

A Matter of Taste 4 a Hit



Volunteer Kim S. poses with Assemblyman Michael Spano.

The Westchester Arc Foundation held its annual gourmet gala, A Matter of Taste, on October 17 at the Westchester Country Club in Rye, New York. Over 250 guests sampled such delicacies

as seared sea scallops with butternut squash risotto, roast figs with gorgonzola and creamy polenta with pheasant ragout. Signature dishes by 22 of the area's finest restaurants and caterers were complemented by over 30 international wines and specialty beers. The event raised more than \$100,000 to support children and adults with developmental disabilities and recognized outstanding contributions to community inclusion.

Former Westchester Arc President Justin Israel was honored with a lifetime achievement award for over 50 years of commitment to the agency and his ongoing fundraising leadership. Quoting poet Carl Sandburg, he told the crowd, "Nothing happens unless first we dream." What started with a handful of parents meeting in an unheated basement has become a wonderful agency that fulfills the dreams of people with disabilities and their families."

Al Donnellan, a founding partner of the law firm of DelBello, Donnellan, Weingarten, Wise & Wiederkehr, LLP, received the agency's community leader award. Donnellan has been involved in some of the most complex real estate projects in Westchester and has been instrumental in the sale of Westchester Arc's 121 Westmoreland Avenue offices.

Continued on page 6

Littman Krooks Named Employer of the Year

NYSARC named law firm Littman Krooks LLP the 2007 Employer of the Year during the organization's October 18-20 convention in Albany. NYSARC is the largest not-for-profit organization in the nation serving persons with developmental disabilities.

Westchester Arc nominated Littman Krooks for the honor because of its commitment to hiring individuals with developmental disabilities.

Office assistant Deepa G. describes her experiences at Littman Krooks as "one of the best jobs I've ever had." Deepa joined the firm two years ago through Westchester Arc's supported employ-

Continued on page 6



Bernard and Deepa display the NYSARC award.

Westchester Arc mission: To empower children and adults with developmental disabilities to achieve their potential based on personal choices, abilities and interests...



Lifetime december 2007

A Matter of Taste 4 1

Employer of the Year 1

From Our President. 2

Kresge Foundation Award 2

Agency Names Building 3

Construction Walk-Through 3

NYSID Honors Alfred H. 4

No Walls, No Limits. 4

From Our Executive Director 5

Recreation 5

Customer Service Council 7

Clinic Focuses on Families. 7

MBIA Invitational 8

New Inclusion Classes 9

From the Foundation. 10

Physicians Offer Perspective ... 11

Tributes 11

LIFETIME is published three times annually by Westchester Arc, a chapter of NYSARC Inc.,
 121 Westmoreland Avenue,
 White Plains, NY 10606
 Tel: 914-949-9300
 Fax: 914-428-0322
 www.westchesterarc.org
 Anne Majsak, President
 Richard P. Swierat, Executive Director
 Writer: Mark Williams
 Design: Victoria Grinapol
 Address all inquiries on articles to:
 Cathleen Bahan
 Director of Marketing and Public Affairs
 cbahan@westchesterarc.org



Westchester Arc respects your privacy. If you do not wish to receive materials containing fundraising communications, please call the privacy contact person at 914-949-9300.



From Our President

Anne M Majsak

Anne M. Majsak

By the time I next write this column, we will have moved into our beautiful new Gateway to the Community. The excitement is palpable as self-advocates, families and staff gauge construction progress and imagine what the new center will enable us to do.

When it was announced at A Matter of Taste 4 (our gourmet fundraiser) that the new building would be named the Gleeson-Israel Center, Justin Israel recalled the intense isolation that led to the creation of Westchester Arc over 55 years ago. At that time, people with developmental disabilities were hidden away, their very existence denied.

This new building is an assertion of their pride and determination, of a commitment to creating opportunities for their personal enrichment. It is a renunciation of yesterday's Willowbrooks. The Gleeson-Israel

Center will be a resource for individuals with developmental disabilities as they choose their own paths into the greater community, a place to refresh their spirits and a magnet for leaders in the field of disabilities as they lend their support to building a better future.

As Executive Director Ric Swierat recently pointed out, this building is not just bricks and mortar. It is a celebration and a promise. A celebration of the hard won accomplishments of the past 50 years and a promise for the next 50. For despite the once unimaginable successes that have been achieved—public education, meaningful employment, community-based homes where residents build deep friendships—more must be done. Unemployment for people with developmental disabilities remains appallingly high. Stereotypes abound. And there are ongoing assaults on the public funding that has nurtured our progress. That's why the new building is a gateway. People with developmental disabilities are still traveling towards their proper place in society. The Gleeson-Israel Center will help equip them for the journey.

Kresge Foundation Awards \$450,000 Challenge Grant

The Kresge Foundation has awarded a \$450,000 challenge grant to Westchester Arc. The grant will be applied towards the agency's first capital campaign, which is raising funds for construction of a Gateway to the Community and a Fund for the Future to safeguard services that are underfunded by the government. The Kresge grant stipulates that Westchester Arc raise the balance of its capital campaign goal—an additional \$982,000—by January 1, 2009, in order to receive the award. It is an "all or nothing" challenge.

Westchester Arc was one of 84 non-profit organizations selected by The Kresge Foundation's board of trustees from thousands of applicants to receive a total of \$45.5 million. "This is a highly competitive grant, one of the few that recognizes the impor-

tance of a capital campaign, and Westchester Arc is very thankful to receive it," comments Beth Beck, capital campaign co-chair.

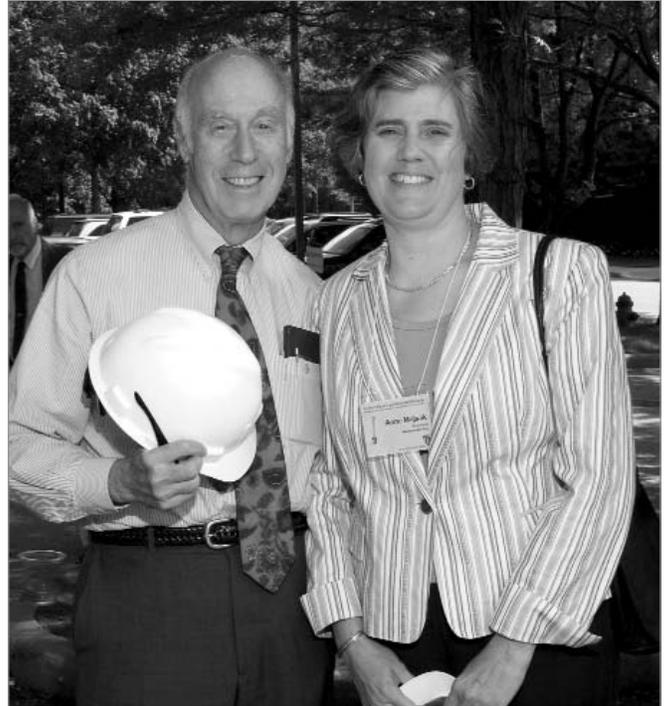
"The grant has inspired us to make more direct connections with our stakeholders and to reach out to new donors," adds Anne Sweazey, executive director of the Westchester Arc Foundation. "The goal is to increase the agency's private donor base, which will support future needs."

The Kresge Foundation is a national foundation with \$3 billion in assets. Through its grant-making programs, The Kresge Foundation seeks to strengthen non-profit organizations by catalyzing their growth, connecting them to their stakeholders and challenging greater support through grants.

Gleeson-Israel Center Agency Names New Building



The agency targets early 2008 for occupancy.



Justin Israel is a longtime agency supporter. With him is President Anne Majsak.

Westchester Arc will name its new Gateway to the Community in Hawthorne the Gleeson-Israel Center in honor of longtime agency supporters Gerard Gleeson and Justin Israel.

Gerard Gleeson and son Lenny shared over 30 years with Westchester Arc. A dedicated parent, Gerard was always there to support and inspire Lenny to lead a full, enriching life. Known as the “dynamic duo,” they were nearly inseparable, fre-

quently attending baseball games, parties and agency events together.

When Lenny grew older and desired more independence, he moved to Westchester Arc’s Park Circle residence. Gerard was proud of his son’s decision and overjoyed to find a home that provided a caring environment. Gerard remained close to Westchester Arc, visiting Lenny every

weekend, volunteering at agency fundraisers and making generous financial gifts. His bequest of over \$2.4 million to Westchester Arc enabled the agency to purchase the Hawthorne property.

Continued on page 10

Westchester Arc Previews “Gateway to the Community”



Anne Majsak, Westchester Arc president; Ric Swierat, executive director; David S., self-advocate, and Andy Spano, Westchester county executive, are impressed with construction progress.

Westchester Arc hosted a walk-through of its new Gateway to the Community on September 7. Over 60 guests, including County Executive Andrew Spano, toured the 45,000-square-foot building, currently under construction in Hawthorne. Move-in is planned for first quarter 2008.

During his remarks, Andrew Spano praised Westchester Arc for its commitment to inclusion. “We pride ourselves on the quality of life in this county, and that’s what Westchester Arc’s programs are about. It’s beyond getting people jobs,” he said. “It’s about self-esteem.”

The event was sponsored by the agency’s capital campaign committee, which invited key donors and community partners to view construction progress. Capital Campaign Co-Chair Beth Beck re-

Continued on page 10



NYSID Honors Alfred H.



Alfred H. enjoys working in Westchester Arc's micrographics department.

NYSID (New York State Industries for the Disabled) has named Alfred H. a 2007 William B. Joslin Outstanding Performer. A longtime employee of

Westchester Arc's business services, Alfred was one of 46 individuals with disabilities recognized for exceptional job performance.

He joined the business services team five years ago through Westchester Arc's S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) program, which partners with local high schools to prepare students for the working world. Upon graduating from Mount Vernon High School, he landed a job in the micrographics department, where he scans microfilms for errors, assists with storage retrieval, delivers records, organizes files and recently learned how to duplicate film rolls. Though initially hired as a "production temp," Alfred's strong work

ethic, outgoing personality and ability to handle multiple tasks led quickly to full-time employment.

Based on his impressive performance in the micrographics department, he assumed additional duties with eDocNY, Westchester Arc's document management service for businesses. As an eDocNY employee, Alfred organizes and distributes files to be scanned. The experience has helped him build self-confidence and establish ties with the community.

"Alfred is a model employee—always on time, courteous and willing to pitch in wherever he can," comments Linda Warner, director of career and business opportunities. "He is a highly valued employee and a true asset to our team."

No Walls, No Limits



Without Walls participants attend arts and crafts classes, baseball games, cultural exhibits and other community activities.

Westchester Arc's day habilitation program instructs individuals with developmental disabilities in the effective use of community services. In an effort to "teach by example," classroom activities are increasingly replaced by visits to the library, museum, mall and other destinations. The

Without Walls initiative is completely community-based, transporting participants directly from home to locations where they can learn daily living skills and practice social interaction.

Over the last year, individuals in Mount Kisco have enjoyed a variety of community

experiences. They have attended arts and crafts classes, taken tennis lessons, spent a day at the Bronx Zoo and volunteered for Meals on Wheels—gaining independence in the process. They've also gone apple picking and had special birthday lunches.

Splendor in the Grass

During June and July, Without Walls participants had "Lunch at Ladson Park," where they lounged on the lawn and listened to live jazz. Following the concert, they strolled along the park's Historic Tree Trail, explored Asian architecture and culture at the Chinese Friendship Pavilion and visited the Azalea Garden.

Batter Up!

Robert S., Kelly S. and Alan R. are hardcore baseball fans who continuously "pitched" requests to attend a Yankees game. In August, their wish came true as Without Walls joined 50,000 fellow fans at Yankee Stadium. The

Continued on page 9



From Our Executive Director

Richard P. Swierat

Richard P. Swierat

There's a popular notion that government is too big and that political leaders do not listen to voters. I suppose that statement could be attributed to most of us, particularly when we find ourselves in opposition to the current state of affairs. On the other hand, I can point to a number of instances in which advocates have influenced disabilities policy, making a real difference in people's lives.

Earlier this year, NYSARC chapters throughout the state launched an effort to gain support for a "burden of proof" bill. The legislation was drafted in response to Schaffer v. West, a U.S. Supreme Court decision that had disrupted the longstanding New York practice of having school districts bear the burden of proof during special ed hearings. New York is the first state to remedy the effects of the Supreme

Court ruling, all due to loud and continuous advocacy from families and other supporters of children with developmental disabilities. Without their voices, many legislators would have lacked key information concerning this complex and difficult topic. Those opposing the burden of proof bill had significant resources bolstering them. Only by devoting many hours to educating legislators did volunteers manage to turn the tide.

Another example. Connecticut's Department of Mental Retardation has officially changed its name to The Department of Developmental Services. This modification resulted from the dedication of families, advocates, and most importantly, self-advocates, who made it clear that words hurt and that the name of a department can foster stereotypes and disrespect towards the individuals it serves.

More recently, Congress passed the S-CHIP bill twice, only to have it vetoed by President Bush. While advocates for this legislation—many of them self-advocates—have not prevailed, Congress understood the importance of this issue and at-

tempted to craft a bill that would meet with presidential approval. We do not always win our point, but there certainly is a passion in each legislative battle.

I bring these issues to your attention to underline the importance of engaging in legislative advocacy. The field of developmental disabilities offers many wonderful services due to the efforts of yesterday's advocates, who fought for the rights of people with developmental disabilities to attend school, work, live and spend leisure time in the greater community. But we cannot afford to become complacent. Nor should we subscribe to the notion that "no one listens" or that "government is too big." We elect our representatives to carry our voices to the chambers of government. They can only do so when we make our opinions known.

If you are interested in learning more about the issues currently under discussion in Washington or Albany, please visit our website at www.westchesterarc.org and watch for breaking news on these topics.

New Year's Recreation



Club Echo travelers take to the streets of Montreal.

Westchester Arc's recreational and respite services provide a wide variety of leisure and learning activities—including summer camp, travel clubs and art classes—designed to help individuals with developmental dis-

abilities learn social skills, experience life in the community and transition from school to work. Here is a preview of the 2008 season:

Camp Echo offers an opportunity for individuals with disabilities, who are 18 or over, to enjoy summer in the woods of Fahnestock State Park in Putnam County. The residential program includes swimming, boating, crafts, hiking and other sports.

Club Echo gives individuals, 18 years of age and older, a chance to enjoy vacations with their friends, while accompanied by

knowledgeable, dependable staff. Day trips are taken to local sports venues, theaters, museums and other sites of interest. Destinations for weekend trips, four-day get-aways and longer excursions have included Lake George, Cape Cod and the Pinegrove Dude Ranch.

Echo Outdoors provides young adults, ages 15-21, with a week of nature study. Participants attend classes such as "lake study" and "outdoor survival skills." They also share cabins with people their own ages, building friendships and enhancing social skills.

Echo Arts is a fine arts program for individuals of all ages who have developmental disabilities. The program builds confidence as it encourages self-expression and creative problem-solving. Students

Continued on page 12

A Matter of Taste 4 a Hit

Continued from page 1



(From left) Honoree Justin Israel, Westchester Arc Foundation board member, and wife Emel; Mitchell Benerofe, capital campaign co-chair, and Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director.

Bill Cuddy, of CB Richard Ellis, as well as Peter Herrero and David Pellon of the New York Hospitality Group, were event co-chairmen. Former New York State Senator Nick Spano served as honorary chairman.

All food, wine and culinary talent were donated by local entrepreneurs (see list at right). Music was provided by the Jazz Conspiracy. Individuals with disabilities contributed to the evening's success with

works of arts and by volunteering as gift bag stuffers, greeters, wait staff and raffle ticket sellers.

"Even though I've had a long day of work, I'm still excited to be here," commented self-advocate Chinika Thompson, who helped bus tables. "I'm happy to meet new people, try new food and support our cause."

For more photos, visit Recent Event Highlights at www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.

Employer of the Year

Continued from page 1

ment program. Initially, she sorted mail, made copies and performed data entry, but her upbeat personality, strong work ethic and aptitude for learning led to new responsibilities. Her duties now include scanning legal documents and shredding paperwork. She is always willing to work overtime and pitch in wherever needed.

Bernard A. Krooks, a founding member of the firm, is a widely sought expert on special needs planning, elder law and estate planning. As a Westchester Arc board member, he generously donates his knowledge and expertise to help families of individuals with disabilities plan for the future. He also hosts a weekly radio show that ad-

dresses the latest issues affecting persons with special needs.

"Individuals with disabilities are wonderfully talented workers who should be treated the same as any other employees," stresses Bernard. "Deepa was given additional responsibilities because she proved she could handle them. She is a valued employee and always included in office functions. Given my background, it's only natural that I would hire individuals with disabilities, and I would encourage others to do the same. On behalf of Littman Krooks, I'd like to thank NYSARC for this award. It's truly an honor."

Local Businesses Give Generously

The following restaurants and other local businesses donated food, beverages and skills to the Westchester Arc Foundation's gourmet event.

Restaurants

An American Bistro
Caperberry Events
Club Chefs of Westchester
Dinner in Hand
Eastchester Fish Gourmet
Emily Shaw's Inn at Poundridge
Great American Barbeque
Harrys of Hartsdale
Lexington Square Cafe
MacMenamin's Grill & ChefWorks
Meritage Restaurant
RG Catering
Ruth's Chris Steak House
Sam's of Gedney Way
Sunset Grille
Tango Grill
Tramonto Restaurant
Underhill's Crossing
Westchester Country Club
Zuppa Restaurant and Lounge

Desserts

Longford's Own Made Ice Cream
Magnificent Edibles

Beverages

The Grape Exchange
Café Ala Carte
Captain Lawrence Brewing Co.
Sparkling Water Distributors



From Our Customer Service Council

Chinika Thompson
Chinika Thompson

With this issue of Lifetime, we launch a column concerning the interests and views of Westchester Arc's customer service council, a board-level committee of self-advocates who influence the agency's strategy and operations. Chinika Thompson is currently serving her second term as council president.

The customer service council is interested in a lot of issues, and we want to make things better for all people with developmental disabilities. We know that it's important to speak our minds. Recently we met with Chris Reinhard

(Deputy Commissioner of Westchester County's Department of Community Mental Health) to give her ideas for the county's annual plan. We told her that we want to meet with more people in the government who influence our lives, and she agreed. She said that when people get to know us, our requests become more meaningful.

We also told her that we want more office jobs for people with developmental disabilities—maybe the county could help out. And we told her that more needs to be done for people who are getting older.

We're also concerned about Westchester Arc itself. We have been working on a code of conduct for both self-advocates and staff. We all have to respect each other to get along. We all have our own talents and opinions and the ability to make contributions. We have to honor each other's differences.

The customer service council is excited about the new building in Hawthorne and we want to help out. We decided to save our extra change and donate it to the capital campaign. It will be our building and we are proud. It will have a water wall in it that was our idea. And it will have the quilt that we designed with the help of Beth Mount. The quilt will symbolize our contributions to the community. The building will stand for our potential.

Finally, I want to congratulate Diana Costello of *The Journal News*. She won a NYSARC award for a story she wrote about the customer service council and self-advocacy (third place NYSARC Media Award, human interest category). She is our good friend and understands how important our work is. You can't change things unless you spread the word.

Clinic Focuses on Families



Dr. Claudia Sickinger, psychiatrist and clinical lead for Westchester Arc's clinic, believes that families are key to the successful treatment of individuals with developmental disabilities. She brings to this philosophy a very personal perspective, having a brother with autism, a sister who has taught special ed and parents who are on the boards of advocacy and social service organizations. "You could say it's a family business," she quips.

After completing her residency in psychiatry at Mt. Sinai Hospital, she was awarded a fellowship in public psychiatry at Columbia University. The program in-

involved working with WIHD (Westchester Institute for Human Development) and "it was a great fit, my personal experience gave me perspective."

Her work in Westchester Arc's clinic involves a specialized form of person-centered planning. "You can't isolate treatment from the rest of an individual's life." That means involving as large a "circle of support" as possible in order to learn a person's history and to identify current environmental factors. "We want to understand an individual's goals, then help them make the necessary adaptations to achieve them." She stresses the importance of keeping families continually informed, within the bounds of confidentiality.

Her role is to conduct an initial assessment of the needed course of treatment, then to collaborate with colleagues specializing in nutrition, rehabilitation counseling, psychotherapy, and occupational, physical and speech therapy. As a psychiatrist, she is also responsible for the management of any medications.

Her evaluations, which may require several meetings, often involve family counseling—addressing the separation anxiety that may accompany an individual's move to a group home or discussing plans for the future during the psychological interview that is a legally required part of the guardianship process.

She brings special expertise to the care of aging individuals—a growing segment of the population—having trained at one of the nation's top hospitals for dementia. She recently organized an agency workshop on the topic, stressing symptoms and courses of treatment.

Dr. Sickinger points out that stereotypes have traditionally interfered with quality medical treatment for people with developmental disabilities. "Twenty to 30 years ago, in the days of Willowbrook, they might have been prescribed anti-psychotics, when they were really anxious or depressed." She emphasizes that people with developmental disabilities experi-

Continued on page 8



23rd Annual MBIA Invitational



Joey Lombardozzi accepts the Charles R. Kingsley Award on behalf of his family.

The 23rd annual MBIA Invitational raised \$375,000 on September 17 for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics New York-Hudson Valley Region. Since the first MBIA Invitational in 1985, nearly \$7 million has been raised for these two organizations.

Over 400 participants hit the links and tennis courts at Anglebrook Golf Club, Mount Kisco Country Club and Whip-poorwill Club. Celebrities in attendance

included sports legends Curly Neal, former Harlem Globetrotters star; Emerson Boozer, former running back for the New York Jets; and Cathy Turner and Bob Beamon, both multiple Olympic gold medalists. Jeremy Schaap, sportswriter and Emmy award-winning ESPN anchor, emceed the event's banquet.

The Lombardozzi family of Mamaroneck received the 2007 Charles R. Kingsley Award for their longtime activism on

behalf of individuals with developmental disabilities. Joey Lombardozzi, with support from his mother Alice, has been actively involved with Special Olympics for over five years. He also works full time for the law firm of Pappalardo, Tombini and Wolff through Westchester Arc's supported employment program.

Self-advocates Patsy and Lois Ginese were recognized for helping to dispel stereotypes concerning individuals with developmental disabilities. The Gineses, happily married for 20 years, were one of the first couples with developmental disabilities to marry in New York State. They live in their own apartment, have worked in the community and frequently encourage others to voice their own opinions.

"The MBIA Invitational is a very nice event and it was our pleasure to attend," said Patsy. "Thank you to everyone at Westchester Arc who has helped us achieve what we have."

For more photos, visit Recent Event Highlights at www.westchesterarc.org/calendar.

Clinic Focuses on Families

Continued from page 7

ence mood disorders to the same extent as the general population.

Similarly, environmental stressors or other medical conditions can play a role. The anniversary of a loved one's death, difficulties with a roommate or a physical condition such as diabetes can affect behavior.

"The things they are more prone to," she notes "are trauma and abuse. They are more vulnerable." In order to balance personal autonomy with needed safeguards, the clinic can evaluate an individual's capacity for informed consent and is always alert to details in a person's psychosocial history that point to threatening situations.

Dr. Sickinger is working with the

Westchester District Branch of the American Psychiatric Association to educate the larger medical community about people with developmental disabilities. "I want to ensure that when our consumers go to an emergency room, they're taken seriously."

Following 9/11, she worked at ground zero, subsequently publishing a chapter in the book *Disaster Psychiatry*. "A Woman Named Katherine" describes her acquaintance with the particularly insightful family member of one victim. She credits the experience with helping her to "hone my everyday work skills and develop new ones to better serve people."

Dr. Sickinger is currently working on a paper for MFY Legal Services, a non-

profit that performs pro bono legal work for individuals with chronic mental health issues. "Offering something that people can really use in their lives is what gets me excited."

Irving W. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Irving W. Irving was a resident of the agency's Inverness and Bedford Men's residences. Those closest to Irving describe him as having been "sweet" and "kind."

Children's School Welcomes New Community Partners



Inclusion classes help children learn from typically developing classmates.

Mount Kisco Day Care and Weekday Nursey School in New Rochelle are the newest community pre-schools to offer inclusion classes sponsored by The Children's School for Early Development.

Inclusion classes enable students with disabilities to learn from their typically developing classmates. In turn, typically developing kids, during the course of learning and playing, experience individual differences in an environment enhanced by staff from The Children's School—state-certified teachers, psychologists, social workers, and speech, occupational and physical therapists with graduate degrees.

The Children's School collaborates with 14 community-based pre-schools throughout Westchester to provide innovative educational, social and support services to over

90 students with disabilities and an equal number of their typical peers. In addition, 24 children with autism currently attend the school's self-contained classes in Hawthorne and Ossining.

"We've come a long way since opening our first inclusion class in 1994," comments Children's School Director Fran Porcaro. "Last year most of the children that graduated from our inclusion classes moved on to traditional kindergarten in their home school district. Families and educators have realized the importance of community-based programs and are requesting more partnerships."

"Some students at the Weekday Nursery School were already receiving speech therapy and other specialized services. The school wanted to establish a more comprehensive program that would combine therapies seamlessly with daily classroom learning, so they came to us," explains social worker Deborah Cohen.

The half-day class focuses on learning that's fun. Students sing songs, recite stories and identify colors to build language, motor and social skills. A recent role-playing activity presented scenarios such as "asking a classmate to play" and "sharing toys"—which taught students how to engage others and make friends.

Mount Kisco Day Care represents the second community inclusion site to open in Mount Kisco. The intergenerational center provides opportunities for pre-schoolers to interact with seniors. Arts and crafts, music classes and "story time" encourage friendship and camaraderie. In addition to traditional pre-school activities, students grow organic produce in the center's year-round gardens, learning about science and nature in the process.

No Walls, No Limits

Continued from page 4

game had Robert, Kelly and Alan on the edges of their seats. They kept close tabs on the score, cheered for the home team and sprang to their feet every time their favorite players scored a hit.

Cultural Beats

During a recent trip to Ellis Island, participants learned about different cultures and explored their ancestral roots. While at the historic site, they viewed exhibits at the Immigration Museum and strolled along The Wall of Honor, which celebrates our country's rich heritage and diversity. The group particularly enjoyed the ferry ride to the island, which offered impressive views of the New York skyline.

"Westchester Arc's Without Walls program has been one of our agency's cutting edge services for the people we serve," comments Kim Spahn, assistant executive director. "Individuals participate 100 percent in community experiences and plan their daily activities. Without Walls reflects the spirit of person-centered planning to its full extent."

Lori L. In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Lori L. Lori attended day services at the Sheib Center in Yonkers and was involved with the agency's service coordination program. Her parents, Bernie and Ruth, have long advocated for the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities and are active members of the Yonkers League, a volunteer arm of Westchester Arc.



From the Foundation

Anne Sweazey

**Anne Sweazey
Executive Director**

We recently received exciting news that The Kresge Foundation has awarded a challenge grant of \$450,000 to Westchester Arc's capital campaign to help with the final stages of construction of the new Gleeson-Israel Center in Hawthorne (see page 2). This is a highly competitive grant, awarded to organizations that demonstrate that their capital campaign is broadly supported by the people who know the organization best: parents of people who receive services, past donors, staff members, vendors, business people and professionals.

Here is where the challenge comes in—in order to receive the grant, we must raise

an additional \$982,000 by January 1, 2009. Thanks to the leadership gifts from our board members, parents and other good friends, the campaign has now raised more than \$6.3 million towards its goal of \$7.5 million. But we still have a long way to go. This fall, we are turning to all the other members of the Westchester Arc community to ask them to help us complete the campaign and meet The Kresge Foundation's challenge.

Many organizations have given their staff members the opportunity to support a capital campaign with inspiring results, and we have done the same. Thirteen senior staff members have pledged \$20,000. This commitment was matched by Beth Beck, co-chair of the capital campaign committee, for a total gift of \$40,000. We then worked closely with a small committee of managers to create a mailing package to the other 600 members of the staff. We wanted them to have an opportunity to participate in a project that will have far-reaching effects for the programs they know better than anyone. A generous

Westchester Arc board member has offered to match, dollar-for-dollar, gifts that result from this mailing.

We are also touched that the self-advocates have told us that they would like to give individually to the campaign. They will be saving their change, a little every day, and we are very grateful to them.

This fall, you will have received a letter from Anne Majsak, Westchester Arc president, asking you to participate in our capital campaign by giving as generously as you can. This is your opportunity to help us meet, and even exceed, the Kresge challenge. Your generous gift will have far-reaching effects for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

The success of this campaign is crucial to ensuring that Westchester Arc is prepared to meet the challenges of this century and able to respond to the evolving needs of people in this county who have developmental disabilities. Every gift has an impact on bettering human lives.

Thank you in advance for joining in this historic effort.

Gateway to the Community

Continued from page 3

ported that, at that time, \$6.2 million of the \$7.5 million goal had been raised. Donations made to the capital campaign will help pay for the new building and support agency programs that receive little or no government funding.

"The new building is going to be great," declared David S., who spoke on behalf of the agency's customer service council, a board-level group of self-advocates. David was eager to tell others about the significance of the new building to individuals with developmental disabilities. "This building means a lot to all of us and I am looking forward to seeing it when it's done," he said.

"There will be offices, but the real principle behind the building is showing that people with developmental disabilities are important citizens and contribute every day," added Westchester Arc Executive Director Ric Swierat.

Agency Names New Building

Continued from page 3

Over 50 years ago, Justin Israel joined a group of social activists with a common goal—to help family members with developmental disabilities lead full, enriching lives. Meeting in basements throughout White Plains, those pioneering advocates formed an organization that would evolve into Westchester Arc. Justin is a former agency president and current Westchester Arc Foundation board member. As part of the agency's capital campaign steering committee, he personally appeals each year to family and friends for donations. He has also bequeathed a major portion of his retirement fund to the Westchester Arc Foundation.

Justin's son Johnny has lived in Westchester Arc's Borchert residence for nearly 25 years. He is also employed at an agen-

cy work center and has flourished as a painter through the Echo Arts program.

I will always be grateful to Westchester Arc. We've accomplished so much in the last 50 years," says Justin. "I wanted to contribute to the great things to come in the next 50."

Milagros Rosa In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of staff member Milagros Rosa. She was a longtime residence counselor at the agency's Avalon House. Those closest to Milagros describe her as having been "dedicated," "enthusiastic" and "generous."

Physicians Offer Perspective to Agency Board



Dr. Baldev Singh



Dr. Timothy B. Sullivan

People with developmental disabilities are living longer. Recent studies indicate an average life expectancy of 60 to 80 years of age. But as these individuals grow older, some are at risk for serious health concerns, including obesity, diabetes and dementia. Many families turn to Westchester Arc for advice on finding the proper health care.

The five physicians on the agency's board of directors bring vast medical knowledge and extensive experience to this arena. Recently, *Lifetime* interviewed two of

them about medical advances, remaining challenges and their contributions to agency services.

Dr. Timothy B. Sullivan, first vice president, joined the agency's board of directors in 2000. A highly respected physician, Dr. Sullivan is the service chief of the day treatment program at St. Vincent's Catholic Medical Center in Harrison, New York, and currently chairs Westchester Arc's clinical services committee.

"Obesity is one of the biggest medical challenges among the aging population," comments Dr. Sullivan. "Many individuals with developmental disabilities demonstrate a lack of will power and an impulse to overeat. They also tend to choose cheap, fast food that is high in calories and fat."

To combat obesity, Dr. Sullivan stresses proper diet, plenty of exercise and educa-

tional programs. He works with agency staff to develop services that teach individuals about self-control, making the right food choices and the importance of daily exercise. He also advocates for more comprehensive, affordable health insurance coverage.

"Being a part of Westchester Arc has been a remarkable and rewarding experience," he adds. "I spent a lot of time in the field prior to coming here, but the agency's dedication, expertise and level of understanding simply blows my mind."

Dr. Baldev Singh has been a Westchester Arc board member since June 2006 and also serves on the clinical services committee. She is an associate professor of clinical neurology at New York Medical College and director of adult neurology at WIHD (Westchester Institute for Human Devel-

Continued on page 12

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between June 27 and October 29, 2007.

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS J. DOWD

Felice P. Abbey
Mr. and Mrs. Albert and Marie Abinanti
Mrs. Nicole Abinanti- Kotula
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Alterbaum
Ms. Suzanne Berger
Ms. Barbara Boettigheimer
Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Rosemarie Boothby
Ms. Jeannette Buffa
Mr. Richard A. Bump
John M. and Katharine W. Conroy
Ms. Mary Dantin
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent and Virginia Fiore
Mr. Aaron Flagg
Mr. Mark Frankel
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Garofola
Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Barbara Gelston
Ms. Andrea Harrison
Ms. Charlene Indelicato
Irvington Democratic Committee
Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Keane
Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Kent
Mr. Randy B. Klipstein

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Levitz
Ms. Elisa Longo
Ms. Claire M. McClennan
Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Messuri, Jr.
Music Conservatory of Westchester
Ms. Janet Nold
Mr. and Mrs. James and Denise O'Neill
Mr. and Mrs. Richard and Kathy Yeager Plano
Ms. Barbara Popelaski
Mrs. Salvatore and Medeline Praino
Ms. Jody I. Queen-Hubert
Ms. Dolores P. Reinertson
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery M. Reuben
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Rizzi
SEAS Westchester
Mr. Kevin Slavin
Sleepy Hollow High School
United Glaxy Associates, LLC

IN MEMORY OF PAULINE EHRESMANN

Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN MEMORY OF DOUGLAS FERGUSON

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Levitz

IN MEMORY OF SHIRLEY FRAENKEL

Mr. and Mrs. Victor Gorodischer
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Levitz

IN MEMORY OF WILLIAM KING

Mr. and Mrs. Richard H. Blackmar
In memory of Charles Kingsley
Mr. and Mrs. Barry Mitnick

IN MEMORY OF LAURIE LECKER

Mr. and Mrs. Alan B. Armstrong
Ms. Lucy Egan
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Finnegan
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Scolaro
Yonkers League for Retarded Children

IN MEMORY OF SCOTT SCHAER

Ms. James Amlicke
Mr. Richard Billig
Jason Consorti
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald and Rachelle Goldfarb
Ms. Monika Griff
Mr. Norman E Robins

IN HONOR OF LARRY FISH

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Schulman

IN HONOR OF DR. AND MRS. WILLIAM FRISHMAN

Dr. Jane Petro

IN HONOR OF JUSTIN AND EMEL ISRAEL

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Acar
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Marx, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Burton Sachs

IN HONOR OF JUSTIN ISRAEL

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Acar
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gang
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Tofel

IN HONOR OF NICHOLAS LOMBARDI

Autism Speaks, Inc.

IN HONOR OF NOLAN SPITZER

Horticultural Solutions
Mr. and Mrs. William Spitzer

IN HONOR OF MRS. ROHALL LEE

Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

IN HONOR OF MR. AND MRS. FRED PETER

Smith Barney
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Epstein
Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

New Year's Recreation

Continued from page 5

have the opportunity to experiment with various media, from brushes and paint, to pencil and paper. Exceptional work is displayed in Westchester Arc's annual art show, held in conjunction with the agency's annual meeting.

Echo Onstage is a weeklong, musical theater workshop for young adults, ages 16 to 25. Participants build self-esteem and muscle tone while learning dance numbers. Role playing and improvisational exercises promote creative thinking and improve verbal and social skills. At the end of the week, participants showcase their talents for families and friends.

The **Spring Ball** is a formal dinner dance for adults with developmental disabilities. Guests enjoy dinner, live music and socializing with friends.

Reunion Club gives individuals who live with their families the chance to become a little more independent. Through leisure activities such as going to the movies or a baseball game, they form new friendships and learn life skills.

Respite House provides planned overnight visits for both children and adults at our redecorated home in Thornwood, New York. This program is designed to give a well-deserved break to family members who care for a person with disabilities at home. Respite is provided seven days per week. Next year, Respite House will host **Arc School Vacations** and **Life Skills Weekends**. Arc School Vacations, to be held during select weeks over the summer, will provide daylong getaways for young adults, 13 to 21 years of age. Participants will visit the aquarium, museum, mall and other community attractions, then return to Respite House for dinner and a movie. Life Skills Weekend help adults, 17 years of age and over, prepare for life away from their families. Attendees learn how to cook, clean, budget money and get along with roommates.

For more information on these programs:

David Gasparri
914-428-8330, ext. 3218
dgasparri@westchesterarc.org



envision possibilities, explore choices

westchesterArc

home | about us | our services | membership | ways to give | discussions | calendar | press room

Our mission is to empower children and adults with developmental disabilities to achieve their potential based on personal choices, abilities and interests.

Breaking News

- Westchester Arc Celebrates Halloween
- *Capital Insider*, November 5, 2007: Weekly Newsletter of the Disability Policy Collaboration
- County Honors Workers with Disabilities
- Anne Majsak Honored
- A Matter of Taste 4 Sizzles
- *Envision Possibilities*, Fall 2007: Capital Campaign Newsletter (pdf)

Our Promise: Caring, Innovative, Professional



Visit www.westchesterarc.org to sign up for monthly news and updates

Physicians Offer Perspective

Continued from page 11

opment). She has cared for individuals with developmental disabilities for over 25 years, with a focus on epilepsy, dementia and autism.

"I can't stress education enough," begins Dr. Singh. "In the past, society showed little interest in people with developmental disabilities. Parents dropped their children off at institutions and never saw them again. But times have changed. As individuals with disabilities desire independence, parents and medical professionals need to be educated about their needs and capabilities. I see a patient from Westchester Arc and I think, 'This is a patient who deserves the same care as everyone else.' We need to get that message out."

Dr. Singh cites dementia as a leading medical concern among individuals with developmental disabilities. Last year, she launched the first dementia symposium at WIHD. She is also the principal investi-

gator for a "Vitamin E Study in Dementia/Down Syndrome," funded by the National Institutes of Health and encourages young doctors to join this focus area.

"Working with Westchester Arc, I have seen many individuals with disabilities lead healthy, productive lives. I am glad to be a part of this agency and am happy to help our families in any way I can."

SAVE THE DATE!

Family Resource Day
February 2, 2008
9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
White Plains High School

Watch
www.westchesterarc.org
for upcoming details


westchesterArc
121 Westmoreland Avenue
White Plains, NY 10606

Non-profit organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
White Plains, NY 10606
Permit 138