

Lifetime

summer 2006

Annual Meeting Celebrates “A Lifetime of Inclusion”



Taking the oath of office are (from left) Sarah E. Phelan, Esq., secretary; Anne M. Majsak, president; Dr. Timothy B. Sullivan, first vice president, and Joseph L. Faber, Esq., second vice president.



Young performers from Magic to Do Productions garnered a standing ovation for their singing and dancing.

Children sang and danced. Artists exhibited their work. And a staff member sang an original reggae rendition that's fast becoming the Everyday Heroes theme song. Westchester Arc's 57th annual meeting, held on June 13 at the Crowne Plaza, White Plains, focused on "A Lifetime of Inclusion." It was an evening packed with information and moments of pure joy. Panel discussions offered advice on educational, residential and transition planning. Members elected new officers and board members (see page 6), and self-advocates voted for the first time for representation on their own customer service council (page 7).

Mohan Mehra, outgoing president, and Ric Swierat, executive director, highlighted the agency's 2005 accomplishments, which included a 55 percent increase in special ed services in the home and inclusion settings,

as well as a 15 percent jump in community jobs. Westchester Arc opened two new residences, held three Family Resource Days, including one for Latino families, and hosted its first self-advocacy summit.

"This is an exciting time for Westchester Arc, and I'm honored to have an opportunity to lead such an innovative agency," said Anne Majsak, newly elected president. "I will focus on establishing more opportunities for social, vocational and residential inclusion, opening the agency's "Gateway to the Community" in Hawthorne and strengthening the fine programs we already offer."

A workshop entitled "Is It Time to Let Go?" stressed the importance of understanding the psychosocial dynamics of teens and families as young people make the transition to adulthood. Planning should include financial, career, residential and social considerations. Support groups can be helpful to families who experience difficulty adjusting to new levels of independence.

A session on residential planning outlined housing choices and probed the issues involved when offspring with developmental disabilities ready themselves to leave the family home. Emily Perl Kings-

**WE'VE REDESIGNED
OUR WEBSITE!**

WWW.WESTCHESTERARC.ORG

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LIFETIME is published quarterly by Westchester Arc, a chapter of NYSARC Inc., 121 Westmoreland Avenue, White Plains, NY 10606
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From Our President

Anne M. Majsak
Anne M. Majsak

As Westchester Arc's new president, I thank you for your vote of confidence. I believe that our central challenge during the coming years will be to maintain the excellence of the services which have built our reputation, while addressing the changing needs of people with developmental disabilities.

Autism rates are skyrocketing. Consumers are living longer. They are speaking languages other than English. And they're demanding more opportunities to live and work within the greater community.

The diversity of the population we serve and our commitment to individual choice mean that we must identify increasingly effective ways of employing our resources. It will require imagination and tenacity from the self-advocates, families and staff who are the backbone of this agency.

By yearend, we will have expanded our satisfaction survey process to include all major programs, and the thoughtful responses

of family members will help point the way towards change that builds upon the highest levels of quality. Our Best Practice Awards (page 8) will continue to recognize innovation that can be replicated throughout the agency. And Everyday Heroes will encourage staff to listen, then envision the small steps that can change a life.

This fall our pre-school will open its first self-contained class for children with autism in a community setting (page 10). A new program, Choices, expands day habilitation to embrace supported employment. Later this year, our respite house will begin conducting "life skills weekends," during which young adults can prepare themselves for residential placements by learning to cook, shop, do laundry and more.

Over the coming months, we will need to work together to develop many more inventive services. Our planned "Gateway to the Community" in Hawthorne will be a celebration of this mission. It will provide spaces for networking, planning and showcasing the accomplishments of people with disabilities.

I am inspired by the pluck of our self-advocates. By the commitment of our families. And by the professionalism of our staff. I look forward to this worthy challenge.

Bresnan Bike Tour Cyclists Put a Spin on Fundraising



Cyclists peddled from New York to Vermont for the annual Bresnan Bike Tour.

Seventy-eight cyclists peddled from New York to Vermont on June 9-11 for the annual Bresnan Bike Tour, raising over \$247,000 for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics New

York-Hudson Valley Region.

Bikers overcame strong wind and heavy rain to complete the 200-mile tour. Seventeen volunteers from Westchester Arc, Special Olympics and other organizations served as a support team.

"Despite unfavorable conditions, participants remained upbeat and were determined to finish the course. Their determination was impressive," says Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc's executive director. "I'd also like to recognize all of the volunteers who worked extra hard to make this tour one of the best yet."

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.



From Our Executive Director

Richard P. Swierat

Richard P. Swierat

At this year's Not-for-Profit Summit on May 15, Robert Puentes of The Brookings Institution described research on "America's First Suburbs," areas such as Westchester County that experienced significant development shortly after World War II. Our county offers a powerful example of trends that are being observed nationwide and which Westchester Arc has already begun to address.

- **Foreign-born population:** "Inner-ring" suburbs have larger concentrations of non-native-born individuals than neighboring cities. The Hispanic population is Westchester's fastest growing ethnic group and Westchester Arc is aggressively recruiting bilingual staff to meet its needs. Our outreach program, which works with underserved communities, collaborates with churches, schools, libraries, hospitals and other local organizations on programs that target Latinos.

- **Aging citizens:** Between 1950 and 2000, the over-65 population in Westchester County grew more than 150 percent. With improved health-care, individuals with developmental disabilities are enjoying longer lives, challenging our ability to meet their specific needs. Designing improved-accessibility residences, increasing guardianship services and creating retirement options are only a few of the tasks before us.
- **High housing values:** Real housing values in Westchester increased over 150 percent during the same period, placing the county "off the charts," in Puentes' words. This is a big reason that so many people with developmental disabilities are unable to find community-based homes. It typically takes years for an individual to be placed in an appropriate residence.
- **High poverty:** The number of high-poverty suburban neighborhoods is rising at the same time that urban concentrations of the poor are declining. These are the people who most require our outreach and crisis services, and these are the individuals

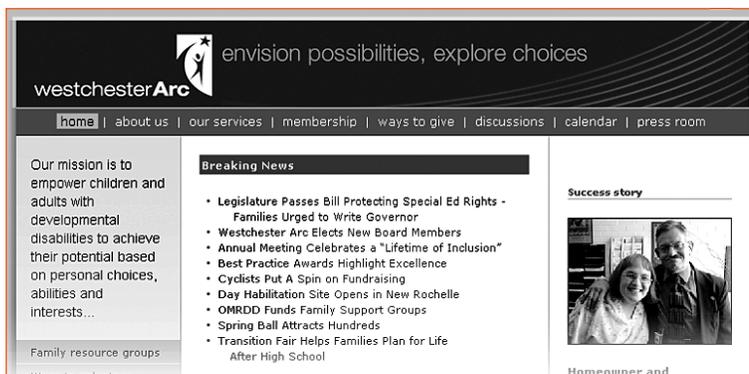
who will suffer most from threatened cuts in Medicaid.

The Brookings study bemoans a "high level of fragmentation among local governments" and the need to build regional coalitions—which is precisely the approach that Westchester Arc has adopted. We cannot address these trends without help. We must reach out to our own "circle of support" within the greater community, pooling resources with other organizations that share our values. Westchester Foundation for Autism, Westchester Institute for Human Development, Heartsong, the Port Chester and Yonkers Latino Networks and many other groups have become important allies.

We have learned, through our Family Resource Days, that one of the most important services we can provide is the consolidation of information. We hope that our newly designed website will become a clearinghouse for materials related to developmental disabilities as we increasingly feature events, links and other resources supplied by and about our partner organizations.

Westchester Arc has been part of the community's fabric for over 55 years. As the region grapples with its "first county" status, the agency will continue seeking solutions to these shared challenges.

Westchester Arc Revamps Website www.westchesterarc.org



Westchester Arc has redesigned its website with more photos, news, event listings and interactive discussions. We've learned that one of the most pressing problems for families is that the information they need is

scattered, so we've responded with more links to relevant websites, calendar listings for a wider range of community events and timelier posting of news.

Perhaps most importantly, we've launched interactive discussion groups that will address a growing list of topics—autism, Medicaid, self-advocacy and much more. Tell us what you think about today's

controversial issues. If you don't see your favorite subject covered, drop us a line.

We'd like to thank the award-winning design firm of R. Bird & Company, Inc., White Plains, for its contributions to the site. R. Bird is responsible for the website's new look, easier navigation and many other improvements.

In the coming months, we plan to grow the site to serve you even better. Let us know how we're doing! Send us listings for the calendar and websites you want to share with others. All comments and suggested content should be sent to rmoore@westchesterarc.org.



Spitzer Outlines Plan to Increase Employment of People with Disabilities

Employer Recognition Breakfast Honors Businesses



(From left) Mohan Mehra, former Westchester Arc president; Raymond Frost, Jr., recipient of the Anthony Canata Memorial Employee Award; Eliot Spitzer, attorney general, and Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director.

Eliot Spitzer, New York State attorney general and gubernatorial candidate, outlined his plan for “building a culture of inclusion, independence and empowerment” for people with developmental disabilities during Westchester Arc’s Employer Recognition Breakfast. Two hundred people gathered at the Westchester Marriott, Tar-

rytown, on April 21 to hear Spitzer and to applaud nearly two dozen local businesses for their roles in building careers for individuals with developmental disabilities.

“About two-thirds of the disabled population are unemployed—a figure that actually worsened during the economic boom of the 1990s,” said Spitzer. “This is unacceptable and the next governor must make it a priority to reduce this number...”

He noted that the state’s support system actually discourages the creation of in-community jobs. Reimbursement is significantly lower for job coaching and finder services that place people in community-based careers than it is for programs conducted in “shel-

tered” settings. He called for correcting such “backward incentives.”

“The State should call on local One-Stop Career Centers to develop a database of people with disabilities seeking employment and employers seeking to hire,” he continued. “...Another way the State can encourage employment of the disabled is through its procurement process.”

Local businesses shared their experiences as employers of people with disabilities and described the two-way benefits that have resulted (see list of award-winning organizations on page 5). Raymond Frost, who has worked at Petco in White Plains for the past decade, received the Anthony Cannata Memorial Employee Award for being an inspiration to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Pat Dowse, vice president of operations for NYSRA (New York State Rehabilitation Association), presented a regional school partnership award to Tuckahoe Union Free High School because of its collaboration with Westchester Arc in transitioning students with disabilities from school to the workforce.

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.



Principal Paul Siragusa accepts the Educational Partnership Award on behalf of the Tuckahoe Union Free School District. With him are Rochelle Saks (left), transitional services director, and Renee Darby, career planner.

Stephen Nix In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Stephen Nix. Stephen was known for his charming personality and great sense of humor. He was involved with the agency’s vocational and recreational services and enjoyed dancing at the Spring Ball, traveling with Club Echo and going to the movies with the Reunion Club.

Employment Awards

The following organizations were honored at Westchester Arc's Employer Recognition Breakfast for their activism on behalf of people with developmental disabilities:

Doral Arrowwood, Rye Brook
New Business Partnership Award

Emilio's Restaurant, Harrison
New Business Partnership Award

Food Emporium, Harrison
Employment Development Award

Home Depot, Mohegan Lake
New Business Partnership Award

MBIA, Armonk
Special Advocate Award

Mechtronics, White Plains
Special Advocate Award

Motion Labs, Cortlandt Manor
New Business Partnership Award

Old Navy, White Plains
Longstanding Employer Award

Pappalardo, Tombini & Wolff,
Elmsford - Special Partnership Award

The Pet Company, Jefferson Valley
Special Advocate Award

Pronto Printer, Cortlandt Manor
Special Advocate Award

Red Lobster, Scarsdale
Employment Opportunity Award

Shoprite, Yonkers
Employment Opportunity Award

Starbucks, Briarcliff Manor and
Mount Kisco - New Business Partner-
ship Award

Stop & Shop Corporation,
Briarcliff Manor - Employment De-
velopment Award

Stop & Shop, North White Plains and
Port Chester - Longstanding Employer
Award

T.J. Maxx, Hartsdale
Employment Opportunity Award

Tuckahoe Union Free School District
Educational Partnership Award

**Westchester County Surrogate
Court**, White Plains - Civic Partnership
Award

White Plains High School -
Educational Partnership Award

Zodiac Restaurant, White Plains
Longstanding Employer Award

Formal Fun: 19th Annual Spring Ball Attracts Hundreds



A couple takes to the dance floor.

Over 560 people attended Westchester Arc's 19th Annual Spring Ball, held on May 5 at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown. "I look forward to the Spring Ball every year," said Elizabeth W. "I love to get dressed up, dance and spend time with my friends."

Guests also enjoyed a gourmet dinner and posing for photos.

"I'll remember this night for the rest of my life," commented Janet S.

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.

Twenty-Second Annual **MBIA** *Invitational*

Golf & Tennis Classic to benefit the Westchester Arc Foundation
and Special Olympics New York - Hudson Valley Region

SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

Mount Kisco Country Club • Whippoorwill Club • Anglebrook Golf Club

For information, contact Elyse Fowler, 914-428-8330, ext. 3027,
efowler@westchesterarc.org.

New Board Members

Officers

President, Anne M. Majsak

Anne Majsak has been a Westchester Arc board member since 1991, previously serving as second vice president and treasurer. She is also co-chair of the Parent Assistance Committee on Down Syndrome (PACDS), a support network that helps new parents of children with Down syndrome understand their babies and develop their potential.

First Vice President,

Timothy B. Sullivan, M.D

Dr. Sullivan is clinical director of the continuing day treatment program and the assertive community treatment team at Saint Vincent's Catholic Hospital in Harrison, New York. He is a respected educator and published author.

Second Vice President,

Joseph L. Faber, Esq.

Joseph Faber is a principal of Faber, Daeufer & Rosenberg, a boutique law firm serving companies, research institutions and investors in the life sciences.

Treasurer, Mark Glucksman

Mark Glucksman is controller for Consolidated Edison's competitive businesses, which focus on sales of electricity to commercial customers and on the ownership and operation of power plants in the Northeast.

Secretary, Sarah E. Phelan, Esq.

Sarah Phelan is an attorney and former senior manager at Deloitte & Touche, LLP. She has also served as an executive at the non-profit American Institute of CPAs.

Newly Elected Board Members

Anthony Assalone
Mary Ann Dantin
Mary Green
Carolyn Holodak
Bernard A. Krooks, Esq.
Eileen Madison
Theresa Mooney
Robert Nuccio
Christopher Orlando, M.D.
Abby Reuben
Rosa Rodriguez
Baldev Kaur Singh, M.D.
Susan B. Walker

Annual Meeting Celebrates "A Lifetime of Inclusion"

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Mohan Mehra received the Katzenberg Award for leadership.

ley confided that "as a parent, you're never really ready to let go, but you have to think about the best interests of your child." She spoke from the heart about wanting her son to have his independence, yet feeling secure that a Westchester Arc staff member was available for support and guidance.

"Children, Parents and Schools: Inclusion in the Education Community" emphasized the importance of fostering a collaborative relationship between families and school districts to ensure the right services for each student. Special education professionals within the school districts ultimately want what is best

and most effective for each child, and families will be rewarded when discussions and planning are conducted in a spirit of cooperation.

A number of awards were presented for outstanding contributions to children and adults with developmental disabilities. Mohan Mehra, outgoing president, received the Katzenberg Award for his leadership; Louise Weston, former president, received the Volunteer Partnership Award for her work on the agency's satisfaction measurement process; Mary Dantin won the Westchester Arc Foundation Volunteer Award for organizing a concert that raised \$100,000 towards the agency's new building, and Mary Ellen Herzog, Ossining School District, received the School Partnership Award for her work on pre-school inclusionary education.

A premier viewing of OMRDD's Everyday Heroes film, which features Westchester Arc staff and consumers, and a spirited musical performance by the youngsters of Magic to Do Productions rounded out the evening.

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.

Art Show and Auction Draw Cheers



Artist Donna G. (left) claimed first prize in Westchester Arc's annual art show. With her is Justine Pagano, senior job placement specialist.

Forty-seven individuals with developmental disabilities competed in Westchester Arc's tenth Annual Art Show, held

in conjunction with the agency's annual meeting. Donna G. won first prize for a collage combining pencil drawings, photography and painting. John S. took second prize for a photo of a snowy winter's eve, and Bobby V. claimed third prize for an abstract watercolor. The show was made possible through the generosity of the Bulova Foundation.

Friends, family and the general public were impressed. "I am overwhelmed by the beauty of this artwork,"

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Self-Advocates Wage Spirited Campaigns Customer Service Council Holds First Election

Seventy-five self-advocates packed the room during the first elections for Westchester Arc's customer service council, an increasingly powerful body that contributes to decisions on agency strategy and operations. The session was part of the agency's June 13 annual meeting.

Candidates presented their platforms and, after officers had been elected by secret ballot, the group broke into caucuses to choose regional representatives. Christine Reinhard, deputy commissioner, DCMH (Department of Community Mental Health), spoke about the importance of expressing one's opinions and discussed changes that are being undertaken to make it easier for people with disabilities to vote.

Self-advocates weighed in on important issues during their campaign speeches. Chinika T., who was elected president, stressed that "Education comes first." (See interview, below.)

Lois G., who also ran for president,



Self-advocates elect officers to their customer service council.

was interested in having Westchester Arc "set a trend all other agencies can follow." She would "reach for the stars, as you see in our logo."

Nicole W., who ran unsuccessfully for secretary, was savvy about the importance of experience and teamwork. "I have worked in both White Plains and Mount Kisco, and I know all the presidential candidates. I could work well with

any of them."
DCMH's Reinhard called council members "pioneers of the self-advocacy movement in Westchester" and explained that she is creating similar groups throughout the county. She disclosed that concerns about transportation and retirement, shared with her during an earlier council meeting,

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Customer Service Council President



President Chinika T. delivers her acceptance speech. "My priorities as president will be helping others learn to read and get jobs in the community."

Chinika T. has been elected the first president of Westchester Arc's customer service council, a board-level committee comprised of self-advocates whose opinions directly affect the agency's plans and operations. "It is a big honor to be presi-

dent and I take my role very seriously," she says. "I am here to help in any way I can."

Chinika has been part of the self-advocacy movement since 2000, playing prominent roles on various Westchester Arc committees. As president, she will focus on education and community employment. Recently, she initiated a tutoring program to help others strengthen their reading and math skills.

"You have to know how to read and write if you want a good job," comments Chinika, who is a valued employee at Iona College in New Rochelle and Westchester Arc's Katzenberg Center in White Plains.

"I'm very happy with my job and I'm thankful to Westchester Arc for helping me find it," she continues. "I look forward to working with the agency to help others find community jobs, too."

Customer Service Council

Newly elected members of the customer service council, a self-advocacy group that advises the board of directors, are:

President: Chinika T.
Vice President: Sharon M.
Secretary: Carolyn H.

Representatives:
Northern Region
 Lois G., Nicole W.
alternates – Patsy G., Hartley S.

Central Region
 Will H., Vance J.
alternate – Eddie C.

Southern Region
 Fred S., Vinnie R.
alternate – Mary M.

Residential
 Florence P., Liz A., Ronald C.



BEST PRACTICE AWARDS HIGHLIGHT EXCELLENCE

The agency's Best Practice Awards, presented twice a year, recognize outstanding delivery of our promise to be "caring, innovative and professional."



First prize winner Ronnie Mandel (right) with Executive Director Ric Swierat.

First Prize - Ronnie Mandel, pre-school teacher, for creating a tool to complement classroom learning. Recognizing that pre-schoolers learn valuable lessons through music, Ronnie recorded a CD of her students singing songs used in daily classroom activities. She presented the CD to each family as a holiday gift, which gave parents the opportunity to experience and support their child's lesson plan. As parents practiced singing with their children at home, the students gained confidence in their abilities and participated more in the classroom. The CD is now used as a mentoring tool for new pre-school staff.

"We received one of the CDs," says board member Rosa Rodriguez, "and it was a big hit. My son knows all the songs and we sing them together. Ronnie Mandel is a special teacher, and this CD is one more wonderful thing she has given to him."

Second Prize - Liza Simmons, community program specialist, for fulfilling the personal dreams of individuals in the agency's Port Chester day habilitation program. Liza organized a Valentine's Day bake sale, which helped participants learn cooking, money management and teamwork—then used the money to fund activities based on the desires of each individual, including a trip to the spa, fashion makeover and shopping spree at Bath and Body Works.



Quinelle Y. enjoys a day at the beauty parlor, compliments of Port Chester day hab.

Third Prize: Lynn Minzloff, treatment coordinator, and Chavewan Kwanmuang, community instructor, for organizing a photography contest that taught art and science skills. For many contestants, the activity served as an introduction to digital photography. Participants worked with day hab staff over a three-month period to learn about adjusting the flash, zooming in, deleting photos, using a tripod and other camera functions. After capturing an image, participants learned how to use a computer to crop, resize and add spe-

cial effects to the photo. The activity encouraged individuality and creative thinking and helped contestants build self-esteem.

Fourth Place: Pam Dyson, Niki Guida, Linda Borkowski, Pam Rothlein, teachers, for promoting an interest in reading and fostering language development through a "Mystery Reader" program. Often, students would invite their parents or grandparents to be the mystery reader, which helped increase the youngsters' self-esteem and class participation.

Fifth Prize: Shauna Council, treatment coordinator, for using her dog, Buttercup, to gain enthusiastic participation in the learning of communication and behavior skills. Every week, attendees of the agency's day habilitation program look forward to their visit with Buttercup, taking turns feeding, petting and walking her around the neighborhood. "Shauna is a wonderful example of the spirit and dedication of the people at Westchester Arc," write Anne and Mort Steinberg. "When she brings Buttercup to visit our son Michael's program, she adds a whole new dimension to his life."

Alice Vandernoot In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Alice Vandernoot. Mrs. Vandernoot was the wife of longtime agency treasurer, Joseph Vandernoot, Sr.

Echo Onstage: Third Time's the Charm



Performers wowed the audience with musical numbers from *Grease*.

Sixteen young adults with developmental disabilities wowed families and friends while performing song and dance routines from *Beauty and the Beast*, *Grease* and *Phantom of the Opera* during the grand finale of Westchester Arc's Echo Onstage. Now in its

third year, Echo Onstage was held June 26-30 at Westchester Community College. The musical theater workshop is sponsored by the agency's recreational services in partnership with Westco Productions, the county's premier theater company for young audiences.

"Our son loves to sing and this was a great opportunity for him to experience the stage," remark Mr. and Mrs. Spooner. "We're so proud of him."

Participants built self-esteem and muscle tone while learning dance numbers. They also learned about different cultures through counselors from England and

Holland who worked with both Echo Onstage and Camp Echo this summer. Role-playing and improvisational exercises encouraged creative thinking and improved verbal and social skills.

"Many performers have been with the program since its inception and I've noticed a growth in their maturity and confidence," comments choreographer Jason Summers. "Individuals who were once shy and afraid to participate are now picking their own music and suggesting dance numbers."

Echo Onstage was also a growing experience for many of its volunteers. "The enthusiasm and joy that exuded from every performer was inspiring," said first-time volunteer Katelyn Moore. "I was especially moved by the performers' unconditional support for one another. I can't wait to return to the program in 2007."

Pre-School Celebrates 50 Years

Donor Event Marks Decades of Innovation



Westchester County Legislator Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh) proclaimed May 4 "Westchester Arc Foundation and The Children's School for Early Development Day."

More than 70 guests gathered at The Children's School for Early Development on May 4 to celebrate five decades of educational innovation. Co-sponsored by The Children's School and the Westchester Arc Foundation, the reception also recognized donor generosity. Westchester County Legislator Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh) commemorated the occasion with a proclamation declaring May 4 "Westchester Arc Foundation and The Children's School for

Early Development Day."

Mohan Mehra, former Westchester Arc president and Katharine Wilson Conroy, Westchester Arc Foundation president, unveiled 39 new gold and silver stars bearing donor names that had been added to a mural symbolizing the role private gifts play in making dreams come true.

"Donations increased by 20 percent this year," notes Fran

Higgins, assistant executive director for special events. "These contributions have helped the pre-school purchase needed classroom supplies, establish cutting-edge programs and maintain expert staff.

On behalf of The Children's School and the Westchester Arc Foundation, I'd like to thank all who have supported us through the years."

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.

Miguel Merced In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of staff member and friend, Miguel Merced. Miguel was known throughout the agency for his outgoing personality and great enthusiasm. In 2005, he developed an innovative program through which day habilitation participants donated aluminum snap tops to local causes. The snap tops did not affect the redemption value collected by the agency's Mount Kisco recycling center and were redeemed by other organizations to pay medical fees and support other worthwhile efforts. The activity also increased the workers' self-confidence and morale.

"Who knew those little tops could do so much good," said Miguel. "I'm thankful I've had the chance to help those in need."

"Sensitive to your needs, understanding, loving and giving. That was Miguel," comments Sal Lorello, job placement specialist. "He will always be in our hearts."



From The Foundation

Katharine Wilson Conroy
Katharine Wilson Conroy

Summer is fast upon us with expectations of long, lazy days spent at sunny beaches, in the mountains or en route to exotic places. I hope that however you choose to enjoy it, this summer is renewing and enjoyable for you.

In the meantime, our capital campaign steering committee is continuing to meet regularly, to develop solicitation and communication strategies and to make calls on

people who we hope will support the campaign with leadership-level gifts.

Thanks to Justin Israel, we recently received a gift of \$40,000 from longtime friend Seth Glickenhau. A couple who had already given generously to the Fund for the Future recently gave \$60,000 for the building. A member of the Westchester Arc staff made a four-figure gift to the building fund. (Who is better able than a staff member to appreciate the potential for enhancement of services that a new facility in Hawthorne promises?) The gift was given in honor of Mohan, Suzanne and Brian Mehra as Mohan ends his term as president of the Westchester Arc board.

If you know of someone who might be interested in supporting the campaign, we would be grateful if you would let us know. Beth Beck, Mitch Benerofe or I --or any member of the committee-- would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss our plans. There are exciting opportunities for naming spaces within the new building after donors, their families or others they wish to remember.

We anticipate that the site work on the new building will be nearly complete in September, and we are planning a groundbreaking celebration for September 20. Watch the mail for your invitation.

Children's School Honors Graduates, Looks Ahead to Fall



Graduates of the Country Children's Center in Katonah reciting The Pledge of Allegiance.

Twenty-four of the 70 students who just graduated from The Children's School for Early Development will attend traditional community kindergarten classes in their home school districts next year. They have learned to hold a pencil, sing songs, "be respectful during circle time" and always try their best, "even if something is different and hard."

The Children's School collaborates with 12 community-based pre-schools in Westchester County, and each site celebrated graduation with a special ceremony. At the Country Children's Center in Kato-

nah, graduates sang *The Sharing Song* ("If there is a new kid, invite him out to hang..."), recited the Pledge of Allegiance and received diplomas.

"The Children's School helped my fear-

ful, non-verbal toddler become an eager learner and listener," comments parent Mari Yuro. "Thank you to everyone at the pre-school for always spending extra time and effort with my son, for coming up with creative learning tools and for your endless advice and strategies. I'm so glad we're tied together in this community and will be seeing you in future years."

Always innovative, The Children's School will open the county's first self-contained class for children with autism to be conducted in an inclusion setting, Little Friends in Ossining.

"It's a true hybrid situation," notes Robin Gersten, social worker and team leader. "Students will participate in a smaller, more structured environment than inclusion classes. Yet they will have plenty of opportunity to interact with typically developing peers, which will help build speech and behavioral skills."

"We're very excited about this program," comments Fran Porcaro, assistant executive director of educational services. "It represents the pre-school's commitment to each child it serves."

Art Show

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said one attendee. "It is a shining example of what people with disabilities are capable of."

Attendees had the chance to purchase the unique work of previous prize-winners John I., Larry C. and Larry G. during a lively auction. Program Director Bill Porcaro, armed with an oversized gavel, got the bids rolling. The three paintings were sold for an impressive \$1500. Half of the winnings went to the artists, while the remainder will help to fund Westchester Arc's art classes.

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between
April 5, 2006, and July 6, 2006.

**IN MEMORY OF
BENNY DELL'OLIO**
Ms. Camille R. Tomao

IN MEMORY OF MARK FRIED
Mr. and Mrs. Jay Sampson

**IN MEMORY OF
MILDRED GLUSKY**
Mr. Bud Faranda
Vector Graphics Supply, Inc.

IN MEMORY OF STEPHEN ALLEN NIX
Ms. Victoria Alexander
Ms. Louis A. Bush
Ms. Eridania Camacho
Ms. Alice K. Conrad
Mr. and Mrs. Sidney E. Cusberth
Ms. Fay L. Fagan
Mr. and Mrs. Ian Jaffe
Ms. Margaret R. Mack
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth W. McComb
Mr. and Mrs. Donald J. Moclair
Ms. Verdi L. Reaves
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery M. Reuben

Sisters of the Divine Compassion
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Swierat
Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester T. Taylor
Volunteer Service Bureau of
Westchester, Inc.

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD PRESSER
Ms. Cecelia Barelli

**IN MEMORY OF
JAY ROBINSON**
Mr. and Mrs. Art Tischler

IN MEMORY OF ROSE SIMON
Mr. Matthew M. Schrier
Yonkers League for Retarded Children

**IN HONOR OF GENE AND FRAN POR-
CARO**
Mr. Andrew K. Levi
Ms. Holly Levinson

**IN HONOR OF MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM
SPITZER**
The Healing Center at Two Titus

Rose Simon In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Rose Simon. A longtime friend of the agency, Rose was a dedicated mother, respected member of the community and strong advocate for people with developmental disabilities.

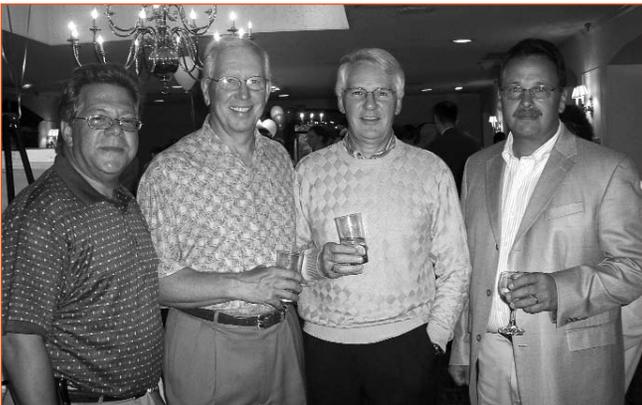
Rose was a true pioneer in the field. Working with the Mount Vernon community, she established the Rose Simon Day Camp for children with disabilities in 1964. Activities such as bowling, swimming and movies helped attendees build friendships and social skills, while promoting community inclusion. In the late '70s, she set up a scholarship fund to help residents of the agency's Crotty House attend Camp Echo, a weeklong nature getaway sponsored by the recreation department.

"Rose's generosity has enriched many lives," says Dave Gasparri, director of recreational services. "Thanks to her, several people with developmental disabilities have enjoyed camp and leisure activities that would not have otherwise been available to them."

She was also a generous donor to the agency's guardianship department and was an active member of the Yonkers League, a volunteer arm of Westchester Arc.

"Rose helped organize fundraisers and work events. She was always willing to pitch in wherever she could," comments Tim Synan, program director. "She brought great energy and compassion to Westchester Arc. She was a true gem and will be greatly missed."

6th Annual Golfing for Kids Is Biggest Success Yet



(From left) Golfing for Kids Co-Chair Bob Palladino, Westchester Arc Chief Financial Officer Norm Szymanski, Bill Phillips of the Walbridge Foundation and event Chair Tony Rizzi.

The sixth annual Golfing for Kids, held on June 6 at the Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, raised over \$128,000 for pre-schoolers with developmental disabilities. Two hundred supporters attended the event, co-sponsored by The Children's School for Early Development and the Westchester Arc Foundation.

During the night's cocktail reception and awards banquet, PTA Co-President and Westchester Arc board member Theresa Mooney credited The Children's School with helping her daughter develop the ability to speak.

Parent Kristie Paladino talked about the first time her son hugged her. "It was a moment I will never forget," she said tearfully. "I knew he was saying he

loved me. Thank you, Children's School, for being here."

County Legislator Tom Abinanti (D-Greenburgh) recognized event Chairman Tony Rizzi for his leadership on the Golfing for Kids committee over the years—proclaiming June 6, 2006, "Tony Rizzi Day" in Westchester County.

Calendar of Events

August 23, 2006

Support for the Adult Sibling

Susan Hamovitch & Kate Strohm
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
JCC Mid-Westchester, 999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale, New York
Contact: Nancy Succoso, 914-428-8330, ext. 3319, nsuccoso@westchesterarc.org, or Charley Moskowitz, 914-472-3300, ext 361, moskowitzs@yahoo.com.

September 18, 2006

22nd Annual MBIA Golf and Tennis Invitational

Mount Kisco Country Club, Whip-poorwill Club, Anglebrook Golf Club
Contact: Elyse Fowler, 914-428-8330, ext. 3027, efowler@westchesterarc.org.

September 27, 2006

Transition Information Night

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Yonkers Riverfront Library
1 Larken Center, Yonkers, New York
Contact: Ralph Szur, 914-949-9300, ext. 3002, rszur@westchesterarc.org, or Martha Pisculli, 914-949-9300, ext. 3142, mpisculli@westchesterarc.org.

October 25, 2006

Sibshop: Welcome Back! Fall Pizza Party!

4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
JCC Mid-Westchester,
999 Wilmot Road, Scarsdale, New York
Contact: Nancy Succoso, 914-428-8330, ext. 3119, nsuccoso@westchesterarc.org, or Charley Moskowitz, 914-472-3300, ext. 361, moskowitzs@yahoo.com.

November 11, 2006

Family Resource Day

White Plains High School
Details to follow.

**For additional listings,
visit www.westchesterarc.org.**

Self-Advocates Wage Spirited Campaigns

continued from page 7

will be included in the local government plan.

She pointed out that although studies indicate that people with disabilities are interested in government, they are 20 percent less likely to vote than people without disabilities, largely due to problems at the polling place. She explained that the federal government's Help Americans Vote Act (HAVA) calls for improvements in accessibility

and in training election officials on how to promote participation by individuals with disabilities.

"Of all the states, New York is last when it comes to complying with HAVA and is being sued by the Justice Department," she declared. If people with disabilities voted at the same rate as the rest of the population, "10 million more votes would have been cast in the last presidential election."

A self-advocate raised her hand and explained that she is afraid that she might vote for "the wrong person. What if he doesn't believe in Medicaid?"

"That's why it's so important to learn about the people who are running for office," replied Reinhard. The council elections were an important lesson in the process of making oneself heard.

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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2006

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For more info, call
Fran Higgins,
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