mathenymatters

Fall • Winter 2026



MATHENY AT 80

Empathy Creates Loving Bonds



Nancy Hamstra
President and CEO

Message from the CEO

This fall, we celebrate a remarkable milestone—Matheny's 80th anniversary. This special edition of *Matheny Matters* honors eight decades of care, education, creativity, and community, made possible by generations of people who believe in the potential of every individual.

Since its founding in 1946, Matheny has been guided by a deeply personal commitment: to provide exceptional care and enhance the quality of life for children and adults with medically complex developmental disabilities. While our programs and services have evolved, that commitment remains at the heart of everything we do.

Our anniversary is a celebration of the people who bring our mission to life. It is reflected in the determination of a student learning a new skill, the pride of an artist sharing an original work, and the trust a family places in our care. It is also evident in the daily dedication of our employees, whose expertise and compassion create opportunities for those we serve.

As President and CEO, I am proud to be part of this community and grateful to those who have shaped Matheny's history. Our families, employees, trustees, volunteers, donors, and community partners have each contributed to a legacy that continues to make a meaningful difference.

Throughout this issue, you will find stories that connect our past with our present and remind us why our work matters. As we honor that history, we also look ahead. Our responsibility is to build on this strong foundation—supporting our workforce, strengthening our programs, and responding thoughtfully to the changing needs of individuals and families.

Thank you for being part of Matheny's story. Your support helps ensure that the promise that inspired our founding continues to guide our future.

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Peter Njenga, longtime Direct Support Professional, with Matheny resident Jacob Rolaf

Photo by Keith B. Bratcher, Jr.

matheny
80th anniversary • 1946–2026



Paul Frascella and his sister Karen Frascella, a resident of a Matheny group home

"For a quarter century, Matheny has given Karen expert care, meaningful days, and a community that knows and loves her. It has given my family peace of mind and let us simply be her family again. Our family's gratitude runs deep."

Message from the Board Chair

My connection to Matheny began more than 55 years ago, when my family searched for a place to care for my sister, Karen. At the time, her medical needs were too complex for Matheny to take on. Thirty years later, when we could no longer care for Karen at home, we came back and found a different Matheny. It had grown to serve people with far more complex medical needs and Karen moved into a Matheny group home.

That evolution changed our lives. For a quarter century, Matheny has given Karen expert care, meaningful days and a community that knows and loves her. It has given my family peace of mind and let us simply be her family again.

Our family's gratitude runs deep. Much of it goes to the people of Matheny: the direct care professionals, nurses, therapists, teachers, facilities and administrative staff whose skill and devotion shape Karen's life every day.

Their example is why I give my time, talent and energy to Matheny as Board Chair.

At Matheny, we focus on a person's abilities, not their disability. For 80 years, we have risen to meet greater needs. I hope Matheny remains strong and independent for the next 80 years and beyond, so that every person like Karen has a place to thrive and every family like mine has a place to trust.

With gratitude,
Paul Frascella
Chair, Board of Trustees



Congressional Visit

Congressman Tom Kean, Jr, recently entered an official tribute into the Congressional Record recognizing Matheny for its 80 years of distinguished service to the community and its enduring impact on students, patients, and families. Representative Kean also visited the Matheny campus to present a copy of the record and a flag from the capital. Use this QR code to see the official tribute honoring Matheny on its 80th anniversary.

In the Spotlight

Vincent Barba, MD, Matheny's Chief Medical and Safety Officer and VP of Patient Care and Safety, recently spoke with Senior Correspondent Jacqui Tricarico on public television's *One on One with Steve Adubato* show. The discussion focused on the barriers faced in healthcare by people with disabilities and how Matheny works to fill that gap.

Barba also recently published an article entitled "The Nexus of Biotechnology and Quality Healthcare" in *Life Sciences Review*, exploring how biotechnology, AI, precision medicine, and digital health can advance healthcare while emphasizing quality, patient safety, measurable outcomes, and responsible governance. He explains: "The true measure of success is not the sophistication of the technology itself, but whether it demonstrably reduces harm, improves outcomes, enhances patient experience and delivers safer, higher-quality care for every patient."



The Matheny VP was recently appointed as an Associate Board Member of the New Jersey Healthcare Financial Management Association, and was honored by the New Jersey Hospital Association with this year's Distinguished Service Award.

Dental Health Podcast

The latest Matheny podcast features a conversation with Melanie Hunt, DMD, general dentist at Matheny. She discusses dental health and the importance of quality dental care for individuals with disabilities, as well as how to find a dentist who can provide care for special needs patients. You can access the full podcast on Matheny's YouTube Channel using the handle **@TheMatheny Medical**.



Golfing for Matheny





The Somerset Hills Masonic Lodge No.163 recently presented a $7,000 check to Matheny. The funds come from the group's first annual charity golf outing, held in July, at the New Jersey National Golf Club in Basking Ridge.

"I was speaking with a few of the Lodge members and before we knew it, we had the formation of a golf outing on paper. One month later we had our first 20 golfers and sponsors. We ended up with 90 golfers and a worthy donation for Matheny," commented Lodge President Rob Colatarci.

"The people of Matheny helped to make the event exceptional. Thank you to Matheny, the sponsors, golfers, individuals, and businesses that donated prizes, and the good people at NJ National. We are already setting the date for next year's outing," added Al LiCata, Community Director of the Lodge.

New Technology for the Classroom



An $8,000 grant from The Summit Foundation purchased two smartboards for use at Matheny School. The large electronic whiteboards—mounted at the front of a classroom—are touch-sensitive. Users can write on them with a finger or special stylus. These boards are also interactive, allowing shared screens, even from a remote location, thereby increasing teacher-student interaction and enhancing collaboration among students.

Established in 1972, The Summit Foundation awards hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to support local human services, senior care, education, disability programs, the arts, and public space enhancements.

CHRISTOPHER & DANA REEVE FOUNDATION
TODAY'S CARE. TOMORROW'S CURE.®

Playground for Fun and Learning

A $24,999 grant from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation has purchased new accessible playground equipment for the Matheny campus.

"The playground is not only a place for play, but also to learn," says Anne Bruno, principal of Matheny School. "Our teachers develop hands-on instruction that helps students study nature and participate in sensory experiences. These upgrades will strengthen those opportunities."















Philanthropy of the Heart

While many entities take off at a fast and furious pace, then sputter and eventually disappear, others grow bigger, stronger, and more effective over time. Matheny is clearly among this second group, establishing itself as an ever-growing and developing standout in its field over its 80 years of existence.

In 1946, as many who had served in the U.S. military returned home to settle down and establish their new peacetime lives, two educators took on the fight of their lives. Their objective—to raise sufficient funds to establish a school in New Jersey to provide an excellent education and welcoming environment for children with disabilities—has grown ever larger in scope over the years.

Walter Matheny, a U.S. Air Force civilian consultant, who had experience working with both disabled children and severely injured military personnel returning home, and his biology teacher wife, Marguerite Hughes Matheny, had never (in a million years) imagined that they would establish a pioneering school for children with disabilities. However, their son, Charles (Chuck) Hughes Matheny, was deprived of oxygen for a short time during a difficult birth in 1941, resulting in what we now know as cerebral palsy. In the 1940s, there was no place for children like Chuck in the public school system and few alternative education services were available. Little was understood at the time about the mental capacity and learning potential of children born with cerebral palsy.

After several years of searching for a school where they felt Chuck could learn and flourish, and not finding one anywhere that they thought acceptable, Walter and Marguerite Matheny took matters into their own hands and began their decades-long undertaking with a $3,000 GI loan. And so, the amazing story of the step-by-step, brick-by-brick, and dollar-by-dollar building of the Matheny organization began. From a school for just a few young children held in a leased building, it has grown into a renowned educational, medical, and arts entity, encompassing a specialized residential hospital and outpatient medical services with practitioners who are highly skilled in the care of this population, as well as an array of adult programs and seven freestanding adult community residences.

Walter developed into a consummate fundraiser, learned from his chosen mentors in the medical field and beyond, and networked to establish tight bonds with many individuals and groups who donated generously to help realize the couple's vision. Marguerite took on the day-to-day oversight of the children in their care, ensuring they were educated like their public-school counterparts while living in a safe and loving "home" like their son, Chuck.

Matheny became a second home to many children, and an only home to some; and a few residents, now in their 60s, grew up with the school and are still living in Matheny's facilities, whether on the Peapack campus or in off-campus group residences. They have been fortunate enough to be a part of Matheny's development and successes for decades.

"It's really incredible," says William Barry Thomson, a local historian who grew up in Peapack. "I'm amazed that Walter and Marguerite Matheny had this vision and then managed to make it all happen," he comments.

It started with the founding of the Burnt Mills School for Paralysis Correction with less than a handful of students (including school-age Chuck Matheny) attending. Three years later, in 1949, the school had enough students

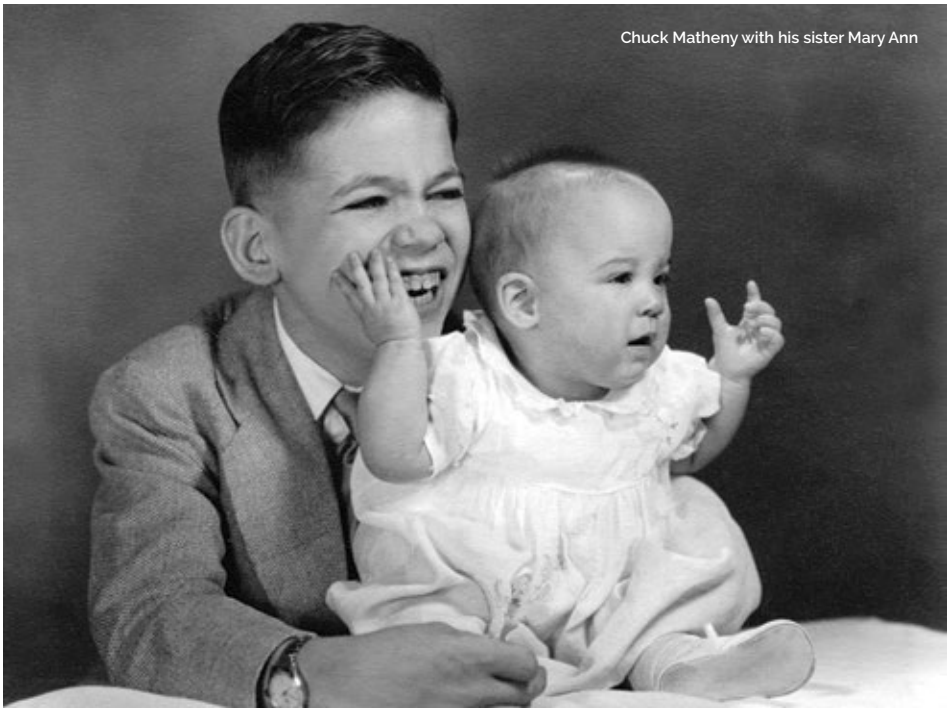
to support a move to larger quarters in Far Hills, and in 1954, the school opened in their new quarters on the Peapack campus.

The 1951 purchase of 38 acres "on the hill" in Peapack in Somerset County heralded the beginning of enormous growth for Matheny, according to Thomson. The school's student population increased; and over the years it grew to serve both residential and community-living students from kindergarten through graduation at age 21, with academic classes as well as physical, speech, occupational, recreation, and music therapies.

While many students only spent weekdays on campus for academic classes, the Matheny Hospital was founded to support children and adults with developmental disabilities and associated, complex medical conditions, providing them with 24-hour, highly specialized care. Outpatient services, including a much-needed dental clinic and wheelchair clinic and workshop, were established to serve both those residing at Matheny and in surrounding communities. Two Adult Services programs were developed to provide daily learning, leisure, and social experiences; and seven community residences—also called group homes—were founded to provide support to adults with developmental disabilities who do not require around-the-clock medical care.

The Arts Access program was launched in 1993, and the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center, a visually stunning addition to the Peapack campus, opened in 2000. The arts program has garnered widespread attention for its brilliant facilitation process to empower adults with disabilities to express their unique vision. And the artists themselves have earned widespread notice in the art world, with two exhibits at Sotheby's, New York, and many others in galleries, museums, and corporate headquarters around New Jersey and Manhattan.

Looking back over 80 years, it is truly amazing that a couple whose initial aspirations were very humble established the largest organization of its kind in New Jersey, and one of the most well-known and respected in the country. The impetus was to give Chuck every chance to live a full and happy life. Along the way, Walter and Marguerite Matheny made the same dream possible for hundreds of other children and adults, many with far more severe disabilities than their son.



Chuck Matheny with his sister Mary Ann

A Local Historian's Perspective

William Barry Thomson grew up as "the boy next door" to the Matheny School. His family purchased 50 acres of the original Blairsden Estate in 1950, and built a home there, giving him firsthand experience of members of the Matheny family during his childhood and teen years.

Thomson remembers visits to the Peapack campus where he met Chuck and his parents. "I could walk there easily," he says. He attended the local elementary school, and later Bernards High School, with Chuck's sister, Mary Ann, 11 years younger than Chuck and the same age as Thomson. His current focus on Matheny's history, in preparation for a recent on-campus slide presentation, has rekindled many personal memories.

"I can picture Chuck, always smiling," he says. "He had such a sunny disposition. Chuck was a happy man."

"He was very active around the campus—he had jobs to do," Thomson continues. "He spent all his life there." Chuck Matheny died in his own home on the Peapack campus in 2017 at age 76.

After earning a bachelor's degree at Drew University and then living and working in corporate administrative posts in Manhattan for several decades, Thomson returned to his first love, architectural history. He studied at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in the summer of 1996. Subsequently he has served as a consultant for management and corporate governance; as a trustee, director and officer of nonprofit organizations; and as a student, writer, and lecturer in historical preservation and architectural history. Thomson has done extensive research on the architectural history of Somerset County, his former home and where Matheny resides.

Thomson says that in 1951, the Walter D. Matheny School (now the Matheny Medical and Educational Center) purchased acreage at the top of the hill in Peapack, including the Blairsden Estates' original stable and carriage barn, and in December 1954 they opened the doors to their new school there. Other parcels

of the original 500 plus-acre estate have also been sold off, although much of the property has been kept intact.

Years later, Thomson was asked to sit on the Board of The Arc of New Jersey, the "State's largest organization advocating and serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families," according to its website. While on the Board, he helped produce a documentary film narrated by James Earl Jones, encouraging employers to consider those with disabilities for jobs. It's a subject he feels strongly about, likely inspired by his early introduction to the Matheny family and their mission.

"I was never uncomfortable around people with disabilities. They were just people," he says.

"There was no awkwardness," he continues. "Even as a kid, I didn't think anything of it."

Following his retirement from the corporate world, Thomson did extensive research into the local history of Somerset and Morris counties. This work resulted in the publication of two large volumes, entitled *New Jersey Country Houses: The Somerset Hills*, written and published with collaborator John (Jack) K. Turpin. "It was a lot of research and a labor of love," Thomson says, "a lot of work and a great joy."

A fascinating article on the history of Blairsden and the Blair Family by Thomson can be accessed on the Somerset Hills Historical Society website.

Mary Ann Matheny Bents

Another "eyewitness" to the day-to-day gradual but steady growth of Matheny was the newest addition to Marguerite and Walter's family. Chuck's adopted sister, Mary Ann, was born in September 1952. According to Mary Ann, she was "a three-pound preemie, and it took until mid-November for me to achieve 5 pounds, which was required to be released from the hospital."

The family stopped to buy clothing and other items for the baby on the way to pick her up from the hospital, and Chuck "helped to pick out the essentials. Obviously, the Matheny family had a soft spot not only for children with disabilities, but also for a tiny baby with a need for a family," Mary Ann tells.



Chuck Matheny with his aunt, Myrl Jean Hughes

Officially adopted two years later, Mary Ann grew up in her family's home on the Matheny campus, attending Peapack-Gladstone Elementary School and Bernards High School, in the same grade as Barry Thomson. She says her parents and Chuck "spoiled me. I had a wonderful childhood—but not necessarily a normal childhood since my parents' jobs were 24–7. They were busy all the time."

"I was exposed to children with disabilities, staff members from different walks of life, races, cultures, and religions. What a great learning experience. This helped me to form my life-attitudes, and philosophies about people and the world," she continues.

Mary Ann left New Jersey for the University of Arizona in 1970, returning home—with one of her college roommates—to work at Matheny after their freshman year. After her sophomore year, Mary Ann married, attended Arizona State University in her junior year, then dropped out for a year after giving birth to her daughter, Mary Heather. She then transferred back to the University of Arizona to finish her bachelor's degree in special education.

"My greatest honor was attending and graduating from the University of Arizona in Tucson," she states. "This was Walt's alma mater. The college awarded him an Honorary Doctor of Laws after my freshman year there. I sure was a proud daughter."

Mary Ann went on to earn a master's in computer science, and recently retired from NASA, where she worked as an IT project manager from 1991 to 2005.

"The Matheny family gave me the best gift ever by accepting me into their family. I was one lucky baby/kid. And I still feel very lucky," she says.

Myrl Jean Hughes

Myrl Jean Hughes, age 103, sister to Marguerite Hughes Matheny and aunt to Chuck and Mary Ann Matheny, currently lives in Hendersonville, North Carolina, near niece Mary Ann. She remembers the early years of Matheny.

"Many sacrifices were made in the early days of the school's existence," she says. "The Mathenys gave up whatever plans they had for the future, and my dad sold his printing business, and moved from Minnesota to New Jersey to become the business manager for the school."

Despite these major life changes on behalf of Matheny's growth, "I never heard one word of complaint about what sacrifices each individual had made," she says.

Myrl Jean continued her close relationship with Chuck after his parents died. "Chuck and I had many conversations, often on the telephone. I was always



Chuck Matheny with his niece, Mary Heather Noble

so proud of Chuck's acceptance of his disability. And many times, I heard him say that there were so many people who were so much worse off than he was," she recalls.

"He was quite independent in many ways," she continues. "He made his own reservation for driving lessons and was very proud when he passed the test."

"But he called me up one day and said, 'I'm thinking about giving up my driver's license. What do you think I should do?'"

"I told him that if he had any doubts about it, then it was a wonderful thing he would be doing by giving it up," she says. And he did.

According to those who knew him best, like Myrl Jean, Chuck was a kind and thoughtful man, who always tried to do the right thing.

Mary Heather Noble

Chuck's niece did not grow up on the Matheny campus, or even in New Jersey. Yet her ties to her grandparents, Walter and Marguerite, to her Uncle Chuck, and to the Matheny "world" were strong and positive.

Her childhood memories include big Thanksgiving and Easter gatherings with family, friends, staff, and former staff at her grandmother, Marguerite's home on the Matheny campus. "Sometimes in the summers, I would go—just me—to stay in my grandparents' home, and I stayed with my grandmother when my brother was born in 1979."

Her grandfather passed away when Mary Heather was very young and living in Arizona. "I didn't know my grandfather well, but I was very close to my grandmother," whom she describes as "very creative, always crafting. She was a really fun grandma. I was about 13 when she died."

Mary Heather recalls that Chuck doted on her brother, who is 5 ½ years younger than Mary Heather, and that her grandmother Marguerite doted on her.

She remembers driving around the campus with Chuck in his golf cart, sitting next to him as he drove the golf cart to the Blairsden mansion, and watching the July 4th fireworks set off by surrounding towns from the area of the campus where the Arts Center stands now.

"Chuck was quite mobile back then," she remembers. "He used to be able to walk across a room, from one piece of furniture to the next. When he was young, he sometimes scooted across the floor on his knees. Later he used crutches, and in his 30s and 40s, he rolled himself around in a wheelchair using his feet, or used his wheelchair as a walker, piling soda into the seat of his wheelchair for delivery to the vending machines."

She remembers him as an industrious worker—mowing the campus lawn with his tractor, collecting trash in a little trailer and taking it to the dumpster, and restocking the soda machines. He also cleared snow from the Matheny property in the winter. "He was friendly with everyone on the campus," she says, "and he was very funny. He loved children and animals, and they loved him."

Around the time of Marguerite's death, Chuck moved out of the family home and into his own home. "He was close to his mother, but he always wanted his independence," she comments. "And learning to drive and getting his driver's license were big goals for him."

"I have a lot of lovely memories from my visits," says Mary Heather. "Chuck would wake up early, listen to his music, scoot down the hall to get ready, shave, do his routine, then go over to the school for breakfast. His speech was difficult to understand, but if you were patient and listened carefully, you could understand. Those of us who knew him well could understand his speech patterns."

And she recalls his love of football, a passion he shared with his father Walter. "They always watched on Sunday," she says. "And he loved movies—both at home and at the cinema. On Sundays, he was also a regular at his church, where he had a lot of friends." And, like his father, he was a successful fundraiser for many causes.

Chuck also enjoyed traveling to visit family and friends in different parts of the country. "He went to Ohio to see our family near Cleveland, and some Hughes family near Dayton. He also visited both Matheny and Hughes family members in Minnesota and traveled to Las Vegas to stay with good friends Linda and William Waggoner."

"Chuck also took travel vacations out West and I think he even went to Disney," says Mary Heather. Mary Ann adds that Chuck traveled with a group of adults with disabilities when he was older, and on one of these trips went to England.

What did he think of his condition and how did he view his parents' major undertaking? "He was proud of the school and what his parents had accomplished. Chuck never complained about his condition. He felt his condition was part of

God's purpose in building Matheny for people who needed it."

"Matheny was a cornerstone of my childhood," she says. "In the early '80s, I remember going to the summer camp, which included both community kids and kids in wheelchairs. We had fun—there were hayrides, barbecues, and we went swimming in the pool."

For Mary Heather, looking back at her time spent at Matheny reminds her of her "particular pride" in being a Matheny family member. She loves Matheny's legacy of welcoming everyone, the non-judgmental atmosphere and nondiscriminatory care. She would hear of "families that had little means, but great needs."

"My grandparents always said to them: 'You are welcome here. We'll figure it out.'"

"These families were always met with open arms—it's so difficult navigating the system. Matheny is a godsend. It has saved so many families."

"Matheny's initial mission—to help people reach their fullest potential—is a particular point of pride for me," she says.

"Now the patients are more profoundly affected and need more specialized healthcare. But even though the patients have changed since the '90s, Matheny is still honoring residents and all they can give. The arts programs have given purpose and a means of expression to many."

Mary Heather fondly remembers Cindy Shanks, a longtime Matheny resident whom she met years ago at a Matheny summer camp, when they were both children. "Cindy is nonverbal. She has created a lot of art through Matheny's Arts Access program," says Marguerite and Walter's granddaughter.

"It delights me to know that she has become an artist."

> "The Mathenys were good people, who did not do this as a moneymaker. There's no question that this was philanthropy of the heart."
>
> **WILLIAM BARRY THOMSON**



W Barry Thomson

W Barry Thomson — "Telling the Story"

"When I was putting together my recent talk, I was incredibly impressed once again that Marguerite and Walter Matheny created what has become a world-renowned establishment on a shoestring," he says. "What they accomplished is so impressive given where they started."

Walter had a bachelor's degree in physical education, which Thomson says was such an important part of what they did, and then he had a career in the military. They made important connections in the medical field, and those individuals served as advisors and helped them build a network, he points out. "Everything seemed to fall into place and come together. Serendipitous is the word that comes to my mind," he says.

"It was not just a job for them; it was a calling," he continues. "They persisted when they could have given up; and through their devotion to the patients, students, families, and staff, they affected thousands of people who passed through these doors."

Also critical to their success were Marguerite's parents, Charles E. Hughes and Maude Tallon Hughes, who moved from across the country to New Jersey to help them out, he observes. "This was truly a family affair."

Thomson was pleased to be asked to give a talk on the Matheny campus last March. "I found out a lot about Marguerite and Walter Matheny, how they came to do this, and how the facility grew," he states. "We lose a lot of history along the way. It's important to me to tell the story of how things developed at Matheny."

And what an "amazing" story it is. "The Mathenys were good people, who did not do this as a moneymaker," he says emphatically. "There's no question that this was philanthropy of the heart."

And so the story goes—and continues to unfold. **MM**

To see Mr. Thomson's slideshow on Matheny's history, use this QR code.

THE ARTIST Blooms

ARTS ACCESS OPENS DOORS TO ARTISTS WHOSE TALENTS HAD NEVER PREVIOUSLY BEEN CONSIDERED

Andrew Edge, a graduate of the Joe Kubert School of Cartooning and Graphic Art and a dedicated professional artist for more than 20 years, who has dabbled in comics, helped design various book covers, has teaching credits, and worked at McFarlane Toys, spends much of his time with his fellow painting facilitators, helping artists bring their creative expressions to life. He understands the powerful impetus to create art and the deep satisfaction it brings to his own life, and he's dedicated to helping others achieve that.

The artists whom he and his staff assist in making hundreds of choices until a painting project is deemed finished—from colors and brush size to canvas and technique—have encountered constant barriers to self-expression throughout their lives, and certainly never expected to paint, exhibit, and sell their paintings, and see their art on coffee mugs, scarves, and ties. Some also choreograph dances and even perform on stage; write and publish their own heartfelt and sometimes comic plays, poems, and essays; and more recently, use technology to create computer art.

In the past, developmental disabilities have side-lined them from engaging in many pursuits, particularly those that require movement and control of arms, legs, and hands. Besides, for most of history, individuals who are largely nonverbal were assumed to have nothing to say, and artistic expression of any kind was thought well beyond the abilities of their brains, as well as their bodies.

Edge is a facilitator and oversees the visual arts painting facilitators in Matheny's Arts Access program. This means quite simply that he and his staff help clients make their own art down to the very last detail by carrying out the physical aspects of painting that they cannot do or supplying the set-up and materials to assist them, if they work on their own, or have limited mobility. The client communicates to the facilitator each brushstroke, each color choice, each placement of brush to canvas, and hundreds of other choices along the way. It's often a slow process that takes great patience by facilitator and artist, but it works.

The facilitation process is used by all the artists in Matheny's Arts Access program, established in 1993, open to community artists as well as those residing in Matheny's hospital and group homes. It's brilliant and complicated, but at its root quite simple, which accounts for its popularity and the artists' amazing achievements.

"Arts Access is certainly one of the gems of Matheny," says Director of Partnerships & the Arts, Heather Williams, who has worked in Matheny's arts programs for more than 16 years. She's a dancer and responded to a classified ad for dancers to participate in *Full Circle*, a semi-annual event to present the artists' works to friends, family, and the larger community audience. She fell in love with the program and never left.

Talk about opening doors. In the 1990s, this fledgling program—that seemed to skyrocket out of nowhere—blasted doors wide open, sending out a welcome mat that spoke to individuals with severe disabilities, whose artistic talents had never previously been considered.

Then in 2000, a stunning arts center opened its doors on the Peapack campus, a moment in Matheny's history that is still being applauded. According to Edge, an entire system had been developed, making it possible for artists in all pursuits to express their choices when pursuing their artistic endeavors, and facilitators to understand and carry out these choices. The systems have been updated and revised over the years, by various staff, who give feedback and insight into the system and process; and some charts made by current staff are for particular clients for use in their virtual sessions.

Some of the artists whose careers launched simultaneously in 1993 with the beginnings of Matheny's artist-facilitation program, among them Karen Yates, Cheryl Chapin, Joshua Handler, Cindy Shanks and James Lane, are still very much involved. Their development as artists can be seen in their work. Many have focused on multiple forms of expression, and all have ventured into the larger arts community beyond the Peapack campus.

Exhibits of paintings and sculpture, dance performances, and poetry and short prose readings have been viewed, applauded, and commended. Paintings and sculptures have been purchased at venues around the State. The Morris Museum in Morristown, New Jersey's famed Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, the Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown, Kean University, Rutgers New Jersey Medical School, Raritan Valley Community College, and Sotheby's in Manhattan are just some of the locales where audiences have enjoyed the works of Arts Access artists.

"In the early days of Arts Access, we taught other groups the process of how we work with our clients to create art. Lately," says Williams, "we offer workshops promoting advocacy and acceptance to local groups about the program, oftentimes bringing the artists themselves and their work to schools and corporate settings and outdoor exhibits."

These artists, who work hard, and take great pride in their ability to be a part of the larger arts community, also



Karen Yates, whose career as an artist launched almost simultaneously with the beginnings of Matheny's artist-facilitation program in 1993, is still very much involved.

sell their work, earning some hard-won income, another amazing achievement for those who had previously been assumed incapable of "normal" pursuits.

Part of the wonder of it all is that so much of the communication system used by these artists to make innumerable choices can now be done remotely. "Zoom and iPad are used in all disciplines for remote sessions. At this point, every Arts Access facilitator uses the iPAD to work with clients," says Williams.

"Technology has helped our program advance and grow," she continues. "Our first step is finding out how the individual communicates. Our process is tailored to their communication style."

Williams says that many clients have had long-term relationships with Arts Access, which serves residents at Matheny Hospital in Peapack and those at all seven of Matheny's group homes. Half of the clients are community based, she explains, either living at home or in other group home residences.

"Those who can get there enjoy coming to the Arts Center on the Peapack campus," she comments. In addition to working on their art, they enjoy the camaraderie of meeting up with fellow artists and the energy this brings to their endeavors.

Simply put, "the facilitator helps the client move through a series of choices, starting with a big concept and working down to smaller choices," Williams explains. "During COVID, everyone started using computers and sharing screens to work." Post-COVID, there are still many people who cannot travel to the Center but can still participate in the program.

"Some artists, who started early in the program, are multi-talented and still hungry to create work," Williams states. "Josh Handler, who identifies as an Arts Access pioneer, takes great pride in his painting and choreography."

James Lane, who also started in the arts program in the '90s, is a painter and choreographer. "The joy he finds in creating is unmistakable, and his enthusiasm shines through," she says. Lane's work has been exhibited at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, The Atrium Gallery in Morristown, and at the Outsider Art Inside the Beltway exhibit in Washington, DC.


Heather Williams


Andrew Edge

Karen Yates, who started in Arts Access in 1993, took a break and came back to Matheny and the arts program several years later. "She's a painter with a beautiful body of work and also a writer," Williams states. "One of her paintings has found its way onto a coffee mug, which is sold through the Arts Access online store. She's limited verbally and uses a computer to speak, which she used to write drama and has participated in a theatre program offered by Raritan Valley Community College, where she performed in a skit."

Cheryl Chapin, who joined the program in its early days, "has tried everything," according to Williams. She reads voluminously, paints, writes short stories, poems, and plays (often quite humorous, according to Williams) and has participated for several years in the New Jersey Theatre Alliance's *Plays by People*. She is always ready to embark on something new, which includes being the chief writer for a Matheny Adult Services video series—currently in production—advocating for those in Matheny's care. This multi-part series has become part of Matheny's orientation program for new employees, educating them about the residents' point of view.

"Over the last few years, our team has placed an even greater emphasis on the marketing and sales part of the arts program, resulting in sales of art and

merchandise last year 35 percent over the previous year," says the director.

"This has been accomplished by expanding exhibits to such places as law and corporate offices and the local post office and leveraging our corporate and philanthropic partnerships. Our artists sold a lot of work," she says happily.

"For a client to see that little red dot on a piece of their work is the best thing," she continues. At least 50 percent of the 50 plus working artists in Arts Access sold something last year, according to Williams.



A painting by artist Karen Yates entitled "I Want to Play Balloon," completed August 31, 2026

"I want to do everything I can to help the artists create, to keep the artists fulfilled, and help them build self-esteem," she says.

Andrew Edge, currently the program's Logistics Manager as well as continuing to be a facilitator, schedules clients from the hospital, from the group homes and from the community for both day and evening, virtual and on-site sessions; keeps track of clients' needs, matching clients with facilitators; and manages the day-to-day operations, coordinating the many moving parts.

He started with Arts Access in 2005, first going through a training program, observing other facilitators working with the artists. At first, he worked there two nights each week, then it grew to three, then he took on some daytime sessions, then became a full-time facilitator. His definition of facilitation is "finding out exactly what the artists want to do by asking a series or line of yes and no questioning and finding out exactly what they need or what they want executed on their behalf through the use of charts. It's artists assisting artists."

"Some clients are more serious, giving everything a lot of thought. They have an idea and think of a plan. For others, it's basically a fun activity. Some of the clients love this so much they would do it full-time if they could," he says.

Artist Karen Yates uses a communication device to tell the facilitator what she wants them to do, and "sometimes she uses eye gaze, for yes and no," he explains. "And sometimes clients use the communication device just to chat. Karen likes to chat about food."

"Artists can also pick out pictures in the chart book to communicate their choices; and we can do samples for them on scrap canvas."

"The paintings sometimes sell," he states, "and sometimes I make wide-format prints of their work, and sometimes the prints sell."

He says that paintings have sold well in the past year. "When we get more art out for the community to see—in banks and law firms and special exhibits—then more art is bought and the artists get money from each sale.

"They get excited," says Edge, "the way any artist would."

The Sotheby's exhibits in Manhattan in February 2019 and March 2024, the recent WAE Center collaborative art exhibit, and the Pfizer exhibit in late September all focused a high beam on the works of Matheny's Arts Access artists, driving sales of their pieces in a big way.

"When someone finishes a project, their joy is huge. They have accomplished a goal. And when they see their art on merchandise, like a tie or a piece of jewelry, they feel very good. And when they sell their art, they are ecstatic," says Edge.

"We are the persons in the chain able to help them do this. That's what facilitating is all about." **MM**

> "When someone finishes a project, their joy is huge. They have accomplished a goal. And when they sell their art, they are ecstatic. We are the persons in the chain able to help them do this."
>
> **ANDREW EDGE**









Life Enrichment Therapies
Come *of* Age

It's not all fun and games, but Life Enrichment Therapies (LET) have taken giant steps into the inner circle of Matheny's adult programming. Not to be taken lightly, LET consists of several therapies collaborating closely under one umbrella. They intersect and intertwine, clearly making life far better for those with medically complex developmental disabilities. LET teaches new skills, fosters mental activity, brings people together, both relaxes and energizes, establishes daily routines to count on and helps individuals happily break out of them sometimes, and encourages participants to develop an enhanced sense of purpose and satisfaction. And not to be overlooked, it's also a lot of fun.

Andrew Fisler first came to Matheny from Kean University in the fall of 2017 as a recreation therapy intern and joined the staff in September 2018, after earning his bachelor's degree in recreation therapy administration. His enthusiasm for LET and excitement about Matheny's forward-reaching approach to supporting its clients are "catching." When asked what he likes best about his job, Fisler says, "No two days are the same. We help everyone do what they want to do. A lot of places shy away from what we do here. We figure out how to do it."

On Mondays, Fisler plans recreation trips with a fellow recreation therapist in the department. There are community trips to local malls, parks, libraries, and more. On Thursday evenings, small groups of Matheny residents, accompanied by recreation therapy staff, dine out at local restaurants. Trips to the American Dream Mall, Museum of Natural History and other welcoming New York museums, concerts, sporting events, and the Point Pleasant boardwalk are all on the menu, and all are great favorites.

Before COVID, small groups went farther afield—to Wildwood, Disney, Lake George, advocacy conferences, Washington DC. "We hope to start up those trips again soon," says Fisler, who would like to take a group to Hershey Park in the coming months. "This would be the third time since COVID in 2020 for us to take an overnight trip. Back in April, we took our first overnight with kid-residents to Kalahari Waterpark resort. We were also able to attend the State Special Olympic games in June for the weekend at The College of New Jersey. The staff would like to plan for three or four overnight trips in 2027."

He explains that the LET staff assumes all care for patients on these trips after getting trained on sleep positioning and direct care requirements for each trip participant. "So much goes into trip planning, even for local trips," he says. "It looks simple but it's not."

However much the open road beckons, weekday routines are the bread and butter of LET, which encompasses the Recreation Therapy, Music Therapy, and Adult Services departments. Residents of Matheny Hospital and its seven group homes, as well as some community participants, attend four to five small group meetings daily. These may feature almost anything, according to Fisler, and might focus on humor, various arts and crafts, reading, fitness, trivia, games, and "armchair travel" to remote locales. Each group meets once a week.

Holidays and events are very important at Matheny, particularly Halloween. Weeks of preparation lead up to the Zombie Prom, community-supported Trunk or Treat, the annual scarecrow contest, accessible haunted house, the much-anticipated large campus costume parade, and the all-school after-party. Creativity and good cheer rule the day, and clients, families, friends, and staff all participate. Recreation Therapy coordinates pre-holiday activities, ensuring the residents' involvement in planning and preparations, as well as the events' accessibility and safety. Everyone looks forward to these annual happenings.

"Variety is important," Fisler says. "But we don't just have fun."

All LET activities have a therapy component. "We're always targeting large goals and smaller objectives," he explains. Recreation therapists each have a caseload of 20 or so residents, including kids and adult residents split across a team of five therapists. Each resident gets an annual recreation therapy assessment, where overarching goals are established; and progress towards those goals is assessed yearly. "Everything we do is very purposeful," he says.

The therapist offers a more common situation by way of explaining the role of recreation therapists, since many people have never heard of the profession and don't know what it does. "Suppose someone has a stroke," he says. "They will need physical therapy to walk again, occupational therapy to resume their daily routines, speech therapy to relearn how

Clockwise from top left (l-r): music therapist Elise Berube, recreation therapist Andrew Fisler, adult services instructor April Stockfisch; Andrew Fisler with Matheny resident Mohamed; music therapy with Elise Berube; April Stockfisch with Matheny resident Jonathan



Left: Matheny resident Jacob Rolaf learns wrestling techniques from Warrior Professional Wrestling.

Facing page: Matheny's LET programs include a wide variety of activities, trips, and events that are both therapeutic and fun.

to swallow and speak. Recreation therapy will make sure the person can access their community and ultimately get back to their life to the best of their abilities."

"It's not playing," he continues. "It helps people to be able to do what they want to do." There are currently five recreation therapists at Matheny, and they are working with clients ages 6 to mid-60s. "Kids in the hospital also get programming," he states.

And, yes, he says "We absolutely did a campout with our clients and took a medically fragile client kayaking. She was singing while she kayaked out on the lake. The spirit of Matheny is amazing."

Fisler knew he wanted to work with this population. "I'm passionate about accessibility rights and treating everyone as a human being," he continues. "Because you're nonverbal doesn't mean you have nothing to say." The recreation therapist earned a master's degree in nonprofit administration from Louisiana State University in 2023.

"There are so many ways to communicate, and Matheny always encourages communication. It's such a joy to know a place like this exists and to be a part of it."

Let's Talk About Singing

Elise Berube, a music therapist at Matheny since early 2023, uses "music to help each client reach their goals and objectives." She does both group and individual sessions, using an array of instruments, including piano, acoustic guitar, drums/percussion, and voice. She conducts three to four group and individual sessions every day with each lasting 45 to 90 minutes. Sounds from a "drum circle," planned and conducted by the music therapy team, recently filled Matheny's halls.

"Some sessions are skill- and project-based, and some are leisure activities," she explains. "Each participant is working on larger life skills goals and smaller objectives. There are six clients in each of my groups, all working towards different goals and objectives. Sometimes we can coordinate the various goals—pull them together—and clients can encourage each other, getting social interactions through music."

"All goals and objectives are written down and included in the client's records," she continues. "The therapists can see each client's history and their progress."

In addition, Berube needs to make sure "everyone's getting opportunities, everyone's safe, and everyone is challenged."

"Leisure groups are more casual," she continues. "We may play a game that's music-based, watch a music-based show, or listen to favorite songs together. All residents can participate in music therapy."

Music therapists work together with other Matheny staff, most often with recreation therapists and adult services instructors, to plan events such as field day, harvest festival, the Spring formal, and the Halloween haunted house. They also collaborate frequently with physical, occupational, and speech therapists.

"Sometimes clients are working towards a movement goal, using music as a motivator," Berube says. "Music therapy is also used in alternative positioning—where clients are helped out of a wheelchair" and into another position to relieve muscles and prevent pressure injuries and joint problems. "Music can be used to help patients relax; and sometimes we work with speech therapists on alternative forms of communication."

What does she like best about her job? "It gives me joy to see clients growing and achieving," she responds. "They live here many years, and I get to develop relationships with them. I get to know many of them very well and it gets me excited to see them succeed."

"This work keeps me on my toes," she continues. "It's a lot of fun. I'm always trying to stay creative and come up with new ways to encourage my clients. I try to figure out how I can encourage them to develop a skill that they already have."

Music therapists work at a lot of different types of jobs in a lot of settings, Berube points out. She's happy to have landed in the place and role where her talent and enthusiasm can truly impact many lives.

Adult Services

Recreation therapy, music therapy, and adult services are joined under the Life Enrichment Therapies umbrella at Matheny. Sean Bielefeldt, Vice President and Executive Director of Programs and Services, who started at Matheny as a recreation therapist more than 24 years ago, heads up this group. All three services plan daily programming; and residents and community participants attend sessions each weekday throughout the day. Sometimes various groups work together, especially when preparing for holidays, events, and special birthday parties for clients.

April Stockfisch, an Adult Services instructor since September 2024, started at Matheny as a physical therapy aide in 2022. After earning her bachelor's degree in psychology, she wanted to "do something positive." Her aunt had worked at Matheny, so Stockfisch had known about it for a long time and felt it would be a good fit for her. It also offers on-the-job training.

As an Adult Services instructor, she helps to run daily group programs for clients—"anything they want to do. Each group has different people and we do different things," she says. She also helps clients purchase items with money from their accounts and keeps track of their spending.

Stockfisch loves "being around lots of people, collaborating with all the therapies, and working together with other LET staff on special events and interdepartmental trips." She especially enjoys accompanying residents on Tuesday and Thursday shopping ventures. Halloween costume shopping is a great favorite of many clients, she observes.

"I like coming to Matheny each day and not knowing what's going to happen," she continues. "It's never boring. It's never routine."

"Everyone cares and everyone is committed. You form very close personal relationships with clients and staff—you get to know them well. It keeps you coming back day after day."

"I'm happy with my work here," she says, "and I feel very lucky to be able to say that." **MM**





"I'm passionate about accessibility rights and treating everyone as a human being. Because you're nonverbal doesn't mean you have nothing to say."

ANDREW FISLER











Living a **Richer Life**

Matheny's Life Enrichment Therapies (LET) program clearly makes life far better for those with medically complex developmental disabilities. By teaching new skills, fostering mental and physical activity, bringing people together to socialize and participate in group events, establishing daily routines to count on, and helping participants get out and about in the community and beyond, the LET program supports individuals to become adults with an enhanced sense of purpose and satisfaction. This is just a small sampling of activities on the LET menu.































The Lisa Krais Life Enrichment Therapy Fund

Lisa Marie Krais, born on January 10, 1969, was the daughter of William D. and Rosanne Krais, and sister to William A. and Peter Krais. Lisa was developmentally disabled from birth. She moved into a Matheny group home in her 50s where she received extraordinary care. Sadly, she passed away in 2024 from complications of bladder cancer.

Lisa's brother, Bill, a member of Matheny's Board of Trustees for more than 20 years, and its Chair/Co-Chair for five, feels enormous gratitude to Matheny's staff. This LET Fund was founded in 2024 in memory of his sister Lisa and to thank Bill for his many years of service. To donate, go to **matheny.org/donate-now/** and select "Lisa Krais Life Enrichment Fund" from the drop-down list.





Matheny resident Jacob Rolaf with longtime Matheny direct support professional Peter Njenga

Empathy Sustains Loving Bonds

Many Matheny staff members have followed closely in the footsteps of Marguerite and Walter Matheny. Their jobs are not "just jobs," but become a calling. Many stay on for 20, 30, even 40 plus years and become part of the fabric of what defines this organization. DSPs (direct support professionals) often attest that their jobs are the center of their lives; and they, in turn, are integral to the lives of group home and hospital residents, forming close, enduring bonds with them that feel like family ties.

Without DSPs, most residents could not get out of bed, shower, dress, eat their breakfasts, and start their day. Most could not travel to or return from their day's destination or do their daily activities. Most could not eat their dinner or get themselves ready for sleep. DSPs at Matheny make life happen for those in their care.

And caring is integral to what they provide. An employment advertisement for a DSP might read: Be kind and caring, and we will teach you the rest. Know that you will be needed and will make a huge difference in people's lives and will be respected for all you do.

Peter Longa, who earned his bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in nursing while working at Matheny, heads up the department, which employs almost 200 DSPs who make sure all residents and patients are taken care of at all hours of the day and days of the week, in various locations, even in snowstorms, even on holidays. He recognizes that those under his supervision are critical to the everyday functioning, safety, and happiness of many individuals at Matheny, and he cares deeply about hiring, and placing, the right DSP to ensure that life goes on at this complex organization with so many moving parts.

"We are proud of all of our DSPs at Matheny. Many have worked at Matheny for several decades—a testament to their dedication to the people they care for. Matheny is a special place in large part due to their incredible work," he says.

Peter Njenga is a direct support professional who has worked at Matheny for more than 20 years and is still enthusiastic about what he calls his "second career." He was first employed in the marketing field before coming to Matheny in 2004 to take on this very different role. He was Chuck Matheny's caregiver during the last seven years of his life.

Njenga says Chuck Matheny requested him as his DSP. "He was very smart," says the long-term Matheny staff member, and "he needed someone who got him."

Chuck was known on campus and in the community as a likeable person, and that's how Njenga also describes him. "He was very kind," he says, "but you could not step on his toes. Working with him for seven years, I got to know him well. He worked hard despite his disability, and everybody who knew him respected him."

Njenga and Chuck Matheny—one the caregiver and the other needing care—became close friends, which is not uncommon at Matheny.

"I was comfortable with him, and he was comfortable with me," says Njenga. "We ate together at his house or in the dining hall, and sometimes we went to restaurants. He was choosey; he knew

what he liked. I stayed overnight in his home, drove him to church, and attended church with him," Njenga says.

"It was an honor to work with him. We were very close. I was with him on the last day of his life and he was happy. He was surrounded by his family. And I was by his bedside too."

Chuck Matheny died in 2017, but Njenga stayed at Matheny as a DSP, developing special skills in caring for those with Lesch-Nyhan disease, a rare genetic disorder that causes neurological and behavioral abnormalities. A hallmark symptom is uncontrollable self-injury, which DSPs must be ever watchful for, protecting patients from causing themselves physical harm. Njenga's widespread knowledge about the difficulties and needs of Lesch-Nyhan patients means that he can provide training for other Matheny DSPs in this challenging specialty, which he is always glad to do.

For Sharon Thompson, whose career as a DSP at Matheny has spanned 37 years, her job is truly a labor of love. Currently, she works at two of Matheny's group homes but spent many years on the Peapack campus, working at Matheny Hospital. If she retires at 40 years of service (in three years) to spend more time with her grandkids, she plans on maintaining friendships with group home residents with whom she has formed such strong bonds.

"Mama Sharon"—as she is called by many—is indeed a person whose warmth and kindness, and enthusiasm for her work, are always evident, even to a casual observer. She is beloved by those she cares for.

"They are all like my own kids," she says. "I know everyone. I love my work."

She often works the night shift, but when she's on the day shift, her routine involves preparing the residents to leave their group home at 8 AM to ride the van to their Adult Services program. She frequently rides along with them, making sure they are safely and comfortably situated inside the building, where the Adult Learning Center staff takes over, and then she returns to the group home to prepare it for the residents' return in mid-afternoon.



Feeding, clothing, helping residents to get up from the bed and move about in wheelchairs and walkers are all part of the DSP's job. Doing laundry, administering oral medications at specified times around the clock, general housekeeping, all "ADLs," or activities of daily living, come under the aegis of the DSP, as well as sometimes driving clients in the van to appointments and recreational activities. The daily tasks of living are challenging, and frequently impossible, for most residents to do without help.

"You do everything for the group home residents," she states.

They often have appointments at one of Matheny's many outpatient clinics on the Peapack campus, she explains. These include dental, medical, orthopedics, podiatry, and seating clinics. If clients don't have an appointment, most participate in the Hillsborough Adult Learning program, Monday through Friday.

"If I fill in on days, then I may go with residents to their medical and dental appointments. I even went on a family



Left: Group home resident Tammy Heppner with longtime Matheny direct support professional Sharon Thompson

Inset: Sharon with group home resident Michelle Esposito

Group home resident Joshua Handler with group home nurse Hayden Gasperment



trip to Florida once when a resident visited her brother, and I've accompanied residents on trips that Matheny planned for them," she says. Her presence helps ensure smooth sailing for participants.

"I recommend this job to my friends and to strangers—anybody who is looking for a job. I talk to them about Matheny, about the school, the hospital and group homes. Even if you have no experience doing this kind of work, you will grow with the job," she says.

"After a while, you'll know if you want to do this kind of work long-term," she explains. "You have to love it." Thompson enjoys training new employees for the job "just like someone taught me. And look—I'm still doing it." Her caring extends to families of the residents, whom she chats with when they visit on weekends or when they come to the group home to attend special get-togethers, like the barbeques that will be held this month.

"We are proud of all our DSPs at Matheny. Many have worked at Matheny for several decades—a testament to their dedication to the people they care for. Matheny is a special place in large part due to their incredible work."

DR. PETER LONGA

When she retires, Thompson plans to continue her close ties with Matheny by volunteering with the group home residents she has cared for through many years. "And I'll bring my grandkids to volunteer, too," she says. "Many of our residents are into computers, and my grandkids can help them out with that."

While the details of keeping a group home running encompass a lot of time and energy, Thompson always makes time to connect with residents in her full-hearted way.

Shared housing in the community helps these adults with developmental disabilities live more independently. Matheny operates seven group homes in Somerset, Sussex, and Warren counties with each home providing a residence for five to six adults.

Cerebral palsy is the primary diagnosis of most of the group home residents, but many also have associated medical conditions, such as vision and hearing deficits, seizure disorders, and dysphagia, which can result in aspiration problems. The ratio of caregivers to clients is generally one to three or four.

DSPs are part of a team that includes nurses, and every team member pays close attention to the unique needs of each resident, and they are trained to notice even small changes that could indicate a larger problem. New hires get on-the-job training at Matheny, generally over a period of several weeks.

In 2015, Peter Longa became Director of DSPs, the position that he currently holds. The life and responsibilities of DSPs are very familiar to him after working in that role at Matheny for an entire decade. It's a profession that he deeply respects.

"The DSP does for the patient whatever the patient cannot do for him- or herself," he says. "If not for the DSP, that patient could be lying in bed all day."

Shifts run eight hours over five days or nights, or twelve hours over three or four days or nights. The director is always on the lookout for new hires who are patient, caring, and compassionate. He believes the job of a DSP is all about caring.

Most DSPs have a great desire to teach, and a great desire to learn. They move around a lot, rarely spending much time at a desk.

"Working as a DSP has taught me compassion, empathy, dedication, and respect," Thompson concludes. "Every resident I worked with has touched my life meaningfully. I'm so grateful to be a part of Matheny's growth and evolution." **MM**

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Individuals, corporations, organizations, and foundations generously helped support every aspect of life at Matheny during Fiscal Year 2026.

Because of our donors' compassion and support of Matheny's mission, the lives of hundreds of students, patients, residents, as well as their families and friends have been enriched in so many ways. We thank all contributors for their extraordinary generosity.

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Longtime partner **Porzio, Bromberg & Newman** recently adorned its new office with artwork from the Matheny Arts Access program, whose corporate art initiative brings fine art by artists with disabilities into professional spaces. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to inclusion, social responsibility, and the power of art to inspire.



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Longtime volunteer **Bill Hoffman** is interviewed about his dedication to Matheny by CBS newsman, John Elliott, during Miles for Matheny event.



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Special thanks to our local friends from **Holotropic Fitness** for leading the 5K warm-up at this year's Miles for Matheny.



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**Some additional donors requested to remain anonymous. We sincerely thank them for their generosity.*

80 Years and Counting







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. There is just a handful of students when the school opens.

1949

The school moves to Far Hills, NJ, needing more space for its growing number of students.

1951

After a successful fundraising campaign, 38 acres of land in Peapack are purchased and become the school's new home.

1954

Another fundraising campaign raises $500,000 to construct a new school with living space for 50 students, therapy rooms, a dining room, an infirmary, a dental office, and more. The building opens in December.

1970

80 children attend the school and live on campus; 50 children receive care as outpatients; 96 staff members are employed.



1978

Matheny Hospital is designated a special hospital by the American Hospital Association.

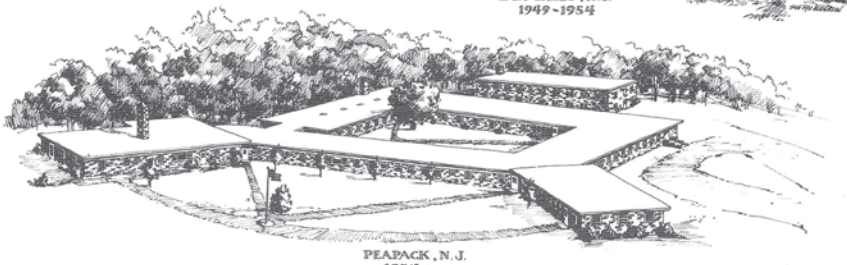
1980s

Matheny develops a rehabilitation technology program to support greater mobility and independent living for its clients.

1983

The Friends of Matheny, which has raised more than $4 million to date for Matheny, is established.





To everyone who collaborated in building and sustaining Matheny through the years, and to all the students, residents, families, friends, staff, and volunteers, whose life-stories are woven into Matheny's complex fabric, we dedicate this 80th anniversary issue.

There is so much to celebrate. And so much still to accomplish.

80 YEARS matheny





1992

The first community residence for adults 21 and older opens in Basking Ridge, followed by 4 more community residences in 1995, 1998 and 2002.



1993

Matheny's Arts Access program is established.

1997

Miles for Matheny, a major annual fundraising event, begins its run. It's still going strong.



1997

Matheny launches 2 Adult Services programs, one on the Peapack campus, the other in Hillsborough, providing daily structured activities for group home residents and community members.

2000

A brand new, state-of-the-art, fully accessible arts center opens its doors.



2003

The Center of Medicine and Dentistry (MCMD) launches, providing a spectrum of outpatient services for Matheny and community residents with disabilities.

2003

A new dental center, specially equipped and staffed, opens on the Peapack campus with a generous gift from the Delta Dental Foundation of NJ, which continues to support the Center.



2019

Matheny's first Sotheby's exhibit in NYC showcases 56 pieces by Arts Access artists.

2022

Matheny opens 2 more community residences in Far Hills.



2026

Matheny celebrates 80 years of growth on behalf of its community.

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