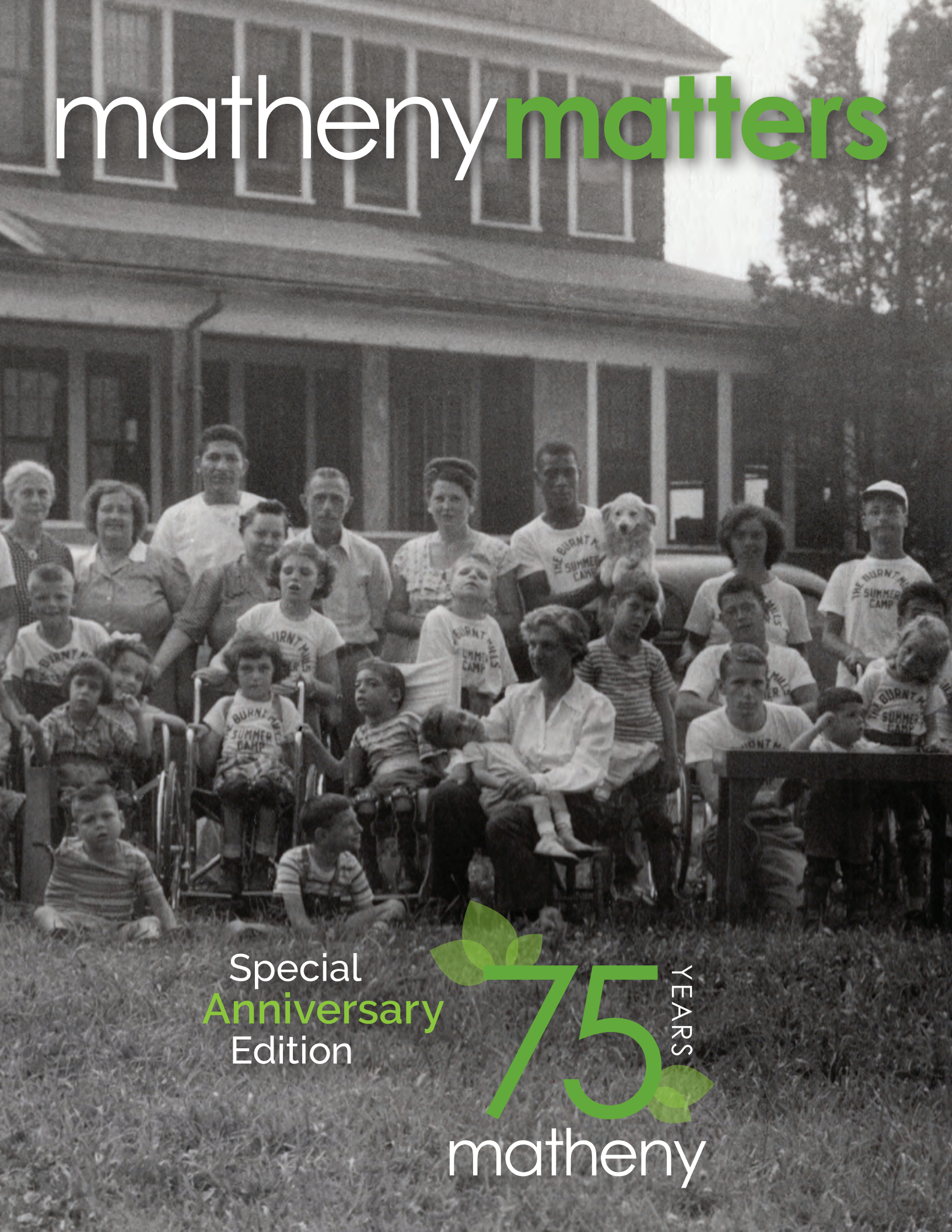


matheny matters



Special
Anniversary
Edition

75 YEARS
matheny

“It is impossible to describe the rewarding thrill of seeing a youngster take his first step or speak his first clear sentence. Each day is filled with small triumphs—routine accomplishments for the normal child but major steps toward self-sufficiency for these boys and girls.”

WALTER MATHENY, 1961

matheny**matters**

Special Anniversary Edition • Winter/Spring 2022

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Matheny
MEDICAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER

65

PRESIDENT AND CEO BILL KENT

Planning Our Next 75

This is the year—2022—when we will complete the drafting of our “One Matheny” Strategic Plan, laying out our aspirations and goals for the next 3 to 5 years. The plan will describe the goals and strategies Matheny hopes to accomplish across 6 dimensions—Person-centered Care; Person-centered Learning; Colleague Well-being; Community Residences (Group Homes); Community, Advocacy, and Education; and Financial Health and Stewardship. The plan incorporates the recommendations and aspirations

coming from our clients, their families, and from our amazing Matheny employees.

Times change and needs change, and organizations must think deeply and carefully about how

they will change and improve for the future, while honoring and retaining their beloved history and exceptional culture. Part of my goal as Matheny’s leader is to develop an inspiring vision for our future and guide the process that will ensure Matheny is not only ready for change, but will continue to build and fortify an enduring entity that thrives and meets our clients’ needs over our next 75 years.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of this incredible organization, I am honored and excited to lead Matheny forward. I cannot wait to see what the next several years will hold for us. With strong support and partnership with our clients and their families and friends, volunteers, donors, and other supporters, we will take great strides to ensure that our goals enable us to continue to enrich the lives and grow the abilities for each person we serve. Thank you to all who make Matheny possible.



We Celebrate md



Up a winding road from Peapack’s main street, looking out at the surrounding Somerset Hills, with sheep grazing quietly on farmland next door, Matheny feels distant from the hectic pace of world happenings. But visit for just an hour and you’ll understand why it has survived for 75 years, and why so many feel deeply attached to this vibrant community. Since 1946, Matheny has been a critical component of the State’s special education history and an integral part of the life stories of many families. In this special anniversary edition, meet some of the people—founders, residents, students, staff, volunteers, donors—who have made Matheny the unique entity it is today.

Matheny



From the cover: The Burnt Mills School for Paralysis Correction, forerunner of Matheny

The main building may look nondescript, but step inside. What you'll likely notice first is the hum of constant movement—up and down hallways, in and out of rooms—but few people are walking. Some wheelchairs move patiently, others whizz down the hallways, sometimes surprising visitors on foot; and there's a constant level of communication going on, most often nonverbal but decidedly upbeat.

The “vibe” is energetic and engaging. Kids go to classes, pre-K through grade 12; adult residents take classes, too; everyone participates in a variety of therapies and group and interactive activities. This is a community where long-lasting relationships are the norm; staff have an unusual commitment; and the joy of celebrating holidays is never overlooked; where students and residents have places to go and things to do, and living the best possible life with others is

the highest priority. This is a community of people with complex developmental disabilities that affect their mobility and communication, but no one here sits passively and stares at a TV screen all day.

Matheny—unique and with a proud history—started as an idea in the minds of two educators, who, despite minimal funding, were determined to create a school where children with serious developmental challenges could live purposeful lives and grow up in a homelike atmosphere.

The Matheny story is a positive one for many even though it has encountered its share of “growing pains” over the years. Its central character rose above his difficult beginnings and earned a kind-of superhero status here. His name is Charles (Chuck) Matheny and he was beloved by many. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's start at the story's beginning.

BOARD CHAIR BILL KRAIS

A History to be Proud of, a Promising Future

As a Matheny Board of Trustees member for almost 20 years, and Chair of the Board since 2019, I am honored to be part of this 75th anniversary publication.

Over the years, I've come to know many Matheny parents and other family members, and I understand the challenges they face. My sister is disabled and has required significant services since childhood. Volunteers—neighbors, friends, even total strangers—came to our house every day to assist with therapies. This was the environment that we were raised in, and that experience taught me to look at challenges in a different way.

This is a particularly exciting time to be a leader at Matheny. We are looking at how we can increase our services and the number of people

we help. We're developing more group homes, and will move more people who are able to live outside the hospital into these homes. We're identifying avenues to treat more patients in our hospital by working with other health care systems.

Matheny is a great place with a great history. I'm constantly impressed by the symbiotic relationship between Matheny's residents and its dedicated staff, which allows residents to maximize their abilities. The level of clinical excellence is astounding. Matheny's uniquely committed employees make it all possible.

With Matheny's leadership, employees, and community, I feel sure that we can move these priorities forward. The future of Matheny certainly looks promising.





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THE HISTORY OF MATHENY

A Family Finds a Much-Needed School

The story of Matheny's beginnings has been retold many times. It's a gripping family saga, but it has grown over the years from one family's story to encompass the life-stories of many families.

In 1930, a young Minnesota couple, Mary Marguerite Hughes and Walter Matheny, met while studying at Hibbing Junior College. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Minnesota, and then returned to her hometown of Hibbing to teach biology. Walter graduated from the University of Arizona in 1935 with a BS in physical education and joined Marguerite in Hibbing, also teaching there. They married in 1936.

Walter, who was interested in helping handicapped children, participated in founding Hibbing school system's first department of "corrective physical education." In 1941, Marguerite and Walter's son, Charles (Chuck) Hughes Matheny, was born and shortly thereafter was diagnosed with a newly recognized disorder called cerebral palsy (CP). Resources to help kids with CP were pretty much nonexistent.



Starting in 1941, Walter served in the Air Force, spending several of his military years rehabilitating injured servicemen. When the war ended, he and Marguerite began working in California for an organization for disabled children. Within

OS

NOTABLE DATES

1941

Chuck Matheny is born and diagnosed with cerebral palsy

1946

Marguerite and Walter Matheny launch a school in Burnt Mills, NJ, for children with cerebral palsy

1949

The school moves to larger quarters in Far Hills, NJ, and increases its enrollment



months, Walter was offered, and accepted, a position heading up the school's new branch in Far Hills, and they moved to NJ. However, they quickly determined the school was not up to their standards and resigned.

Simultaneously, they were looking for a specialized school for their son, but when they realized there were few such resources, Walter and Marguerite made

"Before he was an hour old, we had decided that if Chuck's handicap was a physical one, we would devote our lives to helping him and other children like him."

WALTER MATHENY

a momentous decision. It was the end of 1946—and The Matheny School was about to be born.

With a \$3,000 GI loan, they leased a dilapidated building in Burnt Mills, NJ, and worked together to fix it up. By February 1947, they enrolled five students, including their son Chuck, but their funds were critically low. However, by the end of that year, enrollment had grown to 23 students, and the financial picture was improving.

Students were taught a curriculum much like that of children their age in

Facing page, clockwise from top left: students at the Far Hills campus; Walter Matheny; Burnt Mills School; class time is also fun-time; a "dogsled" provides a ride through the snow; Marguerite Matheny with son Chuck

the public schools, participated in intense physical therapy, and were taught skills that would help them function as independently as possible. The students lived in a homelike environment which, Marguerite and Walter believed, would allow them to thrive and be happy. Children were initially accepted only for a 90-day probationary period, allowing time to evaluate if the child could be helped there.

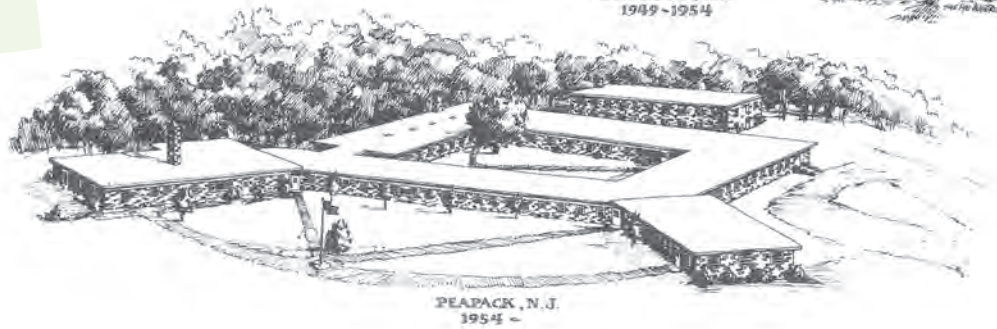


Marguerite and Walter trained at the Children's Rehabilitation Institute in Baltimore with its director, Winthrop Phelps, an orthopedic surgeon and Yale lecturer. He had published a journal article about his stunning observation—that when a child incurred brain damage at birth, it didn't always result in mental retardation. In 1937, he founded the first cerebral palsy facility in the country, based on the premise that many children with CP could be helped through education and therapy. He mentored The Matheny School's founders and became a consultant for the school.

Walter and Marguerite could not spend much time away from their school, which had just one additional staff member. They did the laundry, cooking, repairs and groundskeeping in addition to everything else. When Marguerite's parents visited, they decided to stay on to help. By 1948, the school's reputation was growing, and it was renamed the Walter D. Matheny School for Paralysis Correction.

In 1949, the school moved to a larger building in Far Hills with room to increase enrollment; and in 1950, it was incorporated as a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization with a board of trustees. In just four years, it was well "on its way."





THE HISTORY OF MATHENY

A Pioneering School with a Soaring Reputation



In the early 1950s, the school had 42 students, ages 3 to 15, and it needed more space. There were few other inpatient treatment facilities for kids with CP anywhere in the country; and Matheny always had a waiting list. Space to expand research and train much needed CP therapists and nurses, who were in short supply nationwide, was also needed.

In the summer of 1951, a successful fundraising campaign conducted by Walter Matheny and the Board of Trustees raised funds to purchase 38 acres of land with several outbuildings in Peapack, which had been part of the 422-acre Blair estate. Another major fundraising campaign raised \$500,000 to build and equip a new school on the property. Of more than 300 foundations asked to contribute, 24 gave generously over a period of almost 3 years. In March 1954, construction started on the main building, with living-space for 50 students, as well as offices, classrooms, therapy rooms,

a dining room, kitchen, visiting areas, infirmary, dispensary, isolation room, and dental office. The building was ready for move-in on December 23, 1954.

The school increased its staff to 35. The students had a half day of academic classroom education and several hours of multiple, intensive therapies daily. Community organizations—including the 4-H Club, Cub and Girl Scouts, garden clubs, and the Red Cross—started bringing volunteers to the campus and initiating programs. Also, the school's growing reputation attracted many visiting professionals to the campus.

1950s



1960s

NOTABLE DATES

Summer 1951

Land is purchased “on top of the hill” in Peapack for Matheny’s permanent campus

March 1954

Construction begins on the main building on Matheny’s new campus

December 23 1954

Move-in day for students and staff

September 1964

The Evaluation and Planning Center opens its doors and inpatient bed capacity grows to 78

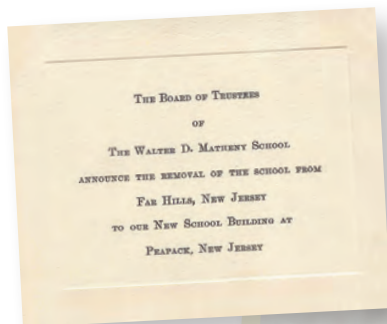
1964

Name changes to The Matheny School

1966

Matheny hosts a 2-day, on-campus symposium on the “education of brain-injured and cerebral palsied children”

Facing page: A variety of therapies, as well as adapted sports and social activities, keep kids moving and happy.



Construction on the next big building project began in September 1963, following another major fundraising push by Walter Matheny. The Evaluation and Planning Center—an extension of the main building with sophisticated diagnos-

“By separating out disabilities and evaluating each one, we will be in a much better position to draw up a rehabilitation program for each child.”

WALTER MATHENY

tic and therapy equipment and housing for students and staff—was designed for a team of specialists to evaluate students over a period of weeks and put together treatment options for each individual child. This was an important addition to the services already provided. Dr. Henry

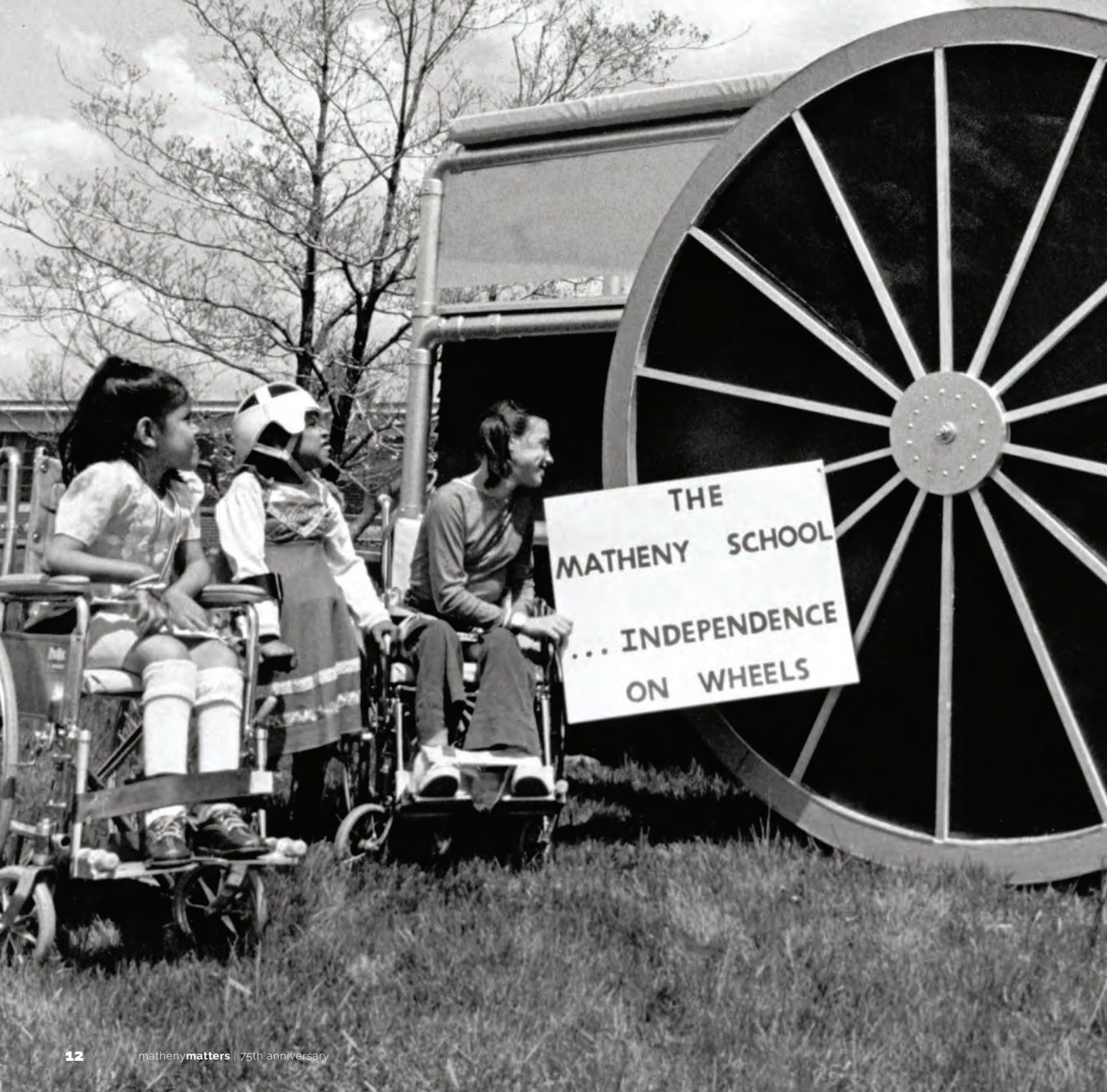
Kessler, well-known founder of the Kessler Institute in West Orange, was the principal speaker at the Center’s 1964 dedication.

The Center attracted much professional attention and Matheny’s reputation took a big leap forward. Also, Matheny’s intensive therapy and academics seemed to produce better results than other programs. About a thousand visitors came to Matheny each year to learn more about the school’s programs. In 1966, Matheny affiliated with NYU’s Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation to create a month-long onsite training program for medical residents.

In 1969, Matheny built another addition—to house visiting parents, professionals, and college students who were training onsite. And the volunteer program, now such a vital part of Matheny’s day-to-day life, blossomed. Many local residents and organizations became increasingly involved in fundraising and also directly with Matheny’s students, reading to them, gardening with them, and providing social interaction.



1970s | 198



OS

THE HISTORY OF MATHENY

Changing With the Times



What did Matheny look like in 1970? Here are the numbers: 80 children attended the school and lived on campus; 78 of them had cerebral palsy, 2 had spina bifida; an additional 50 children received care as outpatients; 96 staff members and 17 consultants were employed there; most enrolled students stayed 15 to 18 months before transferring to specialized schools, or returning home to attend special classes in public schools.

Matheny kids—with their unique float—help celebrate the nation's bicentennial at Peapack-Gladstone's parade, 1976

NOTABLE DATES

1974

Walter Matheny retires after 28 years as the school's director

1975

David Sutton becomes Matheny President

1977

Walter Matheny, co-founder of The Matheny School, dies

1981

Matheny celebrates its 35th anniversary and opens a new Life/Work Building

1982

Elaine Baumeister becomes Matheny President. The Personal Care Assistance Program is established.

1988

Marguerite Matheny, co-founder and a major force at Matheny, dies at age 75

1989

Robert Schonhorn comes onboard as Matheny President

In 1971, Walter presented plans to build a high school for current students plus 25 to 50 day-students. But sadly, before starting his next major fundraising campaign, the school's director had a minor, and then a more serious, stroke. He was able to regain some function, but unable to meet the demands of heading up the school. Walter Matheny retired after 28 years as director of the school he co-founded, and Marguerite became interim director.

In the 1970s, massive changes were enacted on the State and Federal levels regarding the rights of handicapped per-

Facing page: New technology spurs greater independence in the 1970s and '80s, while still leaving time for fun; *top left:* Chuck Matheny works at his groundskeeping job, providing a positive role model for students, 1979

sons. New laws impacted education, social services, housing, transportation, and medical care. In 1975, David Sutton came on as Matheny's new director and led the school through the next seven years.

Many students who traditionally attended Matheny could now go to a public school closer to home, so Matheny began admitting children whose disabilities were more severe. Also, in the late 1970s, Matheny began tackling the issue of how to help their disabled, mentally alert clients function more independently post high school. This became a major Matheny initiative.

“More than anyone I know, Chuck Matheny rises above his circumstances to make a significant impact in our community.”

REV. STEPHEN ROZZELLE
CROP WALK ORGANIZER





THE HISTORY OF MATHENY

Matheny Launches Bold New Ventures



A Momentous Day: President George Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act into law, July 26, 1990. It establishes a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability.

Facing page: Entrance to the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center on Matheny's Peapack campus

As the 20th century moved to its close, Matheny took some bold steps forward. The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act—on July 26, 1990—allocated additional funding for facilities like Matheny to support independent living for disabled adults and offer more outpatient services, as well as increasing funds for the education of professionals to work in this specialized field.

Matheny's \$5.5 million, two-and-a-half-year renovation, completed in 1990, updated existing campus buildings and created and equipped space for new services. Outpatient primary care for children and adults with developmental disabilities; outpatient dentistry, orthopedics, pediatrics and neurology; outpatient physical, speech, and occupational therapies; rehabilitation technology; and a screening program for early detection of physical and neurological problems were among the much-needed services that Matheny provided.

Matheny also took its place in the research world with the creation of the Institute of Applied Research, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, to advance studies related to developmental disabilities. The Institute achieved a worldwide reputation for its work on Lesch-Nyhan disease (LND), a rare genetic disorder causing an overproduction of uric acid, and neurological, cognitive, and behavioral disturbances. A hallmark symptom is compulsive self-injury. Dr. William Nyhan, who discovered LND with Dr. Michael Lesch, was the keynote

1990s



NOTABLE DATES

July 26
1990

Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act

1992

Opening of first community residence in Basking Ridge, followed by four more community residences in 1995, 1998, and 2002

1993

Founding of the Arts Access Program

1998

Steve Proctor comes onboard as Matheny President

1999

Groundbreaking for Robert Schonhorn Arts Center



Facing page: Scenes from Matheny's many activities, including (clockwise from top left): a joyous ribbon-cutting for Matheny's first group home, Basking Ridge; Arts Access facilitation; 8 Matheny students, and caregivers, participate in an exchange program with the Hatchford Park School, Surrey, England, 1988; Arts Center auditorium; Chuck Matheny; Arts Access dance performance



speaker at the first-ever LND conference, hosted by Matheny in May 1994.

Among the most impactful developments was the opening of Matheny's first group home in Basking Ridge in 1992—with funding from the State's Division of Developmental Disabilities. It was so well-received that, in 1995, Matheny opened a second group home in Franklin Township, followed by two more in Frelinghuysen Township in 1998, and a fifth in Lakeside in 2002. Each residence was designed to help 6 adults 21 or older, not requiring ongoing intensive medical care, to live more independently. Group home residents become members of a household and their larger community, and participate in educational, volunteer, arts, and social activities.

Matheny also established an Adult Services Department so that disabled individuals, who have graduated from high school but can't hold jobs, can live active, purposeful lives—attending classes, such as computer lab instruction, adapted sports, fitness, and money management, and can meet and interact with other disabled adults. Its 2 Adult Learning Centers, in Hillsborough and on the

Matheny campus, consistently get rave reviews.

Certainly, among the high points of this decade was the founding of the Arts Access program in 1993, which opened up a whole world of self-expression for disabled visual artists, dancers, and writers, and still thrives today. Initial funding for the pilot program came from the Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation. (See article, page 35)

In the last year of the decade, ground was broken for the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center—home to the Arts Access program and the jewel of the Matheny campus. Its auditorium holds 300 individuals in seats that can be converted from traditional to wheelchair accessible, and its gallery has large windows, with streaming light and views of the surrounding hills. Opened in December of that year, the building—also housing workshops where artists work and congregate—was recognized with a National Endowment for the Arts Excellence in Design Award.



Longtime Matheny resident Jessica Evans enjoys taking part in Miles for Matheny with a Matheny recreation therapist



2000-20



THE HISTORY OF MATHENY

Reaching Out

Matheny's school and residential hospital were established, built up, honed, and grown starting in 1946; so, by the year 2000, Matheny was ready to build more connections to the world beyond its campus. Creating an on-campus, comprehensive network of outpatient medical, educational, mental health, mobility, and social services for developmentally disabled persons in the surrounding communities was central to the plan. Matheny's on-campus residential hospital would house only those whose complex medical conditions required more constant care.

In May 2003, Matheny opened the Center for Medicine and Dentistry—offering outpatient primary care, as well as outpatient gynecology, urology, psychiatry, pediatrics, dentistry, optometry, and nutritional services, and evaluation of swallowing issues—on its campus. The aim was to place these health care services under one roof, making it easier for patients and their families to access. At the Seating and Mobility Clinic, also located at the Center, wheelchair experts are available to assess each client's mobility and safety needs and construct a safer, more comfortable customized wheelchair, and other devices.

Oral health care adapted for developmentally disabled patients was not readily available in the 20th century. However, this changed when the new dental clinic, specially equipped and staffed with dental experts, opened at Matheny in the early 2000s with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Delta Dental Foundation of NJ. One of just a few in New Jersey, it takes care of more than 300 patients annually.

Linking Matheny-residents more closely to the outside world has also been a 21st-century priority. The recreation therapy program takes residents out and about to participate in activities that are certainly

NOTABLE DATES

2000

Robert Schonhorn Arts Center opens

2003

Center for Medicine and Dentistry opens

2014

Matheny resident Shaleena Tomassini wins 2 gold medals at USA Special Olympics Games

2015

Kendell R. Sprott takes on the job of Matheny President

2017

20th anniversary of Miles for Matheny

2018

Arts Access celebrates 25th anniversary

2019

Professionally curated Sotheby's exhibit in New York City showcases 56 pieces by 5 Arts Access artists

2021

Bill Kent becomes Matheny President

fun but also therapeutic, helping them develop additional physical and social skills. A long list of adaptive sports is very popular. Residents also take part in social events; and jaunts to restaurants, malls, sporting events, Broadway theater, and parks and beaches. They become more proficient at using a power wheelchair, getting on and off a van lift, navigating sidewalks, using automatic door openers, ordering food in a restaurant, and managing their money.

The Arts Access program, launched in 1993, has built momentum and developed strong links to the world outside Matheny. Program participants create visual art, written works, and dances, and exhibit and perform at venues throughout the State and beyond. Arts Access also invites friends and family to its *Full Circle* event each November to celebrate the work of Arts Access participants. (Read more, page 35)

One of the most joyous links to the surrounding communities is the annual Miles for Matheny event held off campus each Spring. Since its beginning in 1998, “Miles” has grown from a small wheelchair walk and cycling ride to a day of festivities. It now attracts hundreds of walkers, cyclists, and well-wishers, and is generously supported by local businesses. Miles also serves to introduce Matheny’s residents and students to individuals living and working in the nearby towns, and is one of Matheny’s major fundraisers. (Read more, page 31)

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Matheny’s highly specialized Dental Clinic; Arts Access artist James Lane proudly exhibits at Sotheby’s, NY; Shaleena Tomassini wins 2 gold medals at USA Special Olympics; Wheelchair Workshop; Matheny trip to Disney, 2018, made possible by the Friends of Matheny; Chuck Matheny enjoys the scene at Miles for Matheny; (center) Matheny vans make travel far easier for residents

And, of course, there are Matheny’s 5 community residences, thriving in 3 communities in Somerset and Warren counties with 6 developmentally disabled adults living in each. The homes are part of Matheny’s mission to support its adult patients to be as independent as possible, and to be part of a household and a community. Two additional group homes in Far Hills are currently under construction and happily anticipated.

Reaching beyond its campus boundaries once again, this time to educate the broader medical community, Matheny formed a partnership with Rutgers New Jersey Medical School in 1999. The partnership continues today, with its ongoing mission to educate medical students on best practices for working with developmentally disabled children and adults. Matheny also serves as a training ground for students in occupational therapy, recreation therapy, biomedical engineering, dentistry, and other specialties, with experienced Matheny staff working alongside and teaching undergraduate and graduate students who are training to work with this special population.

Promoting access and inclusion for those with developmental disabilities has been a driving force for Matheny in the 21st century. While barriers continue to diminish, the process of helping to integrate clients into the larger community, and maximize their independence and acceptance, is clearly pivotal to Matheny’s role now and in the foreseeable future.





The story of Matheny—the place—is in large part the story of the Matheny family—Marguerite and Walter, and their children, Chuck and Mary Ann. When Marguerite and Walter went looking for a school for their young son Chuck, born with cerebral palsy (CP) in 1941, little was known about children with CP, and there were few resources to address their education and therapeutic needs. So, the two educators launched a “start-up” school of their own to fill that void—with just \$3,000; and they worked hands-on at that school for their entire lives. Year by year, the founders were joined by a growing number of devoted staff, who helped build and sustain this dynamic enterprise.

A Visiona



ry Family



Top left: Chuck Matheny is happy to hold his baby sister Mary Ann; top right: Matheny family gathers to celebrate wedding; bottom left: illustration of Walter and Marguerite Matheny with their beloved German Shepherd Solly

Prior to founding their school, Marguerite and Walter were educators; and Walter had experience working with physically disabled children and severely injured GIs. They knew what they wanted their school to provide: a solid academic education; a full spectrum of health care services; therapies to maximize each child's potential—all in a “homelike” environment.

The Mathenys worked on the campus and lived on the campus. It was their home and their life. It's where Chuck grew up and it's where the family brought Chuck's adopted sister, Mary Ann, 11 years younger than him, when she was a month and a half old. She went on to college, worked, married, and had her own children. Chuck was educated and had therapies at the school, made friends there, and as an adult, lived in his own small house on the Matheny campus.

It's difficult to gain insights into the life of a family, but it's clear that the school's founders were passionately dedicated to the growth and well-being of the children under their care.



Marguerite and Walter's lives were totally intertwined with the school they had founded. Chuck was one of the children who greatly benefited from this school, and he became a role model and mentor to others who were lucky enough to join him. Here are a few stories that give personal glimpses into the lives of a family whose members impacted the lives of so many other individuals and families.

In Mary Ann's Words

“Chuck was part of the family's decision to adopt me,” says Mary Ann Bents, now retired from a position as IT Project Manager at NASA Goddard Space Flight Research Center. “He helped pick out my coming home clothes and helped build blocks for me. All of that speaks to who he was.”

“He was funny, really funny, and he knew how to make people feel at ease,” she continues. “He adored children and animals, and they adored him.” She remembers him riding around the campus as a teenager in the evenings on a motorized buckboard, and later on a golf cart. The neighbor's dog rode in the golf cart as Chuck's sidekick.

Chuck and Mary Ann spent a lot of time together at the school—hanging out with the students. “The school was a 24–7 job for mom and dad, but we were given unique and personalized time with our parents. They made each of us feel very special,” she says.

“Growing up at Matheny gave me a different perspective from most kids on many things. I learned acceptance and appreciation for different people and I learned about inclusion at an early age.”

The entire Matheny family flew out with Mary Ann when she started at the University of Arizona. At that time,



Below: Chuck Matheny with brother-in-law Gregg and sister Mary Ann, great nieces Zoe and Maggie, and niece Mary Heather Noble; right: Chuck poses with close friend Tara Hopko



Chuck could walk with crutches, feed and bathe himself, talk quite clearly, and enjoyed going out to eat, listening to music, going to see Broadway shows, and traveling to see new places. “He came to visit on his own when I first got married and lived in Arizona,” she remembers.

A Memorable Uncle

Later in life, Chuck exhibited the same zest for life and sense of humor. His niece, Mary Heather Noble, describes him as a “fixture in my life.” She grew up in Ohio but her family visited their New Jersey branch once or twice each year. She remembers him diligently mowing the extensive lawns at Matheny with his tractor mower. “Everyone stopped and talked with him. Walking with him, I would feel so special,” she says. Chuck also plowed the snow, collected the trash, and stocked the soda machines, conscientiously carrying out his jobs.

In his late 40s, Chuck earned a driver’s license, and Mary Heather remembers that he proudly drove a van (locally) that everyone fondly called the Chuck wagon. She recalls his love of music, his desire to “venture out in the world,” his enduring attachment to friends, and his devotion to the Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church, where he was a member for more than 50 years. “His faith was so strong and he was an everlasting optimist,” she observes. “He was never discouraged.”

Like his father, Chuck was a successful fundraiser. He took huge satisfaction when raising money for his adopted causes. Chief among them was the CROP Hunger Walk, a worldwide effort to fight hunger.

During his last weeks of life, Chuck and Mary Heather watched the *Sound of Music* together in his hospital room. “Chuck was singing along, even as he was suffering in the hospital. It captures the kind of spirit he had—enjoying all the things that life gave him until the very end.”

“He had such a big inner spirit,” she states. “He was such a joyful man with a tremendous internal drive. He believed he was put on this earth and given his condition so his parents would start the school and he could show others by example. He always had such a sense of purpose.”

An Employee Becomes Chuck’s Extended Family

Chuck also inspired many Matheny staff members. Tara Hopko, an occupational therapy assistant, met Chuck on her first day on-the-job in 2004. “I always wanted to work at Matheny. I was drawn to the place,” she says. “I loved the story behind Matheny. I loved its family orientation.”

She did not foresee the close friendship she would form with Chuck. What Tara noticed first was his “great sense of humor. And he was such a cool person. He never asked, ‘Why me? Why do I have these burdens?’ He had such grace, such courage, and gratitude.”

Their relationship started in Matheny’s hallways. “I would stop and chat every time I saw him in the halls,” she remembers. “Sometimes he was difficult to understand. You needed to take the time to listen. He had a lot to say.”

Chuck told her about his family; they spoke often. “It made me feel good and it made him feel good, too.”

Chuck slowly became part of Tara’s family and they celebrated major holidays together for years. Her two girls—born in 2006 and 2008—started calling him Grandpa Chuck. “He would come to



my kids’ school concerts and the school would save him a seat in the front row.”

“Chuck never wanted to be seen as a patient; he wanted to be seen as a mentor. Independence was a huge thing for him,” she states. He loved the water; and Tara encouraged him to swim with her twice a week in Matheny’s pool. In cold weather, he joined a senior aerobics class at the YMCA and would try to do all the exercises. She went with him. “We had a blast!” she says.

Tara also encouraged him to ride the adaptive tricycles available at Matheny. “He biked religiously,” she remembers.

“Knowing Chuck made you want to be a better person, more grateful, more gracious. He transformed my husband and me. He had such an impact on us. Chuck was such a great spirit,” she concludes.

The compassion, determination, and hard work of Walter and Marguerite Matheny laid a solid foundation for the Matheny of today.

In 1966, Walter Matheny said: “Time and time again I hear parents ask the same question I asked 25 years ago—‘Why me?’ I had no answer then, but I believe I have one now. If our son Chuck had not been born with cerebral palsy, Marguerite and I never would have gone into this work, the school never would have been built, hundreds of children never would have been helped by the wonderful staff we have been able to assemble.”

Matheny continues as a living tribute to the Matheny family, their friends, and all of the staff and volunteers who have had the foresight, devotion, and, above all, the compassion to help build and sustain the family’s vision.

The article includes excerpts from “Remembering Chuck Matheny,” Matheny Matters magazine, Winter-Spring 2018. Chuck Matheny died at age 76, December 14, 2017.

Services

Volunteerism and fundraising are alive and well at Matheny. It's part of the culture here, where family members, community residents, high school and college students, corporate executives and staff, retirees, and visitors want to be a part of this unique community and help out in some way.

Matheny's volunteer program took off in the 1950s and it grew and grew. Today, hundreds of volunteers staff the Second Chance Thrift Shop, participate in fundraising events, generously donate to Matheny, serve on Boards, visit patients, help out in classrooms, provide holiday celebrations, and work hands-on to improve the campus.

The Friends of Matheny

The Friends is comprised of more than 100 dedicated volunteers of all ages, many of them long-term and most from the surrounding communities. Since its inception in 1983, members have contributed thousands of hours to earn more than \$3.5 million, all of which has been donated to purchase items and services for the benefit of students and residents. A wheelchair washing machine; Smart Boards and Smart Tables to help students communicate; adaptive sports equipment; a 5-day excursion to Disney for several students and their care providers; musical instruments and choir robes; and tickets to major league sports events and live theater are just a few of their many purchases on behalf of Matheny-clients. The Friends also wrap hundreds of holiday gifts, provide food after the Halloween parade and at the annual Miles for Matheny event, sponsor a Staff Appreciation Day, and hold a Day of Beauty for residents.

Jean Wadsworth is the longest serving Matheny volunteer, celebrating 36 years in 2021. When she joined The Friends in the 1980s, the thrift shop had just 15



volunteers. She helped guide and build the group as a past president and as a member of The Friends' Board of Directors for many years.

Another long-term member, Linda Horton, headed up the Second Chance Thrift Shop for 25 of its 36 years before retiring in 2020. She joined The Friends in 1989, immediately started working in the thrift shop, and became its manager in the mid-1990s. The shop thrived—and continues to thrive—earning more than \$100,000 yearly.

Facing page, clockwise from top left: Matheny kids love visits from community members; volunteer Linda Horton in the Second Chance Thrift Shop in Gladstone; Miles for Matheny always draws an exuberant crowd; patient Rasheedah Mahali (center) all dressed up and ready to go





Clockwise from top left: Patrick Scaglione, Vice Chair, Matheny Board of Trustees; Matheny School graduate and resident Bryan Desatnick (seated) with his parents Lloyd and Edana, and grandmother Debra Heller; Miles for Matheny 2018



Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees, established in 1950, has successfully led Matheny through its major growth spurts and a spectrum of other challenges, most recently COVID-19. Its volunteer members work closely with Matheny’s president and other administrators to guarantee that Matheny’s mission is fulfilled.

Bill Kraiss, current Board Chair, has been a member since the 1990s. He describes his connection to Matheny’s mission as “a personal one.” With a disabled sister who needed significant services growing up, he understands the challenges faced by the families of residents and students.

The law firm of Porzio, Bromberg, & Newman—which Kraiss joined in the 1990s—is a long-time sponsor of Miles for Matheny and also has donated many *pro bono* hours of legal services to Matheny families. Kraiss’ wife had the idea for the Kids Fun Run, a hugely popular “Miles” event. Kraiss also served as vice chair of the Board for several years.

He sees this as an exciting time for Matheny as it develops more medical group homes and reaches out to serve more individuals through these homes and other adult services. Kraiss praises the



Top: Wheeling, walking, riding, running at the annual Miles for Matheny; bottom, left to right: longtime Matheny volunteer Linda Horton and her husband, Bill, with Miles for Matheny founder Lu Huggins and her husband Bob (both Lu and Bob Huggins are deceased)

staff—for their clinical excellence, great commitment to patients, and enormous enthusiasm for their jobs.

Edana Desatnick, parent of 2012 Matheny School graduate Bryan Desatnick, has been a Board member since 2003, and served as past Co-chair of the Board with Bruce Fisher from 2016 to 2018. Diagnosed with Angelman Syndrome during infancy, Bryan became a resident-student at Matheny at age 10, after a series of seizures that left him needing more medical attention than could be provided at home. He currently attends Matheny’s Adult Day Program and lives on campus. “His life is so full and he has become so integrated into the community,” says his mother.

As a longtime dedicated leader, Desatnick works to help ensure the well-being and longevity of Matheny. She feels that people often don’t realize how physically intense and medically, emotionally, and mentally challenging it is to take care of Matheny’s children and adults. “I can say that after looking at comparable institutions, I haven’t identified another organization like Matheny that provides the high quality of services from early childhood right through the adult years.”

First as a Board of Trustees member starting in 2002, then as Board of Trustees Chair from 2008 to 2014, and subsequently as a Board member again, Daniel McLaughlin has devoted innumerable hours to ensuring Matheny’s well-being. After taking a campus tour in 1998, he “fell in love. You can’t not be passionate about the people here once you meet them—unless you have no heart.”

His primary mission while Chair was to “get the word out. Most people don’t know about Matheny, unless they live close by. They don’t know Matheny is a great community and a model for other places like this. From personal care assistants to the president, everyone knows each other. They don’t work here to get rich; they are just amazingly dedicated.”



Miles for Matheny Nears a Quarter Century

Miles for Matheny grew out of an idea to bring Matheny residents and those living in surrounding communities together to meet each other and, perhaps, help to dissolve stereotypes surrounding developmentally disabled individuals.

Lu Huggins, who conceived and helped launch the event in 1998, served on Matheny’s Board of Trustees for 20 years and was herself a wheelchair user. In its first year, Walkin’ and Wheelin’ was a small wheelchair walk and cycling ride, which attracted about 100 participants and observers.

Renamed Miles for Matheny in 2000, this yearly Spring gathering now attracts more than 1,000 participants to take part in the Lu Huggins Wheelchair Walk, where friends and family walk alongside Matheny children and adults who “wheel” through the streets to

the cheers of onlookers; a 5K run; six cycling routes; the Kids Fun Run; and the “Breakfast of Champions.”

The Bedminster Flyers Cycling Club, a Somerset County recreational road bike club, has a long history of providing support, and marking cycling routes, for “Miles.” Ardent community support has ensured that this beloved event is always a winner.



Volunteer Larry Thornton with Matheny student James Wild in the Science Garden



His Contributions Live On

When volunteer Larry Thornton spoke, people evidently listened. Looking for a meaningful retirement opportunity close to home in 2008, he started out in the science classroom several hours each week, then began thinking about additional ways to help. He accepted a seat on Matheny's Board of Trustees and on the School Board; and then realized that his marketing and sales background might make him a perfect "ambassador."

He went out into the surrounding communities and told Matheny's story to large corporations, small businesses, and generous individuals. Many "adopted" and completed projects—such as renovating the front patio, restoring the memorial garden, paving a quarter mile nature trail, repairing the pool deck, and weeding and cleaning up the community garden—which have bettered the lives of Matheny residents.

He also conceived a collaboration—still thriving—between the Rutgers' undergraduate Biomedical Engineering Department and Matheny. "These Rutgers students want to apply their learning to real-world problems," he observed. "There are many problems of everyday living to be solved here."

Other Donors Who've Become Part of Matheny's Family

There are many individual volunteers and donors, as well as organizations, businesses—large and small—and clubs and schools that have "adopted" Matheny and formed a relationship that has strengthened over time. Such is the case for CARS (Committee of Auto Racing Supporters) and Holiday Express, to name just two.

CARS members help cheer the holidays by throwing a party every December for Matheny residents living on campus and in Matheny's group homes, and bringing presents for the children and adults who have no closely involved family. CARS volunteers, living throughout New Jersey and surrounding states, have continued this tradition for almost 50 years, and some have become familiar faces at Matheny. The CARS party is a festivity that Matheny residents look forward to and count on each year.

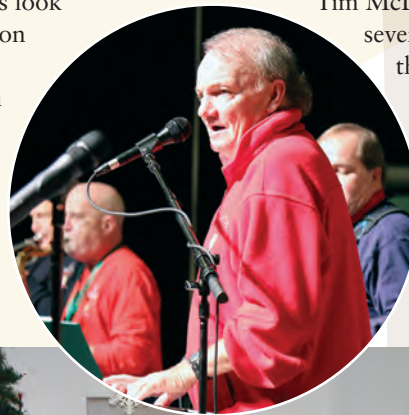
Holiday Express, an all-volunteer music group, has been coming to Matheny since 2001 to present a "rocking" annual holiday

concert, as well as food, holiday gifts, and a spirit of fun and festivity. The group includes 150 rock, jazz, folk, gospel, and pop musicians who volunteer their time, as well as 2,000 additional volunteers who help make the festivities happen. Holiday Express performs about 100 free concerts each holiday season. Members of the Matheny Choir often join Holiday Express musicians on stage for several performance numbers during their annual concert on the Peapack campus, and also at the annual Holiday Express Benefit Concert at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) in Newark.

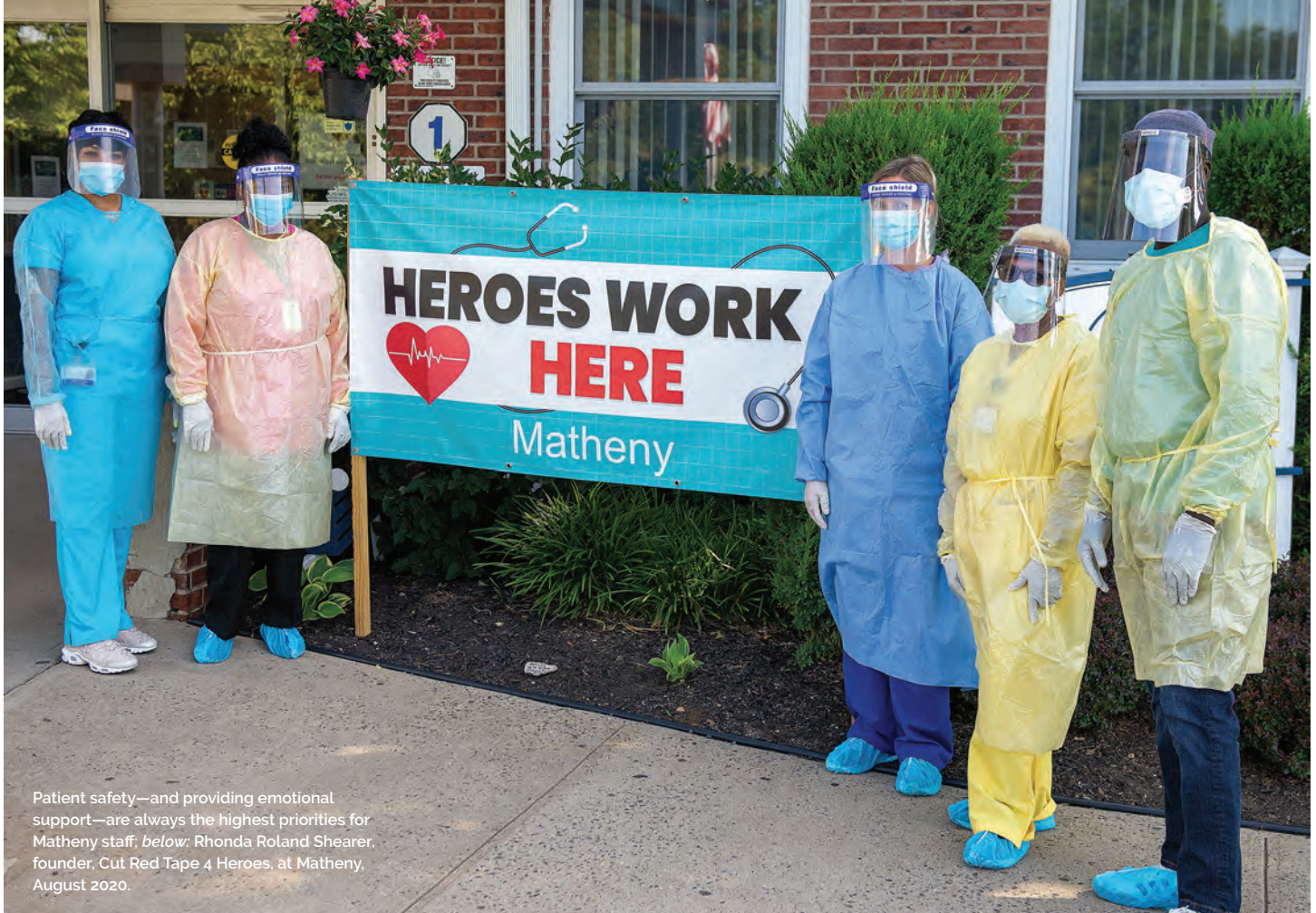
Tim McCloone's love of music and a desire to "help those in need and often forgotten" were the driving forces behind his creation of Holiday Express in 1993. He also performs with his 11-piece band,

Tim McCloone and the Shirleys, at several of the 12 restaurants

that he owns and operates. The Matheny Choir, led by Matheny's Music Therapy Department, sang on stage at McCloone's induction ceremony into the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2019.



CARS volunteers have hosted an annual holiday party at Matheny for almost 50 years; inset: Matheny Choir members are often invited to perform with Tim McCloone's volunteer band at area concerts



Patient safety—and providing emotional support—are always the highest priorities for Matheny staff; below: Rhonda Roland Shearer, founder, Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes, at Matheny, August 2020.

When COVID-19 Came to Matheny

When COVID-19 swooped into NJ in March 2020, many institutions were caught unprepared. But not Matheny. Its “outbreak plan,” which had been put in place years earlier and which all staff members are familiar with, proved to be highly effective. With so many residents particularly vulnerable to the annual flu threat, as well as other highly transmissible respiratory infections, Matheny staff are always vigilant and take immediate steps to stop potential spread, and supply closets are always stocked with the needed supplies.

But COVID-19 was an unusual adversary, and keeping residents and staff safe necessitated an extraordinary quantity of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other health care supplies. The word went out that Matheny was running low on PPE, and families and other donors answered the call with even more generosity and support than usual. Donors gave generously to the COVID-19 Emergency Fund, which was used to underwrite the purchase of additional PPE and supplies to protect staff and patients, as well as

upgrading Matheny’s WiFi, to ensure that families and friends of Matheny’s residents could always keep in touch via Facetime, Zoom, and email.

Donors, including residents of Peapack-Gladstone and neighboring towns, as well as area businesses, gathered and delivered personal protective equipment to Matheny when it was almost impossible to find, brought food and supplies, and kept up everyone’s spirits with their concern, and special attentions, including the Parade of Heroes and the chalked message on the sidewalks celebrating the staff. Of course, Matheny’s Board of Trustees and the Matheny School Board provided the leadership that helped to guide everyone through these tough times.

In August 2020, healthcare workers at Matheny received about \$20,000 worth of free PPE from Cut Red Tape 4 Heroes. This New York City-based initiative puts PPE directly in the hands of frontline workers in hospitals, nursing homes, and other long-term care facilities, which have been struggling to keep up with the demand during the COVID-19 crisis. As of



September 2021, the nonprofit distributed more than 16 million items of PPE to 1.5 million workers.

Time and again, residents and staff have benefited from the incredible generosity of Matheny’s community of volunteers and donors. This ongoing support has made all the difference to the individuals who call Matheny home and the staff who ensure their well-being every day, even during the toughest moments of a global epidemic.

The Beat Goes On

Matheny in 2021 is many things to many people. The wide scope of services offered today could not have been imagined by Marguerite and Walter Matheny in 1946. But Matheny at 75 reflects the philosophy inherent on its opening day—to provide to each individual in its care whatever that person needs to develop to their fullest potential.



Group home residents Bari-Kim Goldrosen and Chet Cheeseman with Group Home Manager Wilner Cenophat (center)

COMMUNITY RESIDENCES

Living More Independently

Thirty adults with multiple complex developmental disabilities live in Matheny’s five group homes in Somerset, Sussex and Warren counties. For all of them, it’s a dream come true.

Shared housing helps residents live more independently and enriches their lives in many ways—interacting with each other in a home setting, meeting neighbors, volunteering and becoming involved

in community activities, and attending Matheny’s adult day programs.

Keeping a group home running 24 hours a day is complicated. Direct Support Professionals assist clients with all of the activities of daily living, administer oral medications, do general housekeeping, and sometimes drive clients to medical and dental appointments and recreational activities. Each group home has a nurse, and a manager who schedules and coordinates the activities of residents and staff. The manager chats frequently with

residents, problem-solves on their behalf, and keeps in touch with families. Two new, long-awaited group homes in Far Hills are slated to open in 2022.

ADULT SERVICES

Keeping Life Interesting

Matheny’s Adult Services program assists those 21 and older to attain their highest level of independent functioning. It includes five group homes (two more are under construction) and two adult learning centers—one in Hillsborough and one on its Peapack campus.

The Adult Learning Center at Hillsborough is a second home to more than 40 participants, all in wheelchairs, who come to the Center to participate in full days of classes and other activities. A variety of sports and exercise options are popular, promoting greater independence and self-confidence, as well as being fun. Spasticity is an issue for many clients, but staff find a unique way for each client to enjoy their sports of choice.

The Center frequently adds new offerings to keep things interesting. Clients especially enjoy the technology/computer lab, equipped with 14 computers and six iPads with special switches and assistive technology, so that each person can function independently. An instructor works with clients on-site and also goes to group homes to help with technology needs.

Yoga, meditation, and sensory stimulation; group exercise; and writing, dance, choreography, painting, and digital art through Matheny’s Arts Access program, are offered. Add to that an “alternate positioning class,” where staff get clients out of their wheelchairs and onto giant bean bags and low physical therapy mats; a power wheelchair-driving group; cooking classes; a self-advocacy group; and more. Clients choose their own program schedule.

ARTS ACCESS

Artists at Work

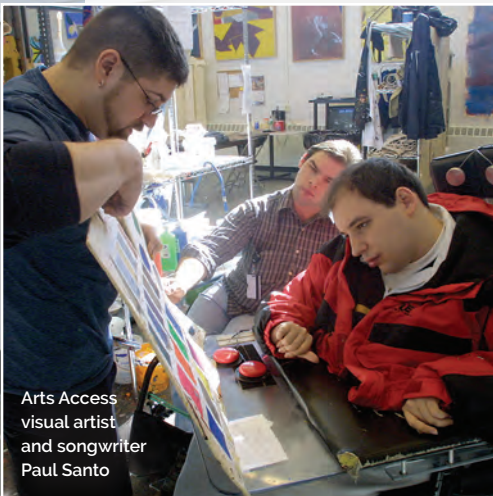
The Arts Access program, established in 1993, gives individuals with complex disabilities the opportunity to create fine art, using innovative techniques and processes. These artists work “side by side” with staff members called “facilitators,” artists in their own right who serve as the clients’ arms and legs. The clients are adults who use wheelchairs, have limited range of motion, and are often nonverbal.

Most artists provide directives to the facilitators through computer-driven communication devices; boards with words, pictures, and numbers; eye movements; and head motions. The facilitator asks questions in a yes or no format, and the client responds.

The artists make all the choices, from paint color to the steps of a newly choreographed dance. The facilitators maintain “neutrality” throughout the creative process, never criticizing or judging the artists’ choices, or even making suggestions.

The program’s founders and early developers were Matheny President Robert Schonhorn and Medical Director Dr. Gabor Barabas and the first director of Arts Access, SuzAnne Barabas. The Schonhorn Arts Center, which opened on Matheny’s campus in 2000, quickly became home to Arts Access, providing workshop, performance, and exhibition space and the opportunity to meet and interact with other artists. What started as a visual arts

program has expanded over the years to include digital art, digital sculpture, a dance and drama program, and creative writing. Since Spring 2020, individuals can participate in Arts Access via Zoom.



Arts Access
visual artist
and songwriter
Paul Santo



Full Circle 2018
dance performance:
Then & Now





Left: Todd Deremer, Hillsborough Adult Learning Center program coordinator; right: Matheny patient Michael Taurozzi with nurse Arlene Carreon.

They also go out into the community to shop, have a restaurant lunch, and do volunteer work, including a disability awareness program for young children. If there’s a need or an interest, the Center runs with it. During COVID-19 lockdown, in-person activities were replaced by a wide variety of popular virtual programs.

MEDICAL AND NURSING Staying Healthy

The licensing of Matheny as a “special hospital” by the New Jersey Department of Health in 1972—and its designation as a special hospital by the American Hospital Association in 1978—greatly increased its recognition and scope of service. The hospital’s three units currently provide long-term care for 101 children and adults with medically complex developmental disabilities. About 40 of these children attend The Matheny School.

Many patients have cerebral palsy as one of their primary diagnoses, although patients can have up to 10 diagnoses, requiring sophisticated, highly skilled medi-

cal and nursing care. Many get nutrition through feeding tubes; respiratory and seizure disorders are common; and patients are very vulnerable to infectious diseases. In addition, patients often have atypical presentations of disease patterns.

Most Matheny nurses like the long-term care aspect of their jobs, working closely with patients, families, other caregivers, and school personnel to coordinate care over a period of years. Nurses learn to communicate well with nonverbal patients and often pick up small changes that may indicate larger problems.

While most parents want their child with developmental disabilities to live at home, sometimes they can no longer take care of an adult-size teen or young adult, or one whose condition has worsened. With Matheny’s sophisticated medical and nursing care, patients often have normal life expectancies.

Matheny’s Vice President of Patient Care and Safety, and Chief Medical Officer and Safety Officer, serves as administrator for all patient care services, including medical, nursing, rehabilitative, and therapeutic services, and psychological care. In addition, this physician-

administrator ensures quality care and patient safety, clinical competency of the staff, and directs fiscal management of the hospital.

In 2020, the hospital again earned The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for Hospital Accreditation, demonstrating continuous compliance with its performance standards and Matheny’s commitment to safe, high quality patient care.

REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY Going the Extra Mile

The Matheny Wheelchair and Assistive Technology Clinic is the place where new wheelchair users—and those with new or changing needs—come to be evaluated, fitted, and trained to use their equipment by highly skilled professionals. The clinic also specializes in associated devices for those with complex physical disabilities.

NJ licensed occupational therapists and physical therapists, certified as assistive technology practitioners and seating mobility specialists, work alongside



AT THE WORKSHOP

Making Unique Wheelchairs

In the 1980s, Matheny's newly developing rehabilitation technology program was part of a growing national movement to make independent living more possible for those with disabilities. Over the years, this workshop has become renowned for creating exceptional wheelchairs and other assistive devices.

While wheelchair manufacturers mass-produce seat cushions and back cushions, headrests, and other components, no single seating system comes out of the box and is OK for an individual with complex physical disabilities. The workshop compiles parts from multiple manufacturers to build a unique wheelchair, or sometimes fabricates some, or all, of the wheelchair's components.

Patients with serious associated clinical conditions, such as vision and hearing deficits, seizure disorders, and dysphagia, may require special wheelchair-features. Also, conditions change over time, often impacting the wheelchair's comfort and functionality.

The workshop is really a small manufacturing plant, where skilled technicians do any accommodation that's needed. The shop also does repairs—quickly whenever possible—recognizing that to be without your wheelchair for even a day may necessitate staying in bed, since clients often cannot swap out another wheelchair. Staff also invent wheelchair pieces to fill new, as-yet unfulfilled needs.

Patrick McCarthy repairs a client's wheelchair.

durable medical equipment suppliers with explicit knowledge of the newest device parts. Taking care of each client involves a many-step process requiring input from multiple sources.

The clinic serves Matheny's residents and students, as well as outpatients, including those who have incurred severe accidental injuries or stroke, or have progressive neurological or muscular disease.

Since each client presents unique challenges, the approach is highly individualized. Ensuring proper analysis, fitting, delivery, and training in the use and care of manual and power wheelchairs, and custom seating support systems, are a

big part of the work. While some individuals can operate a power wheelchair with a standard joystick control, others need alternative controls. Matheny's high-end molding machine can fine-tune seat cushions and back rests to wrap more comfortably around a client's body. Clients can also try out a wide array of devices, including special needs car seats, that support independence and all of the individual's daily activities.

Clockwise from top left: Kevin McCormick, director of rehabilitation technology, a Matheny employee for 44 years; DME technician Tizazu Alamrew, one of the highly skilled workshop staff who build unique wheelchairs; Assistive Technology team members with patient Anthony Santia (center, deceased)



THE THERAPIES

Enhancing Independence, Well-being, Quality of Life

The world of therapy at Matheny—including physical, occupational, speech, recreation, and music—builds and preserves the functioning, abilities, and happiness of clients. Individuals with developmental disabilities want to participate and excel just like those who are able-bodied. Matheny supports them to try new experiences—with a highly skilled team of therapists at their side.

Therapists help clients maximize their participation in everything they do, including their own personal care and moving through their environment with the least restriction possible. All goals take teamwork and include families as part of the team. Therapists also work alongside doctors and other clinicians in the clinics, sharing what they see day to day, and often attending outside medical appointments.

Physical therapy keeps people moving and functioning—and is a high priority in the care plan for clients, many of whom have had limited mobility from birth. At Matheny, the primary focus is on wheelchairs, how clients sit and move in them, how they get out of them, and also how they move after they get out of their wheelchairs. PTs working in Matheny's school focus on how children function within the school environment. For adults in Matheny's hospital, the focus is more on bed positioning, showering, and sleeping at night. PTs team-up with other therapies to problem-solve for each client. Patients and staff tend to stay at Matheny a long time, which allows PTs to see patients grow and their mobility improve, as well as to understand potential issues and challenges that clients may face.

Occupational therapy concentrates more on upper extremity motions and fine motor skills, employing the therapeutic use of daily activities. Matheny OTs use assistive technology, adaptive equipment, and therapeutic positioning and handling.

For elementary school students, occupational therapists work in the classroom



Christ Redeemer Statue
 Located in Brazil, Christ the Redeemer is a statue in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil that was built as a symbol of Brazilian Christianity. In 1850, the idea of building a religious monument was first suggested by a Catholic Priest. It wasn't until 1920 when a group petitioned for support to build a landmark statue that it became a reality. The design was chosen from several ideas and construction began in the 1920s, taking nine years to finish. Christ the Redeemer is the largest art deco statue in the world. It is 98 feet tall (not including the 26 foot pedestal), and the arms stretch to 92 feet wide. The statue weighs approximately 635 tonnes. Christ the Redeemer is located in the Tijuca Forest National Forest, at the top of the Corcovado Mountain.

Located in Jordan, the capital city was built around the tomb of King Aretas IV. The city is known for its Roman Era architecture and the pink stone used in its buildings.

Mayflower

THE MATHENY SCHOOL
It's Where It All Began

A history of Matheny is first and foremost a history of the Matheny School. Founded in 1946, it started out with 3 students and 3 staff members. Since that time, it has grown in so many ways.

The school accepts students ages 3 to 21. Silence is not a virtue here; communication is a top priority. Teachers engage students to learn subject matter, and, at least equally important, to work toward their maximum level of independence. Physical, occupational, speech, and music therapies are threaded through the curriculum, which is based on the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Despite often-tough challenges, teachers devise activities that capture students' attention, and help them achieve specific and measurable goals. Teachers also collect data to measure the success of the programs.

Developing practical skills is also a priority, including activities of daily living. Technology, including SMART Boards and Tables, iPads, iMacs, Powerbooks, and HP-Touch computers, spur students' abilities and confidence. Various communication devices allow nonverbal students to build vocabulary and express thoughts more effectively. The newest and best assistive technology is seamlessly integrated into the lives of the students.

Parents participate in the school's planning processes and often contribute to curriculum design. Staff and parents communicate often, and the classroom doors are open to public school districts wanting to partner with Matheny staff. Like any U.S. school, this one prepares students for adulthood with skills and abilities to see them into their future.





Clients benefit from a spectrum of therapies. *clockwise from top left*: occupational therapy; speech therapy; music therapy; recreation therapy; physical therapy

directly with the teacher, addressing fine motor skills, visual perception, and other skills necessary for academic success. Children who can't hold a crayon, for instance, can be fitted with a functional hand splint with a holder for crayons, markers, or stylus. For those using iPads, wheelchairs can be fitted with an iPad holder and special switches. OTs teach students to access those special switches.

An interdisciplinary team including OTs takes children out of their wheelchairs to work on motor skills, functional skills, and communication. After high school graduation, clients continue to work with OTs and other therapists to achieve greater independence. OTs collaborate with Rehabilitation Engineering to create new devices to better patients' lives.

Speech therapy focuses on communication, hearing, and dysphagia needs. For those who are nonverbal, the struggle to communicate is constant.

Speech therapy always employs a team approach. Communication devices and equipment are of no use if the client cannot access them with hands, feet, head, or another part of the body and that comes under occupational therapy. Communication devices range from low tech to high tech, according to the client's ability to use the device.

Dysphagia, difficulty swallowing, puts individuals at risk of aspiration pneumonia. Speech therapists and OTs determine different positioning, equipment, and strategies for feeding to minimize risk. Some clients receive nutrition, hydration,

and medications through a G-tube in order to maintain safety.

Matheny's speech therapists are highly specialized in augmentative communication and dysphagia. Most clients are independent users of communication devices. They employ words, pictures, and combinations of both to communicate their message, or sometimes, just to say "hi" to their peers. Many carry iPads everywhere they go.

Recreation therapy, aimed at enhancing client-functioning, and leisure activities, providing social and community interaction and supporting interests outside of Matheny, link clients most closely with the outside world. Feeling connected to the community is a major priority for

those who have often been sidelined by mobility and communication difficulties.

The department offers a long list of activities—baseball, track and field, bowling, bocce, golf, yoga, surfing, kayaking, adaptive bicycling, karate, swimming, water skiing, adaptive ice skating, skiing, and snow tubing, as well as shopping, restaurant lunches, concerts, theater, sporting events, the annual prom, and campouts and overnight trips to Wildwood and the Poconos.

Recreation therapy also helps clients use a power wheelchair, get on and off a van lift, navigate sidewalks, use automatic door openers, order food in a restaurant, and shop using money skills to make a purchase. A major goal is to integrate clients back into the community, help prepare them to live in group homes, and maximize their independence.

Prior to COVID-19, recreation therapists organized 20 trips a month, including the most talked-about adventure—four days in Disney for a small group of school-age kids (underwritten by The Friends of Matheny).

Music Therapy is one of the newer disciplines. Research has determined that music affects every lobe and both hemispheres of the brain. No matter where the brain is damaged, the person is still able to benefit from therapy attached to music. At Matheny, music therapy is specific to each client, working on social and motor skills, self-expression, and group participation. For those with communication issues, it offers an avenue to express something and be heard. In addition, music often lessens anxiety.

The department also conducts relaxation training, involving different breathing techniques, guided imagery, and progressive muscle relaxation. This co-treatment with physical therapy gets clients out of their wheelchairs and into alternative positioning equipment in the sensory room.

The department's vocal choir presents concerts at Matheny, and also out in the community, several times each year. Pulling a concert together calls upon a variety of complex skills of clients and also brings joy to many audiences.

Dietary, Direct Support Professionals, Finance, Housekeeping, Human Resources, Operations, more

It certainly takes “all hands on deck” to run a community as complex, busy, and productive as Matheny.

Feeding everyone; cleaning everywhere; keeping the campus buildings in good shape and all equipment up and running; choosing, training, and retaining the right people to do the jobs, and making sure those jobs are covered 24–7; keeping the grounds beautiful; transporting everyone to their daily activities; raising and managing the funds; responding around-the-clock to the unique needs of each resident; communicating with families; ensuring everyone's safety; keeping the technology up-to-date and running. The number and

complexity of tasks seems overwhelming, but all are carried out flawlessly each day.

Direct support professionals are central to the ongoing life of Matheny. As the department's director says so well: “They do for the patient whatever the patient cannot do for him- or herself. If not for them, that patient could be lying in bed all day.” With great warmth and caring, they take care of Matheny's hospital and group home residents 24 hours a day.

What more can we say? Every person counts at Matheny; it is the teamwork on behalf of every client that continues to make Matheny so “special” in so many ways.



In My Own

What are people saying about Matheny?
What have they said in the past?
Patients, staff, family, and volunteers
tell what makes Matheny the
unique entity it is, and how it
has impacted their lives.

RESIDENTS, STUDENTS, FAMILY

"I'll never forget the first day I brought him here. I was so afraid to leave my special child in the care of strangers. But these strangers quickly became the people who would change his life and our lives. A child who could barely eat began to slowly learn how to swallow. A child with very limited gross motor skills began to learn how to move. A child with no fine motor skills began to learn to pick up his own food. And then, on Christmas Day 2008, Ryan stood up and began to walk, completely unassisted, through our home."

Debbie O'Connor, parent of Matheny student
Ryan O'Connor, 2013

"When you meet someone with a severe disability, it's hard to imagine what their quality of life would be. But Matheny has provided my brother Andy with an exceptional quality of life for many years, for which we are forever thankful. What continues to amaze me is the creativity at Matheny that enables people like Andy to have as normal a life as possible."

Justin Lash, brother of Andy Lash, a Matheny resident since 1977. Andy turned 50 in 2021.



Scott and Julie Gordon

"These kids are so vulnerable. Emergencies can come on so quickly, and you have to react so fast. There's no doubt that our son is alive because of the dedicated and amazing staff here at Matheny."

Edana Desatnick, parent of Matheny School graduate Bryan, and a long-time Matheny Board of Trustees member and former Board Co-chair

The teachers bring real academics to the classroom and are a big part of what sets Matheny apart. There is a philosophy here that there's nothing these kids can't do and that's coupled with an amazing sense of warmth."

Julie Gordon, parent of Matheny resident Scott Gordon, a Matheny School graduate

"Writing makes me feel free and good and it's good for my soul. Before I started writing, I didn't know what to do with some of my emotions. When I started writing, everything came together. When everything pushes me down, art pulls me right up."

Jessica Evans, longtime Matheny resident and multitalented Arts Access participant



Ellen Kane

"My paintings represent my happy personality. I always want to do beautiful paintings."

ELLEN KANE, LONGTIME ARTS ACCESS ARTIST

"One of my favorite classes is social studies. I like working with the social studies teacher and learning about different events that have happened around the world. I also like language arts class, learning new words and different stories. I also participated in transition class—it allowed me to experience different job sites."

Jaheem, 2019 graduate of The Matheny School

"I fondly remember how Chuck used to come to the dining room for his meals. He had his own special table and chair. He loved eating with the children and had a special bond with the young ones. He always wanted everyone to be comfortable here. It was our home and he always wanted Matheny to feel like home."

Cindy Shanks, Matheny resident for more than 30 years

"I first came to Matheny when I was 8½. I was very homesick and had never been away from home. Chuck took me out of my chair and put me on his lap and said 'How's my girl?' That made me feel more comfortable being here. I knew him when he had hair—real, black hair. Congratulations on your 75th birthday Mr. Matheny. Holy cow!"

Cheryl Chapin, Group home resident

"Chuck, you are a very nice man. Thank you and your family for having this school. Without you, Matheny would not be around. We wouldn't have group homes. We wouldn't have flowers growing in the gardens. We wouldn't have so many staff who are so loving and caring. Thank you for making me laugh. Laughter is the best medicine. You don't have to call a doctor for it."

Tammy Hepner, longtime Matheny resident and Arts Access participant



"If you're thinking of adopting a developmentally disabled child, go with your heart. It felt right to me. When my parents met George, they fell in love and he immediately became part of the family."

MATHENY PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANT **DONNA HOEHN**, WHO ADOPTED MATHENY RESIDENT **GEORGE**, NOW IN HIS 20s, WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG CHILD



Donna Hoehn and son George

STAFF, LEADERS, VOLUNTEERS

"The people you meet at Matheny—from teachers to bus drivers to kids—everyone touches your heart. Matheny is my favorite place to be. You can be feeling horrible about something when you walk in, but just being there humbles you and puts everything in perspective."

Debra DeLorenzo, volunteer



Debra DeLorenzo

"Chuck was educated here; grew into adulthood and made good friends here; served as a role model and mentor for our students and patients. He demonstrated to others how to live a full life, how to be joyful and how to be an integral part of a community while living with developmental disabilities."

Kendell Sprott, Matheny President, 2015 to March 2021

"It was the intention of Walter and Marguerite to, and I quote, 'take the children as far as they can go.' And today that same mission is the one Matheny pursues."

Robert Schonhorn, Matheny President 1989–1998

"Creativity here is not squelched. If you have an idea, you can go with it. Matheny gives you the opportunity to try things. I also appreciate that therapists work in the classroom. Collaboration among the teacher, therapist, and administration means we can create the programs that provide the best outcome for student progress."

Darlene Tammara, longtime teacher at The Matheny School

"What do I look for in a new hire? Someone who is patient, caring, and compassionate. This job is all about caring."

Peter Longa, Matheny employee for more than 25 years, Director of Direct Support Professionals



"My days at Matheny are awesome. It's like family here. You really bond with the patients. We're a team. In team building, every job is counted and respected because every department is highly needed."

Weyatta Golafaly, Direct Support Professional since 2006

"During the worst times, we sometimes see the best in humanity. Our staff made people laugh; they were a calming presence when needed; sometimes they sang a quiet song to soothe someone; they found ways to give our residents, and other staff members, a reason to smile."

Dan Balboni, Director of Psychological and Social Services for Matheny Hospital and group homes, about the COVID-19 lockdown period

November 2, 1956,

Mr. Matheny,

About a year ago, from Charlotte, North Carolina, I answered an ad for employment in a New Jersey School for Cerebral Palsied Children. I had not been trained to work with handicapped children nor had I particularly planned to leave my home. I was certified to teach in the public schools of North Carolina, however, since I am a Negro, I found it difficult to find a job where I could use my training to best advantage.

Because of your liberal view on equal rights, Mr. Matheny, I have advanced from the attendant staff to assistant in occupational therapy and now to the teaching staff.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity that you have afforded me.

Sincerely yours,

Flossie McIlwaine

"Because of your liberal view on equal rights, Mr. Matheny, I have advanced... to the teaching staff."

FLOSSIE MCILWAINE

Wilner Cenophat works with a student in the 1980s



"The feeling you get when you solve a problem for them—it's really rewarding. The best feeling for me is when the day is over and I am going over things in my mind, and I know that the clients have had a good day. This is their house. This is their home. And their accomplishment is my accomplishment."

Wilner Cenophat, Franklin Group Home Manager, Matheny employee since 1983

"When I come to the door of Matheny, I leave all my fears behind and I put a smile on my face. I know the patients need that. We needed to show even more love for patients during this time."

Hyacinth Wright, a Direct Support Professional, has worked at Matheny Hospital since 2011, speaking about the COVID-19 lockdown period

"You have to be flexible. No two days are ever the same. And you have to be able to work in a team. And, above all, you need to be a caring person, and you need patience."

Brenda Hoagland, retired Direct Support Professional supervisor, Matheny employee for more than 4 decades

"We've studied animals and states of America, using maps and learning new information. Students participated in music trivia quizzes and created comic strips. They wrote poems, read books and discussed them, and have taken virtual tours all over the world. The clients love the virtual classes, they can see each other, and I can see them. They don't feel so isolated."

Jonathan Riano, instructor, Adult Learning Center at Hillsborough, speaking about Zoom classes during COVID-19 lockdown

"We always want to make the patients happy. We are all in this together. We don't want anyone to ever feel they are alone."

Toyin Akinpeloye, Direct Support Professional Supervisor who has worked on Matheny Hospital's Yellow Zone for more than 15 years

"The Matheny's gift to us was their compassion for people with special needs. That compassion is still at the very heart and soul of how care is provided today."

STEVE PROCTOR, MATHENY PRESIDENT, 1998–2014

"We were part of a growing movement to make independent living more possible."

Kevin McCormick, Director of Rehabilitation Engineering and a 44-year Matheny employee, joined Matheny's newly established rehabilitation technology program in 1986

"We are strong supporters of Matheny and its compassionate mission. We are proud to live in a town that Matheny also calls home. Life is a tough enough enterprise even for the healthy, but for those suffering with a variety of illnesses and disorders, life can be cruel and discouraging. Matheny selflessly offers care, guidance, and love for those with debilitating maladies."

Bill Simpson, volunteer, 2020

"Volunteering at Matheny is really an excuse for me to get back to this special place where my son was a student.

The moment I walk through the doors each month with my sweet therapy dog, Sugar, I'm surrounded by positive, welcoming staff, teachers, therapists, and nurses. There's no better feeling than seeing Sugar bring a smile to a student's face, but honestly, being surrounded by the students and staff at Matheny lifts MY spirits just as much."

Katie Harter, volunteer





faces of



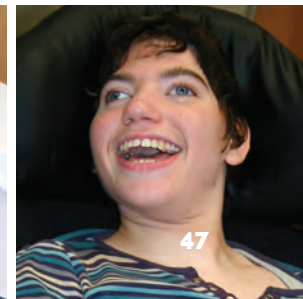


“I do not live with my handicap. I live with my spirit.”

CHUCK MATHENY



matheny



compassion
integrity
professionalism
respect



We Look to the **Future**

Matheny's future will build upon its many past accomplishments. The challenge will be to preserve what's best while simultaneously carving out new vistas that ensure Matheny's longevity and benefit its clients.

CEO Bill Kent—with input from all Matheny staff—is leading the strategic planning process that is building a 5-year plan. “I am committed to creating the best possible environment for all colleagues to do exceptional work on behalf of our clients and their families,” says Kent.

“Our mission is to provide exceptional care and optimal quality of life for children and adults with special needs and medically complex developmental disabilities; our vision is to be the recognized model of excellence in the field of developmental disabilities; and our core values are compassion, integrity, professionalism, and respect.” These principles will guide Matheny as it moves toward a very promising future.

It's always a joy to acknowledge those who contribute to making a project successful. We happily acknowledge the following:

All employees for the past 75 years, who have always been the heart and soul of Matheny and who care for everyone like family;

Every patient and student who has passed through Matheny's doors. You continue to be the motivation that keeps Matheny ticking;

The many volunteers and donors, who have brought such joy and quality of life to the individuals who call Matheny home and their families;

The Board of Trustees, and Matheny's presidents and CEOs, who have always provided strong leadership and a clear path to the future;

Brooke Goode, whose outstanding in-depth research for *On Top of the Hill*, the publication commemorating Matheny's first 60 years, provided much of the historical information that made this current publication possible;

Madeline Borman, author of the 1979 history of The Matheny School, entitled *How Far!*, who researched and preserved historical details of the early years that might otherwise have been lost;

And the team who collaborated on this 75th anniversary publication: Iveth Mosquera, director of marketing and PR; Gail Cunningham, PR coordinator and photo editor; Sheila Johnston Sherer, graphic designer; Eve Jacobs, writer/editor; Keith B. Bratcher, Jr., principal photographer



matheny

enriching lives. growing abilities.

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www.matheny.org

“I feel deeply that it was God’s plan that I have cerebral palsy to give my parents the willpower to build a school where I and others would have a chance to see how independent we could become.”

CHUCK MATHENY

SON OF WALTER AND MARGUERITE MATHENY

