

Brain-Body Connection

Working To Help Children With Disabilities

By: Margo A. Charlebois - Therapy, Medicine

I had an amazing experience last weekend that I am compelled to share with readers. I volunteered to be a "hostess" at a free children's clinic that was held at the BAISD Living & Learning Center. At the clinic, certified practitioners of the Anat Baniel Method (ABM) for Children (SM) provided children with special needs an exciting journey into a non-traditional way of "moving" beyond their current limitations.

At the invitation of Bay City's Suellen Bartel, herself an ABM practitioner, five other ABM for Children trained professionals from Michigan came to Hampton Township for the Saturday clinic. Joined by two practitioners from Pennsylvania and Indiana, they gave thirty families the chance, at no charge, to see firsthand how this work can help children with disabilities.

The families began arriving at 9:00 a.m., moms and dads, grandparents, and others who cherish these wonderful children who cope daily with conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, Down's Syndrome, hydrocephaly, premature birth, as well as simple developmental delays. Some of the children appeared quite fearful, having endured sometimes painful and invasive medical procedures in their young lives. By the end of their movement lesson they were smiling, relaxed and glowing with a sense of accomplishment. The parents and other loved ones appeared thrilled as well, some astonished to have seen their child hold themselves and move in ways they thought weren't possible I think one of the hardest tasks of parenthood is seeking medical care for your child, especially when you know that intervention may mean pain. With this medical model alternative, considered a learning approach, those concerns vanish within minutes of the start of the lesson.

ABM works by communicating with the brain of the special needs child and facilitating the formation of new neural connections and patterns, irrespective of the cause of the child's limitations. As part of the work, nine requirements for the brain to form new and effective patterns of movement,

thought, and feeling, are implemented. Please note that these children are not the only beneficiaries of these specially trained practitioners. If you suffer from back pain, neck pain, sports related injuries, loss of vitality from aging or any of a great number of trauma, disease, or injury that impacts your mobility-transformation movement lessons can help you to establish new, more efficient, comfortable, and healthy ways to move.

The Anat Baniel Method is derived from a learning system pioneered by Dr. Moshe Feldenkrais. In the 1940s, Dr. Feldenkrais, a physicist, engineer, and judo master, was looking to overcome a debilitating injury he suffered to one of his knees. Rather than focus on the muscles and tendons associated with his injury, Dr. Feldenkrais realized that it is his brain that could find new ways to organize and move the leg successfully, despite the injury. From the ABM website: "Movement was the means he chose to communicate with the brain. He made the early connection that how people learn and whether they continue to learn is closely related to how well they function and feel. He understood that each human brain has a built-in capacity to function better or worse, on higher or lower levels. He then proceeded to develop and understanding of the conditions the brain needs in order for it to function and learn best. Based on that understanding he was able to develop concrete ways to communicate with the brain directly, primarily through movement and awareness, and bring about remarkable changes..."

Anat Baniel was a student of Dr. Feldenkrais. She spent 11 years in an apprenticeship and close cooperation with him, learning to master his techniques. She has followed this with 24 years of continued practice, teaching, study and discovery. The practitioners at the free clinic have been trained directly by Anat Baniel in work with adults and the specialty area of working with infants and children with disabilities.

Bay City's Suellen Bartel became trained in ABM after experiencing the miracles of the work first hand. Suellen has been challenged by psoriatic rheumatoid arthritis most of her life. After years of chronic pain and joint damage, a wheelchair user at times, and with traditional medicine having nothing left to offer, Suellen was referred to a movement practitioner. She discovered this amazing work and began a process of miraculous

improvement in her own mobility and quality of life. As a trained practitioner she has entered a new career and can now work with others, including children, to help them achieve the gains and freedom she holds so dear.

As research into the marvel of the human brain continues, we can't know for sure what the future will hold for us but there is knowledge available now about who we are and what we are capable of learning/doing. There are methods and practices in use now that can improve the lives of all of us, whether or not we have a disabling condition.

I encourage you to go to www.anatbanielmethod.com, www.feldenkrais.com, and visit Suellen's web site www.revitalizeyourself.net. At these sites you will find stories, films, research and more. At the Revitalize Yourself site you will find information about local classes and private session availability. Happy learning!

Questions? [Click Here to E-Mail Margo A. Charlebois, MA, LPC, CAC-I](mailto:Margo.A.Charlebois@time4achangecounseling.com)

Or Contact Margo Charlebois at:
807 E Midland St, Bay City, MI 48706
(989) 895-4420

<http://www.time4achangecounseling.com>