

The Bradley *Bulletin*

News and notes for our friends and supporters.

Fall 2021

PAYING IT FORWARD

Karen and Russell Raposa discovered Bradley Hospital about ten years ago during an especially difficult period for their family. They were desperate for help for their youngest son, Thomas, then 12 years old. Thomas, who has autism and is non-verbal, had been experiencing severe behavioral issues, including aggression and self-injury.

“When he finally got to Bradley, he spent three-and-a-half months there,” Karen recalls. “And they saved him. They saved our family, quite honestly. We kept saying to each other, ‘why don’t more people know about this hospital?’”

From that point on, the Raposas have been dedicated to supporting and spreading the word about Bradley. They serve as Governors of the Bradley Hospital Foundation and have helped organize the hospital’s largest annual fundraiser—Bravo Bradley—for years.

“As soon as we found out there were ways to help the hospital, we just wanted to do as much as we could,” Russell says.

Karen adds, “As a society, we often don’t think of the brain as an organ that can be sick, just like every other organ in the body. But Bravo Bradley has a way of helping people understand that, which is so important.”

The Raposas, of Raynham, Massachusetts, fit their volunteer work with Bradley into their already busy schedules. Russell is a sheriff’s deputy with the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office in Dartmouth, Mass., and is also a part-time actor. His recent roles include playing police officer Sully in the film *Patriot’s Day* and a disgruntled customer in a music video for the group “Roz and the Rice Cakes.”

Thomas is one of the inspirations behind Russell’s acting career, which he has developed just in the last five years or so. “I do it for Tommy,” Russell says. “He taught us patience and gave us strength.” Their son has also inspired Karen’s work. In addition to serving as a regional manager in academic sales for a company that manufactures dental instruments and



Russell and Karen Raposa celebrate high school graduation with their son Thomas

equipment, Karen lectures internationally at dental meetings on the topic of dental care for individuals with autism. And she has also written a textbook on the topic for dental professionals.

“I tell dental professionals that they have the ability to profoundly impact the quality of life for an individual with a developmental disorder by learning how to support them through a dental visit,” Karen says.

Thomas, now 22, still experiences difficult days. But his family, which also includes siblings RJ and Brandi, has been grateful to watch him celebrate several milestones, including graduating from high school.

“We are totally indebted to Bradley for what they did for our family,” Karen says. “Now we are paying it forward by trying to spread awareness and understanding.”

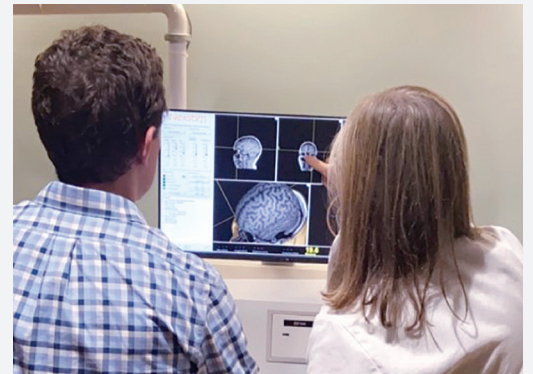
BRAIN-BASED TREATMENT FOR ADHD

Exciting research is currently underway at Bradley Hospital to develop new, brain-based treatments for pediatric psychiatric disorders, including those that affect working memory, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). “While we know that ADHD is a brain-based disorder, many treatment options still focus on improving subjective symptoms and behaviors,” says Brian Kavanaugh, PsyD, a pediatric neuropsychologist at Bradley Hospital.

Through his research, Dr. Kavanaugh is trying to change that. A shift toward treating the underlying biology of the behavior, termed “precision medicine,” has the potential to transform psychiatry—as it did to oncology and other medical disciplines decades ago, he says.

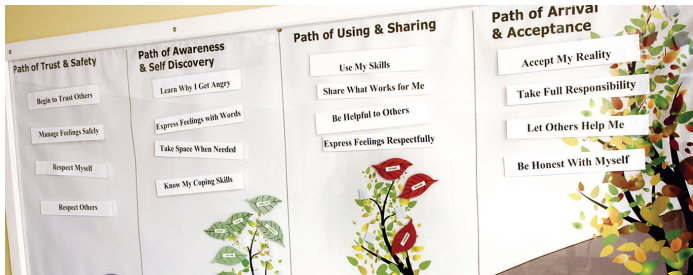
Dr. Kavanaugh is currently conducting a clinical trial investigating whether transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) can modify the dysfunctional brain activity that causes working memory problems, and subsequently lead to improved working memory abilities, for adolescents with ADHD. TMS was first developed in 1985 and has been a clinical, insurance-based treatment for adult depression since 2008. It has also been approved as a clinical treatment for adult obsessive-compulsive disorder and adult smoking cessation. The TMS device is the size of a small textbook and converts a magnetic pulse into an electric current. When placed on the head, the current travels through the skull and into the top centimeter of the brain or “cortex.” This activates or increases brain activity in the given area of the brain.

This type of research requires a slow and cautious approach, Dr. Kavanaugh adds. But it’s worth the investment because “brain-based treatments are fantastically promising,” he says.



Dr. Kavanaugh studies brain images with a colleague

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: THE BRADLEY CENTER



Patients at The Bradley Center receive group and individual therapy

For adolescents dealing with mental or behavioral health disorders, or substance use, finding the right treatment program is an important step toward healing. And for many, acute residential treatment programs such as The Bradley Center are the right fit.

Located in Cranston, The Bradley Center is a 16-bed program for adolescents ages 12 to 17. The center—which treats teens dealing with a wide range of emotional and behavioral disturbances, and co-occurring disorders—is less crisis-oriented than an inpatient program, and can offer a “step down” from hospitalization, explains Amanda Pelletier, LICSW, Clinical

Director, Adolescent Residential Services. Others arrive at The Bradley Center directly from home. “Our program is a match for kids who need to be able to turn down the volume on other aspects of their life so they can focus on their treatment,” she says. “They can put the stressors from school, social life, and technology on pause to focus on what they need to do to get back to their best self.”

Adolescents receive evidence-based group and individual therapy, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Motivation Enhancement Treatment, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy. Expressive activities such as yoga, dance, drumming, and art are also an important part of relapse prevention planning.

After a stay at The Bradley Center, which typically lasts 2 to 3 weeks, some adolescents return home, while some move to longer-term residential care or another program. For those who move to another Bradley Hospital program or provider, the continuum of care is an important benefit. “We’re all working from the same place and philosophy, so the communication and seamless transition when a patient moves on makes a big difference,” Amanda says.



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For information about the Bradley Hospital Foundation, please contact Anne Morton Smith at 401-432-1451 or asmith18@lifespan.org.

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