

KIDS FIRST



Readin',
Ritin', and
Ritalin

Part I

It has been called by many as “Teacher’s Little Helper.” I’m referring to the popular drug Ritalin which is widely prescribed to ““treat” the condition ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), commonly referred to as simply “hyperactivity.”

The number of children given this drug has risen by hundreds of percent in the last ten years or so, much to the delight of the shareholders of Ciba-Geigy, the drug’s manufacturer. The US and Canada are leading the parade in Ritalin use, while European countries are far down the list. Maybe children across the ocean are different? Could it be marketing? Please read on.

It seems as if every child today is being labelled with ADHD. It seems to be a catch-all name given to kids who don’t fit into someone’s definition of how a child “should” behave. The criteria used to make this diagnosis fits almost every child encountered in

practice. According to Dr. Peter Breggin in his book *The War on Children*, ADHD tends to be a middle class diagnosis. So let’s look at the factors that would label a child as having ADHD;

1. Often fidgets and squirms in his/her seat.
2. Has difficulty remaining seated when required.
3. Is easily distracted.
4. Often blurts out answers to questions before they have been completed.
5. Has difficulty awaiting his/her turn during games.
6. Has difficulty following instructions.
7. Jumps from one thing to another.
8. Often talks excessively.
9. Interrupts others.
10. Often loses things.
11. Does not seem to listen.
12. Has difficulty playing quietly.

If your child displays at least 8 of these criteria, he is a candidate for the ADHD diagnosis. (All of a sudden I’m very concerned about myself and most of my friends and colleagues!). These criteria sound like a normal, healthy, exuberant, bored, child. Many authorities feel that these children are actually quite gifted and are very right-brained, i.e., creative. These children function with two speeds;

hyperdrive and collapse. There is no in-between. They are also highly visual and non-sequential processors. In other words, they learn by pictures in a non-traditional manner.

These children, many feel, are “scanners” they scan life and the world around them in the same manner as they scan a computer screen. Some authorities also feel that they are a product of our fast-paced, overstimulated culture. To that end, I must applaud Waldorf schools and their founder, Rudolf Steiner, who frown on the use of computers in their teaching methods.

To make my point clearer, allow me to ask you the question, “what if Einstein and Edison were on Ritalin?” If they were born today, they would surely have been labelled ADHD; both had been expelled from school for disruptive behaviour.

Most parents do not realize that there are no laboratory tests for ADHD; that this “diagnosis” is made purely on observation and is most often initiated by a teacher who is having difficulty controlling the behaviour of a certain child. I am emphatic when I stress that this is NOT an attack on teachers; rather it is an observation. It is interesting to note that “good” teachers have very few ADHD children in their class while others have quite a few. These children need a different teaching method,

which is difficult as schools demand obedience and conformity in most cases.

Rather than use the term ADHD, Dr. Breggin, in his studies on this phenomenon, called it DADD - Dad Attention Deficit Disorder. He feels that a lack of parental attention and lack of discipline very often leads to the diagnosis of ADHD. I agree.

Other health professionals feel ADHD is caused by a lack of certain minerals and neurochemicals in the body. The late Dr. Robert Mendelson, M.D., one of the most respected pediatricians in North America, and a self-proclaimed medical “heretic” once told me that it is our perception which may be at fault. “Is it the child who is hyperactive,” he asked, “or is it that the average earthing is no longer excited about life?” Interesting thought!

Be sure to watch for Part II on
“Readin’, Ritin’, and Ritalin” in
2 weeks, and come to our lecture at
7pm on Nov. 6th at Minerva’s

If you need additional information, please
call me personally at 605-665-8228 and
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Santee

From Page 1

corner of town. The \$1.5 million facility provides a huge boost in visibility and flexibility.

On Friday, the college celebrated its new home with a grand opening ceremony.

The new site includes three classrooms, library, science lab, tech lab, radio station, Native food and lounge, and Dakota language and culture classroom.

The U.S. Department of Education provided most of the funding for the new campus center, with the Shakopee Tribe providing the remaining funds, said NICC President Mike Oltrogge.

“This was designed by the community and included things that they wanted,” he said. “There were a couple of things, like a gym and dorms, that we didn’t include now. But they could be added in the future.”

The NICC provides accredited higher education to the Omaha and Santee Sioux tribes and other learners, Oltrogge said. The NICC was formed in 1973 and currently consists of about 160 students on campuses in Santee, South Sioux City and Macy.

With its new facilities, the Santee campus hopes to double its current 40 to 45 students, Oltrogge said. The new center will allow the NICC to better fulfill its mission at Santee, he said.

“This is a fabulous building, and it offers great opportunities here on campus and with our distance learning,” he said. “The tribal colleges seek to preserve and revitalize the language and culture, while also providing economic development opportunities.”

In that respect, Oltrogge has already talked with Santee Sioux chairman Roger Trudell about starting vocational programs in unused areas of the college.

Oltrogge would also like to provide more four-year programs at



RANDY DOCKENDORF/P&D
Santee Sioux tribal chairman Roger Trudell (center) receives a star quilt during Friday’s ceremony from Nebraska Indian Community College (NICC) board chairman Jeremy Denney (left) and Mike Oltrogge (right). The NICC opened new facilities this fall, marking its first campus.

Santee. Currently, the college provides associate degrees, but it holds an agreement for providing a bachelor’s degree in business from Bellevue University in Omaha.

“It’s something we would like to do sooner than later,” he said of the bachelor’s degrees. “We are hoping for the 2014-16 cycle.”

NICC students already see increased academic possibilities, particularly with the distance-learning offerings.

NICC Student Senate co-president Brian Morris, a human services major, will graduate in May with an associate degree. He supports expanding the Santee campus courses and services in that field.

“I have been talking with a couple of instructors, and we would like to offer counseling for alcoholism,” he said. “It could be for a little group or for many people. It’s something that would benefit the surrounding community.”

NICC student Danielle John will also graduate in May with an associate degree in human services. Her parents attended NICC, and her aunt served as NICC president.

Like Morris, John sees the new Santee campus as a great step forward.

“I think this (new site) will bring in more students,” she said. “It will be positive, because more people will want to attend.”

However, she also doesn’t want to see the school lose its personal atmosphere that attracts students who may struggle elsewhere.

“It’s just feels comfortable (at a tribal college),” she said. “It’s the (Native American) culture, but they also know your name. With the smaller classes, you have hands-on experiences and receive help from the teachers.”

John wants to work with women and children, and may pursue a bachelor’s degree in social work from either the University of South Dakota in Vermillion or Briar Cliff University in Sioux City.

The new Santee campus will give the NICC much greater visibility on the reservation, John said. The lack of recognition remains a problem even for the South Sioux City campus that she attends.

“Everywhere, I talk to people, they don’t know about NICC, even though it’s on the main avenue (in South Sioux City),” she said. “It’s a good college, but a lot of people never know about it until they go here.”

NICC adjunct professor Ralph

Maass sees the tribal college filling an important niche, especially for students who can’t travel for higher education.

“The typical profile of an NICC student is a young, single mother who is a first-generation college student,” he said. “As far as getting out the word about the college, the students are the best recruiters.”

The speakers during Friday’s program emphasized the new opportunities provided by the Santee campus.

Trudell noted the importance of education for his tribe.

“Our ancestors sacrificed for us, for a better life and for a better place. We are working for education, prosperity and wellness of the people,” he said. “We have very high hopes for the future of the Santee people. There are many things to be accomplished.”

The new college campus has made previous generations’ dreams a reality, as tribal members can receive their entire education on the reservation, Trudell said.

“We were suffering for lack of space (at the college), and this building helps accomplish that (goal),” he said. “Our ancestors are smiling down on us now.”

Wyatt Thomas, the NICC Native American Studies division head, said the new campus provides a sense of place.

“This is a permanent structure here for all of our people,” he said. “It’s an opportunity for the future, an opportunity for the future education of our (future) children.”

Other speakers included NICC Student Senate co-presidents Brian

Morris and LaDonna Carrillo, Nebraska State Sen. Tyson Larson and James Wright, representing U.S. Sen. Mike Johanns (R-Neb.).

Wright likened education to a seed that sprouts and changes lives.

“We are growing and planting a garden of knowledge in this very fertile (tribal) community. It’s a land rich in culture,” he said. “We learn not just here (at the college) but from the community surrounding us.”

Wright pointed to the impact of Chief Standing Bear, the namesake of the nearby bridge spanning the Missouri River. Standing Bear successfully argued in federal court in the 1870s that he and other American Indians were “persons” under the law.

“He had an impact not just on Native Americans but for all of the United States,” Wright said.

Friday’s program included the flag raising ceremony by the Santee Honor Guard and the Niobrara VFW and American Legion, prayer

by Kenneth Chapman, an honor song by the Maza Kute group, and recognition of dignitaries and the NICC board of directors.

In his program remarks, Morris said he never thought he would see a new Santee campus — and he was even more impressed when he saw the new building and its offerings.

But he believes the greatest benefits go far beyond the brick and mortar.

Morris, an enrolled member of the Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, has considered earning his bachelor’s degree from Wayne (Neb.) State College. NICC has enabled him to take the first step toward those dreams.

“There are many students who didn’t think they could go to college, but NICC has opened up opportunities and allowed them to pursue their goals,” he said.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf



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