



Matheny *Matters*

Fall / Winter 2006 • www.matheny.org • 908-234-0011



Somerset Hills Bulldogs partner with Matheny by holding a dinner-dance to benefit both organizations.



Affinity Federal Credit Union Foundation, Basking Ridge, becomes an Artist Patron.

Community Connections

Matheny is committed to providing its patients with an exceptional quality of life. That means leaving the hospital for shopping trips, concerts and sporting events...inviting athletes and entertainers to visit here...and generally welcoming the community to join and support us in everything we do. The photos on these pages are just a sampling of how we've already connected with the community. We want to provide many more rich, fun life experiences for our patients and invite you to partner with us to make this happen. There are many ways you can help.

Do you have access to tickets for sports or entertainment events that our patients would enjoy? Perhaps you would be willing to reach out to your favorite local restaurant and ask them to "treat" three or four of our patients to a dinner out. And, of course, direct financial support to help with funding for staffing and transportation costs of day or overnight trips is always welcome.

To learn more about our Community Connections Program, please call the Development Office at 908-234-0011, ext. 260 or 214.



Mason Gross School of the Arts, New Brunswick, invites adult patients to attend a student jazz concert.



Quest Karate, Long Valley, holds a Kickathon to help support Matheny's adaptive karate program.



Villa Enterprises Management, Morristown, raises more than \$50,000 at its golf tournament, enough to outfit Matheny with a new van.

New Friends of Matheny President Is Determined to Increase Membership

Over the past 23 years, The Friends of Matheny have raised close to \$1.5 million for the children and adults at Matheny and provided thousands of hours of volunteer time to help enhance their quality of life. In addition, The Friends have been passionate advocates on behalf of Matheny to a broad segment of New Jersey's corporate, business and foundation community.

Catherine Bergh, a Bernardsville resident, has been named the new president of The Friends of Matheny, and she is committed to increasing the membership. "I'd like to introduce new people to a great group of people," she says. "We can enjoy one another's company while accomplishing wonderful things."

Bergh first became involved with Matheny as a result of an invitation to a wine tasting, sponsored by The Friends at Natirar. A neighbor then approached

her about serving on the Board. Bergh was impressed with the mission of




Catherine Bergh, president of The Friends of Matheny in the new lobby. Behind her is an untitled painting by the late Arts Access artist, Jimmy Morris.

Matheny, decided to become more involved and eventually accepted the presidency.

"I was so impressed by the renovation of the front lobby at Matheny," says Bergh. "The Friends of Matheny under-

wrote the cost of the renovation because they felt it was very necessary to ensure the safety of Matheny children and adults. The changes in the lobby have made a big difference and are representative of what's going on at Matheny."

Bergh is also the impetus and guiding force behind Team Matheny, an offshoot of Miles for Matheny, the annual walking, wheeling and running fundraiser which supports Matheny's outpatient clinic. Upon signing up to be a member of Team Matheny, participants compete in athletic events of their choice, wearing Team Matheny clothing. The goal is to generate financial support through sponsorships as well as help raise awareness.

Bergh is enthusiastic about her new role and the opportunity to help support Matheny. "I don't see the barriers," she says. "I see the possibilities." 

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Cathy Wild of Bedminster with her 13-year-old son, James, a Matheny resident

"This is where he's comfortable. This is his home."

We enhance the quality of life for children and adults with multiple disabilities.

Your gift can help us!

**Call 908-234-0011, ext. 260, or send a gift to:
Development Office, Matheny Medical & Educational Center
PO Box 339, Peapack, NJ 07977**

Full Circle 2006: The Common Thread

Paintings and digital art... wheelchair dance...dramatic readings.

Those were the highlights of Full Circle 2006: The Common Thread, the annual celebration of Matheny's Arts Access Program, which makes it possible for people with disabilities to create fine art, assisted by professional artist-facilitators.

Some 150 guests viewed 48 paintings and pieces of digital art on display in the gallery of the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center on Sunday, November 12, while they enjoyed gourmet food and beverages donated by Limestone Café and cocoLuxe Fine Pastries, Peapack; Gladstone Tavern and Opah Grille, Gladstone; Vine/Grill 73, Basking Ridge/Bernardsville; McCormick & Schmick's and Wegmans, Bridgewater; and Starbucks, Gillette.

The stage presentation included four dance numbers featuring Arts Access dancers, Shaleena Tomassini, T.J. Christian and Natalia Manning with Infinity Dance Theater's Kitty Lunn, Wings Conservatory's Andrea Kramer and Maureen Glennon and the Roxey Ballet's Giovanni Ravelo. There were dramatic readings by Jenny Durr, Rasheedah Mahali, Manning, Jessica Evans, Cheryl Chapin, Alex Stojko and Christian. And some comic relief was provided by studio manager, Scott Beil, facilitator, Keith Garletts and Stojko in skits explaining the facilitation process.

This year's Full Circle theme, The Common Thread, was inspired by Herman Melville's "thousand invisible threads." It was a celebration of what connects and binds us to each other.



Ridge High School student, June Granowitz of Basking Ridge, left, and Pingry student, Remy Teicher of Bernardsville, with Arts Access artist, Dion Alston. Granowitz and Teicher volunteered at Full Circle.



"My Art Painting" by Mark Riddle.



From left, Mike and Janice Berger of Mount Tabor and Roger and Barbara Riedel of Denville.



From left, Andrea Kramer, T.J. Christian and Kitty Lunn performing "On the Wings of a Snow White Dove."



Seven-year-old Jack Bonomo, a second grader at Washington Elementary School in Summit, and his brother, David, made Friendship Bracelets that were given to everyone attending Full Circle. With Jack is his mother, Mary Ann.

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Childhood Experience Prepared Craig Carey for Matheny Nursing Career

Growing up in Millburn, NJ, Craig Carey would often baby sit for his aunt, who had cerebral palsy. “She couldn’t speak,” he recalls. “She would smile, and she’d stick her tongue out for ‘yes’ and ‘no’.” Today, Carey, a Matheny nurse, sees patients everyday who are non-verbal. They communicate in a variety of ways - from employing simple “yes” and “no” signs to utilizing sophisticated electronic assistive technology devices.

Although Carey hadn’t planned a career working with disabled patients, he had “always wanted to work in healthcare.” After completing two years at Kean College in Elizabeth, NJ, he enrolled in the nursing program at Elizabeth General Hospital and became an RN. He started his nursing career at Elizabeth General and also worked at the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in West Orange and Greystone Psychiatric Hospital in Parsippany before joining Matheny in 1997.

“Everything happens for a reason,” he reflects. “I ended up back working with kids with cerebral palsy.” An early welcome from a patient convinced him that he had made the right move. “I’ll never forget,” he says. “She was wearing white stockings and a black dress, and she said, ‘hi.’ I said to myself, ‘This is the place I want to be’.” The patients at Matheny,

Carey says, “are very giving. They’re not judgmental. They have a lot of qualities we don’t have. They may not have the phys-

action with the patients.”

Carey specifically recalls sitting with a patient one Christmas Eve. “She was in her room,” he says, “and she was really sad. She was aware it was Christmas Eve, and she wasn’t with her family; and I just sat there with her for awhile and talked to her. I just remember how good I felt that I had helped her a little.” As part of Matheny’s recreation therapy program, patients often go on trips or attend sporting events. Carey recalls that he used to accompany them quite often. Now he has three young children of his own, which prevents him from doing that as frequently as he would like. But, he adds, “it’s always a wonderful experience to go out in the community with them.”

At other hospitals he’s worked at, Carey says, patients were aware of the relative uncommonness of male nurses. “Patients would say, ‘Oh, you’re a male nurse; I’ve never met a male nurse before.’ Here, there’s not that distinction, especially with the patients. They just know you as a nurse, and that’s it. It

makes you feel more comfortable.” At Matheny, nurses, by necessity, become a part of their patients’ lives. “It’s kind of like you’re their parent,” Carey says. “You have to make sure they’re safe, like a parent would do.”

"Not everyone can come to work and enjoy what they do."



Craig Carey, RN, with 15-year-old patient, Sammy Heisler.

ical or cognitive skills we do, but they excel in other areas. They’re much more compassionate; they’re much more patient. They’re very appreciative of what we do. Not everyone can come to work and enjoy what they do. I enjoy the inter-

Mix of Motivation and Technology Helps Non-Verbal Matheny Student Find His Voice

Many of the patients at Matheny, are non-verbal. Speech-language pathologists regularly provide comprehensive augmentative communication evaluations of these patients, who have the opportunity to try a wide variety of electronic devices and more traditional picture-symbol displays in order to identify what is the most appropriate technique.

Two years ago, 14-year-old Danny Teresi was using a manual language board with symbols depicting what he wanted to express verbally. Spurred on by his special education teacher, Jim Hintenach, and working together with his Matheny speech-

language pathologist, Christine Mayercik, MS, CCC-SLP, he has learned how to effectively utilize a Dynavox computerized speech-output device. Teresi's progress coincided with his transfer into Hintenach's more advanced class of students preparing for transition into

young adulthood. "When Danny moved into Jim's class," Mayercik recalls, "he was suddenly in a classroom where everyone was speaking in sentences and phrases. I think it really motivated him to want to have a voice."

Says Hintenach: "He went from having a board with 60 icons to probably four times that number. With Christine's help, he created pages for each individ-

ual academic area as well as specialty areas. There are pages for language arts, math, science, social studies and Spanish. He also has a career page



Jim Hintenach, left, watches as 16-year-old student, Danny Teresi, uses his Dynavox speech-output device.

where he does interviews. And he has social and leisure pages that he flips to."

Teresi, says Mayercik, "is a very talented non-verbal communicator. His

Jim Hintenach has been named Educator of the Year by the National Association of Private Special Education Centers.


body language and his facial expressions tell you volumes of information." But she concedes that transitioning him from a manual board to an electronic device "was a struggle. He really worked hard with Jim and me. We got his input regarding what to put on his pages initially, and we kind of built it up slowly. He has really come a long way. He's working on sentence structure now,

putting sentences together to express himself. He's able to comment on things now, expressing opinions."

When Mayercik takes Teresi into the speech therapy room for individual sessions, "we start off by my having him tell me anything he wants. Sometimes he'll tell me about Mom and Dad; sometimes he'll tell me about class. But he has the freedom to tell me those things without me asking him questions. We're starting now to take it out of the classroom and use it on weekends. We've taken him out on trips to the mall. His assignment on one of these trips was to choose what he wanted for lunch,

which he was able to do without a problem."

As part of Hintenach's careers curriculum, students are expected to interview visitors to Matheny, finding out more about them and what they do for a living. Recently, Teresi, now 16, interviewed three volun-

teers from the pharmaceutical company, sanofi-aventis. Recalls Hintenach: "Dan chose the questions and interacted with them. Everyone understood what he was asking. He didn't have to repeat anything." Adds Mayercik: "He asks the right questions: 'Hi, how are you?,' 'What's your name?,' 'Where do you live?'" He's very curious. He's got a lot to say, and he wants to say it all." 


'Team Atmosphere' Sets Matheny Apart

When Tara Hopko was 12 years old, her aunt had a stroke and was admitted to the Kessler Rehabilitation Corporation's facility in Chester, NJ. "I would help her eat and get dressed," Hopko recalls now. "That's when I realized I wanted to become a therapist." Hopko actually worked at Kessler and at the Horizon School, a special education facility in Livingston, NJ, before coming to Matheny as a staff occupational therapist about 2 1/2 years ago. She left to have a baby 10 months ago but



Tara Hopko, COTA, works on head and trunk control with four-year-old preschool student, Fiza Mohammad

returned to Matheny part-time, turning down other positions closer to her home in Hackettstown. She was drawn back to Matheny, she says, not just by the patients but by the other employees. "It's such a great team atmosphere here," she says. "It's such a joy to work with extraordinary people who pour their hearts into their jobs." The purpose of occupational therapy is to help patients develop and build skills important for independent functioning, health and well-being. The most important aspect

of OT for preschool children (ages, 3-5), Hopko says, is "stability. We want to create stability in their bodies so they can later use their hands for functional things. Once they have that stability, we can work on other skills such as holding a spoon, feeding themselves, holding and using a writing utensil. We also tend to work a lot on gross motor skills such as trunk and head control." Hopko, particularly likes working with preschoolers because, "They love to play. In fact, everything we do in therapy, we try to make into a game." Almost all therapy in Matheny's preschool, she says, is integrated into the classroom. "For example, while I'm having a student sitting on the ball, the teacher also has an activity going on, and I can incorporate things like reaching and grasping." Just another example of the team approach. 

Appeal of Dinosaurs Motivates Young Poets

The Matheny preschool/ kindergarten class had been studying both dinosaurs and rhymes; and teacher, Allison Irland, was determined to combine the two lessons by having her students write poetry about dinosaurs. The challenge was how to accomplish that with non-verbal students.

Using a Talking Symbol, a compact communications tool that records and plays back short messages, Irland brainstormed with her class "about funny things you might have a dinosaur do." For example, six-year-old Kevin Long wanted to have his dinosaur drive a car. The next step, says Irland, was "to program in other rhyming words with car." The result was Kevin's poem:

*My dinosaur drives a car,
But he got stuck in some tar.
Now he wishes on a star
That one day he'll go far.*

Another student, four-year-old Fiza Mohammad wanted her dinosaur to read a book. So, with the help of the Talking Symbol, she wrote:

*Fiza and her dinosaur are reading a book
By the banks of a brook.
Thankfully, they brought a hook
To catch some fish that they can cook.*

After all the poems were written, there was, according to Irland, "lots of laughing and smiling. They had fun doing


this; it was the first time they had really written anything. Of course, we put their

poems up on the bulletin board so everyone could see them."

The Talking Symbol was created by AbleNet, a company based in Minnesota, that manufactures products designed for students with disabilities. Matheny's mission is to enable students with disabilities to reach their maximum potential. Using a simple device such as the Talking Symbol at an early age will, hopefully, make it easier for the students to learn how to use



Teacher, Allison Irland, holds the Talking Symbol so Kevin Long can listen to words that rhyme with 'car.'

more sophisticated augmentative communications devices as they grow older. 

'Hugs, Kisses' and 'Lots of Friends'

“It’s an XOXO fraternity - lots of hugs and kisses.” That’s how Dave Szott, the father of 11-year-old Matheny student, Shane Szott, described Matheny, where Shane has lived since January, 2006. Speaking after dinner at the Matheny Golf Classic, held October 9 at Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster, Szott, a retired New York Jets offensive lineman, recalled that when Shane, who has cerebral palsy, lived at home in Morristown, “no one would stop by to see him,” but at Matheny, “he has lots of friends.” Szott also remembers having to, “drive all over the state” to find medical care for Shane, but now that he’s at Matheny, “it’s all in one place.”

The golf tournament netted \$53,000 to help support the Center of Medicine and Dentistry, Matheny’s outpatient clinic, which provides medical, dental and therapy care to more than 600 patients with disabilities from 12 New Jersey counties.

All of us at Matheny would particularly like to thank Jim Entwistle and Village Office Supply for making the Matheny Gold Classic such a success. Jim was our member sponsor at Trump, and he and his crew left no stone unturned to make sure everyone had a fabulous day.



Actor Jay Thomas, who conducted the live auction, with adult patient, Jessica Evans.



From left: Porzio, Bromberg & Newman’s Doug Henshaw, Jones Lang LaSalle’s Lloyd Desatnick and PB&N’s Bill Kraiss. Desatnick is the father of 15-year-old Matheny student, Bryan Desatnick; Kraiss is a member of Matheny’s Board of Trustees.



University Health Plans foursome, from left: Matt Obeirne, Jinoak Ha, Mark Calderon and Bill VanGieson.



Dave Szott, left, and former Jets QB Glenn Foley.



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When you make a gift, the honored person or the

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On Top of the Hill

Some people dream of the future but are unable to shape reality. A few, like Walter and Marguerite Matheny, actually turn their dream into a reality and leave a legacy that forever changes the landscape of life.

Gladstone resident, Brooke Goode, has captured the dream and the legacy of the Mathenys in an inspiring book chronicling the first 60 years of The Matheny Medical and Educational Center.

Want to know more? Contact the Development Department at (908) 234-0011, ext. 214 or 260.



In 1954, Chuck Matheny helps break ground for construction of Matheny's new facility in Peapack.

Michelle Russo Named Director of Adult Services

Michelle Russo has been appointed as Matheny's director of adult services. Russo joined Matheny in 1994 as a recreation therapist, a position she held until 1999 when she transferred into adult services as a community instructor. She then became the assistant director in 2001.

Matheny's adult services program is designed to assist adult patients in attaining their highest level of independent functioning. The residential program includes a 20-bed intermediate care facility (ICF), a 29-bed special hospital and five community residences. Matheny also operates two adult learning centers - one in Hillsborough and one at the main campus in Peapack. The ICF, adult day care and community residences are accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of

Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). The adult patients - both Matheny residents



Michelle Russo visits with adult patient, Lateefah Stewart.

and individuals from other community placements - attend the program several times a week, taking classes in a wide range of disciplines, from daily liv-

ing to money management to attendance at and participation in a variety of community events. As part of this program, they are taught the skills necessary for volunteering and for job placement.

The community residences, in Middlesex, Somerset and Warren counties, are licensed by the New Jersey Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and provide their occupants with the opportunity to live as independently as possible - shopping, interacting with neighbors and working or attending classes during the day.

Russo, a resident of Hackettstown, has a BA in therapeutic recreation from Springfield College in Springfield, MA, and an MA in leadership and public administration from Centenary College in Hackettstown.



Karen Staada New Director of Occupational Therapy

Karen Staada, MS, OTR, ATP, has been named director of occupational therapy at Matheny. Staada, who joined Matheny as a staff OT in 1998, was named senior OT in 2004.

Prior to coming to Matheny, the Hackettstown resident was a staff OT at Warren Hospital located in Phillipsburg. Before that, she was an occupational therapist at Northwest Covenant Medical Center in Denville. Staada holds a BS in psychology and an MS in occupational therapy from College Misericordia in Dallas, PA. She is NDT (Neuro - Developmental Treatment) - trained and has been certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Society of America (RESNA) as an Assistive Technology Practitioner (ATP). NDT-trained therapists work closely with individuals with neurological

challenges, helping them to become as independent as possible. RESNA certifi-



Karen Staada, left, with adult patient, Diane Pearson.

cation is awarded to successful candidates who present themselves to the public as service providers involved in the analysis of a consumer's needs and training use of a particular assistive tech-

nology device. In her role as an occupational therapist at Matheny, Staada has collaborated with other therapists and rehab technicians in Matheny's Seating and Mobility Clinic to provide evaluations and solutions for individuals who have impaired posture and mobility. In addition, she is also a member of the New Jersey Occupational Therapy Association (NJOTA).

Occupational therapy is a health and rehabilitation therapy that helps people regain, develop and build skills that are important for independent functioning health and well-being. At Matheny, OTs are part of a collaborative team of educators, instructors and other therapists who help develop adaptive skills and assist in improving performance capacity in individuals whose ability to perform life skills is impaired.



Cathy Church Named Matheny Director of Nursing; Durell Hood to Oversee PCA Department

Cathy Church, RN, BS, PA, has been appointed director of nursing services at Matheny, succeeding Linda O'Connell. Church, who is a resident of Cranberry Lake in Byram Township, NJ, had been assistant director of nursing-PCA Services. Personal care assistants have the responsibility of helping Matheny patients with their most essential daily needs such as eating and personal hygiene.

Church joined Matheny in February, 1992, as a primary care nurse. Seven months later, she was promoted to director of PCA Services. Prior to joining Matheny, Church spent several years working in long-term care facilities. Early in her career, she worked as a recovery room nurse at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center in Brooklyn. She received her nursing degree from Kings County Hospital Medical Center in Brooklyn, where she also worked for several years in the pediatric burn unit. She has a BS in healthcare administration from St. Frances College in Brooklyn.

Durell Hood, LPN, has been named PCA manager and will oversee the operations of the PCA department. Hood, a resident of Budd Lake, joined Matheny in 1985 as a PCA. In 1987, he became PCA night supervisor and two years later was named PCA day supervisor. In 1993, as part of a Matheny initiative to require all PCA supervisors to become nurses, he enrolled in the nursing pro-

gram at Somerset County Technology Institute in Bridgewater, receiving his LPN nursing degree in 1995.



Cathy Church with 14-year-old Matheny patient, Bianca Mathis.

gram at Somerset County Technology Institute in Bridgewater, receiving his LPN nursing degree in 1995. desire "to be more hands on, but not necessarily in an acute care setting. The interaction with the patients here was very attractive to me. This is a great alternative to an acute care setting because you can really affect the well-being and emotional happiness of the patients."

Nurses at Matheny are part of an interdisciplinary team of physicians, therapists, educators and personal care assistants. The team's goal is to make each patient's life as comfortable and satisfying as possible, given their challenges. Church believes the PCAs are "really part of nursing services. Many aspects of what they do - the most basic care - used to be done by nurses. The relationship between the nurses and the direct care staff is crucial for the happiness of the patients because of the long-term nature of their stay here."

Hood agrees that there is "a closeness, a bond," between the nursing and PCA staffs." Recalling that when he first came to Matheny 21 years ago, he had never been exposed to the disabled population, he says, "I had to learn that our patients are okay with their disabilities. We [the general population] are the ones with the problem." He also learned that a patient's ability to speak is not necessarily a measure of cognitive ability. "A lot of these guys have a lot they want to say. You just have to learn to communicate with them."



Durell Hood with 20-year-old patient, Chris Saglimbene.

Church's decision to join the Matheny staff 14 years ago, was motivated by a

Therapeutic Horseback Riding Creates the Sensation of 'Walking'

Matheny, thanks to funding from John and Wendy Neu of New York City, was able to launch a therapeutic horseback riding program for 10 students this past summer. The program, which began on May 26, was a collaboration with the Spirit Filled Riders Academy of Long Valley, a non-profit organization and member of the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). Staff from SFRA brought two horses to Matheny every Friday for 10 weeks (weather permitting) to conduct on-site horseback riding sessions. Participating students were chosen based on an evaluation process with physical therapists, occupational therapists, physicians and nurses, and an OT and PT were present at each 45-minute session.

For children who spend most of their lives in wheelchairs, rid-

ing a horse is as close as they'll ever get to experiencing what it's like to walk, according to Linda Silvia, Matheny director of therapies. And, she adds, "sitting on a horse encourages them to use and strengthen their abdominal muscles, and it also improves their sense of balance."

The reaction to the horseback riding program by both the students and their families has been very enthusiastic. Parents like it because they feel it instills confidence and makes their children forget about their disabilities while they're riding. Matheny plans to repeat and possibly expand the horseback riding program next spring and summer but the ability to do that will depend on funding resources.



(Above) 15-year-old Teddy Lallis is assisted by Spirit Filled Riders' Liz Carlson, left, and his mother Maureen Lallis.



(Left) 11-year-old Shane Szott reaches for the sky.

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