

FACING THE FUTURE

Are you a teen or young adult, 13 to 20-something, born with a cleft lip and palate? If so, please plan to attend the FFC Teen/Young Adult Symposium on

Saturday, September 12, 2009 in the auditorium of the Enders Building at Children's Hospital Boston from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Registration with light breakfast fare will begin at 8:30 a.m. Share your experiences and learn from others about recovering from operations, orthodontics, self-esteem, and how to effectively continue care through your teen and young adult years.

"We hope we can provide information and answer a lot of questions about issues facing teens and young adults," says Kara

Jackman, FFC board member and symposium coordinator (pictured on page 2). Kara heads an enthusiastic 10-member planning committee of teens and young adults in various stages of treatment who want to help by sharing their knowledge and perspectives with their peers in the New England area.

To start the day, a panel of medical experts—a plastic surgeon, oral surgeon, dentist, and psychiatrist—will talk about the treatment of clefts in the adolescent and young adult years. This will be an opportunity to ask questions of the professionals and learn what is involved with procedures they may face.

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October 4, '09
Save the Date!
Walk Family Picnic
See inside for info!



From left, front row: Doty MacDonald, RN; Nate Finch; Rachel Bergan; and Bonnie Padwa, DMD, MD. Back row: Johanna Smith, FFC president; Richard Bruun, DDS; and John Mulliken, MD.

The Foundation for Faces of Children awarded scholarships to three outstanding students at a reception held at Children's Hospital Boston on June 15. Mary Lania, scholarship committee chair, presented \$1,000 awards to the following:

Rachel Bergan graduated from Andover High School, where she participated in both ice hockey and field hockey teams and received the "High-Five Award" for demonstration of leadership, teamwork, sportsmanship, and commitment in physical education. Born with cleft lip and palate, Rachel also has volunteered at various community events, including the Pan Mass Challenge children's bike race for the past two years. Last summer, she participated in

FFC 2009 Scholarships

the pre-college fashion prep program at the School of Fashion Design in Boston. While achieving honors throughout her junior and senior years, she found time to work 15 to 20 hours a week. She will be studying fashion merchandising at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, in the fall. She hopes, in 10 years, to be working in the fashion industry as a clothing line buyer, working backstage at a fashion show, or writing for a fashion magazine.



Torrence Chrisman graduated from Lee High School, where he played trumpet in the band and jazz band, worked on the technical crew of every major school drama production, and helped produce the student-based television show "Lee Live." He has a passion for history, especially the World War II era, and received a merit award in U.S. history last year. Torrence, who was born with Apert's syndrome, also likes to watch Monty Python and listen to John Williams. He will be attending Landmark College in Putney, Vermont, in the fall with hopes of attending Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, for his bachelor's degree. In 10 years, he aspires

to move to Washington, D.C., and work at the Library of Congress doing research in the map and diagram department.

Nathaniel Finch graduated from Lexington High School, where he played on the ultimate Frisbee team and worked on the tech crew for school drama productions. He also served in the peer leader program as an advocate to other students. He was one of three seniors in his high school chosen to receive the MASS award (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents) for academic excellence. Born with Apert's syndrome, Nate was featured in May on Channel 5's "A+ Student Award," which highlights "outstanding high school seniors who often overcome incredible odds to be the best in their school." Nate has a passion for horseback riding, which he began at age 2, and also enjoys skiing and beekeeping. In addition, he works part-time at The Food Project in Lincoln, Massachusetts, which promotes sustainable agriculture. Nate will be attending University of Hartford in Connecticut in the fall. In 10 years, he sees himself pursuing some sort of math career in the business field. He would also like to be a disability activist. ■



In Your Own Words

Hi! My name is Jennifer Dodwell. I was born with hemifacial microsomia and have a great life. I am 24 years old and a recent graduate of Bryn Mawr College, where I majored in English and minored in music. I have taken ballet for 15 years, have sung in choruses and a cappella groups, have co-led a Girl Scout troop, and have worked as a camp counselor and teaching intern. I also write poetry and music. Currently, I live in New Jersey and work in New York City as a legal assistant for a law firm. Oh, and I have wonderful friends! I am writing because I want to share with you some of the things I have learned about how to navigate life as someone with a facial difference.

Don't let your facial difference define you any more than you would your hair color or your shoe size. While it is definitely a significant part of your life, don't let it distract you from finding and loving who you are inside. Whatever you enjoy, whatever you're good at, go for it! Although it might be a little scary or uncomfortable to get out there in front of lots of people, isn't it even scarier to think of all the experiences you might deny yourself if you let self-doubt win? In my life so far, I have found that most people will happily accept you if you hold your head high and show them there is nothing to be afraid of. Also, through pursuing your interests you meet others with the same interests who appreciate you for what you share in common with them. I have found many wonderful friends this way.

Will you still encounter people who do not treat you well? Unfortunately, yes. However, while you may worry that it's because you look different, maybe it is and

maybe it isn't. Whatever the reason, the behavior of those who are mean or unpleasant reveals much more about them than it does about you, so don't let such people influence how you feel about yourself. Remember, too, that you deserve respect at all times, so never be apologetic about your difference.

There may be times when you have thoughts of "Why me?" and "It's not fair!" When I feel this way, it helps me to remember that another person might be feeling just as frustrated by something else. Everyone has challenges to face in their lives, whether immediately visible or not, and even if you were to switch places with the person you may think "looks perfect" or "has it easy," chances are you would soon discover they too have something to cope with.

I also try to remember that I have a unique power to make the world a better place just in my daily interactions with people. When I convey to others with a smile or a cheerful tone of voice that I

am comfortable with myself, it puts them at ease and better prepares them for the next time they encounter a person who is different. Furthermore, talking about your facial difference with others can be a fantastic learning experience for them.

Nevertheless, there may be times when you just need to have a good cry or a good yell, and that's okay too. But try to deal with those feelings (talk to a counselor, a trusted friend or adult, or do something positive to take your mind off things) and then move on, because life is short and you are in command of your own happiness. You have places to see, people to meet and inspire (and be inspired by), and great things to learn and accomplish. So go get 'em!!

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my family for their unconditional love and support through all the surgeries, tears, and triumphs, and for the expert care, impeccable skill, and exceptional humanity of those on the Craniofacial Team at Boston Children's Hospital.



Skating for FFC

For the fourth year, Teri and John Parks, along with the Syracuse Crunch, organized a charity hockey game to benefit FFC. The game raised \$1,000, which was donated to the Foundation in honor of their five-year-old daughter Madison Hannah Parks, who was born with unilateral craniosynostosis.

Before the start of the game, John, Teri, Madison and her younger brother Gavin took to the ice to receive a \$1,000 check on behalf of FFC from the event sponsors—the Syracuse Crunch, Time Warner Cable, and Burdick Lexus. Both Madison's father and grandfather played in the charity event. Teri and John also set up an information table outside the arena with FFC brochures and DVDs.

In Support of FFC

A Really Big Show

Despite illness among the cast forcing a postponement, the Friends of Broadway benefit show did go on! The musical revue featured two dozen talented girls in grades 2 through college singing and dancing to such Broadway show tunes as "South Pacific" and "Annie" and to current hits by Legally Blonde and Taylor Swift.

Ticket sales raised \$1,500 in support of FFC's Teen/Young Adult Symposium. Our sincere gratitude to Samantha Hammel for choosing FFC as the beneficiary of the opening night of their "Roots Tour 2009."

From left, Kara Jackman and Friends of Broadway founder and director Samantha Hammel.



TEEN TALK *continued from page 1*

Next, participants will split into two smaller groups, facilitated by young adults. One group will discuss preparation and recovery from operations while the other will explore self-esteem and social issues. After 45 minutes, the groups will switch, giving everyone a chance to participate in both sessions. Anonymous questions may be submitted through a Q & A box. A bag lunch will be provided during these sessions.

“Our goal is to help others make informed decisions,” adds Brendan Condon, a symposium organizer. “I’ve spent most of my life being a passenger in the process, but now I have the opportunity to help others prepare for the experience and reduce their apprehension.”

Adds fellow organizer Rob Southern, “We want to reach people facing these difficult decisions, so that they have the best information that they can get, not just from doctors, but from those who’ve had first-hand experience.”

Parents are encouraged to attend. They will meet in a separate group, led by parents, to discuss care of their children, cost, insurance coverage, and issues.

Register and learn more about the Teen/Young Adult Symposium at www.facesofchildren.org. You can also contact Kara Jackman at karajackman@yahoo.com or **781-844-6368** to get involved.

This event is made possible by proceeds from *The Friends of Broadway* musical revue (see “A Really Big Show,” page 2). 



The Foundation for Faces of Children is dedicated to improving the lives of children with craniofacial conditions, including cleft lip, cleft palate, and other head and facial differences.

Our mission is to:

- Provide patients and families with the most accurate, up-to-date, and accessible information about facial conditions.
- Advocate for the best care possible for children with facial conditions.

We achieve this by:

- Collaborating with leading specialists.
- Endorsing the team approach to care.
- Partnering with individuals and organizations with similar goals.

We are a not-for-profit organization entirely supported by private donations, grants, and fund-raising initiatives. Please contact us if you would like to participate in or sponsor a fundraising event:

Mail: **Foundation for Faces of Children**
258 Harvard Street, #367
Brookline, MA 02446

Telephone: **617-355-8299**

E-mail: **info@facesofchildren.org**

Website: **www.facesofchildren.org**

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