

Lifetime

fall 2005

Family Resource Day Tackles Tough Issues



Three generations turn out for Westchester Arc's second Family Resource Day.



At Sibshop, kids discuss having a family member with a disability.

On Saturday, October 1, Westchester Arc and community partners tackled a wide array of problems facing the families of people with developmental disabilities. One hundred fifty children and adults attended the agency's second Family Resource Day, held at White Plains High School. Experts addressed controversial New York State laws relating to sexual rights; the challenges to family life when a member has autism; how to "work the system" to obtain the best education possible for a child with disabilities, and much more.

Leslie Walker-Hirsch, former president of the general division of the American Association on Mental Retardation, and Lawrence Faulkner, Westchester Arc general counsel, discussed the frequent conflict between individual rights, health and safety concerns, and respect for family beliefs. "Sexuality is a normal, expected and joyful part of our culture and our humanity," declared Ms. Hirsch. "Even if a person is delayed intellectually, the person's body, emotions and spirit are probably not delayed."

She and Mr. Faulkner agreed that New York State law is "conservative concerning romantic relations" involving adults with developmental disabilities, a topic that Ms. Walker-Hirsch recognized is "very controversial." She devoted much of her presentation to the CIRCLES® paradigm for communicating "what types of touch, talk and trust work in different relationships" so that people with developmental disabilities can build rewarding and mutual emotional attachments.



Leslie Walker-Hirsch talks about how people with developmental disabilities can develop rewarding emotional attachments.

A session on educational advocacy featured panelists who were outspoken in their approaches to navigating the "education maze." Jill Faber, a parent and attorney specializing in issues related to developmental disabilities, explained to families that "the state mandates that a child's education is driven by individual needs."

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From Our President

Mohan Mehra

Many Voices, One Vision

On September 23 and 24, I had an opportunity to attend a unique event in the nation's capital.

Over 2,400 people from across the country, including individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and people who support them, met to produce a shared vision. Called "The Alliance for Full Participation," the conference was sponsored by 11 leading national disability organizations, including The Arc of the United States, United Cerebral Palsy and AAMR. The theme of the meeting was "Many Voices, One Vision." About 100 people represented New York State, including Carolyn Holodak, one of our board members and a self-advocate.

Town Hall Votes

The sessions focused on three areas: building leadership, enhancing quality of supports and services, and self-determination. The highlight of the event was a town hall-type meeting hosted by Frank Sesno of CNN. Touch pad technology was used to poll the audience of over 2,000 people on a number of questions, with the results posted onscreen within seconds. (See page 3 for a summary.)

People with developmental disabilities were a vocal part of this event, and they want to be a part of shaping supports and services. As SABE, a leading self-advocacy group said, "Nothing about us without us."

A number of the sessions reinforced the belief that people with developmental disabilities belong in the community and not

in segregated institutions, sheltered workshops, special schools or nursing homes.

While inclusion in all communities is the ultimate goal, the real way to do this is to connect people to the community. Groups such as Westchester Arc are "bridging organizations" that assist in making these connections. While most communities mean well, they are often clueless about how to make this happen.

Educating the Public

There was considerable discussion of the need to increase the general public's awareness of people with developmental disabilities and their contributions as productive members of the community. A tape of the town hall session would have made a great feature on *CNN Presents*.

All of the 11 sponsoring organizations signed on to a statement of principles that must guide the formulation of future Medicaid policy. Its goal is to ensure access to the program and to promote community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities.

At the end of the conference, the 11 organizations got together and drafted a statement saying that people with developmental disabilities want dignity, respect and full participation for all. It spells out a number of prerequisites to achieving this vision, including the closing of large institutions, real jobs and volunteer opportunities, availability of necessary supports and funding, and decent wages with benefits for direct care workers. State organizations will use the joint statement to guide their priorities. The complete document, along with a statement of principles for Medicaid, is available at the Alliance's website, www.allianceforfull-participation.org.

We should be proud of our chapter's participation in the summit and particularly of Carolyn Holodak, who represented us well! ■



From Our Executive Director

Richard P. Swierat

Richard P. Swierat

Arc Chapters Aid Hurricane Katrina Victims

At this writing, Hurricane Wilma batters the Florida coast, and concerns over the safety of people with special needs is on the minds of community leaders and advocacy organizations. When Katrina devastated New Orleans, the majority of those left stranded or worse were people who could not care for themselves and lacked transportation. Thankfully, this group of people did not include individuals with developmental disabilities. Due to good planning and the support

of a network of advocacy organizations, people with developmental disabilities were moved to safety.

But the story does not end there. We often use the family metaphor when describing the Arc organizations, and the response to Hurricane Katrina victims by Arc chapters throughout the United States represents the best of family supports.

The Arc of the United States was one of the first organizations to establish a dedicated fund in support of individuals served by Arc chapters. The Arc set up immediate discussion and donation opportunities through its website at www.thearc.org. A special page was created on ArcLink (www.thearclink.org; click on "Katrina"). The Arc will channel 100 percent of donated funds to its chapters in the affected areas. There will be no overhead costs deducted, and funds will be used to meet the most immediate needs of food, cloth-

ing, medicine and shelter. In addition, staff who are displaced and in need of employment may contact sister chapters in other states to secure temporary jobs. The fund has now grown beyond \$100,000.

When the hurricane evacuation led people to Texas, Arc chapters throughout that state took individuals with developmental disabilities into their homes. In turn, Arc chapters throughout the nation sent resources to support the Texas chapters in its efforts.

The Arc has 130,000 members in over 1000 chapters throughout the country. We do, indeed, have a large family. But more importantly, we are a close-knit family that remembers to assist those who are faced with difficult life situations. This hurricane season will certainly test our family values. ■

Self-Advocates Take a Stand



Mitchell and Barbara Levitz flank Carolyn Holodak at the national meeting.

On September 23 and 24, self-advocates, family members and social service professionals met to frame a national agenda relating to individuals with developmental disabilities. Here are some results from their town hall-style vote:

- 97 percent believe people with developmental disabilities can live in the community if they have the right supports.

- 93 percent believe it is time to replace the term "mental retardation" in federal and state laws and regulations.
- 79 percent believe that concerns about personal safety are a roadblock to community inclusion.
- 78 percent indicate that, based on personal experience, in regards to people with developmental disabilities, American communities are well meaning but generally clueless.
- 77 percent believe that people with developmental disabilities want to direct their own supports.
- 70 percent believe sheltered workshops must be closed and other alternatives found in the community.
- 68 percent believe having a label hurts people with developmental disabilities because of the stigma.
- 67 percent believe all people with developmental disabilities *can* work.
- 61 percent believe the most important role of community provider organizations is to provide individualized supports.



Homeowner and Self-Advocate



"It doesn't matter what we do as long as we are together," says Arthur of girl friend Shelley.

Westchester Arc employees. During the meeting, he helped to dispel stereotypes concerning people with disabilities as he discussed the joys and obstacles of living in the community. "I live by myself in a condo that I own. I work three days a week at the YMCA and travel around Westchester by public bus," explains Arthur. "I have wants and needs just like you."

friendship and Ralph became Arthur's mentor. He recommended that Arthur speak at agency orientations and helped him design a PowerPoint presentation.

"Many staff members have commented that Arthur's presentation is one of the most memorable parts of orientation," notes Ralph. "It really helps them to see that people with disabilities are capable of so much."

Desiring community employment, Arthur worked with Westchester Arc's supported employment program to find his job at the YMCA, where he folds towels, maintains the exercise area and men's locker room, and orders supplies.

"I'm very thankful to Westchester Arc for all of their support," he says. "They are a wonderful agency that does a lot of good for people."

Prior to living on his own, Arthur shared a home with his mom. "I love my family, but sometimes you need a

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It's a Thursday morning, just before noon, and Arthur S. stares out the window. "My girlfriend Shelley will be here any minute," he says, with a note of excitement. "We're going to lunch at Applebee's."

Arthur has just returned from a speaking engagement at an orientation session for new

Though he's an extremely independent person, Arthur takes comfort in knowing that his family, as well as friends at Westchester Arc, are there for him should he need assistance. Arthur got involved with the agency five years ago after meeting Ralph Szur, director of life planning, at a self-advocacy workshop. The two formed an instant

Golfing for Kids Raises Over \$98,000

The fifth annual Golfing for Kids, held on September 13 at the Westchester Hills Golf Club in White Plains, raised over \$98,000 for The Children's School for Early Development. Two hundred supporters, including Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano and Lyn Brown of *Fox Five News*, attended the event.

In welcoming guests, Children's School Director Fran Porcaro commented, "The generous support from today's event will help the school continue to partner with 17 community-based pre-schools to provide educational and social support to over 200 children with disabilities."

Theresa Mooney, Children's School

PTA co-president, told the crowd, "The pre-school really helped our daughter develop and grow. We are so happy with her progress and extremely grateful to The Children's School." Anne Minihan, a Westchester Arc board member and parent of a recent graduate, also praised the pre-school's dedication.

Event highlights included an evening banquet and happy hour, sponsored by Bridgecom and Cox Nissen. Heather and John Smeriglio won \$10,000 in a cash raffle, while Helene Dursi claimed



County Executive Andrew Spano, wife Brenda and staff.

a London trip for two. Other prizes included tickets to *Saturday Night Live* and a golf vacation in Holden Beach, North Carolina.

An Award-Winning Performance

Workers at The Ann Manzi Center in Mount Kisco got into the spirit of the Emmy Awards by packing the “Ultimate TV Nominee” goodie bags sent to Ellen DeGeneres, Jon Stewart, the stars of *Desperate Housewives*, *Will and Grace*, *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and other famous television personalities. Each bag contained more than 40 amazing new products and was valued at over \$15,000. Goodies included an Effy watch, JBL On Stage speakers, and a \$3000 gift certi-

cate from CY Digital for the purchase of a “Celebrity Package,” including a 65-inch flat screen TV with surround sound.

This project is part of an ongoing partnership between Westchester Arc and Jane Ubell-Meyer, editor-in-chief of Madison & Mulholland, a trend-spotting website and VIP product placement company that creates luxury gift bags for United Airlines first/business class, The Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York, and A-list celebrity events. Earlier this

year, Westchester Arc consumers packed bags for use at Oscar time and during New York City’s Fashion Week.

“It is not only emotionally gratifying to work with the consumers at Westchester Arc, it has been a wise business decision. Over the past four years, we have developed a trust and a solid working relationship,” comments Jane. “I know that they understand my business, and they go the extra lengths to help us out whenever they can.” ■

21st Annual MBIA Invitational Continues Tradition of Giving

The 21st annual MBIA Invitational raised \$330,000 on September 19 for the Westchester Arc Foundation and Special Olympics Hudson Valley. The event continued to draw record crowds, with 450 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 and Emerson Boozer, along with actors Tony LoBianco and John Paul Lavossier. Comedian Jim Morris served as the award banquet’s master of ceremonies. A highlight of the evening was presentation of the annual Charles R. Kingsley Award to the Angi family for their longtime activism on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

Gary Dunton, MBIA CEO and event co-chair, gave his personal thanks to all for participating in the event. “The money we’ve raised this year supports these worthwhile organizations and enables them to provide programs that foster self-esteem, independence and joy in the lives of



Emily Perl Kingsley (center) with the Angi Family.

people with developmental disabilities in our community. What makes this a great day are the camaraderie and the compassion that exist in our industry.”

Anne Sweazey, executive director of the Westchester Arc Foundation, also expressed appreciation. “The MBIA Invitational exemplifies the spirit of giving,” she commented. “We’re so thankful to everyone who generously

donated their time, energy and funds to make this day a success.”

Thomas Hay, executive director of Special Olympics Hudson Valley, noted, “The MBIA Invitational has helped secure the future of those we serve. Working with MBIA maximizes the effectiveness of both Special Olympics and Westchester Arc. We are extremely appreciative for MBIA’s support through the years.”

Trader Joe's and Club Fit Honored



(From left) Ric Swierat, Westchester Arc executive director; Beth Beck and Glen McCarthy of Club Fit; Mohan Mehra, Westchester Arc president, and Anne Majsak, treasurer.

In recognition that October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Trader Joe's of Hartsdale and Club Fit of Briarcliff and Jefferson Valley have been honored for providing opportunities to people with developmental disabilities. NYSARC, Westchester Arc's statewide parent organization, and NYSRA (New York State Rehabilitation Association) both cited the local businesses for their longtime

contributions to building community-based careers.

Trader Joe's was named 2005 Employer of the Year by NYSARC and received a Business and Industry Recognition Award from NYSRA. The gourmet food store employs three individuals affiliated with Westchester Arc as a stockperson, grocery bagger and cart retriever, comprising 15 percent of its total workforce.

Club Fit was recognized by NYSARC with a Supported Employer Recognition Award and by NYSRA with a Business and Industry Recognition Award. The exercise and nutrition center has partnered with Westchester Arc for nearly 10 years and employs six individuals with disabilities.

"Both employers were recognized because they understand people with differing abilities are good employees and fully include them as part of the team," comments NYSRA Vice President Patricia Dowse.

"Westchester Arc nominated Trader Joe's and Club Fit because they have always treated employees who have a disability with sensitivity and respect," notes Kim Spahn, an assistant executive director at the agency. "There was one individual who really wanted to work for the company, yet couldn't start for about five weeks. Trader Joe's was understanding of the person's needs and held the job for them."

Westchester Arc currently partners with over 400 businesses, schools and government agencies to provide job opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Agency programs such as S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources)

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Thank You, Mr. Smith

Bob Smith Inspires Children with Disabilities

Poet and entrepreneur Bob Smith recently visited Blythedale Children's Hospital in Valhalla, where he encouraged youngsters with disabilities to reach for their dreams. The children were so inspired by Bob's *Handmade Poetry* that they decided to write to him. Here are a few excerpts from their letters....

- "Bob, I liked the way you expressed yourself with the Dynavox. It taught me that you could be whatever you want."
- "Thank you for coming to Blythedale. Your poems made me feel good. You have a good personality. I would like to be your friend."
- "Bob, you taught us that people with disabilities could overcome anything

- they set their mind to. It was very important for everyone to hear your story. I liked your poetry. I like to draw. You inspired me to keep doing it. I would like to share in your abilities to inspire others with disabilities."
- "Bob, did you know that I write poetry, too? I hope I am successful as you one day."



From The Foundation

Anne Sweazey
Anne Sweazey
Executive Director

In 2004, Americans gave \$248.5 billion to charity, 2.12 percent of our gross domestic product (GDP). Moreover, the number of U.S. households with a net worth of \$1 million or more rose 21% that year, the largest increase since 1998. In America, there are now 7.5 million millionaire households.

It's not just about a best-selling book; *The Millionaire Next Door* is a reality. These millionaires are the beneficiaries of the commercial and home market real estate boom, the explosion of wealth that characterizes the private equity and hedge fund communities. We are reaching to new and expanded sources of unimaginable affluence. And, in the aggregate, Americans have been giving away to charity almost as much as they collectively save each year.

So much for the big picture. What does this actually mean for us here in Westchester County? At Westchester Arc?

I have a confession to make. I like raising money. I like everything about it: the solidly grounded research, solving the puzzle of human motivation, the art of asking face-to-face, putting together the well-formulated, persuasive proposal, organizing the well-designed, well-received special event.

And here is a second confession: I am grateful that more and more of you are assisting with fundraising to sustain the programs of Westchester Arc. You are doing this as board members, as committee members for the MBIA Invitational and Tour de Bresnan, Matter of Taste 2 and Golfing for Kids events, and as advance workers for the capital campaign. Gradually, the joy of raising money to enable Westchester Arc to realize its vision is taking hold. You are the agents who transform Westchester Arc's vision into reality by eliciting that magic word, "yes," from an individual, a foundation officer or a business executive.

What a thrill! What a high!

Here is a third confession: We can do better. Are we learning adequately from the successes of others? Are we learning from the quintessential special event that sends the donor home thanking you for the opportunity? From the direct mail solicitation that breaks through the clutter of the mailbox to say "we need your help" with an appeal that can't be denied? From the cultivation of leadership that takes off with powerful, peer-driven asking? We can do better. This is one of the richest counties in the richest country on earth. While local, state and federal governments have indispensable roles to play, as do businesses, we have yet to witness the full flowering of philanthropy in our country, in our county or at Westchester Arc.

I am proud to be your partner as you go about your business as fundraising volunteers with energy, spirit and pride, turning prospects into donors and opportunities into realities. ■

Psychotherapy Promotes Healthy Living

As one of the largest healthcare providers to individuals with developmental disabilities in New York State, Westchester Arc's clinical services are constantly evolving to meet the needs of its 575 consumers. Recently, the clinic has emphasized the importance of psychotherapy to address clinical symptoms such as depression, anxiety and interpersonal conflicts and to foster increased independence.

"We have seen an increased need for services to individuals who are dually diagnosed as having a developmental dis-

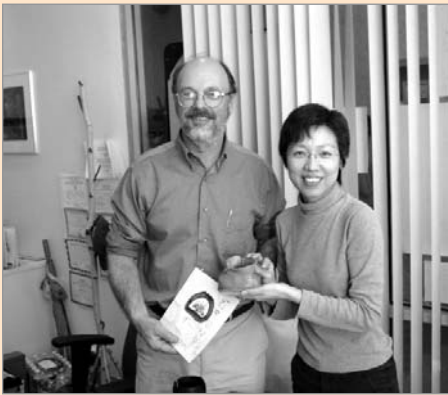
ability and psychiatric illness," comments Tibi Guzman, director of clinical treatment services. "The clinic is responding to the growing needs of our consumers as they embrace greater independence and integration into the community." An increasing number of individuals are seeking treatment for depression, anxiety, aggressive behavior and other disorders.

"Many people are reluctant to go to a friend or family member with a problem or concern. Psychotherapy provides an outlet for individuals to discuss their feel-

ings with a trained therapist in a private, personalized session. In some cases, psychotherapy can establish a personal connection a person may not have had," explains masters prepared psychologist Gretchen Barnable. "For example, a consumer whose depression and anxiety were jeopardizing her job placement was able to maintain her employment by participating in psychotherapeutic services. After receiving psychotherapy, she increased her self-esteem, could better relate to others and obtained a job in the community." ■



Hong Kong Visitors



Vltti Epp of the St. James Settlement in Hong Kong presents Ralph Szur with a special gift.

Westchester Arc recently participated in a cross-cultural exchange of ideas with the Saint James Settlement, a Hong Kong agency serving individuals with developmental disabilities. Ralph Szur, Westchester Arc's coordinator of life planning; Bernadette Carroll, life planner, and Alicia Lawrence, director of service coordination, met with seven members of the Saint James staff to discuss Westchester Arc's innovative approaches to service coordination, person-centered planning and Everyday Heroes. Everyday Heroes work one-on-one with residents in agency-maintained homes to help them achieve personal goals and realize their dreams.

"Both groups were inspired by the meeting," comments Ralph. "Saint James learned about planning for one person at a time, while we were really impressed with the way Saint James effectively used the arts as a vehicle of expression and empowerment."

Representatives from Saint James presented Westchester Arc with a silk banner and ceramic artwork made by individuals with developmental disabilities. After the meeting, all enjoyed a traditional American meal at Pizzeria Uno.

Job Club Encourages Inclusion, Independence



Job Clubs help individuals working in the community stay in touch with friends.

Westchester Arc's Yonkers and Mount Kisco Job Clubs help consumers who have moved from a workshop setting to community-based employment stay in touch with one another.

The Yonkers Job Club was established over 20 years ago. "Consumers missed the camaraderie of the workshops, and there were some things about working in the community they didn't understand," says Program Coordinator Arnie Silverberg. "The Yonkers Job Club provides an informal setting where consumers can learn practical job tips while catching up with their friends." Participants meet twice a month at The Stella and Simon Sheib Center in Yonkers, in addition to enjoying community activities such as bowling and trips to Six Flag's Great Adventure.

The Mount Kisco Job Club was established three years ago by Job Placement Specialists Sal Lorello and Michelle Brooks. The club's 15 members join Sal and

Michelle for quarterly meetings at Belizzi's restaurant in Mount Kisco, where they share a meal and discuss career issues. A recent topic was how to read a paycheck, with explanations of how wages, hours, time-off accrual, social security and income tax deductions are reflected. Other subjects have included avoiding excessive vacation time and how to earn a raise.

"The Mount Kisco Job Club is a great way for consumers to encourage and inspire one another," comments Sal. "Having the meetings in public settings also helps participants grow more comfortable with the community and promotes inclusion."

The White Plains Job Club is a more recent addition. Established in 2005 by Shari Lewitt, director of career supports, the club had its first meeting at Pizza and Brew in Scarsdale on October 6. Twenty participants, along with four Westchester Arc staff members and two parents, attended. ■

Peachy Keen: Adult Day Services Sponsors Peach Festival



Over 70 people attended day habilitation's peach festival.

Over 70 people gathered at The Ann Manzi Center in Mount Kisco on September 13 for Westchester Arc's first-ever Peach Festival, sponsored by adult day services. Participants learned facts and recited poetry about peaches, then enjoyed a peach piñata, penny toss and live entertainment by local musician Justin O'Leary. Arts and crafts, as well as face painting, encouraged creative thinking.

"I like learning about peaches and getting my face painted. This is a marvelous day," commented attendee Duane G.

Another highlight of the day was the art show, featuring paintings, drawings, and a quilt created by consumers. Festivities concluded with a peach cook-off. Winning dishes were peach cobbler (Ossining), upside down cake (Yonkers) and peach-banana smoothies (White Plains). ■

Trader Joe's and Club Fit Honored

Continued from page 6

and supportive employment provide one-on-one job training sessions on work ethic, job skills and interview techniques. The agency then collaborates with local businesses and other organizations to

identify career opportunities matching the skills and interests of job seekers. Onsite job coaching by Westchester Arc staff facilitates successful placements and ongoing development of employees' professional capabilities. ■

Partners

Westchester Arc works with 400 businesses, government agencies and other organizations to identify career opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Here are two partnerships....

Trader Joe's
215 North Central Avenue
Hartsdale, NY 10530
(914) 997-1960

Trader Joe's is a longtime employer of individuals with developmental disabilities. The gourmet grocery store was recently honored by both NYSARC and NYSRA (New York State Rehabilitation Association). For more information on Trader Joe's, see the article on page 6.

The Pet Company
(Jefferson Valley Mall)
650 Lee Boulevard
Yorktown Heights, NY 10598
(914) 962-1343

The Pet Company currently employs a Westchester Arc consumer as an animal care assistant. Store Manager Nicole Ponce works closely with Westchester Arc's S.T.A.R. (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) program to help the employee understand and perform her job responsibilities. This Pet Company provides a safe, comfortable environment, where the employee is treated with sensitivity and respect.

Consumers Volunteer for Halloween Festivities

Forty individuals from Westchester Arc's adult day and vocational services joined other volunteers at Van Cortland Manor in Croton-on-Hudson on October 5, 6 and 7 to prepare pumpkins for the Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze. The "Blaze" is a new Halloween event sponsored by the Historic Hudson Valley, a network of six historic sites in Sleepy Hollow Country and the Great Estates region.

"We simply could not have been ready in time for the kick-off of the Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze without the help of our friends at Westchester Arc," says Althea Corey, site director at Van Cortland Manor. "They were a fun, dedicated group of

scoopers and an integral part of the process."

Participants joined Girl Scouts, high school students and Historic Hudson Valley staff in scooping and hand-carving 3,000 pumpkins that were used in a Jack O'Lantern Garden, Scarecrow Avalanche, Jack O'Lantern Aquarium and other spooky scenarios.

The activity helped individuals build motor and teamwork skills and encouraged creative thinking. "I had so much fun volunteering for this event,"



Westchester Arc provided more volunteers than any other participating organization.

comments Charles W. "I love Halloween, and I'm happy I could help others celebrate it." ■

Homeowner and Self-Advocate

Continued from page 4

little privacy," he comments. So with the help of his sister and brother-in-law, Arthur bought a condo in Yonkers. "I'm a lot more self-confident since I started living on my own."

In his spare time, Arthur enjoys hanging out with Shelley. They go out for dinner, take trips to Atlantic City and walk around Manhattan. "It doesn't matter what we do, as long as we're together," says Arthur.

And speaking of Shelley, here she is. Right on time and ready to go. Arthur springs from his chair and heads for the door. But not without offering one last comment. "To anyone with a disability, I want to say, the best way to become independent is to become a self-advocate." ■

Echo College Graduates to Bigger Campus



Jane Y., Julissa L., Mark E. and Brian M. sample college life.

Echo College, held from July 2 to 9, moved to the campus of Western Connecticut State University in Danbury this year.

"The move couldn't have worked out better," comments Annabel Bayon, recreation specialist. "It was a much bigger, more populated campus. Students and staff were friendly, outgoing and really made us feel at home."

Echo College gives individuals who are aged 16 to 25 and living at home the chance to sam-

ple college life. Fifteen attendees ate in the dining hall, slept in the dorms, went to the gymnasium, explored the campus and took courses.

New classes this year, "Horticulture" and "Socializing," taught career and life skills, while trips to the movies and the Danbury Railway Museum promoted community inclusion.

"Echo College was a lot of fun. I liked the art classes and hanging out with my friends. I'd give it an A," says Daniel S. ■

In Memoriam

The board of directors, staff and entire Westchester Arc community mourn the passing of Ellis Gaines. Ellis was known throughout the agency for his outgoing personality, great sense of humor and love for all things Elvis. He could sing every Elvis song, recite lines from each

Elvis movie and even perform Elvis impersonations. In 2002, Westchester Arc helped Ellis realize a lifelong dream by taking him to Graceland. Ellis lived in a Westchester Arc residence and was very active with the agency's recreation department. ■

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between July 18 and October 13, 2005

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

IN MEMORY OF ANDREW KANISCHAK
Mr. Paul Kanischak

IN MEMORY OF RITA M. WELCH
Mr. Charles Welch

**IN HONOR OF KATHARINE
& JACK CONROY**
Ms. Lauren Lindstrom

**IN HONOR OF LEE GIBBS'
85TH BIRTHDAY**
Ms. Sylvia Liebman

**IN HONOR OF ALAN AND
KEITH HOLBECK**
Mr. and Mrs. Roy Holbeck

IN HONOR OF TIMMY PALADINO
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Curley

IN HONOR OF GENE PORCARO
Mr. Sloan Barnett
Mr. Andrew K. Levi

**IN HONOR OF DANIEL POTTER'S
BAR MITZVAH**
Ms. Joanne Ruckel

IN HONOR OF NOLAN SPITZER
Ms. Elsie F. Allen
Mark A. Abdoo and Joann
Alperstein-Abdoo
Mr. and Mrs. Moshe Bronstein
Mrs. Jan Brownell-Chodkowski
Mr. Scott D. Corrigan
Ms. Eileen F. Divernieri
Ms. Katherine Dugan
Ms. Leslie Forrest
Ms. Simone Blau Gell
Heidi Ann Gesson

Jessica Greher
Ms. Lucyna Kaminska
Mr. Gary Karakula
Mr. and Mrs. A. Michael Maffei
Polly Samuels McLean
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Meunkle
Mr. and Mrs. John T. Moran
Bank O'Beyond
Mr. David Reichenbaum
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sculco
Mr. Christopher Solomos
Ms. Michelle A. Solomos
Charles Soulias Tree Care, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick J. Whalen

**IN HONOR OF THE TEACHING
STAFF AT CSED**
Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Ward

**IN HONOR OF MRS. ISABELLE
WEXLER'S NEW GREAT
GRANDDAUGHTER**
Ms. Matilda Tell

**IN HONOR OF LARRY WOOD &
STEPHANIE CONOLLY'S WEDDING**
Mr. and Mrs. Mark A. Alimena
Mr. and Mrs. Julian M. Bartle
Mr. and Mrs. George P. Beach II
Ms. and Mr. Paul Byrnes
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Conolly
Ms. Patricia De Benedictus
Mr. and Mrs. Keith DeMoura
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen D. Ebinger
Mr. Preston L. Felton
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen J. Harrison
Sean and Yong Murphy
Ms. Rosalie Pell
Ms. Lori J. Scheuermann
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wright
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence P. Wood

Resources

Americans with Disabilities Act

www.ada.gov

This website, run by the U.S. Department of Justice, provides the latest news and information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, including new and proposed regulations, guidelines and how to file a claim. The website also features links to educational opportunities, employment and health care.

Disability Information

www.disabilityinfo.gov

This website was created by the U.S. federal government to provide people with disabilities and their families, as well as employers and service providers, with information on civil rights, community life, education, employment, housing, health, income support, technology and transportation.

New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC)

<http://ddpc.state.ny.us>

This website is a direct link to the New York State DDPC, a federally funded state agency responsible for developing new ways to improve services and supports to New Yorkers with developmental disabilities. It contains information on community involvement, employment, recreation and housing throughout the state and links to guardianship forms, customer satisfaction surveys and upcoming events.

Family Resource Day Tackles Tough Issues

Continued from page 1

"School districts can't establish their own policies," added Fran Porcaro, director of Westchester Arc's Children's School for Early Development.

Three generations of panelists de-

scribed in emotional terms how the entire family unit is affected when a member has autism. Moderator Theodore Roth, Ph.D., noted that a common reaction is to focus family resources on the child with the disability, overlooking the rest of the family's needs. Other speakers described situations in which not all family members recognize and accept the consequences of a child's

autism at the same time. These "personal schedules" can themselves cause stress.

Additional sessions throughout the day covered the regulatory and emotional aspects of residential planning; behavior management for school success; transitioning to adult services, and legal and financial planning. An all-Spanish workshop provided an overview of Westchester Arc services. ■

Calendar of Events

December 3, 2005

Respite Open House

1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

622 Manhattan Avenue

Thornwood, NY 10594

December 5, 2005

Guardianship Holiday Party

6:00 pm - 9:00 p.m.

Reservations required

Westchester Marriott, Tarrytown Road

Tarrytown, New York

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

Recycling Center Workers Aid Youngster

Workers at the Westchester Arc Recycling Center in Mount Kisco recently "snapped" into action to help a two-year-old boy get medical treatment for cerebral palsy and cystic fibrosis. The center partnered with the St. Charles A.M.E. Zion Church in Sparkill, New York, to collect snap tops from aluminum cans for donation to the youngster's community treatment center. The treatment center, in turn, recycled the snap tops to help offset the cost of the youngster's care.

"We collect about three to four million cans a year, which can still be recy-

clad without the snap intact, so this project has provided a virtually loss-free means for Westchester Arc to help others in need," comments Miguel Merced, supervisor at the recycling center. "It has also increased the morale and self-confidence of our workers."

"Our church, this little boy and his family are very grateful for our partnership with Westchester Arc. They are a kind, thoughtful agency doing wonderful things," says Reverend Sanders of the St. Charles A.M.E. Zion Church. ■

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