



Message From the Board

From Dreams to Miracles

By Edward McDonnell

Just like all parents, when my daughter Mandy was born her mother and I dreamed beautiful dreams for her. They were dreams of running and playing and dancing, of her first day at kindergarten, her senior prom, teaching her to drive and choosing the perfect college.

Sometimes even now—so many years later—her mother and I still remember those dreams and wish Mandy's life could have been different. We wish she could walk and talk and live her life without so much assistance. We wish that none of the wheelchairs lining the halls of Larc belonged to Mandy. But one does.

And sometimes—just once in a while—we still cry quiet tears over all that Mandy has missed. But in Mandy's joyful years at Larc we have learned a great lesson: Dreams are effortless, but miracles require hard work. The teachers and therapists at Larc are miracle workers. These special men and women with gifted hands and loving hearts labor brilliantly, quietly and without applause every single day.

“ Dreams are effortless, but miracles require hard work.

Miracle workers know that it can take three years to get a child to utter her very first word. And they are not discouraged knowing that sometimes, even after all that work, the first word never comes. There isn't much glory in holding a child's hand around his spoon and guiding it to his mouth a thousand times, until finally he does it once by himself. And there are no curtain calls for the speech therapist when a little girl, for the first time, swallows a spoonful of food that hasn't been pureed. Miracles can be tedious. And even we parents too often forget to applaud.

Like all the other children and adults there, Mandy's life at Larc is miraculous. Each day she is greeted by teachers, therapists and classroom aides who love her unconditionally. And she loves them back. Then the miracle workers get to work teaching her mind, manipulating her body, and making her smile out loud. The miracle workers thrive on Mandy's smallest accomplishments, and never give up on her potential to achieve the next goal. They enrich her life beyond any dream we could have dreamed. Before Larc, we only knew about dreams; now we know about miracles.

The dreams were ours; the miracles are Mandy's. ■

Edward McDonnell is the father of a Larc student and the Chairman of the Larc School Board of Directors. This article, originally printed in 2010, is one of our favorites and is worth repeating. Well said, Ed!



Special Friend's Perspective

By Joseph Morrissey

Senior Vice President Wealth Management Financial Advisor, Brown & Brown

Larc School Parent Group Association Treats Staff To Lunch—Praise Was The Day's Special

Hosted and served by volunteers from the Larc School Parent Group Association (LSPGA) to thank the entire staff of Larc School, the annual Staff Luncheon was held on Thursday, December 18th. L to r: Friend Joe Haro, Parent Claudine Colgan, Parent Elizabeth Dalzell, Grandparent Jolyne Dalzell, Parents Chris & Ralph Saraceno, and Parent Yvette Parker.

Most memorable at the luncheon were comments sent in from families when asked what they love about Larc School.

- ♥ "You challenge and encourage our children to be the best they can possibly be!"
- ♥ "You are the family our kids are with when they are away from us!"
- ♥ "Your commitment, dedication, love and understanding makes all the difference in so many lives. We would be lost without all of you!"
- ♥ "You make Larc School a community where our children truly belong!"
- ♥ "Simply put, you are amazing! We can't thank you enough for giving your hearts to our children every day! How much you love and care about them shows on their faces every day when they come home to us."
- ♥ "Your hearts are full of compassion while your minds are loaded with creativity."
- ♥ "When the path gets bumpy, you find a way to pave it with love, kindness, and strength."
- ♥ "I wouldn't trust my daughter with anyone but family—and Larc staff is family."

What could be more special?!

I have had the pleasure of being connected to Larc School since the early 1990s. My company, Brown & Brown (formerly The Morrissey Agency and Commerce National Insurance), was brought on to assist the school with their insurance needs. However, what started as a business relationship became personal.

From the beginning, it was very clear that this was a special place with special people doing some very special things. Larc's staff provides a high quality education and more to families with serious and unique needs. The bond that exists between the Larc staff and the families they serve is easy to see and feel, and is distinctive to Larc. At Larc, they are always asking, "How can we do more for these children?"

The warm, caring, skilled environment Larc creates everyday touches anyone fortunate enough to visit the school—and those of us at Brown & Brown are no exception. With an office staff of 35 insurance professionals—each of us with families and children of our own—the business workday is always full. Yet each of us has come to know about Larc and find a way to personally contribute in some way.

These contributions take various forms of expression. More than 50 percent of the Brown & Brown team volunteers their time to help Larc prepare for the annual Bridge Run. This includes putting packets together for the race participants, helping on the day of the race, and, for the hearty, running in the 10K.

“ From the beginning of our business relationship with Larc, it was very clear to us that this was a special place with special people doing some very special things.

Larc's Holiday Empty Stocking Program receives over 95 percent participation from our employees. Clothing, toys, and more are donated and gift wrapped for the Larc families who need a little help during the holidays.

At the annual "Help the Kids" golf outing we are given the opportunity to show our support by being a sponsor and participating in the tournament.

Our strong belief in Larc School's mission prompted us to reach out to some of the insurance companies who underwrite the Larc account. At our request, they have provided annual grants to Larc, which are matched by Brown & Brown, to help support the program.

On a personal note, I have been blessed by my association with the Larc School and all of its components. My coworkers over the years have shared this appreciation for the goodness that is the basis of everything that Larc does. ■

April 15, 2015
Appreciation Breakfast

April 17, 2015
Art Festival

June 5, 2015
24th Annual "Help the Kids"
Golf Tournament, at the
Pennsauken Country Club

September, 2015
Date TBD
Young Lawyers Lobster Bake

November 1, 2015
2015 Cooper Norcross Run
the Bridge Presented by
AmeriHealth New Jersey

calendar



friends OF LARC SCHOOL

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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When remembering those you love, remember Larc

Make a donation to Larc School – the perfect remembrance for all occasions: birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, congratulations, and condolences.

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Bellmawr, NJ 08031

(Envelope enclosed) or donate
online at www.larcschool.org

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Listed above are contributions from July 1, 2014 through December 31, 2014. Please let us know if a name was omitted, and we'll be sure to print it in our next issue.

Creating a Legacy of Giving

It only took one tour of the Larc School campus for Gerry Browne to appreciate the incredible opportunities that are available to children and families at this unique place. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Browne began contributing to the annual golf outing and bridge run.

As was perfectly summed up in the fall newsletter, "Gerry was a giver not a taker, and a good friend of Larc School," said Larc Board Member Jim Madden. "A man of substance, Gerry was truly one of a kind."

“An annual gift will be given in remembrance of my father that will testify to the devotion he had to Larc School.”

Following Gerry Browne's untimely passing in 2012, family and friends were empowered by his philanthropy, generosity, and humanitarianism. Like Mr. Browne, they wanted to perpetuate a tradition of giving.

"In addition to continuing to support the Larc School annual bridge run and golf events, we will begin a new chapter in 2015 that will illustrate the impact Larc School had on Gerry Browne," said his son, **Jeffrey Browne**. "An annual gift will be given in remembrance of my father that will testify to the devotion he had to Larc School."

"Gerry was a very special friend of ours," explained Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner. "He really understood who we are and what we do here, and he did everything he could to support Larc School and our families. This annual gift is a fitting tribute to Gerry and truly embodies his passion for Larc's kids."

Each year, the donation in memory of Gerald Browne will be used for something that will enhance the quality of learning and experience for all Larc students. This year the donation will be used to update the school's sensory room and sensory gym. These areas provide a unique opportunity for multi-sensory experiences that help calm, soothe, or stimulate actions and behaviors, and promote readiness for learning.

Gerry Browne never forgot where he came from and those who provided him opportunities to succeed.

He took great pleasure in helping the youth, whether it was on the court



An annual gift to Larc School donated in memory of Larc Friend and ardent supporter, Gerald Browne (above), will help perpetuate Mr. Browne's tradition of giving.

coaching the Sacred Heart of Camden 7th and 8th grade basketball team, coaching local travel teams, or furthering the Larc School mission. Although Gerry Browne is no longer with us, his memory will never be forgotten. With the annual Gerald Browne donation, his mission at Larc School will continue to touch the lives of others.

Thank you to Larc's Occupational Therapy Department and the Assistive Technology Assistant for all the research and hard work they put into equipping these two sensory areas. ■

Lobsters Bring Love to Larc... And Dinner To Larc Friends And Family!

Everyone at the **Camden County Bar Association's Young Lawyer Committee (YLC) 5th Annual Lobster Bake** had a delicious and lively time (except, of course, the lobsters)! Benefitting Larc School, the Bake was held at **The Tap Room**, in Westmont this past September, and raised more than \$10,000.

Pictured right are: *(left to right)* **Rachel Brekke, Young Lawyers Bake Committee Member**; Kim Marino, Larc School Community Relations; Jim Rhodes, Larc School Board Member; Susan Weiner, Larc School Executive Director; Reggie Beckett, Larc School Board Member; **Elizabeth Dalzell, Larc Parent**; Jim Madden, Larc School Board Member; Cathy Mattson, Larc School Adult Program; Bethann Rogers Larc School Principal; **Matt Rooney, Young Lawyers Lobster Bake Committee Chair**; and Michele McCloskey, Larc School Educational Supervisor. ■



Three Cheers for the Cheerleaders!

Cheerleaders enthusiastically acknowledge and support their friends, family, and/or teams. Larc School has many such cheerleaders who support Larc in various remarkable ways. Mike Wolfe is one such cheerleader whose unflinching support, especially during the Run, has earned him heartfelt cheers from the entire Larc family.

Mike Wolfe first became acquainted with Larc School in 2002 when he was with Lincoln Financial, working with Larc's 401K plan. "That's when I first met Executive Director Susan Weiner and took an interest in Larc other than a business client," said Mr. Wolfe. "Susan knows all of the students by name, and her enthusiasm is infectious. Her passion for the children and school is what stood out for me, and why I wanted to help."

"The leadership Susan provides is excellent. She transformed the school into something really special, and I realized just how special that type of environment must be for the children and their families," he said. "I feel that working at Larc must provide some of the most challenging yet some of the best days of the employees' lives."

“ I feel that working at Larc must provide some of the most challenging and some of the best days of the employees' lives.

While working with Larc, Mr. Wolfe was also coaching girls' basketball at Haddonfield High School, and in 2005 he decided to bring 10 to 15 players to the Run to work as volunteers. "As a coach, I felt it was important that players give back to the community—in this case, to Larc School," Mr. Wolfe said.



Nicole Wolfe, far left, with Ridley High School Cheerleaders—Rah! Rah! Rah!

Although Mike Wolfe no longer works with Larc on a professional basis—he is now employed by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) as Director of Channel Strategy, in Philadelphia—he continues to be an important volunteer at Larc.

At GSK, Mr. Wolfe met and married Nicole Sepcie, who shared his passion for coaching. By 2007 he no longer coached the basketball team, but he had replacement volunteers for the Run—25-30 cheerleaders from Ridley High School, where Nicole Wolfe is the head cheerleading coach!

Mike and Nicole Wolfe not only enlist the cheerleaders as Larc School volunteers each year to assist with the children's run and cheer runners on at the finish line, but Mr. Wolfe has turned to his colleagues at GSK. "At work we have Orange Day. That's when employees take a day from work and volunteer. I bring my team of eight people to Larc, where we take out the trash, clean lights, and do whatever is needed," said Mr. Wolfe. "I only wish that the school would be in session when we go so I could show my colleagues what goes on in those classrooms ... the difference Larc makes in the lives of these children."

Larc School appreciates the difference Mike Wolfe makes in the lives of the entire Larc family, and offers a spirited *Hip! Hip! Hoorah!* for his many years of cheerleading for Larc. ■



◀ *The first male 10K runner crosses the finish line!*

▶ *Larc Student Darcie bands first place female 10K medal to the winner at the finish line.*



Please like us on facebook/runthebridge to keep in touch for the 2015 event.

11.1.15

>> 2014 Run the Bridge

The day was very cold ... and very windy, with gusts up to 40 mph! But while the wind was fierce, equally so were our sponsors, supporters, participants, and volunteers for the **2014 Cooper Norcross Run the Bridge Event Presented by AmeriHealth New Jersey**. More than 4,000 people pre-registered for the November 2nd bridge run. As always, the event was a resounding success—if a little wind-blown—so everyone felt like a winner!

Please like us on [facebook/runthebridge](https://www.facebook.com/runthebridge) to keep in touch for the 2015 event!

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Larc School sincerely thanks the supporters of the 2014 Cooper Norcross Run the Bridge presented by AmeriHealth New Jersey

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Larc School's Favorite Santas



What could be better than a visit from Santa Claus? Three Santas! *Ho! Ho! Ho!*

Every year around Christmas, Larc's three favorite Santas visit our children, bearing cheerful tidings and treasured holiday gifts. *Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!* ■



Amanda Pellegrino (left) and her father, long time Larc supporter Santa Mark Pellegrino, visit Larc classrooms with Executive Director Susan Weiner.



Larc Student Ayo checks out the Santa from the Camden County Department of Corrections PBA Local #351.



With Happy Holiday smiles, Larc Student James buddies up with our Harcourt Santa.