

Lifetime

spring 2005

New Name! Logo! Slogan! Evolving Mission Shapes Agency "Promise"

Westchester Arc, in response to an evolving mission, has changed its name, logo and slogan. As of the agency's June 7 annual meeting, our name has been revised from "Westchester ARC" to "Westchester Arc," a seemingly minor alteration with important implications. Our new slogan, or tagline, is "Envision Possibilities, Explore Choices."

These changes are meant to signal Westchester Arc's response to the raised expectations of children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families concerning self-advocacy, inclusion and personal fulfillment. The people we serve want to be treated as individuals, not as a category. They are increasingly diverse in terms of diagnosis, ethnicity and needs. (See President Mohan Mehra's column, page 2, for further reflections on this subject.)

Westchester "Arc" can no longer be misinterpreted as an acronym. It remains a link to our heritage, echoing our affiliation with NYSARC and The Arc of the U.S., but is also rich in symbolism that is consistent with our mission. "Arc" stands for our efforts to bridge gaps and build supportive connections between those we serve and their communities.

Similarly, our new logo is an updating of the individual "in search of a star" with which you are familiar. The new

graphic communicates the theme of reaching for opportunities and journeying to a wider world.



westchesterArc

envision possibilities, explore choices

"Envision Possibilities, Explore Choices" captures the heart of our mission. We are committed to person-centered planning and individualized services because fulfillment does not come pre-packaged. We are also inviting the greater community to enrich itself by embracing people with disabilities as students, employees and neighbors.

Each day, Westchester Arc, in collaboration with the people we serve and their families, is changing perceptions and building bridges. Our new name, logo and slogan will help to capture the excitement and promise that characterize this deeply felt partnership.



Agency Hosts First Family Resource Day

Two hundred fifty adults and 70 children attended Westchester Arc's first Family Resource Day on February 12 at White Plains High School to learn about issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities. "Families are hungry for information," explained Executive Director Ric Swierat. "The issues are complex and changing. We brought together 30 experts to cover in one day a wide array of subjects."

During the keynote session, family members joined social service professionals to explore the needs and frustrations of typically developing siblings. The achievements of the "sib

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From Our President


Mohan Mehra

The changes to the agency's name, logo and slogan that we announce with this issue of *Lifetime* are both subtle and substantial. In 2003, a survey among families, staff and donors found that most people continued to believe that "ARC" was an acronym, that the word "retarded" had developed many negative connotations, and that people with developmental disabilities have come to feel stigmatized by that label. That, and the fact that we now serve individuals with disabilities other than mental retardation, made it imperative that we change our name.

At the same time, we wanted to preserve and build upon the strong reputation we have developed during our 56-year history for advocacy and social progress. The change from "Westchester ARC" to "Westchester Arc" was our answer. "Arc" is a word, not an acronym. It echoes our past but is rich in associations that point to our future. An "arc" is a supporting structure, a pathway

to the community. This agency, with its caring services, commitment to innovation and professional staff, embodies those symbols. This is what distinguishes us from others, and our goal is to deliver on this promise in every interaction with those we serve and their families.

In redesigning the logo, we again called upon staff, those we serve and our board of directors as we sought to define the "personality" of Westchester Arc. You probably would not be surprised by most of the suggestions we received. Words such as "dreams," "progress," "transformation" and "innovation" were mentioned. The new logo builds upon the old and, we believe, reflects these values.

Finally, we capture the essence of our mission with our tagline—"Envision Possibilities, Explore Choices"—a call to people with developmental disabilities and their communities to adopt an enriched view of personal and social potential.

As we listened to our consumers and families, then examined our activities, we realized that we are, at heart, facilitators of self-discovery and self-fulfillment. It is a mission that makes us enormously proud.

What I Plan to do This Summer

A Conversation with Denise B., James B. and Duane G.



Denise B.

As spring draws to a close, it's time to start getting ready for summer. Recently, we asked individuals in the agency's day habilitation program to comment on their summer plans.

Denise: I just want to stay occupied. I'm going to go bowling, spend some time at the zoo and maybe take a trip with my family.

James: I'd like to visit Florida and some other cities. It would be nice to go to a few Yankee games.

Duane: I want to get a summer job helping people, play basketball and baseball, and swim.

Westchester Arc Honors Employers at Annual Breakfast

Over 130 community leaders, representing business, government and education, attended Westchester ARC's 11th annual Employer Recognition Breakfast on March 11 at the Doubletree Hotel Tarrytown. "The number one concern of businesses is the ability to have the right people in the right job," declared keynote speaker Marsha Gordon, CEO of the Business Council of Westchester.

"They want employees who are motivated and well trained, and we know that Westchester Arc consumers are an integral part of our workforce.... People with disabilities have been, and will continue to be, contributors to the economic growth of Westchester County."



(From left) Sal Carrera, county director of economic development; Marsha Gordon, keynote speaker; Jim O'Toole, consultant and Mohan Mehra, Westchester Arc President.

Richard Sklarin of O'Connor, Redd, Gollihue & Sklarin, LLP, who accepted a New Business Partnership Award, talked of "the joy and enthusiasm that employees with developmental disabilities bring to our workplace and their real dedication to life."

Michael Flanagan of Boies, Schiller, and Flexner, LLP, received a Special Advocate Award for his support of eight people with disabilities who have worked for the law firm since 2002. Referring to how much they have in common with other employees, he observed, "I see them in meetings with their supervisors and it sounds like democracy. I overhear their small talk in the hallways and their

discussions of hot topics in the news. It's our job to 'see' these individuals and to include them, to advocate for them in any way we can."

Steve Palm of the Westchester Restaurant Group also received a Spe-

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Richard and Margaret Blackmar enjoy the pre-school party.

Pre-School Celebrates Its Friends

More than 70 guests gathered at The Children's School for Early Development on May 5 for a reception recognizing the generosity of longtime supporters. The event was co-sponsored by The Children's School and the Westchester Arc Foundation.

Westchester Arc President Mohan Mehra and Westchester ARC Foundation President Katharine Wilson Conroy unveiled 21 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.

Master Chris Berlow and instructor Laura Giacovas of the United Martial Arts Center (UMAC) were honored for helping kids with disabilities build strength and confidence through tae kwon do. Master Berlow and Ms. Giacovas have established an annual Kickathon fundraiser on behalf of the pre-school. Gavin Checci, a former student at The Children's School and current UMAC member, paid tribute to his instructors with a martial arts demonstration.



From Our Executive Director

Richard P. Swierat

Richard P. Swierat

Decades of progress for people with developmental disabilities are now at risk as Congress contemplates the 2006 budget. A narrowly passed Budget Resolution (Senate: 52-47, House: 214-211) calls for cutting entitlements by \$34.7 billion over the next five years. That includes a \$10 billion cut to Medicaid, beginning in fiscal year 2007. Domestic “discretionary” programs such as special education, vocational rehabilitation, supported employment and assistive technology are similarly under attack.

As Paul Marchand, director of governmental affairs for The Arc of the U.S., told our membership at a

February meeting, the “hidden agenda” is to cap Medicaid or issue block grants, which would effectively destroy the entitlements providing most of the funding for services to people with developmental disabilities.

Now begin the really hard discussions. While important, the Budget Resolution is merely a blueprint. Senate and House authorizing committees must hammer out the details for meeting recommended cuts. The process is complicated and long, involving numerous committee, conference and floor votes before a budget appears on the President’s desk for signature.

For over 50 years, advocates have fought for the right of people with disabilities to lead self-directed lives within the greater community. We can’t stop now. These budget attacks could reverse our hard-won advances in

education, jobs and de-institutionalization. But there is much that can be done to avoid this funding catastrophe.

I am calling upon each of you to be involved. The Arc of the U.S. is our voice in Washington, D.C., and you can subscribe to its excellent “Action Alerts” by logging onto www.thearc.org. In addition, if you would like to receive emails on this crucial subject, please send your online address to me at rswierat@westchesterarc.org.

Being informed is your first defense. Then you must let your legislators know how their actions will affect the daily lives of those you love. Over the coming months, Westchester Arc and The Arc of the U.S. will be appealing to you to pick up the phone or send an email in order to tell your story to the legislators voting on your future. Please join us in this crucial fight.

Manzi Center Workers Taste Celebrity

ABC *Eyewitness News* reporter Michelle Charlesworth interviewed consumers at the Ann Manzi Center about what it was like to pack the “Ultimate Nominee Bags,” gifts sent at Oscar time to the likes of Annette Bening, Teri Hatcher and Leonardo DiCaprio. Each star actually received two bags, valued at over \$30,000. Goodies ranged from the world’s most expensive perfume to the latest Blackberry handheld device.

The project resulted from a long-time relationship with Jane Ubell-Meyer, editor-in-chief of Madison & Mulholland, a trend-spotting website



ABC’s Michele Charlesworth (in white) interviewed Manzi Center employees.

and creator of luxury gifts bags for clients such as United Airlines and the Mandarin Oriental, New York. Prior to launching Madison & Mulholland, Jane was founder and president of Buzz Bags, and Westchester Arc consumers

have been packaging materials to her specifications for about four years. “I work with Westchester Arc because I trust them and value their expertise. The consumers who work on my goodie bags love what they do, and I, in turn, treasure the friendships that I have made with them.”

As Allison G. told ABC, “We do a lot of bags, and we like to do these things for Jane.”

Consumers began getting used to the limelight after Nippon TV shot a similar story. But they learned about showbiz vicissitudes the hard way, ending up on the cutting room floor when the Japanese station ran out of airtime.

Westchester Arc Athletes Shine at Special Olympics



The U.S. floor hockey team won first place at the Winter Special Olympics.



Richard B., Paul R. and Deborah D. came home winners from the 2004 Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Nagano, Japan. Eighteen hundred individuals with disabilities, representing 84 countries and regions, participated in the games. Richard and Paul brought back the gold as part of the North East Knights floor hockey team, while Deborah was awarded a silver medal in downhill skiing and a bronze medal in the alpine advanced slalom event.

They were welcomed to Matsumoto City with open arms. The athletes stayed

with host families, who gave them a firsthand glimpse into Japanese culture. "I loved Japan," says Paul. "My host family treated me like family. We went to see rice pounding and drum shows. I also liked not wearing shoes in the house. And the food was really good, too."

"Being in Japan was an eye-opening, life-changing experience," comment coaches Nancy Troiano, Janet Riley and Joe Bellini in a written account of the trip. "The people of Japan were hospitable, friendly and kind. We are especially

proud of our athletes for their admirable performances under demanding circumstances and for meeting every challenge with a smile on their face."

From Matsumoto City, it was on to Nagano for the opening ceremonies. "I talked to people from all over the world," recalls Paul. "I learned a lot from them." Former President Bill Clinton made a special appearance during the first night of floor hockey competition. "I got to shake his hand. That was really cool."

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Transition Fair Helps Families Plan for Life after High School

Over 50 people attended a recent transition planning fair at the Mount Vernon City Hall, sponsored by Westchester Arc's family outreach project, the Westchester Department of Community Mental Health, Hudson Valley DDSO (Developmental Disabilities Services Office) and the Mount Vernon Department of Recreation. The event brought together a wide variety of information useful to families having children with disabilities about to age out of the public school system.

"There are many students coming out of the Mount Vernon school district unprepared because their parents or guardians are unaware of available resources," explains Mary Ann Shelton, outreach service coordinator. "This fair brought information directly to a community in need and helped parents make informed decisions about their children's futures."

Representatives from VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities), Social Security Administration, Young Adult Institute and other non-profit agencies were also on hand. Families were able to register for OMRDD (Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities) services and introduced to various agencies, programs and services. Westchester-Putnam Legal Services were in attendance and offered pro bono assistance to families seeking guardianship services.

"Most of the families who attended have never had access to such comprehensive information in one place. That really made a big difference," continues Mary Ann. "Parents left feeling informed and equipped to make informed choices regarding their children's lives after high school."



From The Foundation

Anne Sweazey
Anne Sweazey
Executive Director

What prompts people to give a donation to an organization? Approval of the mission? A desire to be part of a good cause? The tax deduction? Sometimes the answer is much more direct and immediate. Often a connection with someone whose life has been changed by the services of an organization can inspire a person to give financial help to those programs.

This was the case with Rabbi Adam Miller, at Temple Beth El in Chappaqua. Rabbi Miller recently shared a story with us about how an individual who was helped by Westchester Arc had an impact on his life.

Rabbi Miller had recently officiated at the funeral of Steven Goldstaub. A

ward of the state, Steven had no family to help prepare his funeral or with whom the Rabbi could speak about Steven's life. He had lived most of his life in group homes and attended a day program at through the Ann Manzi Center in Mount Kisco.

Rabbi Miller, who gave us permission to quote him in this newsletter, writes: "It quickly became apparent in speaking with his social worker, Michelle Gorglione, that Steven had been an amazing individual. Steve was more than a man with disabilities; he was a human being with a heart of gold. A loving and warm soul, Steven managed to befriend each and every person whom he met. Michelle's description proved accurate, as a large number of current and former staff and consumers from his house and day center came to honor his memory."

Rabbi Miller goes on to state, "Vicky Toban, a social worker who

had known Steven for more than 20 years, articulated the thoughts of all those present—that they were more than his friends. They had become Steven's family."

Enclosed with this moving letter was a generous check in Steven's honor, together with the wish that Westchester Arc would be able to continue its good work with individuals such as Steven in providing them with skills and opportunities.

Although Rabbi Miller did not have the privilege of knowing Steven, he was moved by the impact that he had on other people during his lifetime. The stream of goodwill and friendship that flowed from Steven in his lifetime passed from him to the people who knew him, and then to Rabbi Miller, who has enabled others to benefit from the programs that made a difference to Steven.

I thought you would enjoy this story.

Yonkers League Dinner Dance Raises \$10,000



The annual event attracted many friends and supporters, all committed to the rights of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Over 90 people attended the 41st Annual Yonkers League Dinner Dance on April 10, raising \$10,000 for the Westchester Arc Foundation. The event was held at Westchester Manor. Special guests Bernard and Ruth Lecker were presented with the 2005 Helping Hand Award for their longtime dedication to individuals with disabilities. The Yonkers League is a volunteer arm of Westchester Arc that supports services for individuals in southern Westchester with developmental disabilities.

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between
January 11, 2005, and May 3, 2005.

IN MEMORY OF SHEILA AARON
Mr. Ronald DePasquale

IN MEMORY OF
WILLARD F. COUTANT
Mrs. Willard Coutant

IN MEMORY OF
LOTTIE DANNENBERG
Mrs. Klare Selo

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

IN MEMORY OF
MADELINE DISERIO
Ms. Joan Dusenberry
Ms. Ann Grundy
Northern Westchester League
for Retarded Children
Ms. Elizabeth A. Rossi

IN MEMORY OF
DOUGLAS EDMUNDSON
Miss Theresa DeGeorge

IN MEMORY OF LISA FAY
Dr. and Mrs. Walter Manzi

IN MEMORY OF
CHRISTOPHER FUIMARA
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Coschigano

IN MEMORY OF RICKY SILVERA
Mr. and Mrs. William Farr
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Schwartz

IN MEMORY OF
BEVERLY STERNSCHEIN
Audio Associates Corporation
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bellezza
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Kakadelis
Dan and Christa Mondoro
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Ramer

IN MEMORY OF JESUS E. TAPIA
Mr. and Mrs. Jesus Tapia

IN HONOR OF GILDA FARIELLO
Mr. Jack J. Fariello

IN HONOR OF
LAWRENCE FAULKNER
Mrs. Marie Louise Donarski

IN HONOR OF
MATTHEW FITZGERALD
Mr. Peter N. Chetta

IN HONOR OF JUSTIN ISRAEL
Mr. and Mrs. Jon Becker

IN HONOR OF THE
STAFF OF WESTCHESTER ARC
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Ferguson

MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR

By JANET M. STEINER

*Janet, a writer who has developmental disabilities,
has been a poet for 20 years.*

WHEN WINTER FINALLY ENDS
AND WE FINALLY GET NICER WEATHER,
WHEN WE DON'T HAVE TO WORRY
ABOUT THE ICE AND SNOW
AND FAMILY AND FRIENDS CAN GET TOGETHER,
THIS IS MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR
WHEN THE DAYS ARE LONGER
AND YOU DON'T NEED A HEAVY COAT,
WHEN YOU DON'T NEED A SCARF
TIED AROUND YOUR THROAT,
THIS IS MY FAVORITE TIME OF YEAR
I LOVE THE HOLIDAY SEASON IN DECEMBER TOO,
DON'T GET ME WRONG
WHEN THE AIR IS FILLED
WHEN LAUGHTER AND SONG,
BUT WHEN YOU MOST SEE
THE BIRDS AND THE DEER
THIS IS MY FAVORITE
TIME OF YEAR!

Yonkers League Supporters

The following individuals and organizations generously donated to the League's dinner dance journal.
Please support Westchester Arc's friends.

Call 914-42-8330, ext. 3157 for contact information relating to the businesses listed.

A & S Hair Design, Inc.

Action Therapy, P.C.

Tamara Weinstein, M.S., P.T.

Mayor Philip A. Amicone, City of Yonkers

Arroway Chevrolet - Saab, Inc.

Lou Roberti

Bress Law Firm

Church of the Annunciation

Croton Auto Park

Dr. Daniel de la Torre

Dunwoodie Pizzeria

Epstein's Dry Goods, Inc.

Anne Filardo Real Estate

Flower Funeral Home, Inc.

Furgiuele & Company Inc.

GROW

The Giardina Agency

Grassy Sprain Pharmacy, Inc.

Mario's Richie

City Council President Richard J. Martinelli,
City of Yonkers

Mr. Kold Kuts

Dr. Christopher A. Orlando

Marco A. Oshiro, DDS

Paradise Lanes

Parents Advisory Committee of Yonkers

Pizza Beat

Rory Dolan's

Royal Press

Salomone & Co.

Sinatra Funeral Home, Inc.

John Toccafondi, DDS

True Value Marden Hardware Co., Inc.

Viking Office Products

Westchester BMW

Westchester Masonry Depot

Yonkers City Post Number 1666

Yonkers Fire Fighters

Yonkers Police Benevolent Association

Yonkers Police Captains, Lieutenants &
Sergeants Benevolent Association



Chili Con Care



Annabel Bayon samples staff specialties.

Westchester Arc heated up February with a Chili Bakeoff, a fundraising event co-sponsored by the Westchester Arc Foundation and the agency's diversity committee. Over 80 staff members and their families attended, raising \$550 for UNICEF's tsunami relief fund.

Guests sampled personal chili specialties prepared by Westchester Arc staff and voted for their favorites by secret ballot. Kim Spahn, assistant executive director, won first prize for his white chili. Runners-up were Regina Moore, marketing manager, for vegetable chili and Andrea Langston, accounts receivable supervisor, for "piccadillo chili."

Food accompaniments, utensils and paper goods were donated by C-Town, Plaza Deli and Proftech. Gift certificates were provided by Outback Steakhouse of White Plains, Pizzeria Uno, Red Lobster, Sam's of Gedney Way and TGI Friday's. "The great thing about the Chili Bakeoff is that it brought Westchester Arc staff from all our locations together," says Elyse Fowler, senior development officer and event organizer. "We all had an enjoyable time, while raising money for a really good cause."

Westchester Arc Chosen to Lead OMRDD Training Sessions

New York State's Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) recently selected Westchester Arc to discuss "Excellence in Service Delivery" at statewide training sessions for other social service agencies. Melanie Fields, Westchester Arc's director of staff training, and Suzanne Panepinto, compliance coordinator, described residential services' Everyday Heroes initiative as an example of "best practices."

Everyday Heroes is a process through which direct care staff use person-centered planning to help individuals with developmental disabilities achieve their goals and interact with the greater community.

"Through Everyday Heroes, Westchester Arc staff enhance the lives of people with disabilities, as well as their own," says Melanie. "I think it's our agency's longstanding dedication and quality of care that sets a standard

for promoting the best lives possible for those we serve."

Everyday Heroes is a residential services initiative that builds person-centered cultures in each of our residences and seeks to celebrate the contributions of direct support professionals. Residential staff have presented their work throughout the state, including NYSARC and NYSACRA annual conferences.

Westchester Arc was one of eight COMPASS-certified agencies asked to speak at the training sessions. COMPASS is a quality assurance program administered by the New York State OMRDD, granted to organizations that promote independence, individuality, and productivity for individuals with developmental disabilities, while maintaining an effective planning and evaluation system. Westchester Arc is the only agency in Westchester County to have received a COMPASS certification.

The Great Outdoors

Last April, Westchester Arc's Echo Outdoors was held at the Taconic Outdoor Educational Center in Fahnestock State Park. Participants got the full camping experience — going on nature hikes, sleeping in cabins and roasting marshmallows, while learning about the environment.

"We got to scoop up a bunch of mud, then look at it under a microscope," says Kimberly J.

"I liked the fact that she could spend some time having fun with kids her own age with similar needs, and I always felt she was in safe hands with Westchester Arc," notes her mom, Barbara.

For more information on Echo Outdoors, contact Dave Gasparri, 914-428-8330, ext. 3218.



Children's School Puts Fun into Fundraising



The Hawthorne Fire Department thrilled toddlers with a visit to the school.

Over 100 students, family members and friends attended "Family Fun Day on February 5, sponsored by the pre-school's PTA. The event, which was organized by PTA co-presidents Michelle Kapica and Mari Uro, was held in conjunction with the annual Scholastic Book Fair, during which children's books are sold on be-

half of the school. Things heated up with a special appearance by the Hawthorne Fire Department, handing out fire hats and taking kids aboard their fire truck. Baked goods and Children's School t-shirts were also available. A total of \$1200 was raised to pay for computers and other essentials.

Yonkers Takes the Cake



Day habilitation recently hosted a special cake decorating event at the V.F.W. Post in Yonkers. A bowling alley, butterfly, cactus, crocodile and Bozo the Clown were among the creations submitted by consumers and staff from Mount Kisco, Ossining, Peekskill, White Plains and Yonkers. Karen Heidman, treatment coordinator, organized the activity, which promoted teamwork and creative thinking.

Partners

Westchester Arc works with 250 businesses, government agencies and other organizations to identify career opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Here are two partnerships the agency has established....

Emilio's Restaurant

1 Colonial Place
Harrison, New York 10528
914-835-3100

Emilio's recently hired a Westchester Arc consumer as pastry chef. The employee really enjoys working in this fun, friendly Italian restaurant.

Epstein's Dry Goods

212 Columbus Avenue
Tuckahoe, New York 10707
914-961-2833

Epstein's Dry Goods has a longstanding history of hiring Westchester Arc consumers. This employer is patient and understanding of employee needs and committed to providing a safe, comfortable work environment.

Day Habilitation Showcases Talent

Watch out, American Idol. Individuals in Westchester Arc's day habilitation services dazzled audiences with song and dance numbers, poetry readings, musical recitals and comedy routines at an agency-wide talent show, held at the Yonkers VFW Post on February 11.

"I loved singing for my family and friends," confided one performer. Those individuals who didn't perform helped organize the event by putting together a program, handing out flyers, serving refreshments and selling raffle tickets.

"The amount of energy that went into planning the event

was incredible," explains treatment coordinator Sandy Woods, who helped organize the event. "Each performance was so good the judges decided everyone was a winner."

The event also served as fundraiser for day habilitation's highly successful Without Walls Program, which teaches individuals with developmental disabilities how to function in society on a daily basis by taking them out into the community. All proceeds from the talent show will be used for upcoming trips to Radio City Music Hall, the circus and dining out in New York City.

Resources

The National Center for Children in Poverty

<http://www.nccp.org>

The National Center for Children in Poverty has released a series of publications describing the role Social Security plays in protecting children. *Whose Security: What Social Security Means to Children and Families* explains how children and individuals with disabilities will be affected if Social Security is cut. The brief is available at www.nccp.org/pub_wsw05a.html

Autism Web

www.autismweb.com

Autism Web is a guide to parents on the diagnosis, treatment and education of children with autism and pervasive developmental disorder. The website contains information on early warning signs, effective treatment and educational conferences. It also includes message boards, up-to-date news and an online book store.



The Children's School for Early Development
5th Annual

Golfing for Kids

Benefiting Children with Autism and
other Developmental Disabilities

Tuesday, September 13, 2005
Westchester Hills Golf Club, White Plains

For information, call Celia Barelli at 914-347-3227,
ext. 104 or visit www.westchesterarc.org

Legacy of Love Society Fete



The Westchester Arc Foundation hosted its first Legacy of Love Society dinner on February 9. Each year this event will recognize individuals who have decided to make a bequest or planned gift to either Westchester Arc or the Foundation. Honorees receive crystal hearts engraved with their names in thanks for their generosity. Above, Mohan Mehra, Westchester Arc President, thanks Heljo Vosari, Justin Israel and Judith Solomon.

Westchester Arc Honors Employers at Annual Breakfast

Continued from page 3

cial Advocate Award for involving people with disabilities in A Matter of Taste, a fundraiser that he co-chaired on behalf of the Westchester Arc Foundation. He trained Michael Greenebaum and Darnell Winfield at his restaurant, Underhills Crossing, Bronxville, where they learned to greet customers, clear dishes and tidy up after diners. Mr. Palm presented plaques to Mr. Greenebaum and Mr. Winfield in addition to receiving his own award.

VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities), a government agency, was honored with a Civic Partnership Award. VESID

provides job training and other services to individuals with developmental disabilities and was key to Westchester Arc's placing 58 individuals in jobs during the previous 12 months.

The Anthony Cannata Memorial Employee Award, given to individuals who have served as role models for others with disabilities, was shared by Mr. Greenebaum and Deborah Dempsey. Mr. Greenebaum has worked at Neiman Marcus's Zodiac Restaurant for 19 years, and Ms. Dempsey has been employed by the Pace University Environmental Center for nearly 20 years. She has cared for livestock, goats, sheep, snakes and even exotic falcons.

Agency Hosts First Family Resource Day

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movement” were clear as participants described attitudes during the fifties and sixties. “Differences were seen as shameful,” noted Mary McHugh, author of *Special Siblings: Growing Up with Someone with a Disability*. “I felt I had to be good all the time because my parents were going through ‘a lot,’ though I didn’t understand what was going on. I would have done anything for a Sibshop when I was little,” she said.

Sibshops are game-filled, non-threatening sessions during which kids can talk to others having a brother or sister with disabilities. The format was developed by Don Meyer of The Arc of the U.S., who chaired the panel.

And, in fact, kids between the ages of seven and 12 started off the day with a Sibshop, during which candid discussion—“What do you say when someone asks what’s wrong with your brother or sister?”—alternated with laughter and balloon volleyball.

Another popular session outlined medical and educational approaches to autism. Dr. John Harrington, New York Medical College, pointed out that at the same time that the autism rate is sky-rocketing, reported cases of mental retardation are in decline. He believes that much of the autism increase is due to “the diagnosis of neurological development problems we didn’t recognize in the past,” which were previously categorized as mental retardation. He also cited Scandinavian research, dating from 1990 and involving one million children, which found no relationship between vaccinations and autism—a controversial hypothesis that has received much publicity.

Dr. Theodore Roth, a psychologist specializing in children with special needs and their parents, discussed the importance of support groups for moms. “You rarely attend to your own emotional needs,” he declared. He

mentioned “the shock of discovery, self-blame, depression, strained family relations and hostile responses from others” as some of the issues that should be addressed. “You need to take care of yourselves so that you can take better care of your families.”

Catherine McHugh, New York State Commission on Quality of Care, hosted morning and afternoon sessions focusing on different aspects of educational advocacy. “You have to know the rules yourself,” she stressed. “Don’t depend on someone else to tell you” what your rights are. “Special education is not a place—it can occur anywhere” and should be conducted in the least restrictive environment possible.

Other workshops, all of which encouraged interaction from attendees, focused on financial planning, career development and the role that recreational activities can play in building confidence and community involvement.



Take Me Out to the Ballroom

Nearly 600 people attended Westchester Arc’s 18th Annual Spring Ball dinner dance, held on May 6 at the Westchester Marriott. Guests enjoyed catching up with friends, dancing to the sounds of No Exit and posing for photos. Westchester Arc’s board of directors, recreation committee and recreation department sponsored the event.

Day Hab Celebrates Cinco de Mayo

Westchester Arc’s day habilitation services sponsored a Cinco de Mayo fiesta at the Ann Manzi Center in Mount Kisco. Guests got into the true spirit of the Mexican holiday with sombreros, salsa dancing and non-alcoholic margaritas. They also made maracas, played cactus ring toss and enjoyed a piñata. An agency-wide cook-off featured Mexican cheese-cake, chicken enchiladas, eggs diabolo, and pico de gallo, a salsa used with tacos and fajitas. “I’m having so much fun today, it makes me want to go to Mexico,” said Denise B.



Calendar of Events

June 27 - July 1, 2005

Echo Onstage Theater Workshop

Call Jody Handley
914-949-9300, ext. 3221

July 5 - July 9, 2005

Echo College

Overnight college experience.
Western Connecticut State University
Danbury, Connecticut
Call Jody Handley
914-949-9300, ext. 3221

July 31, 2005 at noon

PACDS Annual Picnic

John Downing Park
Yorktown Heights, New York
Call Ivy Lewis
914-827-8277

August 12, 2005

Westchester Arc's 7th Annual Staff Picnic

Rye Playland Amusement Park
Rye, New York
Call Sandra Nattoo
914-428-8330, ext. 3147

August 22 - August 26, 2005

Echo Outdoors

Overnight camp.
Fahnestock State Park
Fahnestock, New York
Call Jody Handley
914-949-9300, ext. 3221

October 1, 2005

Family Resource Day

White Plains High School
White Plains, New York
Call Nancy Succoso
914-428-8330, ext. 3319

Twenty-First Annual **MBA** Invitational

Golf & Tennis Classic to benefit the
Westchester Arc Foundation and Hudson Valley Special Olympics

SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

Anglebrook Golf Club • Mount Kisco Country Club • Whippoorwill Club

For information, call Elyse Fowler at 914-428-8330, ext. 3027

Westchester Arc Athletes Shine at Special Olympics

Continued from page 5

The Northeast Knights win was a true comeback story. After losing their first two games, they won three in a row, besting Syria once and the Isle of Man twice, to claim the gold.

Athletes celebrated their win at the closing ceremonies in Sarajevo, then returned home to party with families and friends. Upon arriving at the airport, they were greeted with red, white, and blue balloons and were accompanied back to Westchester by a Mount

Pleasant police escort. "That made Richard feel really special," comments Phyllis Wilson, service coordinator. "He had a great time in Japan and still carries around his medal.

"Westchester Arc is proud of Richard, Paul, Deborah, and all of Team U.S.A for their extraordinary achievements," says Executive Director Ric Swierat. "Having the Special Olympics take place in Japan marks great progress for that country and for the world."

Join The Westchester Arc Foundation for its annual benefit

A Matter of Taste 2

AN EVENING OF CULINARY ARTS

Wednesday, November 2, 2005
Westchester Country Club, Rye, New York

Sample signature recipes from the area's finest restaurants, paired with wines from around the world.

For more info call Fran Higgins at 914-428-8330, ext. 3028




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