



Bradley Hospital  
*A Lifespan Partner*

SPRING 2016

# Free the Future

A PUBLICATION FOR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS OF BRADLEY HOSPITAL

## Connecting With the Child Beneath the Behavior: Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities

**B**radley saved our lives."

Those heartfelt words are the first thing Beth Abbott tells anyone when talking about her son Alex's stay in the inpatient unit of the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities (CADD) last year.

As educators and experienced parents, Beth and Jim Abbott were as prepared as anyone could be to meet the needs of their second child when Alex was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at birth.

But something else was clearly going on. While Down Syndrome children are generally even-tempered and endearing, Alex would have outbursts that became more aggressive and disruptive as he got older.

The family visited numerous doctors near their home in Syracuse, New York, searching for help and answers. Like many families raising children with developmental disabilities, they began to doubt themselves.

"As educators we know that not every kid with a specific diagnosis is the same, but by the time he was 16, he was all aggression—almost 160 pounds of aggression. It took everything in our power to keep him safe," Beth recalls.

"He was crossing boundaries he'd never crossed before. He was damaging property, lashing out at classmates and leaving

the school. He tried to push me down the stairs and he hit my husband.

"We were living never knew when collateral

under siege all the time. We the fuse would blow and what damage would ensue," Beth says, adding, "I don't think he knew what he was doing. He was so riddled with anxiety and had all these physical, emotional and hormonal things going on that he didn't understand and didn't know how to control."

They didn't know what to do. But they knew they couldn't go on like this anymore.

In the fall of 2014, 16-year-old Alex ended up in their local emergency room in an extremely agitated state. But the hospital in Syracuse, New York, was not equipped to admit Alex and address his complex needs.

"We were so exasperated having essentially been told in our own community that they don't have the training to handle him."

Having heard about our work previously, the Abbotts reached out to Bradley Hospital that same day and inquired about admittance to the Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities. They were assured that if they could get Alex to Bradley, the CADD team would help.



Alex Abbott

## Connecting With the Child Beneath the Behavior: Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities *continued from cover*

Dr. Margaret Klitzke, one of the attending child psychiatrists in CADD was instrumental in Alex's diagnosis and recovery.

The inpatient unit is part of the comprehensive CADD program which provides highly specialized clinical services for children and adolescents who show signs of serious emotional and



CADD unit great room

behavioral problems in addition to a developmental disability, such as autism, Asperger's or intellectual disability.

The Abbotts left immediately for the 300-plus mile trip from Syracuse to East Providence.

She remembers the security guard meeting them as they walked to the main entrance. "The first thing he said to us was, 'You are in a good place. Would you like some water? Just know, it's going to be OK.' "

Beth recalls the poignant relief she felt at his kindness. Alex was admitted to the CADD inpatient unit, which would become his home for the next six months. Although those six months were intense work for Alex and the entire family, it was all worth it.

Thanks to the team of specialists on the CADD unit, they discovered that in addition to the initial Down Syndrome diagnosis and the later diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Alex is also bi-polar. This missing piece of information completed a picture that made a lot of sense.

Typically, families who come to CADD have seen many practitioners who are specialists in one particular area, so they

tend to view the behaviors or situation through that lens. However, when there is more than one condition involved, a truly interdisciplinary approach is needed.

"We meet each child where they are at, rather than based on preconceived notions of what a specific behavior or diagnosis means," says Henry Sachs, MD, Medical Director of Bradley Hospital and a clinical assistant professor in the department of psychiatry and human behavior in the Warren Alpert School of Medicine at Brown University.

As is the case with all Bradley Hospital programs, the family is an integral part of the treatment. Dr. Sachs explains, "It is important to work with the family. These kids don't come with an owner's manual. We see families confronted with these really challenging behaviors who end up coming up with responses that can create a whole new set of issues. We can stabilize the child in the hospital, but they have to live in the world." A major goal is to help the child and family transition back into the home or their community.

This approach made all the difference for Alex and his family. "You kind of come in like a lost soul, but you leave with a better understanding of how to manage your child's behavior. Bradley gave us knowledge that will serve us throughout Alex's life. We will always be part of the Bradley family."

Getting the complete diagnosis and the insights they provided empowered the family to make the decisions that were best for Alex and the family. Alex now lives in a residential program near his family. He is proud of the work he is doing and has made friends with his roommates. He enjoys coming to the family home to visit but is always happy to go back to his friends and his life in his new home.

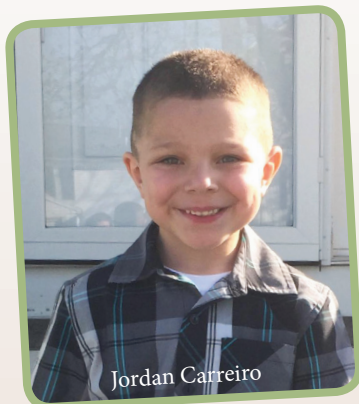
"Bradley gave our family a gift. He's growing to his potential and even exceeding it. I don't know if he would have ever gotten to that place without Bradley."



Alex with his family

"Bradley gave our family a gift. He's growing to his potential and even exceeding it. I don't know if he would have ever gotten to that place without Bradley."

# Expansion of COAST Outpatient Clinic Aims to Impact More Lives



Jordan Carreiro

**B**rooke Carreiro still recalls vividly how difficult it could be for her son Jordan to handle everyday tasks—from taking a bath and getting dressed, to eating—and the challenges the family faced when they'd leave the house.

Diagnosed with Hyposensitive Sensory Processing Disorder—an under-responsiveness to

sensory stimulation—Jordan was in constant motion: spinning, jumping on furniture, crashing into walls, and climbing just about anything he could get his hands on.

“Jordan’s senses were receiving incorrect messages, causing his behaviors to be unpredictable,” says Brooke. “Our daily lives were greatly affected by his ever-changing nervous system.”

Jordan and his family were referred to Bradley Hospital’s Communication, Occupational and Sensory Treatment (COAST) Clinic for outpatient services to treat his disorder. The COAST Clinic was originally created in 2009 through a significant gift from CVS Health. Offering comprehensive treatments for children who have difficulty participating in age-appropriate activities due to physical, neurological, cognitive, behavioral, communication or sensory processing challenges, COAST was exactly what Jordan and his family needed.

“Sensory processing is complex—everyone’s system works differently,” said Christine Gardner, an Occupational Therapist at Bradley Hospital. “What makes our COAST Clinic unique is that

we are family and child focused; we take time to get to know the child as a whole and learn what the family needs from us so that we can provide the best to them.”

The recent expansion of the COAST Clinic’s outpatient program included the addition of two new sensory rooms. The new space is state-of-the-art and includes a therapeutic kitchen, slides, a ball pit, a specially designed space for testing and seated tasks, and much more.

“These rooms have made it possible for us to treat double the number of children that we were able to see previously,” says Christine. “But more importantly, delivering treatment in an outpatient setting allows us to help families practice good carryover at home, which is the key to success.”

Through the COAST Clinic sensory rooms and Christine’s therapy, Jordan learned the techniques his mind and his body needed to regulate his senses through play. He would jump in the ball pit and on the trampoline, swing on a suspended swing, crawl through tunnels, and play with different food textures.

Moving from one activity to the next in a safe sensory-focused environment helped Jordan to better control his behavior and the movements of his body. And, the ongoing outpatient services improved his self-esteem, motivating him to practice what he learned from Christine at home and school.

“Jordan’s behaviors have improved significantly; we wouldn’t be where we are today if it wasn’t for Christine and the COAST Clinic,” says Brooke. “His quality of life—and what we’re able to do together as a family—is very different from two years ago. It was a long journey, but it was worth every step!”



Equipment for children to jump on and swing from, and a therapy kitchen to explore different food textures, are just a few of the features of our expanded COAST Clinic.

# Bradley Hospital's Gregory K. Fritz, MD, Named President of International Organization



**A**cademic Director of Bradley Hospital Gregory K. Fritz, MD, was named as the newest president of The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP). The mission of AACAP is to promote the healthy development of children, adolescents, and families through advocacy, education, and research, and to meet the professional needs of child and adolescent psychiatrists throughout their careers.

"I feel privileged to have been elected as AACAP president, and I am eager to see what we can do to reshape healthcare into what children need and deserve."

According to Dr. Fritz, "I sincerely believe that we are in the most exciting period for the advancement of children's mental health since I became a physician."

Dr. Fritz is encouraged that the intersection between mental health and physical health is getting ever closer. Looking at the whole child will not only help to reduce the stigma of mental illness, it will also encourage and strengthen the communication between medical and mental health professionals. Dr. Fritz plans to focus his two years of presidency on furthering the integration of pediatric mental

health services with primary medical practices.

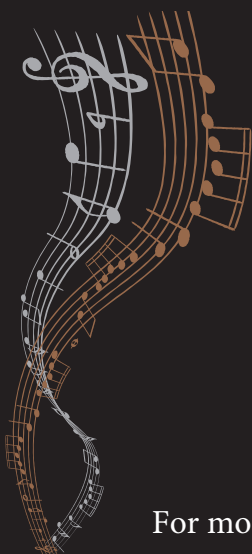
"We are very proud that one of our physicians has been named president of AACAP. Not only is this beneficial for the mental health of children around the globe, it puts Bradley Hospital center stage. We know Bradley is a gem and lifeline for children and their families grappling with mental health challenges, but the world deserves to know what we do as well," says Dan Wall, President of Bradley Hospital.

Dr. Fritz is also the Director of the Bradley Hasbro Children's Research Center. He is the Director of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at Rhode Island Hospital as well as in the department of psychiatry and human behavior at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University. He is also

Professor and Vice Chair of the department. He has been listed in *Health* magazine's "Best Doctors in America" and *Good Housekeeping's* "The 327 Best Mental Health Experts."

**"... I sincerely believe  
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Gregory K. Fritz, MD.



*Bravo*  
**Bradley**  
**Feel<sup>the</sup>POWER<sup>of</sup>Music**

## Save The Date

**Friday, June 3, 2016**

**Rhodes on the Pawtuxet**

For more information, please call 401-444-3761 or visit [giving.lifespan.org/BravoBradley](http://giving.lifespan.org/BravoBradley).



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