



# Timelines



FEBRUARY 2006

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## A Nourishing Career

### *Sheel Muni finds success in Winchester Hospital's Food Service Division*

**S**heel Muni is carving out a career in the food service industry and a full life in the community.

A Reading Memorial High School graduate, Sheel earned a certificate in Culinary Arts through Cape Cod Community College's Project Forward program for students with disabilities.

"He was very proud and we were very happy," recalled Sheel's mother, Gita Muni. Armed with his certificate and experience gained at Papa Gino's and Pizza Hut, Sheel was hired as a part-time food service associate at Winchester Hospital in October of 2001. He covers the front-end position in the patient tray line, garnishing the trays, putting covers and lids on entrees, beverages and soup, and putting the trays on the truck that delivers them to patient rooms.

"He's always on time. He's a lot of fun. We enjoy Sheel," said Joann Pulsford, Food Service Manager for Winchester Hospital. As his supervisor for the past three years, Joann has had the opportunity to watch Sheel grow on the job.

"He reads the menus and he really knows the diets. He knows who can have a garnish and who can't," said Joann.

Sheel also strips and cleans the trays after dinner, unloads dishes from the automated machines and helps prep for breakfast.

"He gets the dish room set up by himself," said Joann. "And he'll pick up a broom if there's nothing to do," she added.

Sheel's strong work ethic, warm personality, encouraging parents, supportive supervisor and follow-up from his Arc employment specialist have combined to make his placement at the hospital a successful one. He's a valued mem-



**Efficient Operation—Sheel Muni helps keep things moving in the dish room at Winchester Hospital.**

ber of the food service team and has taken on additional responsibilities over time.

"He's been doing more prep work lately, cutting Jell-O and putting it into tulip cups," said Joann.

What does he like best about his job? "Putting trays on the truck," Sheel replied. "I love it. It's a good job, you know?" said Sheel.

Work is just one aspect of Sheel's life. He enjoys traveling and has toured Moscow and St. Petersburg with his brother, a physician who lives in Boston. He visited his grandmother in India last fall. Sheel still visits the girlfriend he met at school on Cape Cod. He volunteers one day a week, returning children's books to the shelves at the Reading Public Library. He participates in The Arc of East Middlesex's Center for Emerging Artists and has also done some work in our computer lab.

"I feel that EMI (East Middlesex Industries, The Arc of East Middlesex's employment program), they have done a good job. It's important for his social life too," concluded Gita.

To learn more about The Arc of East Middlesex's employment programs, call Joel Green at 781-944-5655, ext. 5011.

## The Arc of East Middlesex Board of Directors

*President*  
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### *Timelines is produced by:*

Jo Ann Simons, MSW  
*Executive Director*

Susan Ring Brown  
*Director of Development*

Paula Vratos  
*Administrative Assistant*

## ANNUAL FUND APPEAL Keeping Us Close to Your Heart



The Arc of East Middlesex, like most nonprofit organizations, depends on unrestricted annual fund gifts from supporters in order to fully fund our operations. Colleges and universities rely on their alumni, public radio stations rely on their listeners and we rely on you: the family, friends and neighbors of the children and adults with disabilities we support. During this Valentine Season and over the course of 2006, I hope that the work of The Arc of East Middlesex will be the cause closest to your heart.

As I write this column, we are half way through our fiscal year. In reviewing our progress toward our annual fund raising goal, I found good news and bad.

The good news is that our two special events, *The Run for The Arc of East Middlesex* and *The Richard Tucker Memorial Dinner & Auction* were very successful, raising the funds we need to cover the costs of our existing Recreation Programs. My deepest thanks to those of you who contributed to one or both of these events.

The challenging news is that **we need to raise another \$41,500 over the next five months** to help pay for other costs not covered by our state contracts or other sources of revenue. These unfunded costs fall in every division of our organization.

We are paying \$1 more a gallon for heating fuel this year, affecting our residences, administration, workshop and Center for Emerging Artists. A donation of \$200 would cover the unfunded portion of the heat bill for one of our residences for a month this winter. Twenty percent of the agency's portion of employee health insurance for staff throughout the organization is not covered by state contracts.

Even though we have just increased our membership dues from \$25 to \$40 per year, this revenue, projected at \$7,000 for this fiscal year, doesn't come close to covering the costs associated with membership benefits, which exceed \$23,000. Here are a few of those costs:

Arc MA annual dues \$6,840 • Arc US annual dues \$1,780 • Newsletter (8 issues) \$12,424  
So, the other \$17,000 we need covered for crucial benefits like legislative advocacy must come from our fund raising dollars.

Donations also purchase supplies for the Center for Emerging Artists. In our Family Resource division, although we charge modest fees for our Sibshops and FRIENDS Educational Series, donations are needed to subsidize the actual costs. New programs, like the Journey to Independence for teens transitioning to adulthood need start-up funding.

Most of our generous individual donors and corporate sponsors have renewed their gifts to us this year. However, like colleagues at other nonprofits in our area, we did see some "donor fatigue." A few of our sponsors decreased or eliminated their usual gifts to us due to donations they made to other worthy causes in response to last year's domestic and international natural disasters. We estimate that we lost about \$7,500 as a result. Therefore, the support of the family, friends and neighbors of the individuals we assist is more important than ever.

The Arc of East Middlesex is committed to supporting children and adults with disabilities in being full members of their communities, at work, at home and at play. I hope that you will support this mission by responding to our Valentine's appeal today using the enclosed envelope with a gift from the heart.

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

# Elena Previte

**A** desire to seek out the best services for her son, Peter, led Elena Previte to join the Board of Directors of The Arc of East Middlesex (then EMARC) nearly four decades ago. That same proactive concern keeps her involved today.

When Peter was born in January of 1962, he was a handsome, quiet baby.

“If your baby never cries, start getting suspicious,” Elena advises.

The only concern they had during his first few weeks was that he was not gaining weight. Elena raised the issue at each doctor’s visit. For his three month physical, they visited a new pediatrician, who said he was 99% sure that Peter was “Mongoloid.” Elena winces as she remembers the doctor’s use of the term. He invited them to get a second opinion, so they went back to their obstetrician and pediatrician at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital.

“There were not many signs that Peter had Down syndrome. He did have the space between his big toe and his second toe, the high palette and the back of his head was flat. But a lot of newborns have a flat spot on the back of their head. The pediatrician said that he didn’t tell us because it would develop over time,” Elena recalled.

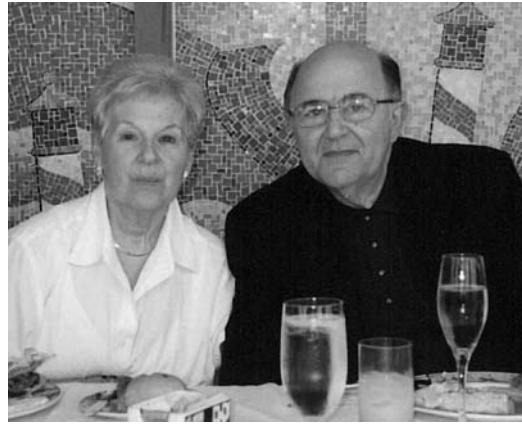
What had changed in the ten or so years since the EMARC founders’ children were born was that the doctor did **not** recommend institutionalizing Peter, advising that he would fare better at home. Betty Trezell, wife of Harold Trezell, the founding President of EMARC, was Elena’s first EMARC contact.

“Mrs. Trezell visited after Peter’s three month check up and shared lots of information,” Elena recalls.

In November of that year, Peter had the blood test that showed the extra chromosome and confirmed that he had Down syndrome. As he grew older, Elena could see that Peter was bored at home. She began looking for educational outlets for him, without any luck. Then in 1967, When Peter was five years old, Elena read an article in the Boston Globe about a nursery school for children with disabilities at the Congregational Church in Wakefield. According to agency historian and Board member Lucie Cripps, the school was established in 1958 by EMARC and subsequently taken over by the Department of Mental Retardation, with continued support from EMARC. Elena met with the teacher, Lois Larson, who said she would accept Peter for the fall class if he learned to walk (so that he could get over the stairs in the event of an emergency).

“He learned to walk that summer,” Elena says.

It was at this time that Elena and Andy became active members of EMARC. Elena joined the Board of Directors in the late 1960s and served first as Treasurer and then Secretary.



**All in the Family—** Board of Directors member Elena Previte and her husband Andy have two children: Peter, 44 and Christina, 42; a son-in-law Dan and two grandsons: Danny, 14 and Timothy, 10. Elena and Andy are shown here enjoying a Disney Family Cruise last year.

“I didn’t have any training as an accountant, but I was able to do a balance sheet. I wrote checks and paid the bills. It was my work as Secretary that was the most time consuming, taking notes in shorthand, transcribing them and sending out the monthly meeting cards,” said Elena.

As Elena watched Peter grow, progressing through the Melrose public school system, she also monitored EMARC’s development. Over the years, the organization grew and became more professional, adding CPAs to the Board and hiring a CFO. What hasn’t changed is the organization’s family focus. Elena said she appreciates Executive Director Jo Ann Simons’ *Family Standard* of determining whether a program or service is what it should be. The standard is: if it’s not good enough for Jo Ann’s son, Jon, then it’s not good enough for anyone’s child.

After turning 22, Peter participated in EMARC’s Day Habilitation program in Stoneham. When that program evolved into a work-based program, Peter transferred to a day program in Chelsea. Although Peter participates in residential and day programs offered by other providers, Elena remains committed to The Arc of East Middlesex, and interested to see what programs might meet Peter’s future needs.

“I do like to know what’s going on. I want to know what’s out there. Andy serves on a couple of DMR boards, so between the two of us we have a pretty good idea of what programs available. I try to help (EMARC) as much as I can.”

And help she does, asking the important question “Is this best for the individuals and families we serve?” as the organization’s leadership contemplates how to continue to meet our mission and remain financially strong in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

In looking ahead to the future of The Arc of East Middlesex, Elena would like to see more recreation programs for children and adults who, like Peter, have significant disabilities. Kerry Mahoney, Director of our Family Resource Center, has been meeting with parents to discuss how to address those unmet needs.

“Increasing recreational opportunities and expanding the number of community residences, that’s a good way to go,” concludes Elena.

## Upcoming Workshops, Exhibits and Events

- **Friends of the Center for Emerging Artists** introductory meeting, 7 to 8 p.m., Thursday, February 9, 2006, 20 Gould Street, Reading.
- Friday, February 24th is the **nomination deadline** (firm) for The Arc of East Middlesex's Spring Awards. Download nomination form from [www.theemarc.org](http://www.theemarc.org).
- Center for Emerging Artists' **Traveling Tapestry Show**, on exhibit at the Melrose Public Library, 69 West Emerson Street, 02176, Friday, March 3, through April, 2006.
- **Writing Social Stories**, 7 to 9 p.m., March 7 & 14, 20 Gould St., Reading. This two part workshop includes an introduction to the techniques of writing social stories developed by Carol Gray, lots of practice, writing and discussion. Parents, teachers and caregivers of individuals ages 4-young adult are encouraged to attend. \$20 for both sessions. Presented by Carol Hilliard, M.S. Ed. Call Kerry Mahoney 781-942-4888 x 4015.
- **Financial Planning, Trusts and Legal Alternatives**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, March 25, 2006, Merrimack College. How to maintain government benefits e.g., Medicaid, SSI, and other means-tested benefits, and how to use family assets for the benefit of a family member with a disability to maintain a standard of living. It will cover Special Needs Trusts, Trustee Selection, development of wills, and legal protection such as durable Power of Attorney and guardianship. Presented by Attorney Theresa Varnet, MSW, JD and Cynthia Haddad, CFP, Bay Financial Associates. \$20 for members of The Arc. Register and pay online [www.arcmass.org/trainingeducation.html](http://www.arcmass.org/trainingeducation.html)
- Center for Emerging Artists' **Spring Art Show Reception**, 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, March 30, 2006, 20 Gould Street, Reading. Free and open to the public.
- The Arc of East Middlesex's **Spring Awards Ceremony**, 6 p.m., Tuesday, April 11, 2006 Holiday Inn Select, 15 Middlesex Canal Park Road, Woburn, MA 01801. Reservations required. Download invitation form from [www.theemarc.org](http://www.theemarc.org).

## Shop for The Arc of East Middlesex!

Save yourself some time and energy and help The Arc of East Middlesex by buying the items you need and want through our on-line Shopping Village!

You can support The Arc of East Middlesex (EMARC)—at no extra cost to you or us. Just buy your favorite products at our online shopping village at [www.greatergood.com/partner/theemarc](http://www.greatergood.com/partner/theemarc) and up to 15% of the price of your purchases go directly to our organization.

Our shopping village includes brand-name items from leading online retailers like Barnes & Noble.com, Delta Airlines, DisneyStore.com, Dell Home Systems, Coldwater Creek, The Gap, Proflowers.com, and more than 100 more. You don't pay extra to buy things online. And your security and privacy are rigorously safeguarded.

Ready to do a little shopping? Visit our Web site at [www.theemarc.org](http://www.theemarc.org), click the online shopping button on the bottom left of our home page, and off you go.

What's more, you'll receive a great retailer special when you register. Please sign up today!



## Harvard Pilgrim and The Arc Partner to Make Holidays Bright



HPHC Gift Coordinator  
Laura Pizza Plum

The Arc of East Middlesex's Family Resource Center has earned the reputation for doing "whatever it takes" to support families of children with disabilities. During the holidays, that includes ensuring that families in need have gifts for their celebrations. Harvard Pilgrim Health Care has been a wonderful partner in creating Happy Holidays for these families. For more than a decade, Harvard employee and former Arc Board President Laura Pizza Plum has coordinated this gift drive. Many thanks to Laura, to Susan Sewell of the Family Resource Center for matching the families with donors and to the following generous contributors for making this such a successful campaign:

*From Harvard Pilgrim Health Care*  
The Charles Baker Family  
Medical Management Department  
Russ and Laura Plum  
Financial Operations Department  
Legal Department  
Mary Donchez  
Ancillary Contracting Department  
Provider Accounting Department  
Mark and Janet Waggoner

*From The Arc of East Middlesex*  
Joel Green  
Zack Poole & Family  
Kathy Zapolski  
Paula Vratos & Family  
Michelle Faugno  
Kerry Mahoney  
Judy Santa Maria  
Vici Riel-Smith

## Employee Appreciation Luncheon Staff Recognized for Outstanding Service

The employees of The Arc of East Middlesex are our greatest resource. In order to provide continuity of care for the individuals with disabilities we support, we offer incentives for employees to stay with us long-term. A luncheon was held on December 27, 2005 to thank employees who have been with the organization for at least a year as of June 30, 2005 and to provide cash Longevity Awards to the lowest paid employees. Special Recognition Awards were also presented to employees who went above and beyond the call of duty during the past year, including some who were ineligible for Longevity Awards due to the fact that they had not been here for a full fiscal year. Senior staff members were not eligible to be recognized in either category.

### Employees selected for Special Recognition included:

#### Administration

Mark Mahoney  
Paula Vratatos

#### Residential

Roman Dolezal  
Jonathan Hartford  
Vincent Van Der Linden

#### Day Services

Amy Buckley  
Mark Hayes  
Andrea Lauritzen  
Christina Preher  
Alex Toth  
Mary Ellen Tortorici

#### Family Resource Center

Michelle Faugno  
Cara Gradzewicz  
Paula Thompson



Going the extra mile—  
(l to r, front row) Paula Thompson, Roman Dolezal, Alex Toth, Christina Preher, (l to r, back row) Andrea Lauritzen, Mary Ellen Tortorici and Mark Hayes were among the honorees at a recent staff appreciation luncheon.

## Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteers are needed for The Arc of East Middlesex to assist with our Reading Adapted Aquatics program. This is an educational, hands-on experience in which the volunteer will work one-on-one with a child (age 3–12) who has a developmental disability. It will take place at The Burbank YMCA on Fridays from 4:30-5:30 p.m. A new session begins February 17 and runs for 6 weeks. Training is provided. Please contact Chenine Johnson at 781-942-4888 Ext. 4036 or e-mail [rec@theemarc.org](mailto:rec@theemarc.org).

## School To Work Parent Workshop

The Arc of East Middlesex's *School-to-Work (STW) Transition Services* division will host a workshop/informal pot-luck dinner for the parents/guardians of STW students from **7 to 8:30 p.m., on Thursday, February 16, 2006** at our 20 Gould Street, Reading office.\* This will be the first in a series of regular opportunities for parents to utilize each other's ideas and experiences regarding raising children with disabilities. The School to Work staff will provide definitive topics of discussion. Kerry Mahoney, Director of the Family Resource Center of The Arc of East Middlesex, will provide information about services offered through the Center, and Jo Ann Simons, Executive Director, will discuss transition issues and parenting children with disabilities.

**\* Parents who would like to learn about transitional services from parents currently utilizing School to Work services are also welcome to attend.**

During the STW Parent Workshop, The Arc of East Middlesex's Recreation Department will be providing an in-house activity for the children of any parents attending. A \$10 fee per child is required to cover the cost of supplies and staff. Please call to register for the workshop and recreation program (if applicable) by Friday, February 10, 2006.

### Contact Information

#### Workshop:

Brian Gordon, *Director of School to Work Transitional Services*  
Tel: (781) 942-4888 ext. 5028  
Email: [briang@theemarc.org](mailto:briang@theemarc.org)

#### Recreation:

Chenine Johnson,  
*Director of Recreation*  
Tel: (781) 942-4888 ext. 4036  
Email: [rec@theemarc.org](mailto:rec@theemarc.org)

**The Arc of East Middlesex**

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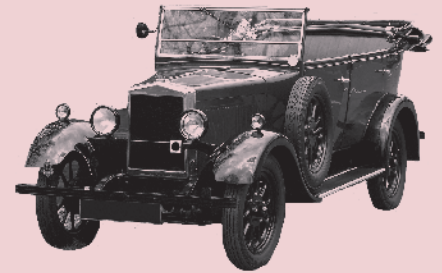
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### On-line Car Donation Program

To donate a car online, visit our web site at [www.theemarc.org](http://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](mailto: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 \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email rather than regular mail?

- No    Yes   Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

