



Perspectives

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

November 2013

Friends of AVS Golf Open

The 2013 Friends of AVS Golf Open presented by AVS Foundation was held on Monday, August 12 at Green Oaks Country Club. Golfers gathered on a beautiful day to enjoy a golf scramble and to honor Myron Cope as the 2013 AVS CHAMPion.

Senator Rocks presented the award to Myron's daughter, Elizabeth, who shared thoughts on her extraordinary father and his commitment to Allegheny Valley School. Regis Champ, Dorothy Hunter Gordon and

Myron's cousin James Kopelman shared personal stories and facts about Myron, who remains beloved throughout Steelers Nation.

Gross proceeds from the day exceeded \$154,000 and were contributed to the Capital Development Fund. Pictured above is NHS Foundation Board Member Timyka Artist (center) with NHS Allegheny Valley School (NHS/AVS) consumers during the golf dinner.



NHS/AVS Wins Big at the 31st Annual Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix

The Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix (PVGP) celebrated its 31st year July 12-21 with car shows, parades, a gala, concerts, and vintage races. Proceeds from this annual event are donated to NHS/AVS and the Autism Society of Pittsburgh.

This year, PVGP Executive Director Dan DelBianco presented each charity with a \$175,000 check. Since its inception, the race has raised more than \$3.5 million for NHS/AVS and the Autism Society of Pittsburgh.

The PVGP, presented by Shop 'n Save, is led by more than 1,100 volunteers who come together to run the entire event from laying the race track, to collecting donations, to selling merchandise to patrons. The success of the event each year continues to bring race fans from around the world to Pittsburgh to experience this truly unique festival of vintage cars. This year, 80 NHS/AVS staff members, families and friends volunteered their time to manage the five merchandise booths throughout the park. We are grateful to all the volunteers and sponsors for their efforts

to ensure the event runs smoothly, is enjoyable for the spectators, and is a huge success for the charities.

Other events during the 10-day festival included the sold-out Black Tie and Tailpipes Gala and Tune-up at Bossa Nova. Both were supported by NHS/AVS staff and board members and helped to raise funds for NHS/AVS and the Autism Society of Pittsburgh.



NHS/AVS's PVGP Ambassador Brandon paints a section of the Ford Mustang banner on display during Race Weekend.

NHS/AVS Joins the Miracle League

Last spring, 13 individuals from the Clinton, Evergreen, Fox and Ohioview community group homes and the son of NHS Human Services Foundation Board Member Dorothy Pollon joined the Miracle League of Southwestern PA to play baseball in a tournament league created for individuals with special needs. Each week, these individuals and their accompanying staff members would dress in their team jerseys, travel to the Miracle League Field in Cranberry Twp., PA and play baseball for the evening against other teams in the league. More NHS/AVS consumers got involved by singing The Star Spangled Banner in front of 100 spectators during the Miracle League of Southwestern PA's Opening Day Ceremony (see top photo).

When the word got out after a successful spring season, several other group homes wanted to join a team for the fall season. NHS/AVS now has five Miracle League teams represented by 61 individuals.

Games last approximately one hour with each team playing two innings. The team line-ups are announced before each game followed by The National Anthem. Between the two innings participants, coaches, buddies and fans sing Take Me Out to the Ballgame. Each team member takes a turn at bat and circles the bases. Staff members, volunteers and fans cheer on the players as they come up to bat, and assist them in the outfield, as needed. All games end in a tie.

Please check avs.nhsonline.org this spring for information on attending a game and cheering for one of the NHS/AVS teams.



Day of Giving Benefits NHS/AVS Consumers

The Pittsburgh Foundation's fifth annual Day of Giving was held on October 3. This year NHS/AVS received 78 donations. Including a match of 13 percent from The Pittsburgh Foundation, we received nearly \$11,000 for the Capital Development Fund. NHS Human Services Foundation also participated this year and received \$1,500.

During the Day of Giving, donors contributed online to their favorite Allegheny and Westmoreland County eligible charities, with each gift receiving a 13 percent

match. This year The Pittsburgh Foundation made \$750,000 available for the match in Allegheny County and \$95,000 in Westmoreland County.

Thank you to all of the donors who supported Allegheny Valley School and NHS Human Services Foundation during the Day of Giving.

WhisperGLIDE® Swing Added at Slippery Rock Program Center

Through the generous support of 25 donors, NHS/AVS's Slippery Rock Program Center will acquire a WhisperGLIDE® Swing, sensory equipment and other items for the SRPC. The WhisperGLIDE wheelchair accessible swing is for all ages and ability levels. With the swing, those using wheelchairs for mobility are able to enjoy the outdoors with friends. The motion of the swing, along with the table, make it an enjoyable way to visit with others.

More than \$10,000 was provided by 25 donors from an appeal made this past summer. The swing will be added to the SRPC Sensory Garden in the spring of 2014, and sensory equipment and other program enhancements will be purchased on an on-going basis. We are grateful for the generous community response to our request for support!



Sarah visits with staff member Tina on the WhisperGLIDE Swing.

Walter F. and Ellen H. Nicoden Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation

Through a grant received from the Walter F. and Ellen H. Nicoden Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, funding is available to support recreational activities and programs for NHS/AVS consumers and their accompanying staff members.

Since the grant was received in June, numerous activities have been undertaken including: 106 consumers and staff members attended an autism-friendly performance of Disney's The Lion King, and more than 80 will attend an autism-friendly performance of The Nutcracker in December; the residents and staff members from Cherry experienced a Poconos Mountain

vacation; a Smart Board was acquired for the Philadelphia Campus; more than 20 western PA consumers participated in equestrian therapy programs; 61 individuals suited up to play ball through the Miracle League; western PA consumers enjoyed a Halloween dance; consumers from Fox began a 9-month series of pottery classes; and more.

We are grateful for the bequest of Walter F. and Ellen H. Nicoden that is providing enriching opportunities for the children and adults in NHS/AVS's care.

Out and About with NHS/AVS Thanks to our Supporters

Individuals from NHS/AVS enjoy active social lives throughout the year and visit many museums, sporting events, festivals and more. Thank you to the many families, friends and donors who made these activities possible. Below are some of the exciting places that the individuals visited this year.

Cultural Events: Disney on Ice, Disney's The Lion King Autism-Friendly performance, Concerts at First Niagara Pavilion, Hershey's Chocolate World, Italian American War Veterans Cruise on the Gateway Clipper Fleet, performances at Mann Music Center, New Cumberland Apple Festival, A Night To Remember Dance through Discovery Christian Church, The Nutcracker Autism-Friendly performance, local church services, Pittsburgh Irish Festival, Pittsburgh Musical Theater performances of Sound of Music, Tarzan, Children of Eden and Sleeping Beauty, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra outreach concerts, Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium, Pride of the Susquehanna Riverboat, Sesame Street Live, Wildwood Nature Park.

Amusement Parks: Co-Co Key Water Park, Idlewild Park and SoakZone, Kennywood Park and Sandcastle.

Sporting Events: Beth Shalom Synagogue annual sports luncheon, hometown teams including the Hershey Bears, Harrisburg Senators, Philadelphia Eagles, Philadelphia Phillies, Pittsburgh Passion, Pittsburgh Penguins, Pittsburgh Pirates, Pittsburgh Power and Robert Morris University.

The Many Faces of NHS

In April, NHS's Chairman and CEO the Honorable M. Joseph Rocks welcomed family members, friends, community leaders and others for The Many Faces of NHS. More than 125 guests gathered at the LeMont Restaurant on Pittsburgh's Mount Washington to witness the breathtaking views and learn about NHS, its impact in western Pennsylvania, and how its programs and services can help respond to our community's needs. Throughout the region, NHS provides services to 1,900 people, and employment to more than 2,200.

In a resolution by the Council of the City of Pittsburgh, sponsored by Councilman William Peduto, Wednesday, April 10 was proclaimed The Many Faces of NHS Day.

Participating in the evening's program were NHS Human Services Foundation board members Timyka Artist, Tom Burkholder, John Frisch, Jerry Mauro and Dorothy Pollon, who shared with the guests their passion for, and commitment to the NHS mission.

Underwriting The Many Faces of NHS were title sponsor Higher Information Group, and presenting sponsors Tom Burkholder, Anna & Ed Dunlap, LeMont Restaurant, HAR-KEL, INC. Medical Specialties, Toni J. Pacé, J&P Service Management Co., Inc., Carol & Richard Patterson, and The Pollon Family.



Pictured above: NHS Human Services Foundation board members John Frisch, Jerry Mauro, Timyka Artist, Senator Rocks, Dorothy Pollon and Tom Burkholder.

Growing our Programs

Program Development at NHS/AVS

Through generous support from the community, NHS/AVS has been able to enhance its programming to better serve the individuals in its care. During the past two years, funding has been secured for NHS/AVS to develop innovative programs that will expand consumer options and greatly benefit the children and adults we serve.

Dental Sensory

The Dental Sensory program's goal is to reduce consumer anxiety during the dental process and improve oral health. Since funding from FISA Foundation was received in 2011, we have identified more than 40 individuals for the study, secured consents for their participation, gathered baseline vital statistics and videotapes, identified and secured sensory equipment and tools, and begun the second round of participant videotaping (with the equipment in use). The dental sensory project is being well received by all involved, from the dentist and other medical professionals to the consumers and those gathering data during the dental exams.

Specialized Alzheimer's/Dementia

Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) are living longer, thanks to early intervention, better healthcare and enhanced community supports. While this is a positive trend, the aging of the population brings new challenges, including higher rates of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. To increase supports for individuals at NHS/AVS who are affected, as well as their families and the employees who provide their care, funding was secured from the Polk Foundation to enhance our approach to screening and diagnosis, redesign one of our residences, offer new programming, provide training and support for staff, families and peers, and develop strategies to improve access to quality care through advocacy, research and collaboration. We are excited to begin launching components of our new Alzheimer's/Dementia Program on the Pittsburgh Campus in 2014.

Mansion Market

The first NHS/AVS store and café, the Mansion Market, will be launched at our Patricia Hillman Miller Campus thanks to the generosity of The Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust. The store will allow consumers to learn and practice financial management and communications skills on a regular basis.

Compressed Natural Gas Vehicle

Through a grant from Polk Foundation, NHS/AVS's Patricia Hillman Miller Campus will exchange one of its gasoline fueled buses for a bus that will be fueled by compressed natural gas. There are many benefits to using natural gas including its reliability, cost, cleanliness and the fact that it is locally produced.



Stephanie and Sarah are joined by staff members Antoine and Mary at PHMC's Mansion Market.

Assistive Technology: NHS Human Services is undertaking a number of assistive technology projects, including two that are being led out of NHS/AVS in Western PA. In addition to the two NHS/AVS projects, which are underwritten by Polk Foundation, the overall NHS Assistive Technology project will include four other demonstration projects in NHS Central/Western and Eastern regions serving individuals with I/DD and Adult Behavioral Health. The NHS/AVS projects are as follows:

Assistive Technology: *Smart Homes*

The Smart Home core committee is exploring how we can utilize innovative technologies within our homes to improve consumer quality of life and independence. There are many exciting opportunities to partner with those on the cutting edge in this field, and the committee is working to incorporate useful tools into a new NHS/AVS group home. With items such as Smart TVs, remote controlled home systems, iPad and iPhone applications, and motorized adaptive kitchen components, the possibilities are endless. A pilot location has been selected and in the coming months we will be implementing new technologies into the location and assessing efficiencies gained and the impact on the lives of those we serve.

Assistive Technology: *Communications & Technology*

NHS/AVS is developing a new Communications & Technology Program to improve the quality of life for its consumers by helping them leverage the internet to stay in touch with family and friends, communicate with members of their support services team, acquire basic computer skills, and explore other interests. We have partnered with the US Department of Homeland Security's national Stop.Think.Connect campaign for guidance on safeguarding privacy, and are reviewing products that have been designed to meet the needs of individuals with I/DD. In addition to acquiring new equipment, we will be providing training for staff and families, to ensure the technology is used effectively and safely.

Questions? Contact Dorothy Hunter Gordon at dgordon@nhsonline.org or 412-299-7777.

Connect with us!

Website: avs.nhsonline.org

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