

The CARING TOUCH

The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children, Inc.

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Spring 2006

13-Year-Old Head-Strong from the Start

by Donna Payne

To say Alex Payson is determined is an understatement. Just ask her therapists.

The Booneville teen has a will about her that early on may not have served her so well. Her first memories of coming to The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center more than a decade ago are of "playing with the big boat, walking on the balance beam and getting put in time-out."

"She put every therapist through the wringer," Paula Payson recalls about her daughter.

Alex was born two months prematurely and weighed 4 pounds 2 ounces. Because of her early arrival, she was watched closely for developmental delays common with premature infants. But it was while watching Alex around her peers who were already walking that convinced Edward and Paula that something more was going on. While at a party, Paula sought the opinion of a friend, a physical therapist. She concurred with the



Physical Therapist Ming Chidester works with Alex on her balance.

Paysons' suspicion, which was later diagnosed by a neurologist. Alex had cerebral palsy.

Specialists at Arkansas Children's Hospital referred Alex to the Kistler Center, where she began therapy at about 18 months old. It has been a true family affair since. Her mother, father and grandparents all have been involved in her occupational and physical therapy schedule. The family has made the 45-mile trip from Booneville and back as often as three times a week to see Kistler therapists.

While some may look at the Payson family in awe, it is the Kistler family Paula is inspired by.

"Jennifer Kistler – really her whole family – I don't think I've ever been so touched by the giving of a family," Paula says. "This place is like a dream. It has been so inspiring to be associated with their giving nature."

Through the years, the Paysons have seen the progression of the Center, including the move to its current site, the addition of several therapists and the explosion of patients now being cared for.

"It's like a family. I know there has been a lot of change, but the atmosphere never does," Paula says.

Martha Osbun was Alex's first physical therapist at the Kistler Center. Osbun remembers getting a little workout of her own with Alex.

"A lot of times she was determined to not do what I wanted her to do," Osbun says, so she always had to have a separate goal in mind – one that would motivate Alex.

"She was always mischievous but had so many great interests," Osbun recalls. "Alex has always had a strong conviction about things."

Lighthouses was one of them. Once, when Alex was about 7, she went on a family vacation to the Outer Banks and climbed more than 200 steps to the top of Currituck Lighthouse with her mother and father.

"When she first came, she could just stand up and I knew she needed a walker," Osbun



Ming Chidester, Alex and Martha Osbun.

says. "I ordered her a special walker with wheels on it and showed her how to use it.

"She walked right out of it in two weeks," Osbun said. "That was pretty much what Alex was going to be like."

Alex still seems determined to do whatever she chooses, she's just making better choices.

She played basketball for three years, enjoys riding her 4-wheeler on the family farm and loves the challenge of rock wall climbing! She recently made it 20 to 30 feet up a "rock wall" while on vacation with her cousin. She also has participated in activities that on the surface seem recreational but have an underlying therapeutic benefit, such as swimming, massage therapy and horseback riding.

Physical therapist Ming Chidester has been working with Alex for about a year and a half and says she certainly can be mischievous but is smart enough to understand why she comes to the Kistler Center.

"She's very smart," Chidester says. "She's really good with her home program and is very responsible for a 13-year-old."

But that doesn't keep them from having the occasional bean bag fight.

Alex enters a different realm when she talks about animals. She has three golden retrievers, six fish, a 28-year-old horse

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Head-Strong from the Start

named Junior and a pet cow, Gabriel, she saved from certain death. The cow's mother died during birth and it didn't look like he was going to make it. Alex's uncle intended to put the calf down but Alex changed his mind and he let her take it home. Alex bottle-fed Gabriel and talked lovingly to him. She even physically helped hold up his back legs to encourage him to walk – and it worked. Gabriel is now, as they say, healthy as a horse and living happily at the Payson place.

This passion for rehabilitating animals spills over into Alex's TV time. "I enjoy the show called 'Growing Up...' on Animal Planet," Alex says. "They have stories about different animals being rehabilitated."

She obviously knows the value of giving something – or someone – a gentle nudge and, despite that early defiance, she also understands her role in her own therapy. What she does during her time at the Kistler Center is as much training as it is therapy at Alex's age. She must continue her exercises at home for there to be progress. Her mother keeps an exercise chart for Alex and changes the routine enough to keep her from getting complacent. Alex also receives botox

treatments every four months at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

Almost as routine as her exercise regiment is what she calls "the constant questioning of why I am the way I am." Alex has gone to school for the most part with the same children since kindergarten but she says there is always someone new.

"It took all the way through elementary school for me to be accepted," Alex says. There is a slight smile when she tells the near-urban legend of why she walks the way she does. "This boy told someone it was because my dad put my shoes on the wrong feet when I was learning to walk."

Alex and classmate Cody Tabler recently returned from a Junior National Young Leaders Conference in Washington, D.C., where they spent six days learning about leadership skills, touring national monuments and historic sites, attending workshops and learning about and listening to national leaders. This was a huge step for Alex, but maybe a bigger one for her mother. Paula dropped the kids off at the national 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md., and went about her way. All three survived beautifully!



Cutline

Paula says Alex, who is in advanced placement classes and is near the top of her class, has always excelled in school – but has begun to struggle this year. A pretty typical thing to hear from the parent of a middle school student. But as much as there is that is typical about Alex's life, it is her extraordinary determination that has made it that way.

When asked what her reaction will be the day she "graduates" from the Kistler Center, she said, "I'm gonna jump 10 feet in the air!" Does anyone doubt her?



Gregory Kistler

SPEAKING OF FAMILY

Family, by nature, is at the heart of The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children, Inc. Betty and Wayne Kistler's 6-year-old son was struck by a car in 1962, which resulted in a severe head injury that eventually would take his life. They were faced with the task of traveling hundreds, sometimes thousands, of miles to find medical treatment for Gregory.

Gregory's condition improved to the point he was able to attend school, enjoy fishing trips and take walks. But in his teen years that improvement began to slip away. His brain had begun to deteriorate and he died in 1979.

Five years before Gregory's death, Betty and Wayne had the anticipation of a new grandchild. Their youngest daughter, Jennifer, gave birth to Michelle in 1974. Unfortunately, their anticipated joy was mixed with pain. Michelle was born with spina bifida, more commonly known as open spine. Michelle unexpectedly died in October 2003, leaving a void that could only be filled by love and hope for other children.

When Michelle was born, her family was given neither help nor hope. But that was unacceptable. This time Betty and Wayne knew what was ahead for Michelle – and Jennifer. This time they were wiser. This time the care would come to the child instead of the other way around.

Armed with a determination that only parents – and grandparents – can muster when a child is in need, they went to the community. There were skeptics who, even in the mid-1970's, saw little need to

provide care for physically disabled children. Families were provided with sympathy but little else. Even pediatric wheelchairs were scarce.

But in 1978, this Fort Smith firefighter and homemaker founded The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children. They not only wanted to provide for Michelle but also for others in search of help and hope.

Could they have even dreamed of the results of their determination? Thousands of children – and their families – have entered the door Betty and Wayne opened for them. A door that first opened into a room in the old Sparks nursing school building that held therapy equipment Wayne had crafted himself and had a single physical therapist caring for a handful of children.

These people were not medical professionals. They were not wealthy, did not sit on boards of big businesses or have contacts at the country club. They were common grandparents who did an uncommon task. They fought for the right for their grandchild to have a better life than what the world was offering her and improved the lives of countless others along the way.

Betty and Wayne Kistler, we thank you.

by Donna Payne – a parent who first became associated with The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children when her son Blake was born prematurely.



Betty & Wayne Kistler

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September 9, 2005 - March 3, 2006

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Corrections

If we have reported your gift incorrectly or failed to include your gift, please call Kathie at the Kistler Center at 785-4677. Thank you for your support!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS



HAVE IT YOUR WAY™

Burger King - Receipt Drive

March 19th to April 30th

Burger King wants you to Have It Your Way and help Kistler Kids too!

The Kistler Center will receive 10¢ for every receipt of food or drink purchased at any Burger King restaurant in Fort Smith, Van Buren, Alma, and Poteau. Just place your receipts in the collection box at the counter or ask the drive-through associate to place your receipt in the box for you. An additional collection box is available at the Kistler Center. The event is sponsored by **Neubauer Restaurants Corporation**.



All You Can Eat Pancake Breakfast

April 9th

What a yummy way to help raise money for the Kistler Center! Enjoy freshly made pancakes, sausage, biscuits & gravy, and your choice of beverage on Palm Sunday, **April 9th from 7:00-11:00 a.m.** for only \$4. Children 12 and under can begin their day with a great breakfast for only \$2. **Sponsored by Sacred Heart of Mary Church**, the event address is McNerney Parish Center, 1301 Frank Street in Barling.



**For event information,
call (479) 785-4677**

**April is Occupational
Therapy Month.**

Spend a Night in the Caribbean without leaving town!

May 20th - 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.



Come join **Peggy Weidman, Honorary Chairperson**, and the Caribbean planning committee for loads of fun at **A Night in the Caribbean** to be held at Beverly Enterprises **Saturday night, May 20th**. Get a great deal on silent and live auction items while supporting the children of the Kistler Center. A variety of items will be auctioned by auctioneer Gerald Hyman, including weekend getaways, fine art, jewelry and more.

At just \$60 per ticket (\$45 of which is tax-deductible) you can enjoy great food, including Bahaman-basted roast pork by **Chef Mickey Sellard** and a cascading chocolate fountain with a variety of fruit and other goodies for dipping in the chocolate! An open bar will be available throughout the night.

Zero Mountain, Inc. is sponsoring the award-winning musicians of the **Barrio Band**, who will perform their unique blend of American, Caribbean and Latin Jazz. Funky front man Al "Papa Rap" Lopez will even throw in a little Hip Hop Salsa! This is a musical experience you won't want to miss ... **bring your dancing shoes!**

There will be an opportunity to enter and win in the **Drawdown** event that evening. A Drawdown is a donation drawing in which the last name drawn wins. In this case, half the cash pot will be the prize while the other half benefits the Kistler Center. Cash Drawdown tickets will be available at the event for \$20 each, or for \$15 each if purchased in advance with event tickets.

Make your reservations early! Special corporate tables are available for businesses or groups of eight with party favors, listing in newspaper advertising, and eight cash drawdown tickets. Please call the Kistler Center for more information and reservations.



19th Annual Classic Truckers & Cruisers Show

July 15th & 16th

Classy trucks, colorful cars, shiny motorcycles, and mighty big-rigs will cover Columbus Acres for a two-day judged event. Among others, there will be trophies for



Best of Show, Manager's Choice, Top Three; and for the third year, the **Michelle Kistler Memorial Award** will go to the best big-rig. Registration is \$20 before July 3rd and \$25 the day of the show. Admission donations will be collected at the gate. Bring your family for a day of fun - there will be kids' activities Saturday afternoon and concessions will be available throughout the weekend. The event is sponsored by the **Classic Truckers & Cruisers Club**.

If you would like to become a member of the Classic Truckers & Cruisers Club or to volunteer at the show, please call Donna Hicks at 452-7299.

**April 23-29 is National
Volunteer Week**

**May is Better Hearing and
Speech Month.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Miller Lite Open

August 12th & 13th

A fun way to spend a weekend and help raise money for the Kistler Center! This annual **4-Man Scramble** golf tournament is sponsored by **Burford Distributing**. The event will be held on August 12th & 13th at **Deer Trails Golf Course**, Fort Chaffee. **Mulligans** will be sold during Saturday check-in and donation drawing tickets for great items will be available all day Saturday. The event will conclude with a **Calcutta** on Saturday night at Fort Chaffee Eagles Club. Call for more information or to be a sponsor.

- *Green Sponsor, \$150, does not include a player for the tournament*
- *Team Entry Fee, \$240 includes a team of four players for the tournament*
- *Tee Sponsor, \$450, includes two players for the tournament*
- *Hole Sponsor, \$750, includes a team of four players for the tournament*



Cell Phone Drive

On-going

Take that old Cell phone out of retirement and put it to work! Participate in the used cell phone drive.



Cell Phone Donation

The Kistler Center will receive a monetary donation for each working cell phone donated. The better the phone, the more money we will receive. Older model phones may not generate any funds, but they will be recycled properly.

All donations are tax-deductible. Consult your tax advisor to determine the value. Donation receipts may be generated at www.cellular donation.org.

To donate, please bring your used cell phone to the Kistler Center, Moore Dental Care, Rhodes Chevrolet, or Sutherlands. Don't forget to erase the address book and any personal information.

Printer Cartridge Collection Drive

On-going

A great way to help raise funds for the Kistler Center with little effort and no cost!

Collect used Canon, Dell, HP, and Lexmark printer cartridges from friends, family, and your office to help Kistler's Kids. To donate, bring your cartridges to the Kistler Center, Moore Dental Care, Rhodes Chevrolet, or Sutherlands. Please put cartridges in a plastic bag.

The Kistler Center will receive \$2 for every used cartridge collected.

To request a collection box for either of our on-going events, call Kathie at 479-785-4677.



For event information, call (479) 785-4677

SHARING THE SPIRIT

Leo and Barbara Anhalt remember well the dream Betty Kistler told to them many years ago – she told them of her dream for a therapy center for children. There were two things that she stressed – first and foremost was that patients of the center would receive the **best** treatment possible for their particular needs. The second was that **no child** would be turned away because of his or her family's financial circumstances. That dream became a reality in The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children, Inc.

The Anhalts wanted to do something to assure the continued success of the Center as it meets the Kistler family goals. That is why they have transferred the proceeds of a life insurance policy to the Kistler Center in the amount of \$250,000. Thank you, Leo and Barbara Anhalt, for your generous gift and your tireless support of the Kistler Center.



Barbara



Leo

You Too Can Help

The future of our children should inspire us to be our best selves, to live our best life possible. One way we can do that is by sharing our assets with those who need help. Planned giving ensures that financial gifts are used to the best possible advantage, to

benefit the greatest possible number of people. At the Kistler Center, planned giving can be a gift of any amount, either current or deferred, during your lifetime or after it. The three easiest strategies for planned giving are a gift annuity, a provision in your retirement plan, or a final bequest in your will. You may also contribute to the Kistler Center through a charitable remainder trust, a charitable lead trust, insurance, or a life estate.

Children touch all of our lives. What a better gift than to help children live their best possible life? What a better legacy? What grateful recipients! A CPA, attorney, or financial planner can answer your questions. Look into it today. Your gift can make an incredible positive difference for many lifetimes to come.

May 20, 2006

Mark Your Calendars



OPPORTUNITIES

Currently seeking speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist. For more information, contact Jennifer Kistler at 479-785-4677. www.kistlercenter.org



The Michelle Kistler Memorial Endowment Fund

In loving memory of Michelle Kistler, The Gregory Kistler Center has established a special and unique endowment fund. This ongoing endowment, through its earned interest, will be used to help fund needed therapy to more of our special children so we can continue our philosophy of never turning a child away for financial reasons. Additionally, as the Center's board directs, some earnings may be directed to operational activities to sustain and grow the Kistler Center's ability to provide the most up-to-date physical, occupational and/or speech therapy possible for children. Contributions may be made as a one time gift or spread over three to five years. Won't you become one of our Charter Benefactors?



Kistler Center Board President, Gerry McEvoy, accepts a \$10,000 donation from State Representative Jim Medley. Rep. Medley secured these monies from the General Improvement Fund.

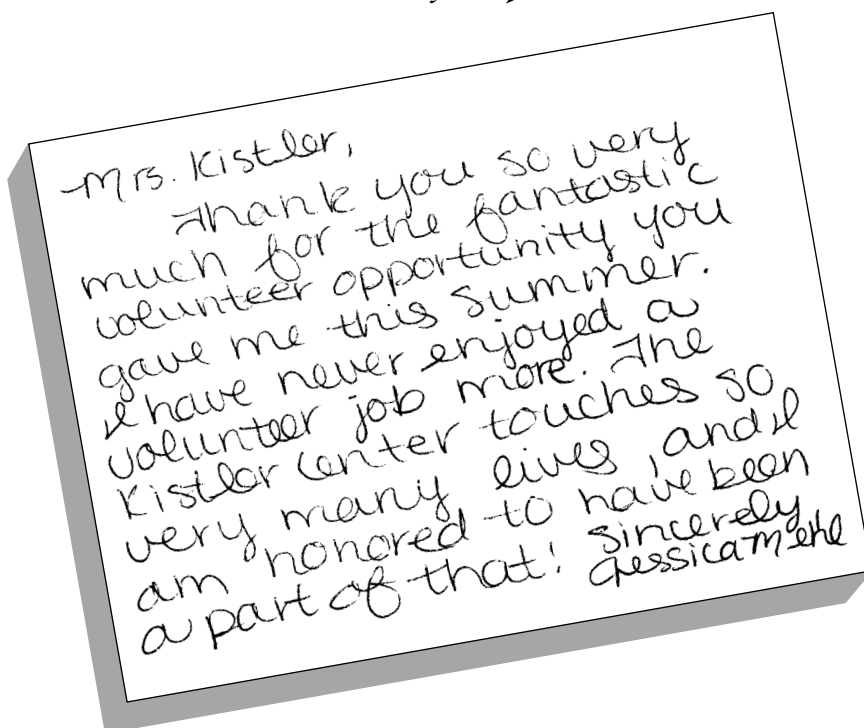
One Size Fits All



Have you been searching for just the right gift? One with special meaning? Then consider making a donation to the Kistler Center in honor of a friend or family member. That "gift" will not only mean a lot to the recipient, but it will also mean continued care for children in need.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

"Volunteers are not paid because they are worthless, but because they are priceless."



WISH LIST

- Construction paper
 - Crayola or RoseArt markers
 - Don't Wake Daddy game
 - Electrical tape
 - File cabinets, new or used
 - Industrial paper shredder, confetti type
 - M&M's, plain - small packs
 - Oatmeal - individual packets, flavored
 - Playdoh - Playdoh brand only
 - Razor scooter
 - Starburst candy
 - Toothbrushes, child size soft
 - Tootsie Rolls
 - Uno Attack Game

 - Specialty items:
 - Hand weights ~ \$25 each
 - Switch toys ~ \$50 each
- For more information call Jennifer
785-4677

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| • Reading, writing readiness | • Equipment recommendation | 479-785-4677 |
| • Aquatic therapy | • Equipment loan locker | www.kistlercenter.org |

The Gregory Kistler Center accepts and acknowledges gifts and memorials in honor of friends and loved ones.

Enclosed: *In Honor/Memory Of (if you wish)*

_____ \$25	Name _____
_____ \$50	Address _____
_____ \$100	City/State/Zip _____
_____ Other	We will send notification of your contribution to the family.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State/Zip _____

Please mail your contribution to
 The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center • 3304 South M Street • Fort Smith, AR 72903

I (we) will support **The Michelle Kistler Memorial Endowment Fund**, that will be used to help fund needed therapy to more of our special children so we can continue our philosophy of never turning a child away for financial reasons. I (we) commit to this fund a total of \$_____ to be given as follows.

- (Please indicate one.)** One-time 3-years 5-years
- \$_____ Monthly \$_____ Semiannually
- \$_____ Quarterly \$_____ Annually

Beginning Date: _____/_____/_____ Enclosed with pledge card \$ _____

Please Print Name/Names _____

Mailing Address _____ Phone (_____) _____

City/State/Zip _____

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Please consider the Kistler Center in your will.



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