We Are Nonprofit, Hear Us ROAR!

Have you recently noticed some new trends at Morrissey-Compton Educational Center?

All of a sudden, the words “A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation” are appearing on all of our company collateral, including this newsletter. New signs in our lobby list recent donors and encourage others to give. Our Spring Appeal was widely promoted and heavily focused on the matching gifts offered through Silicon Valley Gives (for a recap of this event, turn to page 5).

In short, we at Morrissey-Compton are doing our very best to raise awareness of the fact that we are, first and foremost, a nonprofit agency—and to encourage a culture of giving that will sustain us well into the future.

Why Now?
We’ve been working to overcome a challenge that we’ve faced for some time: the fact that somehow, in spite of 32 years of Morrissey-Compton helping individuals with learning differences succeed, many of our clients and friends seem to have no idea that we are a not-for-profit agency.

Morrissey-Compton’s recent hire of a full-time Fund Development Director, Lyn Balistreri, was the first step towards focusing more of our time and resources on donor relations, with community outreach and increased communication efforts included under that umbrella.

continued on page 4
Dear Friends of Morrissey-Compton,

Greetings from our new home in Redwood City!

Our move to our office on Price Avenue went smoothly over Memorial Day Weekend. Our last day of operations in Palo Alto was on Friday, May 23, and our Redwood City office was open for business Tuesday morning at 8am. We love our new building, particularly the additional space and the convenience of having all of our offices located on one floor. To celebrate our new location, we are having an **Open House on Saturday September 13**. The details of our Open House are outlined on page 11, and I would like to invite all of you to this special event.

This newsletter also describes other exciting events and programs at Morrissey-Compton. We recently completed our **32nd year of Challenge School**. With the help of our new and larger space in Redwood City, we are continuing to build our clinical program by adding new staff and expanding our services in psychological therapy and educational therapy, particularly in the area of executive functioning. **Kathy Button** has joined our staff and is providing educational and executive functioning therapy, as well as testing services, to our clients, and **Dr. Erica Ragan will be** bringing her expertise in anxiety, eating disorders, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy to Morrissey-Compton in September. Their biographies are at right.

Also in this issue, you can read about the exciting **new research institute** being developed at Morrissey-Compton by **Dr. Surina Basho**. Our research program will help guide development of new programs, modify existing programs, and evaluate the effectiveness of our work. You can also read about developments in our Half Moon Bay office, plans for our parent education and group therapy programs this fall, and innovative educational therapy offerings at Morrissey-Compton.

I would also like to remind you that our **Annual Fundraising Breakfast** will be held on **Thursday, October 2** at the Menlo Circus Club. This year, we are honoring **Claudia Koocheck**, a longtime educator and current Director of the Charles Armstrong School. Through the kindness of one of our families, we have a **$50,000 matching grant** so that any money donated will automatically be doubled. As a reminder, all money raised for this event is used for our scholarship fund, which allows us to fulfill our mission to help all families regardless of their ability to pay.

I look forward to seeing you soon, hopefully on September 13 and/or October 2.

With Warm Regards,

John T. Brentar, PhD
A Letter from the Director

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I look forward to seeing you soon, hopefully on September 13 and/or October 2.

With Warm Regards,

John T. Brentar, PhD

New Faces at Morrissey-Compton

We are pleased to welcome two outstanding professionals to our team:

Kathy Button, MEd, Educational Specialist

Kathy Button comes to Morrissey-Compton from MIND Research Institute, where she helped train teachers and administrators in the Bay Area to use the Spatial Temporal Math program.

Before coming to the West Coast, Kathy worked as a Reading and Learning Disability Specialist at the Institute for Learning and Development (ILD) in Massachusetts. At ILD, Kathy conducted assessments and saw students for educational therapy. She has also worked as a special educator in many classroom settings.

Kathy does educational assessments and provides educational therapy/tutoring services at Morrissey Compton for elementary through high school students, with a focus in reading, math, and executive function.

Erica Ragan, PhD, Staff Psychologist

Dr. Erica Ragan earned her BA in Psychology with Highest Honors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While at the university, Dr. Ragan worked on a research study on child development, the transition to parenthood, and the effects this has on the broader family system. She received her MA and PhD at the University of Denver’s Clinical Child Psychology program, where she conducted research and received extensive clinical training in psychosocial assessment as well as evidenced-based therapies for children, teens, families, and couples. She completed her predoctoral internship at Stanford University’s Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and the Children’s Health Council.

Dr. Ragan completed a two-year APA accredited postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University’s Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Mood Disorders and Eating Disorders clinics. She has a strong background in evidence-based treatments for mood and anxiety disorders including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT). She also has extensive training in the assessment and treatment of eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge eating disorder, and picky eating.

In her spare time, Dr. Ragan enjoys spending time with friends and family, exploring the Bay Area, listening to live music, and going hiking with her dog.
Focus on Fundraising

You are invited to
Attend Our 8th Annual
Scholarship Breakfast:

“Facilitating
Bright Futures”
Honoring
Community Educator

Claudia Koochek
Director, Charles
Armstrong School

Thursday,
October 2, 2014
8:00 to 9:30am
at
Menlo Circus Club

RSVP by September 19

To register, call
650-322-5910 or
email lyn.balistrieri@ mrrcomp.org.

Thanks to an
anonymous donor, all
gifts will be matched
up to $50,000!

Gifts in any amount
are appreciated.
All proceeds benefit
Morrissey-Compton’s
Scholarship Program.

We Are Nonprofit, Hear Us ROAR!

continued from page 1

Why Were People Unaware of Our Nonprofit Status?
Morrissey-Compton employs outstanding mental health and educational professionals, and our fees for their comprehensive psychological and educational assessment, consultation, therapy, tutoring, and advocacy services are in line with the averages in our area. Since the majority of our clients are able to pay these fees, they provide a significant source of income that would, in other organizations, result in a profit.

However, Morrissey-Compton is committed to providing its services to everyone who needs them, regardless of ability to pay. That means that a number of our ongoing clients, and the majority of our Challenge School students, are only able to use our services because we provide financial aid in the form of reduced fees and, in many cases, full scholarships.

Where Does This Money Come From?
Morrissey-Compton has made many loyal friends over the years, and those friends have been remarkably generous in their giving. We are very fortunate that historically, a few key donors have provided the majority of our scholarship money each year. The rest is made up of smaller—but equally appreciated—gifts from other donors, many of whom are past and current clients. Gifts from both new and existing donors are requested through our twice-yearly appeals, Fall Fundraising Breakfast, and other fundraising events throughout the year.

What’s Our Plan for the Future?
Our plan is to continue to try to raise awareness of Morrissey-Compton’s history of good works and nonprofit status, both within and beyond our existing client/donor base. Increased community outreach will be key to these efforts, and upcoming examples include our September 13 Open House (page 11) and Fall Fundraising Breakfast (box at left). You are welcome at both of these free events.

In the coming months, look for more “friendraising” events, more communications about matters that are important to donors, and continued efforts to spread the word about Morrissey-Compton Educational Center: an exceptionally accomplished NONPROFIT organization with a proven history of helping individuals and families learn not only how to cope with learning differences, but to eventually move past them—and keep thriving!
We ask our friends to “Dream Big.” But when Morrissey-Compton decided to participate in Silicon Valley Community Foundation’s first-ever day of giving on May 6, even we didn’t dream that we could bring in enough gifts to come in 19th out of all 674 participating nonprofits. With $40,265 in day-of gifts plus $15,000 in matching gifts plus $16,165 in other matches and prizes, Morrissey-Compton managed to raise $71,430 in funding for our operations, programs, and scholarships!

It’s four months later, and our glow still hasn’t faded. What a day, and what wonderful friends we have. On behalf of our staff, Board of Directors, and the individuals we serve, thank you all so very much for your support.

School-Based Tutoring

A Unique Program for Your Unique Student

by Kathy Button, MEd, Educational Specialist

Did you know that by special arrangement, Morrissey-Compton Educational Center may be able to provide tutoring at a student’s school during the school day? Parents who request these services must first obtain permission from school administrators, who then provide a time and appropriate tutoring space.

A Bounty of Benefits

Once arranged, on-site tutoring can help students in many ways. Young students, for example, who may be too tired for additional instruction at the end of a long school day, may respond very well to tutoring during the morning hours. Similarly, older students who are busy after school with extracurricular activities may find it convenient to schedule tutoring sessions during their regular school study periods.

The advantages to in-school tutoring arrangements often extend beyond ease of scheduling. Tutors who regularly visit their students’ schools can directly connect with teachers, who can then help them prioritize both content and needed strategies for their students. Teachers usually welcome additional tutorial support that can contribute to their students’ success.

At the same time, students may be more likely to apply strategies learned in their tutoring sessions to their school assignments. Students who struggle with organizational and executive function skills may particularly benefit from this type of school-based support, where ongoing coaching and regular check-ins can make all the difference.

Parent Testimonial

“Having Kathy, the educational specialist, at my daughter’s school allows her to meet directly with the teachers. Even a brief conversation can help Kathy plan future sessions, and also gives the teachers additional information about what works for our daughter.

When Kathy meets with our daughter in the school setting, it helps her stay in a learning frame of mind.”

For more information about school-based tutoring, call 650-322-5910 or email erin.shinn@morrcomp.org.
Creating A School-Wide Executive Function Culture

Students in today’s world must manage multiple demands, both in, and outside of, school. Unfortunately, many capable students are struggling to meet these demands.

For instance, students must juggle more content curriculum at a younger age; filter and retain more information in their environments; and participate in more organized out-of-school activities. And they must do all of this while having less time to reflect on their own learning processes. **In order to meet the demands of the 21st century, students must engage and develop their executive function skills.**

Executive function (EF) skills consist of a set of cognitive processes in the brain that include working memory, cognitive flexibility, planning, organizing, prioritizing, and self-monitoring. All of these skills help students to manage their behavior and emotions in order to execute tasks and achieve goals.

The reality is, however, that EF skills are not taught explicitly in the classroom. Moreover, teachers are not trained in how to improve EF skills in children. This has created a great need for teacher training in EF. At Morrissey-Compton, **Dr. Surina Basho** has been collaborating with schools and providing professional development training in EF directly to teachers and administrators.

**An Example of Innovation**
One school that is at the forefront of creating a school-wide EF culture for all students is **Fraser Academy**, an independent, not-for-profit school in Vancouver, Canada that is dedicated to helping students in grades K-12 with language-based learning disabilities.

Fraser Academy recently began a three-year initiative for integrating EF curriculum across all grade levels and content areas. Fraser Academy asked Dr. Basho to assist them with this endeavor, and last June, Dr. Basho provided an in-depth, two-day workshop with key staff members representing grade cohorts 2-12.

In her workshop, Dr. Basho helped staff:
- Refine their understanding of EF
- Learn the key components to building a school-wide EF culture
- Identify Fraser’s EF mission and goals
- Establish a foundation for building their own EF curriculum for all grades
- Create school-wide systems for the implementation and integration of EF

**Ongoing Collaboration**
Over the summer, Dr. Basho continued to consult with Fraser Academy. In August, she returned to the school to deliver another professional development workshop, this time to the entire teaching staff. Key staff members also presented the EF curriculum to the teachers, with an emphasis on integrating these strategies across all content areas. Additionally, with a goal of building a sustainable EF culture, the school had Dr. Basho give a presentation on EF to parents.
Dr. Basho will continue to consult with Fraser Academy over the three-year initiative and track their progress for the Morrissey-Compton Research Program. In time, we would be thrilled to see local schools—and perhaps eventually, every school—learn how to create a school-wide EF culture.

The Morrissey-Compton Research Program

Morrissey-Compton seeks to comprehensively address the needs of children, adolescents, and adults with learning differences and/or attention and emotional difficulties. As part of this mission, Morrissey-Compton recently established a Research Program led by Dr. Surina Basho.

The initial goals of our Research Program are to:

- Deepen our understanding of the assessment and treatment of executive function (EF)
- Further the underlying theory of EF in the learning disabilities field
- Build research-based teacher training programs in EF for schools
- Provide parent education trainings in EF
- Train future clinicians, researchers, and educational specialists in EF
- Share our knowledge with others by publishing in peer-reviewed journals and presenting at conferences.

Over the summer, Dr. Basho had a total of six Research Interns (two doctoral, one Master’s student, one undergraduate, and two high school students) working in the program. Their many accomplishments included building a research database and encoding EF data; establishing an ongoing book project for kids, by kids, with EF; creating an informational poster on EF to help students and parents better understand it; and building a resource book list about EF for parents, students, and teachers.

Dr. Basho would like to thank each of our summer Research Assistants and Interns (pictured above) for their hard work and dedication.

The Morrissey-Compton Executive Function Research Program is in its early stages and will require special funding to effectively meet its goals.

If you are interested in giving to this program (or to any Morrissey-Compton program), please contact Lyn Balistreri at 408-396-8953 or lyn.balistreri@morrcomp.org.

Back (left to right): Aaron Gorelik, Kate Lazar, Leo Rosas. Front: Lauren Allerhand, Dr. Surina Basho, Genevieve Linchangco. Not Pictured: Alicia Vanden Bussche.
A Summer of Heroes

We just wrapped up another successful year at Challenge Summer School. This year’s theme was heroes, and our students and teachers were nothing short of champions! Our students, grades kindergarten through sixth, engaged in multi-sensory lessons about historical heroes and individual heroic events (such as helping out a friend) to develop core academic skills, learning strategies, and confidence.

Realizing the importance and interconnection of executive function and learning, this year we kicked off a school-wide executive function curriculum. Developmentally appropriate executive function strategies were embedded across classrooms, ages, and grades. That is, every student was exposed to, and had an opportunity to practice and employ strategies for, becoming a more aware, engaged, and strategic student. For instance, the upper grades learned about how mnemonic devices can facilitate memory.

As we wrap up this summer, our eyes are toward next year. We hope for a great school year ahead for our students, whose parents will be getting an individualized report about how their sons and daughters did at Challenge Summer School, as well as recommendations for regular school.

Stay tuned for dates and information regarding Challenge Summer School 2015!

Moving Forward

by Denali St. Amand, PhD, Educational Specialist

Morrissey-Compton’s new office in Half Moon Bay has already begun to serve students, families, and the coastal community with assessments, tutoring, and class offerings. Our annual Parent Education Classes will be coming soon.

We are active participants in the strong community partnership to enhance education on the coast, not only in Half Moon Bay, but north to Pacifica and south to Pescadero and La Honda. We’ve been networking with public and private schools, local libraries, businesses, and organizations such as the Rotary Club of Half Moon Bay, where we recently shared our offerings and goals in a presentation.

Board Member Rudie Tretten has given invaluable guidance and support to our work here, as has John Brentar, especially with assessments. Many thanks to our staff members, both local and those commuting from Redwood City, who are sharing their talents and expertise. We expect to soon add a staff member who will be dedicated to tutoring English-learning and Spanish-learning students at this office. We are proud, excited, and look forward to further engagement in the coming months.
Cutting-Edge Offerings

Try Interactive Metronome Training to Improve Cognitive, Behavioral, Social, & Motor Skills

Dr. Kevin McGrew from the Institute of Applied Psychometrics, “Most all human behavior involves a brain clock to coordinate microsecond-based signals in the brain. Interventions that ‘fine tune’ the brain clock can improve human performance, from student school learning to adults recovering from a stroke.”

Morrissey-Compton Educational Specialist Dr. Raymond Jones adds, “We’ve always known that timing in the brain affected a wide variety of conditions, but until IM, we did not have a specific brain training program that could improve timing in children, adolescents, and young adults.”

How It Works
IM involves principles of the traditional musical metronome, which are combined with the precision of a personal computer to create engaging, interactive brain training exercises. The individual is challenged to precisely match a rhythmic beat with synchronized hand and foot exercises and is given feedback through headphones that tells how “on beat” he or she is. This feedback guides the individual and helps improve timing and ability to plan actions.

IM is a short-term, intensive program scheduled in one-hour training sessions, two to five times per week for eight weeks. IM is offered by more than 25,000 practitioners in over 30 countries worldwide. It is a challenging, yet fun brain training program that keeps an individual’s attention, and produces significant results. There is also an IM-Home program that enables the training to be done in the comfort of one’s home.

For more information, contact Dr. Raymond Jones at 650-322-5910 or raymond.jones@morrcomp.org.
Free! Parent Education Classes
We are excited to announce the 2014-15 slate of parent education classes, in both Redwood City and Half Moon Bay! Classes are held from 6:30 to 8pm, and topics include:

• ADHD and Executive Functioning
• Anxiety in Children
• Supporting Your Child in the School Setting
• Organizational Skills
• Ending the Homework Nightmare

Please visit www.morrissey-compton.org for dates, additional topics, and a link to pre-register via Eventbrite (required).

Support Groups for Parents
Support groups for parents will be starting in early October and focus on a variety of parenting challenges. Individualized parent coaching is also available.

Memory in Action!
Held in our Half Moon Bay office, this workshop will help attendees:
• Learn how memory works
• Identify types of challenges
• Create individualized strategies
• Practice strategies at school now—and keep them for life!

Saturdays, September 6 & 20 & Sundays, September 14 & 28
Middle School Students 12:30 to 2pm
High School Students 3 to 5pm
Additional private lessons available if desired.
Location: Morrissey-Compton Educational Center, Inc.
840 Main St. Suite B2
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Social Skills Groups
Fall groups will be starting soon for children who struggle with issues such as making and keeping friends, impulse control, anxiety, emotion regulation, or managing the stresses of adolescence. Children are grouped based on age, developmental level, and having similar challenges and goals.

For more information about Parent Education, Social Skills Groups, and Parent Coaching at Morrissey-Compton, contact Sue Garber, MA, at sue.garber@morrcomp.org.

For information or to sign up for this workshop, contact Denali St. Amand, PhD, at 650-729-3033
Upcoming Events

Free!

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Please join Morrissey-Compton Educational Center for an OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, September 13, 2014 • 11am to 4pm

Drop-in anytime • 595 Price Avenue, Redwood City

• Discover (or re-discover) our comprehensive, not-for-profit psychological & educational assessment, consultation, therapy, tutoring, advocacy, and skills groups for children, adolescents, adults, and families coping with learning differences

• Enjoy live music, wine, and other refreshments

• Prizes, fun, and supervised activities for kids ages 5 and up

• Hear informative talks for parents by Morrissey-Compton’s staff experts

Choose from two at each time

11:30am
2. An Overview of Dyslexia

12:00pm
1. Advocating for Your Child’s Special Ed and Accommodations (IEPs and 504 Plans)
2. The Importance of Emotional Connection for Brain Integration

12:30pm
1. Executive Skills Coaching for Adolescents
2. Assessing Young Children—Infants to Age 5

1:00pm & 3:00pm: Remarks by Executive Director, Founders, and Guest Speakers

Visit www.morrissey-compton.org for updates on day-of activities, including a caricature artist, singalongs, & more!

RSVP to 650-322-5910 or at www.eventbrite.com.
RSVP is appreciated, but NOT required.
It is the mission of the Morrissey-Compton Educational Center to enable children and adults with learning disabilities and school-related difficulties to achieve their goals by providing the highest quality diagnostic and intervention services in a supportive environment.

**Executive Director**
John T. Brentar, PhD

**Senior Educational Specialists**
Erin Shinn Berg, MEd
Brooke Cargile, MA

**Educational Specialists**
Kathleen Button, MEd
Susan Chait, MA
Emile Potter Jobson, MA
Raymond Jones, PhD
Ashley Kinkaid Koedel, MA
Hope Scheid, MA
Denali St. Amand, PhD
C. Priya Tjerandsen, MA

**Psychologists**
Ted Alper, PhD
Janet Dafoe, PhD
Karen Dearing, PhD
Cassandra Golding, PhD
Erica Ragan, PhD
Jenna Rinsky, PhD
Elizabeth Santana, PhD
Heather Taylor, PhD

**Director of Research**
Surina Basho, PhD

**Tutor**
Bill Nielsen

**Educational Specialist**
Angela Brillhart

**Intern**

**Parent & Community Education Coordinator**
Sue Garber, MA

**Director of Fund Development**
Lyn Balistreri

**Intake Coordinator**
Suzy Music

**Support & Office Staff**
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Rudie Tretten
Jeanne B. Ware

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