



Matheny *Matters*

Fall/Winter 2007 • www.matheny.org • 908-234-0011

Sanofi-aventis Executives Participate In Special Field Day at Matheny



The entire group of sanofi-aventis volunteers.

About 30 executives from sanofi-aventis went on a scavenger hunt, played adaptive bocce and pushed wheelchairs in a relay race during a special field day held Monday, October 15, at Matheny.

Sanofi will again be the title sponsor for Miles for Matheny, Matheny's annual fundraiser and community event, to be held April 20, 2008. But the company believes that philanthropy is more than simply contributing money, and one of the objectives of its community involvement program is to offer its employees a variety of opportunities to serve the community through volunteerism.



Brent Ragans of Warwick, NY, with 15-year-old student, Gregory Kuhrt.



George Aubrey of Cummings, GA, right, assists 18-year-old student, Ryan Stifter, while Matheny PCA manager, Durell Hood, cheers them on.



Bruce Braughton of Stewartville, with 10-year-old student, Sean Hartigan.



Malcom Parker of Bridgewater, with 15-year-old student, Bianca Mathis.

Nets' Jason Collins, Watchung Hills Students 'Score Points' With Matheny Patients

New Jersey Nets' 7-foot forward/center Jason Collins, accompanied by eight students from Watchung Hills Regional High School in Warren, recently spent a Sunday afternoon with patients and students at Matheny. Long-time volunteer, WHRHS senior Jacki Rosenzweig of Warren, arranged Collins' visit with the help of her father, Charlie Rosenzweig, who is vice president of league entertainment and player marketing for the National Basketball Association.

Collins read children's stories, helped the patients shoot baskets at an adaptive basketball hoop and distributed photos, which he personally autographed. The eight Watchung Hills students were all members of the Homecoming Court.



Jason Collins, with 18-year-old Matheny student, Richard Kelly.



Jacki Rosenzweig selects a children's book for Collins to read.



Five-year-old Matheny student, Katherine Gaudio, plays catch with Watchung Hills High student, Jen Hurwitz of Warren, NJ.

Save the date!
The Friends of Matheny
Iris Ball
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For more information call 908-234-0011, ext. 282 or email volunteers@matheny.org

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21-year-old Chris Saglimbene

King of the Prom!

We help children and adults with developmental disabilities accomplish the unexpected.

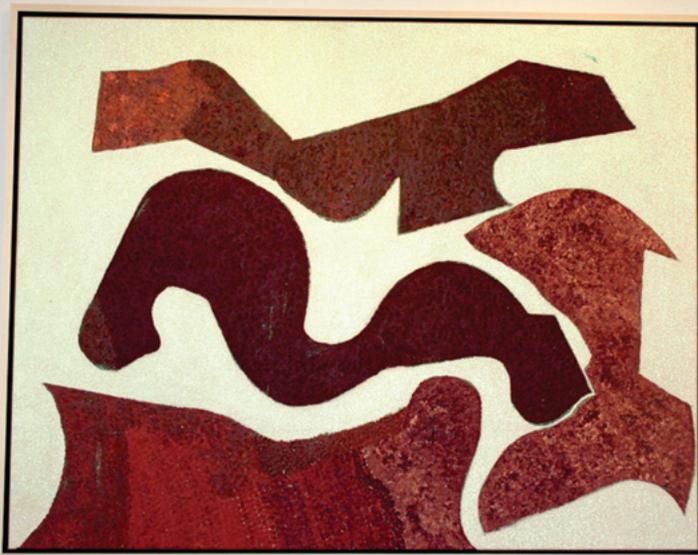
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Full Circle 2007: The View from Here

untitled by Mark Riddle



The music and lyrics of Josh Groban's "You Raise Me Up", performed as artists in wheelchairs were rolled onto the stage at the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center, was a fitting finale to an inspiring afternoon. It was the conclusion of the stage presentation at Full Circle 2007: The View From Here, the annual celebration of Matheny's Arts Access Program, held Saturday, November 10.

Full Circle began with a gallery reception featuring paintings, drawings, digital art and sculpture created by Arts Access artists. The stage presentation highlighted prose, drama and dance created by Arts Access artists, accompanied by professional actors, dancers and singers. And a dessert reception enabled those in attendance to view the artwork once again.

Richard Wade of Long Valley fell in love with a painting (untitled) by artist, Kevin White, and purchased it. Herman and Pat Simmeth of Berkeley Heights came to Full Circle because they belong to the same church (First Christian Assembly of Plainfield) as artist, T.J Christian. They found the exhibit "overwhelming". Bob and Lori Woods of South Brunswick were there to see their daughter, Meagan, a dance major at Rutgers' Mason Gross School of the Arts, perform to the prose of Arts Access artist, Cheryl Chapin. Said Mrs. Woods: "This is our favorite of all her performances."

The show was produced by Arts Access dance facilitator, Andrea Kramer, artistic director of Wings Conservatory in Chester. In a simple but moving description of what had transpired, Lyn Sanders, director of Arts Access, observed that, *"Nowhere are so many people who cannot speak, speaking volumes. Nowhere are so many people who cannot run, gliding gracefully across a stage..."*



Arts Access dancer, Shaleena Tomassini, performs "In the Arms of the Angel" with the Roxey Ballet's Mark St. Pierre.



From left, Richard Wade of Long Valley; his daughter Allison, a student at West Morris Central High School; Arts Access artist, Kevin White; and Kevin's mother, Phyllis, of Palmyra. Kevin's painting is displayed behind them.



Meagan Woods dances to the prose of Cheryl Chapin.



Herman and Pat Simmeth of Berkeley Heights.

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Nursing and Art: Perfect Together

Nine years ago, Basking Ridge resident, Letty Oratowski, was attending the Mountain Art Show in Bernardsville when she saw, “a roomful of abstract paintings that were vibrant and exciting.” To Oratowski, who has degrees in both nursing and art, the paintings “didn’t look like the usual things coming out of schools. I said to someone that I wished I could see one of the artists, and I was directed to a girl in a wheelchair. I asked her if she was one of the artists, and she became very excited and started waving her arms wildly. She couldn’t utter any words, and I was wondering, ‘How on earth could she have done a painting?’”

At the time, Oratowski was a same-day surgery nurse at Columbus Hospital in Newark. The artist she met was Ellen Kane, an adult patient living in one of Matheny’s community residences. Kane is also an artist in Matheny’s Arts Access Program, which enables people with disabilities to cre-

ate fine art, assisted by professional artist-facilitators. Oratowski was directed to a video that explained how the



Letty Oratowski, RN, with adult patient, Kevin White.

paintings were executed, and, “when I saw that,” she recalls, “I was dumbfounded.”

A year later, after deciding not to work full-time anymore, Oratowski contacted the human resources department at Matheny and began

working as a nurse in the adult services program. After six months as a nurse, she also began serving as a facilitator in the Arts Access Program. She did that for five years before reducing her work schedule to two days a week as a nurse, in preparation for eventual retirement. But she savors the memory of that five-year period. “I was a nurse and facilitator,” she recalls, “and everyday I discovered the personalities and talents that these patients possessed.”

Oratowski has a BS degree in nursing from Rutgers-Newark and a Master of Arts degree from the University of Iowa. Not everyone can combine nursing and art facilitating, but she has some words of advice for those planning a career in nursing. “Matheny,” she says, “is a joyous place to work. It’s so much less stressful here than in an acute care hospital, and you develop a relationship with the patients. This is a place you look forward to coming to everyday.” 

Matheny Services Help Public School Districts with Special Needs Challenges

Matheny is now offering the skills and experience of its staff to public school districts on a consultative basis. Matheny therapists and teachers will be available to travel to public schools in Somerset, Morris, Hunterdon and Warren counties to conduct on-site evaluations and training. Or public school personnel from any location in New Jersey can receive this assistance at Matheny’s Peapack campus.

Matheny’s experience with medically complex students, according to

Sheryl Gavaras, principal of The Matheny School, “enables us to apply that expertise to the full spectrum of children with special needs. We are committed,” Gavaras continues, “to spreading this knowledge into the community to help public school districts better manage the challenges of educating special needs students.”

The following specialized services are available:

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication.

- Classroom Technology.
- Classroom Consultation & Staff Support.
- Seating & Mobility Evaluation/ Specialized Equipment Provider.
- Training & Professional Development.
- Student/Program Evaluations.
- Preschool Services.
- Home-Based Services.

School districts interested in more information about these consultative services should call (908) 234-0011, ext. 755. 

Scott Beil Receives 'Excellence In Arts' Award from Somerset County

Scott Beil, who is the studio manager of Matheny's Arts Access Program, was the recipient of an Excellence in the Arts Award from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission at a special dinner on Tuesday, October 2nd, at the Twin Brooks Country Club in Watchung. The award was one of four that were presented in the Arts in Education and Mentorship category.

Arts Access is a program that enables people with disabilities to create fine art, assisted by professional artist-facilitators. In the fall of 2003, Beil, who was an art education major at The College of New Jersey, designed and created a special curricu-



Scott Beil, right, waits for a selection from 17-year-old non-verbal artist, Danny Teresi.

lum, the Art Education Initiative, for the students at the Matheny School. The curriculum satisfied the New Jersey Art Education Core Curriculum Standards for Students with Severe Disabilities

(CCSSSD). Primary goals of the program are to maximize students' potential to make critical artistic choices and to develop their intellectual, imaginative and creative skills. "We present them with some choices," he explains, "and they make every selection," often via simple 'yes' and 'no' commands.

The Excellence in the Arts Awards honor individuals and organizations that have demonstrated exemplary leadership and dedication to the fine and performing arts in Somerset County. The Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission exists to preserve, promote and protect the culture and heritage of Somerset County.

Eagle Scout Project: Collecting Toys and Games for Matheny Patients

Anthony Genetti had run in several 5K races at Miles for Matheny. He had also attended the celebration picnics at Matheny and played bingo and musical chairs with patients during the holiday season. So, the Voorhees High School senior was aware of and comfortable with Matheny's patients.

When it came time for him to decide on his Eagle Scout project, Matheny immediately came to mind. Genetti collected toys and games for Matheny patients, placing collection boxes



Anthony Genetti with Matheny adult patients, Gerald Tavares, left, and Dion Alston.

throughout his hometown of Califon at such locations as Rambo's Country

Store, Califon General Store, Peapack-Gladstone Bank and Rafferty's Salon and Spa. He collected 95 items, which he, along with about 13 volunteers, recently delivered to Matheny. Then, he, accompanied by the volunteers (other Voorhees students and a few adults), stayed at Matheny for about 1½ hours helping the patients with some arts and crafts activities. "I was relieved I was able to get it done," Genetti says. "The patients seemed really happy we were here. Everybody had a good time."

Team Spirit!

About 25 football players and cheerleaders from Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington spent two hours on Saturday afternoon, October 27, visiting with patients and students and participating in an arts and crafts project. The event was so successful that the HCRHS students are already planning to take part in future Matheny activities, such as Miles for Matheny, to be held April 20, 2008, and the Matheny Prom, scheduled for May. The visit was coordinated by head coach, Matt Perotti, and Holly Bormann of Flemington, an RN whose son, Brad, is on the football team. The high school students exchanged friendship bracelets, talked sports and went out of their way to help all of the patients be part of the day's activities. 



Brad Bormann with Chuck Matheny, whose parents founded Matheny 61 years ago.



Adult patient, Dion Alston, shares a laugh with Ali Mendez.



Anthony Terranova does karaoke with adult patient, Rasheedah Mahali, cheered on by other HCRHS students.



Tim Irwin coaxes a smile from 19-year-old student, Jaime Barnes.

Matheny Research Institute to Study Availability Of Dental Care in NJ for People with Disabilities

Matheny's Institute for Research has been awarded a grant from the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities to study the availability of appropriate dental care for people with developmental disabilities in New Jersey.

The Institute plans to conduct a survey of the 8,100 dentists in New Jersey regarding the accessibility of their offices, their staff's training in special care dentistry, whether or not they

accept Medicaid and other aspects of their "readiness" to serve persons who have developmental disabilities. The data will be used by NJCDD for policy and planning purposes, and a portion of the data will be entered in a searchable online database to allow families of persons with developmental disabilities to identify appropriate dental care in their communities. The project is modeled after one that is currently in operation in Massachusetts, conducted by

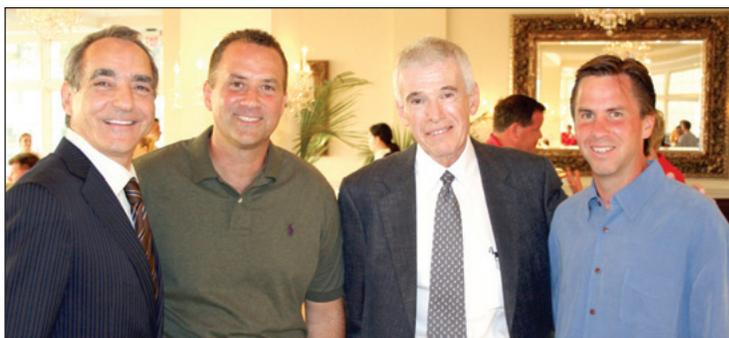
the Eunice Shriver Center at the University of Massachusetts.

The mission of the Institute for Research is to conduct research and to disseminate findings that enhance the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and those who work with them.

The Institute operates under the direction of Kenneth Robey, Ph.D, who can be reached at (908) 234-0011, ext. 716, or research@matheny.org. 



From left, Dr. Anthony Cioco; State Senator Kevin O'Toole and Juan Fernandez of Picillo, Caruso & O'Toole, Wayne; and Bill Dagiantis, Imperial Painting, West Orange.



From left, Matheny parents, Charles Fieramosca and Lloyd Desatnick; Matheny president, Steve Proctor; and Matheny trustee, Bill Kraiss.

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n Course

Ninety-six golfers participated in the seventh annual Matheny Golf Classic, held Monday, October 8, at the Trump National Golf Club in Bedminster. Funds raised from sponsorships, raffles and auctions netted approximately \$52,000 to help support the Matheny Center of Medicine and Dentistry, which provides medical, dental and therapy care to people with disabilities in 12 New Jersey counties.

For the second consecutive year, actor Jay Thomas conducted the live auction following dinner. And Matheny parents, Joe and Betty Christie of Keyport, spoke to the dinner crowd about their son, Jason, who is an adult patient at Matheny. Jason, they said, has developed a great deal of self-esteem "because of the love exhibited by the Matheny staff."



Actor and radio host, Jay Thomas with 14-year-old Matheny student, Raven Bennett.



From left, Matheny parent and retired NY Jet, Dave Szott; Matheny board chair, Annie Brady; retired NJ Devil, Scott Stevens.

Our Special Thanks...

A tribute to recognize occasions like birthdays and anniversaries, to honor a friend, or in memory of a loved one takes on special meaning when it also helps the many children and adults at Matheny.

When you make a gift, the honored person or the

family of the deceased receives a personal letter acknowledging your gift. The amount is never mentioned. You, as the donor, receive an official receipt for your tax deductible contribution. For more information, call Robert B. Budelman, III at 908-234-0011, ext. 744.

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Gifts to Matheny Medical and Educational Center provide a wonderful opportunity to honor the memory of a family member, friend or colleague, or to recognize an individual or a life occasion.

MATCHING GIFTS

Your company may have a matching gifts program. Matching gifts can double or even triple your contribution. Please contact your company's Human Resources Department to see if you are eligible.

CORPORATE GIVING

There are many ways your corporate employer can support Matheny, including becoming a Miles for Matheny sponsor or forming a corporate team to participate in the event, supporting our annual Matheny Golf Classic or by making a corporate contribution in support of a patient or student program. Employee volunteer projects are also a way for your company to make a difference and support the important care provided by Matheny.

If you have any questions about making a gift, please contact Robert Budelman, Director of Philanthropy, at (908) 234-0011 ext. 744 or by email at: rbudelman@matheny.org

Giving News: Charitable IRA Rollover

If you are age 70½ or older, current legislation now allows you to make cash gifts totaling up to \$100,000 a year from your traditional or Roth IRA to qualified charities without incurring income tax on the withdrawal.

How is a Gift Made?

The gift must be made directly from the IRA to the charity to avoid being counted as taxable income. An IRA owner interested in making such a distribution should make arrangements through the IRA account trustee.

The Benefits:

- Since the IRA gift distribution is not counted as income, it will not affect the owner's tax bracket or otherwise create adverse tax implications.
- By using the money that would normally go to taxes (as much as 35%), the IRA owner can make a larger gift if he or she chooses.
- Gifts of this type can satisfy the minimum required distributions from the IRA starting at age 70½.

Please consult your financial advisor for updated information.

School Principal's Priority: Using Creativity, Technology to Develop New Ways of Teaching

Sheryl Gavaras has been named principal of the Matheny School, after serving as director and acting administrator since July, 2005. She joined Matheny in 2002 as program coordinator.

Prior to coming to Matheny, Gavaras was director of clinical services and school social worker at the Rugby School in Woodfield and, before that, was school social worker at the Arc of Monmouth County's Dorothy B. Hersh High School in Tinton Falls. She also served as a school social worker, guidance counselor and as a substitute teacher at the American School in Bonn, West Germany. Gavaras, who is a resident of West Long Branch, has a BA in sociology/ social work with departmental distinction from the Christopher Newport College of the College of William and Mary and an MSW from the School of Social Services at Fordham University.



Sheryl Gavaras assists 16-year-old student, Natalie Tomastyk, with her laptop computer.

She recently completed the New Jersey Expedited Certification for Educational Leadership Program (NJEXCEL).

Gavaras believes passionately that, "all children can learn." She has put a priority on using creativity and technology to develop new ways of teaching.

A current project that epitomizes

Gavaras' philosophy is a "1 to 1 learning" program – one computer, one interactive, personalized learning experience in a wireless environment with anytime access to the internet. Gavaras and Alex Fraumann, information technology coordinator, felt this program, developed by the Metiri Group, a national consulting firm, would be the perfect tool for Matheny's students, many of whom are non-verbal and often feel cut off from the world around them.

So, funded by a Good Neighbor Grant from the Verizon Foundation, the program is being tested in a single class of older, transition students. Says Gavaras: "With one switch, students can operate the mouse and the scroll bar. This opens the doors to the world at large and gives them positive feelings of self-worth. This enables our students to participate in the future." 

Interdisciplinary Approach Emphasized by New OT Director

Donald Pauselius, MS, OTR, has been named director of occupational therapy at Matheny, succeeding Karen Staada. Prior to joining Matheny, Pauselius was an OT at North Jersey Developmental Center in Totowa and before that was at St. Joseph's School for the Blind in Jersey City.

He switched from an earlier career in special education because he preferred working with smaller groups and "physical needs, rather than educational needs." At Matheny, Pauselius actually experiences both because all therapies are provided in partnership with classroom teachers. In fact, one of the most enjoyable aspects of working at



Donald Pauselius works on fine motor skills with 15-year-old Matheny student, Gregory Kuhrt.

Matheny, he says, is "the way individual departments work together. And, because so many of the students and patients live here," he adds, "we get to talk to the nursing staff on a regular basis. And that provides regular follow through."

Pauselius, a resident of Mine Hill Township, received his BA in special education from William Paterson University in Wayne and his MS in occupational therapy from Misericordia University in Dallas, PA.

Occupational therapy at Matheny focuses on cognitive, motor and psychosocial development; activities of daily living; splinting; and assistive technology.

New PT Director Cites Matheny's 'Wonderful Working Environment'

Renee Fischer has been named director of physical therapy at Matheny, succeeding Cynthia LaBar. Fischer, who joined Matheny in January, 2006, has been working as a PT for 12 years in a variety of settings, both in New Jersey and in the metro Atlanta area. She has a wide range of experience working in rehabilitation, geriatrics, pediatrics and orthopedics. Certified as a neuro-muscular therapist, Fischer, a resident of Bridgewater, has a BS degree in physical therapy from Richard Stockton College in Pomona. She was motivated to become a physical therapist, she says, because she grew up



Renee Fischer with seven-year-old Matheny student, Nicholas Barros, in Matheny's sensory room.

playing with a cousin who had a brain tumor at the age of two.

Matheny, she adds, is "a wonderful working environment. I enjoy working with so many people who really care about what they are doing."

Physical therapy at Matheny provides therapeutic interventions that enable each patient to attain his/her optimal level of function. Physical therapy's major role is to improve motor skills for functional tasks; improve musculoskeletal, cardiovascular and/or respiratory integrity; and promote health and well-being for patients' comfort and quality of life.



Challenge of Recreation Therapy: To Generate 'Creative Ideas Everyday'

"These patients just want to do what normal people do. We try to bring that to them."

That comment by Sean Bielefeldt, clearly describes the objective of the recreation therapy program at Matheny. Bielefeldt, who has been named director of recreation therapy, succeeding Elizabeth Nelson, says the challenge of the position is "to come up with creative ideas. Everyday is different."

Growing up in Branchburg and graduating from Somerville High School, Bielefeldt had planned to become a high school history teacher. He enrolled at East Stroudsburg University as a secondary education major, but a friend was majoring in recreation therapy. "I had never heard of it," he recalls, "but I became interested and eventually went to my advisor and switched majors."



Sean Bielefeldt helps 14-year-old Matheny student, Raven Bennett, with 'adaptive tennis'.

After working two summers as a teacher's aide at The Midland School in North Branch and attending an on-campus presentation by Matheny on Lesch-Nyhan Disease (a rare condition caused by a defective gene in the X chromosome), Bielefeldt landed an internship at Matheny in May, 2002.

Three months later, he joined the Matheny recreation therapy staff.

In 2004, the Somerville resident helped launch an adaptive karate program. Every week, instructors and students from Quest Karate in Long Valley visit Matheny to conduct karate classes designed to help patients build self-respect and self-discipline and to momentarily put their disabilities aside, throwing punches and kicks just like any other karate student. Once a year, Quest Karate also holds a Kick-A-Thon to help fund the program.

The recreation therapy program offers a wide variety of recreational activities and special events to patients at Matheny. Each patient has an opportunity to engage in purposeful leisure activities and community trips that promote physical, emotional and social well being.



Second Chance Shop Raises \$105,000+

The Second Chance Shop, the Gladstone-based thrift shop operated by The Friends of Matheny, set a new record for the 2006-2007 season, raising \$105,275.58. The Friends is an auxiliary group that raises funds for a variety of projects that directly impact Matheny patients. Recent gifts have included an interactive computer system and an equisizer mechanical wooden horse. The Friends also funded half of a 'Community Connections' van, dedicated to transporting Matheny patients to such venues as restaurants, shopping malls, concerts and athletic events.



Celebrating the record year, from left, are: Pat Albertini of Mendham, Denise Oliver of Gladstone and Lisa Novella and Linda Horton of Peapack. Albertini and Horton are co-managers of the shop. Oliver and Novella were volunteers on duty when sales went over the \$100,000 mark. The shop, located on Jackson Avenue, specializes in the sale of gently-used clothing, housewares, jewelry and other unique items.

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