

Westchester D.A. Jeanine Pirro Praises Job Progress for People with Disabilities

Westchester ARC Honors Employers



Daniel Bauchman (center), who works for the Westchester County Clerk's Office, was cited as a role model for individuals with developmental disabilities. Here he's pictured with Sandy Miller, director of public affairs, Con Edison; Ric Swierat, executive director, Westchester ARC; Joe Petri, regional manager, Con Edison, and Mohan Mehra, president, Westchester ARC.

"We have people working in the D.A.'s office with developmental disabilities," began Westchester County District Attorney Jeanine Pirro, delivering keynote remarks at the agency's Employer Recognition Breakfast on March 11 at the Hilton Tarrytown. "Everyone has something to offer," she continued. "People are entitled to be appreciated for who they are and what they do.... We empower individuals in my job and so does Westchester ARC."

The annual event, attended by nearly 200 representatives of business, education and government, celebrated West-



Westchester County District Attorney Jeanine Pirro with Kim, one of the hundreds of individuals with developmental disabilities currently working in community-based jobs.

chester ARC's 35 years of job placement experience and was part of the agency's recognition of March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month.

"Our society is judged by the way we treat people," Pirro declared. "People who watch and don't do anything, don't try to help, are making a choice. Then I see people who go out of their way and make good choices to help other people. You are those people," she said to the audience, a sampling of the 250 employers who have worked with Westchester ARC over the years to build career options for people with disabilities. "The leadership of Westchester

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Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March was Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, a time to highlight achievements and issues relating to the people Westchester ARC has served for the past 55 years.

Our annual Employer Recognition Breakfast (lead story, this page) celebrated decades of successful partici-

pation by our consumers in the workforce, while "Art with Heart," the agency's traveling artshow (see p.10) was enthusiastically embraced by the community.

County Executive Andrew J. Spano issued a proclamation recognizing the accomplishments of people with disabilities and renewed the government's "commitment to removing

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westchester
ARC Lifetime
spring 2004



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From
Our
President

Mohan Mehra

Mohan Mehra

Our Employer Recognition Breakfast on March 11 was an inspiring celebration of the agency's 35 years of experience identifying job opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. Today we have 340 consumers working in 140 community-based locations throughout Westchester County. About one fourth of them have been in their jobs for over four years. Another 250 consumers work at agency locations in White Plains, Yonkers and Mount Kisco.

This great success has depended on hundreds of partnerships forged through the years with business, government and education. These enlightened organizations recognize the great value that people with developmental disabilities bring to the workplace in terms of reliability, low turnover, increased productivity and high morale. The availability of agency-provided, onsite job coaches, as well as tax credits and wage reimbursements, enhance what is obviously good business and good citizenship.

Westchester ARC matches individual job seekers' skills with

employer needs. We utilize "job carving," a technique to probe the needs of prospective employers. We analyze an organization's operations to identify repetitive tasks that do not make the best use of a current employee's time. We then work with the employer to combine such tasks into a position matching the skills of our consumers. We understand the aspirations and abilities of our consumers because of the person-centered planning that is key to our career services. It's a win-win approach that increases the productivity of all concerned.

Mount Kisco Frame Shop owner Bruce Macaulay, honored at the recognition breakfast, recently told *The Journal News* he wouldn't "even want to think about running his business without" consumer Richard G. "In the 16 years he's been with me, I think he's missed three days of work." Robin Henry, administrative partner at the Law firm of Boies, Schiller and Flexner, LLP, has repeatedly talked of how the six employees from Westchester ARC have helped "humanize our office," in addition to being productive.

Individuals with developmental disabilities are a valuable social resource. If you are interested in discussing employment opportunities for our consumers, please contact Denise Brown, 914-681-0656, ext. 232, or dbrown@westchesterarc.org, for more information.

Early Intervention Gives Kids a Head Start

One of the many services offered by our Children's School for Early Development is its early intervention program for children who are three or younger.

"Early intervention is absolutely vital to a child's progress," stresses Kathleen Higgins, a service coordinator and educational advocate at the pre-school. "By starting intervention at a young age, a child has a better

chance of reaching his or her true potential. I have seen children enter pre-school speaking full sentences as a result of early intervention. Some attend typical kindergarten classes in their home school district. I don't think they would have had that chance without early intervention."

She explains that the first step in early intervention is determining

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Tots Embrace Technology

A colorful, kid-friendly computer—the Little Tikes Young Explorer—was recently installed at the pre-school's inclusionary classroom in Yorktown. Since 1999, computers have provided an important enhancement to our program's other learning activities. To date, they are also available at the school's Hawthorne, Ossining, Boys and Girls Club and County Children's Center locations.

"I think integration of technology in the classroom is important," says Brian Spinler, a teacher at Yorktown. "Teachers and aides use the computer to reinforce math, science and social skills the kids are learning throughout the day. Using a key-

board helps define motor skills at the same time that it requires the children to share, interact and be respectful with each other." The computers come with a bench for two, which calls for socializing and teamwork.

Funding for the computers has come from The Children's School PTA, led by PTA President Leslie Jerris, who has also been instrumental in the *Golfing for Kids* fundraiser. "Leslie's hard work with the PTA has also paid for books and other essential supplies for our students," says Fran Porcaro, assistant executive director, educational services. "The active involvement of our parents is really key to our success."

Agency Launches Theater Workshop



Sue Swenson, vice president, The Arc of the United States, recently presented \$5,000 to Westchester ARC to help fund Echo Onstage, a new summer day camp, created in partnership with Westco Productions. With her are Mohan Mehra, president, and Ric Swierat, executive director, Westchester ARC. Scheduled for June 28 to July 2, Echo Onstage will feature theater arts.

For information, contact Francesca Piacentino, (914) 428-8330, ext. 3219.

Pre-School Develops Communication Program for Children with Autism

As the first school in New York State to provide day-long, community-based classes for children with autism, The Children's School for Early Development has played a pioneering role. Behavior analyst Christina Burk trains the entire staff in state-of-the-art teaching techniques, and the school has a contract with Dr. Vincent Carbone, a nationally recognized expert in learning environments for individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities.

Classes at the school's central location in Hawthorne, as well as those in community-based settings, use applied behavior analysis (ABA), with special emphasis on tracking verbal behavior (VB). Children are taught functional communication, academic, social and other skills

using techniques that have proven highly successful with children diagnosed with autism. These methods are derived from B.F. Skinner's legendary behavioral studies and have been adapted for the pre-school by teachers Helga Coiro, Dona Delohery, Jacqueline Picchione and Patricia Werner.

Teaching verbal behavior requires a combination of intensive, highly structured, techniques with a flexible, natural approach to learning speech and communication patterns. Individualized speech therapy is mixed with community activities such as cooking and art projects. Although activities are structured, they are designed to be fun to motivate students and encourage communication transferable to non-classroom experiences.

"The more you know about a student, the more effective you can be in helping them achieve their full potential," says Patricia. "Everyone here at The Children's School works really hard to ensure our students have a positive learning environment, and I think the addition of verbal behavior has been really helpful to most of our students."

As a result of the ABA/VB program, children with autism have made significant gains in language and participation skills. By the time they are ready to graduate from pre-school, many children who were once non-verbal are speaking in full sentences, telling jokes and prepared to attend mainstream kindergarten classes.



From Our
Foundation
President

Katharine Wilson Conroy
Katharine Wilson Conroy

Pooled Supplemental Needs Trusts (SNTs) are important financial instruments to consider in order to protect the financial resources of loved ones with developmental disabilities. Bequests of money or property made in a will can affect a consumer's eligibility for government benefits. Placing a bank account in trust for a person with disabilities can affect entitlements upon the death of the bank account holder.

SNTs are means of funding services, activities and supplies not covered by public programs without reducing the consumer's government entitlements or being subject to income and inheritance taxes. They can make the difference when it comes to quality of life—whether that means a computer, a special vacation or certain medical supplies. In addition, by designating the Westchester ARC Foundation to receive a portion of funds remaining upon the consumer's death, SNTs are an excellent way of demonstrating continued commitment to the larger community of consumers and their families.

The Westchester ARC Foundation has designated five trustees to oversee operation of two newly

established SNTs, which are ready to accept funds from interested parties:

Community Trust I is a third-party trust established by a family member or friend on behalf of an individual with disabilities. The consumer can draw upon funds both during and after the contributor's lifetime.

Community Trust II enables an individual with a disability to deposit his or her own assets to prevent their affecting Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or other government entitlements.

Consumers and family members will soon be invited to sessions on how to assess the role that these trusts could play in their personal financial planning. In the meantime, contact Anne Sweazey, 914-428-8330, ext. 3336, asweazey@westchesterarc.org, for more information.

Like Family....

Guardianship Program Offers Long-Term Care with Personal Touch

Sometimes people with developmental disabilities require continued help making certain decisions or caring for themselves when they reach the age of 18. If a family member isn't available, Westchester ARC, as the local agent of NYSARC, can serve as legal guardian.

What makes our guardianship program so special is our commitment to person-centered services. Guardianship advocates Sandra Rosario and Joneen DeCicco assist individuals with all aspects of their lives, from planning birthday parties to establishing a home. Along with Assistant Executive Director Nancy Succoso, they handle about 40 individual cases and are always available, no matter

the day or time. But for Sandra and Joneen, being a guardianship advocate isn't about what they have to give up, it's about the feeling they get when they help someone.

"One of my consumers visits me every day. We talk about everything in his life and have gotten really close. I think he takes comfort in having someone there for him who's like family. And I take comfort in being there for him," says Sandra.

A nine-member Guardianship Committee holds monthly meetings at which insights are shared on providing the best care possible. "I hate to miss a meeting because it would mean missing two hours of shared stories about human courage and compassion," comments committee member, Ruth Dewey.

"Guardianship is about putting the needs of an individual first. We really get to know those we care for. To me, they're all family," says Judith Solomon, another committee member.

The guardianship program also educates family members about the need to become legal guardians and offers life planning assistance. Due to improvements in healthcare, people with developmental disabilities are enjoying longer lives, making guardianship an increasingly important service. Financial support comes from private grants and individual donations. For more information on the guardianship program, call Nancy Succoso, (914) 428-8330, ext. 3119, or Sandra Rosario, ext. 3290.



Westchester D.A. Jeanine Pirro Praises Job Progress

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ARC and its partners set a new standard that is more open, welcoming, understanding and accepting of those who embody the diversity in our community.... The inclusion of every member in our society, of every talent and walk of life is what makes Westchester the great place that it is."

Pirro was followed at the podium by White Plains Mayor Joseph



White Plains Mayor Joseph Delfino received an award for his support of working opportunities for people with disabilities. With him is Linda Warner, director of career and business opportunities.

Delfino, who received an award for his ongoing commitment to including persons with disabilities in the workforce. The mayor spoke of a "renaissance" in White Plains, emphasizing that while the city's "brick and mortar" achievements are important, "helping others is what life is all about."

Daniel Bauchman, who works for the Westchester County Clerk's Office, was cited as a role model for individuals with disabilities. He received The Anthony Cannata Memorial Award, a New York State Assembly certificate of merit and a proclamation from the County Clerk's Office.

Westchester ARC Executive Director Richard P. Swierat distributed awards to two dozen organizations for their leadership in job development. Honorees ranged from a small, family-owned business to multinationals. They have provided jobs in offices and food service, in retail locations and on maintenance crews. The Harrison, Katonah-Lewisboro, Rye Neck and White Plains school systems were praised for their support of Westchester ARC's S.T.A.R. program (Students in Transition Accessing Resources) in preparing high schoolers with developmental disabilities for the working world.

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

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discriminatory practices which might prevent (them) from reaching their full potential."

Our Children's School for Early Development unveiled a mural (see p.8) honoring longtime financial supporters. Over half of the pre-school's 2003 graduating class progressed to regular kindergarten settings.

Visit our website at www.westchesterarc.org to view clippings from *The Journal News* and *The Westchester County Business Journal* and *The New York Times* that focus on the progress being made by people with developmental disabilities.

2004 Employer Recognition Breakfast Honorees

Honoring His Honor

Mayor Joseph Delfino

Government Advocate

Glen Hockley

New Business Partnership

Coldwell Banker

Verizon

Educational Partnership

Rye Neck School District

Harrison School District

Katonah-Lewisboro School District

White Plains School District

Long-Standing Employer

Fuji Photo Film USA, Inc.

Mount Kisco Frame Shop

SYMS

Union Child Day Care Center

Yonkers Office of the Ageing

Youth Enhancement

Belli Bambini Early Childhood Center

Pappalardo, Tombini and Wolff, LLC

Civic Partnership

Town of Greenburgh,

Department of Public Works

Employment Development

Con Edison

FLIK International at the Westchester Medical Center

Kohl's

Sodexo at the New York Medical College

Employment Opportunity

Jewish Community Center of Mid-Westchester

Port Chester Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre

ShopRite

Anthony Cannata Memorial Employee

Daniel Bauchman



From Our
Executive
Director

Richard P. Swierat

Our June 1 annual meeting will be a time to reflect on decades of progress as Westchester ARC celebrates its 55th anniversary. Any vibrant organization must evolve over time, and the agency has certainly done so, while remaining committed to the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.

What have we come to embody during half a century's struggle against stereotypes? First of all, we stand for lifelong service to our consumers, for enriching their opportunities from the moment of diagnosis through senior years filled with dignity. We believe that knowing and supporting an individual through each of life's phases makes us a more skilled service provider as our consumers strive to build well-rounded lives.

We provide one-on-one teaching to toddlers with special needs. On-campus educational and social experiences to young adults through Echo College. Career opportunities that build self-confidence and independence.

Secondly, Westchester ARC stands for inclusion and its beneficial ripple effect through the community. When early intervention and community-based pre-school enables a five-year-old with developmental disabilities to attend public kindergarten with minimal supports, everyone benefits.

A recent *Journal News* article on employment for people with disabilities noted that one of our consumers, Raymond Frost, had been working at Petco for seven years, "four years and 10 months longer than the median tenure of retail workers in this country...." Low employee turnover translates to enormous cost savings for employers, and our consumers are noted for their long-term commitment to their jobs.

The examples go on and on. So come to the annual meeting on June 1 in Tarrytown and join us in celebrating the accomplishments of our consumers and committed staff.

Consumers Encouraged to Vote

Politicians aren't the only ones asking for votes in the upcoming election. Melanie Fields, Westchester ARC's director of staff training, is hard at work educating consumers and staff about the voting rights of people with disabilities.

"It's a common misconception that individuals with developmental disabilities aren't allowed to vote, but they cannot be denied that right," says Melanie. "It's important for our consumers to know that they have just as much say in the outcome of an election as anyone else. That's empowerment."

Over the last several months, Melanie has assembled information pamphlets and spoken to consumers at Westchester ARC residences about this subject. She notes that while there may be factors complicating the voting process for a person with disabilities, they can be overcome.

"If an individual needs help filling out a ballot, they can ask someone to go into the booth with them— either someone they select or assigned election workers from the Democratic and Republican Parties. It's key that people know they have choices,"

"This is one more way that Westchester ARC is working for the inclusion of our consumers in community life," comments Executive Director Ric Swierat. "They hold down jobs, do volunteer work, pay taxes. Voting is their right and responsibility."

For more information on voting rights and registration, contact Melanie Fields, 914-681-0650, ext. 3312.

Letters

Every day Westchester ARC receives letters from consumer families and other community members. Your opinions matter, as we work to provide ever better service to our consumers. We will collect examples of your correspondence from throughout the agency, or you can email *Lifetime* directly—cbahan@westchesterarc.org.

A Young Volunteer Considers a Career

After spending the last month with (one of the agency's Day Habilitation groups)..., I have grown to appreciate and understand the disabled population so much more...., I loved working with the consumers, as well as the staff....After doing volunteer work with you for about a month, I realized that this is a potential career for me....Obviously, at times, things were somewhat stressful, but the staff has a great way of making it all seem less hectic....I would like to thank you, again, for this amazing opportunity that not a lot of people get at my age....

Krissi Olton, High School Student



MBIA Invitational Turns 20 on September 20

Break out your golf clubs and tennis rackets, and take a swing in support of Westchester ARC and Westchester-Putnam Special Olympics. On Monday, September 20, MBIA will host its 20th annual Invitational, benefiting children and adults with developmental disabilities. The MBIA Invitational is the largest event of its kind in New York State, featuring a day of golf, tennis and goodwill at three of the county's premier clubs—Mount Kisco Country Club, Whippoorwill Club and Brae Burn Country Club.

The MBIA Invitational is made possible through financial sponsorships and the hard work of 17 committee members, who spend seven months working out the details—



MBIA executive committee members standing from left are Regina Moore, Barry Steelman, Jerry Peters, John Zanzarella, Dick Mann, Anne Sweazey, Lois Baldwin, Robbie Morris, Elyse Fowler, Deidre Christiansen. Seated from left are Andrea Madden, Michael Ballinger, executive director, and Maryann Martini.

running ads, securing sponsors, arranging celebrity appearances and securing raffle prizes. On the day of the event, more than 30 volunteers organize golf and tennis schedules, arrange raffles and coordinate the evening's entertainment. "Everyone on

the committee works really hard to ensure that the day is enjoyable and memorable for all," says committee member Elyse Fowler.

This year's MBIA Invitational promises to be the best yet. Guests will rub elbows with nationally known sports personalities and other celebrities, enjoy a cocktail reception and attend an awards banquet under the stars.

Last year's efforts raised over \$330,000 for two great causes, and with your help, 2004 will be another outstanding year. For more information or to register for the MBIA Invitational, call Elyse Fowler, (914) 428-8330, ext. 3027.

Home is Where Westchester ARC's Heart Is

Twenty-five Westchester ARC staff members have participated in the agency-facilitated Employer Assisted Housing Program (see Summer 2003 *Lifetime*), with one person in the process of purchasing a home and another enabled to make important improvements.

"I've been able to install new windows and to invest in some landscaping," explains Elyse Fowler, a senior development officer at the agency. "Now I'm putting up siding. If it hadn't been for this housing program, I couldn't have done any of it at this time. I really encourage others to take advantage of this opportunity."

The program is available to Westchester ARC employees through

the Housing Action Council, a not-for-profit organization that provides financial and educational assistance to homebuyers. In addition to individual counseling sessions, the Housing Action Council offers:

The Home Buyer Club, workshops on the process of acquiring a home, with topics such as budgeting and saving for home ownership, obtaining a mortgage and home maintenance.

The First Home Club, a savings club for employees who meet certain eligibility requirements. Participants save for a period of 10 to 30 months, with their contributions tripled—to a maximum of \$5,000—through a grant from the Federal Home Loan Bank.

The New York Mortgage Coalition, through which nine financial

institutions provide more affordable mortgage programs for low- and moderate-income families and individuals. Lenders offer lower down payments and more flexible underwriting requirements, as well as neighborhood-based counseling in home ownership and credit.

The Home Improvement Program, through which qualifying homeowners receive financial assistance for maintenance and renovations.

"People who work in Westchester should have the chance to live in Westchester," says Maria Labriola, manager of benefits and human resource information systems. "This program is about giving back to our staff."



Children’s School and Westchester ARC Foundation Honor Donors with Mural



The commemorative mural highlights the agency’s commitment to the dreams of consumers and their families.



Admiring their star on the mural are donors Alexandra Powell (left) and Debbie Mansfield.

On March 30, the Children’s School for Early Development and the Westchester ARC Foundation hosted a reception celebrating the generosity of the pre-school’s many longtime supporters. Nearly 70 guests, including donors, educators and government representatives, gathered at the Children’s School in Hawthorne, New York. Tom Abinanti, a Westchester County legislator, Bob Paladino, a Harrison councilman, Charlie Wood from Senator Spano’s office and Mary Swikata from Governor Pataki’s office, were among the attendees.

The event featured the unveiling of a mural that depicts a young person

blowing star-shaped bubbles, a reference to the agency’s commitment to making dreams come true. Gold and silver stars, engraved with the names of caring donors, emphasize the role that private gifts play in making those dreams possible.

The mural was conceived by Rich Anderson, a graphic designer on the Westchester ARC staff, and executed by Julia Dixon, a painter and student in SUNY Purchase’s School of Fine Arts. More stars will be inserted as the school receives major gifts.

During her welcoming remarks, Fran Porcaro, director of educational services, noted that the pre-school has

become a model for the inclusion of children with special needs in community-based classes.

In thanking guests for their overwhelming support, Katherine Wilson Conroy, Westchester ARC Foundation president, emphasized the foundation’s mandate to help ensure the financial stability of under-funded programs such as the pre-school.

“Tonight was about saying thank you to our supporters. They’re our best friends,” said Fran Higgins, senior development officer for the Westchester ARC Foundation.

Volunteer Organizations Play Many Roles

The Yonkers League, Northern Westchester League and Parent Assistance Committee on Down Syndrome (PACDS) are volunteer arms of Westchester ARC that share the agency’s commitment to social inclusion and empowerment for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Yonkers League, serving southern Westchester and surrounding areas, celebrated its 40th anniversary at an annual dinner dance on March 27. More than 100 guests recognized decades of accomplishments and raised nearly \$7,000 to help support agency programs. Over the years, the Yonkers League has lobbied for

groundbreaking programs benefiting people with developmental disabilities. Volunteers have staffed day training sessions at the Stella and Simon Sheib Center and have worked with city officials to organize a summer day camp. The league also holds a yearly bazaar.

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Hot Off the Peekskill Press

Lifetime isn't the only newsletter published by the Westchester ARC community. Introducing the *Peekskill Press*, a newsletter created by consumers in our Peekskill Day Habilitation Center as an outgrowth of their experiences with digital photography.

"They were taking such great pictures, we decided we needed some stories to go with them," says Lisa O'Brien, a staff member who assists with the newsletter's publication.

The *Peekskill Press*, which debuted in December 2003, features stories developed and written by consumers, as



Members of the press (clockwise from left, standing) Debra J., Susan P., Lisa D., John D., Pamela N. and Judy S.

well as their photography. Holiday parties, community activities and fiction filled the first issue. Copies were distributed to family and friends.

Working on the newsletter is now an ongoing activity. "I like choosing the pictures that will go in the newsletter," says John D. "It's A-okay."

"Working on the newsletter makes me learn what it might be like to be a newspaper reporter," adds Lisa D.

"I think this is a great way for consumers to be creative and have fun, while learning valuable communication and clerical

skills. We're all very proud of our accomplishment, and look forward to producing more issues in the future," concludes Lisa.

Resources

Do you have a favorite website, publication or other resource that could be useful to individuals with developmental disabilities? We're always looking for suggestions. Send yours to cbahan@westchesterarc.org.

The Autism Coalition

www.autismcoalition.org

Provides links to the most prominent autism organizations in the nation and a support and resources network helping with issues pertaining to autism.

Capacity Works

www.capacityworks.com

Website supported by Beth Mount, a nationally recognized consultant working with programs that educate people concerning the capacities of people with disabilities. Sells books and posters to inspire person-centered work.

Early Intervention Gives Kids a Head Start

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whether a child has a developmental delay. These delays may arise from trauma at birth, premature delivery, genetic anomalies, childhood illness or a host of other causes. Early warning signs include failure to crawl, stand or babble, feeding difficulties and being unresponsive to people or sounds.

In addition to discussing concerns with a pediatrician, we recommend that parents or caretakers who suspect that a child has a developmental disability contact the Westchester County Department of Health, (914) 813-5061. An initial service coordinator will help the family determine whether or not the child requires an evaluation, and when appropriate, refer the family to an approved evaluator such as The Children's School.

At The Children's School, a multi-disciplinary evaluation is performed by a psychologist or special educator,

speech pathologists and other specialists, depending on areas of concern. If services are warranted, an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) meeting is convened to determine how to best serve the child's needs. A service coordinator is appointed to help the family obtain the approved services.

The Children's School provides a wide variety of home- and community-based early intervention services, including special education, speech, physical and occupational therapies and social work. Mommy & Me groups meet twice a week, and a parent-child support group meets monthly.

For more information on early intervention, contact Fran Porcaro, associate executive director, educational services, (914)347-3227, or log onto www.westchesterarc.org.



Dance Classes Exercise Body and Mind

The popular beats of rock group No Doubt fill the room as Elizabeth W., a student in our Echo Arts dance program, shows off her latest moves for instructor Francesca Piacentino. Elizabeth is all smiles as Francesca encourages her to “feel the music” with personal interpretations. Then teacher and students line up to “step, clap, step” their way through a choreographed number, and Francesca congratulates them for remembering what they learned the week before.

Echo Arts is a series of fine and performing arts classes for individuals with developmental disabilities who are 16 or older. Through an eight-week session, students use dance to stay fit, stretching and strengthening their muscles at the same time that they build memory skills. The program also

gives consumers a chance to let loose, have some fun and showcase their individuality.

“Our dance classes promote movement through expression of one’s personal style,” says Francesca. “My students are so excited about being here. They pay close attention, pick up steps easily and remember choreographed routines. Elizabeth keeps telling me she can’t wait to go to a party and show everyone what she’s learned.”

Dancing has been part of Francesca’s life since the age of two, and she’s trained in tap, jazz and ballet. “I think it’s great that we recognize how important the arts are in shaping an individual’s life,” she says. To register for one of our classes, contact Francesca at 914-949-9300, ext. 3219.



Dance builds strength and memory while promoting self-expression.

“Art With Heart” Opens in Greenburgh and Yonkers

“Art with Heart,” the traveling artshow created by Westchester ARC consumers, has been a huge success within the community, extending its March display at Greenburgh Town Hall through May 9. In addition, Paul Feiner, town supervisor, and Sarah Bracey White, executive director for cultural affairs, have dedicated the town hall’s Alcove Gallery as a permanent space for the works of Westchester ARC consumers. During most of April, additional pieces were exhibited at the Riverfront Library in Yonkers.

“When I saw the work of Westchester ARC consumers, I thought it would be wonderful to share that work with the people of Yonkers,”

commented Nancy Waters, the library’s director of communications and community relations. “I think this show is a great opportunity for all members of the community to share in a common theme.”

“The success of the traveling art show has made me want to bring even more work from people with develop-

mental disabilities into the public eye,” said White in explaining Greenburgh’s decision to offer an ongoing home for our consumers’ art. “We hope the addition of a new wing for Westchester ARC consumers will encourage the creation of new work and provide ongoing opportunities for them. We hope to make Greenburgh

Town Hall the place where you can view a wide range of artists.”

Westchester ARC’s yearly art competition will be held in conjunction with the June 1 annual meeting. Outstanding work from that show will be displayed throughout the county during the coming year as testament to the creativity and individuality of people with developmental disabilities.



Mr. and Mrs. Silverman and son Michael view his work on display at Greenburgh Town Hall.



Volunteer Organizations Play Many Roles

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The crowd enjoyed the music at the Yonkers League's 40th anniversary dinner dance.

The Northern Westchester League conducts similar volunteer activities within its region of the county (Mount Kisco and satellite locations). It regularly helps finance programs supplementing those provided by Westchester ARC in order to add to consumers' enjoyment. A holiday party with a gift for each consumer has long been a special annual event. At press time, the group was preparing to host a May 16 luncheon at Colonial Terrace, Peekskill, in honor of

Westchester ARC President Mohan Mehra. "Being a volunteer means you're enhancing the lives of others, as well as your own," says Rita Ross, president of the Northern Westchester League.

PACDS is a support network that helps new parents of children with Down syndrome to understand their babies and develop their full potential. The group conducts a monthly support group at the Children's School for Early Development, which gives parents the chance to ask questions, have some family playtime, and most importantly, realize they are not alone.

PACDS also sponsors an annual family picnic, makes hospital visits to new parents and provides referrals for programs and services, such as the pre-school's early intervention service. "The more involved you get, the more you learn, and the more you're able to give back," concludes Anne Majsak, PACDS chairperson.



Yonkers Mayor Philip Amicone with Westchester ARC consumer and board member Carolyn Holodak.



Lucy Egan, left, with Rita Cristantiello, president of the Yonkers League.

Voluntary Groups

If you wish to participate in one of Westchester ARC's voluntary groups, call one of the representatives below.

Northern Westchester League

Rita Ross, President
(914) 238-4669

Yonkers League

Rita Cristantiello, President
(914) 347-5231

PACDS

(Parents Assistance Committee on Down Syndrome)
Anne Majsak, Chairperson
(914) 238-7909

Tributes

The following tribute donations were received between

IN MEMORY OF DENTON STEWART

Dormitory Authority, State of New York
Ms. Brigid Hayes

IN MEMORY OF HELEN M. HARRIS

Ms. Charlotte Stolmaker

IN MEMORY OF HERBERT PINSLEY

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Coward

IN MEMORY OF JOAN ELLEN FLYNN

Ms. Susan Brennan
Ms. Camilla Calamandrei
Ms. Jeanne Carr
Ms. Laura Laub
Ms. Kathy Stokes Murray
Ms. Susan Solomon
Ms. Barbara Turk

IN MEMORY OF LOTTIE DANNENBERG

Mrs. Klare Selo

IN MEMORY OF MARY MARTHA MORONEEY

Ms. Joan Corona
Ms. Edna Stark

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD KOENIG

Northern Westchester League
Ms. Joan Dusenberry
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Swierat

IN HONOR OF KATHARINE & JACK CONROY

Ms. Mary M. McMillan

IN HONOR OF KENNETH LAUNHARDT

Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Launhardt

Mark Your Calendar

MAY 16, 2004

Luncheon to honor Mohan Mehra and Family

Colonial Terrace, Cortlandt Manor
sponsored by The Northern League
of Westchester ARC
Call Rita Ross, (914) 238-4669

JUNE 1, 2004

Westchester ARC Annual Meeting

Crowne Plaza, White Plains
Call (914) 428-8330, ext. 3379

JUNE 1, 2004

"My Home"

Seminar on housing options for
people with disabilities.
FREE ADMISSION
Hampton Inn, Elmsford
6:30 - 9:00 p.m.
Register by May 21, 2004
Call Melanie Fields, (914) 681-0659,
ext. 3312

JUNE 11-JUNE 16, 2004

Bresnan Tour deWagner

Annual bike tour from New York to
Vermont, benefiting Westchester ARC
and Westchester-Putnam Special
Olympics.
Call Jerry Peters, (845) 878-9722
or visit
www.bresnantourdewagner.com

JUNE 28-JULY 2, 2004

Echo Onstage Theatre Workshop

SUNY Purchase
9:30-3:30
Call (914) 949-9300, ext. 3219

JUNE 28-JULY 2, 2004

Echo College

SUNY Purchase
Call (914) 949-9300, ext. 3218

Log onto

www.westchesterarc.org

View our online calendar
for updated information
and event dates.



The Children's School for Early Development

4th Annual

"Golfing for Kids"

Benefiting Kids With Special Needs

Tuesday, September 28, 2004

Westchester Hills Golf Club, White Plains

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

Join the
Westchester ARC Foundation
for its annual benefit

A Matter of Taste

An Evening of
Culinary Arts at the Castle

Tuesday, October 26, 2004
Whitby Castle, Rye

Sample some of Westchester's
finest cuisine
prepared by the
county's leading chefs.

*Look for more information in the
next issue of "Lifetime."*

Contact Fran Higgins
at 914-428-8330, ext. 3027.



20th Annual

MBIA Invitational

*Golf & Tennis Classic
to benefit the Westchester ARC Foundation
and Westchester-Putnam Special Olympics*

September 20, 2004

Mount Kisco Country Club
Whippoorwill Club
Brae Burn Country Club
Call Elyse Fowler at 914-428-8330, ext. 3027

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