



inner strength

The Newsletter of Cardinal Hayes Home for Children

Spring 2010

IT WAS WORK, BUT IT WAS FUN! Clinton Hollow ICF knows how to throw a party...

Activities and fun do not always take place at the main campus in Millbrook - in October, the home in Clinton Hollow had its annual Fall Family Feast. What a celebration! Staff planned and cooked and worked hard so that the residents could enjoy this fun-filled evening.

Tables were decorated with fall centerpieces, and the menu was wonderful, from the ham and sweet potatoes to the apple crisp and ice cream. But that's not all - there was entertainment provided by mother/daughter musicians (a direct care worker and her mother) who played the piano and the violin.



Harriett, our faithful volunteer, and Mandy, Daniel, and Diane (mother, brother, and sister of a resident) also joined the festivities. With some help, each individual made a poster of his or her favorite things. Individual photos, taken in advance and framed, were gifts for the families.

A display of these photos was a focal point of the decorations and made everyone smile.

Ideas for special times like this come from workers who know from experience that *it is in giving that we receive*. Even though these events take extra time and effort to plan and carry out, the smiles and laughs of the residents make it all worth while!

— Lori Johnson
Supervisor, Clinton Hollow ICF

Dear Friend,

This issue of "Inner Strength" begins a new era for our newsletter. We have changed the format by inviting our care giving staff to contribute articles for publication which enable them to express their personal observations and insights into our Mission. The "grass roots" nature of these articles is engaging and I believe our readers will certainly understand why each day can be a rewarding experience at Hayes.

To our staff who submitted these articles I say "thank you" for sharing your thoughts and your enthusiasm in serving the needs of others. A special thanks also to our donors whose contributions help us to continue our Mission of embracing the inner strength of people with disabilities.

Fred Opers
Executive Director

THE SPELLING BEE Could you spell it?...

Each year, Literacy Connections in Poughkeepsie has a fund raiser in the form of a spelling bee. For the second year, J., one of our residents has taken part, this year sponsored by the Rotary Club of Millbrook. J., who is non-verbal, was aided by Amanda, a school aide and used his "dynabox" to spell out his answers. The format was such that it was a team effort with ten pairs vying for a chance to qualify and advance to the final rounds. We are very proud of J. who made it to the 8th round before succumbing to the word "froufrou". J. of course, was more excited by the fact that his "dynabox" was programmed so that he could order lunch himself afterward!

EXPERIENCING GOD'S CREATION

A field trip to Dr. Rappaport's "funny farm"...

In November, the students from Group 5 had a wonderful opportunity to visit and explore Ma and Pa's Funny Farm, located at The Stallion Park in Millbrook. When we arrived we were greeted by Dr. Sandra Rappaport, owner of the farm. The farm was developed by Dr. Rappaport with the mission of providing an opportunity for children and adults with special needs to become "farmers for a day." The students were guided through the farm by Dean Bouyea, farm manager, who was patient and offered lots of information about the various animals.

During our tour we saw goats, llamas, rabbits, chickens, horses, cattle, donkeys and a baby camel named Herbie. The animals were very friendly, presenting a host of opportunities for sensory activity, as they readily approached the fence and stood close by to be petted and talked to. Rabbits were taken out of their cages so the students could touch and smell them. One of the favorite animals was a Watusi, which is a descendant of African cattle. The Watusi have huge horns and it was truly incredible to see the students take to these very large animals.



Our visit was short, but we were assured that when the warmer weather returns, we will be able to visit again and engage in grooming and feeding the animals as well as various other farm activities.

— Dara Russell
Special Education Teacher, CH School

HAPPINESS IS... A PERSONAL REFLECTION...

My name is Crystal Williams. I have been providing care in the Amenia ICF for 2 ½ yrs. I became interested in learning more about intellectual disabilities after spending time with two of my family members diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and Autism. A mentor of mine said to me, "The more you learn about it, the more you can help". I've learned that it takes a lot of patience, understanding and support to provide for a child with a disability.

The day I walked into the Amenia house, I felt like this was my calling, that my care was greatly needed. We are asked not to get overly emotionally attached, but human compassion almost always, for myself anyway, seems to surface. I have to admit that my days always seem a little brighter when D. comes through the door from her work training program yelling, "I'm home", "Hi guys", or when the room is silent and T. starts to serenade

us with a Disney song. You can't ignore the excitement in V.'s face when she ties her sneakers all by herself, or when A. recites her address and phone number without looking at the paper. It can be the smallest thing such as saying "thank you", for receiving a snack, or having S. assist in making the salad for dinner.

These are a few of the things that I enjoy about coming to work every day. To teach, to provide support and to learn, are the greatest experiences that one can ask for in being an employee at CHH.

"Teach this triple truth to all: A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity."

— Buddha

— Crystal Williams
Direct Care Professional, Amenia ICF

KUDOS TO OUR STAFF

Direct care workers are the backbone of CHH. Without their dedication, we would be unable to carry out our mission of providing for the needs of our residents.

To see our direct care workers in action is to observe their enthusiasm, creativity, patience and compassion. They love their charges and do all possible to help them reach their potential with joy and perseverance.

Outings for our residents, accompanied by the appropriate number of workers are part and parcel of our efforts to promote socialization. The local restaurants, parks and other recreational venues welcome our residents who enjoy the various opportunities to socialize to the best of their abilities: bowling, horse-back riding, baseball, swimming, etc.

There are always funny episodes to share, like the time the residents were taken to an outdoor concert. One of the ladies, Cheryl, who loves music and wants to be as close as possible to the source, ran down the aisle, went onto the stage and climbed onto one of the speakers, happy to be so close, and unaware of the worker who followed close behind. The smile on Cheryl's face told it all! Outings to the mall, concerts, trips to the city for events, are all welcome opportunities for our residents to enjoy life. Priceless!

— Sr. Jackie La Vie, fmm

“Direct support professionals are so important to those of us with disabilities. They are like a key to a locked door and on the other side of that door, they help us get to a whole new world. That’s how important direct support professionals are and that’s why we need to work together -to help people with disabilities lead fulfilling lives and to advance their profession.”

— David Liscomb, President
Self-Advocacy Association of NY State

WATCH HAS A NEW “HOME”

Our WATCH Program (Work Activities Training at Cardinal Hayes) has moved to its new location a short distance from the former one.

Our much anticipated move took place over the Christmas Holidays with an opening day of January 4th 2010.

Thanks to our wonderful maintenance and support service staff the building was freshly painted, furnished

and decorated to meet the needs and approval of our young adult participants in the program. The move went very smoothly and everyone has transitioned very nicely into their new surroundings. WATCH is a very happy place these days! The building provides a lot more useful space for activities such as computerized engraving, pre-vocational training, music therapy, arts and crafts, sensory activities, group games, computer training and exercise programs.



The WATCH program is currently certified to serve 15 young adult individuals 21 and over who have developmental disabilities and can benefit from the support and guidance that the Watch staff provides in a Day Habilitation program. Participants are

transported by agency vans each day to and from the program and in and around the community for various activities.

A big THANK YOU goes to everyone who helped make this long awaited dream a reality.

You put these smiles on our faces!

— Mary Campbell
Director of Habilitative Services

DEDICATION OF NEW SCHOOL AT CARDINAL HAYES

October 8, 2009

Members of the staff, Board of Directors, FMM sisters, residents and friends gathered at the new school to wait with anticipation Archbishop Dolan's arrival to bless and dedicate "The Theresa and Edward O'Toole Education Center". Fred Apers and Betty Wolf welcomed His Excellency as he stepped out of his car, and flash bulbs from many cameras went off. As the clouds cleared and the sun came out, the weather collaborated greatly for the outdoor ceremony. After Fred's welcoming words, Jessica led us in the pledge of Allegiance accompanied by some of our Boy Scouts and Adventurers (girls). Sr. Lois, Provincial Superior U.S. Province, led us in prayer and spoke of our history here with gratitude for the many accomplishments attained under the leadership of Fred Apers. Ken Anderson, President of the Board of Trustees of our school and Betty Wolf, President of the Board of Directors of CHH then spoke and gave Archbishop Dolan a gift of a basket of local goods. John Kading, VFW member, told of how the acreage left by the VFW was purchased by CHH. George Whalen, a longtime benefactor gave a touching testimonial to the FMM sisters who served here from the beginnings of the Home. Archbishop Dolan then addressed the group of over a hundred, praising the staff for its dedication to the special needs children over the years, acknowledging also the devotion and generosity of the many benefactors and the Millbrook community's support for this ministry. He then blessed the new school and began a tour of it accompanied by photographers and dignitaries. The invited guests went to the school gym for lunch and fellowship while the children and staff ate under the tent. After his tour Archbishop Dolan "table-hopped" to greet all the guests, thanking them for their support. Some of the guests toured the new facility and saw it in 'action', as the children had returned to their classrooms after lunch.

This was the day Our Lord had made and we were glad and rejoiced in it!

— Sr. Jackie La Vie, fmm



PATIENCE, PERSEVERANCE...PRICELESS!

What if we lost our ability to taste, feel hunger or plan that next delicious meal? Some infants are born with complex medical conditions, anatomical problems, respiratory and cardiac problems or lack neurological coordination to move the food in the mouth and swallow making oral feeding difficult or impossible. As a result, tube feeding is initiated to improve and maintain nutritional status. When tube feeding is initiated, the mouth goes through many changes. The stimulation provided by touch to the mouth, feeding equipment and food often disappears. Gradually the mouth becomes unfamiliar with touch, taste, texture and other pleasurable stimuli. The face and mouth become hypersensitive. The child becomes unable to participate in exploration that is the primary path to learning. Occupational and speech therapists are often asked to work with children

who demonstrate food refusal behaviors or when they have matured and are ready to be weaned from tube feeding to oral feeding. The transition from tube to oral feeding is often difficult especially for children who have been tube fed for extended periods of time. Many children who are tube fed have endured invasive procedures in and around the mouth. Unless these experiences are balanced with positive touch, anything approaching the mouth is perceived as potentially painful and to be avoided, making attempts at oral feeding difficult. Hypersensitivity and poor oral motor coordination resulting in gagging, reinforce the child's fear of eating. Tube feeding also does not allow the child to experience the sensation of hunger that further limits their desire to eat.



George (name changed due to privacy) is a 10 year old, non-ambulatory, non-verbal youngster who resides at Cardinal Hayes Home for Children. A gastrostomy tube was placed at a young age due to difficulties with accepting food by mouth and safe swallowing, decreasing his risk for aspiration, which could potentially lead to pneumonia. Severe hypersensitivity in and around his mouth prevented acceptance of any food by mouth. He would rotate his head side to side and push the food away, refusing to open his mouth. Through

playful interactions between Val, the occupational therapist, Jackie, the speech therapist, and George, he is now accepting small amounts of pureed foods willingly. It is important to allow him to participate as much as possible, as in holding the spoon. He has been observed “finger painting” in whipped cream and pudding to experience pleasant hand to mouth activities. Music, singing and

vibration are used to help distract him and reduce stress during food presentations. When fully absorbed in a play activity or listening to music, children are more likely to forget the protective barriers that they have erected to feel safe. George is developing a sense of control over the feeding situation by holding the spoon and randomly placing it into his mouth. There is often more food on his face than in his mouth but that is all part of the learning process and what makes it more fun! As George increases his oral intake, it is hoped that his tube feedings can be reduced. Who knows, maybe someday you will see George in his favorite restaurant, eating ice cream!

— Valerie Ruzich
Occupational Therapist

CARDINAL HAYES HOME FOR CHILDREN RECEIVES GRANT

On March 4, 2010, Mr. Fred Apers, Executive Director of Cardinal Hayes Home and Cardinal Hayes School for Special Children, was presented with a \$3,000 grant from “The Renegades” Pitch for Kids Foundation Executive Director, Mr. Rick Zolzer.

The foundation is the brainchild of the president of our local baseball team, the Hudson Valley Renegades. When reading the Mission of the foundation, *“The Renegades’ Pitch For Kids was founded to enhance the quality of life of young people and their families throughout the Hudson Valley by supporting community organizations whose programs make a positive change in youth, their families and the community,”* we immediately recognized the kinship to our own Mission.

This grant will offset the cost of purchase and installation of unique suspended track systems which utilize a HOPSA harness (referred to as a HOPSA dress). This equipment will benefit the multi-handicapped children we serve. The HOPSA dress is suspended from an adjustable electric lift mechanism attached to permanent ceiling tracks. Once in the harness, the child is free to simulate walking with no resistance at all, easily sliding along the track with the slightest movement from their feet or body. This

allows for greater confidence and success in mastering other methods of assisted walking and enables these youngsters to participate in activities in an upright walking position through the use of this specialized equipment. For these youngsters, this is as close as they will come to “walking” in a conventional way.



Through the generosity of The Renegades Pitch For Kids Fund, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, the Millbrook Rotary Club and many loyal donors, this equipment will be installed in therapy rooms at Cardinal Hayes School for Special Children. Our school staff are very excited at the prospect of utilizing this equipment for the students.

Thank you again to the Renegades Pitch for Kids Fund for their good faith support of our Mission. The Renegades Pitch for Kids Fund will be honored with a plaque on our “Friends of Cardinal Hayes School” donor wall in our new school building.

We wish the Hudson Valley Renegades good luck in their upcoming baseball season and look forward to bringing our kids and staff to attend a game and cheer them on!

— Mary Hurley
Executive Assistant

Embracing the Inner Strength of People with Disabilities

Cardinal Hayes Home for Children
P.O. Box CH, St. Joseph Dr., Millbrook, NY 12545
(845) 677-6363

Sponsored by the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary
Executive Director: Fred Apers
Mission Coordinator: Sister Anne Turbini, FMM

Visit our website:
www.cardinalhayeshome.org