



Building Bright Tomorrows... Today

Spring 2018



Straight from the Director

Welcome to the spring edition of our newsletter. Spring is a time of renewal, growth and hope. Hope is such a powerful emotion. It embraces the possibility of change, moves us past negative experiences or situations, and can propel us forward when we might procrastinate or hesitate. Our clients and staff hold hope in their hearts every day. We acknowledge the challenges and focus our energy on actions, thoughts, and tools that build the skills we need. We try out new ways of thinking that builds healthier, stronger, positive relationships with those around us.

The skills training described in this issue is a very practical tool, built on the notion that what we often think of as bad or uncooperative behavior is often a sign of lagging skills. For example:

- Emotional skills like the ability to express anger in a safe way or ask for what you need in an appropriate way
- Thinking skills such as the ability to read and give meaning to body language and facial expressions in another person
- Group skills like sharing, respecting another's physical space, and taking turns

All of us have lagging skills at one time or another. I think of my first years living in New Zealand. Having grown up in Germany, my school English was unpolished and I regularly coined phrases that left my counterparts perplexed or laughing. With practice, I got better and the blunders are now very occasional.

Thank you for supporting our work—standing alongside children and their families, as they embrace hope for a better future and work together to learn new skills. Their work is often difficult. The emotional support they receive from all of us is one of the pillars that keeps them going. Together we create a stronger, inclusive and accepting community.

I wish you a wonderful time, enjoying the beauty of spring and early summer.

**-Bettina Schempff
Executive Director**



Trainer and child using dancing as a coping skill

Skills Training at Old Mill Center

In order to serve a diverse range of clients, Old Mill Center offers a variety of counseling options for children and teens. One of the most versatile of these is skills training. Skills training teaches children individual skills for emotional regulation, social skills, communication skills, and other coping strategies that contribute to mental health. Skills training benefits the child, and also the entire community: it allows the child to better communicate with family members, peers, teachers, and anyone else with whom they interact.

Used in combination with traditional therapy, skills training can help children learn to cope with everyday situations and big emotions that could otherwise be overwhelming. Clients are typically referred to skills trainers by a licensed therapist.

One of the biggest advantages of skills training is that the trainers are portable

and can act as the therapist's eyes and ears outside the office and in between therapy sessions. They work with children in their normal environments, including schools, homes, and organizations like the Boys and Girls Club. This allows for natural interaction with the child and gives the trainer a chance to help implement new skills during stressful situations when the child needs them most. If a child forgets their coping strategies in a stressful moment, the skills trainer is there to help them interrupt the escalation cycle before things get out of hand. In short, they're able to provide real time, real world support.

Skills trainers often use games and other forms of play to help teach emotional literacy and to facilitate meaningful conversation between children and their peers. They also employ a variety of different tools such as fidget toys, calming jars, art, or music, to teach skills related to specific behaviors. Treatment is personalized based on the child's personal needs and goals.

**Skills training is all
about identifying
emotions and utilizing
safe, healthy, adaptive
self-interventions to deal
with them in the moment.**

Trainers also focus on “teaching the teachers”—coaching adults on how to best support the child's mental health and skills goals. Because they are already familiar with the child's strengths and specific needs, skills trainers can serve as advocates for their

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Health & Happiness

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clients, helping to strengthen the child's caregiver network by connecting with teachers, parents, and therapists. They can even help parents collaborate better with their kids at home, using play to strengthen parent-child attachment or

"Since I'm familiar with his strengths and needs through the time we spend together, I'm able to provide interventions that are effective and timely."

**-Alice Alexandrescu,
OMC Skills Trainer**

finding mutually beneficial solutions to familial issues.

Though skills training remains a relatively unfamiliar option to most, it holds tremendous value as part of a comprehensive treatment program. Old Mill Center currently employs four trainers who work closely with outpatient therapists both in our facility and out in the community.

Mingling coping techniques with play and turning stressful situations into teachable moments, skills trainers are often the link between the child's world and the therapist's goals, providing an approachable way to help kids adopt new life skills.

Here's a coping skill you can try at home!

Tucker Turtle Technique

Step 1: Recognize that you feel angry.

Step 2: Stop!

Step 3: Go into your shell. Take 3 deep breaths, and think calm, coping thoughts.

Step 4: Come out of shell when you're calm and thinking of a solution.



The Importance of Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is important to a child's development and can help establish a lifetime of healthy behaviors, through gained motor competency and increased physical activity. Outdoor play can differ from other forms of preschooler exercise or activities, since it is often **child-initiated** providing a different level of engagement. Beyond improving health, there are many learning opportunities from actively engaged learners in an outdoor environment.

Nervous about your four-year-old scaling the climbing wall? Don't be. Preschoolers who are risk-takers during outdoor play are actively engaged in mastering important skills needed to evaluate risk. By effectively evaluating

risk, children stay safer. Children will problem solve to discover safe jumping distances, climbing heights, and improve their speed and mobility, becoming safe natural explorers of their environment.

As children are exploring the outdoor play space, **getting dirty is also important.** Nature-based play offers children hands-on, authentic learning opportunities. Children can get up and close with a lady bug, discovering this six-legged insect. Splashing in a mud puddle starts laying a foundation for future education in hydrology. **Outdoor play is more than just children going down a slide.** By supporting outdoor play, we are supporting our children in establishing healthy behaviors and promoting learning.

*-Kelly Hoke
Parent of Hayden Hoke,
OSU Human Development and
Family Studies graduate student*



Top 4 Corvallis Playgrounds:

Avery Park
SW Avery Park Dr

Wildcat Park
2701 NW Satinwood St

Riverbend Park
3530 SE Midvale Dr

Tunison Park
2270 SW Butterfield Dr
via Valley Parent Magazine / Yelp

The Community Speaks

A note from Jerry & Beckie Duerksen Why We Give

In 1980, Beckie and I began supporting Old Mill Center. We believe in the vision and the mission to help keep children safe and give them a chance to thrive. We liked the work that our friend Bev Larson was doing. It seemed innovative, creative, and at the same time so necessary.

The Center continued to grow, adding programs and clientele. Naturally, with that growth, there was a need for continued funding. We have risen to that challenge each year since with financial support.

"We believe in the vision and the mission to help keep children safe and give them a chance to thrive."

We really didn't imagine that we would have a need in our own family for assistance from Old Mill Center, but then our grandson Joseph began struggling with behavioral issues at age 4. We enlisted the aid of Old Mill's staff to help our young grandson identify the triggers that made him act out inappropriately and show him how he could safely release his feelings. Our whole family benefited.

Old Mill continues to grow in a variety of ways to meet the needs in our community. Our grandson has grown into the young man we had hoped. He has the tools to deal with daily life, and a sense of normalcy. We are so grateful.

We give because we believe in Old Mill's work, and we have seen the growth in the programs, the growth in our grandson, and the need for growth in funding. We encourage our community to join us in giving to Old Mill Center. Together we improve the lives of children and families.

-Jerry Duerksen

reprinted from April 2016 newsletter



Jerry Duerksen & his granddaughter Eesa at the 2017 Annual Auction

UPDATE: Duerksen and Associates continues to grow their support and to offer incentives for others to join them. In 2017 they purchased a new vehicle for Old Mill Center to raffle off, challenging others with matching donations. The car raffle proceeds to the Center were just under \$40,000, helping to support our work in our Relief Nursery outreach program, specifically designed for children designated as high risk for child abuse and neglect. This year they have done the same, offering the Center a new vehicle to raffle and encouraging their clients to get involved with additional donation matches. They are not only encouraging more giving to the Center, they are exposing many more community members to the work and the impact that Old Mill Center has in our community. Additionally, Jerry and Beckie's son Steve and his wife Dawn have begun to make their own mark in supporting Old Mill Center and other local youth organizations. They are true givers and they challenge you to join them!

Get involved!
Visit www.oldmillcenter.org.

Enjoying your golden years?

Here is one way to contribute to your favorite charity:

Required Minimum Distribution

The IRS requires that you start taking withdrawals from your qualified retirement accounts (IRA accounts, 401(k)s, 457 plans and other tax-deferred retirement savings plans like a TSP, 403(b), TSA, SEP, or SIMPLE) once your reach age 70½. This requirement is called a required minimum distribution, or RMD.

Can I direct my RMD to a charity?

You can direct your RMD to a charity, and it will not be reported as taxable income on your tax return. This provision was a temporary provision in the tax code but was made permanent starting in 2016. It is called a "qualified charitable distribution."

This spring we will provide updated information on other ways to offer financial support to the Center. Please see our announcements at www.oldmillcenter.org, and look for our monthly newsletter for tips.

Support for Old Mill Center

"We give locally, where we can see firsthand that our donations are making a difference."

-Marilyn Starker

"Children are our future and must be nurtured. It takes a community to nurture properly."

-Pat and Jay Dixon

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE
MAY 12



Dinner & Auction

Tickets are available online at
www.oldmillcenter.org

Thank you major sponsors!



Wishlist!

- Boys & girls pants, sizes 4T-7
- Laundry/dish soap
- Fabric softener sheets
- Jugs of bubbles
- White & clear glue (by the gallon)
- Construction paper
- Soccer balls, basketballs

Fireside Recital

at Old Mill Center

Sunday May 6th

Berto Boyd
and **Mario Diaz**
Flamenco & Classical Guitar

Tickets are \$65.

Reservations required. Please call 541-757-8068 or visit www.oldmillcenter.org for more information.



WIN A NEW CAR!

Enter to win a
2018 Toyota Rav4 or Subaru Forester!

Tickets \$100 each, only 410 sold



Buy tickets online at
www.oldmillcenter.org

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