The families of children with neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism, fragile X, and Williams syndrome, have little time to consider the problems of modern science. Their days are filled with practical concerns—the countless decisions, details, and challenges to helping their children lead full lives. At the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, we are dedicated to bringing tomorrow’s treatments to children and families, today, through research.

**Autism Research Spectrum**

*By Jan Roseenergy*

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that profoundly affects the lives of thousands of children and adults and their families. It is considered a spectrum disorder because of variations in symptoms, characteristics, and severity. At the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, an interdisciplinary spectrum of research addresses the many puzzles of autism not only from the angles of diagnosis and intervention but also genetics, brain science, and medical issues.

**Early diagnosis.** TRIAD—Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders—is a keystone in the Vanderbilt effort to diagnose, treat, and understand autism. TRIAD is directed by Wendy Stone, Ph.D. (pediatrics and psychology). The earliest possible diagnosis is a major focus of TRIAD research. Stone and her colleagues have found that autism can be diagnosed accurately in 2-year-old children. Different clinicians agree about whether a child is on the autism spectrum, and the diagnosis appears to be stable over time. This means that intervention can begin early to improve developmental outcomes.

**Core characteristics.** Stone’s research results suggest that the most reliable behavioral indicators of autism in young children are a limited... Continued on page 2

**Director’s Message**

Many Perspectives, One Vision

The families of children with neurodevelopmental disorders, such as autism, fragile X, and Williams syndrome, have little time to consider the problems of modern science. Their days are filled with practical concerns—the countless decisions, details, and challenges to helping their children lead full lives. At the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, we are dedicated to bringing tomorrow’s treatments to children and families, today, through research. Continued on page 3

**Eunice Kennedy Shriver Visits the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center**

Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver (center), executive director of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, with Elisabeth Dykens, Ph.D. (left), Vanderbilt Kennedy Center associate director, and Elise McMillan, J.D. (right), Vanderbilt Kennedy Center director of community outreach. Mrs. Shriver visited the Center while in Nashville in February. The establishment of the John F. Kennedy Center in May 1965 was made possible by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, with matching funds provided by Peabody College and the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. The Foundation also supported visiting research professorships for research on intellectual disabilities.
Autism Research

from page one

ability to engage in back-and-forth social interactions; a speech delay accompanied by a failure to use nonverbal methods of communication such as eye contact, gestures, and facial expressions; and reduced interest in sharing one’s experiences with others, such as pointing to or showing objects.

Screening Tool for Autism in Two-Year-Olds (STAT). The results of Stone’s research enabled her team to develop the STAT, a 20-minute play-based measure to identify children at risk for autism. The STAT can be used in community, home, or clinic settings. A variety of professionals, including speech pathologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, early intervention providers, and teachers, have participated in TRIAD’s STAT training workshops.

Even earlier diagnosis—siblings. More recently, Stone’s research has focused on the behavioral characteristics of autism in children under 24 months. She is studying infants who are at elevated risk for developing autism, following their development over time until they reach the age at which a diagnosis can be made. The high-risk group being studied is later-born siblings of children with autism. While most siblings will not develop autism, the incidence in this group is 5% to 8%. Stone is collaborating with Tedra Walden, Ph.D. (psychology), and Paul Yoder, Ph.D. (special education), to study social orienting behaviors in groups of younger siblings. Families interested in taking part in sibling studies can call (615) 936-0265.

Genetics. About 10% of individuals diagnosed with autism have an identifiable genetic condition, such as fragile X syndrome or tuberous sclerosis complex. In most cases of autism, no specific underlying cause can be determined, but evidence suggests that the condition results from genetic factors and currently unknown environmental influences. Five to fifteen or more genes may play a role in the development of autism. These “susceptibility genes” confer some degree of elevated risk and may then predispose an individual to the development of autism.

James Sutcliffe, Ph.D., and Jonathan Haines, Ph.D. (molecular physiology & biophysics, Vanderbilt Center for Human Genetics Research), are collaborators in the Autism Genome Project, a consortium of autism research groups that is the largest ever to focus on the genetics of autism. The research of the Vanderbilt group led by Sutcliffe has resulted in the identification of specific genetic risk factors as well as chromosomal regions that are expected to contain one or more genes involved in the development of autism. Families interested in taking part may call (615) 343-5855.

Brain development. Findings from imaging and behavioral studies in combination with genetic and biochemical studies suggest that autism may be the result of pervasive, early developmental abnormalities affecting neural information processing. Pat Levitt, Ph.D. (pharmacology), studies molecular and cellular mechanisms that control the development of the forebrain and the causes of developmental and neuropsychiatric disorders, including autism. Genes that cause changes in how the circuits implicated in autism actually develop are being identified, and the Levitt lab is doing studies on these genes in children with autism and their families.

Sleep disorders. Sleep disorders are common in autism and other developmental disorders, and there is evidence that sleep and neuronal activity affect one another. Sleep expert Beth Malow, Ph.D. (neurology), has teamed with Stone (pediatrics) and Craig Kennedy, Ph.D. (special education), to explore the dynamics of sleep in children with autism and its relation to daytime behaviors. Families interested in taking part may call (615) 936-0448.

Language intervention. Developing the most effective treatments for children with autism is paramount. Yoder (special education) and Stone (pediatrics) have collaborated on a study to compare the effectiveness of two communication interventions, the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Responsive Education and Prelinguistic Milieu Teaching (RPMT), in teaching “commenting” and useful speech. Commenting is an important prelinguistic behavior in which a child initiates joint attention with another person to share a positive interest or feeling. Lack of commenting distinguishes young children with autism from children with nonautistic developmental disorders. Children were randomly assigned to PECS or RPMT treatment. Yoder and Stone found increases in useful speech in both groups, but PECS was superior to RPMT at a clinically significant level in facilitating useful speech and talkativeness. RPMT was more effective than PECS in facilitating increased use of commenting for children who already used some commenting before treatment, but RPMT did not affect children who had none.

Center director Pat Levitt summarized, “The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, with TRIAD, has brought together a unified team of talented scientists who are working on a collective vision to solve the puzzles of autism and bring better treatments to children and families.”

Internet Resources

• TRIAD (Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders)
  www.TRIADatVanderbilt.com
• Autism Spectrum—Health Topics, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt
  www.vanderbiltchildrens.com/autism
• Autism Society of Middle Tennessee
  www.autismmidtnn.org
• Autism Society of America
  www.autism-society.org
• Cure Autism Now
  www.cureautismnow.org/
• National Alliance for Autism Research
  www.naar.org/
• Tennessee Disability Pathfinder
  www.familypathfinder.org

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is present from early in life. It occurs in as many as 1 in 500 children and is about 3 times more common in boys than in girls.

There are no medical tests for autism. The diagnosis is based on the presence of a pattern of behavioral symptoms:

• Difficulty interacting with others
• Impaired understanding and use of language
• Restricted patterns of activities and interests

Although all three features must be present for a diagnosis of autism, the specific behaviors exhibited can vary widely from person to person.

Primer

Autism is considered to be a spectrum disorder because the symptoms and characteristics can be present in different combinations and at different levels of severity. The disorders on the autism spectrum are:

• Autistic disorder
• Asperger’s disorder
• Rett’s disorder
• Childhood disintegrative disorder
• Pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS)

The specific causes of autism are not yet known, though there is consensus that genetic vulnerability and unidentified environmental factors cause atypical brain development. Early identification and early intervention are key components to optimizing outcomes for children with autism spectrum disorders.
Director’s Message from page one

Imagine the problem-solving ability of some of our nation’s top behavioral and brain scientists, educators, neuroimaging specialists, pediatricians, and language experts working on a single issue like autism. Now imagine the typical situation at most universities where they work in isolation. We try to do it differently at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, finding ways to encourage and support a team approach to solving the mysteries of developmental disabilities. Our work in autism—the theme of this issue of Discovery—is led by Dr. Wendy Stone’s multidisciplinary TRIAD program, and is representative of what can be accomplished by an enthusiastic group of scientists and clinicians.

We are closing in on identifying genes that increase the risk of autism. Our scientists are exploring the architecture of the developing brain to discover how it may be disrupted in autism. We are investigating how the brain recognizes faces and objects to better understand the social impairments that are the hallmark of autism. And we are studying the relationship between sleep and developmental disorders such as autism.

Center investigators are pioneering methods for the early detection of autism and intervening to promote the best outcomes. We are helping children with developmental disabilities overcome barriers to speech and language. Working with our family, they made sure we were comfortable.”

The Moores also took part in TRIAD’s Enhancing Interactions (EI) class, which emphasized learning the skills needed to best interact with Cole. TRIAD spent a great deal of time getting to know Cole’s individual characteristics and taught the Moores how to function better day to day. What differentiated TRIAD’s EI class from other services the Moores had received was being able to observe the methods used successfully with Cole. TRIAD displayed an activity, and the Moores practiced while teachers were present to provide feedback and support.

“Our experience with the EI class raised the level of hope we have for our boys. When following their suggestions, the boys’ level of communication went up. Seeing the progress gives us the motivation to keep going,” said Mrs. Moore.

Cole and Alex Moore are now 2 1/2 and are making great strides due to the attention they receive from TRIAD.

“If the boys’ autism had not been identified early, we shudder to think where they would be right now. With early identification and intervention, they have made—and continue to make—wonderful progress.”

TRIAD Helps Families and Professionals

By Traci Fleischman

TRIAD (Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders) is dedicated to improving assessment and treatment services for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families while advancing knowledge and training. It is a program of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, and the Department of Pediatrics/Center for Child Development.

TRIAD’s mission is to offer a broad range of services to children and families in the community; to provide exemplary training to parents, service providers, and professionals; and to conduct state-of-the-art research to increase the understanding of the development and treatment of autism and related disorders.

The clinical programs of TRIAD are available to families, schools, and professionals. Programs for families include behavior management classes; social skills groups; medical evaluation, treatment, and follow-up; TRIAD summer camp; and Enhancing Interactions (EI) classes. EI classes teach parents of children under 3 methods for interacting with and teaching their children during daily routines and activities.

Educators have a variety of programs available to them, including child-focused consultation, program consultation, specialized internship programs, and TRIAD Teacher Training (TTF). Under the TTT program, TRIAD

A Family Perspective

By Stephanie Comer

A child’s first birthday is typically one of celebration. But for Jon and Michelle Moore, it was the beginning of questions concerning their twin sons Cole and Alex. “Cole had a flat affect. He didn’t want to touch his cake or open his presents. Something didn’t feel right,” said Mrs. Moore. After months of uneasiness and at a friend’s suggestion, she called TRIAD.

“The Autism Society suggested TRIAD,” said Mrs. Moore. “TRIAD took considerable time asking questions about Cole’s development. They listened to my concerns. TRIAD knew what to look for, when others didn’t. Cole was diagnosed with autism at 26 months of age.”

Alex was different because he was more social than Cole. However as they learned more about autism spectrum disorders, they noticed Alex’s repetitive behavior.

“Spinning and running were all he wanted to do. His eye contact seemed to be decreasing. He had acquired some language, but it was out of context. Three months after Cole’s diagnosis, Alex received a PDD-NOS diagnosis,” said Mrs. Moore. Since visiting TRIAD, Mr. and Mrs. Moore have become involved in both research and clinical services.

“We participated in Dr. Stone’s study ‘Autism Screening for Children Under 24 Months.’ The staff was genuinely concerned about our boys and..."
Leading the Vanguard of Discovery


**Education**

B.A., 1975, Psychology, Williams College
M.S., 1978, Psychology, University of Miami, Coral Gables
Predoctoral internship, 1980-81, University of North Carolina School of Medicine/Division TEACCH
Ph.D., 1981, Clinical Psychology, University of Miami, Coral Gables

**Attraction to Developmental Disabilities Research**

As long as I can remember, I have been interested in the relation between the brain and behavior. I was awed by the range of variations in human development. My first exposure to children with autism led to a fascination with the disorder that has never waned. Working with these children is like solving a puzzle; behaviors that initially seem erratic and unpredictable can be understood and improved with specialized treatment strategies. It is an exciting time for autism research, as our knowledge about its causes and treatment is growing at a rapid rate. I am constantly learning from the children and families I see, and it is very gratifying to think that in some small way, something I learn may improve their lives.

**Reasons for Kennedy Center Membership**

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center has been an invaluable resource in my development as a researcher. As a young investigator, it provided the supports necessary to “grow” a research program: assistance with grant preparation, statistical consultation, and recruitment of families. As my research program has become more established, the Kennedy Center has enabled me to stretch the boundaries of my work through collaborations with investigators in other disciplines, such as special education, neurology, and genetics. One of the unique features of the Kennedy Center is the role it plays in bringing together scientists from a variety of training backgrounds; these interdisciplinary collaborations enable us to ask more far-reaching questions and to move more quickly along the road to solving problems related to development and learning.

**Selected Publications**


**Research Interests**

Autism: early identification, relation of early social and communicative development to later outcomes, evaluating efficacy of early interventions

**Principal Investigator for**

Early social orienting in siblings of children with autism spectrum disorders, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Predicting responsiveness to imitation intervention, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
Mentor-based postdoctoral research fellowship, National Alliance for Autism Research

**Clinical Interests**

Helping parents understand, interact with, teach, and enjoy their young children with autism

**National Service**

• Editorial Board, *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, Infants & Young Children*
• Co-chair, National Alliance for Autism Research/National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Baby Siblings Research Consortium
• Chair, National Institutes of Health Workgroup on Treatment Outcome Measures for Children with Autism, Birth to Five

**Selected Publications**


**New Grants**

- **Contrast mechanisms in diffusion weighted MRI**
  John C. Gore, Ph.D. (Radiology & Radiological Sciences)
  National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes

- **The Engagement Classroom: A model for preschool inclusion**
  Robin McWilliam, Ph.D. (Pediatrics)
  U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs

- **Periadolescent noradrenergic regulation in the BNST [bed nucleus of the stria terminalis]**
  Danny G. Winder, Ph.D. (Molecular Physiology & Biophysics)
  National Institute on Drug Abuse

- **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Nicholas Hobbs Discovery Grants**
  Shaping a morphogen gradient
  Michael K. Cooper, M.D. (Neurology), Bruce H. Appel, Ph.D. (Biological Sciences)

- **Reading development and its neurological basis among students**
  Lynn S. Fuchs, Ph.D. (Special Education), Adam W. Anderson, Ph.D. (Biomedical Engineering), Donald L. Compton, Ph.D. (Special Education), John C. Gore, Ph.D. (Radiology & Radiological Sciences), Robert Hodapp, Ph.D. (Special Education)

- **Estimating risks of hospitalization for mothers of children with disabilities**
  Stephanie A. So, Ph.D. (Economics), Robert Hodapp, Ph.D. (Special Education), Richard C. Urbano, Ph.D. (Pediatrics)

- **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Family Research Program Discovery Grants**
  Parent and child communication about childhood cancer
  Bruce E. Compas, Ph.D. (Psychology & Human Development), Mary Jo Gilmer, Ph.D. (Nursing)

- **Understanding family caregiver strain**
  Craig Anne Heflinger, Ph.D. (Human & Organizational Development)

- **Routines-based interview to plan interventions and measure family quality of life**
  Robin McWilliam, Ph.D. (Pediatrics), P. J. McWilliam, Ph.D. (Special Education)

- **Towards unraveling the genetic etiology of autism**
  James S. Sutcliffe, Ph.D. (Molecular Physiology & Biophysics), Randy D. Blackely, Ph.D. (Pharmacology), Jonathan Haines, Ph.D. (Molecular Physiology & Biophysics)
New Grants  from page four

Parent socialization of emotion regulation in preschool children who stutter
Tedra A. Walden, Ph.D. (Psychology & Human Development), Edward G. Conture (Hearing & Speech Sciences)

Preliminary investigation of sibling relationship and adjustment in Prader-Willi syndrome and Williams syndrome
Melissa Maxwell—Mentor: Elisabeth A. Dykens, Ph.D. (Psychology & Human Development)

Familial abuse in individuals with disabilities
Marisa Sellinger—Mentor: Robert Hodapp, Ph.D. (Special Education)

Parent-child interactions in depressed mothers vs. fathers: Effects of treatment
Rachel Swan—Mentor: Judy Garber, Ph.D. (Psychology & Human Development)

Sibling use of responsive interaction strategies
Alacia Trent—Mentor: Ann P. Kaiser, Ph.D. (Special Education)

Outreach Grants
Elise McMillan, J.D. (Vanderbilt Kennedy Family Outreach Center):

Family support 360 grant [planning family one-stop centers]
Administration on Developmental Disabilities

Conexion [Disability Hispanic outreach]
Administration on Developmental Disabilities

Arts build communities—Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Arts Initiative
Metropolitan Nashville Arts Commission

Leads the Vanguard of Discovery

JAMES SUTCLIFFE, PH.D.
Assistant Professor of Molecular Physiology & Biophysics
Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Investigator
Joined Vanderbilt Kennedy Center 1997

Research Interests
Genetic basis of autism spectrum disorders; genetics of neuropsychiatric disorders, including major depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder

Principal Investigator for
Genetic analysis of 15q11-q13 in autism, National Institute of Mental Health
Mentor-based postdoctoral research fellowship, National Alliance for Autism Research

Clinical Interests
Clinical assessment of individuals with autism to establish correlations with emerging genetic data, in particular for derivation of novel, genetically relevant trait-based subsets of the broader autism phenotype

Honors
• March of Dimes, Basil O’Connor Starter Scholar Research Award
• Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Family Research Program Discovery Grant

Selected Publications
McCauley, J. L., Li, C., Jiang, L., Olson, L. M., Crockett, G., Gainer, K., Folstein, S. E., Haines, J. L., & Sutcliffe, J. S. (2005). Genome-wide and ordered-subset linkage analyses provide support for autism loci on 17q and 19p with evidence of phenotypic and interlocus genetic correlates. BioMed Central Medical Genetics, 6, 1


Education
B.S., 1986, Biochemistry, Auburn University
Ph.D., 1992, Biochemistry/Human Genetics, Emory University
Postdoctoral Fellow, 1992-97, Department of Molecular & Human Genetics, Baylor College of Medicine

Attraction to Developmental Disabilities Research
I have been attracted to this area since graduate school, when I was involved in the cloning of the fragile X syndrome locus. I continued work to solve genetic puzzles related to developmental disabilities as a postdoctoral fellow studying Prader-Willi and Angelman syndromes, involving deficits of imprinted gene expression in 15q11-q13. I developed this work into the genetics of autism, initially with a focus on duplications of this region in a small percentage of the autism population. I have extended these efforts across the genome in collaborative efforts to discover the nature of genetic variation underlying autism. Understanding genetic risk factors for autism will aid in diagnosis and early intervention. Studying how systems are affected by risk factors may ultimately lead to improved therapeutic options for this vulnerable population.

Reasons for Kennedy Center Membership
The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center is unique as a transinstitutional center with activities spanning an extraordinary spectrum from community outreach and family support to basic research. It is this reach across so many disciplines that I find so compelling, because it provides opportunities to bring different kinds of expertise and investigators together to attack the problem of diagnosing, treating, and deciphering the underlying biological basis of a developmental disorder. My research into unraveling the complex genetic etiology of autism requires detailed clinical assessment of affected individuals, but equally involves parents and other family members. Thus our research is dependent on participation of the family unit to find the genes underlying this disorder. The Kennedy Center Research Program on Families represents an excellent example of how the Kennedy Center facilitates our efforts.

Where to Find Help

Vanderbilt Kennedy Family Outreach Center
Supported by the Lili Claire Foundation and the Brooks Family Discovery Fund
(615) 936-5118

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder
(800) 640-INFO [4636]
(615) 322-8529 (Nashville)
www.familypathfinder.org

Taking Part in Research
See Study Finder
http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/studyfinder
When Holley Thomas came to Peabody as a graduate student in special education, it did not take her long to find a calling. “One of my first classes was focused on engagement,” she said. “Each student was paired with a child, and the child I was paired with had autism. It was so interesting to watch his ‘up days’ and ‘down days,’ to witness different mannerisms, and to see what worked with him and what did not.”

As Thomas pursued her master’s degree, she was placed on a grant focusing on autism with Vanderbilt Kennedy Center investigator Mark Wolery, Ph.D., professor of special education. This gave Thomas a chance to work with children with autism in a new way while looking for effective techniques to increase social interaction in SGS children with intellectual disabilities.

Thomas is studying the effectiveness of group friendship activities in increasing the social interaction of children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms on the playground. Group friendship activities involve typical preschool songs and activities modified to include varying types of social interaction and affectionate responses such as hugging, giving high-fives, and tickling.

In Thomas’ study, an SGS classroom has a group of four children with one of the children having an intellectual disability, such as autism, and little to no social interactions. This child is selected by the teacher as a child likely to benefit from the friendship activities.

Everyday, the teacher leads the group in a 7- to 10-minute group friendship activity. The teacher has a pool of songs such as “Happy and You Know It.” First the children simply sing the songs in the normal fashion. During the intervention component, the group friendship activities are adapted with an affection component. At this point, instead of singing “If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands,” the teacher may lead the children in singing, “If you’re happy and you know it, hug a friend.” The question is whether the added “friendliness” will carry over to the playground, where children engage in activities that are not teacher-led.

Thomas takes data on the playground daily to determine whether the group friendship activities are an effective intervention in increasing social interactions between a child selected for the intervention and other group members.

“I hope to determine whether group friendship activities are a useful tool for teachers to use in their classrooms in increasing social interaction between children with intellectual disabilities and their typically developing peers,” said Thomas.

When Thomas graduates with her M.Ed. in May, she hopes to continue her work with children with developmental disabilities, and autism in particular. “At the School, I’ve had the unique opportunity to observe best practices with all children—those with disabilities and those with typical development,” she said. “I’ve also had the chance to learn from and work with excellent teachers and children. This has provided rich experiences that I would not otherwise have been exposed to.”

Modeling Play

After receiving a bachelor’s degree in psychology and communications from the University of California-Santa Barbara (UCSB), Jeff Hine took a position that eventually helped him find a new path. “I worked in a few residential facilities,” he said. “A number of adolescents living in these homes had been diagnosed with autism, and they had very little exposure to intervention services throughout their life.” This initial experience coupled with an internship at the UCSB Autism Research Center peaked Hine’s interest in the variety of interventions available for children with autism.

Hine’s relationship with SGS began even before he was a student at Vanderbilt. “I visited the School when I was touring potential graduate programs. I thought it was fantastic to study at a university that had direct access to research...”
The Susan Gray School provides inclusive education for young children with and without disabilities and support for their families. Its fourfold mission is providing high-quality service, supporting research, contributing to the training of future teachers and researchers, and demonstrating recommended practices as a national model. It is a program of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and Peabody College.

### SGS News

**Child Psychiatry Fellows Train at SGS**

By Stephanie Corner

The Susan Gray School (SGS) provides a unique training opportunity for fellows in the child psychiatry rotation at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. The inclusive environment provided by the School gives fellows the chance to observe preschool children who are typically developing as well as to observe preschoolers with developmental disorders. It is the broad mission of service, training, demonstration, and research that makes the SGS an outstanding environment for a rotation in the child psychiatry fellowship.

Each of the fellows is in the second year of training in a specialized child psychiatry fellowship program. They have completed medical school and a residency in adult psychiatry. One of the major goals of the program is to have the fellows interact with educators of preschool children while gaining valuable observation experience.

“Fellows in training in child psychiatry attend the Susan Gray School one morning per week for at least one month,” said Catherine Fuchs, M.D., associate professor of psychiatry. “They are trained to understand psychiatric illness in children and adolescents. To do this well they must have an understanding of the developmental milestones in children, both physically and emotionally.”

When visiting the SGS, fellows have the option to observe or participate within the classroom or to observe from mirrored observation rooms. They may attend a weekly staff meeting where they can learn from the team and provide medical discussions about specific developmental disorders.

“The School gives the fellows opportunities to see children in a structured environment where there is a planned focus to help children master language, social, cognitive, motor, and adaptive skills,” said Ruth Wolery, Ph.D., SGS director.

After a rotation at SGS, fellows continue their training at other locations such as the Center for Child Development, Vanderbilt Community Mental Health Center, and schools throughout the area. SGS sets a high standard for teamwork. “This is an opportunity for the fellows to observe the role of educators in the life of preschool children, highlighting the importance of the collaboration between educators and child psychiatrists,” said Fuchs.

### Eunice Kennedy Shriver Visits the Susan Gray School

Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver (right), executive director of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, with SGS director Ruth Wolery, Ph.D. Mrs. Shriver visited the School while in Nashville in February. When the John F. Kennedy Center was founded, Peabody psychologist Susan Gray, Ph.D., urged that it include an on-campus, research-oriented “Experimental School.” Sargent Shriver, then a member of the Kennedy administration, had visited Dr. Gray’s Early Training Project to improve the educability of young children at risk because of poverty. He credited Dr. Gray with the inspiration for founding Head Start.
Autism diagnoses are growing at the alarming rate of 10% to 17% per year, according to the U.S. Department of Education and other federal agencies. It is estimated that the number of Americans diagnosed with autism, 1.5 million in 2004, could reach 4 million by 2010. The spike in diagnoses, advances in genetic testing, and debate regarding how best to treat autism are changing the landscape of diagnosing, educating, and understanding children and adults with autism.

To explore how this complex disorder is communicated to the public, Vanderbilt University, in conjunction with the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), is hosting a fellowship April 10-13, for a limited number of print, broadcast, and experienced freelance journalists. The fellowship, Living with Autism: Rates, Causes, and Treatment, will bring together Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and other researchers, education experts, advocates, parents, and individuals with autism to discuss with journalists the latest research, the rising incidence of autism, the debate over its causes, and needed educational and policy changes.

Through interactions with faculty, tours of classrooms and laboratories, and small-group discussions, journalists will have the opportunity to learn more about this complex disorder and hear the stories that aren’t being told.

The keynote speaker is Temple Grandin, Ph.D., who has autism. In her books Emergence: Labeled Autistic and Thinking in Pictures, she paints with remarkable clarity the world in which she lives. Other guest speakers are Marshallyn Yeargin-Allsop, Centers for Disease Control, and Andy Shih, National Alliance for Autism Research.

Topics covered include defining the autism spectrum; autism on the rise—increased incidence, better diagnoses, or increased reliance on social services; closing in on the genetic basis of autism; the vaccine question; parents’ views of the daily challenges of living with autism; the importance of early diagnosis and intervention; understanding and addressing language and behavioral needs; the whole health picture; brain imaging; and a journalists roundtable on how to most effectively report on autism.

Vanderbilt Kennedy Center presenters are Pat Levitt, Ph.D. (pharmacology); Wendy Stone, Ph.D., and Michael Aschner, Ph.D. (pediatrics); Jonathan Haines, Ph.D., and James Sutcliffe, Ph.D. (molecular physiology & biophysics); Craig Kennedy, Ph.D., Mark Wolery, Ph.D., and Paul Yoder, Ph.D. (special education); Elisabeth Dykens, Ph.D. (psychology & human development); Isabel Gauthier, Ph.D. (psychology); Beth Malow, Ph.D. (neurology); and John Gore, Ph.D. (radiology and Vanderbilt Institute of Imaging Science). Other Vanderbilt faculty are Kathryn Edwards, M.D., and Susan McGrew, M.D. (pediatrics). Parents include Debbie Derryberry, Leisa Hammett, Pat Sanders, and John Shouse.
Outreach News

Biscuit and Alyssa Capucilli visit Nashville

By Jan Rosemergy

Preschoolers, beginning readers, and other book lovers were treated to a week of events in November featuring children’s author Alyssa Satin Capucilli and Biscuit, the golden puppy who is the star of her popular Biscuit series.

Capucilli is author of more than 30 children’s books, including Biscuit, the popular best seller used to launch the My First I Can Read series from HarperCollins. Biscuit has been deemed a modern classic and has been translated into numerous languages worldwide. Proceeds from the sale of Biscuit books during Capucilli’s Nashville visit benefited Vanderbilt Kennedy Center programs, thanks to the generosity of the Capucilli family and HarperCollins. Capucilli is the sister of Harla Levitt, wife of Vanderbilt Kennedy Center director Pat Levitt and member of the Center’s Leadership Council.

“Biscuit and Alyssa Capucilli are a perfect match for the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center’s interest in promoting children’s reading,” said Elise McMillan, the Center’s director of community outreach. “The Vanderbilt Kennedy Reading Clinic helps struggling readers, and books like the Biscuit series designed for beginning readers are so important. Mrs. Capucilli is deeply committed to helping children of all abilities enjoy the gift of reading. We’re so grateful to her and her husband Bill for spending a week in Nashville and doing so many programs for children.”

Biscuit and Capucilli delighted children—and parents and teachers—from the Susan Gray School, Vanderbilt Child Care Centers, Vanderbilt Kennedy Reading Clinic, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, Gordon Jewish Community Center, Buena Vista and Eakin Elementary Schools, and Currey Ingram Academy. At the schools, Capucilli introduced children to the process of writing, illustrating, and printing books, as well as leading children in reading favorite Biscuit books aloud. Children received Biscuit bookmarks and activity sheets. Books were donated to many of the programs Capucilli visited. The new Biscuit theme song written by Peter Capucilli, a Vanderbilt student, premiered in Nashville at the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center children’s event.

Capucilli also met with future early childhood and elementary teachers enrolled in Peabody College’s Department of Teaching & Learning course “Exploring Literature with Children.” “Children’s lives are transformed through literature, but young adults’ lives are changed as well,” said Mary Jean Jewell, Ed.D., who leads the course. “I’m grateful that Alyssa Capucilli took a special interest in the lives of our students at Peabody. Her passion for serving children is inspiring.”


The Biscuit series has appeared on the New York Times children’s best-sellers list and on the American Booksellers Association Pick of the Lists. Biscuit titles have sold more than 6 million copies worldwide. Two of Capucilli’s books won the Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Award in 2004.

The Biscuit character made his television debut on “Captain Kangaroo,” and the book series has been featured in the Captain’s Storybook Corner. Biscuit appears on hundreds of recommended reading lists for kindergarten and first grade, has been included in the Scott Foresman Reading program, and is a featured Scholastic Book Club selection.

For information on Capucilli and Biscuit, see www.alyssacapucilli.com.

Korean Early Childhood Leaders Visit

A delegation from the Samsung Child Education and Culture Center and Samsung Welfare Foundation of Korea visited the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, December 10, to observe early childhood education programs that include children with disabilities and to speak with early childhood education researchers and administrators about implementing inclusive preschool programs. They are shown here visiting a preschool classroom in the Susan Gray School. Left to right are Dr. Aeyeol Yoo, Foundation vice president and Center director, Gichan Choi, general manager, and Jungyoon Choi, manager of the division of child studies.

Better Together—The Vanderbilt Pediatric Network

“Better Together” expresses the commitment of Vanderbilt professionals to collaborate on activities with the goal of promoting the development of children with disabilities to their fullest potential while providing guidance and support to their families. The Vanderbilt Pediatric Habilitation and Rehabilitation Network coordinates services from the Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt, Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center, Center for Child Development, Home Care Services, Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital, and Susan Gray School. Team members provide medical, therapeutic, assessment, consultation, and support services for children in both inpatient and outpatient settings. For a list of these Vanderbilt services, see www.vanderbilthildren.org/rehabservices. Subscribe to the free brief quarterly electronic newsletter at www.vanderbilthildren.org/bettertogether.
The Ties That Bind

LORIE LYTLE
By Traci Fleischman

When Leadership Council member Lorie Lytle was asked to define the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center in as few words as possible, her immediate response was “propelling science and enriching lives.” The Kennedy Center is near and dear to Lytle’s heart and her brief description of the Center says it all.

“It was scary having a child who could not communicate,” explained Lytle, who has two children. Her daughter Eden is 6 and her son Luke is 4. Lytle became involved with the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center after Luke, then 2 1/2, was diagnosed with expressive-receptive language disorder, a disorder that poses a problem in processing what is being said, as well as expressing it. Luke’s inability to communicate left both him and his parents frustrated.

“The people at the Kennedy Center not only love the science of what they do, but they also love the families that their science touches,” Lytle said. “The researchers and staff members are passionate about enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities.” As a result, Luke was enrolled in the Child Language Intervention Project (CLIP), a program of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center and the Vanderbilt Bill Wilkerson Center.

“It wasn’t until we met with Steve and Mary Camarata that we had a clear picture of how Luke would develop and that he, indeed, would be a typically developing child by the time he was in kindergarten,” continued Lytle. “Luke is now a happy, charming, and gregarious little boy. I saw first-hand the difference early intervention can make in a child’s life.”

Over the past year, Lytle has become an active part of the Kennedy Center. In June 2004, she joined the Center’s Leadership Council, and she and her husband became members of the Nicholas Hobbs Donor Society.

“So many people have family members with a developmental disability and have no idea where to turn for the latest research or treatment. I want to help spread the word about the Center,” Lytle commented.

Lytle has been involved with the Nashville music industry since 1987. Her background is in publicity. She has been volunteering her time and expertise to the Center to help connect the music industry and the Center, and she is currently busy recruiting members of the music community to become involved in the upcoming Williams syndrome summer music camp that will be co-sponsored by the Kennedy Center.

“No one who has found the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, I am very involved in promoting the Center so that other families can have the same opportunity that my family had—an opportunity for early intervention and peace of mind,” explained Lytle. “I am both humbled and honored to be even a small part of a place that is improving the quality of life for so many people, especially children.”

The Hobbs Society, made up of donors who give $1,000 or more annually to the Center or one of its programs, reached 100 members in December—a landmark achievement made possible by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Leadership Council.

“We’re grateful to every single member of the Hobbs Society,” said Center director Pat Levitt. “We want to express special appreciation to Barbara Gregg Phillips, chair of our Leadership Council, and to Ann Eaden, who challenged us to reach 100 members.”

“Ann Eaden has said that we want to be sure that the Kennedy Center is not a well-kept secret,” said Barbara Gregg Phillips, Leadership Council chair. “Last October, Ann and I told Harry Jacobson, Vice Chancellor of Health Affairs, that we were nearing the goal of 100 members. Without hesitation he said that we had the momentum to get to 1000. We welcomed that encouragement as a challenge, and we believe that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of that we can reach higher goals in the days to come. So let’s just think that this is one tenth of 100 members.”

The Hobbs Donor Society was established in 1997 with the leadership of Annette Eskind, founding chair of the Council. Through gifts and volunteer resources, Hobbs Society members advance groundbreaking research in human development. Due to space constraints, we are not able to list all the Hobbs Society members in this issue, please see Giving - Hobbs Society on our Web site.
Lili Claire Foundation Evening of Change

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Family Outreach Center, supported by the Lili Claire Foundation, was recognized for its growth and achievements in its first year at the Lili Claire Foundation's Seventh Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction held November 16, at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles. “An Evening of Change” was the theme.

The Lili Claire Foundation's mission is to create community-based programs and services that make a positive difference in the lives of children living with neurogenetic disorders, while providing hope and resources for the families who love them.

“Lili Claire passed away when she was 5 1/2 months old,” said Keith Resnick, Lili Claire's father and executive director of the Foundation. “Now, every day since she was born we've done what we can to honor her memory.”

At the dinner, Leslie Litt-Resnick and Keith Resnick emphasized the need to overcome insensitivity and stereotyping of persons with intellectual disabilities. “Like us, many are born with remarkable talents that can flourish when given the opportunity.”

This theme was demonstrated by the exceptional musical talent of Trieana Moon, one of the evening's featured performers. A talented singer who has Williams syndrome, Moon has been singing and playing music since age 4.

The annual dinner and auction is one of the Foundation’s primary ways for funding its programs for children and families with its three University Partners—the Vanderbilt Kennedy Family Outreach Center, the Lili Claire-UCLA Family Resource Center, and the Lili Claire-University of Las Vegas Life Skills Center.

The dinner was hosted by Matthew Perry of Friends fame. Performances were by Boyz II Men, Goo Goo Dolls, Mya, and Kathy Griffin.

Attending the dinner for the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center were Pat Levitt, director; Elisabeth Dykens, associate director; Elise McMillan, director of community outreach; BethAnn McLaughlin, Kennedy Center faculty director of community and special projects; Carol Rabideau, Outreach Center social worker; Teresa Turnbo, Outreach Center coordinator; Barbara Gregg Phillips, Leadership Council chair; and Colonel Robert Phillips, Jr., and Lorie Lytle, Leadership Council members.

“Teresa and I talk with families every day at the Family Outreach Center,” said social worker Carol Rabideau, “so we know what a truly remarkable gift it is to have the support of the Lili Claire Foundation, which makes these services possible. The Resnicks, the Lili Claire Foundation, and all those who generously donate to the Foundation make a tremendous difference in the lives of so many children and families.”

Celebrity Rags 4 Charity Riches

Celebrity Rags 4 Charity Riches held an online auction on e-Bay in October that benefited the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. Our thanks to Cynda West Johnson and Renee Layher of Rags 4 Riches; to Heather Bohn, BethAnn McLaughlin, and Lorie Lytle; and to all the celebrities who donated items and the persons who purchased them.

Memorial Foundation Gift Expands Outreach

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center has received a $100,000 grant to expand the Vanderbilt Kennedy Reading Clinic and Behavior Analysis Clinic to serve more families who might not otherwise be able to afford their state-of-the-art services.

“So many families need expert services to help children overcome major difficulties in learning to read or in managing challenging behavior,” said Pat Levitt, Ph.D., Center director. “We are so grateful for this very generous gift from the Memorial Foundation because it will allow us to meet this growing need. Thanks to the Memorial Foundation, we’ll be able to train additional service providers and so serve many more families, without financial barriers. It also will allow us to continue to develop new training partnerships with schools, community centers and organizations.”

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Reading Clinic, directed by Doug Fuchs, Ph.D., Nicholas Hobbs Chair in Special Education and Human Development, provides intensive systematic, research-based instruction and assessment for students in the early elementary grades. For information, call (615) 322-8185.

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Behavior Analysis Clinic, directed by Craig Kennedy, Ph.D., professor of special education and pediatrics, serves individuals with developmental disabilities and severe problem behaviors. The Clinic provides comprehensive health, educational, and behavioral assessments to identify causes of behavior problems and then develops community-based interventions. For information, call (615) 322-8185.

The Memorial Foundation’s mission is to enhance the quality of life in Middle Tennessee by providing economic support to nonprofit organizations. It responds to diverse community needs, assisting agencies that focus on health and rehabilitation, youth and children, senior citizens, education, human and social services, and substance abuse.
Spring 2005 Calendar of Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are free and open to the public. Events are subject to change. Please check the calendar on our Web site kc.vanderbilt.edu or call (615) 322-8240. For disability related training and other events statewide and nationally see www.disabilitytrainingtn.org.

April

APRIL 2-9
Nashville Week of the Young Child
Vanderbilt and community sponsors
See kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/woyc for complete event listing
Contact Nashville Area Association for the Education of Young Children
(615) 383-6292

APRIL 5 & 7
Nashville Week of the Young Child
Helping Children Love Reading
The Vanderbilt Kennedy Reading Clinic is partnering with Metro Public Library on a free session for parents, teachers, and caregivers on how to foster a love of reading in preschool children. Children will attend a Library Storytime for Preschool Children while adults attend their program.

• Tuesday 10:30 a.m.
  Bordeaux Library
  4000 Clarksville Pike
  For information and reservations call
  (615) 862-5856
• Thursday 10 a.m.
  Edmondson Pike Library
  5501 Edmondson Pike
  For information and reservations call
  (615) 880-3957

APRIL 7
Nashville Week of the Young Child
Workshop on Switch and Adaptive Toys
Having age-appropriate toys that motivate children to play, learn, and explore their environment is important for all children, but especially so for children with vision or other developmental problems. A variety of toys will be demonstrated, and participants will learn how to adapt toys. Space is limited. Free child care is available.
Sponsor Tennessee Infant Parent Services School, with Technology Access Center Registration
(615) 741-5002
Thursday 6:30 p.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

APRIL 6
Developmental Disabilities Grand Rounds
Sleep in Children with Autism
Beth Malow, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Neurology
Light breakfast provided
Continuing Education Credit offered
Co-Sponsor Center for Child Development, Pediatrics
Wednesday 8 a.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

APRIL 6
Neuroscience Graduate Seminar
Aneuploidy and Chromosomal Mosaicism in Brain Development and Function
Jerold Chun, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Molecular Biology and Pharmacology
University of California at San Diego
Co-Sponsor Vanderbilt Brain Institute
Wednesday 4 p.m.
Room 1220 MRB III Lecture Hall

APRIL 15-JUNE 30
Arts and Disabilities Exhibit
Esteemed Colleagues
Untitled Group artists led by Lain York paired with artists with disabilities
Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Lobby of Kennedy Center/MRL Building
Artists Recognition Reception
Day and time to be announced
Contact Teresa Turnbo, (615) 936-5118
teresa.turnbo@vanderbilt.edu

APRIL 16
Sibshop
Games! Fun! Support!
For kids, ages 7-12, with a brother or sister with a disability
Lunch provided. Advanced registration required.
Contact Teresa Turnbo, (615) 936-5118
teresa.turnbo@vanderbilt.edu
Saturday 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

APRIL 21
Lectures on Development and Developmental Disabilities
The Autistic Brain: Perspectives from Affective Neuroscience
Richard Davidson, Ph.D., Vilas Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, Director of the W.H. Keck Laboratory and Laboratory of Affective Neuroscience
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Thursday 4 p.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

APRIL 27
Ninth Annual Britt Henderson Training Series for Educators
Designing a Positive Behavior Support Plan to Better Serve Elementary School Students
Conclusion of year-long workshops
Poster presentations and reception
Contact Elise McMillan, J.D., (615) 343-2540
elise.mcmillan@vanderbilt.edu
Wednesday 4-6 p.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

May

MAY 4
Developmental Disabilities Grand Rounds
International Adoption: The Child and the Family
Alice Rothman, M.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
Linda Ashford, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Pediatrics
Light breakfast provided
Continuing Education Credit offered
Co-Sponsor Center for Child Development, Pediatrics
Wednesday 8 a.m.
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building
**MAY 4**  
**Neuroscience Graduate Seminar**  
A Basal Ganglia Circuit Essential for Vocal Learning  
David Perkel, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology and Otolaryngology, University of Washington  
Co-Sponsor Vanderbilt Brain Institute  
Wednesday 4 p.m.  
Room 1220 MRB III Lecture Hall

**MAY 23** (tentative)  
**Attachment Conference**  
Scholars will present on emotional attachment, e.g., attachment disorders, parent-child interaction therapy, animal models of maternal-infant care, and policy issues regarding children in foster care  
Patti van Eys, Ph.D., Elisabeth Dykens, Ph.D., Conference directors  
Monday 8:15 a.m.—4 p.m.  
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

**JUNE**

**JUNE 13-JULY 1**  
**TRIAD Social Skills Summer Camp for children with autism and peers**

**JULY 6-30**  
**Explorers Unlimited Academic Camp for teens and young adults with Down syndrome**  
Co-Sponsor Down Syndrome Association of Middle Tennessee

**JULY 24-JULY 30**  
**Williams Syndrome Music Camp for teens and young adults with Williams syndrome**  
Co-Sponsors Vanderbilt Blair School of Music, National Williams Syndrome Association

**JUNE 1-5**  
**3rd Annual Tennessee Disability Mega Conference**  
Sponsored by coalition of more than 50 Tennessee disability related organizations, including the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center  
Regular registration deadline May 15  
Contact www.tndisabilitymegaconference.org or call (800)-835-7077  
Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel and Conference Center

**JUNE 22**  
**Dual Diagnosis Conference**  
Sponsored by the Vanderbilt Kennedy Behavior Analysis Clinic’s Community Inclusion Project, this statewide conference is designed for those who work with individuals with a dual diagnosis of developmental disabilities and mental illness.  
Wednesday 8 a.m.  
Theater/Conference Center, Monroe Carell Jr. Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt  
Contact Teresa Turnbo, (615) 936-5118  
teresa.turnbo@vanderbilt.edu

**APRIL 9 & MAY 7**  
**Down Syndrome Association of Middle Tennessee**  
Circle of Friends  
Recreational and social skills development program for individuals with Down syndrome ages 12 and over  
Registration required  
Contact DSAMT (615) 386-9002  
10 a.m.—3 p.m.  
Westminster Presbyterian Church

**MAY 19 & JULY 21**  
**Autism Society of Middle Tennessee Events**  
**Autism Orientation**  
Registration required  
Contact ASMT (615) 385-2077  
Thursday 6:30-8:30 p.m.  
Room 241 Kennedy Center/MRL Building

**JULY 13-16**  
**36th Annual Autism Society of America National Conference**  
ASA at 40: In Tune with the Future  
Registration available after March 1  
Information asa.confex.com/asa/2005/  
Nashville Convention Center

**Take Part in Research**

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center welcomes the participation of children and adults, with and without disabilities, in research studies. To view a list of projects seeking participants, see kc.vanderbilt.edu/studyfinder/ or call (615) 936-5118.