

Apalachin Occupational Therapist collaborates on a new book

by Anne O. Stout

Kim Wiggins of Apalachin, an Occupational Therapist with the Binghamton Central School District has collaborated on a book; “Just Right”; with another Occupational Therapist, Gwen Wild.

Wiggins was born and raised in the Catskill, NY area and graduated from Catskill High School; and went on to Utica College; where she said, “I tried a bunch of different majors but Occupational Therapy held the most interest.”

Wiggins received her Bachelor of Science degree in occupational therapy from Utica College of Syracuse University. She is a member of the American Occupational Therapy Association, a member of the NYS OT Association (NYSOTA). She is also a past president of the Junior League of Binghamton, New York and a past NYSOTA Pediatric Special Interest Coordinator.

She is certified in: Mobile Devices for Children with Disabilities; Irlen Screenings; Puzzle Art Therapy; Handwriting Without Tears; Zaner Bloser; The Listening Program; and The Size Matters Handwriting Program.

Wiggins explained“Occupational Therapy tries to increase the daily function of people, students with job, school and play, sensory integration and modulation; as well helping them create new skills. At first an evaluation is done, taking a look at what they are doing at home and at school.”

“We work on increasing the child’s self-awareness in the curriculum.” Wiggins explained, “We work on teaching them about themselves and try to help them self-regulate.”

She provides clients with both a clinical and parental perspective. Wiggins herself is the adoptive parent to an adult son with special needs and three biological children (including a set of twins).

Wiggins has also spent time traveling and lecturing to various groups. She is a winner of 2012 NYSOTA Award of merit for practice in pediatrics for contributions to the OT profession which have had statewide significance; Graduate of the Entrepreneurial Assistance Program through Broome Community College and 2011 2nd Place Winner of the Business Plan Competition; Winner of the Status of Women’s Council 2008 Woman of Achievement Award; and Winner of the 2008 “20 in Their 20’s” Southern Tier Opportunity Coalition Award.

In the preface of the book, Wiggins stated, the idea for BrainWorks came to her one day in 2007 while preparing an in-service training for teachers of kids with autism. I realized they needed a visual system to help kids learn to identify their sensory needs and discover how to meet

those needs through selected strategies.

I started by adding color coding to pictures from the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)® to indicate the intended effect of each activity: calming, alerting, or just right. Not long after that, I recruited a friend who was a graphic artist to develop my own set of sensory activity cards. That system evolved into BrainWorks and was an immediate success.

Using BrainWorks, occupational therapists were able to quickly set up sensory programs and begin teaching kids the principles of self-modulation. Soon, therapists and teachers began realizing that all kids benefited from the use of these strategies, not just kids identified as having sensory processing issues.

According to Wiggins her research study in a general education setting (Wild & Steele, 2018) confirmed that using BrainWorks to support the implementation of sensory strategies resulted in significant improvements in social participation, adaptive behaviors, functional communication, and several other areas measured on the Sensory Processing Measure (SPM) and the Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC-2). Through this study, Wiggins and Wild identified pitfalls to the implementation of the program and the need for a specific curriculum to make it easy for teachers and other professionals to use in the classroom.

After collaborating on courses pertaining to Response to Intervention (RtI), the agreed to

Getthere takes transportation assistance for healthcare to new heights Local man gets ride of (and for) his life

Rural Health Network of South Central New York’s mobility management program, Getthere, has provided transportation assistance to individuals for health related needs since 2013.

Since then, Getthere has assisted nearly 7,000 individuals with over 28,000 trips.

On February 5th, a UHS Wellness Coordinator phoned Getthere looking for a way to get a 59 year old Endicott resident with Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease to the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Getthere Mobility and Transportation Advocate (MTA), Stephanie Button began to explore all options to provide the

State of the county address to be presented

The Chair of the Tioga County Legislature is set to give the State of The County Address on March 9, 2021, at 12noon during the regular monthly Legislature Meeting in the Edward D. Hubbard Auditorium, Ronald E. Dougherty County Office Building, 56 Main Street, Owego, NY.

Chairwoman Martha Sauerbrey

Right: Kim Wiggins and far right: Gwen Wild collaborated on “Just Right” a program that can be taught by occupational therapists, speech therapists, physical therapists, teachers, social workers, psychologists,



parents, or anyone working toward helping their students become independent and successful in school.

partner and write this curriculum. Thus, Just Right! A Sensory Modulation Curriculum for K-5® was born. “We believe it can be taught by a variety of professionals to help all kids learn to meet their sensory needs in the least restrictive environment for the purpose of self-regulation of their behaviors and emotions.”

In her preface the co-author Gwen Wild stated: As a school-based occupational therapist, I understand the many challenges that therapists face each day. One of the most difficult things to manage are students’ sensory plans. For years, I provided strategies and handed out sensory tools for them to use in the classroom. Most of the time they were not used, were lost, or returned because they were ineffective. In my view, students and teachers were to blame for not following through.

Frustration mounted as I realized these strategies were simply not working. Finally, I realized why: I was the problem. I was not teaching my students or the adults in the school system why and how to use the strategies. My students were not able to self-regulate because they did not have the self-awareness to know when to use their strategies.

Initially, said Wild, I tried using existing programs for small groups or whole classrooms. Each time I gave a strategy or a tool to a student I tried my best to explain why and how to use it in the classroom. But I still felt as though something was missing. That’s when Gwen and I started to collaborate.

We envisioned a program with specific, ready-to-use, how-to lessons that did not take long to prepare and resulted in self-

regulated kids.

With BrainWorks as a starting point, Gwen and I designed a simple curriculum that can be taught by therapists, social workers, teachers, and parents. Our goal is to help all children understand their own needs and advocate for themselves.

Just Right! A Sensory Modulation Curriculum for K-5, can be purchased at <https://www.otkimwiggins.com/product-page/just-right-a-senory-modulation-curriculum-for-k-5>

Occupational therapy practitioners have a holistic perspective, in which the focus is on adapting the environment and/or task to fit the person, and the person is an integral part of the therapy team. It is an evidence-based practice deeply rooted in science.

take him to the Cleveland Clinic.

Upon discharge, Getthere has scheduled transportation back to the airport to meet his pilot and return to Binghamton where Getthere will have a ride home for him.

When receiving the news, the

Endicott resident stated, “I thought I was at the end of the line. I am now looking forward to this trip and feel a sense of hope.”

According to Getthere Director Bill Wagner, this collaboration demonstrates the determination of

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