

Message From the Board

By Charles Higgins



“ We were so pleased to be able to help a number of our Larc families with a variety of expenses during this last year. We helped keep utilities turned on; we helped with insurance deductibles and with outstanding dental and medical bills... just to name a few.

Sunny and bright, a symbol of hope... yellow was my daughter Lauren’s favorite color. Lauren was a life-long student at Larc School. My wife Gail and I know just how challenging life can be when caring for a child with disabilities. During the 2017-18 school year, we were so proud to be able to introduce “The Lauren Higgins Hope Award” to Larc families. This fund was created to honor Lauren’s memory by lending a helping hand to families experiencing hardship or extraordinary expenses related to the care and needs of their Larc child. The funding comes from an incredible benefactor and Larc Board Member, Pepe Piperno.

We were so pleased to be able to help a number of our Larc families with a variety of expenses during this last year. We helped keep utilities turned on; we helped with insurance deductibles and with outstanding dental and medical bills...just to name a few.

As the months rolled by, we were asked to help with larger expenses that were as high as \$25,000 for home modifications and requests to help with the funding needed for vans equipped with hydraulic lifts. These requests simply could not be handled by our fund. However, this did not stop members of the Larc Board. In true Larc fashion, we found another way to help.

Our Larc Chairman Ed McDonnell and I became aware of the NJ Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund (CICRF) –a financial assistance program for New Jersey Families dealing with large medical expenses for a child with an illness or condition (acute or chronic) for which they are unable to pay and are not fully covered by insurance, state, federal programs or other sources. The program requires that the eligible family pay the up-front costs first, for which they are later reimbursed. Your child with special needs is eligible through age 21. In addition, this program

is retroactive. For example, if you paid for something two years ago, you can submit those bills. These expenses include, but are not limited to, ambulatory care, acute, or specialized in or out patient hospital care, medical equipment, medically related home and vehicle modifications such as ramps or wheelchair lifts, home health care, medical transportation, etc. We wanted to make sure our families knew about this valuable resource.

In the past, some families were unable to get the help they need because they cannot afford the up-front costs. To solve this problem in Camden County, the Board of Freeholders established the Camden County Catastrophic Illness in Children Relief Fund Bridge Loan, which assists local families by providing secured “bridge loans” for up to \$5,000 to be used for eligible down payments or expenses. The Camden County Bridge Loans that are approved by the CICRF are then repaid by the Fund, not by the family.

We invited Claudia Marchese, Esq., the Executive Director of the CICRF, and Ralph Condo, the Director of Government Relations at the Camden County Improvement Authority, to come to Larc on two separate occasions to share more information with our families. Even the few families that were aware of this program came away with a deeper understanding of what the program has to offer. Anyone still needing information should visit www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cicrf/home/ or contact the CICRF at 609-292-0600 or 800-335-3863.

The Larc School Board of Directors believes whole-heartedly in not only educating our students, but also providing resources and opportunities for their families in the hopes that we can make each day better than the day before. Hopefully, virtually every family can benefit from this fund. ■

Nine years ago we chose Larc School or maybe Larc chose us

By Jen, a Larc Mom

When your child is diagnosed with any disability or diagnoses it is completely overwhelming and you don't know where to begin. Sending a typical verbal child to school at three years old is scary to any parent. Sending a non-verbal child, who is completely dependent on others, to school at three is absolutely terrifying. We were absolutely terrified. How would we be able to trust complete strangers with our son Tyler?

The answer is...when you find the right place, you just know. You feel it. The moment we walked in to Larc School we felt a comfort, a warmth, and a sense of home. There was happiness throughout the building, a sense of family. Larc chose us that day and we've never looked back.

Larc welcomed us with open arms into the family. Their compassionate staff cared for Tyler and developed a special bond with him that grows stronger with each passing year. We have a level of trust with Larc that is irreplaceable. As a parent, there is no better feeling in the world than knowing your child is well taken care of in a fun, safe place when you are not there.

When you have a child with multiple disabilities so much of your day is filled with worry and concern. Caring for them is a full time job and requires a tremendous amount of support. For six hours a day, Larc takes that worry away. That is such a gift.

But Larc is so much more. Larc School was created for students like Tyler—to give him the very latest and best opportunities to learn and grow, and reach his fullest potential. From the classrooms, to the playground, to the sensory areas, to physical education, every lesson, every piece of equipment and technology is adapted so that every student in the school gets to experience learning in a very personal, accessible, and individualized way.

I sit on the Help the Kids Golf Tournament committee because Larc fundraises to bring more opportunities, more equipment, more programming to their students—to my son. I volunteer to help Larc because we are family, and Larc is Tyler's home away from home. ■



Tyler, full of smiles, surrounded by his mom, dad, brother, and sister.

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Above: Executive Director Susan Weiner congratulates Ben Kruger and Jeff Long, two players from this year's winning team. (Not pictured Eric Kruger and Paul Tuttle) Right: Jaime Roemer shows off the incredible raffle basket she won during the dinner.



The 27th Annual “Help the Kids” Golf Tournament... It's about so much more than golf!

Over 150 golfers took to the greens at the Pennsauken Country Club on a cloudy Friday on June 1st. But the sun came out and shined down on our golfers and dinner guests as they enjoyed cocktails on the deck before dinner. Over 70 spectacular raffle prizes lined the room. As everyone sat down to a delicious meal, Executive Director Susan Weiner took a moment to reflect on why we were gathered together...Larc's very special kids. Each year Ms. Weiner shares stories about the children at Larc. She shares their milestones, their victories—big and small, their challenges, and this year she shared their stories of hope.

“The first Friday of every June is one of my favorites. A day filled with family, friends and fun...and a little golf too,” Executive Director Susan Weiner shares when asked about the annual tournament. “As I look around the room and see so many familiar faces, and some new ones too, I am so grateful. Larc is so grateful because Larc School runs on love and hope, and every year, on that first Friday in June, that banquet room is overflowing with both.”

thank you

6.1.18
help the kids
27TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
Benefiting the Larc School

Larc School Sincerely Thanks the Sponsors of the 27th Annual "Help the Kids" Golf Tournament.

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Celebrating Staff for their Commitment to Larc's Kids

This past June, our Larc family shared a meal and many laughs at our annual staff dinner as we celebrated the close of another successful school year. Executive Director Susan Weiner and Principal Michele McCloskey recognized staff members who have reached special anniversaries. Congratulations and thank you for all your years of service!

10 YEARS: Classroom Assistant Jill Molchanow
Teachers Patti Patete & Chelsie Young

15 YEARS: Teachers Julie Campbell & Stacie Halscheid
Classroom Assistants Danielle Smith & Marie Watson

20 YEARS: Instructional Assistant Rhoda Wus

30 YEARS: Classroom Assistants Tina Clark, Cathy Monti, & Joann Viereck

35 YEARS: Classroom Assistant AnnMarie Scaffidi

Executive Director Susan Weiner (pictured far right) and Principal Michele McCloskey (pictured far left) recognize staff members celebrating milestone anniversaries. Pictured (center l to r:) Stacie Halschied, Julie Campbell, Chelsie Young, Cathy Monti, AnnMarie Scaffidi, Danielle Smith, Joann Viereck, Tina Clark, Patti Patete, and Marie Watson.

Heart of Larc Award

The Heart of Larc Award, presented at the staff end of year dinner, recognizes a staff member's extraordinary contribution to Larc School. This year's award was extra special as it was presented to two of Larc's extraordinary staff members, Adaptive Physical Education Teacher **Amber Case**, and Classroom Assistant and After School Art Club Coordinator **Melissa Stratton**. For consistently going above and beyond, we thank you!





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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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Mindy Norlian, Steve Tyman, and Becky

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In memory of Isaac "Buzz" Wilkinson

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Listed above are contributions from January 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018 Please let us know if a name was omitted, and we'll be sure to print it in our next issue.

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.

Contributions may be sent to: Larc School,
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*(Envelope enclosed) or donate
online at www.larcschool.org*

50th ANNIVERSARY 1968-2018

50th Anniversary Brunch

Larc friends, family, and staff helped celebrate our 50th Anniversary during a lovely brunch at the Tavistock Country Club in Haddonfield on April 29th. Executive Director Susan Weiner and Larc Board Chairman Ed McDonnell spoke of Larc's humble beginnings and how, through the support of so many generous people, Larc School has grown into the exceptional facility it is today. Mr. George Norcross III, Mr. Philip Norcross, and Congressman Donald Norcross, as well as the Norcross Foundation, were honored for their unwavering support of and tremendous contributions to Larc's kids. ■



Larc honors its Board of Directors (l to r:): Chas Higgins, Treasurer; Susan Weiner, Executive Director; Carol Parker-Elbert, Vice Chairperson; Geri Spencer, Secretary; Assemblywoman Patricia Egan Jones; James Madden; James Rhodes; Reginald Beckett; Pepe Piperno; and Ed McDonnell, Chairman.



(l to r:.) Board Chairman Ed McDonnell and Executive Director Susan Weiner present Philip Norcross and George Norcross with framed pictures honoring the special occasion.

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**In memory of Richard
"Richie" Ventura, Jr.**
Ms. Kathy Ventura-Davis



Cheers and Tears for our Graduates



Four preschool students and five educational program students graduated this past June. This is always a day full of anticipation, pride, and tears—lots and lots of tears. Tears flowed from families and staff members alike as everyone watched our graduates processed down the aisle. Teachers spoke with great intimacy of each of their students and the strong bond they have formed with them, especially the secondary teachers who have had their graduates for a number of years. Larc Principal Michele McCloskey proudly awarded each student a diploma and congratulated them on their achievements and Executive Director Susan Weiner spoke to the families, thanking them for their trust and for allowing Larc to be a part of their child's life. The Hallmark Channel can't touch a Larc School graduation! ■

(Top center) Principal Michele McCloskey congratulates and presents a diploma to preschool graduate, Rae. (Top right) Graduate Alexis showing off her beautiful smile. (Bottom right) Victoria, with the help of Classroom Assistant Devon, beams with pride as she processed down the aisle.



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Susan Weiner

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Larc School names new principal

Michele McCloskey has risen through the ranks from assistant to teacher to lead teacher to educational supervisor and now principal. Michele's passion for education and equally strong passion for Larc School make for a winning combination. ■

“ We talk about that moment when our families first walk into Larc and how it feels like home—how they know it is the right place for their child. That moment happened for me too. I always knew I wanted to be a teacher in special education. I first joined Larc as a classroom assistant when I was a college freshman; I knew right away that I wanted to be a part of the Larc family. I was inspired to come back after college and work for Larc. I rejoined the Larc family in January 1995 as a teacher. It has been my absolute pleasure educating and caring for our students and connecting with families. I am very honored to continue to provide that support and leadership as Larc's principal.

—Michele McCloskey, *Larc Principal*