



The Belle Center

A nonprofit serving children with disabilities
and their families



eNews: March 2009

Hi Friend of The Belle Center,

2009 has gotten off to a great start at [The Belle Center](#)! Thanks to those of you who came to our Trivia Night & Silent Auction in January. We raised over \$14,000, which directly supports our children with disabilities and delays.

In this issue, you *must* read our new alumni story. It's definitely going to brighten your day, and perhaps even broaden your mind. Sign your child up for our new art therapies, and read about a photographer who would love to work with kids who have special needs. If you or a loved one has a disability, check out the information about People First of Missouri's Self-Advocacy Spring Conference. Also, don't forget to save the date for our golf tournament!

Regards,
The Belle Center Staff



1. Register for our golf tournament

Save the date for golf! Our [17th Annual Margot Schenk Memorial Golf Tournament](#) will be on Monday, May 11th at Lake Forest Country Club in Lake St. Louis. Support our children with disabilities by becoming a [hole or corporate sponsor](#), and bring your friends for a day filled with golf, silent auction items and gourmet meals.

Register today by contacting [Angie Wuelling](#), Development Director, at 314.821.5230.

2. Sign up for a fun, NEW therapy

With music therapy, your child will have a blast while improving her health and development. Music therapy is a creative way for children with disabilities and developmental delays to make their own music while improving their imagination, abstract thinking, emotional and self-expression, and motor skills.

We are offering individual therapy sessions, as well as group therapy classes:

- Group therapy classes will be offered in spring, summer and fall.
- Each group therapy class will last for eight weeks.
- Each individual session will be 1.5 hours in length.
- Group therapy classes cost \$200 for eight weeks of classes. Individual therapy sessions cost \$85 per hour.

For more information or to register, please contact [Theresa Strothkamp](#), Outreach Program Director, at 314.821.5230.

3. Alumni success story: Isabel Hogan

Gliding across the stage at December's VP Ball, Isabel Hogan looked radiant in her sparkling blue gown. Her big smile, bubbly enthusiasm and confident composure ignited thunderous applause from the audience. People in the front row started tearing up, and the crowd almost gave Isabel a standing ovation. Why? Because in her 22 years, Isabel has broken countless barriers facing people with disabilities.

Born with Down syndrome, Isabel began receiving Belle's [therapies](#) as a tiny infant. Isabel also attended Belle's [full inclusion preschool](#). According to Isabel's mom, Tara, Belle provided their family with hope that their daughter would walk, talk, make friends and go to school with other children.

After graduating preschool, Isabel went to her local Ladue public schools. She played sports, learned to ski and wakeboard, and did everything her siblings did. Isabel also ice skates, and even performed at Savvis Center. As a teenager, Isabel played on Ladue High School's field hockey team and had an assist against rival Clayton High School. Right before Isabel won Homecoming Queen 2006, a local news station aired a story about her remarkable accomplishments.

This May, Isabel will graduate from her Career Training Program through Special School District. This program has enabled Isabel to work at a cafeteria at St. Luke's Hospital, as well as work at a heart rehabilitation hospital. She is looking for a job after graduation, and would love to work at a school.



In her spare time, Isabel stays busy by playing Special Olympics sports and hanging out with friends. She is always planning her next event. Isabel is also a constant fixture at soccer games for Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School (MICDS). To show Isabel how much they value her support, the boys team even celebrated Isabel's 21st birthday during their senior night celebration. A surprised Isabel walked onto the field, and the team presented her with a cake that said "Happy birthday to our #1 fan!" A few members of the MICDS team also attend all of Isabel's Special Olympics competitions.

But there's one big thing Isabel continues to dream about: a college education. Isabel says she would like to attend Lindenwood University, like her older sister. Isabel has achieved so many of the same successes as her older sister, such as graduating from Ladue High School, playing field hockey, winning Homecoming Queen and becoming a debutante. Knowing Isabel and her work ethic, we expect to continue hearing great things about this incredible young woman, whatever path she chooses!

4. College dreams become reality for students with intellectual disabilities

One of our preschool teachers found this amazing [U.S. News and World Report article](#), and we had to share it with you. [Read](#) this empowering article of how students with disabilities are shattering stereotypes and realizing their dreams of attending college. The article also discusses the benefits of [inclusion](#), which is central to Belle's mission.

5. Capture your child's smiles

We received the following email from Kate Brockmeyer, a photographer who is starting a company specializing in photography of children with special needs. If you're looking for a photographer experienced in working with children who have disabilities, please [contact Kate directly](#):

I am looking to do school pictures, family pictures and just to get the word out to parents that there is someone out there with the patience and the desire to capture their child's smiles and personality. I previously worked at St. Louis Special School as an applied behavior analyst and spent all my free time providing respite care for area families. I now work at a local studio and am ready to break out on my own. I am based out of St. Louis but am willing to travel outside of St. Louis and the surrounding areas.

*Thank you for your time,
Kate Brockmeyer
314.420.7173
kbkphotography@gmail.com*



6. Join power wheelchair soccer team

The Disabled Athlete Sports Association (DASA) invites children and adults, ages 5 to 60, to play power wheelchair soccer. According to DASA, some players might be able to walk between games while others use wheelchairs as their primary means of mobility. For more information or to sign up, please contact DASA's Kelly Behlmann at 636.477.0716.

7. Attend People First of Missouri's "Self-Advocacy Spring Conference"

Need to boost your advocacy and leadership skills? Want to meet over 300 fellow self-advocates? If you or a loved one has a disability, mark your calendars for People First of Missouri's 14th annual advocacy conference. You will learn important information about guardianship, new options for employment, different types of housing options, and how to take control of your finances.

People First of Missouri: 14th Annual Self-Advocacy Spring Conference

Friday, April 24 - Sunday, April 26

Tan-Tar-A Resort at the Lake of the Ozarks

For more information and to receive a registration form, contact People First of Missouri at 800.558.8652.

8. Money-saving tip for prescriptions

Stop spending a ton of money on you and your's child's prescriptions! Check out Schnucks, Target, Dierbergs, Wal-Mart and Sam's Club. At these stores you can purchase a 30-day supply of generic medications for only \$4. You can also buy a 90-day supply for \$10. Over 300 generic medications are available at these prices, regardless of whether you have health insurance. For more information, check out the following Web sites: [Schnucks](#), [Target](#), [Dierbergs](#), [Wal-Mart](#) and [Sam's Club](#).

About The Belle Center

The Belle Center is a nonprofit organization that provides early intervention services for children with disabilities and developmental delays, as well as their families. Founded in 1984, Belle's preschool program is the Midwest's first full inclusion preschool where children with and without disabilities and delays learn and play together. Our mission is to ensure that all children with disabilities and delays are fully included in school and community life. Belle's three programs annually serve more than 330 children with disabilities and their families. We also support an additional 150 families through advocacy services and referrals.

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