

# STAR Center holds Playground Rock ribbon cutting, benefit in Greenwood Village

## GLORYUS GOINGS ON



By GLORY WEISBERG

SUBMITTED BY JANICE ROETENBERG

Playground Rock in Greenwood Village had a grand opening celebration for STAR Center's new sensory playground and raised more than \$12,750, which included matching funds from presenting event sponsor, Cargill, Inc.

Several hundred people attended the Sept. 29 celebration, which featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony, concert by The Nacho Men, barbecue and children's activities.



Greenwood Village Mayor Ron Rakowsky, STAR Center Founder Dr. Lucy Jane Miller, and 4-year-old Jackson Stear cut the ribbon at the grand opening of STAR Center's new sensory playground.

Photo courtesy of Stevie Crecelius

Each year, hundreds of families from around the world come to the STAR Center for assessment

and treatment of sensory processing disorders and other conditions that include sensory challenges, such as autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and other behavioral and developmental disabilities.

Occupational therapists at STAR Center will use the new sensory playground during treatment sessions to help kids improve coordination, muscle strength and balance.

STAR Center, a Colorado 501(c)(3), is the premier clinic for treatment of children and

adults with sensory challenges. The center offers intensive "burst" treatment that research shows is effective in treating sensory issues. Treatment typically involves occupational therapy, which enables children to participate in the normal activities of childhood, such as playing with friends, enjoying school, eating, dressing and sleeping.

Parents are involved throughout the process so families can learn to create sensory lifestyles and continue to see progress after the formal treatment program ends. Dr. Lucy Jane Miller, founder of the STAR Center, is widely recognized as a leader in Sensory Processing Disorder research worldwide.

Children with SPD exhibit a wide range of symptoms, including:

- Over-sensitivity to touch, noises, smells, or movement
- Floppy or stiff body; clumsy, poor motor skills or handwriting
- Difficulty dressing, eating, sleeping or toilet training
- Frequent or lengthy temper tantrums

- They can be easily distracted, fidgety, withdrawn or aggressive
- Crave movement
- Are easily overwhelmed

Among the 250 supporters were Ron Blair, Howard Cohn, Tasha Eurich, Edward Goldson, Tim Hoyman, Leigh Kahn, Tyson Kasperbauer, Carol Kranowitz, Kathryn Miller, Marla Roth-Fisch, Nick Scharf, Steven Slaughter, Gina St. Aubin and William Whalen. Also at the ribbon cutting were Patrick Pratt of the South Metro Denver Chamber and Sheryl Benjamin, executive director of STAR Center.

Sponsors also included Granny Ma's Catering, Landscape Structures, Inc., Kahn Construction, Miller & Steiert, P.C., Split Rail Fence & Supply Co., Subway, The Nacho Men, and WonderWorx LLC

For more information about the STAR Center in Greenwood Village, visit [www.spdstar.org](http://www.spdstar.org) or call 303-221-STAR (7827).

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### STAR Center Testimonials

*"The successes we celebrated while at STAR Center over the summer are indeed real and tangible. Within three days, there were noticeable, noteworthy improvements in my 8-year old son's overall regulation, attention and self-esteem. With the help of the STAR model and knowledgeable OTs and support team, I was able to accomplish more with my 8-year old son in three weeks than I have been able to accomplish in six years of his varying therapies combined.*

*There were also great improvements made by my 6-year old son who struggles with auditory challenges, tantrums and a speech delay. At the end of our first intensive segment (2 1/2 weeks), there were remarkable improvements in his speech and a great increase in his cooperativeness in daily routines (meal times and bedtime routines). I tell friends and family who are noticing a change in his regulation and speech that we learned to recognize and understand "Zones of Regulation." He can tell me now when he is in the "Yellow" or "Red" zones, a great way for him to tell me (and his brother) that he is really frustrated or angry, which is a huge improvement over him just screaming. I have learned, too, a new way to communicate and play with my boys that helps us ALL regulate and feel successful!*

*Thank you again, Lucy, for giving me back my boys and my belief in my abilities as a SENSATIONAL mom!"*

— Paula Ryan

### Ellie's Story

Ellie was diagnosed with SPD when she was 4. Her mother, Tiffany Vossoughi, was encouraged to read *Sensational Kids*, by Dr. Lucy Jane Miller, founder of SPD Foundation and STAR Center, which led the family to STAR.

"Prior to coming to STAR, we lived our lives on eggshells," said Tiffany. "We never knew when or what was going to make Ellie meltdown. From the time she was born, if she was awake, she was crying. She was sent to the director's office at school every day because of meltdowns in class, sometimes several times a day, and each one could last up to an hour. We fought with her at every mealtime. She would not eat or sit at the dinner table."

What is life like after the family completed four weeks of intensive treatment for SPD? "Our lives have changed pretty dramatically," said Tiffany. "We have learned to look for cues from Ellie and educated Ellie's teachers on SPD. We are seeing a huge decrease in meltdowns at home and at school. Our relationships within the family are improving as well. Now that my husband and I understand what is going on, we stopped blaming each other for the way Ellie acts. Overall, we feel better educated to keep her environment as supportive as possible so she can succeed."

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## Society calendar

Calendar items may be e-mailed to [gloryweisberg@comcast.net](mailto:gloryweisberg@comcast.net)

### NOVEMBER

- 9 American Heart Assn. FlavoRed Luncheon, 303-996-8737
- 10 Children's Hospital Colorado Gala, 720-777-1721
- 11 Adam's Camp Scholarship Dinner, 303-563-8290, ext. 13
- 11 Gathering Sparks Mizel Museum Holiday Art Market, 303-749-5014
- 12-19 Operation Christmas Child National Collection Week, 303-745-9179
- 15 Central City Opera Guild L'Esprit de Noël Holiday Home Tour Patron Preview Tour, 303-292-6500, ext. 108
- 15 Colorado Bright Beginnings Goodnight Moon Gala, 303-433-6200, ext. 25
- 16 Rocky Mountain Lions Eye Bank Circle of Light photo Project, [www.circleoflightphotoproject.org](http://www.circleoflightphotoproject.org)
- 16 Women Air Force Service Pilots honor WASPs at Wings Over the Rockies, 303-360-5360, ext. 110
- 16-17 Central City Opera Guild L'Esprit de Noël Holiday Home Tour & Boutique, 303-680-2450
- 17 Adoption Exchange Fantasy Ball, The Heart of Dixie, [www.adoptex.org/fantasyball](http://www.adoptex.org/fantasyball)
- 17 Project C.U.R.E. High Rollers for Health & Hope, 720-490-4022
- 23 Colorado Ballet Sugarplum Ball, 303-783-3604, [coloradoballet.org](http://coloradoballet.org)
- 26 AMC Cancer Fund Men's Event, 303-698-1151
- 29 Sewall Child Development Center Beacon Celebration, 303-399-1800
- 29 Denver Art Museum Collectors' Choice, [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org)
- 30-Dec. 2 Women's Bean Project Annual Holiday Fair, 303-292-1919