

VISTA

FALL
2016

AN EDUCATIONAL
PUBLICATION BROUGHT
TO YOU BY PTACH

EMPOWERMENT & ACHIEVEMENT BOOSTING THE CHALLENGED CHILD'S SELF ESTEEM

+ SENSORY
INTEGRATION
& LEARNING

+ DEVELOPING
AFFINITIES

NEW! DRAMA CLASS AND
TALENT FAIR AT PTACH

+ A BALANCING ACT :
WORKING
WITH THE
WHOLE
CHILD





A BALANCING ACT : WORKING WITH THE WHOLE CHILD



A MESSAGE FROM THE EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR

Our students present a wide variety of strengths and interests. While they may struggle to progress in academic areas, we must continue to focus on building their strengths and developing their interests. Our PTACH programs have the necessary resources to help students overcome their weaknesses, such as specialized reading and writing programs, math programs, speech and language development, etc. However, as you will read in many of the articles in this edition of our newsletter, we also invest our resources, both instructional and financial, in finding ways for our students to shine.

It may be tempting to adhere to a philosophy of “work on the reading and math and all will be fine.” This approach is occasionally voiced by parents who want to know why we don’t do “even more” math or writing. The problem with this somewhat short-sighted attitude is that, more is often less. If the “more” becomes too much it wears students down, making this approach counter to the latest research on learning. Parents often find a certain comfort level in saying my child is “only Dyslexic.” However, the researched-based reality is that Dyslexia is only one piece of a

complex neurodevelopmental profile. Thus, focusing on reading alone may have limited results.

In previous newsletters we reported on our wonderful knitting and guitar programs, which are excellent examples of the many superb facets of our model. When it comes to academic, social, and emotional development, we must be balanced in our approach. For over 35 years we have shown that if we consistently imbue students with the belief that they are capable and talented human beings, life after school can be both promising and productive.

I would like to once again invite our readers to visit one of our many programs to see first-hand what PTACH is really about. Professionals with years of practice behind them (who thought they knew what PTACH was about) and actually visit, are always impressed and enlightened. Come see the warmth, encouragement, and positive vibes that permeates our classrooms. Pay us a visit to see for yourself who we are and what we aim to do.

YOURS TRULY,
DR. JUDAH WELLER. ED.D.

COME VISIT A PROGRAM AND MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION!

Bais Yaakov D’Rav Meir

85 Parkville Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11230

Mrs. Miriam Serkez, M.A.

Yeshivas Rabbi Chaim Berlin

Elementary School

1310 Avenue I

High School

1593 Coney Island Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11230

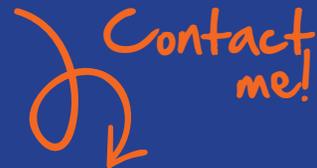
Rabbi Reuven Kamin, M.A.

Yeshiva University High School for Boys

2540 Amsterdam Avenue
New York, NY 10033
Rabbi Baruch Feder M.S.

Yeshiva University High School for Girls

86-86 Palo Alto Street
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Welkowitz M.S.



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WELCOMING

PEOPLE @PTACH



- 1** Joining us as the newest member of the Chaim Berlin Elementary faculty is **MR. SHAYA HECHT LCSW**. Mr. Hecht will be assuming the position of the program's dedicated counselor and will play a large role in the development of students' social and emotional well being. Mr. Hecht has a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Touro College and a Master's degree in Social Work from LIU. He worked at Interborough Developmental and Consultation Center, as well as at Yeshiva of Central Queens. He currently provides counseling for children, adolescents, and adults in a private-practice setting in Cedarhurst. We look forward to drawing on Mr. Hecht's expertise and knowledge in developing our students both socially and emotionally.
- 2** We are pleased to introduce **RABBI YAAKOV YOSEF YURMAN** who will be joining the staff at Chaim Berlin High School as the new 12th-grade Rebbe and as the Mashgiach Ruchani. Rabbi Yurman has many years of experience in the field of Special Education and was a Rebbe/Principal at the Academy in Brooklyn for many years. With his dynamic personality and a unique talent for reaching each student Rabbi Yurman will be an integral addition to our staff, and we are very excited to have him on board.
- 3** Beginning in the fall, **MRS. NAOMI DREIFUS** will be the new English/Language Arts teacher at our Yeshiva University High School for Girls program. After graduating with a Master's degree in special education from Queens College, Mrs. Dreifus worked as an English teacher in the Public School system for several years and most recently as a special education teacher at Yeshiva Education for Special Students in Queens. We welcome Mrs. Dreifus to PTACH and anticipate a bright future for her and her students.

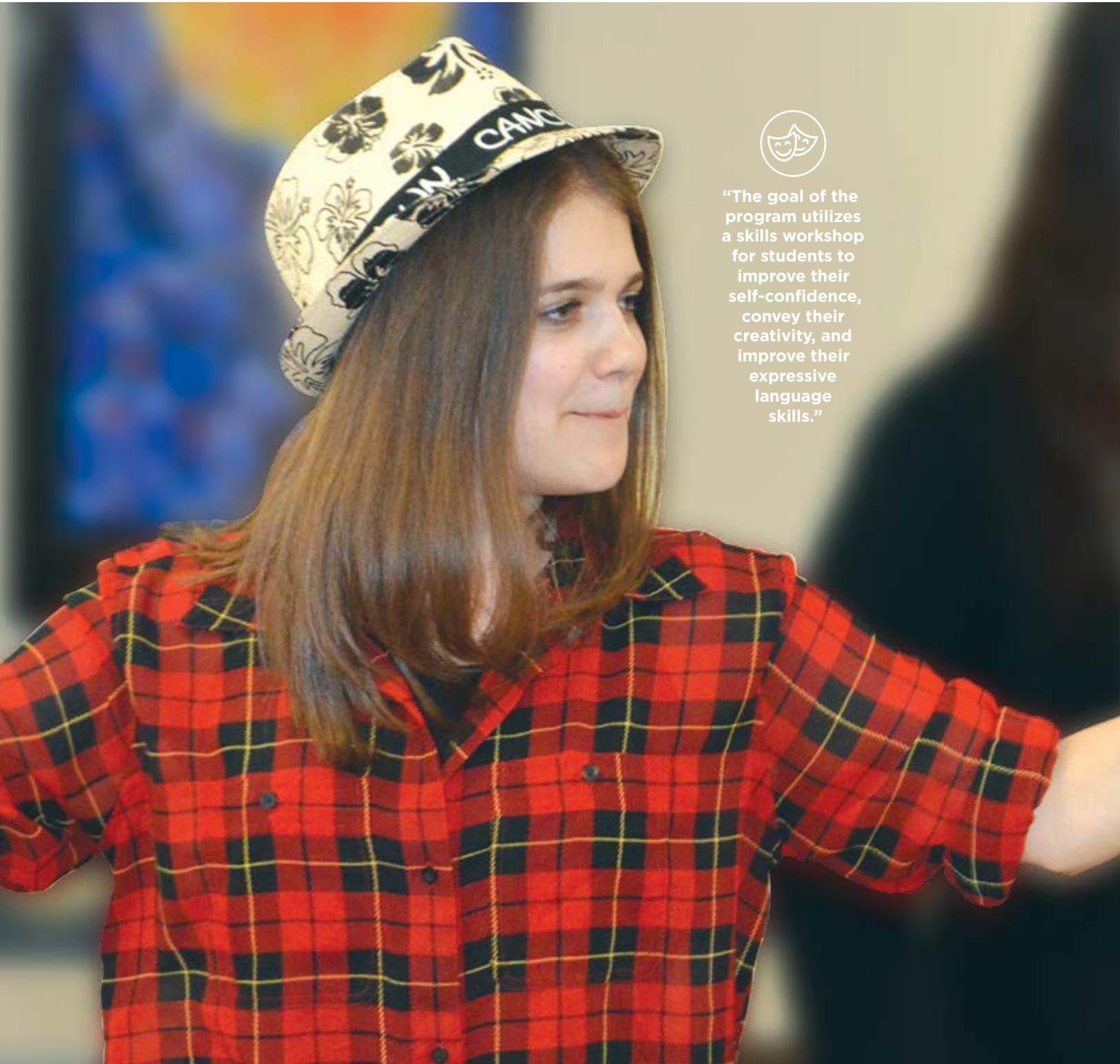
IN APPRECIATION

PTACH would like to wish bracha and hatzlacha to two venerated members of the staff who retired after the 2015-2016 school year, Dr. Noah Malowitsky and Mrs. Sharon Glowgower.

Dr. Malowitsky has been the School Psychologist at CBE for over 20 years. His positive attitude, abundance of energy and deep wisdom has helped countless students over the years. He will be greatly missed. We wish Dr. Malowitsky much success in his further endeavors.

Mrs. Sharon Glowgower has been an esteemed member of the faculty at Yeshiva University High School for Girls for 25 years. We have all benefitted from her innovative teaching style, which has made her one of the most popular teachers at the school. Until this day, students from her early years of teaching keep in touch with her, which is a true testament to the indelible impact she has left on her students. Sharon will be greatly missed by her students and colleagues alike.

DEVELOPING



“The goal of the program utilizes a skills workshop for students to improve their self-confidence, convey their creativity, and improve their expressive language skills.”

AFFINITIES



THEATER BEATERS At the beginning of the 2016 spring semester, the PTACH Program at Yeshiva University High school for Girls instituted a theater program led by Ms. Leah Gottfried. Ms. Gottfried has a BA in film studies from Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women and has experience conducting acting workshops in the New York tristate area and Los Angeles.

The goal of the program is not performance based; rather, it utilizes a skills workshop for students to improve their self-confidence, convey their creativity, and improve their expressive language skills. Ms. Gottfried uses improvisation and scene study to accomplish these goals. Students who rarely feel comfortable expressing their opinion, or are too shy to speak publicly, can benefit by participating in an improvised scene or using a new voice during roleplay.

Involvement in a theater program has helped our students expand their thinking and improve their communication skills. Rachel, a theater student, commented that she finds the acting exercises to be creative and relaxing. Tovah says that it is a way for her to express herself and have fun. According to Sara, acting opened up her true self.

Together with PTACH's speech and language component, the combined purpose of the drama program is to foster better self-expression, collaboration, and communication. If nothing else, as Tovah says, theater class is just plain old fun!

AFFINITIES FAIR

The PTACH program at Chaim Berlin Elementary School recently hosted its inaugural Affinities Fair. This was a schoolwide project through which

students could choose an affinity (an area of interest) and present it to their teachers and peers. Students chose to present on a wide range of topics including juggling, keyboard, playing guitar, biking, baking, photography, first aid, and many other diverse topics.

Encouraging children to develop their affinities allows them to reinforce their natural strengths and can help their growth in many areas. For example, a child with an affinity for cars will have more interest in researching and reading material on the subject, which is utilized as a strategy to develop reading skills and expertise in that area.

Each student created a poster board consisting of a description and pictures of their affinity. They then went on to explain, describe and, in some cases, demonstrate their chosen affinity while the rest of the students watched on. "It was amazing to see how each student was an expert in their own area and held the attention of the entire group," says Rabbi Kamin, the program coordinator.

After each presentation, the students held a question and answer session in which they responded to the audience's questions. Being able to answer their peers' questions gave each student a sense of self-confidence and ownership. Dr. Weller, educational director at PTACH says, "When a student works within their affinity, an area of high 'satisfaction,' attention and focus are naturally developed."

Overall, it was a positive experience for all involved. "I loved seeing how each affinity reflected the student's personality," says Mrs. Rabinowitz, a teacher/specialist at PTACH. The fair gave students a chance to shine and share another side of themselves.



BENEFIT BREAKFAST 2016

“ In support of the dozens of children from the Five Towns and Far Rockaway area who benefit from the various PTACH programs, David and Jane Seideman and Steven and Elisheva Schlam hosted a breakfast reception in Lawrence, NY, this past February. The event was very well attended by people from all over the area.

PICTURED: 1. David and Jane Seideman receiving a certificate of recognition. Pictured with Councilman Bruce Blakeman and Chris McGrath | 2. David Seideman, host, addressing the crowd | 3. Rabbi Yehosua Kalish, Rav of the Bais Medrash of Harborview, delivering Divrei Bracha | 4. Dr. David Pelcovitz, delivering an informative workshop | 5. The event was very well attended by people from all over the area.

Rabbi Yehosua Kalish, Rav of the Bais Medrash of Harborview, delivered Divrei Bracha and spoke about the important role PTACH plays in the world of Jewish education, and the countless lives the PTACH programs have changed over its 40-year history. The community was privileged to hear from special guest speaker, Dr. David Pelcovitz, world-renowned psychologist and professor at Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration, delivered an informative workshop on the topic of "Combating 'Affluenza'- Raising Responsible and Moral Children."

Dr. Pelcovitz cited studies that showed how children affected with affluenza (a term that combines affluence and influenza, and refers to the unhealthy psychological and social effects of affluence) are three times more likely to submit to alcoholism, depression, and other major issues. He said that the core ingredients are a sense of entitlement and a lack of gratitude for any of the good in these children's lives. When children are taught to value the basics that have true meaning, such as religion, family, and friends, they can then begin to appreciate the good and go on to lead happy, successful, and meaningful lives. Dr. Pelcovitz also emphasized the invaluable role PTACH plays in helping Jewish children with learning differences have a bright future and lead productive lives.

PTACH is greatly appreciative to the Seidemans for graciously opening their home for this event and for all those who attended, showing support for PTACH.

REFLECTIONS

Rabbi Boruch Feder,
Coordinator PTACH/YUHSB

5

5 days before graduation, I received an email asking for several of my students' pictures. MTA was putting together a slide presentation showing students when they entered the school and how they appear now. The email stated a deadline for submission of the pictures, but a later phone conversation included the caveat, "We will wait up until the last minute to make sure we receive pictures of P'TACH students."

What a great feeling! P'TACH students would be included in the presentation, just as our students are involved in all high school activities, including regular classes, extracurricular activities, and the daily

occurrences that are dealt with, as we work hand-in-hand to help our students gain the most they can from their high school experience.

When appropriate, our students attend MTA classes. All students go to physical education class and may additionally be placed in a Shiur, a science class, or another suitable class. Teachers and P'TACH support staff are in regular contact with each other due to the unique relationship P'TACH has with MTA.

P'TACH students are often members of the sports teams, many times acting as captains of the teams. Boys participate in the debate team and the Model UN; they join students from other schools to hone their skills and travel to Washington to advocate for their fellow Jews in need. They participate in school trips along with their friends from MTA. From the Freshman hike and barbeque, to the Sophomore and Junior overnight trips, until the Senior three-day year-end trip, our students and Rebbeim are fully integrated with the general high school program. On the schoolwide Shabbos in the Catskills, the P'TACH staff offers programming input and feedback during and after the retreat, and they are involved like the other MTA Rebbeim. Boys can room with MTA students or P'TACH students, whichever they would like. During the Chanuka Chagiga, Rabbi Blackstein, a P'TACH Rebbe, became the center of attention, as he demonstrated how to break a brick with his karate chop.

Our students are fortunate to gain from the collaborative efforts between P'TACH and MTA. As report cards were being prepared, another email arrived. It was Dr. Taylor from MTA making sure that the P'TACH report cards were ready, so they can be distributed as a merged effort. Rabbi. Kahn, the new Head of School, sent a letter asking me if he should hold off a little to help facilitate some of the P'TACH students' needs.

Integration is the key. It ensures that our students feel that they are part of the school. It is perhaps our biggest and most crucial goal. It makes all the difference.

BY SHARON TEPFER, M.S. OTR

SENSORY INTEGRATION & LEARNING



I was introduced to the PTACH program three years ago when I was invited to give a series of teacher trainings. I was immediately greeted by the joy and laughter of the children in the hallway, along with the warmth and caring that emanated from the PTACH staff.

The eagerness and enthusiasm of the dedicated teachers brought about the implementation of therapeutic exercise programs in the classrooms. Our collaborative efforts continued this year as I became more actively involved in setting up an occupational therapy program, which afforded me the pleasure of working individually with many of the students and their parents.

The specialized reading and writing curriculum offered in PTACH does not happen in a vacuum. All PTACH professionals understand the multi-sensory nature of building these critical skills. Attention (the orchestra leader for all learning) and sensory skills must be integrated into core instruction in order for students to become successful readers.

Ask parents of children with learning or attention deficits if their children experience problems with sensory processing, and many of them will answer with a resounding “yes.” While all children can be particular about expressing their likes or dislikes, children with sensory integration dysfunction can be so severely affected by their sensory preferences that it inhibits their daily functioning.

The information we receive about the world comes to us through our senses. We are all familiar with senses that take in information from outside our

bodies: taste, smell, sight, hearing and touch. However, just as important to our development is the sense of movement, also known as the vestibular sense. This is central in maintaining muscle tone, coordinating the two sides of the body, and holding the head up against gravity. It coordinates the movements of one’s eyes, head and body. This sense makes it possible for a student to look up at the whiteboard and back down at the paper without losing the place. If messages from this system are confused in the brain, children might appear excessively clumsy or aggressive because they’re not aware of how much force they’re applying. This sense plays a significant role in our awareness of the world and our ability to understand and learn.

The interplay among the various senses is complex, and its precise functioning is necessary for a person to interpret a situation accurately and to respond appropriately. This organization of the senses is termed “sensory integration.” For most children, sensory integration develops in the course of ordinary childhood activities. Motor planning - having an idea, planning an action, and executing the action - are natural outcomes of the process. But for some children, sensory integration is disordered, much like a rush-hour traffic jam, and a number of problems in learning, development, or behavior may become evident.

It is important to recognize and understand how each child perceives and is affected by different experiences. Children who are overly sensitive to touch, movement, sights, or sounds may exhibit

**(Sensory Integration & Learning,
Continued from page 9)**

behaviors such as irritability or withdrawal when touched, avoidance of certain textures of clothes or foods, distractibility, or a fearful reaction to ordinary movement activities. Similarly, some children may react negatively to loud noises, or may have trouble tuning out background noises in order to attend to specific sounds. In contrast to the overly sensitive child, an under-responsive child may seek out intense sensory experiences such as crashing into objects. These children may be oblivious to pain or to body position. Some children fluctuate between over- and under-responsiveness. Similarly, some children may be constantly on the move or may be slow to activate and fatigue easily.

Continuously receiving jumbled messages can be frustrating for a child, whose behavior can become even more unpredictable when asked to transition from one activity to another. When a child's nervous system is working poorly, being asked to pay attention to something new could be just too much. Children experiencing some of the problems mentioned above may know that some tasks are more difficult for them than for other children, but they may not know why. They may withdraw or push people away because they feel threatened. Some children soon figure out ways to avoid those that are hard or embarrassing tasks, and they may appear to be troublesome or stubborn. Parents, teachers, therapists and professionals often struggle to make sense of these behaviors; however, this is the only way the child can express stress, cope with problems, and handle a host of other emotions. These children see no other solution.



OUR JOB when faced with these types of students is to teach them new coping strategies that work NOW. We cannot ask the child to wait while we build skills and increase self-esteem. Being proactive, and intervening before the child reacts with frustration or withdrawal can result in quicker improvement. Sensory strategies and therapeutic interventions are not usually skills that the child automatically acquires; they must be individually selected.

THE GOAL OF THERAPY is to teach the child how to physically complete the activity, learn the beneficial organizing effects provided by the activity, and acquire the skill to use the activity for self-regulation. Treatment consists of carefully designed, multisensory activities that challenge one or more sensory systems simultaneously. The goal is to help build neural pathways that lead to appropriate response to information that comes into a child's brain through the senses. Each time you practice something you strengthen the neural connections so that it eventually becomes automatic.

THE LIST OF PROGRAMS THAT WE HAVE IMPLEMENTED IN PTACH INCLUDES:

THERAPEUTIC LISTENING & INTEGRATED LISTENING SYSTEMS (ILS) is an evidence-based auditory intervention intended to support individuals who experience challenges with sensory processing, listening, attention, and communication.



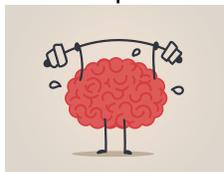
"HOW DOES YOUR ENGINE RUN?"

provides a way for teachers and therapists to help their students learn how to monitor the signals that indicate an internal level of readiness to work, play, listen, and attend.



ASTRONAUT TRAINING: A sound activated vestibular visual protocol designed to enhance the dynamic interplay of moving, looking and listening.

BAL-A-VIS-X: Rhythmic Balance/ Auditory/Vision exercises for brain and brain-body integration.



BRAIN DANCE based upon the 8 movement patterns of early human development which wire the central nervous system.

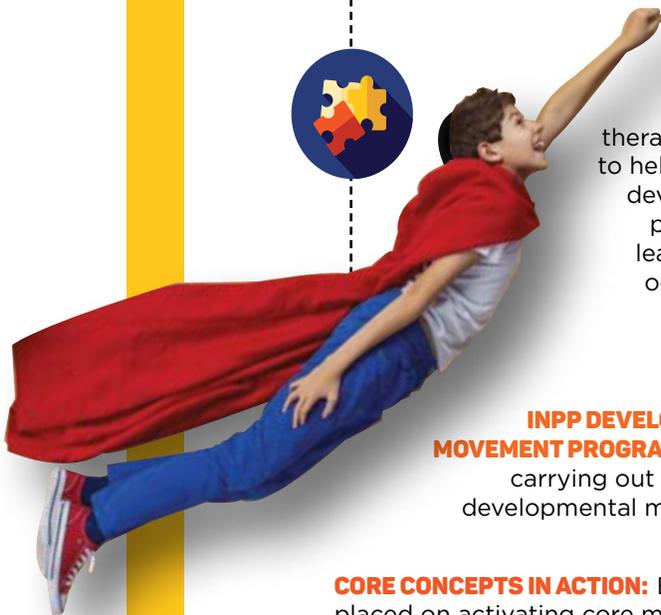
BRAIN GYM: Movement – based system to enhance personal development and diverse fields of learning.



PUZZLE ART:

therapy system to help children develop their perceptual, learning and oculomotor skills.

RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT TRAINING AND REFLEX INTEGRATION: recognizing when reflexes are retained and the implications and behaviors which may result and a variety of different movements and techniques we can use to work with children with these issues.



INPP DEVELOPMENTAL MOVEMENT PROGRAM involves carrying out a series of developmental movements each day.

S'COOL MOVES FOR LEARNING & FOCUS MOVES:

Developmentally appropriate activities that integrate both hemispheres of the brain, improve vision, and strengthen core postural muscles – all essential for learning with ease.

CORE CONCEPTS IN ACTION: Emphasis is placed on activating core musculature to achieve deeper respiration and to increase core strength and endurance.



These programs have already shown measurable improvement with our students. My goal is to continue to share the excitement and joy that comes with helping students actualize and maximize their full potential.



Parents for Torah for All Children
1689 East 5th Street
Brooklyn, NY 11230

YOUR SUPPORT OF PTACH HAS RESULTED IN COUNTLESS "SUCCESS STORIES" FOR OUR STUDENTS.

These students thought they could never make it. But with PTACH's small class sizes, specialized teaching techniques and expert staff found that they really can be successful and empowered learners.

**Here is one such story.
Read and enjoy the nachas.**



**Dear Dr. Weller, Mrs. Serkez & the
entire PTACH staff in Rachel's life,**

As I write this to you, my eyes well up in tears and my heart beams with joy and gratitude. The report card below belongs to your student Rachel M., but it also belongs to you.

As parents, it is our nachas to derive, but for you it is your nachas to own. This incredible girl has made amazing strides because she felt your genuine belief in her, your dedication, and your supportive guidance. She would not be where she is today without you and the PTACH program.

From the staff in Rachel's new high school we continue to receive glowing reports about her academic achievement, and her exceptional character, maturity, and intuitive sensitivity. Rachel is a product of your work, your love, and your constant message to her that anyone can overcome and triumph.

There are not enough words to adequately express our gratitude for all you have done for Rachel and for us. Please keep this report card as a reminder of all that you make possible every single day.

**With our deepest appreciation and thanks,
Rachel's proud parents**

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