

## Meet NMTSA

Meet NMTSA is a new program designed to invite our community into our clinic! Each month we welcome community members for a special tour to give them information on our programs, facility, and staff. In this 1 hour tour, each guest will get to visit the clinic, observe a live music therapy group, be welcomed by an NMTSA board member, and hear from an NMTSA parent/family. We hope that each month we will have the opportunity to welcome more people into the life of NMTSA and build stronger relationships with our community members and organizations.

These tours will be held every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5-6pm. We need your help! Please invite and encourage your friends, family, coworkers, and community members to participate. For more information or to RSVP please call us at (602) 840-6410 or email [info@nmtsa.org](mailto:info@nmtsa.org). Don't miss out on the fun led by Paige Jacobson. Thanks for all of your hard work, Paige, getting the tours started!

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## Staff Tidbits

- NMTSA would like to thank Rebecca Norton for her contributions in coordinating the newsletter for the past two years. We wish her continued success in her career pursuits!
- We welcome the two youngest members of the NMTSA family: Kathryn Kirin Hardy and Lukas Finnegan James Reany! Congratulations to Michelle Hardy and Dena Reany and their families on their new additions.
- Thank you, Sabra Follis, for your hard work and vision in the Parent Empowerment Center. You have done an amazing job!!
- We are pleased to announce many new faces at NMTSA: Bethany Jones, MT-BC, NMT, Janell Ornelas, ACT Special Educator, and the following ACT Instructional Assistants: Goldie Byerly, Tiffany Crawford, Chad Delk, Andre Harris, Francis Serdenia, and Victoria Barski. WELCOME TO THE TEAM!

Thank you to the following staff for their contributions in this edition of *Functional Cadence*: Janell Ornelas, Michelle Hardy, Paige Jacobson, Sabra Follis, Sarah Studebaker, and Suzanne Oliver.

# Functional Cadence

The Rhythm of NMTSA



## Celebrating 27 Years of Serving the Phoenix Community!

### Upcoming Programs

Check out our website at [www.NMTSA.org](http://www.NMTSA.org) for information about upcoming events and fundraising opportunities

***Did you know that according to the law, your child should be provided with the supports and accommodations necessary to access the general education curriculum according to the law?***

***See page 2 for more information.***

### Contact Us

Phone: 602-840-6410  
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### Did You Know?

*Exciting new developments in the life of NMTSA*

- ...NMTSA was chosen as **Channel 12's "12 Who Care" Honoree** for the month of August? This honor included Channel 12 running twenty-nine 30-second promotional spots during the month, running one 60-second spot, providing a live interview with NMTSA's executive director on it's mid-day show, and honoring NMTSA staff at a luncheon on October 23<sup>rd</sup> where they presented NMTSA with a \$1200 check. This donation will be used to fund NMTSA's Competency-Based Communication Peer Programs. Thank you to the NMTSA families that nominated us for this honor.
- ...NMTSA **can receive donations through United Way** as a non-partnering agency? On your fall campaign donor form you may select Option C, use the VSUW Agency Code 9937, and include our name, Neurologic Music Therapy Services of Arizona. Your donation will then go directly to NMTSA to support its non-funded programs.
- ....you are able to obtain an Arizona Tuition Tax Credit by making a donation to NMTSA/ACT Program? School Choice Arizona is working with NMTSA in order to provide tuition grant/scholarships to ACT students. You may take a tax credit up to \$1000 for married persons filing jointly or \$500 for a single taxpayer. See a brochure in our reception area, ask your therapist for more information, and/or log on to [www.schoolchoicearizona.org](http://www.schoolchoicearizona.org) or [www.nmtsa.org](http://www.nmtsa.org).
- NMTSA was recently awarded a **\$3500 grant from John C. Lincoln Health Foundation?** This grant will partially fund our Community Education and Training Programs including six months of parent training sessions and Level One competency-based communication trainings. Thank you to the Lincoln Gives program, to NMTSA parent, Sarah Lee, and therapist, Carolyn Estrada, for assisting us in applying for this grant.
- NMTSA can **use your help in identifying community grants and corporate sponsors** to fund its non-funded programs? NMTSA is reliant on private donations and corporate sponsorships to grow and expand its programs and services. If you are aware of sponsoring opportunities please let your therapist know. We can all work together to continue to provide unique opportunities to this community!

To download an electronic version of this newsletter, visit:

[www.NMTSA.org/News](http://www.NMTSA.org/News)



## The A.C.T. Program Expands to Offer Transition Program to Current Students

Beginning December 1st, the ACT program will open a transition program designed to accommodate our older students who are not quite ready to be placed back in their regular district programs. This new classroom will continue to prepare them for this goal while also allowing opportunity for several of our waitlist students to be placed at ACT.

The transition program will be housed right next door to our existing facility, in suite 1014, and will feature a library/media center to be used by all ACT students. The space will also include private Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy rooms. We are excited about the new expansion and look forward to having NMTSA families utilize the space as we will be hosting our frequent community education programs there.

## Education Focus

Did you know that your child should be provided with the supports and accommodations necessary to access the general education curriculum according to the law? Often times families and students, find themselves in the position of having to prove their intelligence prior to being given the opportunity to learn at their grade level. Most often intelligence is determined through rigorous testing methods that do not account for motor or communication deficits in individuals. Over the years, we have learned that not all standardized IQ tests are adequate to assess students with learning differences and, thus, often test scores reflect a much lower intellect than what may actually be true. When testing is administered, federal law states that your child should be provided the supports necessary so that the test is a true reflection of what is being tested rather than reflecting your child's impairment. Many families, and teachers, are not aware of this law as stated:

*[1] The district is required to insure that all "assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other facts the test purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure)." Fed. Reg. 300.304 (C) (3)*

Awareness and implementation of this law can transform the child who is bored with repetitive tasks and acts out in class to one who is academically challenged and motivated to control his behavior in order to access the learning environment. If you find yourself in an IEP meeting in which you are informed that your child is not performing at grade level, ask them what kind of supports and accommodations were provided to your child in order for this to be determined. If they indicate that none were provided, as your child is required to independently demonstrate his/her abilities, update the personnel on the law.

For more information, see the following article in the Parent Empowerment Center: Edelson, M.G. (2006). Are the Majority of Children with Autism Mentally Retarded? A Systematic Evaluation of the Data. Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities, 21 (2), 66-83.

## Parent Empowerment Center

NMTSA is not only committed to providing quality neurologic music therapy services, but also to making unique community education and training resources available. The Parent Empowerment Center (PEC) at NMTSA is a resource center allowing access to informative research articles, books, media releases, and websites. We are very excited to be able to offer these resources for loan. If you find a book that you are interested in borrowing, just let your child's therapist know and they will walk you through setting up a user profile as well as check the book out for you.

We have over 175 books in our growing library on subjects ranging from Autism to Diet, Facilitated Communication to General Medicine, and much more. Come on into the PEC and take a look. If you have any questions, need more information, or are interested in donating to the PEC please contact Sabra Follis at [sfollis@nmtsa.org](mailto:sfollis@nmtsa.org).

## Calling all volunteers!

As many of you may know, NMTSA was chosen as the August "Twelve Who Care" honoree by Channel 12 News. We received many responses from interested people to volunteer, assist, and get to know more about our unique organization after the Channel 12 spots aired. In an effort to involve NMTSA families, supporters, and community members, we are updating and expanding our Volunteer Program. As part of this process, we welcome Sabra Follis as our new Volunteer Coordinator. We would like to thank Amanda Ferguson, our former Volunteer Coordinator, for developing the program and for her valuable guidance in the transition. We wish her luck as she is pursuing a career in nursing and only with us part time at NMTSA.

We are excited to incorporate the vast talents, passions, and hobbies our volunteers possess to meet the needs of NMTSA. What are your distinct gifts that you might share with us? Remember all ideas and talents can be put to use!! Are you handy with instrument repair? Can you sew? Could you lead an after-school program for ACT? How are your organizational skills? Can you construct just about anything? Are you the next Betty Crocker? If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering at NMTSA, please contact Sabra Follis at [sfollis@nmtsa.org](mailto:sfollis@nmtsa.org) or call 602-840-6410.

## Interview with Janell Ornelas, ACT Classroom Teacher



*Tell us a little bit about your self and your background.*

I am an Arizona native originally from Tucson but loyal to the ASU Sun Devils! After changing my major four times, I graduated from ASU with a degree in Special Education in 2005. I knew that working within the special needs community was my passion but was discouraged by what I saw in public schools so I dabbled in other careers while looking for the right fit. I got my real estate license and did that for about a year, unfortunately, I was a year too late – I missed the "boom". My next venture was a job at Phoenix Suns Charities, where I helped organize events and raise money for non-profit organizations throughout Arizona. Although it was fun and had great perks like U2, I still hadn't found what I was looking for. Fast forward to May, 2008...I answered an ad for a teacher at a small private school and finally discovered my niche here at NMTSA.

*Why did you accept the position at ACT/NMTSA?*

From the moment I observed at A.C.T. I was sold. Kids with autism actually being given the tools and supports they need to access an appropriate education! How about that?! I have always felt that we owe it to every child to provide them with the opportunity to be successful and the philosophy at NMTSA was totally aligned with that belief! Long story short, I took the position because this is an amazing place where I get to spend my days with incredibly intelligent children who are going to change the way the world looks at autism. That makes me the most fortunate person I know!

*Do you think your prior position prepared you for your role here at NMTSA?*

My job prior to this was with the philanthropic arm of the Phoenix Suns, Phoenix Suns Charities. Our mission there was to improve the lives of children and families throughout Arizona by providing grants and scholarships to non-profit organizations and high school seniors. During my time there, I had the opportunity to help plan major events, learn the grant process, and become friends with several people who are heavily involved in the valley non-profit circuit. I feel that my previous position will be beneficial because I can use the experience to secure funding for different programs here at the clinic and am hopeful that Phoenix Suns Charities will be one organization that will be interested in supporting NMTSA programs!

*What do you do in your spare time?*

What is this spare time you speak of? Just kidding! I'm a pretty simple person...I like to spend time with family and friends, work out, travel, read, go to the movies, catch a football game, and cook (to name a few). Most of my family is here in town so I enjoy getting to see them almost everyday – my mom is my best friend so even if I don't see her I talk to her *at least* once a day. I am currently training for the P.F. Chang's half marathon so I have been spending an obscene amount of time on a treadmill. I only add the previous sentence so that all of you will hold me accountable – no backing out this year!

*If anyone were to bring you a treat after a hard day of work, what would you hope for?*

Either Starbucks or Dunkin Donuts! I don't discriminate!

## Research Corner: Coming to a Clinic Near You

NMTSA is proud to make one of its missions "to promote advances in research and education of the application of neurologic music therapy interventions with persons with developmental disabilities." We are excited to announce that, in light of this mission, NMTSA is launching its first clinical research project this spring. Michelle Hardy and Sarah Studebaker are heading up a study that will look at clinical cases to examine the effects of active participation in a protocol, developed from the NMT technique Auditory Perception Training, on sensory integration of individuals with autism.

These are exciting times for research here at the clinic for a number of reasons. First of all, we anticipate this project to be the first of many studies, projects, and other research collaborations. Research is also a "team effort" and we are excited about the possibilities of involvement from clients, families, community volunteers, and others in the various aspects of the upcoming projects.

Stay tuned for updates on the current project as well as new studies that will undoubtedly enable NMTSA to remain at the cutting edge of evidence-based practice in music therapy and allow us to continue to provide the most effective services possible to those we serve.

To read up on some of the latest information about the biological components of autism, check out the new Feature Article in the Parent Empowerment Center.

*Minshew, N.J. and Williams, D.L. (2007). The new neurobiology of autism. Neurological Review, 64, 945-950.*