



Message From The Board

By James Rhodes

It has been a beautiful summer at Larc School. And as sad as we are to see the summer come to an end, it's also an exciting time, not only for our students and parents as they prepare for the first day of the 2015 school year, but for those of us involved in the planning and preparations for our largest fundraising event of the year—the **Cooper Norcross Run the Bridge Event Presented by AmeriHealth New Jersey**.

It's hard to believe how big this event has grown from its humble beginnings as a local 5K around Bellmawr with 200 participants back in 1996, to the sophisticated, major running event in the Tri-State area that it is now. The extraordinarily popular Cooper Norcross Run the Bridge closes the Benjamin Franklin Bridge to traffic, allowing thousands of participants and supporters to run over and back, and through the Camden Waterfront area in support of Larc's kids.

It doesn't happen overnight and it doesn't happen without an incredible team of dedicated people behind the scenes! Throughout the year, a committee of our friends and sponsors from Cooper University Health Care, The Norcross Foundation, AmeriHealth New Jersey, Delaware River Port Authority, Camden County, and the Running Co. of Haddonfield meet once every couple of months to plan and prepare for this enormous undertaking. We also receive amazing support from Rutgers University, the Riversharks, Coopers Ferry, the Camden County Police Department, and many more. We are so grateful for their friendship, for believing in Larc School, and recognizing that our students and families truly need their support.

This year's Run the Bridge—always the first Sunday in November—will be held on November 1st. Register to join us in this 10K, 2 Mile Bridge Walk, and Kids Dash by going to www.runthebridge.org. ■

The idea for a charity run for Larc School was conceived in 1996 by Captain Thomas J. McDonnell, then director of the Camden County Police Academy. Captain McDonnell, the dedicated team of volunteers, and the 200 participants in that first run—held on May 8, 1996—had no idea what a popular, huge event would come of the 5K fundraiser they had created.

Special Friend's Perspective

By Dianne L. DeMarco

Right, Special Friends to Larc School, Joe and Dianne DeMarco, share smiles and a delightful evening at Larc's annual Golf Banquet.



I have been blessed in many ways throughout my life, and one of them certainly has been my relationship with Larc School. When I was asked to be the Special Friend of Larc, I was overwhelmed and honored!

I first met Susan Weiner when I toured the school with her and Joe Morrissey in late 1996. I was not aware that Larc School even existed until that day. At the time, I was an employee of Commerce National Insurance and Joe asked me to be the account executive for Larc School's insurance portfolio. Touring the school, my heart melted when I heard the soft voices of caring teachers working with the children and saw the children's smiles—so happy and proud of what they did or said.

Not long after that, Susan and I met to discuss business and, of course, exchanged personal stories. I told Susan that, since 1979, my husband, Joe, and I have been hosting a golf tournament to fund a scholarship in memory of our son, Joe, who died in a car accident while a senior at Audubon High School.

I remember how our little town of Audubon rallied around us and how appreciative we all are to this day—my husband and I, our daughter Dawn, and our two grandsons, Matt and John. Our community, school administrators, and borough councilmen were right there to offer support and ideas on how to fund the scholarship that my husband wanted to start. They have continued their support and help all these past 37 years. We chose

a golf tournament to fund the scholarship as my son was on the golf team, and I'm proud to say he was an exceptionally good golfer at only 17 years of age.

“ My heart melted when I heard the soft voices of caring teachers working with the children and saw the children's smiles—so happy and proud of what they did or said.

When Susan heard my story, she was quick to ask me to join Larc's golf committee and I was happy to do so. When I grew up in the early 50s, my mom was a single parent of four and she taught us that you don't need money to help people ... always be kind ... there are many things that you can do to be helpful—open a door, carry a grocery bag, cut someone's grass. I guess some of that rubbed off on me. I love doing things that I know will be helping Larc's kids.

I'm always amazed at all Larc does for and with the children. The children are always first in the minds of the staff. They are always asking, "What can we do for our children?" The parents of these very special children have a wonderful, safe, happy school for them. The fact that the parents do not have to provide anything for their child's care is simply amazing. While my heart breaks for the children and their parents, I am so happy they found Larc School. The love that Susan, her staff, board members, and friends of Larc have for the students is endless!

The work they do is carried out with so much love, kindness, and patience. You can see and feel the love and compassion from the entire staff whenever you are in the school. To see the smiles on the children's faces as they are getting off the bus, going up and down the halls, or are in their classrooms is proof to me that they are happy at Larc.

Although my professional/business relationship with Larc lasted just three years, my personal relationship with the school continues, and that's what is most meaningful to me. It's a relationship I truly treasure. I will continue to be involved and help in any way I can for as long as I'm physically able to do so.

Thank you, Joe Morrissey, for introducing me to Larc. Thank you, Susan, for asking me to get involved on the golf committee. Saying yes was one of the best decisions I have made in my life! Thank you, Larc Staff, for all you do for the children! ■

The Kruger Family: First Year At Golf, First Year At Larc

*Jennifer and Benjamin Kruger
share their personal story.*

When it was time to send their four-year-old son, Ryan, to pre-school, the Krugers thought it was going to be difficult finding the right place for him, as he has spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy. But Mom Jennifer Kruger explained, "We found Larc after a couple of school tours with the Mt. Laurel Child Study Team and immediately fell in love with it."

Dad Ben Kruger agreed. "Everything about the school works for Ryan's needs—the size of the classrooms, the number of the staff working with the kids, the right amount of structure, and the school itself," said Ben. "It all seems to work for him."

"And Ryan loves it," said Jen, who particularly loves the communication with Ryan's teacher. "It's exceptional," agreed Ben. "There's constant communication. A book comes home daily with Ryan telling what he did, and we send back what he did at home."

The Krugers are thrilled with the progress their son has made since he started Larc last fall. "It's a life changing experience for him and for us," said Jen. "He's so excited to go, and we've seen so much improvement since he's been at Larc. The staff knows how to get him to eat and drink ... probably better than at home!" Ben agreed, "And Larc's Speech Therapists are helping to secure a speech device for Ryan so he'll be able to communicate with us. We are very excited about that. Every day is something different, something good."

Giving back is very important to the Krugers, who both work at TD Bank. Jen was involved with the Yankee Candle fundraiser and with the Secret Santa Workshop last Christmas. "Currently, I'm doing a fundraiser for the Run. I reached out to a tee-shirt

“ It's so good to feel accepted, and to know that Ryan is loved. The teachers, the principal are all so welcoming. You just don't feel different here.



Above, Larc Student Ryan shares a moment of delight with his Dad and Mom.

company and got 117 orders so far for Ryan's team—that's \$600 for Larc!" she shared.

Ben joined the Golf Committee earlier this year. "I enjoyed being in the tournament and on the committee working with other parents. I put together a couple of foursomes, including coworkers and family members. It was a fantastic event. Everyone I invited had a great time," Ben said. "I've been very impressed with this event. Larc has been organizing the golf tournament for many years and they have it down. I see a lot of outings in my line of business, and I can tell you this event is well organized. I look forward to being a part of many more in the future—on the committee and at the event.

"One thing we particularly like about Larc is how comfortable it is," he said. "From the executive director to the secretary, everyone seems so very welcoming. You can have a casual conversation with anyone. It's a great thing to be able to trust. It's wonderful to be comfortable when we leave him and know he's safe. We trust who he's with. It gives us peace for the days he's at school, allowing Jen and I to work. We know he's under good care and enjoying himself."

"It's so nice to feel part of a family that can understand what we're going through," said Jen. "It's so good to feel accepted, and to know that Ryan is loved. The teachers, the principal are all so welcoming. You just don't feel different here." ■

thank you



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*The rain stopped ... the sun came out
... and so did the grateful golfers!*

Larc School's 24th Annual “Help The Kids” Golf Tournament

*Playing A-round For The Fun
Of It ... All For Larc's Kids!*

Our 24th Annual “Help the Kids” Golf Tournament, held on Friday, June 5th, was a resounding success! Our morning golfers pushed through what was supposed to be a passing rain shower, but was actually quite close to a downpour. Surprisingly, the clouds lifted and the sun made a big entrance for our afternoon golfers, making for a lovely day of golf. Cocktails and jazz music on the deck followed by dinner and incredible raffle prizes—this year valued at over \$15,000—with truly wonderful friends made for a memorable night. Executive Director Susan Weiner teared up as she shared cherished memories of a former student who passed away earlier this year, reminding everyone why we gather together on the first day each June and that their support touches real lives. ■



*A fine end-of-a-successful-day for the many
Larc friends and family at the Golf Banquet
following the tournament—with a sumptuous
dinner ... and fabulous raffle prizes!*

Giving Technology a Hand

Larc's New Assistive Technology Position

Assistive Technology is not new, but Larc's Assistive Technology position is! Assistive Technology (AT) is just what it sounds like—using technology to assist people with disabilities in performing tasks that otherwise would be difficult or impossible to accomplish. It could be as high-tech as an adaptive head switch or as low-tech as a foam tube properly placed to help with positioning.

“Through the years, both the technology needs and opportunities for our students have exploded. We have devices and equipment today that we just didn't have 20 years ago,” said Larc Executive Director Susan Weiner. “With these new technologies come new challenges. A smart board is great for a student who can stand and touch the screen, but how do you make that technology available to a student in a wheelchair who has difficulty extending his or her arm?”

At Larc School, you call on their Assistive Technology Assistant. The role of this new position is to analyze the technology needs of Larc students, work collaboratively with teachers and therapists to find solutions to problems, and create alternatives designed to enhance communication, mobility, positioning, and access to technology and education.

Little did Larc know that their first ever AT Assistant was already in the building. As a classroom assistant at Larc School for several years, Lydia Jenchura learned first-hand the unique challenges Larc's students and teachers face. After hearing about the AT Certification program from a friend, Lydia pursued the program on her own. Larc Principal Bethann Rogers first learned of Lydia's interest in AT when she found her studying during her lunch break.

“We understood the value of Lydia's AT endeavor,” said Mrs. Rogers, “so we started to develop an Assistive Technology position at Larc. Originally our goal was to open this position for one year, but it's been hugely successful, and now we can't imagine not having it.”

“I love the position,” said Ms. Jenchura. “I feel I'm helping many students have a more productive and fulfilling environment. It's very rewarding.”

In addition to finding solutions to students' needs on a daily basis, Ms. Jenchura continually researches new technology that might be of help to Larc students. Her newest find is TAPit. This interactive, desk-like learning station is designed to work with a computer and has the remarkable ability to recognize the difference between an arm resting on a screen and a finger intentionally tapping the screen.

“The TAPit is expensive, but our children with limited physical ability will greatly benefit from it,” said Mrs. Rogers. Larc is now the proud owner of a TAPit, thanks to a grant from the Camden Home For Children And S.P.C.C., and a gift from Mark Pellegrino and family, and the Pellegrino Automotive Group. Many, many thanks from AT Assistant Lydia Jenchura, the rest of the Larc Staff, and, of course, from the many Larc Kids who will benefit greatly from this unique technology! ■



Assistive Technology Assistant Lydia Jenchura works with Larc Student Jabrill to help make his day-to-day activities more accessible.

“Originally our goal was to open this position for one year, but it's been hugely successful, and now we can't imagine not having it.”

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Listed above are contributions from January 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015. Please let us know if a name was omitted, and we'll be sure to print it in our next issue.



Larc Celebrates Landmark Staff Anniversaries At Annual End-Of-Year Dinner

Larc's annual staff dinner, held on June 16th at the Metro Diner, hosted 90 staff members. And, as with all things *Larc*, at the heart of the evening was Larc's kids. "The best part of the night is when the staff shares their favorite stories about the kids," said Executive Director Susan Weiner. "They talk about accomplishments achieved, jokes told, and camaraderie. The stories are funny, sweet, and touching. People who don't know our students can't always understand what makes our kid stories so special, but, at our staff dinner, everyone there knows these kids and understands both their little and big accomplishments."

Top, Nutritionist Glenda Westenberger (far left), Teacher Vicki Potter (center right), and Speech Therapist Roxane Adams (far right) hold Longevity Awards presented by Executive Director Susan Weiner (center left,) celebrating 35 years at Larc School.



Above left, Executive Director Susan Weiner presents Longevity Award to Classroom Assistant Bonnie Langdon, celebrating 25 years at Larc School. Also receiving Longevity Awards, for 15 years at Larc, were Nurse Jeanne Danese, and Educational Supervisor Michele McCloskey [not shown]

Above right, Physical Therapist Jackie Ricketts, who retired one month shy of 25 years at Larc, receives a retirement gift from Executive Director Susan Weiner.



The Knights Shine The Morning Of Larc's Appreciation Breakfast

Larc School's annual Appreciation Breakfast is one of Executive Director Susan Weiner's favorite events. "It is the one time of year when we invite our friends and supporters to join us at Larc and have the opportunity to say *Thank you* face-to-face," explained Ms. Weiner. "They have the chance to tour the school and see firsthand the impact their support has on our students."

Wednesday morning, April 15, 2015, Ms. Weiner opened the event in the Larc School gym (transformed into a banquet hall) with her personal thanks to the 75 guests and a touching video sharing special moments throughout the year between students and staff. "You know you've connected when you see people dabbing their eyes and hear the quiet sniffles," she said.

Larc Board Member James Madden introduced the day's honored guest, **Past State Deputy Andrew Lipenta** of the **New Jersey State Knights of Columbus**. Mr. Madden presented Mr. Lipenta with the **Lauren Higgins Hope Award** for the charitable work he and the New Jersey Knights of Columbus have done over the past 35 years to benefit the children of Larc School. This award is given to those whose support and generous acts give us hope that, for Larc's kids, each

and every day can be better than the day before.

"It was an honor to be selected to receive the prestigious Lauren Higgins Hope Award on behalf of all the Knights of Columbus members who have been supportive of Larc School for many years," said Mr. Lipenta. "The Award artwork depicts a young child reaching out for assistance. This artwork so aptly expresses the hope and caring service provided by Larc School and its many benefactors who have generously supported Larc students and their families." ■

Above, every day in every way, Larc School appreciates the many who are dedicated to the students of Larc. Larc's annual Appreciation Breakfast offers an opportunity to express thanks and gratitude to these outstanding supporters. (left to right) Larc School Board Member James Madden; Al Bennett, Knights of Columbus Member; Larc School Executive Director Susan Weiner; Maria Lipenta and honored guest, Past State Deputy New Jersey Knights of Columbus Andrew Lipenta holding the Lauren Higgins Hope Award; Larc School Board Member Reggie Beckett, Past State Deputy New Jersey Knights of Columbus, and his wife, Alice Beckett; Jerry Burke, Knights of Columbus Member, and his wife, Honora Burke; and Larc School Board Member James Rhodes.

June 12, 2015—Graduation A Goal Achieved ... Kudos To All!

Friday, June 12th, Larc students, staff, and families joined three pre-school and five secondary graduates to celebrate the graduates' achievements at Larc School and wish them success in their next endeavors.

Addressing the students and their families, Executive Director Susan Weiner said, "In 1769, a term was developed—*In Loco Parentis*—that states that schools should act in place of the parents during the school day. Here at Larc, we take that very seriously. And while we can never replace you as parents, we do become part of your family. And, like family, we watch with great pride in all that you [the graduates] have accomplished."

It was a proud day for all—Larc students, staff, and family.



Secondary Program Graduate Lindsey receiving a warm hug from her sister and Larc staff member, Liz, who glows with pride.



Preschool Graduate Jayda holds her diploma up high as Larc Principal Bethann Rogers and Teacher Michele Steriti offer heartfelt congratulations.



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All Dressed Up And A Wonderful Place To Go— Larc's Annual Spring Formal!

It was an **Under The Sea** wonderland at the Larc gym on May 15th when the annual **Spring Formal** brought music and fun to about 20 Larc students dressed to the nines! Passing through a coral reef arch, the students and staff left parents behind as they began their evening of dancing, refreshments, and merriment. ■



Left, Larc Student Caleb poses for a photo with a Larc Classroom Assistant Natalie at the annual Spring Formal.

Right, Larc Students William and Ashley move to the mood and the music of an enchanted evening.

