

# The CARING TOUCH

The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children, Inc.

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## Therapy More Than Child's Play

by Nancy Steel

Taylor Stewart is an appealing, energetic 18-month-old with loving parents, a 5-year-old brother Brandon and a special challenge. Brian and Kimberly Stewart's daughter weighed 6 pounds, 4 ounces when she was born. Kimberly's pregnancy was uneventful and Taylor was delivered by cesarean section due to her position at birth.

A series of events following that joyful event led Taylor to The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center in Fort Smith, where she receives physical, occupational and speech therapy five days a week. Kimberly and Brian have worked out a schedule that allows one of them to take her to the 45-minute therapy sessions.

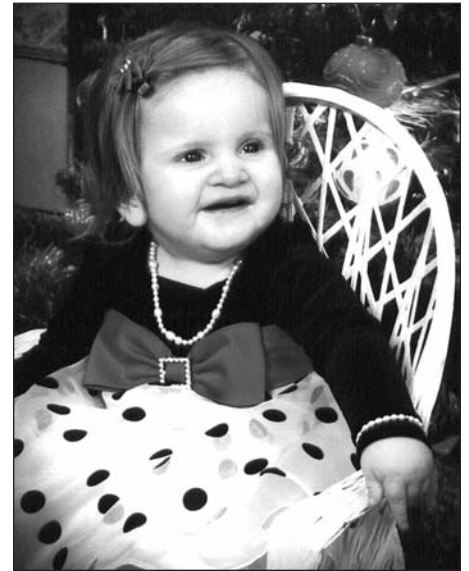
"We're really very lucky because we both have jobs that let us bring Taylor," said Kimberly who takes Taylor to her 8:15 on Friday mornings. Kimberly is an accountant with David Hedges CPA in

Spiro, where she has a flexible work schedule. Brian works second shift at Baldor, which allows him to take Taylor to her 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. appointments.

For the first few months, Taylor's progress seemed a bit delayed to Kimberly and by the time Taylor was due for her six-month well baby checkup, Kimberly said that Taylor was late pulling up to a sitting position. Although Taylor seemed to have no vision or hearing problems, she had difficulty holding her head up and was not yet rolling over or sitting by herself. In addition, Taylor struggled when she was placed on her stomach.

**"It looks like Taylor's playing, but for her playing is the way she learns," Kimberly said.**

Kimberly said Taylor's doctor suggested that she could benefit from an evaluation at Arkansas Children's Hospital in Little Rock. As a result, Taylor underwent a CT (computed tomography) scan and an MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) that revealed some mild abnormalities. After consultation with a neurosurgeon in the hospital's neurology department, the Stewarts were told that one side of Taylor's brain was very slightly smaller than the other. The difference in size was one-half a



Taylor Stewart

centimeter, or about the thickness of five credit cards stacked on top of each other. Because Taylor was so young and the difference in size was slight compared to the total size of her brain, the Stewarts were told to take a wait-and-see approach until Taylor was reevaluated when she was 12 months old.

In addition to all the joy of her first birthday, Taylor's 12-month anniversary also triggered a return to Arkansas Children's Hospital and testing at the hospital's Section of Genetics and Metabolics. There, Taylor was found to have developmental delays due to Trisomy 9, a defect in one of the 46 chromosomes that contain DNA, the genetic instructions used in the development and functioning of all known living organisms including humans.

To fully understand the impact of Trisomy 9 would require years of advanced education and training, but basically Taylor has three portions of



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## Therapy More Than Child's Play *continued*

chromosome 9 instead of the usual two parts (one from each parent). There is no known reason why Trisomy 9 occurs and the abnormality can produce a very wide range of symptoms that vary greatly in severity, but Taylor is fortunate to have a lesser involvement, said her mother.

She is also fortunate, Kimberly said, to have the therapy offered at the Kistler Center. "They are just wonderful. We can already see improvements in her in just six months. It's really an emotional roller coaster to have a child with Trisomy 9," Kimberly said. "Some days everything's going good and then some days it seems like you're back at square one. We just keep at it."

What the Stewarts "keep at" begins with Kistler Center physical therapists Ming Chidester and Martha Osbun, speech-language pathologist Charity Rowden and occupational therapists Ashley Samuelson and Sarah Pond.

"Taylor has a tendency to have low muscle tone, and that makes it harder for her to work against gravity," said Martha Osbun, a long-time physical therapist at the Kistler Center who is semi-retired.

"We work (with Taylor) on strengthening exercises and on balance when she's sitting and standing. She likes to sit and to stand but she doesn't know how to get from lying to sitting, sitting to standing. So we're teaching transitions, where she's actually participating," Osbun said as she deftly maneuvered Taylor's hips and legs to assist her from sitting to standing in the Kistler Center's large physical therapy room.

To the casual observer it might appear that Osbun is doing all the work but in reality Taylor is pulling, pushing and leaning and Osbun is facilitating the way she moves, teaching and reinforcing each movement to enhance and maximize Taylor's abilities. "It looks like Taylor's playing, but for her playing

is the way she learns," Kimberly said.

Due to Trisomy 9, Taylor's trunk muscles are weaker than normal and she tires easily, so each therapy session is broken down into smaller sessions so that Taylor gets the most benefit.

"Her parents understand that Taylor tires quickly, so they know she can't benefit fully if her therapy is back-to-back," said Osbun. "That's why Taylor comes to the Center five days a week." Osbun said that Kimberly and Brian are taught the same techniques to use at home with Taylor and that the learning process is ongoing throughout the day as Taylor plays, babbles and learns to move about more independently.

"We provide the building blocks so that Taylor can improve the strength in her trunk, have better sitting balance, and transition from one position to the other. Her trunk strength has to improve for her to do all of these things so we're working on her having abs of steel," she said as she demonstrated one of Taylor's exercises.

In occupational therapy, the focus is more on Taylor's hands and using them to do daily tasks like picking up things, moving food from plate to mouth and the skills needed to put on her clothes.

"The number one occupation of children is playing, and our work involves teaching Taylor to use her hands in a purposeful manner," said occupational therapist Ashley Samuelson, who noted that Taylor had made "tremendous progress" in fine motor skills in the past week.

Clapping is a major component of Taylor's current therapy, said Samuelson. "She's definitely made sizable steps forward with clapping other's hands, and the next step will be for her to bring her own hands together. She's also better with finger-feeding herself with small pieces of food," Samuelson continued. "Right now her mid-range goal is to have her picking up dry cereal to eat and pick up her

sippy-cup and put it in her mouth. I don't see any reason why she won't have a good quality of life and do many things on her own."

Speech-language pathologist Charity Rowden is equally optimistic about Taylor's outlook. "She's focusing more on the communication part of speech, watching my mouth when I talk, even touching my mouth while I am speaking."

Rowden said that the ability to communicate involves much more than simply learning how to make sounds. "We work with Taylor on oral motor exercises, getting her to be more aware of her mouth and tongue. That involves muscle tone, so in one of her exercises we use a tool called the Z-vibe, a kind of probe that vibrates and has different fittings with different textures. This helps her learn how to use her mouth."

Taylor's normally sunny disposition remains intact as she meets with therapists and learns the basic skills that will determine her life course. As most any 18-month-old, she asserts herself and demonstrates her early search for independence and identity, serenely unaware that her path may be more difficult than many of her peers. For her parents and her therapists, her sheer perseverance is a very positive sign.

"As a parent, I may not see improvement as much because I'm with her every day," said Kimberly, but she wouldn't be where she is now without the therapies she's getting. They've made a 100 percent difference. I know it's working.

"Taylor is much stronger, she babbles a lot more and she's very alert," said Kimberly. "She's very opinionated in what she wants. She knows what she wants. The Kistler therapists are giving her the building blocks to get there."

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September 17, 2009 – March 10, 2010

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September 17, 2009 – March 10, 2010

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

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**Currently seeking a Physical Therapist.**

For more information, contact Jennifer Kistler at 479.785.4677

[www.kistlercenter.org](http://www.kistlercenter.org)

Special  
Letters  
From  
Our  
Friends



Dear Kistler Staff,

I want to thank you all for allowing me to volunteer and shadow at the Kistler Center this summer. Everyone has been so nice to me and I've enjoyed getting to know all of you. This has definitely been one of my favorite volunteer experiences and I want to thank you all for making it so enjoyable. I wish you all the best! The Kistler Center is a lucky place to have  
Love,  
Ann

Dear Kistler Center,

Thank you so much for letting us borrow the wheel chair while Maggie had her long east on. It meant so much for her to be able to go to school and be with her friends.

Please accept this donation to continue the good work you do in our community to improve the lives of others in need.

Thank you,  
The Allen family

Please find enclosed our check for \$ [redacted] in honor of our great-granddaughters - Allie + Aubree Odle.

Thank You for the work you do with our precious twins and all children.  
The promotional video is wonderful! I would like to purchase 4 if you have available - if not as many as I can. Please advise price & I will send another check for videos.  
Thank you,  
Mike + Carol Key

# MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## SATURDAY, MAY 1, 2010



Come join the fun at *A Night in the Caribbean* to be held at Golden Living on Saturday, May 1st at 6:00 p.m. At just \$60 a ticket (\$45 of which is tax deductible) you can enjoy great food, including Bahaman-basted roast pork by Chef Mickey Sellard and a cascading fountain of chocolate. An open bar will be available throughout the evening featuring mojitos by **Top Shelf Bartenders**.

**Zero Mountain, Inc.** is sponsoring the electrifying sound of the **Salsa Rhythm Project** musicians. This Salsa/Latin jazz group includes percussionists, horns, and singers and features Latin dance such as salsa, mambo, rumba, and merengue. Even people who don't typically dance can't seem to resist getting up on the dance floor and moving to the music. This is a musical experience you won't want to miss – bring your dancing shoes!

You can 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 **Tim Dunn**, including weekend getaways, fine art, and tickets for two to the Caribbean on **American Airlines**.

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 reserved event tickets.

Seating is limited, so make your reservations early. Special corporate tables are available for businesses or groups of eight, with advertising for the corporate sponsor, special gifts, and eight Drawdown tickets included. **Please call Kathie at the Kistler Center for information and reservations, 785-4677.**

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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## 23rd Annual Classic Truckers & Cruisers Greenwood Car Show

April 24, 2010 - One Day Show!

Classy trucks, colorful cars, shiny motorcycles, and more will cover the Square in Greenwood for this judged event. There will be trophies for Best of Show, Manager's Choice, Top Three, and more. Early registration is \$20 before April 16th and \$25 the day of the show. Donations will be collected throughout the day. Bring your family for a day of fun – there will be kids' activities Saturday afternoon.



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 479-452-7299.

Sponsored by the Classic Truckers & Cruisers Club,

[www.classictruckersandcruisers.com](http://www.classictruckersandcruisers.com).



## 7th Annual Burger King Receipt Drive

April 1st to April 30th

Burger King wants you to "Have It Your Way" in April 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 Burger King 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 **YEAR ROUND** at the Kistler Center. The event is sponsored by **Neubauer Restaurants Corporation**.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**A Night in the Caribbean**  
Saturday, May 1, 2010



Coming In May!

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Kistler Center Executive Director Jennifer Kistler, presents a plaque of appreciation to Joe Dickinson(L) and Kevin Dickinson(R).



## The Michelle Kistler Memorial Endowment Fund

In loving memory of Michelle Kistler, the Board of Directors of The Gregory Kistler Treatment Center For Children, Inc., has established an Endowment Fund. This endowment, through its earnings, will be used to help fund needed therapy to more of our special children so the Board of Directors can continue the philosophy of never turning a child away for financial reasons. Additionally, as the Kistler 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 occupational therapy, physical therapy, and/or speech-language therapy possible for children. Contributions may be made as a single gift or spread over several years.



## Cell Phone Drive & Printer Cartridge Drive

*On-going*

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

Instead of throwing out that old printer cartridge, bring it into the Kistler Center. Collect cartridges from your friends, family or at work and help raise money for the Center.

The Kistler Center will receive a monetary donation for each working cell phone and printer cartridge 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. We will receive \$3 in-store credit from Staples for each used printer cartridge donated. We are now able to accept laser cartridges as well.

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. Please put printer cartridges in a bag to keep things neat and clean. All donations are tax-deductible. Consult your tax advisor to determine the value. Thank you!



## SHARING THE SPIRIT



### Butterfield Place Waffle Bar Breakfast

### Kistler Indoor Triathlon at Marvin Altman Fitness Center



### Charleston Car Club Car Show



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