



Timeline



JUNE 2007

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Arc Art a Hit in the Big Apple NDSS features Jeff Caturano's Work

Jeffrey Caturano of the Arc's Center for Emerging Artists (CEA) received national recognition this spring when his painting of a Victorian garden was featured in the invitation and program book for the National Down Syndrome Society's (NDSS) Spring Luncheon. The event, which honored best-selling author Mary Higgins Clark, was held April 26th at the Tavern on the Green in New York's Central Park.

"We're pleased to have Jeff's talent recognized at this level," said Arc of East Middlesex Executive Director Jo Ann Simons, who serves on the NDSS Board of Directors.

Jeff promoted his work during a boutique sale of art created by people with disabilities preceding the luncheon. A Red Sox fan whose portfolio includes paintings of Fenway Park and Gillette Stadium, Jeff put aside his regional allegiance to create a Yankee Stadium painting and posters for his New York fans. He took a bow and was applauded during the luncheon for his contributions to the event.

"It was awesome," Jeff said.

Jeff also had the opportunity to catch up with actor Chris Burke, Corky from the early 1990s television series, *Life Goes On* whom he had previously met at conference.

Jeff's parents Jim and Rosemarie Caturano accompanied him to New York for the luncheon.

"Jeff seemed to be proud of his accomplishments and the uniqueness of his work attracted many interested buyers to his display table. The theme of the confer-



Patrons of the Arts - George and Patricia Olvany, pictured here with artist Jeffrey Caturano, purchased Jeff's painting of Yankee Stadium, which was auctioned at the NDSS Spring Luncheon.

ence was to highlight accomplishments of those with Downs Syndrome and it was terrific to see the diversity of talents displayed and the support of so many people. Jeff's mother was caught up in the promotion of Jeff's art and made a few sales of her own. The silent auction which featured the painting of New York Stadium was an appropriate feature for the day and Jeff was excited at the amount of the final bid. Our thanks to the EMARC and the Center for Emerging artists for giving Jeff this opportunity," Jim said.

While Jeff was the featured artist at the sale, the work of a dozen CEA artists was included. It was the Center's most successful event, with over \$1800 worth of jewelry, note cards, posters, t-shirts and magnets selling in just 90 minutes.

"We'd love to repeat this success locally, with families hosting jewelry parties for their friends and relatives," said Jo Ann.

For information about hosting a jewelry party, call Heather Weikel at 781-942-4888, ext. 5029 or email ceapromo@theemarc.org

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The Joy of Graduation

A Personal Perspective by Ralph D'Amico, Treasurer

As a parent, it always felt like this day was somewhere really far off in the distant future. My wife Nancy and I place a lot of emphasis on education, and education places a lot of emphasis on benchmarks -- with graduation being the ultimate goal for our child. Even though you know that date is out there, it still seems like it will never actually happen. There will always be a lot of time before this happens. But it does -- and for our family, Michael's graduation is in just a few weeks.



Mapping his own Path - Michael D'Amico prepares for life after graduation.

Michael was born in August 1985 -- about six weeks early and weighing less than four pounds. He had trouble eating from the time he was born. He spent a month at Beth Israel and came home to us in late September. We discovered that Michael was still having trouble eating and growing, both physically and developmentally. For those of you who know Michael, it would probably come as a shock to know that he didn't really talk until he underwent major stomach surgery when he was nearly four years old. Two weeks after the surgery, Michael started saying lots of words -- he hasn't stopped talking since.

We are very proud of what Michael has accomplished. He has learned many skills over the years -- not all of them are good or useful, but they help him to be who he is. He is someone who has mostly enjoyed school -- it has been fun and challenging. Michael has met many people in the five schools that he attended. He has made friends at every one of these schools, and with the use of his cell phone, he maintains contact with this large network of people. He has met and shared some part of his life with many people, and we are amazed at how independent Michael has become, as he walks all over Reading making friends with everyone he meets.

Michael's brother was always very much a part of Michael's life when he lived at home. Some of his brother Ralph's friends are still involved and supportive of Michael -- even though Michael's brother has lived very far from home for nearly four years. Michael's brother continues to have a very special relationship with him. Michael also has made friends with his many teachers and sports coaches -- these are all very special people to him.

Michael has experienced and learned many skills. School has focused on books, life skills, vocational skills, and social skills. While I don't think that Michael found a real interest in books, he has done very well with the other skills. Graduation will bring about major changes in Michael's life -- less structure but more work and less play. Michael already is working four days a week through LABBB and the Arc's School to Work program -- so he has some idea of what will happen after he graduates.

While graduation will present many challenges for Michael and for us, Michael is ready. He isn't really planning for the future or worrying a lot about global warming, but he is his own person -- ready to make or help make decisions about his life -- where he wants to live, what kind of work he wants to do, what music he likes, what cell phones and computers are best. As Michael completes his schooling, and enters into our adult community, we want to say thank you to all of the people who have committed their time and energy to help Michael become who he now is -- these people are at Early Intervention, the Reading Public Schools, Camp Paul, the Arc of East Middlesex, DMR, the SEEM Collaborative, and the LABBB Collaborative. I know that graduation is right around the corner, but it's still 60,000 minutes away!

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Dr. Fogle selected as Patriots Community MVP Finalist

Dr. Rhonda Fogle was honored as a Community MVP Finalist by the New England Patriots in a ceremony at Gillette Stadium May 31st. She was nominated by the Arc of East Middlesex in recognition of the swim program she runs at the Reading Burbank YMCA for 20 children with disabilities.

"We are so pleased to have this opportunity to publicly recognize Dr. Fogle's outstanding contributions to families," said Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director of the Arc of East Middlesex.

The award includes a \$1500 contribution from the Patriot's Foundation to the Arc of East Middlesex in Dr. Fogle's honor. "I've always wanted to raise money for this program!" said Dr. Fogle.

Nine year's ago, Rhonda Fogle's daughter Elizabeth Asche, then a student at Phillips Academy in Andover, came to her concerned that her skating instructor's young son, who had a disability, could not get into a swimming program. Dr. Fogle supported Elizabeth in creating a swim program for the boy and a group of other children with disabilities she treated in her Melrose practice. She guided Elizabeth in recruiting fellow Phillips student volunteers to provide one to one support in the pool for the children and in securing donated pool time. When Elizabeth graduated from Phillips, Dr. Fogle became both the liaison with Phillips Academy and the Arc and the weekly coordinator of the swim program. She's involved in every aspect of the program, from jumping into the pool to assure a nervous parent that their fragile child can swim to donating and delivering healthy refreshments and prizes each week.

For some parents, the swim program is the first recreation program of the Arc of East Middlesex in which they have enrolled their child. Once they see that their child can be successful in an athletic endeavor, a whole range of recreation opportunities becomes available for them. The swim program gives children with disabilities the opportunity to socialize with the teenage volunteers and develop strong mutual friendships. We usually see strides in motor skills and language skills for participants when the friendship bonds occur.

"For the families, having the child with special needs swim normalizes the family dynamics. Vacations and weekend activities can include this activity that everyone can enjoy," said Dr. Fogle.

Volunteers originally sign up because their friends are doing this program, and because they need community service for their college applications. They return because they bond with these children.

"They start to partner with the parents, for example, encouraging one family to remove the child's life jacket as he could now stand in the pool, and to watch as the child began to float and kick and dog paddle by himself!" Dr. Fogle added.

Dr. Fogle has donated her time to mentor dozens and dozens of student volunteers. We share her belief that when the teenagers make an emotional connection with the children in the pool, and



Our MVP – Dr. Rhonda Fogle

they see the progress that their kindness fosters, they drop any prejudice about individuals with disabilities that they may previously have held. We believe that these amazing teen volunteers will in fact go many steps further: speaking up when classmates make fun of people with disabilities; and when they grow up and become business leaders, providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Dr. Fogle, congratulations and thank you for being our MVP!

Volunteer Opportunities

Enrich your life and that of the individuals we support!

Summer Programs:

• Outdoor Basketball for Teens and Adults

Where - Reading area TBA

When - Weekday evening TBA

Contact - Chenine Johnson 781-942-4888 ext. 4036 or
rec@themarc.org

• Youth Skill Building Basketball

Where - Malden YMCA

When - Weekday evenings TBA

Contact - Chenine Johnson 781-942-4888 ext. 4036 or
rec@themarc.org

For more information about volunteer opportunities, call Pat Simons at 781-942-4888, ext 4032.

Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Staff Honored for Holiday Gift Campaign

Tina Melpignano and Toni Russo of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care's Proposal Development and Analysis department were recently honored with Distinguished Service Awards by the Arc of East Middlesex for coordinating a Holiday Gift Campaign to benefit 11 low income families of children with developmental disabilities.

"Again this year, Harvard Pilgrim employees opened their hearts and wallets to provide gifts not only for the children but for the parents we support. Without Toni and Tina's kind assistance, these families would have had a very sparse Christmas," said Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director of the Arc of East Middlesex.

The drive, founded over a decade ago and generously coordinated through 2005 by HPHC employee and former Arc of East Middlesex Board of Directors President Laura Pizza Plum, provides clothing, toys and more for children whose families cannot afford to buy holiday gifts for them. Michael Devlin of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation recruited Tina and Toni to coordinate the 2006 campaign. The pair then enlisted their Harvard Pilgrim co-workers to fill the wish lists of 11 families supported by the Arc. They worked with the Arc's Family Resource Center to meet the particular needs of each family.

"We are deeply grateful for the outstanding efforts of Tina and Toni, for the ongoing support of Harvard Pilgrim CEO Charlie Baker and for the generosity of his staff," said Simons. The Arc of East Middlesex (EMARC) is a nonprofit organization which assists children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Now in their 50th year, they annually help 700 people from over a dozen



Distinguished Service – Toni Russo and Tina Melpignano (center) were honored by the Arc of East Middlesex recently for their support of low income families of children with disabilities. Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director of the Arc (far left) and Michael Devlin (far right) of the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, are shown here congratulating them.

Middlesex and Essex County communities with services including Residential Supports; Vocational Training; community Job Placement; the Center for Emerging Artists; School to Work Transition Services and the Journey to Independence; a Family Resource Center; and a large Recreation Program.

The Arc of East Middlesex has received three consecutive certifications of Two Years with Distinction, the highest ranking given by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation. For more information, visit their web site at www.thearc.org or call 781-942-4888.

The Arc of East Middlesex is Pleased to Acknowledge Gifts from the Following Donors...

Friend - Gifts Up to \$100
Dello Russo Funeral Service

Sustainer - Gifts \$250- \$499
Reading Lions Club

Patron - Gifts \$500 - 999
Boston Red Sox

Benefactors' Circle- Gifts \$1000 - 2499
Atlantic Food Mart

In Honor of Deborah A. Cimini
Mr. and Mrs. Claude Cimini

Tribute Gifts
Use the pledge form on the fundraising org) to remember a loved one or honor a friend or relative for a special occasion. We are pleased to acknowledge the following tribute gifts.

Memorials
In Memory of Ann McNeil
Henry LeSage

In-kind Gifts
Kathy Holmes and Sarah Lee
Marie and Hank Rej

The Arc of East Middlesex is looking for donations of furniture and household goods in good condition. If you have items to donate, please email a description of the item(s) and your name, location and phone number to mberardo@thearc.org. We're sorry; we are unable to accept clothing. Thank you!

New Members
Welcome to:
John Burns and Family
John Farrell and Family
Elizabeth Holland and Family
Sarah Nastasi and Family
Anna Spinale and Family

Gifts received through May 2, 2007

Sharing Our Expertise Sharon Borggaard & Judy Santa Maria Present at NYC Conference



Sharon Borggaard, President of the Board of Directors of the Arc of East Middlesex, and Judy Santa Maria, Assistant Director of our Family Resource Center, each presented at the YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities Conference at the Crowne Plaza in New York City last month.

Our Expert – Sharon Borggaard

Sharon, who founded our Adult Sibling group, participated in a panel called “What Every Sibling Should Know.” Her co-presenters included May McHugh, author of *Special Siblings*, Tamar Heller of the University of Illinois; Anne Guthrie, a consultant with the Sibling Support Project; Thomas Fish of Ohio State University; Annette Spallino, Coordinator of Sibling Services for AHRC; and Yasuko Arima, Sibling Support Coordinator for Tokyo.

“It was quite emotional - realizing the needs of the siblings – what they need from their parents and from the different Arcs. It gave siblings a chance to be heard and to support each other,” said Sharon.



Our Expert – Judy Santa Maria

Judy and Susan Jones of the United Arc of Franklin and Hampshire Counties presented a workshop called “A Chance to Parent” for individuals working with parents with cognitive limitations.

“The conference gave us a chance to network with other people who work with people with disabilities in Maryland, New York and Philadelphia and to plan for the national conference which will take place in September in Maryland,” said Judy.

Supported Living Openings

The Arc of East Middlesex, Inc. has several openings in an apartment building we own in Wakefield. There are four 2-bedroom apartments and on-site laundry. Up to four individuals may be accepted. All qualified tenants are eligible to receive Section 8 housing assistance as the building is a Section 8 building. Support services will be provided by mentors from our Supported Living team. A minimum of 10 hours a week must be purchased. Supports may be privately paid or funded by DMR for individuals who receive DMR funding. In addition to rental subsidies, we will assist individuals in receiving food stamps, energy subsidies and PCA services if eligible. For more information or to arrange an eligibility assessment, contact Jo Ann Simons at jas@theemarc.org.

New!

Sign up for our Email News on our Homepage www.theemarc.org

One area in which we are moving fast ahead is increasing our use of technology whenever possible. Now our homepage includes a Sign up for Email Newsletter form off the main menu which gives you interest choices including our Timelines Newsletter, the Recreation Brochure, and the Center for Emerging Artists Newsletter, and Journey to Independence/Real World updates. So get your email addresses logged today! If you are already receiving emails from us currently, you do not need to complete this step.

Upcoming Workshops, Exhibits and Events

FROM THE CENTER FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

Ongoing: Reading Public Library, 64 Middlesex Avenue, Reading, MA. Various pieces on display in the History Room.

Ongoing: Reading Town Hall, 16 Lowell Street and Reading Post Office, 136 Haven Street in reading, MA. Various pieces on display.

The Arc of East Middlesex will be participating in **The Reading Lions Club's Fourth Annual Reading Friends and**

Family Day.

Saturday, June 30, 2007. Watch local papers for listings.

Run for the Arc, Sunday, September 16, 2007 – held in conjunction with the Melrose Victorian Fair. Run or Walk in our 13th Annual 5K. This year, participants may also raise funds through a personal web page. Please visit our web site at www.theemarc.org for more information.

50th Anniversary Celebration, Incorporating the Richard Tucker Memorial Dinner & Auction, **Wednesday, November 7, 2007** at the Peabody Marriott, 8A Centennial Drive.

The Arc of East Middlesex
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On-line Car Donation Program

To donate a car online, visit our web site at www.theemarc.org, click on vehicle donation at the bottom of the left hand column of our home page and follow the instructions that pop up. Be sure to designate The Arc of Massachusetts, Waltham as your charity and email us at info@theemarc.org so that The Arc of East Middlesex is credited for the donation.



The Arc of East Middlesex Membership Application

Membership includes 10 issues of our *Timelines* newsletter; the Arc US newsletter; the Arc MA newsletter, *The Advocate*; access to our Recreation and Advocacy programs; invitations to Arc of East Middlesex events and an opportunity to nominate honorees for our Annual Spring Awards Ceremony.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please check all that apply:

Family Member Professional Interested Friend

Family Member Served (used to send mailings for age-appropriate events)

Name _____ Date of Birth _____



Graduation Season – Our best wishes to artist Albert Young who completed our School to Work Transition program this spring!

Dues: \$40 per year. Please make check payable to **The Arc of East Middlesex.**