



Special Friend's Perspective

By George Norcross

From a young age, my parents taught me the importance of community, and about our responsibility to help others, whenever we can. Their passion directed considerable support to many of those in need, and finding ways to make those lives a little bit better. As champions and role models, their experiences and compassion inspired me. I have tried to pass on to my own children their compassion for others.

In that sense, Larc has been a wonderful gift to me. It has given my family an opportunity to follow my parents' lead and make a small difference in the lives of others. And who better to support than the beautiful children of Larc, who so deserve our care and affection. There could hardly be a more worthy endeavor than enriching their lives. That is why my family has made it our goal to reach out to others, tell them the Larc story, and ask them to help too.

For families who struggle every day to care for their disabled children and adults, almost nothing is casual or easy. A trip to the mall, a ride to the seashore, dinner at a restaurant—or even at home—all require exhaustive planning and enormous energy. Meal times and bed times, afterthoughts for most of us, are often strenuous ordeals for Larc families. If we are able to help, I don't believe any of us has the option to ignore the many needs of disabled children and their families.

The first time I walked into Larc, I remember being struck by how bright and happy it was. I felt warmth and caring from everyone I encountered—

administrators, teachers, assistants, therapists, and students. For the first time, instead of just hearing about the specialness of Larc School, I felt it. It is a feeling that has never left me. It is the feeling that compelled me to become a grateful member of the Larc family.



George Norcross shares a story with a Larc student.

For the last ten years, the Norcross Foundation and the Cooper Foundation have been intimately involved with Larc School as volunteers and supporters. We are proud to be the naming sponsor of the Cooper Norcross Run the Bridge Event ... and we appreciate the 5,000 folks who, every year, accept the challenge and do the 10K run and 2 mile walk over the Ben Franklin Bridge. They do it for the Larc kids and their families. ■

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ASAH

Each year, ASAH, a New Jersey private school association serving the special education community, honors individuals for excellence in the field of special education, and commitment to their organization and community. This year, Larc School Staff Members swept all three awards for Region IV, which consists of 16 schools.

Pictured here with a very proud **Larc Executive Director Susan Weiner** (*center right*), are the 2013 ASAH award winners for Region IV: **Larc Speech Therapist Judy Krumbein** (*far left*), winner of the Related Services Professional of the Year award; **Larc Teacher Joanne Pezzella** (*center left*), winner of the Educator of the Year award; and **Larc Assistant Shannon Williams** (*far right*), winner of the Paraprofessional of the Year award.

"It's unusual for all three awards to go to one school," said Ms. Weiner. "I'm so proud of our outstanding staff for the expertise and honor they bring to Larc School."

The winners will be heading to the New Jersey State finals, at the Atlantic City Convention Center, in November. *Congratulations, Larc Staff, and good luck!* ■



Message From the Board

By Patricia Egan Jones

It has been an extraordinary experience working with the children, families, and staff of Larc School for the past 40 years. It was my special privilege to have worked with Larc School's Board of Directors, and the New Jersey State Legislature to ensure a home for our kids and the work that is done for them and with them. Larc has called Bellmawr home since 1982 and Bellmawr has so generously embraced us.

I've enjoyed and been impressed by so many wonderful moments watching and helping Larc grow. It certainly has taken a *village*, and growth never stops. For example, we've established a well

which I proudly hung in my office for all to see. We have dances, our scrumptious Thanksgiving lunch and other holiday celebrations ... and the list goes on.

Larc is truly about our kids and their families. I remember with such pleasure the joy on the faces of brothers and sisters, moms and dads, and grandparents on graduation days, when entire families come together at Larc to support and believe in our children and the exceptional staff that serves them each and every day.

I know you have read this before, but great praise must go to the staff who come to

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... great praise must go to the staff who come to work each day with smiles on their faces, knowing that the work they will be doing is so valued and important.

thought out program for the siblings of our students. This provides a place for our students' brothers and sisters to share their cares and concerns with people who truly understand ... and have fun doing so! Larc cares not just about the student, but about the entire family, just as the family cares so deeply about their child, our student.

Larc staff works to bring all types of activities to our students and their families. I particularly enjoy the art exhibits, where students' works of art are shared with everyone. I purchased a few,

work each day with smiles on their faces, knowing that the work they will be doing is so valued and important. Indeed, we would not have Larc if not for the wonderful staff.

Yes, there are a lot of supporters here in the community to back up Larc's valuable work, and we do so with smiles on our faces and love in our hearts for our kids. I am grateful to be a part of the Larc family. There is nothing like it. Thank you, Larc, for all the incredible memories, as well as the exciting challenges that lie ahead as we continue to grow Larc far into the future. ■



Graduation ... A Time For Celebration and Pride

Families and friends joined the Larc School staff and student body for Graduation, June 14 at Larc School. This year, four preschool and two educational program students were celebrated as graduates. "We are all so very proud of our graduates for all they've accomplished," said Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner. "It will be our greatest joy to watch as they continue to grow and succeed." ■



Educational Program Graduate Mike T. cuts the graduation cake while Larc Principal Bethann Rogers proudly looks on. Insert, Pre-school Graduate Cameron P. and Larc Teacher Michele Steriti beam with pride.



Larc Employees are Honored

Seven Larc employees were honored for their years of service to Larc School. Rhoda Wus (left) celebrated her 15 year anniversary. Next to Rhoda are Larc's 25 year employees: (left to right) Vicki Bauer, Cathy Monti, Joann Viereck and Dawn Kasperzak. Ann Marie Scaffidi (right) celebrated her 30th Anniversary with Larc School. Not pictured, Tina Clark also celebrated her 25th Anniversary this year.

"I'm most honored to be working with such a loving and dedicated staff. These wonderful people make all the difference in the lives of our students," said Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner.

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Larc School gratefully acknowledges these gifts from our caring friends—individuals, foundations, corporations—whose generosity makes it possible for Larc School to provide the very best for its students and their families. We extend our deepest gratitude to every donor.

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Listed above are contributions from January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013. Please let us know if a name was omitted, and we'll be sure to print it in our next issue.



Maria Ciarroccki shares her personal story

adapted for the Larc Newsletter from Ms. Ciarroccki's letter to Larc School, read at the Golf Tournament Banquet

When my son, Anthony, (above) was diagnosed with severe brain damage and cerebral palsy at two months of age, our families were truly devastated. My husband, Mike, our daughter, Marie, and I were immediately cast into a new world, a world that included doctors, pharmacists, hospitals, therapists, labs, specialty care centers, and so much more. Suddenly I realized that there was a whole world out there that I never knew even existed!

It took us two to three years to get a grip on this new life, a life that included knowing what our child needed and trying to navigate our way through a complex network of social services to get what he needed.

When we were faced with the challenge of finding an educational program to meet his needs, we visited several schools. And then I walked into Larc School. I can't explain the feeling that came over me as I stared down the hallway at all the wheelchairs lined up in that meticulously well-cared-for school hallway, but I knew at that moment that this was a school where my son belonged! I knew that Larc was a school that loved these special children.

How could I know this just from walking into the building? I saw wonderful artwork lining the hall that was created by these beautiful children. I saw a boy wheeling

down the hall accompanied lovingly by an attentive aide. I saw children gathered in the gym/auditorium, happy to be with their teachers and aides as they participated in an activity.

“I attribute this dramatic change in Anthony's behavior to the time and attention the Larc staff has spent working with him. Larc has opened up Anthony's world to him!”

But that was not all I saw. The principal took time to sit with me and talk about Larc's program. She took me on a tour of the school and introduced me to Larc therapists. At that meeting, the therapists got Anthony into a stander and I was able to see my son stand up—so proudly, I might add—for the first time in his life!

Anthony is now 13 years old. I have seen my son grow from a boy that barely made a sound to a boy who clearly notes his

preferences. He demonstrates through gestures and vocalizations that he knows exactly what is going on. He lets us know what songs he likes (having a preference for Carrie Underwood and Taylor Swift). He knows when he is getting his bath, when his sister is getting into trouble (as evidenced by his devilish grin), and when we are talking about him.

I attribute this dramatic change in Anthony's behavior to the time and attention the Larc staff has spent working with him. Larc has opened up Anthony's world to him!

I am very grateful for all the support that Larc has given to me throughout the years, and for the love that they show my son. How many teachers visit your child when they are in the hospital? How many classes send get well cards home with cuddly stuffed animals when your child is sick? How many schools have a dentist visit the school to ensure the children's teeth are properly cared for?

Thanks to the faculty and staff at Larc, I go to work every day knowing that all of Anthony's needs are being met—that he is being challenged to be the best that he can be and to get the most out of life. I go to work every day with the peace of mind that Anthony is at a school that loves him and his fellow students for the special children that they are! ■



Heart of Larc Award

Larc Teacher Stacie Halschied (left) receives the Heart of Larc Award from Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner, along with heartfelt thanks for her extraordinary service to Larc School and Students.

“I'm most honored to be working with such a loving and dedicated staff. These wonderful people make all the difference in the lives of our students,” said Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner.

Larc's 22st Annual "Help The Kids" Golf Tournament

Letter from Larc Mom Brings Ray Of Sunshine To Rainy Day

It was a great day for a **Golf Tournament Banquet** on Friday, June 7th at the **Pennsauken Country Club**. Although the tournament itself was cut short by a storm—only one group of four of the 134 registered golfers stayed the course before the rains came—nothing could dispel the awesome energy in the banquet room that evening.

About 150 golfers and Larc supporters enjoyed a delicious dinner and Larc's fabulous raffle prizes. This year, close to 80 gift baskets, each worth at least \$100, and a money board worth \$1,000 were won by guests, while others bid on a variety of items, from Flyers memorabilia to concert tickets, all to support Larc.

But the highlight of the evening came when Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner read a letter written by **Maria Ciarroccki**, the mother of **Larc Student Anthony**. Sitting at a table nearby, Ms. Ciarroccki and her husband, Mike, were introduced to the rapt crowd when Ms. Weiner finished reading the letter. The banquet guests greeted the Ciarrocckis with a standing ovation. ■



Golf Tournament Banquet raffle winners Steve Oliver (left) and Ryan Cody, of System Solutions, happily pose with prizes.

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