

FLORIDA LIONS  
*Conklin Center*  
FOR THE BLIND

TEACHING SKILLS TO DEVELOP  
**POTENTIAL**



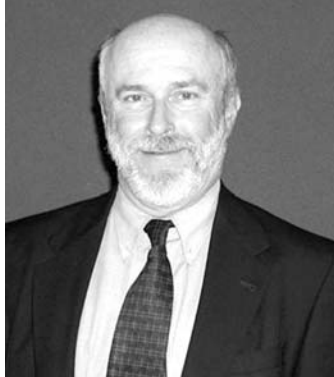
FOR

# INDEPENDENCE



**2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

# perspective



ROBERT KELLY,  
Executive Director

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**JULY 1, 2008 - JUNE 30, 2009**

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**MISSION** – To help children and adults who are blind and have additional disabilities develop their potential for independence and participate fully in community life as productive, contributing citizens.

**VISION** – Our vision is to reduce or eliminate dependence on institutional or homebound care.

Each person who comes to the Conklin Center is filled with the hope that they will be able to improve the quality of their life. Each student is unique, yet they all have the same goal: to be able to be in control of their lives and live independently.

The Center is in its 30th year of serving Florida's adults who are blind with additional disabilities and beginning the tenth year of providing training and support to the families of children up to age six who are blind. This achievement required the combined efforts and support of many caring and dedicated people. I am grateful to everyone who has helped make the continued success of these proven programs possible.

Every student's journey to independence follows its own path. In this report you'll read about Ashley, who dreams about becoming a writer, and Michael, who has been working and living on his own for more than

ten years. Addison, the most recent graduate of our Early Intervention program, who was born with serious visual and medical conditions, is a joyful participant of the local kindergarten class.

It is courageous and hard-working people like Ashley, Michael, Addison and his parents who inspire us all to redouble our efforts to make sure the Center continues to create opportunities for the vulnerable people who need us.

Thank you for the important role you play in helping our students and graduates develop their potential and achieve their goals.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Robert Kelly  
Executive Director

FLORIDA LIONS

Conklin Center

FOR THE BLIND

*“Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.”*

*– John F. Kennedy, 35th president of US 1961-1963 (1917 - 1963)*

## CENTER BASED TRAINING

### MY EXPERIENCE AT THE CONKLIN CENTER – *By Ashley*

I began my two week evaluation on September 29, 2008. At first, when I was told I would be going to the Conklin Center, I was not very happy. In fact, I refused to go. The idea of leaving my family, my parents and five siblings and going to a new place made me nervous. However, in the end I went.

Sure, I knew my first day was not going to be easy, the first day is always the hardest. Over the next couple of days I began to get used to being here and started to make friends. I also met Josh, one of the graduates, who I am now dating. The two weeks flew by, then it was all over and I was back at home.

In May, 2009 I returned to start my three month evaluation. I have classes in cooking, laundry and cleaning, workshop, mobility, community access, shopping and money management. The most important thing I have learned since being here is that everyone needs help. It doesn't matter if you have a disability or not, we all have challenges that we must face, and obstacles that we must overcome. I have Cerebral Palsy, have had many surgeries, and was born premature. However, I will not let these challenges get in the way of my dream to become either a journalist or an author. I know what my limitations are, and I have had many struggles throughout my 20 years, but I have not let them stop me from living my life.



## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Every two weeks a prospective student comes to the Conklin Center to begin a process that can change their lives forever. They are adults from throughout Florida who are blind and have at least one additional disabling condition. They all share a common goal: the desire to live on their own and be responsible for making the decisions that affect their lives.

The first step is a two-week evaluation to identify skills and aptitude and to determine if the Center's services will meet their needs. Candidates discuss their hopes and goals with instructors and participate in all of the classes that will enable them to achieve their goal of living independently. When an individual returns to the Center as a full-time student, they live in the dormitory at our Daytona Beach campus. An education program is designed for each student to meet their unique needs and abilities. Instruction includes:

Adult Basic Education: training in Braille, money management, handwriting, sign language, finger spelling, low vision screening, and use of computers and other adaptive technology.

Activities of Daily Living: students learn functional skills such as shopping, cooking, safety, household management, personal care, and planning and living within a budget.

Orientation and Mobility: instruction in using a sighted guide, basic and protective techniques, use of the long cane, and community transportation.

Vocational Training: Development of basic work skills and habits. Students earn money in our on-site workshop to save for the apartment they will live in when they complete the program.

- 43 Students participated in our residential rehabilitation program
- 27 Completed the evaluation only
- 43 Total served (unduplicated)

## COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES – *Michael*

Looking back, Michael said he knew exactly how Ashley felt about leaving home and all that is familiar to come to a new school. Referred by his counselor at the Division of Blind Services, Michael, who is legally blind and has mild developmental delay, came to the Conklin Center from Niceville in the Panhandle. He said he was homesick for the first few weeks but he got over it too.

Michael credits the help he received from the staff, “it’s hard not to like the Center because of the staff, there’s a lot of support. and, as a student, you’ll make friends.”

When Michael completed the training program, his first job was as a dishwasher at a pizza restaurant, followed by a seasonal position at a local hotel. A self-described people person, when he heard about an opening for a bagger at Food Lion, he wanted to try for it.

This year Michael is celebrating 10 years of successful employment and independence at Food Lion. Now he works the parking lot where his duties include checking the lot for carts, and what he likes doing best – helping customers carry groceries and load their cars.

Michael is fiercely proud of his independence. In fact, he has continued working despite a diagnosis of cancer a few years ago and undergoing several rounds of grueling chemotherapy. He receives ongoing assistance from our Supported Employment/Supported Living program. His Supported Living Coach helps with reading his mail so he can pay bills and manage his money. She also helps with shopping and getting to doctors’ appointments. After grocery shopping they divide and label items for storage to make meals during the week. Supported Employment Coach, Rayni, helps with filling out paperwork, job re-training, such as when Michael was promoted to cart attendant, and makes sure Michael is trained in the store’s safety protocols.



## SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT, SUPPORTED LIVING AND CONTINUING LIFE SKILLS EDUCATION

The Supported Employment and Supported Living programs offer ongoing, low-intensity assistance to the Center’s graduates to help them remain employed and independent.

Supported Employment works with local employers to find work in the community, provides on-site training and provides guidance and support to both employee and employer at the job site.

Supported Living assists graduates in their apartments with everyday activities such as housekeeping, budgeting, shopping, reading mail, using public transportation, and accessing community resources.

Life Skills Training Program: In collaboration with Daytona State College, the Center provides its graduates with continuing educational opportunities to improve their quality of life. Participants select topics of interest (such as cooking, personal safety, disaster preparedness, civics, computer skills, social skills, fitness) and set goals for accomplishment.

- 67 Adults received supported employment training and assistance
- 40 Adults received supported living services
- 42 Adults participated in life skills training program
- 75 Total served (unduplicated)



## EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM – Addison

To meet Addison now, it is hard to believe that at his birth doctors provided a grim prognosis. Born about 10 weeks premature, he had brain damage and a severe visual impairment. Addison's parents, however, never gave up on their beautiful baby. Three months after he finally returned home, his mother brought him to the Conklin Center to arrange for Early Intervention services. Throughout six years of weekly therapy sessions, both at his home and at the Conklin Center, Addison has made amazing progress both visually and developmentally.

He can spell, reads many words and is learning to add and subtract. Addison learned the alphabet using textured alphabet letters and did pre-literacy activities with textured, patterned, sound, and large print books. He learned math concepts using an abacus and adapted computer programs. The light box (seen in the picture above) helped Addison increase the use of his functional vision and to learn shapes, colors, and pictures. He also plays the piano, types on the computer, and even speaks Russian. His vision has improved to the extent that he is able to see print, color, and photographs!

Addison entered kindergarten this year where he spends the mornings in a special needs classroom and receives vision, physical, occupational and speech therapy in the afternoon.



## TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR OUR YOUNGEST STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

When the Early Intervention program was launched in 2000, services for children from birth through age five with significant visual impairment and their families were ineffective or nonexistent in most parts of Florida. Parents need to learn how to create a nurturing, safe and enriched environment that will encourage their child's development. Children with little or no vision must be taught to explore and interact with the world using their other senses.

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to live their life to the fullest. The Conklin Center's Early Intervention program continues to make sure children who are blind or severely visually impaired that live in Brevard, Flagler, Putnam and Volusia Counties have every chance to begin developing their potential so that they will lead active, independent lives.



70 Children from birth to age six received services

138 Family members participated

208 Total served



**REVENUE FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2009**

Government contracts	\$1,594,301
Donated supplies and expenses	8,395
Legacies and bequests	127,159
Contributions and Private Grants	351,945
Special events	94,435
Investment and other income	51,057
Food Services	5,034
Program Services	22,038
Realized gain (loss) on assets	(110,948)
Other	2,314
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$2,145,730</b>
<b>2009 EXPENSES</b>	
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES</b>	
Instruction and student activity	2,093,601
Supported Services	
Administration	123,743
Fundraising	176,467
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$2,393,811</b>
Changes in net assets	(248,081)

Net assets - beginning of year 4,552,548

Net assets - end of year \$4,304,467

*The Conklin Center strives to keep administrative (6%) and fundraising (8%) costs low - 86% of every dollar raised provides direct services. The complete audit for fiscal year 2009 is available upon request.*

# lions club donations

Thank you Florida Lions for all you do to help.

## LIONS CLUB DONATIONS July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009



DISTRICT 35-F	
General	\$5,750
Life Membership	1,000
Special Events	1,440
Total	\$8,190

DISTRICT 35-I	
General	\$16,233
Life Membership	1,000
Special Events	662
Total	\$17,895

DISTRICT 35-L	
General	\$23,683
Life Membership	
Special Events	1,304
Total	\$24,987

DISTRICT 35-D	
General	\$15,800
Life Membership	1,950
Special Events	591
Total	\$18,341

DISTRICT 35-O	
General	\$28,772
Life Membership	3,850
Special Events	7,349
Total	\$39,971

DISTRICT 35-A	
General	\$5,155
Life Membership	
Special Events	1,640
Total	\$6,795

DISTRICT 35-R	
General	\$9,100
Life Membership	1,250
Special Events	2,442
Total	\$12,792

**TOTAL LIONS CLUB DONATIONS \$128,971**



*Delores Farris, PCC and President of the Board of Directors (2nd from left) gathered Florida Lions and friends at a gala in Ocala in April to celebrate the Center's 30th anniversary.*



It is an honor to acknowledge the many compassionate individuals who have included the Conklin Center in their philanthropic plans over the years. Through gifts of real estate, a bequest or other form of planned giving, they are helping to ensure the continuity of services for children and adults who are blind and have coexisting disabilities for years to come.

## LEGACIES

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Anthony Eannelli  
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N. Sinclair  
Miklos Szabo

Muriel Vanwyck  
Madeline Wade  
Henry Whitham  
Victoria Wirths  
Vera Wolpert  
Louise Zmuda

\*New gift received during Fiscal Year 2009\*

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Jim & Betty Hennigan's 50th Anniversary  
*DG Shel Reichard*  
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*Marion Ruesink*  
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*VDG Lion Shel Reichard*  
Bob Respass  
*Gainesville Lions Club*  
Lions Carol Scherf & Shel Reichard's Wedding  
*DG Estelle Clark*  
Tracey & David Simes Birthdays  
*Charmar Simes*

Vito Cardone  
*Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Cardone*  
Vincent Catalano, Past President DBLC  
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William Clark  
*Jacques Swart*  
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*Marion Ruesink*  
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George Gill  
*Marion Ruesink*  
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*Maynard and Susan Shumway*  
Aaron Wiles  
*Patricia McKay*  
Betty Wind – George Baldwin's sister  
*Jean E. Lewis*  
*Marion Ruesink*

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Darden Restaurants Foundation

Florida Lions Foundation for the Blind  
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# donors

Thank you! The Conklin Center is grateful for every donation from the following individuals, businesses, foundations and government agencies. Together we can ensure that children and adults who are blind fully develop their potential for independence.

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*Gifts of \$1,000 or more to our Annual Campaign*

Dr. James H. Demming  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry N. Koontz  
Mr. Robert E. Lee  
Ms. Alice J. Rettig  
Mrs. Elizabeth M. Roberts

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*Monthly contributions*

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## MOTORCYCLE DRAWING

World Famous Iron Horse Saloon



## RIDE FOR SIGHT POKER RUN

Boot Hill Saloon, Cubco Screenprinting, Carl Franklin and Quick Draw Motorcycles



## WALK N' ROLL & PANCAKE BREAKFAST

DeLand Lions Club, Lakeland Imperial Lions Club and Mount Dora Lions Club



## 5K

Bright House and Ormond Beach Lions



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