

# Offering therapy for autism

By: FRED A. SAVANA Bucks County Courier Times

## NEW BRITAIN TOWNSHIP

**Christina Davis, a naturopathic physician, is bringing groundbreaking holistic therapies to treat autism and other conditions to her new clinic, the Peace Valley Holistic Center in New Britain Township.**

**The nonprofit center, housed in a 243-year-old Bucks County-owned farmhouse on Old Limekiln Road, will provide a wide range of services for special needs children and their families, focusing on those diagnosed with autism. She also treats patients with multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy, as well as other illnesses.**

**Davis and a host of volunteers worked to renovate the dilapidated property that had once served as a county-run home for boys. Vacant for 12 years, the house had fallen into disrepair. "It was a mess," said the doctor.**

**The center has a five-year lease with the county, with an option to renew each year. Davis said she and the volunteers donated some \$50,000 in work and materials to restore the home that now features a spacious meeting area, a full kitchen and a therapy room. Using light and sound therapies, Davis and her staff work to bring children suffering from autism disorders that can cut them off from others, into the mainstream world.**

**"It all works in concert," explained Davis of the three-pronged approach the center uses to help not only those with autism but those suffering with other disorders.**

**Light energy, directly or indirectly, influences human growth, development and behavior, explained Davis, from a room in the center where rectangular panels of colored light sit on two walls. As with many of the therapies used at the center, color light therapy "revitalizes and restores the body's psychological needs while rebalancing the mind." Davis said it has shown to positively influence mood, emotion and behavioral modulation for autistic children.**

**Many autistic children hear sounds differently, disturbing them so much that they don't speak or communicate properly. With sound therapy, children can be de-sensitized to these disturbing sounds and begin to relax, become less anxious and fearful and begin to speak again, explained Davis.**

**The hope of such progress is exciting to Anita Miller, who is on the center's executive board and who also has twin grandsons who are autistic.**

**"This is something very new and very promising," said Miller.**

**Another therapy being used at the clinic is Qigong, known as "needleless" acupuncture. It's used to reduce and relieve pain and stress.**

**Besides the direct therapies offered, the center also provides education and complementary care such as stress management for the entire family. Monthly seminars**

**will be provided by experts in the field of education and law to help parents navigate the special education system.**

**Davis stresses the importance of nutrition and vitamins for special needs children in her treatment and said they can have a positive influence on attention and comprehension.**

**While some insurance companies cover the costs of some of the therapies, the center is working to find grants and other financial support to help families defray the expense of the various programs.**

**By combining the therapies according to the needs of the patient, Davis said she hopes to improve the lives of many families. The 70-year-old doctor, who holds a degree in natural medicine from the International School of Holistic Practices in Virginia, said she has worked with 19 families who now have autistic children living in the community and exceeding earlier expectations.**

**Davis' curriculum is accredited by the University of Pennsylvania and has been taught as continuing education for doctors and nurses of Holy Redeemer Hospital, Gwynedd Mercy College and other clinics in the region. She graduated from the School of Ethical Hypnotherapy in Naples, Fla., and formerly operated the Golden Wellness Center in Glenside.**

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