



HEALTH, MIND & BODY — PAGES

# KIDS

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IN LOVING MEMORY  
OF  
MRS. GINGER MARKS

# Seven-year-old from Dubai comes to the area for therapy services

Since 1991 Theraplay, Inc. has been providing pediatric therapy services in Southeastern Pennsylvania. Physical, occupational and speech therapists employ a one-on-one approach while working with patients from birth-to-21 years.

Theraplay families travel from all over Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey to receive these services. Now Theraplay can add Dubai to that list. In July, Khalid, a 7-year-old from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, started coming to Theraplay to receive occupational therapy services three times a week.

Khalid struggles with social and communication skills, and began receiving therapy in his home at the age of three. Initially, he saw a speech therapist twice a week, and gradually added an occupational therapist's services.

While Khalid benefitted from the therapy he received, the nature of therapy services within Dubai is that the frequency is often very sporadic. Additionally, schools in Dubai have little to no therapy options and do not offer integration between children who may need to work with a therapist and mainstream schools.

Such is the case for Khalid. He attends a mainstream school, gets good grades and exhibits no behavior issues – not the school's idea of a child that needs therapeutic intervention. Knowing that there are not enough therapists working in Dubai and that Khalid has a tendency to regress in the summer, his parents began to explore therapy services outside of what was immediately available to them.

After careful consideration, Khalid's family tried the Expressions Day Camp in Yardley, Bucks County. The camp is designed for children who experience social skill deficits. After Khalid began, the camp director recommended Theraplay as an additional option and Khalid's family agreed.



**THERA**play inc.

Khalid came to Theraplay to develop skills that help him when he is at home or on breaks at camp. Keeping Khalid physically active was one of the goals adopted by his family and therapists. His treatment plan involved playing on the therapy swing, dodging through an obstacles course and completing strengthening exercises. He worked on improving his coordination and carrying out his ADLs (activities of daily living).

Although Khalid could have benefitted from more time at Theraplay, he was only in the United States for seven weeks. With that in mind, his therapists worked with the family in order for Khalid to receive the maximum benefit. After each session, therapists reviewed what they had focused on and provided mom and dad with a detailed home program. This would allow Khalid to continue improving these skills while at camp and eventually when he returns home.

Theraplay worked with a team approach which enabled Khalid to work with different therapists. He benefitted from this approach for generalization skills and collaboration among the team of therapists.

"It was so rewarding to be able to speak to dad and have him share that he finally understands a bit about what is going on with his son and how to help him, as he doesn't have anyone to explain things to him over in Dubai," said Megan Morace, center manager at



**Members of Khalid's occupational therapy team at Theraplay, Inc. pose for a photo.**

Theraplay's Newtown Center and one of Khalid's therapists.

"Both Khalid and his family learned so much during their time with us which will only help to carry things over at home," said Morace. "To see how grateful he was really made me stop and think about the impact we have on the children and families we service, and that is exactly why I became an occupational therapist."