

## Westchester Arc Celebrates Groundbreaking



Breaking new ground are, from left, Anne Majsak, Westchester Arc president; Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director; State Senator Nick Spano (R-35th District); Mitchell Benerofe, co-chair, Westchester Arc capital campaign steering committee; Justin Israel, Westchester Arc Foundation board member, and Mohan Mehra, former Westchester Arc president.

State Senator Nick Spano (R-35th District) presented a \$100,000 community gift to Westchester Arc Executive Director Ric Swierat to help defray costs. “Arc has done so much for a population that, decades ago, was forgotten,” noted Spano. “This ‘Gateway to the Community’ will be more than just bricks and mortar.... “I look forward to sharing in the smiles of the children and adults who will have an opportunity to work and live in this community--as they should--thanks to this agency.”

“The mission of Westchester Arc is to provide a framework for those it serves to live their lives with opti-

On September 20, over 150 people gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking for Westchester Arc’s “Gateway to the Community” at 265 Saw Mill River Road, Hawthorne, New York. Pre-schoolers in hard hats wielded shovels, as did government officials and fundraisers. So far approximately \$4.5 million has been collected for the new building and a “Fund for the Future” to safeguard under-funded programs.

“The new building will be a big improvement on the old one,” said Will Horton, a Westchester Arc board member who has developmental disabilities. “I’m going to feel a lot more at home there.”

mism, self-worth and a sense of security,” noted Mitch Benerofe, co-chair for the agency’s first capital campaign. “The building will be a platform for accomplishments and security for many years to come.” The committee’s fundraising goal is \$7.5 million.

Guests at the ceremony included County Legislator Thomas Abinanti (D-12th District); State Assemblyman Adam T. Bradley (D-89th District); White Plains Mayor Joseph Delfino; Greenburgh Town Supervisor Paul Feiner (D); Director Tom Hay, Special Olympics New York-Hudson Valley; Deputy Commissioner Christine Reinhard, Westchester Department of Community Mental Health; Ira Rothenstein, HudsonValley Developmental Disabilities Office, and Mary Swikata, office of the governor.

The Hawthorne building will replace the agency’s current headquarters at 121 Westmoreland Avenue, White Plains. The existing site is incompatible with the needs of a population ex-

### NEW SCHEDULE

Beginning with this issue, *Lifetime* will be published three times each year. Visit [www.westchesterarc.org](http://www.westchesterarc.org) for frequent updates on issues related to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

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From Our President

*Anne M Majsak*

Anne M. Majsak

Westchester Arc was founded by parents over 55 years ago, and its continuing family focus is reflected in the activist nature of our board of directors. The responsibilities of the board’s 32 members extend beyond the establishment of policy to key operational issues. With 20 board-level committees, the directors make a significant commitment of time and talent.

Our board reflects a rich diversity of experiences, perceptions and skills. We have two self-advocates—Carolyn Holodak and Will Horton—who directly represent the 1600 children and adults we serve each day. We have directors with decades of advocacy experience, who shaped some of our earliest battles for equal rights in education, work and housing. We have parents of pre-schoolers, teens and adults. We also have siblings, who understand the special demands of what may be the longest relationship a person with developmental disabilities maintains through life. Four of our directors have medical backgrounds and eight are attorneys. This variety informs our efforts as we serve an increasingly heteroge-

neous population having a growing interest in direct community participation.

The performance of virtually every Westchester Arc service is overseen by board committees. Pre-school, residences, clinic. Day habilitation, outreach, service coordination. Our guardianship committee “becomes family” to the individuals it serves, making medical decisions, approving financial expenditures and overseeing the personal details that contribute to a fulfilling life.

The board manages the agency budget, crafts personnel policy and monitors quality. It guides work on our new facility, the “Gateway to the Community” being built in Hawthorne, and participates in the capital campaign that will help pay for it. Board members also contribute their expertise to the public relations activities that help shape the agency’s image within the county and beyond.

With this issue of *Lifetime*, we launch a series of interviews (see page 3) intended to introduce you to the gifted and generous individuals who guide our agency. It’s our hope that their comments will inspire you to become more involved in Westchester Arc, because our need for talent is ongoing. If you’re interested in volunteering, please email me at [amajsak@optonline.net](mailto:amajsak@optonline.net). I’d be delighted to discuss ways in which you can contribute.

# Westchester Arc Celebrates Groundbreaking

*continued from page 1*

pecting a high level of involvement with society at large. Westchester Arc now delivers most of its services within the community--neighborhood residences, jobs, leisure activities and more. As services become dispersed, however, it becomes increasingly important to have a central location where people with disabilities and their families can network, consult social service professionals and have ac-

cess to other resources enabling them to make decisions concerning their futures.

Westchester Arc’s White Plains headquarters is currently up for sale. CB Richard Ellis, a Fortune 500 company based in Los Angeles, has been chosen as exclusive advisor and broker.

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, [www.westchesterarc.org/calendar](http://www.westchesterarc.org/calendar).

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.

## Family Experiences Shape Board

**First in a series of interviews with members of Westchester Arc's board of directors.**

*Westchester Arc's early intervention and pre-school services are often a family's introduction to the agency. At The Children's School for Early Development, caring professionals can evaluate a newborn's needs, identify funding alternatives and explain educational models. Young families, who represent the future of the agency, have high expectations for their children, and their representation on our board is important to ensuring that our initiatives are synchronized with changing member needs.*

Board member **Theresa Mooney** first became involved with Westchester Arc when staff from The Children's School diagnosed 17-month-old Catherine with a learning disability on the autism spectrum. They helped identify a "wonderful" early intervention program and then taught Catherine for two years in one of the pre-school's Hawthorne-based classes dedicated to children with autism.

"Having that intensive speech training really helped," Theresa says. "When Catherine started school she had no



"Westchester Arc opened doors," comments board member Rosa Rodriguez, pictured with (from left) Ethan, Dyani and Zion.

speech, would constantly cry and would not participate in any structured activity." Now five, Catherine is learning to talk, loves the computer and has begun attending a special needs kindergarten.

What does this new board member bring to the agency? "I understand from

personal experience what young parents need—a place to turn to for advice on their options, help understanding how to navigate the various transitions their kids will experience. The number of children

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## Club Echo Takes Manhattan



Club Echo, a vacation and leisure program for adults with developmental disabilities, recently traveled to the Big Apple. Vacationers visited the Museum of Natural History, posed with (wax) celebrities at Madame Tussauds, enjoyed soul food and blues music at B.B. King's and cruised to the Statue of Liberty. For more information on Club Echo, contact David Gasparri, [dgasparri@westchesterarc.org](mailto:dgasparri@westchesterarc.org), 914-949-9300, ext. 3218.



## Matter of Taste 3 Honors David Boies Recognized as Model Employer



David Boies (far left) was honored for his example-setting hiring of people with developmental disabilities. Pictured with him are employees with disabilities and their job coach. "They have done a terrific job," says Boies.

"We all have abilities and we all have disabilities," attorney David Boies told guests at A Matter of Taste 3, Westchester Arc's October 17 gourmet fundraiser at the Westchester Country Club in Rye.

"Life is about finding roles that best match our abilities." The high-profile litigator, known for the Florida vote dispute during the 2000 presidential election and for the Microsoft anti-trust case, was hon-



Nineteen of Westchester County's top restaurants donated expertise and food to the agency's third annual gourmet gala.

ored for his example-setting employment of people with developmental disabilities.

Over 250 supporters attended the event, during which 19 of the county's top restaurants (see listing on page 5) prepared such specialties as lamb shank osso buco and white chocolate mousse-filled sugar cones. Over 50 wines from the world over complemented the dishes.

David Boies, who has dyslexia, is a longtime champion of people with disabilities. He explained that for the past four years, in cooperation with Westchester Arc, he has employed individuals with developmental disabilities to run the mail-room operations of his law firm, Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP. "They bring more care, commitment and joy than you can imagine," he said. Westchester Arc has done a great job of matching people's likes and dislikes with their abilities."

"David is a great boss," said Wayne R., who works at the law firm. "He is nice and treats me very well. I am so happy he was honored by Westchester Arc."

All food, beverages and culinary talent were donated by local entrepreneurs. Music was provided by the Jazz Conspiracy.

Individuals with disabilities created paintings that were auctioned and given as gifts to honoree David Boies and to both Kevin J. Plunkett, Esq., and Peter Herrera, Jr., co-chairs of the event organizing committee. Consumers also designed floral arrangements, packed souvenir bags, made boutonnieres and bused tables. "I'm so excited to volunteer again," declared Michael G., who works in a local restaurant and has bused tables at A Matter of Taste since its inception. "I rushed straight from work to get here."

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, [www.westchesterarc.org/calendar](http://www.westchesterarc.org/calendar).

## Local Businesses Give Generously to *A Matter of Taste 3*

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

An American Bistro

Cafe Ala Carte

Caperberry Events

Captain Lawrence Brewing Company

Club Chefs of Westchester

Crabtree's Kittle House

Eastchester Fish Gourmet

Emilio Ristorante

The Grape Exchange

Great American Barbeque

Harrys of Hartsdale

Jackson & Wheeler

Longford's Own-Made Ice Cream

MacMenamin's Grill and Chefworks

Magnificent Edibles

RG Catering

Ruth's Chris Steak House

Sam's of Gedney Way

Tramonto

Underhills Crossing

Westchester Country Club

Zuppa Restaurant and Lounge

## Conroy Elected NYSARC President

Westchester Arc Foundation President Katharine Wilson Conroy was sworn in as NYSARC president in late October during the state organization's annual convention in Niagara Falls. She was elected to the position by the group's delegate assembly, comprised of representatives from each chapter. Westchester Arc is a chapter of NYSARC, which is the largest not-for-profit agency in the nation serving persons with developmental disabilities.

"I am very excited about becoming NYSARC's president, says Katharine. "It is a great honor."

"Katharine is a true leader," comments Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director. "Her reputation as a lawyer with expertise in trusts and estates makes her an extremely valuable asset to both Westchester Arc and NYSARC."

Over the years, Katharine has served Westchester Arc as treasurer, board member and guardianship committee chair. As president of the Westchester Arc Foundation, she has focused on building a Fund for the Future to ensure the agency's ongoing financial stability. In addition, she has been instrumental in the



Katharine Wilson Conroy

creation of supplemental needs trusts, which enable funds to be set aside for the "extras" that contribute to a person's quality of life without jeopardizing publicly funded benefits. She has also served on NYSARC's legal committee.

## Carvel Donates to Guardianship

The Carvel Foundation has donated \$15,000 to Westchester Arc's guardianship services.

As the local chapter of NYSARC, Westchester Arc serves as legal guardian to 140 adults with developmental disabilities. The agency also provides educational and technical assistance to family members and others who are interested in becoming guardian to an individual

with developmental disabilities who has reached the age of 18 and is unable to make major personal decisions.

"Guardianship is a vital program that is completely dependent on private donations," stresses Nancy Succoso, assistant executive director. "We are so thankful to the Carvel Foundation. Their generous gift will help Westchester Arc to provide continuous, family-like care."

## MBIA Invitational Continues Tradition of Giving



The Shaw family of Croton-on-Hudson, pictured with Emily Perl Kingsley (far left), received the Charles R. Kingsley Award for their activism on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> annual MBIA Invitational raised \$300,000 on September 18 for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics New York-Hudson Valley. Since the first MBIA Invitational in 1985, over \$6 million has been raised for these two organizations.

The event drew a sell-out crowd, with almost 400 participants hitting the links and tennis courts at Anglebrook Golf

Club, Mount Kisco Country Club and Whipoorwill Club. Celebrities in attendance included sports legends Ralph Branca, Emerson Boozer and Rusty Staub.

A highlight of the evening was presentation of the annual Charles R. Kingsley Award to the Shaw family of Croton-on-Hudson for their activism on behalf of individuals with disabilities. Chris and Anne Shaw have been supporters of Westchester

Arc since their son, Ned, started pre-school classes at the agency's pre-school.

"Ned really blossomed at The Children's School," says his mother. "This fall, he is attending a typical first grade class in our home school district."

Gary Dunton, MBIA CEO and event co-chair, gave his personal thanks to all for participating in the event, many of whom have attended for two decades. "The support of our friends and colleagues in the financial services industry has been outstanding. It is truly an honor to be part of a business community that understands the need to put work aside for a day to contribute to something much bigger than ourselves."

Anne Sweazey, executive director of the Westchester Arc Foundation, also expressed appreciation. "The MBIA Invitational provides vital support for our services," she commented. "We are so thankful to MBIA and its staff for their continued dedication to enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities."

For more photos, go to Recent Event Highlights, [www.westchesterarc.org/calendar](http://www.westchesterarc.org/calendar).

## Self-Advocates Connect with the Internet



Self-advocate Bob Smith plans to launch his own website.

Over a billion people worldwide use the Internet for research, recreation, commerce and correspondence. People with

developmental disabilities are no different.

Patsy Ginese began surfing the web a few years ago, while recovering from surgery. "I was bored at home, so I went online to pass the time," he recalls. "At first I just played games. That helped me take my mind off things and

feel better. Then I found out I could look up recipes and other information. Now I go on the Internet to learn."

Vance J. and David S. rely on the Internet for self-expression. A self-advocate, Vance regularly informs Westchester Arc staff of his views on employment, community inclusion and other issues--via e-mail. David S., a writer, draws inspiration by reading about music and plotlines from *Rigoletto*, *La Bohème* and other favorite operas. "I also like to visit the Mercedes website," says David. "My mother drives a Mercedes and I like to keep up with the latest models."

Poet and entrepreneur Bob Smith recently began developing his own website.

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## From Our Executive Director

*Richard P. Swierat*  
Richard P. Swierat

Since our beginnings as an Arc chapter, families, staff and self-advocates have been on the forefront fighting for the rights of all people with disabilities. Efforts have, of course, focused on local, state and national issues within the U.S. During the past year, though, The Arc has participated in drafting the first human rights treaty of the 21st century, which relates to the treatment of people with disabilities throughout the world.

It is estimated that 650 million people, or 10 percent of the world population, has disabilities. Of the 192 nations participating in the United Nations, only 45 have specific legislation protecting that population.

The International Disabilities Rights Monitor (IDRM), founded by Dr. William Kennedy Smith in 2003, reports on the status of inclusion and participation by people with disabilities in 52 countries around the world. The organization's first report was delivered to the United Nations in June 2006, as the ad-hoc committee to develop treaty language was convened. The IDRM reported that:

- Only seven countries have attained a status of "Most Inclusive Nation";
- Over 80 percent of the nations surveyed have some type of law protecting people with disabilities;
- People in rural areas typically experience worse conditions, even in those countries with a status of "Most Inclusive Nation."

Don MacKay of New Zealand, chairman of the ad-hoc committee, opened an August 2006 meeting by thanking the disability community for initiating the process for these discussions. McKay referenced a motto developed by U.S. self-advocates, "Nothing about us, without us," to inspire participants. Sue Swenson, executive director of The Arc of the United States, played an active role in the sessions.

Unfortunately, the group was unable to finalize any agreement. It was a major disappointment that the United States refused to sign an accord because it already has a comprehensive set of laws on disability rights. In response, it was noted by non-U.S. colleagues that these treaties are simply guideposts for reasonable action and not necessarily binding on the signing parties.

### Issues that were easily agreed upon included:

- People have a right to life on an equal basis with others;
- Newborns with disabilities have a right to life and should live with their parents;

- People should have access to public spaces and buildings, as well as transportation, information and communications;
- It is vital that nations change attitudes and combat negative stereotypes and prejudice by promoting the abilities and contributions to society of people with disabilities.

### Some of the disputed issues included:

- Governments should provide for specific protections to people with disabilities living under foreign occupation;
- Nations should provide the same sexual and reproductive health care to people with disabilities as other populations.

This meeting was adjourned in late August 2006 with no treaty but a great deal of momentum. Fifty countries were represented throughout the session, and the expectation is that they will return in 2007 to finalize an agreement. In addition, there is an expectation that the United States will eventually sign on to a treaty.

This is the strength of advocacy and, more importantly, of spreading advocacy beyond our areas of personal responsibility. Arc chapters have created a strong advocacy network that has changed the United States, one community at a time. Now is the time to establish the same influence throughout the world. We will be watching carefully in 2007 and reporting to you.

## Life at Bryant V Keeps Residents Well Rounded



Lenora B. shows off her stamp collection

Move over, Oprah. The ladies of Bryant V have started a new book club, in addition to writing poetry, collecting coins and planting a garden.

"We're very active here," comments Cherry Charlton, assistant residence manager. "Our residents lead quality, well-rounded lives."

House activities are based entirely on the wants and needs of each resident and

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## Entergy Donates \$45,000

Entergy Nuclear Northeast has awarded two grants--totaling \$45,000--to Westchester Arc for the purchase of a new vehicle and installation of energy-efficient windows at several of the agency's residences.

The new vehicle will be used by Westchester Arc's community services. Nearly 500 people with developmental disabilities depend on the agency for personalized community services, including 24-hour crisis intervention, family outreach and Medicaid service coordination. "An additional car will enhance the lives of these individuals and help the agency reach more people in need," notes Alicia Lawrence, program director. "It provides a resource for staff to make more home visits, travel to different communities and offer safe, reliable transport to medical appointments, local shops and other community needs."

New windows will be installed at agency residences in Briarcliff, Croton, Ossining and Scarsdale. Westchester Arc's residential services currently operate 43 residences throughout the county, providing homes for over 200 adults with developmental disabilities. This is the third time Entergy has made an energy conservation gift to the agency.

"Saving energy is part of the agency's ongoing commitment to the quality of our homes," stresses Rosemarie Crisafi, assistant executive director, residential services. "It's about being a responsible member of the community."

A longtime supporter of Westchester Arc, Entergy Corporation is an integrated energy company engaged primarily in electric power production, energy trading and retail distribution, as well as gas transportation.

## Clinic Begins Vocational Rehab



Common items such as combs and pins prove instrumental in determining an individual's strengths, skills and aptitudes.

Today, more than ever, people with developmental disabilities desire community-based employment. To support that goal, Westchester Arc offers pre-vocational training, job placement, onsite job coaching and has recently reinstated vocational rehabilitation counseling.

Administered by the agency's clinical services, vocational rehabilitation helps individuals overcome personal and professional barriers and improve their job performance.

"There is a lot of pressure to do a good job and many people are reluctant to go to a boss or co-worker with a problem," notes masters-prepared counselor Donna Brennan-Barnett. "Rehab counseling provides an outlet to discuss issues and concerns with a trained therapist in a confidential setting."

Donna works one-on-one with individuals to assess strengths and skills and then develops a rehabilitation plan that fits each person's aptitudes, education levels, physical abilities and career goals. Sessions also teach interview techniques, time management and office etiquette. In many cases, rehabilitation counseling has helped an employee retain his or her job.

"There was one individual who needed to take a nap during her lunch break but would always oversleep," says Donna.

"I suggested she use an alarm clock. Now she wakes up with plenty of time to get back to work. As a result, her productivity and self-esteem have increased and her employer is very pleased."

Westchester Arc's clinic is one of the largest healthcare providers to individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State. More than 600 people utilize the clinic's psychotherapy, nutrition, speech, occupational and physical therapy services. For more information, contact Tibi Guzman, director of clinical treatment services, at 914-428-8330, ext. 3401, [tguzman@westchesterarc.org](mailto:tguzman@westchesterarc.org).

### Israel Stander In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Israel Stander. Israel lived in a Westchester Arc residence and was an avid participant in agency-sponsored art classes. Those closest to "Izzy" describe him as having been "charming" and "endearing."

## Westchester Arc Offers More “Choices”



David S. celebrates a year of community-based employment.

Young adults with developmental disabilities now have more community-based choices, thanks to a new program exclusive to Westchester Arc. The service, aptly named “Choices,” combines day habilitation with supported employment services. Unlike traditional day hab programs, “Choices” is delivered entirely in the community; in contrast

Westchester by next year.

“Transitioning to the adult world isn’t always easy for young people or their families,” comments Mashal Gonzalez, community integration coordinator. “This program provides an opportunity for young adults to enhance their social skills, build friendships, increase their work capabilities and grow com-

to most supported employment placements, participants are supervised by staff at all times. The program currently serves individuals in northern and central Westchester, but the agency hopes to expand the program to southern

portable with life in the community.”

Twelve young adults, ages 18-25, currently take part in “Choices,” and activities are based on the skills and interests of each participant. For example, one individual enjoys spending time with animals, so “Choices” set up a volunteer position at Tea Town Nature Preserve in Ossining. Another expressed an interest in the food-service industry, so Westchester Arc partnered with a local Dunkin’ Donuts.

“I’ve received nothing but positive feedback,” reports Ralph Szur, director of life planning. “During a recent transition fair, I was approached by the parent of a young adult with developmental disabilities, who’d noticed “Choices” in action at a McDonald’s in Bedford Hills. She saw one of our job coaches helping an employee with his writing skills and was impressed with the professional way in which she interacted with him. I was thrilled to hear such enthusiastic comments.

## IBM Execs Visit Pre-School

On September 22, Somers-based IBMers lent a helping hand to The Children’s School for Early Development. Led by Nancy Pearson, international marketing vice president for one of the corporation’s key software products, a dozen IBMers spent the day painting, organizing educational supply closets and cleaning the playground after debris from the July tornado had been removed.

The visit was part of the corporation’s “Executive Days of Caring,” a longstanding project providing community service to local agencies involved in health and human services. IBM chose the pre-school in an effort to focus on the significant needs of children.

“I applaud companies such as IBM that encourage employees to give back to the

community,” comments Fran Porcaro, assistant executive director, educational services. “Their visit was a wonderful opportunity for both organizations to partner on a common goal.”

After a busy morning, IBMers enjoyed time with the kids. They shared a pizza lunch, sang songs, recited the alphabet, constructed puzzles and played games.

“The best part of the day was the actual painting of the playroom, providing a restored place for the children to play,



After a day of volunteer work, IBMers enjoy spending time with youngsters at The Children’s School for Early Development.

and spending some time interacting with the children with fun activities. Everyone on the team enjoyed the day,” commented Pearson. “And we valued your passion about the role and mission you have.”



### From The Foundation

*Anne Sweazey*

**Anne Sweazey  
Executive Director**

This is the time of year when growers eagerly count the fruits of the harvest, the time of year they literally get to see the outcome of their labors. The tax year dictates its own growing and creates its own reckoning time, a time to take steps to reduce your taxes for 2006 and better position yourself for the next cycles in 2007 and beyond.

Wisely and creatively used, charitable deductions can be powerful planning tools. When you choose to support charitable causes such as the Westchester Arc Foundation, the government shares the cost in the form of tax savings. Choosing

the right asset to give can make the results even better. For instance, you can claim the full fair market value of donated appreciated securities as a charitable deduction on your tax return, reducing income taxes while avoiding capital gains taxes on the appreciation. The Foundation welcomes securities as gifts.

This year, Congress passed a charitable giving incentive package that contains an item that might be of special interest to those of you who are thinking about supporting the capital campaign. The provision provides an exclusion from gross income of up to \$100,000 for charitable gifts from an individual retirement account (IRA), which would otherwise be included in income. The provision is effective for two years, through 2007. This kind of contribution would be immediately available to Westchester Arc and could be earmarked for the new

building in Hawthorne or for the Fund for the Future.

Those of you who are especially interested in supporting the Fund for the Future-- the long-term capital fund created to support Westchester Arc programs-- may wish to consider a donation in the form of a bequest. A bequest earmarked for the Fund for the Future offers you the satisfaction of knowing you're helping to touch the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families far into the future. Considering your will today may help you build your legacy to the Westchester Arc community tomorrow.

To find out if any of these ideas would benefit you, please consult your financial or tax advisor. For more detailed information on how to give a gift of stock to the Westchester Arc Foundation, call me at 914-428-8330, ext. 3336.

Happy holiday time to you all!

## eDocNY Provides eFFICIENT Document Management Solutions



**New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson (center) congratulates eDocNY on a job well done. "I look forward to working with eDocNY again in the near future," he said.**

In November 2005, Westchester Arc launched its newest document management service for businesses--eDocNY-- which cost effectively converts high vol-

umes of paper-work into digital images.

"In today's job market, it's important to keep up with modern technology," stresses Linda Warner, director of career and business opportunities. "eDocNY has created additional employment opportunities and will

help generate more income for Westchester Arc services."

Employees of eDocNY recently scanned and digitized thousands of build-

ing department records for the town of New Rochelle. The job represented the second phase of a project that began with their converting assessors' records for computer storage. Three employees having developmental disabilities worked at City Hall, where they scanned over 14,000 files containing the building permit history for every structure in New Rochelle, then downloaded the images to an external hard drive for eventual merging with town databases. Because the building records are in everyday use, the ability of eDocNY to perform onsite work was important to the project's success.

Their work was recognized with a special visit from New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson. "I can't thank you enough," he said. "This is such important work, and I don't know how we could have gotten it done without you."

## Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between July 7, 2006, and October 18, 2006.

### IN MEMORY OF ANNE MCGUIRE

Ms. Deborah S. Aiges  
Ms. Kelly Baxter  
Ms. Stacy Berenbaum  
Mr. and Mrs. John Petree Bohman  
Ms. Anne Byrne  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter D. Conyers  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Daulton  
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald DiGiacomo  
Mr. Glenn Ellis Jr.  
Ms. Patricia A. Gift  
Ms. Melanie O. Greco  
Dr. and Mrs. Ira S. Halper  
Ms. Anne E. Hinkel  
Ms. Dorothy Jordan  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Leeds  
Mr. Terence Lennox  
Mr. and Mrs. F. Kevin Lynch  
Mr. and Mrs. Daniel J. Malone  
Mr. and Mrs. Martin F. McGrath  
Ms. Lynn T. Mellott  
Ms. Lisa Palladino  
Ms. Rita Proulx  
Ms. Helen Puff  
Random House, Inc.  
Mr. Steven L. Ross and Ms. Susan F. Scharf  
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Sans  
Ms. Carol Scatorchio

### IN MEMORY OF BENNY DELL'OLIO

Ms. Camille R. Tomao

### IN MEMORY OF MIGUEL MERCED

Northern Westchester League for Retarded Children  
Ms. Rita Ross

### IN MEMORY OF SARA JANE HILLMAN

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Hillman

### IN HONOR OF ANNE SWEAZEY

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Muller

### IN HONOR OF COLLEEN F. CAREW

Littman Krooks LLP  
Bernard Krooks, J.D., L.L.M.

### IN HONOR OF JOSEPH RIGUZZI

Mr. Fred Riguzzi

### IN HONOR OF MR. AND MRS. LEWIS RIPPES

Mr. and Mrs. Morton Ross

### IN HONOR OF MOHAN MEHRA

Mrs. Marie Louise Donarski

### IN HONOR OF JEFF KIRSCHNER

Mr. Melvin Herskovits and Ms. Lucille Kirschner

## Self-Advocates Connect with the Internet

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"I want to reach as many people as I can," he explains.

"I check my e-mail once a day," adds Arthur S. "It's a great way to stay in touch with family and friends. I like to visit the Westchester Arc website sometimes, too. The other day, I found my picture and a story written about me. I felt like I was famous!"

The agency recently redesigned its website to include interactive discussion, more timely news, community-wide event listings and links to scores of websites specializing in developmental disabilities. Check it out for yourself at [www.westchesterarc.org](http://www.westchesterarc.org)!

## Family Experiences Shape Board

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needing this assistance is growing."

**Anne Majsak**, recently elected president, has an 18-year-old son who also attended The Children's School but who now, as a high schooler, goes to movies with the Reunion Club and is looking forward to a "transition weekend" at Respite House. "It's to teach teenagers group living and independence skills," Anne explains, "to prepare them to move out of the family nest as their siblings do."

Anne echoes Theresa's concern that parents have "a place to call" with their questions. "They need to be made aware of the challenges facing their kids as they prepare for the working world, and they need to understand guardianship. There's so much planning that they need to do."

**Leslie Jeris** headed up The Children's School PTA before becoming a board member. "I met so many parents through the pre-school. It really helped me form a network," she says.

"My daughter, Rebecca, is very social and she enjoyed it there. Although she wasn't ready to begin speaking till after she 'graduated,' the teachers helped her build towards it internally. When she began speaking, she already knew every nursery rhyme.

"I'd like to strengthen our advocacy services for young children. During early intervention, kids are 'immersed' in services, then things change and the school district becomes the gatekeeper for funds. It can become controversial and parents need to be taught how to advocate for their kids."

**Rosa Rodriguez** says that son Ethan "flourished" at the pre-school. "We saw tremendous leaps. The teachers hung in there with him." She claims that her other two children benefited as well. "We were introduced to a model that we never thought was possible. The organization opened up doors. These children don't need to live on the periphery. They can coexist with typical kids—learn, grow and be accepted.

"I'd like to see Westchester Arc work with other organizations to research additional therapies. Kids learn in so many different ways.

"We need to build a community that's carrying the torch, front and center, for people with disabilities. This is what they deserve."

## Calendar of Events

**December 4, 2006**

### Westchester Arc's Guardianship Holiday Party

6:00 p.m.

Westchester Marriott Hotel

Tarrytown, New York

Contact: Nancy Succoso,  
914-428-8330, ext. 3319,  
nsuccoso@westchesterarc.org.

**December 13, 2006**

### Staff Recognition Dinner

5:30 p.m.

The Crowne Plaza, Hale Avenue,

White Plains, New York

Contact: Maria Labriola,  
914-949-9300, ext. 3110,  
mlabriola@westchesterarc.org.

**For additional listings,  
visit [www.westchesterarc.org](http://www.westchesterarc.org).**

## Pretty Petals: A New Business Blossoms



Last summer, White Plains day services planted the seeds for their own flower business, Pretty Petals. The venture promotes creativity, while teaching time, teamwork and money management skills. Participants design colorful, unique floral bouquets and then sell the arrangements to agency staff, and plans are afoot to begin offering the service to other White Plains organizations. Profits will be used to fund trips, movie outings and other recreational activities.

"I love flowers. I've always wanted to work in a flower shop and now I feel like I do," comments Lynn B.

## Life at Bryant V Keeps Residents Well Rounded

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Assistant residence manager Michelle Proctor recites poetry written by Marcia P.

also include movie nights, knitting sessions and trips to the mall.

"I really like living at Bryant V," says Jamie C. "I've always wanted to grow flowers and now I have my own garden."

The reading group was formed two months ago at the request of resident Marcia P. "Marcia likes to write poetry and wanted to draw inspiration from other authors," explains Michelle Proctor, assistant residence manager.

Twice a week, residents and staff gather in a circle to read and discuss a literary work of choice. Books range from classic love stories such as *Romeo and Juliet* to the modern day adventure, *Wildfire*.

"The book club is one of our most successful ventures," continues Michelle.

"It teaches language, vocabulary and memory retention, while providing an outlet for residents to socialize and have fun."

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