

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

H.E.L.P. PROGRAM



Newsletter

Spring 2017

From the Director's Desk

I recently read an article, "Life Success for Students with Learning Disabilities: A Parent's Guide," which highlighted more than twenty years of research conducted by the Frostig Center in Pasadena, California. This article supports many of the concepts we try to reinforce at the college level and may help many families understand a range of factors that help promote success for LD students.

The Frostig Center was founded in 1951 by Marianne Frostig, Ph.D., a pioneer, leader, and advocate in education for children with learning disabilities. The Frostig Center research traced the lives of individuals with learning disabilities in order to identify factors that predicted successful life outcomes.

Questions were raised why some people with learning disabilities succeed, while others find little reward personally, socially, or financially. Six attributes were identified: *self-awareness, proactivity, perseverance, goal setting, using support systems, and emotional coping strategies*. These factors were found to be more important, and have a greater influence on success, than academic achievement, gender, social-economic status, ethnicity, and IQ. The finding did emphasize that not every successful individual will have **each** of these qualities, but what it does report is that successful individuals with learning disabilities will be much more likely to have these characteristic than those who are unsuccessful. Although success is not a guarantee, these factors do increase the chances of achieving a fulfilling and successful life.

Successful people with learning disabilities exhibit **self-awareness**, such as being open and specific about their difficulties, with an understanding of how their disability affects their lives. Furthermore, they have an ability to compartmentalize their disability. **They are able to see their disability as only one aspect of themselves, their difficulties do not define who they are.** This self-awareness enables them to find jobs that provide the best fit for their skill set. (continued)

Keys to success

- *Self-awareness*
- *Proactivity*
- *Perseverance*
- *Goal-setting*
- *Support System*
- *Emotional coping strategies*

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From the director (continued)

Successful people with learning disabilities are usually **proactive**. For example students become actively engaged in their school, community, and in social and family settings. **They can make decisions and act upon them, and assume responsibility for their actions and resulting outcomes. When things don't work out, successful individuals generally take responsibility for the outcome and don't blame others.** They exhibit a willingness to consult with others when faced with making decisions.

Many successful people with learning disabilities exhibit **perseverance** and keep on the path despite their difficulties. **They rarely give up. However, they will know when to move on after all other avenues are considered.** After repeated failures they are able to see alternative strategies for reaching their goal. They learn from their failures.

For most successful people with learning disabilities, **goal-setting** will include a strategy for reaching goals that are specific, yet flexible. **They have an understanding of the step-by step process to obtain those goals and they will be realistic and attainable.**

A **support system**—typically populated by family members, friends, mentors, teachers, and therapists provides guidance and encouragement for both successful and unsuccessful individuals with learning disabilities. **However, successful people attempt to reduce their dependence on others as they move into adulthood, but they will actively seek support of others when needed. Those who are unsuccessful frequently can't "cut the cord" as they transition into adulthood and may remain highly dependent on others.**

Lastly, **emotional coping strategies** allow successful people with learning disabilities a means of reducing and coping with stress. At the college level we see many students who are dealing with psychological difficulties such as anxiety and depression. **Successful individuals have developed strategies for reducing stress, which helps them avoid resulting psychological difficulties. Such strategies may include counseling, expressing their feelings, asserting oneself, utilizing support and asking for help, planning ahead, keeping away from negative situations/people, and obtaining medication if necessary.**

This 20-year longitudinal study provides another perspective why some students are better able to find success than others.

Student Spotlight



For Christopher Richards, a Roane County high school graduate, choosing to attend Marshall was the right decision because of the

new Electrical and Computer Engineering Program. After spending several semesters at Marshall, Chris learned that his decision to choose Marshall afforded him a valuable benefit: access to the Marshall H.E.L.P. Program. Chris shares that, before coming to Marshall, he struggled as a student. He experienced difficulty with time management and organizational skills.

Chris says it became clear that what he was doing was not working. His physician referred him to H.E.L.P. where he met with the director and was assigned a Learning Specialist in the Skills Development program. In just one semester Chris' GPA went from a 2.4 to a 3.1! He was elated! Chris attributes his success to: 1) going to class regularly, 2) doing assigned homework, 3) asking for help and 4) never missing tutoring. He further shares that it also helps to have someone to hold him accountable and to meet with on a regular basis.

The next semester, Chris continued in Skills Development and added academic tutoring. He says, "I choose to be here [at H.E.L.P.] because it works. I have had tremendous results!". H.E.L.P. is very proud of Chris and his accomplishments.

NEW POSITION

A new position, *Learning Specialist and Life Coach*, was recently created at H.E.L.P. due to the ever changing needs of our students. We will also be reaching out to students within the community by providing opportunities for them to improve their skills and be more self-sufficient and productive.

The specialist will address specific problems students encounter in their academic and everyday responsibilities. We hope to introduce students to more effective learning strategies and study skills, guide them through transitions in their lives, such as preparing for college, and help them examine and discover obstacles or challenges by aiding in a course of action to make necessary improvements.

Students participating in the group mentioned above will have the chance to hear from guest speakers, discuss challenges in a friendly environment, go on outings periodically, and get to know other students better.



Sara Barker, Michelle Barnes, and Debbie Painter at the Fletcher School in Charlotte, NC.

H.E.L.P. Visits the Carolinas

Debbie Painter and Sara Barker were invited to Greenville, SC, at the end of November, to speak to prospective students, parents, and educators from several private schools in the Greenville area. The assembly of people was gathered by Dana Blackhurst, the headmaster of the Chandler School. Dana also serves on H.E.L.P.'s Board of Advisors. Debbie and Sara presented the H.E.L.P. Program's mission to the assembly and were joined by Brian Bozeman and his mother Gwen, and Hartlee Blackhurst. Both Brian and Hartlee are graduates of Marshall University and the H.E.L.P. Program.

While Debbie and Sara were in the area, they also visited the Fletcher School in Charlotte, NC. Bill Keese, Upper School and College Counselor, invited them to the Fletcher School. They were joined in their presentation by Michele Barnes, mother of William Barnes, a current H.E.L.P. student and former graduate of Fletcher.

This recruiting trip was a success as we are in contact with several students from both the Greenville, SC, area and the Fletcher school. Thank you, Dana and Bill, for the invitation!

Meet Our Newest Staff Members



Amy Jones-Burdick Learning Specialist and Life Coach

Amy Jones-Burdick begins a new aspect of her career by accepting a recently created position with the H.E.L.P. Program: *Learning Specialist and Life Coach*. Amy obtained an M.A. in Clinical Psychology in 1989 from Marshall University. She furthered her education at the University of Louisville Medical School, entering a Doctoral Psychology Internship, and University of Mississippi as a Ph.D. candidate in Counseling Psychology. Her career experiences include psychological and neuropsychological assessments of children and adults, crisis intervention, inpatient and outpatient therapy, and program coordinator of child/adolescent services for a psychiatric hospital. Amy began working with the H.E.L.P. Program as a Learning Specialist in 2013. We are so fortunate to have someone with her experiences and background.

Fall 2016 GPAs 3.0 & above

Jonathan Adkins
Nathan Adkins
Emily Anderson
Mason Anderson
Sapphire Atkinson
William Barnes
Claire Brison
Rebecca Broadman
Matthew Brown
Erika Budd
Meredith Currin
MacKenzie Daniels
Patick Davis
Jonmikel Donaldson
Hannah Eidt
Jacob Evans
Kerenann Flouhouse
Charles Hargadon
David Havens
Madison Hunt
Kieran Intemann
Joshua Kennedy-Noce
Jacqueline Kuzma
Jenna Lioi

Fall 2016 GPAs 3.0 & above

Charles McCallum

Alex Market

Megan McGehee

Ellen McNamara

Birittney Moore

Jordan Morgan

Katie Morrison

Brian O'Keefe

Stephen Oxendine

William Papageorge

Madison Peters

Andrew Pisters

Phillip Pisters

Taylor Raines

Brendan Reardon

Christopher Richards

Evan Robinson

Savannah Ruedt

Joseph Schwartz

Andrew Short

Madison Silver

Braden Swenson

Stephen Tyler



Cindy Clay Coordinator of Diagnostics

In September 2016, we were excited to welcome Cindy Clay as she joined H.E.L.P. as the *Coordinator of Diagnostics*. Cindy is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist who comes to us with vast experiences. She has a history of working with specialized populations, inpatient and outpatient therapy, and over 20 years in private practice. As with many staff members who currently work in the H.E.L.P. Program, Cindy was also a Graduate Assistant for H.E.L.P. from 1987-1989. In addition, she earned an M.A. in Clinical Psychology from Marshall University. We are blessed to have Cindy return to the place where her career journey began.



Jerry Greer Memorial Scholarship



Summer 2016 brought a new group of incoming freshman to the H.E.L.P. Program as they participated in our five-week Summer Prep Program. During this time, students take a university course for credit and work with learning specialists to begin transitioning to the college environment and prepare them for the fall semester.

Sadly, one of our students, Jerry Greer, was involved in a boating accident near his home in Tennessee, where he lost his life. With his parents' blessing, we have chosen to offer a scholarship to a student attending summer prep in Jerry's memory. Preference will be given to students with dyslexia. Applications will be online once the Summer Prep packets are posted for the upcoming session.

Message from Diagnostics

I am pleased to be working with the HELP Center and have been very busy since joining the staff in September. The diagnostics program services children, adolescents, and adults from age six, in the assessment and identification of learning disabilities and ADHD. I am assisted by Savanna Tickle, PsyD Student and graduate assistant. Typically, I see 2-3 clients for assessment per week, in addition to results sessions with clients and families, coordination of new referrals, and, everyone's favorite, writing, and distributing reports!

We have recently been afforded an opportunity to work with clients referred by Dr. Paul Finch, Pediatric Oncologist with the Edwards Comprehensive Cancer Center, in testing children who may have the "late effects" of childhood cancer treatment. Brett Wilson with Walking Miracles has been instrumental in helping these patients by seeking programs that can offer the services they need to progress. We are pleased to be participating in this joint venture to assist families and children who have been faced with unthinkable challenges. This will be an interesting collaboration and a way to assist with early identification of these problems, leading to more effective interventions and support for these children.

It is important to mention Brett is a survivor of childhood cancer who came to the H.E.L.P. Program many years ago for academic support. Treatments he received resulted in learning disabilities that led him to our program. We are thrilled to have him recommend our program to his clients and are so proud of his accomplishments! It is very rewarding to have our past students and tutors share information about the benefits of participating in our program. Thank you, Brett for being an ambassador for H.E.L.P.

Cindy

December 2016 Graduates

While we had a small graduating class at H.E.L.P. in December, their accomplishments are notably significant.

The following students were awarded degrees following a great deal of work and persistence.

Tyler Albitz

BA, Criminal Justice
Minor : Integrated Science and Technology

Jordan Morgan

BBA, Management
with concentration in
Health Care

William Pollard

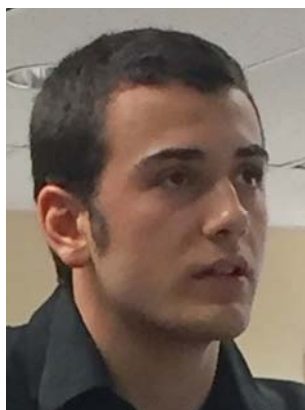
BS, Natural Resources
Minor: Integrated
Science and Technology

Steven Tyler

BFA , Theater
with concentration in
Production

Good luck in your future endeavors. You will be missed. We are so proud of all you have achieved!

Tutor Spotlight



Michael Converse came to Huntington, West Virginia from Fairfax, Virginia where he attended Robinson Secondary Schools. Michael's mother found out about Marshall University's H.E.L.P. Program and the Asperger's Program through her personal research in the two areas that were important for Michael's academic success. Michael visited the Marshall campus and met with the H.E.L.P. Program staff in 2010. He knew that Marshall was where he needed to be.

While on his academic journey, Michael obtained a Bachelor's degree in History and minored in English. Michael has followed in the footsteps of several H.E.L.P. graduates and is working as a Graduate Assistant with H.E.L.P. while pursuing his Master's Degree in History. Nancy McCormick, one of Michael's tutors since 2012, stated "Michael is one of the most dedicated and hardworking students I've ever worked with." She further shares that, "Michael dedicates himself totally to the task at hand; whether it is a reading assignment for class, research for a paper, the completion of a short story for his creative writing class or improving his jujitsu skills, Michael is always going to go the extra mile to do his very best work."

According to Ms. McCormick, "one of Michael's accomplishments during his time at Marshall was his participation in The Clio Project, a project of faculty at Marshall University. Clio promotes heritage tourism and historic preservation by connecting residents and visitors with information about historic sites throughout West Virginia and the United States. Michael worked under the supervision of Dr. David Trowbridge to create entries for approximately 20 historic sites in the southern United States."

Michael now tutors students with Learning Disabilities. One his students commented, "Michael is an awesome tutor!" When asked what Michael's advice to new students would be, he answered, "Don't give up! Don't be afraid to move out of your comfort zone and try different things. Listen and learn from others. Sometimes I was uncomfortable doing something socially or was upset when I didn't do well on a test. At times I was terrified. I learned to fight through even on my worst days. My motivation was that I didn't want to be seen as one who gave up. I am grateful for all of my fantastic tutors. I cannot give credit to one without giving credit to all."

Baltimore Bound

Debbie Painter, Missi Fisher, Nancy McCormick, and Laura Rowden will be heading to Baltimore this February to represent the H.E.L.P. Program at the 54th Annual LDA International Conference. Debbie and Missi will be at the exhibitor's table to provide H.E.L.P. information to conference attendees. Nancy and Laura will be presenters, which they have done at previous LDA conferences. They are excited to return to this wonderful conference where they hope to both learn more about the latest in learning disabilities, and also share the wealth of their knowledge with other conference participants. Nancy will be presenting a session entitled, "Finding the Appropriate Support for College Students with Learning Disabilities." Because choosing a support program for college students with Specific Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder can be challenging for families, Nancy's session will focus on what to look for, and questions to ask, when in search of the best program for their student. Laura's session is entitled, "I Can Remember: Memory Strategies for Students with Learning Disabilities." This session will briefly discuss memory, give general memory tips, and cover specific mnemonic strategies.

Medical H.E.L.P.

Nancy McCormick is serving as the Interim Coordinator of the Medical H.E.L.P. Program. She was first employed at H.E.L.P. in 1993 as a Graduate Assistant working as an academic tutor with the College H.E.L.P. division. In 2004, she first began working with Medical H.E.L.P. Later, Nancy accepted a coordinating position with College H.E.L.P., while maintaining a relationship with Medical H.E.L.P., working one-on-one with medical students on reading, time management and organization, and study skills.

Nancy enjoys the opportunity to work with medical students and enjoys playing a role in their journey toward meeting their academic and career goals. When asked about her involvement with the Medical H.E.L.P. Program she shared, "I have been privileged to work with students from all over the country, from New England to Florida to Nevada and California. It is an awesome experience to work with so many bright individuals and to introduce them to a new way of thinking about their learning."

Many past medical students still keep in touch with Nancy. We are always excited to hear how they continue to experience success using the tools they gained while enrolled in our program.

ALUMNI NEWS

Congratulations to **Matt Skeens** and his wife Ryan on the birth of their son, Paul Gavin Skeens, on November 13, 2016. Matt was a December 2007 graduate of Marshall and a participant in the H.E.L.P. Program. They currently reside in Nashville, TN, where Matt works as a Sales Representative for Verizon Cellular Sales and Ryan, a graduate of the Marshall Medical School, is doing her Fellowship in the Neonatal Unit at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt. The H.E.L.P. Program's annual scholarship fundraiser, the "Paul Skeens Scramble 4 H.E.L.P." golfing event is named in memory of Matt's father, Dr. Paul Skeens.

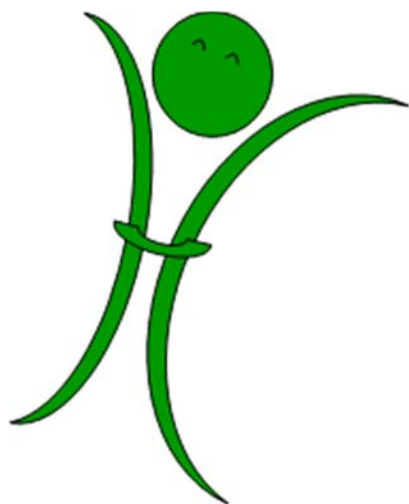
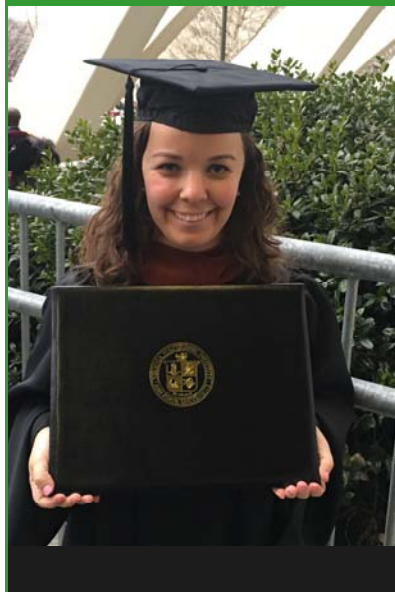


Short Story Writing Contest Fall 2016

Winners:

1st place **Mason Anderson**
2nd Place **Will Barnes**

Dana Zambrotta, a former Marshall University and H.E.L.P. graduate, completed her Masters in Natural Resources from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia in December, 2016. Currently, Dana is trying to procure a full-time position in the natural resources field. Congratulations, Dana!



How Can You Help?

As a 501c3 non-profit, the H.E.L.P. Program relies on the generous assistance and contributions, in whatever size or form, from people just like you to help us achieve our mission of ensuring that students with a specific learning disability and/or A.D.H.D. receive the academic support and assistance needed to help them succeed at Marshall University and beyond. In addition, we serve school-aged students and medical students. All of the staff, tutors, and students at H.E.L.P. offer their sincere appreciation for any help you may be able to provide.

If you would like to contribute to the H.E.L.P. Program, you may mail a check made out to “MU H.E.L.P. Program” along with your name, address, phone number and email address to:

Marshall University H.E.L.P. Program
Attn: Missi Fisher, Business Manager
One John Marshall Drive
Huntington, WV 25755

Remember, the H.E.L.P. Program is a 501c3 non-profit, so your charitable donation is tax deductible as allowed by law.

ATTENTION

GOLFERS:

Due to unforeseen circumstances, our annual fundraiser, Scramble 4 H.E.L.P. has been postponed. We are committed to continuing fundraising efforts for scholarships and will communicate updated plans as they are available.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services.

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