

Annual Newsletter : November 2014

The Georgiana Institute, Inc., 250 Amber Wood Run, Chapel Hill NC 27516; Cell: 203-994-8215

Not long ago, Sarah Howell, my youngest daughter, was chatting with another mother in a playground. The other mom told my daughter that her child had a sensory processing disorder, that a therapy called Auditory Integration Training had made all the difference, and that she had taken him to Sandra Newton, an Occupational Therapist at Developmental Therapy in Durham, NC, a few minutes away. Sarah's jaw dropped. This was a first, someone initiating a conversation about A.I.T. who didn't know who Sarah was. She said, "Oh yeah. My mom started that."

All my children have participated in our family's mission to launch A.I.T., aka Auditory Training. Georgie, a caricaturist and an arts and crafts teacher in Oregon, is Vice-President of the Institute. A revised edition of her memoir, Overcoming Autism, will soon be available, e-book and print. Mark, my son, a hedge fund trader in New York, is Treasurer. Sarah, an architect, married to Lucius, a Cardiology Fellow at UNC Hospital (why we're in Chapel Hill), provide ongoing technical support in the office as well as a granny flat in their house (the Institute rents an office in the same house). My step-daughter, Pam Stehli Hearne, a Special Ed professional in New Hampshire, is a certified A.I.T. Practitioner. Kitty and Hunt, her siblings, although not involved directly, stay close, along with their teenage daughters. Sarah named her youngest child Hunt, after my stepson. It is three years since Peter, the patriarch, died. He is greatly missed and will always be honored worldwide for his pivotal role in the Auditory Training initiative.

Georgie and I are thrilled to have been invited to be keynote speakers at a conference on A.I.T. in London, on March 21st and 22nd. The event is hosted by Rosalie Seymour, an outstanding Audiologist and Speech Pathologist, and a renowned and pioneering Auditory Training Practitioner since the early nineties in South Africa and Ireland as well as the U.K..

Earlier in the Fall, when The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time "walloped Broadway" according to a rave review by Ben Brantley in the New York Times, I raced up to New York to see it. The play is about an autistic fifteen-year-old who tries to find out who killed a neighbor's dog. His sensory processing issues, auditory and visual especially, are dramatized with innovative sets and intense displays of lighting and sound to the point where the audience is nearly overwhelmed by sensations experienced routinely by people on the spectrum. Although I didn't exactly expect the protagonist's auditory sensitivity to be ameliorated by A.I.T. (I *wish*), more often than not, autism is being described as a sensory processing disorder, which the play so beautifully illustrates. There are rays of light everywhere as awareness of this spreads, and schools are becoming interested in offering A.I.T. Carin Smit, a traveling Practitioner in South Africa, has emailed me that it is going into every public school in Indonesia.

Recently, Georgie severely injured three of her fingers while moving a heavy piece of gym equipment from one room to another in her house. Although she was afraid she would lose some caricature gigs, she called last week to say, "I can draw with my right hand now, Mom, but I have to use my left hand in Karate to break boards." Aw gee, Georgie. When I told my four-year-old grandson Lucius about this he was impressed. I said, "Right. Don't mess with your Aunt Georgie." When I dedicated Sound of a Miracle to her for her courage and determination I was spot on, and we have her to thank for revealing her history of severe autism in order to help those still suffering.

We hope you will support our work in the coming year. Your donations are tax-deductible and are vital to maintaining the Institute, its office and its website, as a resource for information on A.I.T. The Georgiana Institute is a non-profit organization, Tax I.D. #06-1500430. **Thank you!**

Annabel Stehli, Director

Encl. 2: Conference brochure

Information on equipment and a home program offered by the Institute through **The Sensory Clinic** in the U.K.: www.sensoryclinic.com