

# Family Times

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Kinetic Connections owners  
(L-R) Leslie Wiechens,  
Annabelle Sines  
and Glenda Jones.

## From Failure to Honor Roll

### *Kinetic Connections and Interactive Metronome Training*

By Karen Perry

It was painful for Yvonne Gillum to watch her daughter struggle with a learning disability. "We'd been through so much. We'd paid for the tutors. We had done the piano lessons and the violin lessons, because of what the research says about that. What were we supposed to do now? We had done everything," she said. When she heard about Kinetic Connections and its Interactive Metronome Training, she decided to give the program a try. Soon, she began to see a change in her daughter. She went from bringing

home F's in Algebra, to bringing home A's and B's. She went from failing the FCAT to passing it. She even made the A-B Honor Roll. "It's been amazing!" Yvonne marvels. "No tutors, no more asking for help with homework—none of that."

What exactly is Interactive Metronome? While Yvonne Gillum considers it miraculous, there is a more scientific explanation. According to the corporate website, "The Interactive Metronome (IM) is a computer-based training program shown to improve attention, coordination and timing in chil-



dren and adults with a wide range of cognitive and physical difficulties including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The IM provides a non-invasive way to stimulate learning and development.” (from [www.interactivemetronome.com](http://www.interactivemetronome.com)). Participants in IM training attend approximately 15 one-hour sessions over a period of 3 to 5 weeks. During the sessions, the participant, wearing headphones and using hand and foot sensors, performs a series of 13 different exercises to a computer-generated beat. An auditory guidance system challenges the participant to focus and synchronize movements to within milliseconds of the auditory signal. The closer the participant’s response time is to the actual beat, the better the score. The participant’s score improves over time, resulting in improvements in cognitive and physical abilities. While more research must be done to show exactly why this process works, studies do show that the brain learns through the repetition of precise activities. Learning to keep the beat trains the brain to plan, and sequence and process data more effectively.

One of the more amazing aspects of the early research on Interactive Metronome is the wide range of cognitive and physical challenges that have been shown to benefit from it. Studies on children with ADHD have shown that those undergoing IM training showed great improvements in attention, coordination, control of aggression, reading and language processing. Special education students improved both motor control and coordination after IM training. Studies have also shown significant improvement in academic performance for students with learning disabilities. Additionally, dramatic positive results have been achieved with Interactive Metronome training for individuals with stuttering, Parkinson’s Disease, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA/stroke), and autism.

People without physical or learning disabilities benefit as well. Athletes have been using IM training to improve their timing, sharpen their focus and increase their mental processing speeds. A study on IM trained golfers showed a 20%-40% improvement in shot accuracy, while the control group saw no gain. Many leading schools, universities and professional athletes from the NFL, NBA, NHL and PGA are using the IM program and seeing impressive results.

Interactive Metronome was invented by Jim Cassily. Its original purpose was to help musicians and athletes improve their timing, rhythm, focus

***“I’m so  
excited,  
the entire  
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*Kimberlyn Elliott works on improving her timing and focus.*

and coordination. He quickly discovered, however, that it could help people with a variety of physical and cognitive disorders. He took the responsibility of this important discovery seriously, and spent seven years on research, development, testing, and documentation, before making Interactive Metronome available to qualified professionals. In 2001, Cassily spoke at a Greenspan professional conference where three Ocala women listened to his lecture with fascination. These women all work with special needs children and were particularly impressed that IM has support and research validation from Dr. Stanley Greenspan, a giant in the field of early childhood development. They recognized that Dr. Greenspan’s appointment as Chairman to the Interactive Metronome Scientific Advisory Board and as Director of IM Clinical Studies was an important confirmation of the effectiveness of IM. They were so impressed, in fact, that they trained to become Interactive Metronome Providers, and started Kinetic Connections, Inc. here in Ocala.

Leslie Wiechens, Annabelle Sines and Glenda Jones had been friends and co-workers for many years in the school system, when they attended the Greenspan conference that changed the course of their lives. These women worked every day with children suffering from cognitive and physical disorders, and were eager to learn more about how to help them. Leslie is a special education teacher, Annabelle is a physical therapist, and Glenda is an

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# From Failure to Honor Roll

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*Jake Fischer improving his attention span.*

occupational therapist. Jim Cassily's description of what Interactive Metronome could do to help people really struck a chord with them. While continuing in their day jobs, Leslie, Annabelle and Glenda opened Kinetic Connections in August 2002, becoming the only providers of Interactive Metronome training in Ocala. As word has spread of the amazing results from IM training and the demand for their services has increased, they recently found it necessary to move to a larger office to better serve their clients. One of their future goals is to introduce Interactive Metronome to the Marion County public school system.

Yvonne Gillum, for one, is thrilled that they were there for her daughter. When she quickly started seeing results, she was stunned by the change. "She has just blossomed and bloomed!" After trying so many other options and not seeing any changes, she had been skeptical at first, but Leslie, Annabelle and Glenda put her immediately at ease. Their passion and enthusiasm for their work was contagious. Yvonne enjoyed working with them and was so impressed with her daughter's results that she came to an important decision. "I'm so excited, the entire family is doing it!" 🙌