANKFUL FOR...

I am thankful for freedom!
- Ally

I am thankful for my RCG
team, my husband and my
family.
- Kara

I am thankful for being able to
wake up everyday to make a
difference in my life and those
around me.
- Stephanie

I am thankful for people. This
year has truly taught me that it
really is an amazing time to be
alive. Even in a world of COVID,
social turmoil, and election
season; people are still finding
ways to connect and be there to
support one another selflessly.
Even in times of adversity, most
people really are good at heart
and I'm so incredibly thankful for
that.
- Mari

*I am thankful for health, humor,
iced coffee, and the ability to
learn and grow everyday
alongside my home family and
work family.*
- Courtney

I'm thankful for life itself and
the family that God have
supplied me with.
- Grover

I'm thankful for being
surrounded by positive
people who lift me up when
I'm feeling down
- Jamie

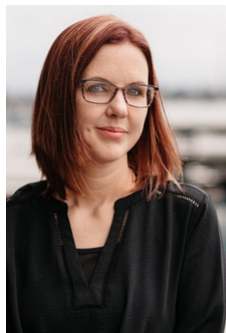


All RCG locations will be closed on Thursday, November 26, 2020, in observance of Thanksgiving.

We are thankful for all of YOU!

Behind the newsletter

Newsletter Team:



Wendy Helm
Design & Content
Coordinator



Amanda Wells,
M.Ed., LBA, BCBA



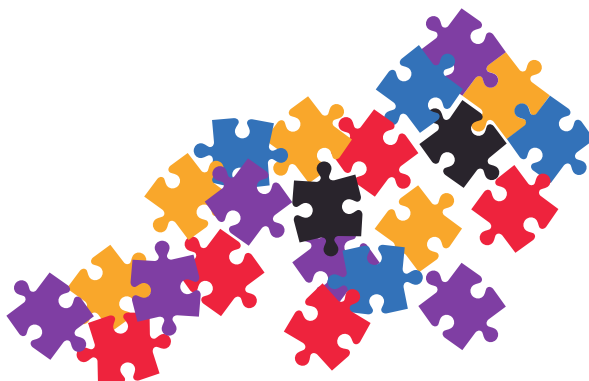
Courtney Bise,
M.Ed., BCBA, LBA



LaDonna Branson,
MBA



Jamilya Brown,
BS, RBT



Contributing writers for this month's newsletter (pictures shown with articles):

Tara Dailey, B.S., RBT

Amanda Wells, M.Ed., LBA, BCBA

Kristen Keys, BCaBA, LABA

Jamie Bass, M. Ed., BCBA, LBA

Sarah Shreckhise, MS CCC-SLP, BCBA, LBA

Lindsey Olsen, MOT





rcghealthnetwork.com | 804.897.1753

1107 Alverser Drive
Midlothian, VA 23113

Facebook | Instagram | Twitter