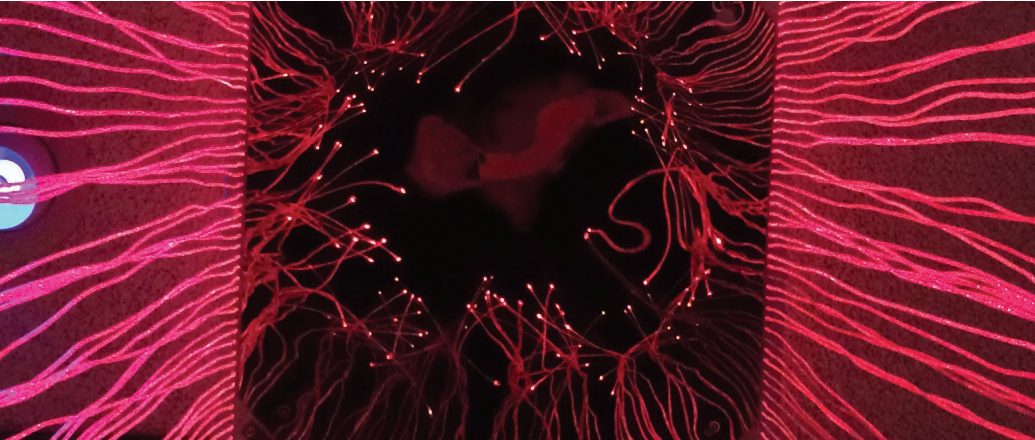




IN THIS ISSUE

Multi-Sensory Therapy Room Ribbon Cutting



Ribbon Cutting	1
A Letter from our Chief Executive Officer	2
Welcome New Staff Members	2
Staff Spotlight	2
Visit from ABC7	3
International Women's Day Event	3
eCycle	4
Thank you for an Incredible Job	4

The Douglas Center celebrated the newly created Multi-Sensory Therapy Room on Wednesday, January 13, 2016. A grant from the Coleman Foundation help make the creation of this environment possible. Multi-Sensory Therapy provides a responsive sensory-focused environment for individuals with special needs. Clark McCain, Senior Program Officer for the Coleman Foundation joined in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The new area enables participants to interact with specific objects in a controlled setting at their own pace. The environment utilizes light, sound, smell and a range of specialized equipment designed to create an environment that is conducive for relaxation. The state-of-the-art equipment has proven beneficial in reducing problems with self-injurious behaviors, relieving agitation, promoting relaxation and the modulation of their own emotions. Individuals with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities show increased concentration, alertness and awareness of their environment with the use of Multi-Sensory Room Therapy.

Participants interact with the equipment in small groups with the assistance of a case manager who has been trained in Multi-Sensory Therapy. The multi-sensory room provides individuals with varied optical, acoustic, olfactory and tactile stimuli, assisting individuals in increasing their concentration and focus. Additionally, the effectiveness of these types of environments extends into providing new ways of encouraging learning, motor development, cognitive development, language and social interaction skills. The goal is to provide a relaxing activity that is designed to create a feeling of safety and stimulation that is

(continued on pg 3)

SINCEREST GRATITUDE TO
The Coleman
FOUNDATION
helping to make things possible



Clark, from the Coleman Foundation and a few board members enjoying the therapy room.

“We have observed a significant decrease in behavioral difficulties and perception issues.”
– Rifath Khan



The Douglas Center

A ray of light for individuals with special needs

Dear Friends, Supporters and Colleagues:

The Douglas Center is continuing to provide opportunities for our program participants to further integrate and contribute to the community. As you may know, The Douglas Center has been involved in several collaborative community projects with much success. Our participants have worked with the Skokie Library in delivering books, DVDs, etc... to homebound Skokie residents. Every other week our participants, accompanied by staff members of The Douglas Center, pick up ordered books and materials from the Skokie Library and personally deliver them to homebound residents. This program has met with great success according to the Skokie Library. The library has received numerous calls from its patrons thanking our participants for their wonderful service and acknowledging the great job that they do. This program is a wonderful example of the types of collaborative opportunities that we strive to provide to our participants who thoroughly enjoy their community involvement.

We are also delighted and privileged to have been selected to participate in another community collaboration. On April 7th The Douglas Center program participants began a project facilitated by the Open Studio art program and the Village of Skokie.



*Rifath Khan, CEO
The Douglas Center*

Participants of this project will create a mural which will be a permanent installation located at the Village of Skokie.

Our newest community collaboration for adults living with special needs at The Douglas Center is the “Next Chapter Book Club” (NCBC). The Douglas Center and the Skokie Library were awarded a grant by the Skokie Community Fund to participate and facilitate semi-monthly book club meetings for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The book club meetings are facilitated by staff members of the Skokie Library and The Douglas Center who have received comprehensive training by the Next Chapter Book Club organization. Members

of the book club include individuals with disabilities from numerous agencies within the community.

This innovative and very special program was developed by an Ohio University professor to provide individuals with disabilities, reading at all levels, the opportunity to read and discuss books. The NCBC members also spend time socializing with each other. The mission of the NCBC is to provide meaningful opportunities for learning, social connections and authentic community engagement for people with developmental disabilities.

The Douglas Center is committed to providing a wide range of choices and opportunities to our program participants living with disabilities. We would like to express our gratitude to all of our community partners for their collaboration and dedication to supporting individuals with special needs.

We look forward to working together on these and future collaborations.



Participants and staff at the Skokie Library to kick off the New Chapter book club.



Staff Spotlight

Meet Amanda Bulgrin

Amanda has been a Case Manager at the Douglas Center for just under 2 years. Her average case load includes 45 clients. Her assistance in the new Multi-Sensory Room is indispensable. We asked her a few questions, here are her thoughts.

What is your specialty?

I have a background in working with individuals with autism through utilizing applied behavior analysis (ABA), adaptive communication and sensory therapy. I also facilitate the pet therapy group.

What impact does the sensory room have on your clients?

Having a sensory room has helped my clients learn to identify their anxiety/agitation and has empowered them to advocate for themselves and use adaptive tools and strategies to manage their frustrations and emotions. It gives them independence and a space to relax.

What is your favorite piece of equipment in the new sensory room and why?

I love the bubble wall because it's very soothing both to watch and listen to.

What do you wish to say about our clients?

Our client's desires are the same as any other adult, they want to feel empowered and have a sense of purpose. Each of our clients has something to contribute to the world. They are very insightful, creative and extremely capable, if we are willing to see ability first rather than disability.

In your opinion, what makes the Douglas Center different?

What makes the Douglas Center different is our focus on tailoring programs to the individual and offering them choices in their programming. This creates an environment in which the clients feel supported and respected.

Thanks Amanda and all the staff at Douglas Center, for doing what they do!



New Staff Members

Welcome, Rosemene Rose and Igboji Sarah, our new Direct Service Professionals.

Sensory Therapy Ribbon Cutting *(continued)*

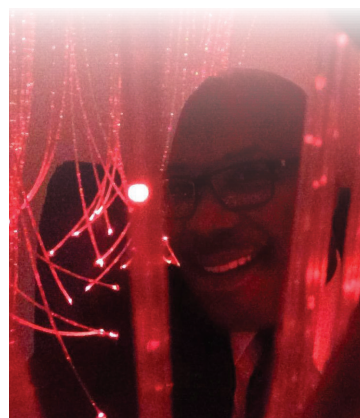
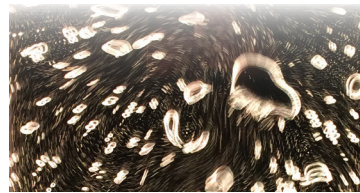
under the control of the participant. “This program will assist individuals with disabilities in becoming more effective and productive members of society,” stated Rifath Khan.

The Douglas Center Featured on ABC7 Chicago

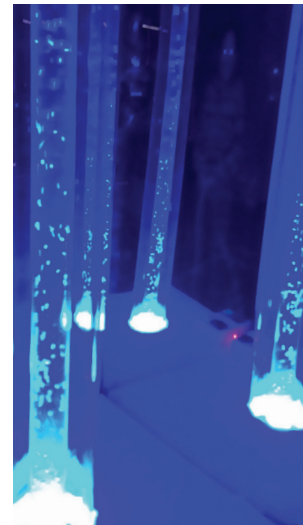
The new Multi-Sensory Therapy Room received another visitor this winter. Hosea Sanders from ABC7 Sunday Morning News stopped by and interviewed, our CEO, Rifath Khan. In the special feature Ms. Khan focused on the benefits of multi-sensory therapy for individuals living with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities. “Oftentimes, individuals with disabilities are overwhelmed by the amount of stimulation within their environments,” commented Rifath Khan. “Multi-Sensory therapy enables the individual to exert some control which helps provide relaxation.”

Hosea Sanders also interviewed Amanda Bulgrin, Case Manager. Be sure to read her insights in the *Staff Spotlight* on the previous page. Program Participant, Ken Carr spoke with Mr. Sanders about his personal experience utilizing the newly developed Multi-Sensory Room. “This room helps me to relax and get things off of my mind when I’m stressed.”

The Multi-Sensory Room was made possible by a grant from The Coleman Foundation.



Hosea Sanders engages in the Multi-Sensory Therapy Room experience.



Lights, sounds and tactile therapy help promote the modulation of their own emotions.

“In addition to the therapeutic value of this type of therapy, the participants are having fun!”

– Rifath Khan

Rifath Khan Speaks at American Telegu Association “International Women’s Day” Event

Rifath Khan, Chief Executive Officer of The Douglas Center was recently invited to speak at the “International Women’s Day Celebrations” event hosted by the American Telegu Association. Held on March 20th at the Viceroy of India Banquet Hall in Lombard the event was part of a month-long series of programs honoring women’s rights and celebrating the accomplishments of women in geographical, political, economic and social sectors.

The event featured several presentations and panel discussions. Ms. Khan’s presentation “Defining Ability in Disability” highlighted the many accomplishments of individual’s living with disabilities. She detailed the

numerous choices and opportunities available to program participants of The Douglas Center in the center’s wide array of programs and services for people with special needs.

Among the guest speaker presentations were Dr. Arati Reddy, Endocrinologist on “Diabetes and Thyroid Problems in Women” and Ms. Anu Malhotra, Health Executive on “Art of Stress Free Living”.

The event was attended by approximately 200 women; most of whom were elegantly dressed in colorful sarees. Attendees were treated to lunch and entertainment, games and dancing.

The mission of the American Telegu Association is to assist and promote literary, cultural, educational, religious,

social, economic, health and community activities of the people of Telegu origin. The organization promotes exchange programs for students, scientists and professionals of Telegu origin between the United States of America, India and other countries.

The American Telegu Association raised funds during this event which will be donated to The Douglas Center and the Sahrudaya Foundation, India. “On behalf of The Douglas Center, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the American Telegu Association for the opportunity to raise awareness of the challenges and contributions of people with special needs. Thank you to all those who generously made donations in support of our work.”



image credit : Suresh Bodiwala



The Douglas Center

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The Incredible Efforts are Greatly Appreciated



The Douglas Center would like to express our deepest gratitude to our wonderful staff and colleagues for their unwavering dedication and hard work in assisting the center with the facilitation of the sewing contract from the Department of Defense. This project is held to very stringent standards with a high degree of detail. A project of this magnitude requires exceptional organization and detail in order to train and oversee the work required. "I am enormously grateful to our wonderful staff and colleagues for their assistance in this project," stated Rifath Khan, CEO.

“The dedication to our participants is exemplary.” – Rifath Khan



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