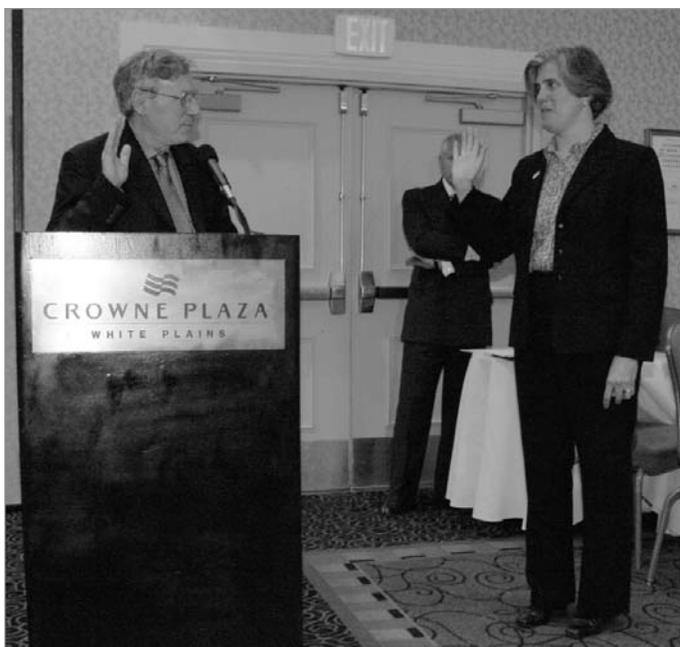


Lifetime

August 2007

Annual Meeting Confronts Family Concerns Westchester Arc Elects Board Members



President Anne Majsak takes the oath of office.

Families shared experiences and received solid advice from recognized experts. New officers and board members were elected

(see page 5). Westchester Arc President Anne Majsak and Executive Director Ric Swierat highlighted agency accomplishments. And an 11-year-old boy, speaking about his unconditional love for a sibling with autism, brought the crowd to its feet. These were just some of the moments that defined “Advocacy and Social Change,” Westchester Arc’s 58th annual meeting, held on June 12 at the Crowne Plaza, White Plains. Visit “Recent Event Highlights” at www.westchesterarc.org/calendar for summary of president’s remarks.

Dr. Grant Mitchell, commissioner of the county’s Department of Community Mental Health, confronted the chaos caused by alarming autism rates. He informed attendees that “autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the nation, with over 3,700 reported cases in Westchester alone.” He then urged public support systems to quit “pushing and shoving” and start working together to meet the vast needs of individuals with autism, many of whom require the services of more than one public agency.” Dr. Mitchell went on to praise Westchester Arc for its commitment to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Continued on page 5

On the Campaign Trail Customer Service Council Holds Elections

Seventy self-advocates exercised their right to vote during the agency’s June 12 annual meeting, electing new officers to their customer service council, an increasingly powerful body that contributes to decisions on agency strategy and operations. Candidates waged spirited campaigns, speaking about jobs, equality and education.

Chinika T., who was re-elected president, stressed improving literacy. “In this year, I learned a lot about the challenges we have. Reading is still one of the biggest.” Later, she promised to look into getting books so that self-advocates could learn how to read during downtime at the agency’s pre-vocational workshops.

Lois G., who also ran for president, was interested in improving communication throughout the agency, while Linda K., the council’s new vice president, pledged friendship and support.

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Chinika T., president, and Carolyn H., secretary, are sworn in during the night’s business meeting.

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From Our President

Anne M Majsak

Anne M. Majsak

Westchester Arc’s Gateway to the Community, the new resource center being built in Hawthorne, New York, is taking shape. Each week, a staff photographer captures construction progress, and by the time you read this, the building should be fully enclosed. When you receive your next issue of *Lifetime* in December, the center will probably be complete, and we anticipate moving in during the first quarter of 2008.

This “Gateway” will serve our self-advocates and families in myriad concrete ways, but for a moment, I’d like to ponder its power as a symbol. You will read elsewhere in this issue about the quilt that self-advocates are designing for the new building (see page 4). From the first, consumers asked that water be in-

corporated in its design, and a dramatic water wall is planned. The quilt picks up the water theme, exploring ways that water can be seen to symbolize inclusion and consumers’ contributions to the greater community.

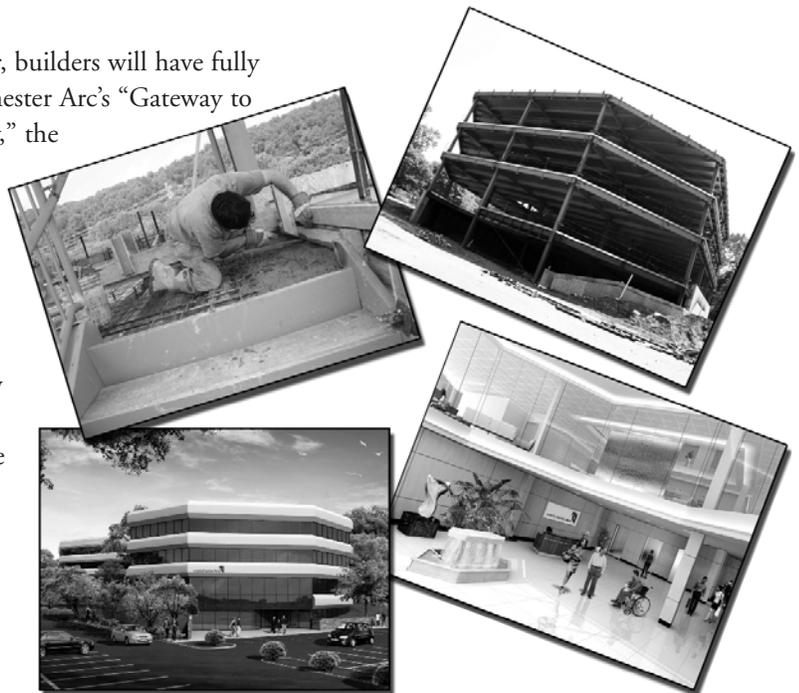
The agency’s Everyday Heroes completed a quilt last winter that depicts the transformational power of one-to-one relationships when focused on the aspirations of people with developmental disabilities. That artwork, too, will adorn the new building.

And families will soon be asked to collaborate on a third quilt for the center. It will depict lives that have taken unexpected turns, filled with challenges, confusion, pride and love.

We all know that, despite the enormous progress of the past 58 years, real obstacles remain. But this Gateway to the Community will stand as testament to the gifts—and grit—of individuals with developmental disabilities. It will offer them information, support and inspiration. It will be a beautiful space, a powerful space, symbolizing their potential.

**Gateway to the Community
 Becoming a Reality**

By mid-summer, builders will have fully enclosed Westchester Arc’s “Gateway to the Community,” the agency’s new resource center in Hawthorne, New York. By then, concrete flooring will be poured, window frames will be installed and the roof will be in place. Early 2008 is targeted for occupancy.



Visit www.westchesterarc.org for ongoing construction updates.

Business Leader Applauds Hiring People with Developmental Disabilities



(From left) Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director; Anne Majsak, Westchester Arc president; Marsha Gordon, president and CEO of the Business Council of Westchester, and keynote speaker Kenneth Adams, president and CEO of the Business Council of New York State.

Speaking at Westchester Arc's April 26 Employer Recognition Breakfast, Kenneth Adams, head of New York's largest business advocacy group, vowed to increase statewide awareness of the advantages of hiring people with developmental disabilities. As president and CEO of The Business Council of New York State, he represents thousands of firms and hundreds of chambers of commerce.

"The enlightened employers in this room and those you partner with around the county are critical to the independence of people with developmental disabilities,"

he told over 200 business and civic leaders gathered at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown. "This is a tradition that should be a model to business owners across the state."

Adams was keynote speaker at the annual event, which honors organizations that have helped individuals with developmental disabilities build careers within the greater community. The City of Yonkers issued a proclamation recognizing the more than 30 organizations being honored for combining good citizenship with business acumen.

"The competitive advantage of hiring

people with developmental disabilities needs to be promoted," Adams continued. "The businesses in this room are doing the right thing and others should feel compelled to follow their example in order to remain competitive."

This was the 14th annual breakfast and attracted one of the largest crowds ever, including a number of political leaders. New York State Assembly Representative Adam Bradley (89th District); Westchester County Board Legislator Lois Bronz (8th District); Westchester County District Attorney Janet DiFiore, and Yonkers Council President Chuck Lesnick were all in attendance.

Former State Senator Nick Spano, who could not attend, was honored for his longtime advocacy of the civil rights of people with disabilities, for championing their employment and fighting for accessible public facilities. His repeated endorsement of financial support for Westchester Arc's activities has helped thousands of families throughout Westchester.

Keith Caminiti and Carolyn Holodak, two individuals with disabilities who have long worked within the community, received the Anthony Cannata Memorial Employee Award for inspiring others.

Continued on page 7

Golfing For Kids Drives in Over \$100,000



Matt Valenzano of *Exceptional Parent Magazine* is recognized by Fran Porcaro of the pre-school.

The seventh annual Golfing for Kids benefit, held on June 5 at the Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, netted over \$100,000 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.

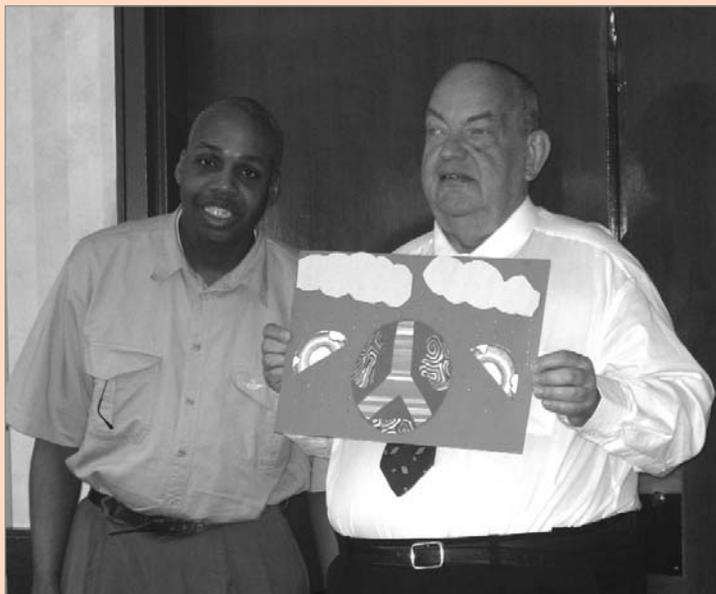
During the night's cocktail reception and awards banquet, parents Jazmine Cox and Annette Mauro praised the pre-school's caring touch. Children's School Director Fran Porcaro honored Matt Valenzano of *Excep-*

tional Parent Magazine for "sharing the pre-school's mission." She also paid tribute to Golfing for Kids Co-Chair Robert Paladino for his seven-year commitment to the event.

An enthusiastic live auction got the crowd swinging. Ralph Robins scored a dream vacation to Ashford & Drumoland Castle in Ireland with a bid of \$4,600. A silent auction offered more enticing prizes, including Florida, New England and North Carolina getaways, a foldable bike and a consultation by an English gardener.



Self-Advocates Design Quilt for New Building



Vance J. and Will H. imagine a new world order.

Self-advocates are collaborating with Dr. Beth Mount, an international authority on person-centered planning, to create a quilt that symbolizes their contributions to the community. “We’re going to tell a story together that has never been told,” Dr. Mount explained at the start of a day-long brainstorming session. “And we’ll do it in a way that will change the world.”

This undertaking builds on an earlier project in which Westchester Arc’s residential staff worked with Dr. Mount to create an Everyday Heroes quilt. That artwork, now hanging in the lobby of the Katzenberg Center in White Plains, depicts the ways in which one-to-one relationships that focus on individuals’ aspirations can change lives.

When Dr. Mount learned that self-advocates had requested that the agency’s new resource center, under construction in Hawthorne, New York, incorporate water into its design (there will be a dramatic “water wall” visible from the lobby), she began probing the significance of water as a symbol. The project will explore how water imagery can be seen to symbolize the gifts that people with developmental dis-

abilities bring to the greater community. “What does water make you think of?” she asked. The associations cited by self-advocates were many and sometimes startling. “Drinking water.” “Purity.” “Peace.” “Condensation.”

More than one participant waxed poetic. Said Vance J., “I think of a new heaven and a new earth, where no one will be rude, nasty or fighting. They will be polite. There will be peace in the world.” At which point, Dr. Mount pointed out that floods have been used throughout world literature to symbolize the washing away of things we no longer need and the potential for a new world.

“How do you contribute?” she continued. “I vote.” “I’m kind.” “I have a job.” “I help others read.”

“And how do you know when you’ve made a difference?” Dr. Mount persisted. “When people smile,” said one self-advocate.

After a morning of idea-sharing, attendees constructed collages in which water symbolized the benefits of inclusion to the greater community. There were rivers, ponds, storms, dams, boats and rainbows. Now Dr. Mount will transform these images into quilting squares that will comprise a dramatic wall hanging for the agency’s new Gateway to the Community.

“When people don’t understand about the gifts you can bring,” observed Dr. Mount, “they can treat you badly.”

Concluded self-advocate Carolyn Holodak, “This is a good think tank.”

Douglas Ferguson In Memoriam



The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Douglas Ferguson, who served as president of the agency’s board of directors from 1991 to 1994. An innovative leader, he sponsored the first board-level resolution to create a separate foundation to raise money for programs receiving insufficient government support. He was deeply involved with various agency fundraisers, including A Matter of Taste, and chaired the adult day services committee. His daughter Elizabeth formerly participated in the agency’s workshop program.

As co-owners of Ferguson Investment Consultants, Inc., he and his wife, Cynthia, were named “Individuals of the Year” in 2006 by the Sleepy Hollow Chamber of Commerce for their longtime involvement with Westchester Arc. They were also active members of the Warren Washington ARC in upstate New York.

“Douglas was a thoughtful leader who, in his distinct way, worked with the board of directors, committee members and fundraisers to maintain focus on Westchester Arc’s mission,” remembers Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director.



From Our Executive Director

Richard P. Swierat

Richard P. Swierat

In 1949, Westchester Arc arose from the frustrations of families choosing to keep their children out of institutions and in the community. While the prevailing wisdom was that institutionalization best served children with disabilities, those parents

bucked the tide and opted for community schooling with at-home supports.

Over the years, the Arc movement attracted increasing numbers of individuals with disabilities and families who rejected “accepted wisdom.” They brought a creative tension to the “established system,” and the resulting controversy helped forge new ways of delivering services.

Today, another group is challenging the educational and community service systems—families with loved ones on the autism spectrum. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability, and

people on the spectrum deserve their proper place in the system. As they confront the current service system, their requests are reasonable, echoing the concerns of disability groups that came before them.

It may be natural to feel protective concerning past successes. But achievements on behalf of individuals with any disability, strengthen us all. We should embrace the challenges posed by people on the spectrum and their families. We should work together to shape a service system that is responsive to these new needs, as we have in the past.

Annual Meeting Confronts Family Concerns

Continued from page 1

Panel discussions tackled autism, special education and self-advocacy. “Services for Kids and Adults with Autism: Where to Find Them/How to Get Them,” helped parents navigate the maze of programs and methodologies offered

in response to the autism surge and to identify the best choices for their children. A panel of clinicians and transition planners offered timely suggestions concerning evaluations, recreation, legal services, medical assistance, social skills training and other community resources.

“Educational Advocacy for Children and Teens: Legal Rights and Negotiating Strategies” prepared parents for the often-contentious process of defining educational plans for students with disabilities. Attorneys, educators and parents emphasized the importance of fostering a collaborative relationship between families and school districts to ensure the right services for each student.

A third workshop focused on the self-advocacy movement, individuals with developmental disabilities making their opinions known and directing their own lives. Self-advocate Avdi Bruncaj inspired the crowd. “People said my life would be hard. That I’d never walk or talk. But I can do both. I even speak two languages. They said I’d never fall in love. And I got married two months ago. I’ll never let people tell me what to do.”

Avdi’s sister, Jackie, discussed her supportive role. “Avdi is very independent and sometimes I worry about him living on his own, but I know he’ll call me if

he needs me. Whether it’s driving him to the store or helping him type a paper, I’ll always be there for him.”

It was an evening highlighted by goodwill—the Yonkers League, a volunteer arm of Westchester Arc, presented the agency with a check for \$12,000, and a number of volunteers and community partners were recognized for their outstanding contributions to social inclusion for individuals with developmental disabilities. A performance by the Magic to Do Players, a theater troupe of children with developmental disabilities, rounded out the evening.

See “Recent Event Highlights” at www.westchesterarc.org/calendar for list of awards.

Newly Elected Board Members

Officers

President

Anne M. Majsak

First Vice President

Dr. Timothy B. Sullivan, M.D.

Second Vice President

Sheryl R. Frishman

Treasurer

Mark Glucksman

Secretary

Sarah E. Phelan, Esq.

Board Members

William Horton

Phyllis Lombardi

Mohan Mehra

Paul Mehta

Julie Rabinowitz

Marie J. Radcliff, Esq.

Linda Sabbarese

Thomas D. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Thomas D. Thomas was a resident of Westchester Arc’s Pemart house and enjoyed agency-sponsored art classes. “Thomas could light up any room he entered,” says Residence Manager Yvette Phox. “He had a loving personality and great sense of humor. He’ll always be in our hearts.”

“A Matter of Taste” Serves Fourth Course



A Matter of Taste combines gourmet food with wines from around the world.

With hundreds of restaurants, Westchester offers a multitude of fine dining choices. From the intimate trattorias of Yonkers to the trendy steakhouses of White Plains, it's nearly impossible to experience the county's full flavor without spending a

lot of time and money in the process. But what if you could sample scrumptious food from 20 of the area's top-rated restaurants, all under one roof?

On October 17, The Westchester Arc Foundation presents “A Matter of Taste 4” at the Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York. You'll enjoy signature dishes from the hottest restaurants, along with over 50 international wines

donated by The Grape Exchange. You'll also get a souvenir journal containing a selection of recipes from the evening's fare.

Since its inception, “A Matter of Taste” has netted nearly \$300,000 for individuals with developmental disabilities and recognized outstanding contributions to community inclusion. Past honorees include

County Executive Andy Spano and high-profile litigator David Boies.

This year, Bill Cuddy, of CB Richard Ellis, and Peter Herrero, president and owner of the New York Hospitality Group, are co-chairmen. Former New York State Senator Nick Spano serves as honorary chairman. Former Westchester Arc President Justin Israel will be honored with a lifetime achievement award, while Al Donnellan of the law firm of DelBello, Donnellan, Weingarten, Wise & Wiederkehr, LLP, has been named recipient of the agency's community leader award.

Featuring mouth-watering attractions, live music and wines for all palates, “A Matter of Taste 4” is sure to sizzle.

To find out how you can be a part of this special night, contact:

Fran Higgins
914-428-8330, ext. 3028
fhiggins@westchesterarc.org

Spring Ball Turns 20



Mary Beth W. and Jeffrey K. take to the dance floor.

Over 570 people attended Westchester Arc's 20th annual Spring Ball, held on May 4 at the Westchester Marriott. Sponsored by the recreation department, it has become one of the agency's most popular events. “I'm having the time of my life,” said Jamilla C. “I hope the ball lasts another 20 years.”

After a multi-course meal, guests caught up with friends, posed for pictures and showed off their moves on the dance floor.

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

Bresnan Bike Tour



Seventy cyclists peddled from New York to Vermont from June 8-10 for the annual Bresnan Bike Tour, raising over \$200,000 for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics New York-Hudson Valley Region.

Bikers endured heavy winds, uphill climbs and sharp twists to complete the 200-mile tour.

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

Employer Breakfast

Continued from page 3

Keith, who has been affiliated with Westchester Arc since 1976, has worked for Lexington Square Café, Mt. Kisco, for 13 years.

Carolyn, who has been on the Westchester Arc board of directors since 1999, has worked at Yonkers City Hall for the past seven years and received the 2002 Herbert Katzenberg Volunteer Award.

District Attorney Janet DiFiore accepted an award for hiring a person with disabilities to work in the Yonkers Courthouse.

Visit "Recent Event Highlights" at www.westchesterarc.org/calendar for complete list of awards.

Peter C. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Peter C. Peter was a longtime resident of the agency's Bedford Men's house. Those closest to Peter describe him as having been "charming" and "likable."

On the Campaign Trail

Continued from page 1

"Guys, I'm happy to help in anyway I can," she said.

David S., who ran unsuccessfully for secretary, captured the true spirit of the customer service council. "Even though I didn't win, I will still help out whenever I'm needed," he told the crowd. Impressed by his sportsmanship, Chinika asked David to stand in when secretary-elect Carolyn H. can't attend meetings.

Marc Brandt, executive director of NYSARC, the largest non-profit agency in the nation serving individuals with developmental disabilities, informed the group that the self-advocacy movement continues to grow. "Throughout New York, the concerns mirror those here in Westchester, healthcare—including equal treatment from doctors—equal rights, meaningful jobs, better transportation, better access to voting places, respect and dignity," he commented.

He also complimented self-advocates for making their voices heard. "Life is a challenge for all of us, but it's also full of successes. Here at Westchester Arc, you demonstrate what life can be all about."

Customer Service Council

Officers

President

Chinika T.

Vice President

Linda K.

Secretary

Carolyn H.

Council Members

Northern Westchester

Lois G.

Lynne L.

Hartley S.

Nicole W.

Central Westchester

Debbie B.

Eddie C.

Will H.

Vance J.

David S.

Southern Westchester

Susan H.

Michael S.

Art Show Touches Hearts



Over 70 individuals with developmental disabilities competed in Westchester Arc's 11th annual art show, held in con-

junction with the agency's annual meeting. Joshua F. won first prize for his depiction of a snowy winter's day. The work combined a variety of media—paint, glitter and tree bark—to create a three-dimensional effect. Joan F. took second prize for an Impressionist-style nature scene. And Pam N. claimed third prize for a painting characterized by imagina-

tive shapes and swirling motion. Ten honorable mentions were also awarded. The art show was made possible through

the generosity of the Bulova Foundation.

A companion children's art show celebrated the creativity of pre-schoolers from The Children's School for Early Development.

Attendees had the chance to purchase the unique work of previous prize-winners Larry C., Larry G., Lauren F. and Anthony T. during a lively auction. Sheryl Frishman, newly-elected second vice president, got the bids rolling, and the four paintings raised \$1,200. Half of the winnings went to the artists, while the remainder will help to fund Westchester Arc's art classes.



Best Practices Awards Showcase Staff Innovation

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



Marcia Oliver (center) receives first prize check.

First prize: Marcia Oliver, residence manager, for helping a resident change behavior patterns that threatened her safety, living situation and job.

"The resident lives in a supportive apartment, which means she is independent and doesn't require 24-hour supervision. Yet, there are agency guidelines all residents must follow and she was having trouble complying with some of them."

For instance, the resident had a history of arriving for her job at Westchester Arc's 121 Westmoreland location hours before the building opened. In winter months, this meant walking along darkened streets and waiting in the bitter cold.

Marcia had an idea. "I suggested I call her every day at 7:30 a.m. and asked her not to leave the house before getting the phone call," she recalls. The plan worked. Marcia calls from her home, using her own time, while readying her young daughter and herself for the day. She even calls during days off. "Making sure the consumer gets to work is important to me," says Marcia.

Second prize: Iran Buckler, community program coordinator, for establishing ongoing relationships with WJCS (Westchester Jewish Community Services), Rabbi Harry Pell and highschool-

ers from the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester and creating more opportunities for social inclusion.

Last winter, Iran reached out to these community members in order to give consumers a Chanukah party they'd never forget. A large crowd congregated at the agency's day habilitation center in White Plains, where they recited Chanukah stories

and lit the menorah. One consumer played songs on the keyboard, while others sang and danced.

"Many students were meeting people with disabilities for the first time. This experience broadened their horizons. Many even expressed an interest in coming back. For the consumers, the day promoted diversity, individualism and choice," says Iran.

Third prize: Steve Lipkin, coordinator of day habilitation services, and Beverly Anderson, day habilitation specialist, for planting the seeds for a new flower business, "Pretty Petals." The venture promotes creativity at the same time that it teaches scheduling, teamwork and money skills. The startup has capitalized on major holidays such as Valentine's Day and Mother's Day to raise money for trips, movie outings and other recreational activities.

"This is a truly consumer-run business," says Steve. "Consumers purchase and cut flowers of their choosing, then work together to build arrangements. Participants have gained self-confidence and increased their ability to make choices. Plus, they're learning how to run a business. A successful one, at that."

Fourth prize: Susan Rodriguez, pre-vocational coordinator, for organizing a team-building activity that raised funds for

children in need. Susan responded to consumers' requests to get involved with com-



A member of "The Green Team" applies finishing touches.

community services by entering them in a "Gingerbread House" fundraiser benefiting the Ossining Children's Center, a non-profit daycare facility.

Participants were split into two teams, which they named "The Green Team" and "The Ranger Team." Each team designed a house with a "fall" theme, using brown M&M's, spearmint leaves and other colorful candies. The teams took first and third prize in the competition, raising over \$75 for the center. Participants were extremely enthusiastic and overcome with a spirit of goodwill. The activity promoted inclusion, encouraged creative thinking and created opportunities for ongoing community activities.

Fifth prize: Dr. Vicki Mast, psychologist, and Barbara Spatola, preschool systems and operations manager, for developing a presentation that celebrates the history and accomplishments of The Children's School for Early Development. The pair spent hours creating a heartwarming, inspirational video that tells the pre-school's story.

Pomp and Circle-Time: Pre-Schoolers Graduate to Community Kindergarten



Graduates of Church of the Highlands in White Plains receive their diplomas.

Nearly half of the 79 students who just graduated from Westchester Arc's Children's School for Early Development will attend typical kindergarten classes in their home school districts next year. Graduates have learned new lessons—reciting the alphabet,

spelling *c-a-t*, counting to 10—and have made new friends. “Twelve of this year's graduates are no longer considered to have developmental disabilities,” notes Children's School Director Fran Porcaro. “That's an amazing accomplishment.” The Children's School collaborates with 12 community-based pre-schools throughout Westchester, and each site celebrated graduation with a special ceremony. At Church in the Highlands in White Plains, graduates sang *Let Me Be a Child* (“Let me try my wings, and if I fail, encourage me to try again....”), named

the days of the week and received diplomas.

Lillian J. is one of the graduates moving on to typical kindergarten. Prior to attending The Children's School, Lillian could hardly speak or hold a pencil. She also had trouble socializing, often avoiding eye contact with someone she didn't know. After a year in an inclusion class, she speaks in full sentences and writes her name. She waves hello to visitors, chats with classmates and participates in “circle-time.”

“Inclusion classes make all the difference,” says special ed teacher Rebecca Lindner. “They provide an environment for children with disabilities to learn how to talk, walk and relate to their ‘typical’ classmates. Meanwhile, the ‘typical’ children learn to accept and appreciate others for who they are. I've seen many children, with and without disabilities, build true friendships this year. It's a beautiful thing.”

one of the first toddlers to attend classes at the pre-school's Hawthorne location.

Pre-School Grad Is Well-Rounded Teen



Nearly 15 years after graduating from The Children's School for Early Development, Eugene G., or “E.J.,” as he likes to be called, has grown into a star athlete, musician and popular student at Somers High School.

E.J. first became involved with The Children's School through its early intervention services, which combine special education, social work, physical and occupational therapies to help children, three and under, build communication and motor skills. Early intervention helped E.J. improve his balance, coordination and communications. At age three, he became

score his first touchdown, evoking cheers and tears from the crowd.

“E.J. loved going to school there,” recalls dad, George. “It was all so new to us, but the teachers and staff were very supportive. They offered personal attention and really taught E.J. a lot. I'd recommend the pre-school to anyone.”

In 2003, E.J. fulfilled a lifelong dream—and made national headlines in the process—by becoming the first teen with Down syndrome to play on the Somers Middle School football team. He was quickly accepted by teammates. “He's just like us, why should we treat him any different?” asked one.

At first, E.J. participated in stretching drills, but he wanted more. Finally, on a brisk October night, coaches gave E.J. the moment he'd been waiting for—a chance to be part of the big game. He donned his helmet and took to the field. And with the help of his teammates, he “shuffled” 35 yards to

“We never dreamed this could happen,” comments mom, Katie. “We're lucky to have such incredible support from our school district and community.”

Upon entering Somers High School, E.J. became a featured player for its football team, the Tuskers. But after two years, he wanted to move on to other interests, so he “retired” to join the school's marching band and perform in its production of *Oliver!*

“Music and theater have become a big part of E.J.'s life,” notes George. “This summer, he'll be a crew member for a production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. After graduation, he aspires to work backstage at Radio City Music Hall.”

A well-rounded teenager, E.J. also works part-time at a local pizzeria and participates in Special Olympics. His favorite events include power lifting and downhill skiing.



From the Foundation

Anne Sweazey

**Anne Sweazey
Executive Director**

As you probably know by now, we are well into a capital campaign to raise funds for a new Gateway to the Community in Hawthorne, New York, and for a Fund for the Future, our long-term capital fund. Our hardworking capital campaign committee has been soliciting the leadership gifts that will contribute the most to our fundraising goal. After the feasibility study and planning period, we appointed the steering committee and they have been meeting every month for two years now.

At our meetings, we review lists, report on visits we are making to prospective donors, congratulate our committee members on successes, plan for the rest of the campaign and continue to work on perfecting our fundraising skills.

I recently had a conversation with a major gift prospect who took me by surprise and made me think. We had decided to call him because of his longstanding connection to Westchester Arc and because we have reason to believe he can afford a major gift. I followed all the guidelines. I suggested a place to meet with no distractions. I emphasized the brevity of our meeting. I acknowledged his busy schedule. Then he asked the question: "What do you want, MONEY?" I think I gulped and said something like, "Well, you can trust me not to lift your wallet." But on further reflection, I think the right answer would have been "YES."

Yes, we want money to help with the construction costs of our new building. We want money to endow our programs so that future generations of consumers can have educational, recreational, employment, respite and guardianship services to help them become contributing members of their community. Money helps us empower the people who depend on Westchester Arc.

But my next step was to assure him that

he is in good hands. We would not ask him to help until he is ready to make a gift and until he fully understands what his gift can do. When we meet with him (yes, he agreed), we will assure him that we can answer his questions about our plans and will be good stewards of his gift. Once that tone of confidence and trust has been established, the giving isn't a duty but a privilege. Sir Winston Churchill said, "For every man (or woman!), there comes a special moment when he is tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing—unique and fitted to his abilities." That is the opportunity we offer.

So, we are expecting to continue our leadership visits for the next several months. Very soon, we will be taking the campaign out to the community, asking all of you, our members, donors, parents and family members, our staff, vendors and everyone with a connection to this great organization to consider a gift to help us complete this campaign. And yes, we will be asking for your money.

Transitional Services Prepare High Schoolers for Adult World



Kaity L. sweetens up White Plains Bake Shop.

As high school students with developmental disabilities plan for life after graduation, they face many questions. Will I find a job? Will I make new friends? Where will I live? S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) partners with public high schools to prepare young

adults, 15 and over, for the adult work world.

S.T.A.R. career planners work with students, their families and school faculty to develop a personalized plan that identifies interests and capabilities, then locates internships and post-graduate opportunities. Students also

attend job readiness classes and receive pre-vocational training and onsite job coaching to help adapt skills to employers' needs.

While working with S.T.A.R., students receive additional support from the agency's life planning center. Staff bring together

students, parents, teachers, friends and professionals from throughout Westchester Arc to create an overall plan based on students' preferences concerning career, social life and residential options.

Kaity L. found an internship at White Plains Bake Shop through the S.T.A.R. program. Initially, Kaity stamped and

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Curtis A. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Curtis A., who was a participant in the agency's residential and adult day services. Curtis enjoyed dancing and singing and was best known for his love of Michael Jackson. Those closest to Curtis describe him as having been "unique" and "memorable."

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between February 23, 2007, and June 26, 2007.

IN MEMORY OF FRANCES BAUMGARTNER

Lou-Co Stone Setters, Inc.
Ms. Cecelia Barelli
Boys & Girls Club
Ms. Barbara Cutri
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Chiusano
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Coiro
John M. and Katharine W. Conroy
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Cox
Mrs. Elaine Dunham
Ms. Elyse M. Fowler
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Gersten
Ms. Lynn Hall
Ms. Fran Y. Higgins
Mrs. Gladys F Jones
Ms. Amy Laskin and
Mr. Jamie R. Smith
Mrs. Isabel Leach
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Mandell
Ms. Bridget McCarthy
Ms. Kizzy Peltier
Mr. and Mrs. Eugene J. Porcaro
Mr. Mark Potashnick
Ms. Marcia S. Presser
Dr. and Mrs. Peter Richel
Mrs. Pamela Rothlein
Ms. Ann-Marie Sabrsula
Mr. Daniel A. Sinigoj
Small Miracles Early Childhood Center
Mr. Adam Holstein
Ms. Barbara Spatola

Ms. Nancy Succoso
Ms. Anne F. Sweazey
Mr. and Mrs. John J. Tegeler
Mrs. Valdez

IN MEMORY OF LAWRENCE J. CENTRELLO

Ms. Dorothy Centrello
Mr. and Mrs. Charles J. Murray
Ms. Dorothy E. Noe
NYS Education Department
Yonkers League for Retarded Children
Ms. Mary Anne Young

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM H. CHILDS

Mrs. William H. Childs

IN MEMORY OF BENNY DELL'OLIO

Ms. Camille R. Tomao

IN MEMORY OF LEAH LEVITZ FISHBONE

No. Westchester League for Retarded Children
Ms. Rita Ross
Mr. Robert Paoli, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Morton Ross

IN MEMORY OF MARION HUGHES

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stephan Mooney

IN MEMORY OF MOTHER KATHERINE AND FATHER HENRY

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN MEMORY OF ED PAOLI

Mr. Richard Minoff

IN MEMORY OF ETTORE PAOLI

Ms. AnnaLouise De Marco

IN MEMORY OF HEATHER STEELE

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN MEMORY OF MICHAEL REHILL

Ms. Lisa Chesnut
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Cunniffe
Mr. Sean Duffy
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas P. Gibney
Kildare Mens S&B Association, Inc & Ladies Aux
Ms. Julia Moran
Mr. and Mrs. Victor F. Paterno
Precision Carpentry of Westchester, Inc.

IN MEMORY OF VERA SCOLA

Yonkers League for Retarded Children

IN HONOR OF JESSICA BELLONTONI

Dr. and Mrs. Dominic Cervoni

IN HONOR OF KATHERINE CONROY

Ms. Lisa Lindstrom and Mr. Chris Conroy

IN HONOR OF MRS. ESTHER FRISHMAN

Dr. and Mrs. Richard G. McCarrick

IN HONOR OF WILLIAM AND ESTER FRISHMAN

Zygfryd and Helene Wolloch Foundation

IN HONOR OF MURRAY HOCH

Mr. and Mrs. John Reichler

IN HONOR OF MIA GRACE KELLY

Ms. Elizabeth Sorenson

IN HONOR OF MRS. R. LAUNHARDT

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN HONOR OF CALVIN NEIDER'S BIRTHDAY

Ms. Cathy Circle
Mr. and Mrs. David Fisher
Mr. and Mrs. Barry Goldstein
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. O'Connor
Mr. William R. Ryan
Mr. John Siebel
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Socolof

IN HONOR OF GENE AND FRAN PORCARO

Ms. Holly Levinson

IN HONOR OF GENE PORCARO

Mr. Andrew K. Levi

IN HONOR OF HENRY SCHNEIDER

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN HONOR OF MARY ELLEN SMITH

Mr. and Mrs. W. Lawrence Smith

IN HONOR OF NOLAN R. SPTIZER

Ms. Elsie F. Allen
Mr. and Mrs. John Stelluti
Mr. and Mrs. Peter A. Walkes

eDocNY Celebrates First Anniversary



eDocNY employee Shelley C. preps documents for scanning.

A little over a year ago, Westchester Arc built upon its long-established microfilming, record storage and document destruction services by adding electronic scanning and digital imaging capabilities. The new business venture, named eDocNY, offers life cy-

cle document management, ranging from low-tech solutions such as shredding and box storage, to hi-tech digitization enabling database integration and online access. Digital services represent the fastest growing part of the business. Having billed \$77,000 in 2006 for high-tech services, eDocNY brought in \$56,500 during the first quarter of 2007 alone—up 40 percent from the previous quarter.

Long-term plans call for eDocNY to become a standalone, profit-making entity that will help fund Westchester Arc programs. It's already providing opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to work within the community at client sites. eDocNY employs 34 individuals, with and without disabilities, who sort through an av-

erage of 2,500 documents per day.

Earlier this year, eDocNY secured a contract to scan 10,000 architectural drawings for the New York State Department of

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Irving W. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Irving W.

Irving was known throughout the agency for his upbeat personality and winning sense of humor. He was involved with the agency's residential and recreational services and enjoyed going to Camp Echo.

Calendar of Events

September 6-8, 2007

Self-Advocacy State Conference

Marriott Hotel, Albany, New York
Contact: 518-382-1454,
www.sanys.org

September 17, 2007

23rd Annual MBIA Golf and Tennis Invitational

Contact: Elyse Fowler,
914-428-8330, ext. 3027,
efowler@westchesterarc.org

October 11, 2007

Westchester Disabled on the Move, Inc.

Annual Event
6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Contact: Claudia Sleter,
914-968-4717, ext. 21,
claudias@wdom.org

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

The Westchester Arc Foundation
invites you to

A Matter of Taste 4

AN EVENING OF CULINARY ARTS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2007

Westchester Country Club
Rye, New York

Come and sample
signature dishes
from the
area's finest
restaurants,
served with
wines from
around
the world.



For more info, call Fran Higgins,
914-428-8330, ext. 3028.
fhiggins@westchesterarc.org

eDocNY Celebrates First Anniversary

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Housing and Community Renewal. Impressed with the quality of eDocNY's work, the state agency extended its contract to cover another 7,000 documents.

"eDocNY is growing very fast," comments Linda Warner, director of business services. "We're constantly developing new partnerships and current clients are eager to work with us again. At the rate eDocNY is going, it should turn a profit

within three years."

For now, eDocNY helps individuals with disabilities earn their own wages. During a recent workday at eDocNY's White Plains offices, Elizabeth W. removes staples and paper clips from legal documents. "I'm learning how to prep and scan documents and that's a good skill to have," she says. "I really like this job."

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folded boxes, but her willingness to learn and aptitude for customer service led to additional responsibilities. Working at the bakery has helped Kaity strengthen her time management and social skills, and after six months on the job, she began organizing pastry displays, assisting customers and ringing up sales. She's also taken a giant step toward her career goal. "I want to be a baker or own my own shop someday," says Kaity.

Similarly, S.T.A.R. helped David M. find an internship closely matching his skills and ambitions. When a career planner asked about work preferences, he responded, "Something with animals." So S.T.A.R. secured an internship at Best Friends Pet Care in White Plains, where he cleans cages, sweeps the floor and assists with obedience training. "David has bonded with many of the dogs and even brings in cookies for them," notes Job Coach Melissa Surace.

"His self-confidence has definitely improved since he started working there."

Twenty-Third Annual

MBIA Invitational

23

SEPTEMBER 17, 2007

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

Mount Kisco Country Club
Whippoorwill Club
Anglebrook Golf Club

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



westchesterArc

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White Plains, NY 10606

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