

## THERAPY MATTERS, EVEN IN THE RESTROOM

### Healthcare Foundation Funds Renovation of School Restrooms



Breanna works on brushing her teeth in one of the new Horizon restrooms.

Before Breanna leaves her class in Horizon Elementary School to head to therapy, her nurse helps her to gather her toothbrush and toothpaste and the two ladies head to the nearby girls room. "Are you ready to get those teeth clean?" asks occupational therapist Trish O'Connor, greeting them at the restroom sinks. Breanna smiles and nods and Trish begins working with her on putting toothpaste on her toothbrush. Just down the hall, Myles is in the boys room with physical therapist Steve Pasterick, working on lifting himself from his wheelchair. "Let's get to work, buddy!" says Steve as he helps Myles reach for the grab bar and try to pull himself from his wheelchair.

Both restrooms are abuzz with activity, with staff and students

using the stalls, sinks and changing tables. While the school is well known for its intensive therapy services, few realize that the restrooms are critical areas for learning and training. "Our focus is on helping students become more independent," said Trish, "and key to independence are activities of daily living (ADL) - those things each person does to care for him/herself. The majority of ADL take place in the restroom-including toileting, washing hands and face and brushing teeth- so we spend a lot of therapy time there with students."

Physical therapists utilize the restrooms to work with students on wheelchair propulsion and positioning (to access the toilet and sink), weight-bearing transfers

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## CPNJ TO HONOR CEO OF BLUE CROSS



CPNJ will honor Robert A. Marino, Chairman, CEO and President of Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey at the agency's 2016 Steps to Independence Celebration at the Crystal Plaza on November 3rd. The event is the agency's largest fundraising event of the year.

"We are excited to have such a prestigious honoree for our event," said Kelly Marx, the longtime CPNJ board member who has led the agency's fundraising efforts for more than 50 years. "Our programs depend on the revenue we generate from this event and we are grateful to Bob for investing the time and energy to make this event successful."

For information on purchasing tables, tickets or journal ads, please call the CPNJ development office at (973) 763-9900, ext. 1103.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Our main story in this issue focuses on a topic that might seem a bit unusual to some—restrooms. CPNJ provides a full range of care and for many of our consumers this includes assistance with activities of daily living—helping with things like toileting, bathing, and brushing their teeth. These activities are necessary and important and we strongly believe they should be openly discussed—there is no embarrassment in caring for yourself or for others. The story is a wonderful reminder that every aspect of our day provides opportunities to learn.

Also featured in this issue is a story about the fundraising successes of our schools and adult day programs. Each year, staff at these programs volunteer their time to develop and implement various fundraisers and then direct how these monies are spent to benefit our consumers. Our consumer families give generously and ask others to help as well. The combined efforts of families and staff members have provided the funds needed for these programs to go above and beyond what we would otherwise be able to do. We are proud that we keep these funds “local,” meeting needs identified by program staff and families.



This newsletter includes two articles that illustrate how your support keeps CPNJ at the cutting edge of technology and its impact on those we serve. The new Vision Training Room at our elementary school is just the latest example of the remarkable ability of our Horizon Schools to utilize technology to meet the individual needs of each of our students. The last article, about our mobile training unit, highlights our ongoing efforts to provide the most effective and efficient training possible to our staff members. Our ability to invest in such critical technology is made possible through our generous supporters.

Enjoy the issue and have a wonderful summer.

Warmly,  
Purna Rodman Conare

## CONTACT US

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## HORIZON UNVEILS NEW VISION TRAINING ROOM

Jeremy's face lights up as he enters the Vision Training Room at Horizon Elementary School. The room is quiet, has no windows and is sparsely furnished. Occupational therapist Trish O'Connor rolls Jeremy's chair up to the computer and his eyes widen in excitement. Jeremy is working with eye-gaze technology, a software that allows users to control the computer with their eyes. He starts by controlling a paint brush to paint a photo and later moves to a story book, using his gaze to select characters and control the outcome of the story.



OT Trish O'Connor works with Jeremy in the Vision Training Room.

"Jeremy has made incredible progress using this software," said Trish. "And this room helped make it all possible." The Vision Training Room recently underwent a major renovation and now includes the very latest state-of-the-art equipment, thanks to a generous donation from longtime supporter Dottie Litwin-Brief. The room is designed to assist students with alternate access needs (like Jeremy), as well as students with visual impairments, difficulty maintaining their attention to tasks, and difficulties in the area of sensory processing and motor planning. "The key is to be able to work with an illuminated object in a darkened room," said Trish. "It makes it easier for students to focus on the task at hand."

Each piece of equipment was carefully chosen to meet the needs of Horizon students:

- **Environmental Control Unit:** This is a device that allows students with limited mobility to operate electronic devices by simply hitting a switch;
- **Somatron Abbotsford Chair:** connects to a sound system to impart soothing tactile sounds, sensations and resonance throughout the body;

- **Tactile Wall:** offers an array of objects for students to use their sense of touch to compensate and strengthen their other sensory systems;
- **Musical Squares:** these large touch-pads on the floor and wall combine gross motor skills and cause-and-effect understanding to enhance motor planning skills;
- **Disco Ball:** stimulates students' peripheral vision;
- **Ladder Lights:** a device that registers voice output with a series of lights so students have feedback to help control their vocalizations;
- **Infinity Tunnel:** a wall-mounted device that provides an optical illusion which gives the impression of infinite depth. Its sound-sensitive colors rotate at different speeds depending upon the sounds to provide feedback to students' vocalizations;
- **Bubble Tube:** Students hit switches to change the color of a column of water in a tube, which allows them to work on their cause and effect skills.

"This room is truly unique in New Jersey," said Horizon Elementary School Principal Tina Volpe. "We are so thrilled to have the support of Dottie Litwin-Brief. Her support will allow us to impact students for many years to come and we are so thankful to her."



CPNJ CEO Purna Rodman Conare (left) and Horizon students Abby and Pedro show off the new Vision Training Room to Dottie Litwin-Brief and Dr. Donald Brief

## ANNUAL FUNDS SET NEW FUNDRAISING RECORD

Horizon Schools as well as the agency's three adult day programs each have their own annual fund. The programs raise funds all year long in a variety of ways, including a tricky tray, handbag bingo, lunch sales and raffles and their fundraising culminates with the annual Wheelin'-n'-Walkin' Challenge in the spring. All of the funds raised by each program are spent in support of that particular program. This year, the programs raised a combined total of more than \$200,000!

## THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING FOR RAISING OR DONATING MORE THAN \$1,000:

Aidan K Foundation  
Available Light of New York  
James & Anna Marie Barrows  
Kirk Brittel  
Britton Burdette  
David Carlson &  
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Jonathan Shaver  
Jeffrey & Janis Strauss  
Daniel & Jessie Torrey  
Turner Construction Company  
Wilentz Goldman & Spitzer

## OUR TOP FUNDRAISING FAMILIES:



CPNJ CEO Purna Rodman Conare (left) with Chris and Lianna Halkyard, who raised over \$10,000.



CPNJ CEO Purna Rodman Conare (right) congratulates the Machemer family at the elementary school walk. The Machemers raised an all-time record of \$80,000!



Joann DeSimone (right) with her son, Ben, at the high school walk. They raised more than \$8,000.



The Gittleman family raised over \$12,000 with a record of more than 140 gifts.

## TRICKY TRAY RAISES OVER 26K!

On Saturday, March 12th, over 250 people attended Horizon High School's Third Annual Tricky Tray. The event was a huge success, raising over \$26,000. Thank you to Ann Marie Micchelli and Natasha McCall for their ongoing leadership of this event and to the members of the event committee for all their hard work. And thank you to everyone for your ticket purchases and your generous donations of raffle prizes and your time.



(back row, left to right) Carmen Martinez, Ted Groh, Fanny Velandia, Anne Marie Micchelli, Grace Pisani, Lyndsay Murphy, Poling Huang, (front row) Chris Lynch, Ken Brucato

## HORIZON INTRODUCES HANDBAG BINGO

Over 100 guests attended Horizon Elementary School's first Designer Handbag Bingo on Friday, April 8th to take their chances at winning 10 authentic designer bags. The event raised over \$8,000! Thank you and congratulations to the members of the event committee for developing this fun and exciting new event. Thanks also to everyone who supported the event and helped make it so successful.



Event committee members Alisa De Angelo (left) & Gina Wagner (Tami Pantiliano not pictured)

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(to get in and out of a wheelchair) and weight-bearing on the grab bars (to get on and off the toilet). "More than half of our student population is non-ambulatory and only 15% are toilet trained," said Steve. "If we can help a student learn to hold him/herself up independently, it relieves the caregiver of some of the weight-bearing needed for transferring him/her to the toilet several times each day for the rest of their lives."

But working on therapy skills in the school's restrooms has become far more challenging over the years. "We renovated this building before moving here late in 2001," said Horizon Principal Tina Volpe. "We've seen a steady increase in students with significant physical challenges in the last 15 years and the restrooms were no longer meeting our needs." With four student restrooms but only one accessible stall in each, therapists were pressed for time with students and staff backed up trying to access the rooms. Transferring a student from a wheelchair to a toilet requires two staff members and the space available in one of the four accessible stalls. And the configuration of some restrooms sometimes infringed on the dignity of students, with changing tables located outside of stalls.

"We desperately needed to make changes and we turned to The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey for help," said Purna Rodman Conare, CPNJ's President & CEO. The foundation awarded a grant that allowed the school to renovate all four student bathrooms to double the number of accessible stalls (which in turn allowed the school to double the number of changing tables) and to add a student showering station. "The grant allowed us to create the restrooms we need to properly serve our current body of students," said Purna. "We are grateful to have funding partners like the Foundation, who invest the time and effort needed to understand the intricacies of the issues facing special needs students."

## CELEBRATING THOSE BEHIND THE MISSION

CPNJ hosted its 2016 Staff Appreciation Brunch at The Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club in Livingston on April 22nd. The agency honored those employees celebrating milestones of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years with the organization. "These are the folks who truly define our agency and we want to celebrate them and thank them for all they do every day," said CPNJ CEO Purna Rodman Conare. Tyra Burns, whose daughter Shana attends the Orange adult day program, and Joanne DeSimone, whose son Ben attends Horizon High School, thanked staff members for all they do for their children and all of the consumers they serve.

Thank you to our Director of Training, Alicia-Ann Caesar, for organizing the event and thank you to the rest of the event committee: Melissa Kuderka, Natasha McCall, Patti Murray and Chris Stratton. A special congratulations to our six employees who celebrated 20 years with the agency (Karen Maas was unable to attend):



Top Row (left to right): Michelle Roth, Katherine Kiernan, Roland Eastmond  
Bottom Row (left to right: Patricia Fields, Willie Wright

# Tribute Gifts

If you would like to remember someone with an "in memory of" gift or celebrate a special occasion with an "in honor of" gift, please contact the CPNJ development office at (973) 763-9900, ext. 1602. We will notify the person of your choosing with a special card telling them that a gift was made.

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## In Honor Of Gifts

- For:** Kelly Marx  
**By:** Melanie Penn & Adam Kaplan
- For:** Brooke Plumstead  
**By:** Lawrence & Deborah Stryker
- For:** Deloitte Impact Day & Christine Kotarba  
**By:** Tania Taylor
- For:** Roger Lope  
**By:** Kristopher Lagreca
- For:** Allan Brief's 80th Birthday  
**By:** Donald Brief
- For:** Ralph & Nancy Casciano's 50th wedding anniversary  
**By:** Bill & Sylvia Smalley
- For:** Mitchell Caspert's Birthday  
**By:** Ron & Doreen Safier
- For:** Donna Castellano's long and excellent service to CPNJ  
**By:** Helene Jaffe

## In Memory Of Gifts

- For:** Lee Bremer's Brother, David  
**By:** Ed & Barbara Becker
- For:** Zigmund & Mary Patricia Kloza  
**By:** Stachia D. Kloza
- For:** George Zolna  
**By:** Mitchell & Shari Caspert
- For:** Dorothy Botnick  
**By:** Dorothy Litwin-Brief
- For:** Anita Gold  
**By:** Mitchell & Shari Caspert
- For:** Edward R. Barwick, Sr.  
**By:** Matthew & Annemarie Barone  
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- For:** Bobbi Maxman  
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## MYERS SUPPORTS NEW MOBILE TRAINING UNIT

Thanks to a generous donation from longtime CPNJ board member Maxine Myers, CPNJ has developed a new and innovative mobile training unit that will revolutionize how training is provided to CPNJ staff members.

To provide the best possible services to our consumers, CPNJ must provide frequent and ongoing trainings on a wide range of subject material. This is no easy task, with the agency's more than 800 staff members off-site and also spread among 19 different program locations. "We needed to think differently," said Alicia-Ann Caesar, the agency's Director of Training. "The old training model, where everyone travels to a central location, is less than ideal for us. We want to place as little added work on our direct care staff as possible, and that means I need to be mobile."

Alicia-Ann developed the concept of a mobile training unit, which includes a dozen tablets with keyboards, a projector and large screen and specialized software. "I can pack everything into a travel kit and literally bring the training directly

to any of our sites," said Alicia-Ann. "This will help me to better serve all of our staff members and we are so grateful to Maxine for making this possible."



Alicia-Ann Caesar (left) unveils off the new mobile training unit to Maxine Myers