

# CONTRA COSTA TIMES EAST COUNTY TIMES

## **Behavioral Health Company to partner with Brentwood's Dainty Center/Willow Wood School**

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BRENTWOOD -- A popular behavioral health company that specializes in a proven therapy for autistic and other special needs children will join forces with Dainty Center/Willow Wood School and integrate its unique programs into the existing curriculum on the Brentwood campus.

"We have always had inclusion and met different needs here," said the school's Administrator Tiffany Herron-Lumpkin. "Trumpet Behavioral Health is an amazing organization and they are going to make it a national model to show that there can be successful inclusion and integration."

Trumpet will provide Applied Behavior Analysis services to preschool students there, particularly those with autism and other developmental delays. ABA has been scientifically proven as an early intervention technique to measure children's behavior, teach individualized social skills and gauge the progress of that socialization, according to Trumpet representatives.

Trumpet Executive Director of Research and Clinical Services Dr. Linda LeBlanc said that early intervention during preschool can help children with autism make major gains in essential social development and communication skills.

"Early intervention is critical to ensuring that children with autism develop pivotal skills that enhance their cognitive, social, and emotional development," she said. "The children who attend these preschools will receive excellent services from highly skilled clinicians who are focused on creating powerful, positive environments to maximize each child's potential for the rest of their lives."

According to Herron-Lumpkin, ABA can help students with a wide variety of challenges including those with Down syndrome and typically developing children with problematic

behaviors in the infant to 6-year-old age range. Trumpet will utilize ABA techniques on the campus and also provide supplemental, home-based therapy for some students a few days per week.

"We have looked at other agencies before in working with these students. They (Trumpet) want to hold onto our Dainty Center model that has worked for us in the last 33 years. They want to fold into that and bring in their expertise of ABA," Herron-Lumpkin said. "They work on the specific skills of each individual child. It is changing the environment to support that child."

Lumpkin noted that ABA is now often covered by most health insurance plans. She said the school's philosophy is centered around mainstreaming special needs kids with their typical peers and providing valuable interactions that help with social development and future transition to classrooms with their same-age peers in the regular school system.

"Our organizations have worked hard to create this cooperative program implementation that values individuals with diverse learning styles. We will continue to develop programs that enrich the learning opportunities for both typically developing and special needs kids," said Rebecca Sterling, Trumpet's Regional Director for the East Bay.

Dainty Center parent Jennifer Pelton said that ABA has helped her autistic second grader in the home for many years and she is hoping that it will help her typically developing younger son who exhibits attention-seeking behaviors.

"It really works," she said. "It is not just behavioral. It is social and personal skills and so many things. It will be great for this community."

Parent training events and educational workshops for parents will be included in the partnership.

An open house on Feb. 22 from 9-11 a.m. will take place at the school and feature crafts, snacks and discussions about toilet training, picky eaters and the importance of schedules.

"They understand the needs of our community out here. There is such a need for all of these families," Herron-Lumpkin said. "We have so many parents that already know the Dainty Center and the word is getting out quickly."

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#### IF YOU Go

Trumpet Behavioral Health and Dainty Center/Willow Wood School will host an open house from 9-11 a.m. on Feb. 22. It will feature crafts, snacks and discussions on toilet training, developing a schedule and picky eaters. The campus is at 1265 Dainty Ave. in Brentwood. To make a reservation, call 925-634-4539.