

# From Outer Space to Hephzibah Home!

By Jennifer Stix, Development Associate/Communications and Digital Content Specialist

## Art Therapist Shelby Varela Offers our Children Down-to-Earth Support and Guidance.

ART THERAPIST SHELBY VARELA COMES TO HEPHZIBAH with a wide array of academic and professional experiences. The recipient of a full soccer scholarship to Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona, Florida, Shelby began her studies as a major in engineering psychology- which is the study of how to design aircraft controls and instruments to make them easier and safer for users to operate. At first this seemed like the perfect marriage of her interests in art and in human behavior. But an internship at a group home opened her eyes: soon Shelby found herself drawn to helping others – using her talents and interests to have a direct impact on in the lives of children and families.

This epiphany led her to Chicago where she attended the Adler Graduate School's Art Therapy Program and eventually came to Hephzibah!

### What inspires you?

I love art and kids! I always knew I wanted to work with children – and I feel blessed to be able to work with both!

### How does Art Therapy Differ from Traditional Therapy?

In art therapy we are not worried about goals but about helping the child come to conclusions through their own creations. Art helps an individual step back and look at himself from an observers' perspective. And it's more difficult to suppress feelings when communicating through art.

### What is a typical first-time, art therapy project?

Using safe, simple materials a child can control, such as crayons and pencils, I ask them to draw a place where they feel safe – whether it is imaginary or a place they already know. Then, right away, we discuss the work. I don't lead or interpret. The longer I know a client, the more I can understand their story. It is a launching pad for discussion and understanding.

### What keeps you motivated?

The moments when the child's "light bulb" goes off – when I see tiny changes – when a child takes comfort and support from the sessions.

### Ultimately, what do you want your clients to get from art therapy?

I want the children to feel empowered, encouraged, and most important, to heal. ♥



Art Therapist Shelby Varela

## Hephzibah Board of Director NEWS



Carol Dunning



Ian Hutchinson

HEPHZIBAH CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION is pleased to announce the appointment of two new members to its Board of Directors — **Carol Dunning** and **Ian Hutchinson**.

Ms. Dunning is the Director of Human Resources for Now Health Group, Inc and resides in Wheaton. Mr. Hutchinson is the Chief Commercial Officer for Aon Global Professions Practice and resides in Glen Ellyn with his wife Tina and their three children.

Mr. Hutchinson and Ms. Dunning bring an exciting and diverse range of experience and community involvement to Hephzibah Children's Association. ♥