

BOERNE

BUSINESS MONTHLY



Learning Foundations of Boerne Helps Children with Learning Challenges and Other Needs



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LEARNING FOUNDATIONS OF BOERNE HELPS CHILDREN WITH LEARNING CHALLENGES AND OTHER NEEDS

by Joseph Lilli | photos by Ron Pritchett

Since it was founded in 1969 by Fran Tarkenton, former NFL quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings, Learning Foundations has thousands of wonderful, heart-warming stories of helping children successfully overcome dyslexia, ADHD and other learning or attention challenges.

One such story involves a 9-year-old adopted boy named Nathan.*

When Nathan was in third grade he struggled with math. Concerned, his parents sought help from Learning Foundations in Boerne.

Their Director of Assessment evaluated Nathan and discovered his difficulty with math wasn't simply a learning issue. There were underlying problems due to the boy's lack of cognitive and neural development.

As part of the initial consultation process, the parents mentioned that they had adopted Nathan from Russia. Like many adopted children, he hadn't received much stimulus early on in the orphanage.

The lack of stimulus stunted his full development, leading to behavioral and coordination challenges. For instance, if another child confronted him in any way, he either broke down or resorted to punching the child. At home, he often wet the bed.

To enable him to gain control of his behavior and emotions, Learning Foundations trainers worked with Nathan one-on-one using music therapy and a customized cognitive training program that focused on body control, body and behavioral awareness, and mindfulness.



pictured above: Rafael Scarnati, Executive Director of Learning Foundations of San Antonio and Boerne

Five months after starting the program, his mother reported Nathan no longer had behavioral problems at school and no longer wet the bed.

She reported that he had gone to camp the previous summer, but they often received calls from the camp saying Nathan was either fighting or suffering meltdowns.

The next summer, however, his behavior was exemplary.

Meanwhile, his grades and motivation in school improved considerably. He was no longer having difficulty with math.

Rafael Scarnati, Executive Director of Learning Foundations of San Antonio and Boerne, says that when parents seek help for a specific academic problem, they often find other underlying issues that actually cause the problem. These issues usually deal more with the child's cognitive and neural development, as opposed to a lack of intelligence or just being lazy.

BOERNE LOCATION

Prior to April 2015, families had to travel to Learning Foundations in San Antonio. To accommodate the large number of students coming from Boerne, Scarnati opened a Center last April at 215 West Bandera Road in Boerne.

When parents bring their child to the Boerne facility, Center Director Ruth Heller begins with a

free consultation. She'll assess the parents' concerns about the child so that she understands what needs to be evaluated.

"From there, Ruth will recommend an initial evaluation for the student. This can be anything from a dyslexia evaluation, where we try to determine if a student's reading and spelling challenges are actually caused by dyslexia, to a more general test of cognitive skills, such as memory, attention, logic and reasoning, and other processing skills," Scarnati says.

"We also host a free, no-obligation parent seminar on Monday nights at our San Antonio location (2817 Thousand Oaks). It starts at 6:30 p.m. and runs to about 8 p.m."

After a short presentation, parents can ask questions and are given an opportunity to schedule an evaluation.

"After the evaluation, we look at the test results and compare that to the parents' objectives for their child. We use that information to customize a specific training protocol for the child," Scarnati adds.

All training by Learning Foundations is individualized to the child and includes one-on-one training. The amount of time a child spends at the Center (anywhere from four months to two or three years) and the kinds of exercises the student does depends on what the child needs. No matter what specific exercises they are working on, it is always delivered in a fun and friendly environment designed to make the child feel successful.

The Boerne facility is open year-round



for families and throughout the day to accommodate both home-schooled students as well as students who attend local schools. Summer programs are also available.

MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAM

One of the new programs Learning Foundation now offers is music therapy called The Listening Program.

"This is a specialized selection of classical music and nature sounds that are recorded and digitally enhanced to heighten certain frequencies of sound that will stimulate the brain to either gain more focus or to relax and sleep better, or decrease general anxiety," notes Scarnati.

"A lot of times we'll pair up music therapy with one of our different programs. It accelerates the progress realized with our regular programs."

Children listen to the musical selections at home with specialized headphones. The music selections are tailored to each child's needs.

"We put together a musical selection that allows students to be calmer, sleep better, be more focused, or increase their language ability. This is something that's widely used here in the U.S. and in other countries," Scarnati adds.

TRAINERS NEEDED

Learning Foundations is seeking good qualified trainers to join their team. Interested persons should have at least a bachelor's degree and a background in educational psychology, as well as experience working with children and a passion for helping children who struggle with learning.

For more information, contact Rafael Scarnati at 1-844-TX-Learn (895-3276).

FREE CONSULTATION

Parents can schedule a free consultation with Learning Foundations by calling 1-844-TX-LEARN. They can also visit www.learningfoundations.com for more information.

*Nathan is not his real name.

