Dr. Johnson April Newsletter

**HAPPY APRIL!**

I started the month up in Canada for our Spring Break ski trip to Whistler/Blackcomb mountain. The temperatures were warmer than previous years and I was worried because when we arrived, I could see bare patches on the lower slopes. However, Whistler/Blackcomb is so amazing and huge that we spent the entire trip on the upper half of both mountains which was covered with snow (and received a few inches while we were there). I experienced skiing above the clouds on day 1, in a cloud on day 2 and a cloudless sky on day 3. Most importantly I returned with ACLs intact and another set of amazing memories. I truly mean it when I encourage anyone interested in skiing to join us on these trips. The Taylor family took me up on this offer 5 years ago and have been skiing with us ever since!

**FAREWELL TO HANNAH**

We knew this day would come but we're still not looking forward to it. Hannah, our office manager and nurse extraordinaire who has been with us since the beginning of Direct Pediatrics will be moving back to Arkansas at the end of the month. Hannah's husband is completing his dental training at UofL and will be starting his career in  Arkansas, where both are from. We can not thank Hannah enough for everything she has contributed to the growth of Direct Pediatrics from being the first person your family sees when you come in the office, to spreading the word about Direct Pediatrics all over Louisville, to launching our Middletown office, to even teaching my 20 year-old how to be a phlebotomist! We wish her best of luck on all her future plans and she will be missed!

**WELCOME TO SECILY**

With Hannah's upcoming departure, Kaitlynn will become the new Office Manager of both Direct Pediatrics locations but will primarily be located at the Middletown office. Secily has joined the team and will be the primary medical assistant and contact person at the Norton Commons office. Secily joins us from Oldham County Pediatrics where she worked as a medical assistant. When not taking care of Direct Pediatrics families, Secily loves travel, walking her Great Dane and Golden Retriever and spending time with her family.

**TESTING**

Just as a reminder, anyone interested in diagnostic, academic, behavioral, developmental and/or autism evaluations can schedule with Emily by calling the office at 502-515-6601. She does exceptional work and has plenty of availability.  Direct Pediatrics members pay 50% but her services are available to anyone.

**ADHD INFORMATION (AND MISINFORMATION)**

As a pediatrician and a child psychologist, I see a lot of kids with ADHD. Treating ADHD is one of the most fulfilling things I do as kids and families who have been struggling for years receive an accurate diagnosis, begin treatment and can quickly begin to reach their potential in the areas of academics, behavior and social relationships. As many families know, it's not always quite this easy as some children have other issues on top of ADHD and sometimes it takes many tries to find the best-fit treatment, but we keep working and fine tuning until the child is doing as well as possible. I'm pretty passionate about treating ADHD as soon as possible, as untreated ADHD often leads to learning problems and peer difficulties in the earlier years followed by anxiety, depression and substance abuse in the teen years and beyond. With this in mind, it upset me when the article "Have we been thinking about ADHD all wrong" came out 4 days ago. The article questions if ADHD is real, suggests the treatments don't work, are dangerous and this is all a ploy by Big Pharma to make money. Some talk show hosts picked up the story and basically said, "See, we knew ADHD wasn't real." Doing a shallow dive into the article (because it was so flawed that a deep dive wasn't needed), I learned that...

* The article author cited a big ADHD study (the multimodal treatment study of ADHD- MTA study) where kids with ADHD were randomly assigned into 4 treatment groups; a control (no-treatment) group, a behavioral therapy group, a medication only group, and a combination medication/behavioral therapy group for 14 months. At the end of the 14 months, all the kids were evaluated and the kids in the no treatment group has the least improvement, more improvement was seen by the behavior therapy group, and the kids in the medication only and medication + behavior therapy group had the most improvement. The author of the article explained that 36 months after the study started, there was no difference between any of the groups, implying that the initial effects of the treatment equalized over time. This finding was misleading at best and deliberating trying to fool the reader at worst. The author didn't mention that after the 14 months, the study was over and participants could pursue whatever treatment they wanted. Some probably started medication for ADHD, others may have stopped medication, some may have pursued behavioral treatment, etc. When the groups were tested again at 36 months, of course the results were similar because they hadn't been in a "treatment group" in almost 2 years.
* Other researchers cited by the author in his article had quotes completely taken out of context from articles on websites, and when the researchers contacted the author and NY Times to request that their quotes be corrected, the author and NY Times refused to speak to the researchers.
* Fortunately, Russell Barkley, the retired psychologist who has studied ADHD for over 50 years and has published countless articles and books, has uploaded a 4 part video series addressing all the errors and misleading information from this article. His videos can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8GlhCmdkOw&t=1106s>

**BOOK REVIEW**

I recently have been seeing a lot of kids for anxiety related to sports performance. In order to brush up on my sports' psychology I discovered a fantastic book, that I am definitely recommending for parents.  The book is...The Confident Mind: A Battle-Tested Guide to Unshakable Performance, by Nate Zinsser

The concepts discussed in the book certainly apply to athletes, but they also apply to anyone in any area of performance including music, academics, jobs and social interactions. The main take home point is that confidence is a skill that anyone can practice and develop, rather than a trait that some people have and some people don't. Most of the book is spent discussing specific strategies to train your brain to become and remain confident. I've been trying out the strategies and they are effective. I could definitely see parents using these techniques with their kids to help improve their child's confidence along with their child's skills.

**DR. JOHNSON POOL OPENING**

When we opened Direct Pediatrics, we said this would not be your typical pediatric practice. Last summer we had weekly Friday night dinners with the Doc on the office patio during food truck Fridays. On Saturday April 26th, I will open our backyard pool to Direct Pediatric families. Come by any time between 11am-6pm and stay as long as you'd like. A parent needs to be present at all times. Please bring chairs, towels, sunscreen and any foods that your family wants. I'll have basic snacks, water and juice. The pool is big enough for a lot of families and will be heated. Message me if your family plans to attend and I'll send you the address. If we have too many sign up for Saturday, I'll probably add Sunday as well. Bet your previous pediatric practice didn't do that!

**Steve Johnson MD, PhD, FAAP**

Pediatrician & Child Psychologist

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