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# Rebecca Center for Music Therapy Newsletter: Volume 4 Issue 1

John Carpente Ph.D., MT-BC, LCAT  
Molloy College, jcarpente@molloy.edu

Jill Mulholland MS, MT-BC, LCAT  
Molloy College, jmulholland@molloy.edu


Suzanne Sorel D.A., M.T.-B.C., L.C.A.T  
Molloy College, ssorel@molloy.edu

Michael Kelliher MT-BC  
Molloy College, mkelliher@molloy.edu

Diana N. Abourafteh MT-BC  
Molloy College, dabourafteh1@molloy.edu

*See next page for additional authors*

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**Authors**

John Carpente Ph.D., MT-BC, LCAT; Jill Mulholland MS, MT-BC, LCAT; Suzanne Sorel D.A., M.T.-B.C., L.C.A.T; Michael Kelliher MT-BC; Diana N. Abourafeh MT-BC; Laura De Gennaro Psy.D.; and Audra Cerruto Ph.D.



# The Rebecca Center

## For Music Therapy at Molloy College

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 1 • SPRING 2017

# Newsletter

## ASD Research: Five Years in the Making

## What's Inside



### ASD Research: Five Years in the Making

### Beyond the Session Room: Jason's Story

### Experiential Learning at the Center

### Campus Connections

### Community Outreach

### Research

### Recent and Upcoming Presentations

### Book Club

After five years, data collection for The Trial of Improvisational Music therapy's Effectiveness for children with Autism (TIME-A) is complete! The study aims to determine the effects of improvisational music therapy on social communication skills of children with autism spectrum disorders. The multi-site clinical trial included nine-countries worldwide: Australia, Austria, Brazil, Israel, Italy, Korea, Norway, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. With 364 participants randomized, this study is the largest clinical trial on non-pharmacological therapy for autism, to date! This is a tremendous accomplishment for the music therapy community and for the autism community, worldwide.

The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College (TRC) had the privilege to be the only site to represent the United States. TRC collected the third largest data set of all the countries involved, with 53 individuals randomized. Invaluable time was devoted to recruitment and data collection, with various professionals, graduate students, and undergraduate students from the Molloy community integral to the process. Those involved were music therapy intervention providers, parent counselors, assessors, administrators and schedulers, filmmakers, and data archivists.

While final results are expected in late 2017, the data collected provided various opportunities for sub-projects to emerge at TRC. Of these projects, the following articles have been published:

Carpente, J. A. (2016). Investigating the Effectiveness of a Developmental, Individual Difference, Relationship-Based (DIR) Improvisational Music Therapy Program on Social

Communication for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, miw013.

Carpente, J. A. & Aigen, K. (in review). Assessment in music therapy: A music-centered perspective. In, D.J. Elliott, G. McPherson, & M. Silverman (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative and philosophical assessment in music education*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Geretsegger, M., Holck, U., Carpente, J. A., Elefant, C., Kim, J., & Gold, C. (2015). Common characteristics of improvisational approaches in music therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder: Developing treatment guidelines. *Journal of music therapy*, 52(2), 258-281.

With over 50 participants and five years of data, the Rebecca Center serves as a hub for research material for the music therapy and Molloy communities.



# Beyond the Session Room: Jason's Story

Meet Jason. Jason is a 21-year-old young man who has attended music therapy at the Rebecca Center for a number of years. He has participated in both individual and group therapy, with work supporting his growth in areas of socialization and emotional expression within the context of musical-play. Like many of the clients at The Rebecca Center, turning twenty-one means aging out of the public school system. In an effort to support the needs of our clients, the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy (TRC) and the Center for Autism and Child Development (CACD) have begun creating new programs that are focused on fostering transitional skills for young adults with various developmental challenges.

TRC and CACD have spearheaded collaboration with the Madison Theatre at Molloy College in order to meet Jason's work experience needs. The Madison Theatre at Molloy College is a 550-seat theatre that opened in the late fall of 2011. The theatre is host to a variety of world-class performers from around the world of theatre, music, dance, cabaret, comedy, and more. Jason's work experience includes setting up the stage for the event of the day, handing out programs to the audience, and striking the set after the performance. Each step of the experience provides him with a variety of skills, including



job specific tasks and development of work ethic, while collaborating and socializing with coworkers. Jason has worked various events, such as the Swingtime Big Band: Autumn in New York, and Cuban Nights featuring the Havana Cuba All-stars. The theatre believes that artistic expression and appreciation is an important part of the development of the full person. Thus, while music therapy continues to aid in Jason's expression and experience of the world, Jason is now able to give back to the community by working at a theatre that values artistic expression and development of the individual.

Dr. Audra Cerruto, Director of Educational Services at CACD, organized the collaboration between TRC, CACD, and the Madison Theatre. She oversees Jason's work experience alongside Mike Kelliher, Music Therapist. In addition, undergraduate and graduate education students at Molloy College were recruited as job coaches to support Jason at work. The Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) now funds the Molloy College education students in recognition of the work and dedication done with Jason. Not only is Jason developing transitional skills and job preparedness, he gets to do so in an environment where, between tasks, he is able to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

## Experiential Learning at the Center



Music Therapy Intern, Anne Crean with Brent

"The Rebecca Center has been pivotal to my process as a music therapist in training and overall development as an individual. The staff's unwavering support and constructive feedback inspires me to grow. Working with and learning from such committed and insightful individuals has made all the difference in my understanding of and approach to music therapy."

- GISELA X. BERRONES CORTEZ  
MUSIC THERAPY INTERNSHIP STUDENT



Education students, Laura, Safiya, Seja, Megan, Kirsten, Kelly, Nicole, Christina and Director of Educational Services, Dr. Audra Cerruto

The interdisciplinary work of The Rebecca Center (TRC) and Center for Autism and Child Development (CACD) provides a range of opportunities for Molloy students from various departments to work experientially with children and young adults with developmental disabilities. Students from Education, Music Therapy, Social Work, and Psychology are involved in various programs such as individual and group music therapy, Campus Connections, Homework Helpers, Interactive Content Learning, and Soaring Saturdays. These students have the opportunity to connect, network, collaborate, and share ideas from their unique perspectives all within the context of experiential learning with people in the community.

Each of these programs follows a developmental framework in effort to promote social-emotional growth. In music therapy, students facilitate or co-facilitate sessions in which they create music to promote moment-to-moment shared experiences based on each individual's unique needs. During education based programs, students cre-

ate individually based lessons to meet each client's unique academic goals in interactive, innovative, and engaging ways. The education department further supports this endeavor by having their students create specialty projects and have donated them for the clients. The Campus Connections program brings together many different disciplines in effort to best serve our clients by providing them with experiences across the departments on the Molloy College campus.

Professionals-in-training are valued and regarded as a part of the TRC and CACD team. They are involved in all facets of the Center; assessment, treatment, and research. Besides working first-hand with clients, students are provided with training and supervision that supports a developmental, relationship-based approach towards treatment.

With over **twenty** student volunteers during the 2016-2017 clinical year, the Center continues its efforts to best prepare students for their future careers.



# Campus Connections



The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy (TRC) partnered with the East Rockaway school district in 2012 and Hewlett-Woodmere school district in 2015 to provide music therapy services to both high school and middle school special education students. Students are bused into TRC each week to engage in process-oriented music therapy group sessions. During which, they are able to engage in group music making while being provided opportunities for processing and social-emotional growth. Not only do the students engage in group music therapy, they get the college experience by ordering and having lunch in the Anselma Room. While the East Rockaway and Hewlett-Woodmere districts have their own group sessions, lunch time brings these two school districts together. Students are able to interact with one another across communities, providing them with opportunities to engage and interact with other people more flexibly and spontaneously.

While group music therapy continues to be a provided service for the East Rockaway and Hewlett-Woodmere school districts, an additional program emerged. In 2015, the Campus Connections program was developed to meet the needs of students transitioning out of high school. Students are provided with opportunities to be included in novel experiences at Molloy College in preparation for job readiness and life skills development.

## **Connect, Collaborate, Cultivate.**

The Campus Connections program encompasses these three ideas, as students are encouraged to connect with one another, collaborate with peers to problem solve during challenging moments, and cultivate a passion for learning through relationship-based work.

Clinical Coordinator of the Center for Autism and Child Development (CACD), Dr. Laura De Gennaro, and Music Therapist at TRC, Mike Kelliher, lead the Campus Connections program. Music Therapy, Psychology, and Social Work students engage in experiential learning as they take part in the Campus Connections program. TRC and CACD has connected with the Social Work department in providing a hands-on pre-practicum experience (attached to their professional encounter course) while receiving cross-discipline training and super-

vision on the relationship-based model of working with young adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Various disciplines at Molloy College take part of the Campus Connections program to provide the school-district students with a breadth of experience. Through collaborative efforts with the Athletics, Criminal Justice, Education, Library, New Media, Nursing, Social Work, and Student Affairs departments, students engage in a range of activities on campus. The Athletic department worked alongside the students to prepare jerseys for the players' next game, to create folders with promotional materials and even made their way to the gym to play some basketball and kickball together. The New Media department discussed the social meaning and creation of memes, showed the students how the 3-D

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**"I had a great experience working with the Rebecca Center and the Campus Connections program. Partnering with the Rebecca Center, I feel like I learned a lot that will help prepare me in the social work field for the future."**

**-DANIELLE KHOURY, SOCIAL WORK MAJOR**

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printer works and setup an actual opportunity for the students to use their state of the art virtual reality equipment and share the changes in media. After trying one of the headsets on, one student was so interested in the possibilities of this technological advance and said, "I want to create a video game where people can experience what it is like to have a disability." When the students met with the Nursing department, they discussed healthy eating and nutrition and were hands on in making smoothies together. While experiences consist of job related skill building, students are supported and encouraged to negotiate and collaborate with others, reflect on community based experiences, express personal and emotional needs effectively, and experience and process a variety of problem solving situations.

# Community Outreach

## **Soaring Saturdays**

The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy and Center for Autism and Child Development continue their efforts to service the community through the development of programs. In collaboration with the St. Agnes Cathedral Elementary School of Rockville Centre, NY, the Soaring Saturday's program was developed to facilitate the acquisition of foundational academic skills. Dr. Audra Cerruto, Educational Director at CACD, along with Molloy College Adjunct Professor Ricky Moroney and their undergraduate and graduate education students provide exciting and engaging opportunities to learn with varied high and low tech materials and activities in small groups. At CACD, the same interactive educational model is utilized on a one-to-one basis with students of all ages and abilities. The educational activities are carefully designed to meet the individual needs of each learner.

## **Backyard Players & Friends**

We are excited to announce our recent collaboration with Backyard Players & Friends (BYP). Backyard Players & Friends is an inclusive art-based community program open to young adults of all abilities. They offer a variety of classes including Yoga, Theater Arts and Movie Bites right here on the Molloy College's campus! This community program provides additional training and volunteering opportunities for members of the Molloy community. BYP also provides job training opportunities for our clients.



# The Rebecca Center

For Music Therapy at Molloy College

## Our Mission

Our mission at The Rebecca Center is to use interactive music therapy interventions to facilitate relatedness, communication, and thinking while removing physical and cognitive barriers that prevent children with developmental challenges from engaging in essential social interactions and life processes.

## Core Values

Music and the relational experiences intrinsic to musical-play are therapy when applied clinically. Interactive musical experiences can help a child with developmental challenges in many ways; fulfill the need to interact, socialize, communicate, achieve, learn and improve physicality. Musical-play can provide the unique experience of integrating multiple sensory stimuli simultaneously, facilitating self-regulation and sensory modulation. Musical-play can also generate effective interactions that foster reciprocity and creative thinking.

## Changing Lives

Programs at The Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College are aimed at discovering the unique potential in every child through interactive musical-play, in order to facilitate engagement, relatedness, communication, and thinking. In creating a non-judgmental, musically and emotionally supportive therapeutic atmosphere, the child can discover emotional and behavioral self-regulation through engaging in interactive musical-play.

## Staff

**John Carpente, Ph.D., MT-BC, LCAT**  
Founder and Executive Director/Associate Professor of Music and Music Therapy

**Suzanne Sorel, DA, MT-BC, LCAT**  
Associate Dean and Director of Graduate Music Therapy

**Jill Mulholland, MS, MT-BC, LCAT**  
Program Coordinator, Music Therapist

**Michael Kelliher, MT-BC**  
Music Therapist

**Diana N. Abourafteh, MT-BC**  
Music Therapist

**Laura De Gennaro, Psy.D.**  
Clinical Coordinator, Center for Autism and Child Development

**Audra Cerruto, Ph.D.**  
Director of Educational Services, Center for Autism and Child Development

**Stephanie Cestaro**  
Office Manager

**Michelle Severo**  
Administrative Assistant

# Recent and Upcoming Presentations

Abourafteh, D. & Mulholland, J. (2017). Respecting Neurodiversity within a Developmental Relationship-based Model of Music Therapy. Paper Presentation. Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Music Therapy Association Conference, Rochester, NY.

Carpente, J. & Casenhiser, D. (2017). Improvisational Music Therapy Supports Engagement in Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Paper Presentation. International Meeting for Autism Research 2017, San Francisco, CA.

Carpente, J. & Munoz, M. (2017). The Power of Affect: Orchestrating affective relationships during a music therapy internship experience. Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Association for Music Therapy, Rochester, NY.

De Gennaro, L., Kelliher, M., & Mulholland, J. (2016). Watering the Roots: Working within relationships to foster social and emotional development in a life skills program. Paper Presentation. The 20th Annual International DIRFloortime® Conference, Orlando, Florida.

Kelliher, M. (2017) Relating Through Music: A Nordoff-Robbins Level 1 Case Presentation. Paper Presentation. Mid-Atlantic Region of the American Music Therapy Association Conference, Rochester, NY.

Mulholland, J. (2017). The Effects of a Relationship-Based Model of Music Therapy on Group Work. Paper Presentation. The 15th World Congress of Music Therapy, Tsubuka, Japan.

# Current Research

## TRC and CACD Research:

- A Closer Exploration Of Therapeutic Relationship Through A Musical Medium: An Arts-Based Research Study
- The Effects of Relationship-Based Improvisational Music Therapy on Social Emotional Development and Learning with Children with Neurodevelopmental Disorders
- Parental perceptions of social reciprocity and parenting stress in parents of children with ASD

## Collaborative Research:

- Effective Treatment Strategies for Children with Autism: A Review of the Literature – Dr.

Casenhiser at the University of Tennessee

- Imitation or Mimicry in Improvisational Music Therapy Supports Interaction with Children Autism Spectrum Disorder – Dr. Casenhiser at the University of Tennessee
- iPads and the Use of Technology with the Special Education Students in the Soaring Saturdays Program – Professor Moroney of the Education Department at Molloy College
- Validity and Reliability Evidence for a Music Therapy Observational Instrument for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder – Dr. Gattino at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul Music Therapy

# Book Club

Suggested reads for parents and children. Some of these texts are available to borrow at the front desk. Just ask!

## FOR PARENTS:



## FOR KIDS:

