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Education... for a Lifetime

GPA today

News and information about Garfield Park Academy

Fall 2011

Addicted to Success

Mitchell Cohen lights up with a sly smile when he describes himself as 'an addict.' "I am addicted," he jokes, "but it is not what you think."



GPA Alumnus, Mitchell Cohen

The 21-year old college senior is studying marketing and business at Arcadia University. He

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Linking Research with Practice

It has only been a decade since the No Child Left Behind Act required schools to use scientific-based research for programs and teaching methods, but at Garfield

Park Academy, science, evidence and data have always been important. In fact, all of the teaching strategies, clinical services and therapeutic approaches used at Garfield Park Academy have a solid foundation in research and have been supported by scientific literature.

"Since we opened our doors in 1993, our work has been rooted in cutting edge educational research and best practice," said Dr. Steven Morse, Superintendent at Garfield Park Academy. "Our commitment to evidence-based intervention is a critical element that sets us apart."



The centerpiece is The Teaching Family Model, an internationally recognized,

scientifically validated cognitive behavioral model for intervention. It has been selected by the American Psychological Association as a "Model Program in Service Delivery in Child and Family Mental Health." Garfield Park Academy is the first school-based program in the nation to be certified by the Teaching Family Association

The data-driven Teaching Family Model is highly student-centered and emphasizes self-determination. "We collect data throughout the day and across settings to identify the cause of a student's ineffective behavior," said Dr. Dale Starcher, Clinical Director of Garfield Park Academy. "Our positive behavior supports program relies on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), and offers cognitive behavioral supports to ensure that each student

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Automotive Program Receives National Accreditation

Garfield Park Academy's automotive program has received accreditation from the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation (NATEF), and The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE), making it the only state-approved private school for students with disabilities in New Jersey to have an accredited program. The program underwent rigorous evaluation using nationally accepted standards in areas such as instruction, facilities and equipment.

"This is great news for automotive-minded young people and their parents," said Donald Seyfer, NATEF Chair. "Because the program increases cooperation between local education and industry leaders, it gives added assurance that Garfield Park Academy's graduates will be employable entry-level technicians."

Upon completion of the evaluation, NATEF recommended that Garfield Park Academy be accredited by The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). ASE is a national non-profit



organization which tests and certifies repair technicians, in addition to accrediting automotive training programs.

"The accreditation is an important part of the quality transition services offered by Garfield Park Academy," said Dr. Steven Morse, Superintendent. "Our students will be assured of a quality education, and shop owners who hire our graduates will be assured of getting quality job applicants."

Linking Research with Practice *continued from cover*

learns new, more appropriate ways to solve problems."

Peggy McElgunn, Esq., Executive Director of the Teaching Family Association said, "Garfield Park Academy represents the gold standard in positive behavioral supports for students with disabilities. Their commitment to excellence is unsurpassed."

Other interventions and supports used at Garfield Park Academy, including Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Biofeedback, are backed by a growing body of literature to support their

effectiveness in school settings with students who are at-risk.

Accreditation and certification by external organizations reflects the Academy's commitment to continuous growth and improvement. Garfield Park Academy is one of only a handful of special education private schools to earn accreditation from the Middle State's Association, America's premier regional accreditation agency.

The Association recognizes excellence in educational quality, planning, and growth in student performance and provides rigorous standards of educational quality.



"Since we opened our doors in 1993, our work has been rooted in cutting edge educational research and best practice.

It is our commitment to evidence-based intervention that sets us apart."

*- Dr. Steven Morse,
Superintendent*

Addicted to Success: Mitchell Cohen

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is on the Dean's list and was awarded an academic scholarship. Before coming to Arcadia, he earned a degree in Culinary Arts at the internationally recognized Johnson and Wales University.

"People have always told me I was smart, but I never believed them. Now, I have a 3.7 grade point average, and am disappointed if I get less than an 'A'. I have come to expect the best from myself," said Cohen. "I am addicted to success."

This spring, Cohen wrote to GPA to express his gratitude for the support and intervention he received when he was a student there. "The school turned me around. They changed the expectations I have for myself," he said.

When Cohen was in 5th grade, he was placed out of district because of his behavior. "I was very argumentative and defiant," he recalled. "I did not have much respect for authority."

Cohen recalled coming to GPA with "a chip on his shoulder" and described how he got into a fight on his first day. "The teachers took me aside, but they did not yell at me. They talked to me, and made me feel more comfortable, and they really cared."

"The school helped me learn to be accountable for my own actions," said Cohen. "I learned that whatever I do - good or bad - has a consequence."

"The social worker was right in our classroom, and every week, I got to talk to her alone," said Cohen "And when our

"The school helped me learn to be accountable for my own actions. I learned that whatever I do - good or bad - has a consequence."

- Mitchell Cohen



Mitchell Cohen with Tony Lorine, School Counselor, during Mitchell Cohen's recent visit to GPA.

whole class met with her as a group, I realized that we all have problems, but we are all responsible for our own actions."

After more than three years at the Academy, it became clear to staff that Cohen had developed a set of skills that would allow him to do well in his local public school. Social workers reached out to Cohen's case manager to advocate for his return. Although initially reluctant, the local district eventually agreed and Cohen returned to his home school in the middle of 8th grade.

Today, Cohen is preparing for a career in food services marketing and sales. Proud of his accomplishments, he is also sometimes surprised by his own success. "I never thought I would be in the position I am in now, but here I am, thanks to Garfield Park Academy!"

Equine Program Expands on Campus

Thanks to generous private donations, GPA's Equine Assisted Psychotherapy (EAP) program has moved onto the School's Willingboro campus. Last spring, an 8,000 square foot paddock was erected on a grassy field behind the school, allowing the therapy horses to come directly to the campus. Equine Assisted Psychotherapy is a collaborative effort between a licensed therapist and a horse professional, both of whom are certified in EAP. Students do not ride or groom the horses, rather, EAP relies on developing working relationships with the horses, a process that builds skills



in non-verbal communication, assertiveness, creative thinking, problem solving, personal responsibility, confidence, and positive attitude.

GPA's unique program has been profiled in the New York Times.

Education... *for a Lifetime*



GPA's Compass Program to present Training on the Educational Needs of Students with Brain Injury

What: Understanding the Needs of Students with Brain Injury
When: Friday, October 14, 2011 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Where: CNNH, 250 Haddonfield-Berlin Road, Gibbsboro, NJ
Who: Dale Starcher, Ph.D., Clinical Director, Garfield Park Academy & George Neimann, Ph.D., Director of Clinical Development, CNNH

Experts in the field of brain injury will discuss intellectual, cognitive, sensory, communication and psychosocial difficulties associated with brain injury in school aged children and youth. Participants will learn about comprehensive assessment, and evidence-based special educational services, supports and accommodations that students with brain injury often require as they re-enter school.

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for this event. Visit our website at GarfieldParkAcademy.org for more information. For registration call 856-346-0005.

The Compass

*School Re-entry Program
for Students with Brain Injury*

 Garfield Park Academy A Program of Garfield Park Academy in Willingboro, NJ



Garfield Park Academy is a New Jersey state approved, not-for-profit school that provides effective, evidence-based special education services for students in grades K-12 who have a history of learning, social, emotional and behavioral challenges, and is Middle States Accredited. For more information, please contact Garfield Park Academy or visit our website.

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Education... for a Lifetime

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