

Summer 2015



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Carole Soricelli, MS, OTR, *Director*

Here at Trinitas Children's Therapy Services (TCTS) we count ourselves very lucky to work with extraordinary children, their parents, and talented educators and staff in schools throughout the state.

**Our mission is simple:** to improve the quality of life of special needs children both inside and outside of the classroom. We encourage and support their parents. We give our fellow educators and therapists valuable tools to help children thrive each day.

We develop programs of engagement because we believe that better informed parents and teachers are the best advocates for special needs children. The 10 Tips Workshop series, now in its fifth year, is a perfect example. Our occupational and physical therapists assist teachers to help special needs children make strides along side classmates in today's schools. Finally, thanks to the spark found in physical therapists, students who face multiple challenges can reach their "impossible dreams."

I'm sure you can see why our chosen career is so deeply satisfying.



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## SCHOOL-BASED NEWS WHAT A KID WANTS

By: Kathryn Salamone, BA, MA

Think about it: what kid doesn't like to hop, skip and jump? Given that most kids are watching television, playing video games and using iPads in their spare time, kids may need a bit of coaxing. But, being outside, or even indoors in a classroom and having fun in physical activity is a simple, tried and true part of childhood pastimes.

With that in mind, school administration and teachers looked into ways to provide fun and educational opportunities to reward students for positive behavioral choices they make each day. Positive Behavioral Support in Schools (PBSIS) has been in place at Rahway's Roosevelt School for seven years.

Three years ago, teachers at Roosevelt asked if TCTS occupational and physical therapists could develop a "Hop, Skip and Jump" program for pre-K, Kindergarten and 1st graders. Originally designed for the classroom, a challenging obstacle course was instead created in the occupational therapy/physical therapy room. But, Gerard F. Power, PT, DPT, and OT team members Jennifer Agresto, OT; Nordia Campbell, OT; Jami Hughes, OT and Renee Powers, OT; along with Occupational Therapy Clinical Fieldwork Student Chava Hoberman, OTS, soon realized that the program was also suited for outside of the classroom. Built on the successful indoor program, this year the OTs and PTs brought the hopping, skipping and jumping outside to the school's field.



The program has been a big hit for both general education classes as well as special education. To cap the challenging experience, the OTs and PTs structured a contest activity for all the classes. This year's basketball "shoot out" gave all classes the chance to make dunk shots with nothing but net! In addition to receiving winner medals, the winning class had the honor of receiving a "shout out" on the school's PA system.

Mary Agnes Faver, Special Education teacher at Roosevelt School, has high praise for the TCTS OTs and PTs. "We appreciate how they have taken the steps to make this a valuable activity for our youngest students. All of these fun-filled activities and games translate into a great experience for our children. We are so thankful to the TCTS OT/PT team for their work here at Roosevelt: They exemplify caring and commitment, not only to their assigned students, but to the whole Roosevelt School family."

# DAY DREAM BELIEVER... AND HOMECOMING QUEEN

*"When I was little, I would always dream of becoming a princess."*

By: Kathryn Salamone, BA, MA

Daniela Murillo-Cifuentes, an 18 year old senior at Linden High School, had that simple dream, just like any six year old girl. Daniela lives each day with such a positive attitude that hers is a text book case about how to make lemonade when life serves up lemons.

Daniela has a history of dystonia, a neurological movement disorder that produces sustained muscle contractions that cause twisting and repetitive movements or abnormal postures, and also a neurodegenerative disease of unknown etiology which causes her bones to ache all the time. But, don't ever use the word "suffer" around her; she'll never forgive you: "I just smile through the bad moments. There are things that I am able to do that many other people cannot do. For me it doesn't matter whether I'm in a wheelchair or using a walker. I see myself as very smart, unique, and beautiful inside and out. I am one lucky person and I know what I am capable of doing."

Daniela came to the United States alone from her native Colombia. As she explains, "The biggest challenge was leaving my family behind. But, if I had never come here, there wouldn't be this opportunity to go to school and have a good life." She admits that her life has been complicated, but in her words, "I am here to tell you that my life is the best. I do not allow my disability to determine what I can and cannot do. I have to be honest: I sometimes think that if my life wasn't so challenging, I would be able to go out with friends and do all stuff that other teenagers my age do."

Gerard F. Power, PT, DPT, has worked with Daniela for the past 12 years. In his eyes Daniela is intelligent, funny, and sensitive, an absolute pleasure to know. Fellow students, teachers and staff members are her vast network of friends in Linden school system. All who know her have nothing but kind things to say about her.

"When I first met Daniela in 2003, she was having mild balance issues, mild muscular weakness and difficulty keeping up with her peers on the playground and in her physical education class," says Gerard. According to several teachers, Daniela began school as a typical kindergartener but by 1st or 2nd grade she began falling for no reason. In order to understand what was going on with Daniela, Gerard discussed her physical issues with colleagues and her doctors. He also did textbook research to get a better grasp of what was going on.

Linden Schools responded by making sure that Daniela would be safe throughout the school day. As Gerard notes, "Each subsequent school year, as Daniela's condition worsened and brought new physical challenges, modifications were put in place for her. In the 2005 - 2006 school year, as a result of falling many times each day for no apparent reason, it was necessary for Daniela to use a safety walker which almost eliminated the falling for the next few years."

High School presented additional problems when, even with the use of her walker, Daniela began to fall in the af-



ternoon. This prompted the use of a manual school wheelchair in the afternoons while she continued to use her walker in the mornings.

Working together, Gerard and the high school Physical Education instructor devised a program that allowed Daniela to participate in a modified weight training program on a daily basis to maintain her strength. Gerard realized there was more to be done. He wrote a letter of medical necessity to the family's insurance provider. In less than two months, a power wheelchair was delivered. "Daniela was extremely reluctant to use the power wheelchair, as she was initially with the walkers and manual wheelchairs. But, she adapted. As she leaves the Linden schools after her graduation this year, I am extremely proud of the young woman she has become."

Now, as Daniela completes high school, she enjoys the honor of being Linden High School's Homecoming Queen. She credits this once-in-a-lifetime honor to "the great people I met and the amazing support system of teachers and students."

Upon graduation, Daniela will work at John F. Kennedy Medical Center in the CAT area and in the hospital's business office.

# WHY NOT GIVE PUSH A CHANCE?

By: Kellianne K. Martin, OTD, OTR

For teachers, therapists, parents, and students, September comes with stress. Everyone at home and at school is eager to get off to a good start so that kids have everything they need for a successful school year.

As a school-based therapist with Trinitas Children's Therapy Services, I can tell you first-hand that I am on a mission in September to schedule all of my students for therapy, working closely with classroom and resource teachers, and with fellow therapists to make sure that everything flows smoothly.

This past September, there was added stress related to an effort to facilitate "pushing into the classroom" rather than pulling the special needs student out. As an occupational therapist, my goal is to ensure that the student can function at a developmentally appropriate level for his or her age and to assure that the student benefits from classroom instruction while keeping in mind the student's goals and what works best for each classroom teacher. So, my mission was to find the most appropriate times to "push in."

Ms. Lyn Goldsworthy's first grade classroom at Brookdale School in Bloomfield was a great place to start. She was enthusiastic and open to me working in her

room on a weekly basis. With her encouragement, I saw many opportune "push in" times to interact with her students.

I became known as "Miss Kellianne" and none of the students knew who was receiving occupational therapy. Since the students were used to a special education teacher who pushed in to provide academic support during the day, my presence in the classroom was not a distraction and the kids considered it routine.

Like most six year olds, these Brookdale first graders were fidgety and wiggly and it interfered with their attention spans. I suggested to Ms. Goldworthy that I bring non-distracting fidget toys and other "OT" tools to leave in her room for any student to use. Thanks to her openness, I met the needs of all the students effectively and proactively.

Soon, I walked in with stress balls, Koosh Balls, foot long erasers with tassels that could be tied in a knot, and a variety of other fidget toys. All of these items sparked the curiosity of the children who wanted to know about them, and, more importantly to try them out. They understood my explanation that they would help to calm them so they could focus on their lesson, but that they

were not to be used as toys. By the end of the school year, the students were able to grab a fidget toy whenever they needed it. And, just as importantly, they are able to recognize when they no longer needed it.

Back in the fall, a student who was receiving occupational therapy because of his difficulty sitting still and maintaining an upright seated posture was given a lap pad. Almost immediately, this student took to it, as did many others. I was encouraged by the acceptance and resulting progress when I saw multiple lap pads throughout the room as well as exercise balls serving as alternative seating options. The result: the students

were better able to sit and learn. Much of the credit for this goes to Ms. Goldsworthy for recognizing the benefits of multiple lap pads as well as alternative seating options.

On any given Wednesday, at least one of Ms. Goldworthy's students asked for a stretch or movement break that resulted in better attention to the lesson. It all worked!

Mr. Joseph V. Fleres, principal of Brookdale, supported the use of these tools. He recognized their value and benefit

*Continued on page 4*

## "PUSH" LEADS TO POSITIVE RESULTS

When parents see "push in" therapy in action, they are usually on board, especially at the PreK/K level. I am very passionate about "push in" and feel the students benefit more in the classroom than when they are pulled out.

*Linda Colucci, M Ed*

*Director of Special Services, Bloomfield Public Schools*

"Push in" OT in my classroom has benefited my entire class, thanks to how Kellianne Martin and I work together toward the students' IEP goals. Those who receive OT are not pulled from their academic work to receive services they need. Students who do not officially receive OT also benefit from

the options open to them. Since I can observe Miss Kellianne's interactions with these students, I can reinforce and replicate her efforts when she is not present.

*Lyn Goldsworth*

*First Grade Teacher, Brookdale School*

I truly believe in the inclusive "push-in" model. It ensures that real-life application is occurring and important skills can be implemented. With support from above and the willingness of a dynamic staff, we have successfully carried out "push in" at Brookdale.

*Mr. Joseph V. Fleres*

*Principal, Brookdale School*

# FAREWELL “OLD SCHOOL” METHODS

By: Chava Hoberman, OTS

A day at school is certainly not like it was 40 years ago, or even 15 years ago.

Today, teachers infuse technology into the curriculum throughout much of the school day. Smart Boards and iPads have replaced chalk boards and Composition Notebooks.

At home, children are expected to be able to access their homework on the school's webpage. My, how things have changed!

The process of writing is both demanding and challenging to children who, more and more, are acquiring familiarity with the computer as an integral part of their learning. Another farewell to the old Composition Notebook.

So, in the midst of the school day when there are so many subjects for students to learn, there is limited time to teach

handwriting and typing. Typing on a computer can compensate for a child's weaker capabilities like handwriting. Although typing would seem simpler, there are many technicalities involved in working at a keyboard that a child needs to master in order to be successful.

A child who types functionally needs to have good kinesthetic sense, good attention, motivation, and good motor coordination of all 10 fingers. In order to become successful at typing, it is necessary for the child to practice with feedback, ideally from a skilled therapist.

A typing group is offered at the Trinitas Children's Therapy Services Center to help children master this skill. Each child benefits from working with a skilled occupational therapist. The learning sessions consist of fine motor activities, bilateral coordination activities, and

practice using a typing program on a computer. The group format is extremely effective as is individual instruction. When children receive group instruction as well as individual attention, they reap the benefits of both learning formats. The improvements in a child's kinesthesia, motor coordination, and attention lead to increased speed and accuracy while typing.

There is limited research available regarding the number of words per minute school-aged children should be able to type. Generally, third-graders should be able to type 15 words per minute (wpm). By 4th grade, children should be able to type 20 wpm, by 5th grade 25 wpm, and 6th grade 30 wpm (Hopkins School, 2011). It is the goal of the typing groups at Trinitas Children's Therapy Services Center to support each child in reaching and mastering typing skills at his age or grade level.

## SCHOOL-BASED NEWS

### GIVE PUSH A CHANCE *Continued from page 3*

to all of the students. More so, he appreciated the therapy services being provided directly in the classroom.

Pushing into the classroom has been successful since the chosen activity ultimately relates back to a student's goals and objectives. There have been random and worthwhile opportunities to focus on movement from simple to higher level activities — handwriting; copying; locating workbooks/folders; pencils or crayons; using scissors; applying glue to paper; following multi-step directions to complete tasks, and getting assistance with self-regulation within the classroom environment.

For teachers, regularly scheduled therapist-led activities relating to a school theme benefit the entire class. These activities focused more closely on identifying improvement for the class as a whole. Now, when anyone walked into the classroom, students eagerly showed off a newly acquired skill or sought assistance when necessary.

As the year progressed, the ease of “pushing into a classroom” increased with clearly-visible benefits. Classroom teachers appreciated that they could observe different techniques that occupational therapists might implement and opportunities to discuss ongoing

concerns and strategies. There was greater carryover and skill acquisition among the students. We found that parents were thankful that their child was not missing valuable class time, and more importantly, that their child was not being singled out. Students were happy that they got to stay with classmates throughout the day so they didn't miss out on anything!

The “push in” model is a win-win for most everyone. Providing these occupational therapy services allows me to serve the students and all involved in a more effective, well balanced, and proactive way.

## 10 TIPS HAS A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

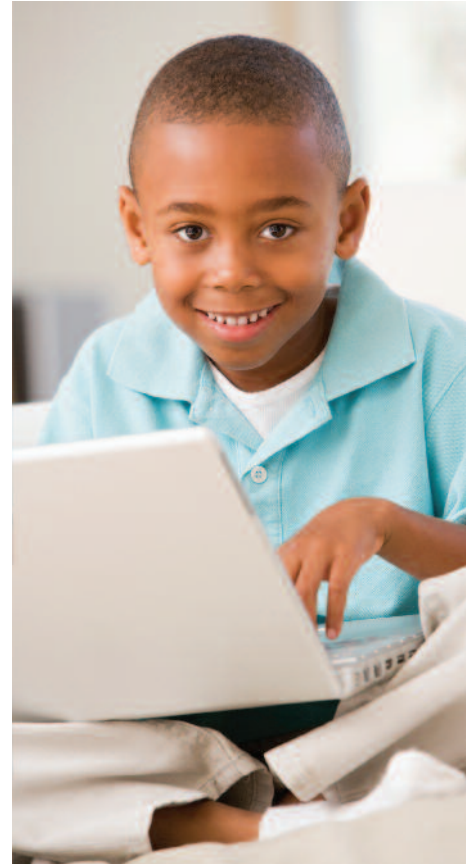
Sometimes the most effective goals are the ones that can be most simply achieved. Take a look at the successful 10 Tips Workshops that Trinitas Children's Therapy Services (TCTS) launched in 2009.

Its mission: provide more education to members of the community regarding child development. The target audience was parents, teachers, and child care providers. Five years later, they continue to be the individuals TCTS wants to reach.

Christine German, OTD, OTR, who came up with the concept and introduced the program, looks back on how 10 Tips came into being. "I had two main priorities when organizing these workshops," she says. "First, I wanted the workshops to be meaningful for the

participants by being full of useful strategies that could be readily implemented the very next day. The second priority was that the workshop topics would be relevant and never boring."

Christine is happy to share the success of this program that has proved for five years that it works. She is the first to admit that, without question, the hard work and participation of others on the TCTS staff has helped. "It really has been a humbling and rewarding experience for me to create and run this program. I have the opportunity to interact with so many great teachers and other members of the community. I could not have done this without my co-presenters, Benjamin Lipman, PT and Kristen Healy, SLP-CCC. So, a special thanks goes out to them for all that they do to continue the success of this program."



### 10 CHEERS FOR 10 TIPS

Feedback from the workshops is overwhelmingly positive. "Really, the only complaint from this year was that we had a hard time sticking to the timeframe. Well, we fixed that by expanding the workshops from one hour to an hour and a half," Christine shared.

Here's what workshop participants had to say:

*"These 90 minute seminars contain more useful information than some all-day seminars."*

*"The course was very informative."*

*"Lots of information to use in the classroom and to share with fellow teachers."*

*"Great! Easy ideas I can actually use."*

*"I have tried tips from the last workshop and they worked."*

*"All the workshops this year were great!"*

*"Your classes are not only informative, but they give 'precise examples' of how to identify potential learning delays in children."*

*"The way the classes are presented, it all makes sense which makes it helpful for us to identify these strategies and use the activities with our own children."*

*"Thank you for sharing your time, experience, and wealth of knowledge with us."*

The 10 Tips Workshop Series will announce the topics for the 2015 - 2016 school year very soon.

For more information, please visit the Trinitas Children's Therapy Services website, [childtherapynj.com](http://childtherapynj.com), or contact Christine German, OTD, OTR at [cgerman@trinitas.org](mailto:cgerman@trinitas.org)

## TCTS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY...

TCTS is an organization for all seasons as you'll see in this round-up of events and activities that the staff participates in throughout Union and other counties.

### TCTS Joins in the Leap

Healthier living and positive lifestyle choices were all a part of the 2015 "Healthy Leap into Summer" health fair and exposition at Elizabeth High School. Now in its ninth year, the expo gives teens a healthy dose of knowledge about good health, thanks to numerous organizations like Trinitas Regional Medical Center. Physical fitness demonstrations, information on lung disease

and stroke prevention, and blood pressure checks and cholesterol screenings were among the contributions Trinitas made to the event. Continuing its participation, Trinitas Children's Therapy Services provided information on Emotional Intelligence, also known as EQ, to the teens who stopped by the TCTS booth.



### In Step with Autism

Members of TCTS "walked the walk" as they participated the 2014 Autism Speaks walk at Nomehagen Park in Cranford. About 40 people formed the TCTS team members including 12 cadets from the Union High School Junior Reserved Officers Training Corps (JROTC). Sean Boud, son of Aida Mendez-Boud, TCTS Coordinator for Elizabeth Schools and brother of Elyse Boud, TCTS Administrative Assistant, helped coordinate the involvement of his fellow JROTC members as part of a community service project.



### Helping Others Give Thanks

When it comes to generous giving, TCTS knows how it's done. Thanks to the generosity of the TCTS staff, families in Elizabeth, Linden and Summit enjoyed a bountiful Thanksgiving. Such gestures are greatly appreciated by members of the community who we take time to remember.

### iPads Rule!

In the 2014 edition of Kidmatters, the cover story featured how iPads were making an impact in the work of TCTS with the children who receive our services. Through the extraordinary work of the Trinitas Healthcare Foundation and the generosity of PNC Bank and the Provident Bank Foundation, TCTS received grant money to purchase 12 new iPads, bringing our total at the time of this award to 26.

The funding from PNC Bank allowed TCTS to buy six iPads and keyboard cases for staff working in the Elizabeth School District. These devices provide therapeutic and academic interventions in a more comprehensive and cohesive way, with the hopes of maximizing each child's opportunity for success through innovative learning opportunities iPad technology presents. The additional six iPads received through the Provident Bank Foundation will be used by TCTS staff in other districts. These new iPads will expand the scope and breadth of learning among students who can benefit from this type of technology in the classroom. They will allow students to gain valuable feedback from analyz-



ing any data yielded from the device and also gain further information from a questionnaire provided to teachers and parents associated with the students.

Not to be outdone, a sizable grant from Summit Area Public Foundation helped fund 16 new iPads equipped with an evaluation tool called the PEDI-cat. Like those mentioned above, these are equipped with keyboard cases and valuable teaching apps and have been used within school districts in Western Union County. The grant also covered the purchase of a storage cart for these devices.

In December, the newly-formed organization, Working Women For A Cause, held its first fundraiser, a Karaoke

Night, which benefitted TCTS. Assemblywoman Annette Quijano (District 20) and Elizabeth Board of Education Commissioners-Elect Ana Maria Amin and Maria Carvalho joined the efforts. The result was funding for a few more iPads for TCTS. Assemblywoman Quijano also spearheaded the fifth Three Kings Day celebration at Trinitas in January. At that event, children who receive services from both TCTS and the Trinitas Behavioral Health Department received toys. In addition, benefactors provided funding to purchase additional iPads.

All told, these recent acquisitions bring the total of iPads to 48. Lots to crow about since two years ago, TCTS had none!

### Other Grants that Made a Difference

The Turrell Fund which serves children also provided a \$5000 grant for TCTS to offer a "Scribbles to Script" program to early childhood students in the Elizabeth School District.

The John Taylor Babbet Foundation, whose generosity honors his memory, provided a much appreciated donation for the purchase of a defibrillator for TCTS offices in Springfield.



# HONOR ROLL:

## The Staff of Therapy Services

(includes employees and contractors)

### Administration

Carole Soricelli	Director
Kevin Nelson	Therapy Center Manager
Sherone Lewis	Business Manager
Elyse Boud	Administrative Assistant

### Occupational Therapists

Jennifer Agresto	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Kristen Asencio	Sr. Occupational Therapist
June Baldino	
Ellen Benson	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Cheryl Borenstein	
Sherri Brandthill	
Nordia Campbell	
Stacie Carroll	
Megan Cohen	
Evelyn D'Onofrio	
Regina Datria	
Carolyn Driscoll	
Robin Edwards	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Jillian Gergely	
Christine German	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Melissa Guerrizio	
Alison Haggan	
Beata Hertel-Kiszkiel	
Jami Hughes	Sr. Occupational Therapist
Tracey Hunsinger	
Jill Leon	
Nicole Lepore	
Diane Loil	
Janet MacNamara	
Kellianne Martin	
Kristine Parente	
Valerie Pessirilo	
Melanie Piccolo	
Renee Powers	
Donna Riddell	
Valarie Schiavoni	
Rebecca Seidman	
Marcia Sidford	
Esther Simon	
Magda Svorec	
Jill Tanis	
Melissa Vastola	
Patty Vesper	OT Coordinator
Lisa Walker	
Heidi Washuta	
David Yamasaki	Program & Clinical Coordinator

### Occupational Therapy Assistants

Ann Cutalo	
Darlene Fasciani	
Elizabeth Garrison	Sr. OT Assistant
Christine Henning	
Aida Mendez-Boud	Elizabeth Coordinator
Nancy Viglianti	Sr. OT Assistant

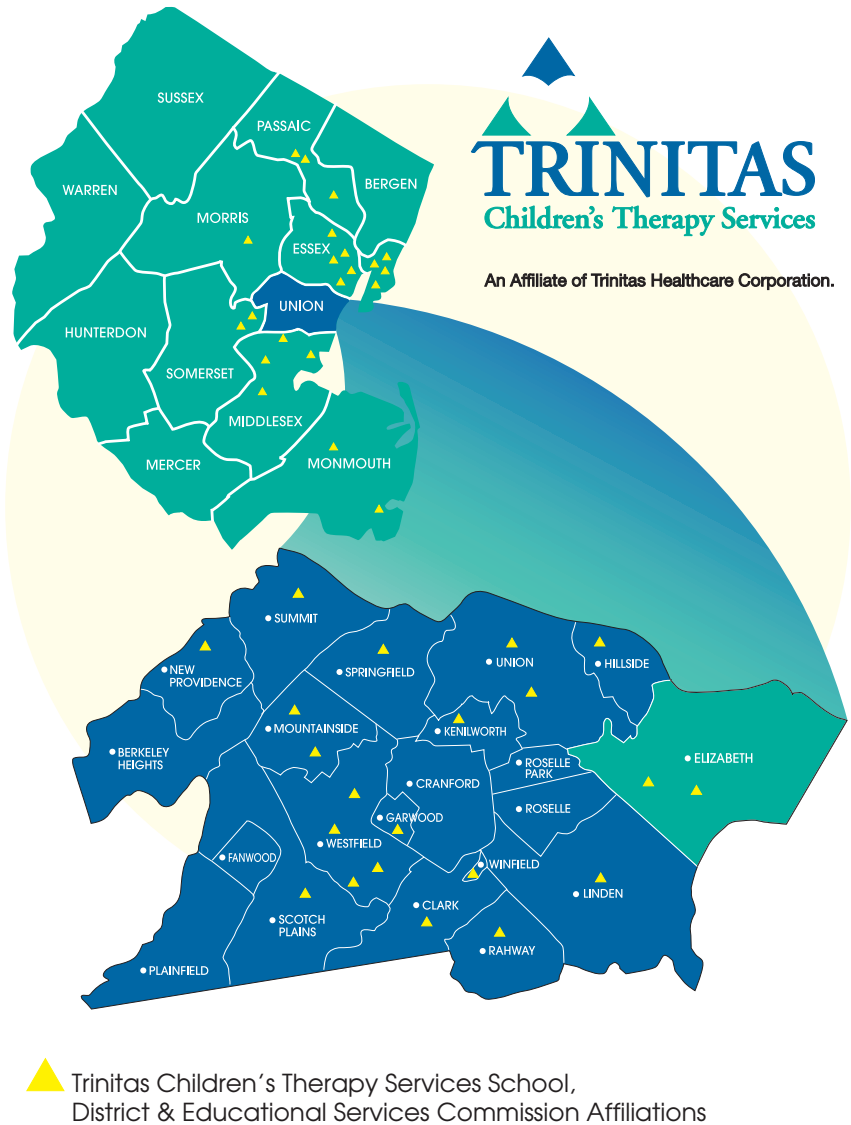
### Physical Therapists

Nicole Gulino	
Nathalie Haughey	
Marc Helder	
Benjamin Lipman	Sr. Physical Therapist
Leslie Marcks	
Carol Olsen	
Gerard Power	Sr. Physical Therapist
Maria Samadjopoulos	
Carol Sheridan	PT Coordinator
Bonnie Stoeckel	
Karen Valenti	
Jolanda Weinkauff	
Lisa Yuschak	Sr. Physical Therapist
Jackie Zaffarese	

### Speech Language Pathologists

Kristen Healy
Jackelyn Heim
Holli Horlacher

# Where We Are



# Kidmatters

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Visit us at [www.ChildTherapyNJ.com](http://www.ChildTherapyNJ.com) or [www.TrinitasRMC.org](http://www.TrinitasRMC.org)

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