

# The Bradley *Bulletin*

News and notes for our friends and supporters.

Winter 2019

## O'Neils Dedicated to Shining Light, Changing Lives

**F**or Tricia and Tim O'Neil, words really are deeds. The Rumford couple talk to people about Bradley Hospital at every opportunity, hoping to inspire them to learn more and get involved—just as they did.

“The more you know about Bradley, the more you want to be involved,” says Trish, a new member of the Bradley Hospital Foundation Board of Trustees. “And the more you get involved, the more you appreciate how much you can do to make a difference.”

The O'Neils' connection to Bradley goes back a decade, when their youngest was treated here as a teen. She's now 26 and lives in the Washington, DC area. Her grateful parents want to ensure all families know about and have access to the world-class care at Bradley Hospital.

“Bradley really sells itself,” says Tim, who belongs to the hospital's Board of Governors. “When I talk to people, they always say, ‘Wow!’ They're amazed at how unique Bradley is and how much it does.”

In addition to their leadership and advocacy of the hospital, the O'Neils are devoted Bravo Bradley supporters, bidding handsomely on such auction items as a cocktail party for 20 at the Lobster Pot.

Tim grew up in Barrington, Rhode Island, and Trish in Buffalo, New York. The two met more than 20 years ago when they worked for the same financial management firm in Manhattan. They married soon after.

Their philanthropic partnership includes a longtime commitment to children's issues and mental health concerns. They are also active in RISE (Rhode Islanders Sponsoring



Tim and Tricia O'Neil

Education), which provides scholarships and mentorship to children of incarcerated parents. Trish, who is a senior vice president at Morgan Stanley, serves as treasurer on RISE's board.

“We want to feel that we're having a direct impact on people's lives,” says Tim, who is retired from sales and sales management in the financial services industry. He mentored a teen at RISE for six years, guiding him through high school and on to Providence College. The two remain close.

The couple also supports Rhode Island Hospital, where Trish serves on the Board of Governors; Hasbro Children's Hospital; and The Miriam Hospital, where Tim has been treated for multiple myeloma.

“Being involved in the community becomes ingrained in you,” says Trish. “There's so much you can do to shed light and change lives.” Adds Tim, “Lots of things sing in our ears about Bradley Hospital. It resonates for us.”



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# Verrecchia Autism Clinic Delivers Specialized Outpatient Services

A group of children worked busily around a table at Bradley Hospital, using clay to create “worry bugs” and “helper bugs.” The boys and girls, all struggling with anxiety in addition to autism spectrum disorder (ASD), fashioned their “worry bugs” into fantastical shapes that embodied their fears. The “helper bugs,” like super heroes, were constructed to crush those fears.

The children were taking part in a new group program at Bradley Hospital called Facing Your Fears. It’s one of a comprehensive array of services offered at the Verrecchia Clinic for Children with Autism and Developmental Disabilities. The outpatient clinic was made possible by a \$1 million dollar gift from the Verrecchia Family Foundation.

Children with autism experience behavioral and psychiatric issues at four times the rate of children without such conditions. The Facing Your Fears group—piloted with assistance from the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism—specifically addresses anxiety, which often afflicts kids with ASD. Psychiatric evaluations, medication oversight, individual, group and family therapy, and parental training in behavior management are among the Verrecchia Clinic’s specialized services.

The clinic also provides case management to assist families as they transition their children into adult settings, strengthening the continuum of care for our patients with ASD.

“Our families are greatly in need of specialized services to assist their children and to help them learn behavioral strategies to support them at home,” says Clinical Director Karen Cammuso, PhD. “I am so pleased this new clinic offers what they need.”



## Gold Standard Treatment Changes Lives

Developed decades ago to teach coping skills and change unhealthy behavior, dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) is recognized as the gold standard for treating suicidality and self-harm in adults. But randomized control trials have recently distinguished DBT as the gold standard for suicidal adolescents as well. It’s called DBT-A. The designation is welcome news to Kerri Kim, PhD, director of the Mindful Teen suicide prevention program at Bradley Hospital. In fact, Dr. Kim and her team have contributed their own findings to the research and literature on DBT-A. It is the therapy upon which Mindful Teen is based.

“Mindful Teen produces life-preserving outcomes,” says Dr. Kim. “We have been collecting and analyzing data since 2016, when we implemented comprehensive DBT-A. We’ve seen significant reductions in suicide attempts, self-injury, emergency department visits, and days in psychiatric inpatient care.”



The focus of DBT-A is to teach mindfulness, emotional regulation, distress tolerance, interpersonal effectiveness, and middle path skills as alternatives to life-threatening behaviors. The Mindful Teen program weaves these skills through individual therapy, an 18-week multi-family skills training group, 24/7 phone coaching, and a consultation team for providers.

In 2018, Dr. Kim and co-author Janine Galione, PhD, published their findings on the significant improvement of Mindful Teen participants in Brown University’s Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter. While the clinical trials at Bradley were not randomized—every patient in the program was enrolled to evaluate treatment gains—the research contributed significantly to the field, says Dr. Kim, and that’s important.

“We’re helping these kids build lives worth living. That’s our overall goal.”