



## A Message from the Board

by Charles Higgins



**It can be hard** given the heaviness of the pandemic we have faced over the last year to not focus on the hardships—and there have been too many—but there have also been moments of great generosity and gifts of hope that we must remember, protect, and cherish. Larc School started with just a glimmer of hope and it is that hope that continues to carry us through this time.

Many of you know that Ed McDonnell led the effort to find that first glimmer of hope for his daughter, my daughter, and other families with children like our own. He found it in a small group of determined parents who founded Larc School over 50 years ago. There was no curriculum, no buses, no funding from the school districts, no therapy, no year-round program, no building that we owned, but there was hope. Hope that we could provide a better life for our children with special needs.

Today, we have perhaps the best program for our kids in the area. The resources available to our families are second to none. The staff and leadership are beyond gifted. Our kids' potential is maximized every day and they have a "home" at Larc.

Please know that Larc's board and staff understand these unique challenges and will always strive to be there for them.

The board continues to find ways to enhance what our school offers. Our families do not have to worry about the financial burden of paying tuition or the various therapeutic care that the staff offers. Our parents and their loved ones have more than enough on their plates to manage in these challenging times. Loving and caring for their special child simply presents daily challenges that only these parents fully understand. Please know that Larc's board and staff understand these unique challenges and will always strive to be there for them. It has been an honor for me to be a part of something so incredibly special. ■

“ Everyone benefits from this partnership! Larc’s kids and adults get more dental care, and future dental assistants get real world experience treating patients with special needs.

STEFANIE RIEHL  
*Executive Director, Larc School*



## Larc and Camden County College Partner to Improve Dental Hygiene for Individuals with Disabilities

Larc School and Camden County College (CCC) team up for the second year to provide educational opportunities for both Larc students and adults as well as the students in the CCC Dental Hygiene and Assisting Programs. Last March, CCC students visited Larc School to perform dental wellness screenings and to gain valuable experience on how to best serve individuals with special needs. Larc administrators welcomed the CCC students and shared information about the severity and variety of disabilities they would see during their visit. They shared suggestions and best practices on how to communicate, position, and overcome obstacles Larc students and adults face when visiting the dentist. Larc’s individuals practiced communicating, sitting still, and listening to directions during their screening. Larc families were happy to have their children benefit from having a dental wellness check during their school day!

This March Larc is excited to continue its relationship with the CCC Dental Hygiene and Assisting Programs by having Larc staff take part in the first of a series of virtual panels with CCC students. Larc staff will share their expertise and answer questions about interacting with and providing services to individuals with special needs. Later in the spring, CCC students will give a virtual lesson to students and individuals on dental hygiene and nutrition.

Larc is grateful for this opportunity to partner with CCC and would like to acknowledge the Area VII Physicians who provided a generous grant to make this partnership possible.

A special thanks to Dr. Jeff Shubach, the volunteer dentist for the visit. ■



Top: Savion does a great job opening his mouth so the CCC Dental Assisting student, Amanda Madara, can count his teeth. Angelina (top left) with the help of CCC Dental Assisting student, Jannie Pinkney, and James (bottom left) practice brushing skills.



# 2020 Class of

## Congratulations to Our Graduates

Unable to hold our traditional graduation ceremonies in June of 2020, Larc staff took to the streets bringing graduation to our graduates! A caravan of Larc staff took time to visit each and every graduate at their homes. Masked and socially distanced, staff played “Pomp & Circumstance” as they watched Executive Director Stefanie Riehl and Educational Supervisor Melissa Carey present the proud grads with their diplomas. Families and staff shared smiles and tears, everyone grateful for the chance to celebrate together and hoping for an in-person graduation ceremony later in the year.

That chance came in the fall when Larc was able to invite graduates back into the building for a very small and socially distanced gathering. Preschool grads were brimming with pride and excitement. For secondary graduates that were able to attend, it was bittersweet—a final goodbye to a school that will always be like a second home. Teachers gave their students an emotional send off with a tribute that included pictures of grads through the years and a heartfelt speech highlighting special memories and accomplishments. ■

Kyle (top) proudly poses in his cap and gown. Rebecca (left center), cheered on by classroom assistant Melissa Lexa, receives her diploma at the in person graduation from Educational Supervisor Melissa Carey. Charles (right center) is smiling under his mask as he accepts his diploma. Gabby (bottom) is surrounded by Larc staff as everyone takes a moment to celebrate.





# 2020

## A Lesson in Adaptability & Gratitude



Brielle (top) was all smiles with classroom assistant Pat Davis as she returned to school in September 2020. Cameron (center) working with Speech Therapist Betsy Thompson in the remote setting. Destiny (bottom) was excited to see classroom assistant Stephanie Baldwin and be back at Larc School. Jayden (pictured on laptop) learning from home with Larc staff's encouragement.



Larc School closed our doors on March 17, 2020 in response to the Covid-19 health crisis and moved to a Remote Learning Plan. During the uncertainty of the first few months, our confidence in the incredible creativity and expertise of our staff and in the strength and resiliency of our students and their families carried us. In the remote learning environment, we continued to focus on providing our families with the high level of programming and individualized support they were accustomed to receiving.

This shift also required a high level of adaptability and that is something Larc knows all about. Larc teachers, therapists, and staff are experts at adapting. It's what they do every day. They find new ways to help our students reach their goals. Teachers and therapists reached out to each and every family and made sure they had everything they needed to support their child in this new environment. Families became co-teachers and co-therapists.

The next challenge was in finding the resources to meet everyone's technology needs and as the situation unfolded, the resources to get the safety and personal protective equipment needed to get back to school safely. Again our Larc Family came through, but this time it was our friends and our sponsors through their generous donations and grants that made it possible for us to meet this new challenge. Cooper University Hospital donated 500 cloth masks. Eagletree Capital donated 10,000 surgical masks. The Lauren Higgins Hope Award purchased 20 Chromebooks to be distributed to students in need. Target Community Engagement Funds and Eagletree Capital gifted Larc with grants to be used for Covid-19 preparations.

With all the incredible support we received, Larc was able to re-open its doors in September offering two tracks for students, full-time in-person and full-time remote. We moved to a fully remote track for everyone through the holidays and into the New Year. As this newsletter goes to print, our in-person students will be returning to the building on March 1st. Everyone is looking forward to the time when ALL of our students and adults can return to the building.

2020 has proven that the African proverb "it takes a village" couldn't be truer. And Larc School is so incredibly grateful for our village, for our family. It is that overwhelming sense of gratitude that we will take with us as we move forward into this New Year. ■







9.4.20  
*help* the *kids*  
 29TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT  
 Benefiting the Larc School

## Golf Tourney Postponed, But Worth the Wait

Thank you so much to everyone who helped us celebrate our 29th annual “Help the Kids” Golf Tournament. It was an amazing event...even more so given the unique challenges we all faced in 2020. After making the decision to move the tournament from June 5th to September 4th, we were hopeful everyone would still be able to join us and we were so touched by all the support.

It was a beautiful day! Over 100 golfers came out to enjoy the course at the Pennsauken Country Club and golf for Larc’s Kids. Everyone was in a great mood and so appreciative for the opportunity to get together! While we had to forgo our dinner and raffle prizes, there were cocktails and hors d’oeuvres on the deck, and of course we took a moment to reflect on why we were gathered together...Larc’s very special kids. ■

### Larc School Sincerely Thanks the Sponsors of the 29th Annual “Help the Kids” Golf Tournament

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SAVE THE DATE ▼   
 JUNE 4, 2021



# 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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Mrs Patricia White

*Listed above are contributions from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020. 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, 1089 Creek Road,  
Bellmawr, NJ 08031

*(Envelope enclosed) or donate online at [www.larcschool.org](http://www.larcschool.org)*



## Lobster Bake Re-Imaged for 2020

**Thank you so much** to Kara Edens, Executive Director at the Camden County Bar; Carly Ferro (pictured above), Lobster Bake Chair; and all our Young Lawyer Committee friends! They found a creative way to continue to hold their annual Lobster Bake to benefit Larc School despite the challenges of 2020. We are so grateful for their passion and commitment to Larc's kids!

The 11th Annual Lobster Bake was held in mid-August 2020. Guests ordered in advance for take-out gourmet lobster, crab, or chicken dinners from Caffe Aldo Lamberti. Meals came with wine, dessert, and an extra helping of gratitude from the kids at Larc School!

Thank you to all the sponsors and take-out dinner guests who supported the event! ■



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<b>30 YEARS</b>
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<b>20 YEARS</b>
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<b>10 YEARS</b>
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<b>5 YEARS</b>
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Larc School recognizes and honors our staff members who celebrated milestone anniversaries in 2020!



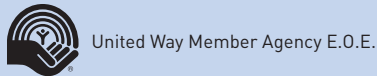
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- 2-mile walk
- [www.runthebridge.org](http://www.runthebridge.org)

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