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Newsletter

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR / CEO

Dear Friends,

In this, our 55th year of service to children and families in our community, I extend my heartfelt thanks for the generosity of all of our donors, volunteers and partners. Your support makes a real difference in the lives of the children and families we serve.

A special thanks goes to all the organizations and individuals in the Hudson Valley community and beyond who helped make it possible for the children in our Residential Programs in Rhinebeck, NY to be able to swim in their newly renovated swimming pool this summer. The pool was

completed and opened on June 21st.

The swimming pool is an integral part of our summer recreation program and was in need of significant repairs. For almost 30 years, the swimming pool has been important to the children's therapeutic activities, and on a more basic level, they have had the opportunity to experience the simple pleasure of play!

On behalf of our children, our Board of Directors and staff, I offer our sincere gratitude to each person and organization, who

through their generous support, guaranteed the successful completion of the extensive pool renovations.

Other examples of our donor's generosity are illustrated in this issue of our newsletter. We look forward to your continued support.

Best Regards,

James McGuirk, Ph.D.
Executive Director/CEO

OUR MISSION

The Astor Home for Children promotes the emotional well being of children, youth and families through leadership in the development and provision of preventive and treatment-oriented behavioral health services and early childhood education.

ASTOR'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ASTOR HOME FOR CHILDREN/ ASTOR LEARNING CENTER

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Lawrence Weisberg, Co-Vice Chair
Michael C. Betros, Treasurer
David A. Crenshaw, Ph.D., Secretary
J. Joseph McGowan, Esq., Asst. Secretary
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John E. Hoey, MD
Julie H. Krieger
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BOARD OF TRUSTEES ASTOR HOME FOR CHILDREN FOUNDATION

James McGuirk, Ph.D., President
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PUBLIC POLICY BREAKFAST

On March 25, 2008, in partnership with the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce, we hosted our annual Public Policy Breakfast. The keynote speaker, Dr. Donald Meichenbaum, presented "Creating a Safe Community." He offered an audience of business and community leaders a positive perspective on how to create safety in the community, and illustrated the cost to society of violence in youth and its long-term implications for the community.

Following the breakfast, Astor also sponsored a special training workshop with Dr. Meichenbaum that was opened to mental health professionals, nurses, psychiatrists, students, interns, teachers, school clinicians and educators, and agencies. Dr. Meichenbaum offered specific strategies to use evidence-based programs to alter the developmental course of high-risk children, youth and their families.



(From Left to Right) James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, Dr. Meichenbaum, Board Members Charles R. Daniels, III, and Scott D. Bergin, Esq.

EMPLOYEES OF ASTOR'S CHILD GUIDANCE CENTER IN THE BRONX TO PRESENT AT CONFERENCE

Jamila Codrington, Ph.D., Supervising Psychologist, June Helme, LCSW, Program Director, Analisa Cussi, LCSW and Jacqueline Rosado's proposal, "A Grass Roots Approach to Building a Collaborative and Culturally Sensitive Mental Health Agency in the Bronx," was accepted as a 40 minute panel presentation at Lehman College's 25th Anniversary Conference on Urban Social Work. The conference will be held on November 18, 2008.

ASTOR HAPPENINGS

Our Children & Families...

STUDENT OF THE YEAR FEATURED IN POUGHKEEPSIE JOURNAL

On June 19, 2008, Ramel Jackson took both the Student of the Year Award and the Golden Sneaker Award for top male student athlete during the annual children's award ceremony for the Residential Programs in Rhinebeck, NY and its award winning special education school, The Astor Learning Center. This ceremony celebrates the achievements of the children in the Residential Programs by honoring each child with an award. Ramel's story was so inspiring that he was interviewed by the Poughkeepsie Journal and featured in an article entitled *Boy Changes, Knowing Others Care*, published in the Journal on July 28, 2008.



The 2008 Golden Sneaker Award

“This Awards Ceremony is a reminder to all of us why at Astor we believe in the importance of focusing and celebrating each child's strength.

The joy and pride I saw on their faces as they received their awards was wonderful. The staff worked hard to make it a very special day for the children, families and friends, and I thank them all,” says John Kelly, Assistant Executive Director, The Astor Home for Children, Residential Programs.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATES IN TURNOFF TV WEEK

Astor's Early Childhood Program in Pine Plains participated in Turnoff TV Week, April 20 – 26, 2008. This national program encourages children and adults to watch less television in order to have more time for a healthier life and greater community participation. It also aims to increase parents' awareness of the number of hours children watch TV and to offer suggestions for reading together, getting outside, and playing board games. To begin the event, donated toys and books were given to children and their parents. Parents received a calendar to document their activities and each family received a certificate for their efforts to cut down or eliminate TV watching for the week. The program was a success with many families participating and enjoying activities together.

DESIGNS BY BENJAMIN

On May 29, 2008, Benjamin, a 13 year old student in our Residential Programs, unveiled his own designs with a fashion show in Founder's Hall in Rhinebeck. Benjamin, who would like to become a fashion designer, was encouraged by staff members to pursue his dream. Staff members and volunteers worked with Benjamin for over a year so that he was able to complete his art: from choosing fabrics to learning about fashion design, sketching, to putting on the actual show. The fashion show was attended by staff, students, friends and family with standing room only! Benjamin was the Master of Ceremonies, and discussed in great detail each design concept. We are very proud of his hard work and dedication and thank the staff and volunteers who worked with Benjamin to help him begin his dream of becoming a fashion designer. Benjamin, we will see you on the runway!



Child Care Director, Beatriz Vides, Showing Dolls that are Dressed in Benjamin's Clothing Designs

ASTOR HONORS FOSTER PARENTS

May is National Foster Care Month, and to honor the many families we work with at Astor, the staff at Astor's Foster Care Program recognized and thanked their foster parents for all their hard work by treating them to a dinner on May 5, 2008. This was a very special celebration. Two of our families that have adopted their foster children were honored, and we are delighted that they will continue to care for other foster children in their homes. In addition, we thanked our families that have been with us for many years; some for as many as 10 years! It was a successful and rewarding evening where we were able to show our appreciation for all that these families do for our children.

GIFTS & DONATIONS

How your donations are helping...



Bridget Reading to Kids

YOUNG GIRL GIVES TO ASTOR

When Bridget McGuigan decided to compete for her Girls Scout Bronze Award (the highest award for Junior Girls Scouts), she chose to have a book/DVD drive and have Astor's Early Childhood Program be the recipient. Bridget recruited her friends and family to

assist her. She collected a van load full of books and DVDs that she delivered to the Early Childhood Program Library with the help of her mom, brother and a friend. During her visit, Bridget was fascinated to learn that we have volunteers who come and read to the children and decided that this was something she would like to do. Bridget returned at a later date to read and play her violin for the children. Both the staff and children were overwhelmed by her acts of generosity. One is never too young to give and we thank Bridget for her generosity!

FIRST DUTCHESS QUILTERS KEEP ASTOR CHILDREN IN WARMTH AND COMFORT

Ms. Pat Comeford and Ms. Helen Cassidy are members of the First Dutchess Quilters, a group in Poughkeepsie, NY that meets regularly to quilt. This group, being familiar with Astor's Residential Programs, decided to make quilts for each child in the Programs (a total of 75). To see the children's faces when they are given their handmade quilt is priceless! When you see the colorful quilts on the children's beds one can appreciate their comfort in having their own personally made quilt. The time, love and dedication the quilters put into making each quilt is enormous and we are forever thankful to them for bringing such joy to our children. They will continue to make quilts for all the new children!



Gathering at Millerton Ceremony

ASTOR AWARDED \$20,000 IN LEGISLATIVE GRANTS

Astor's Early Childhood Program in Millerton, NY received a generous legislative grant in the amount of \$20,000 from both State Senator Vincent Leibell and State Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro to make much needed safety improvements to the facility and for program upgrades. Both were able to procure \$10,000 each in funding from the state.

On July 31, 2008 a ceremony was held at the Millerton location where Senator Leibell and Assemblyman Molinaro were thanked for their work on behalf of the children of Astor. They received a tour of the facility with Astor's staff, and some board members who were on hand for the ceremony. Assemblyman Molinaro said the work we do is "phenomenal" and much-admired. "There are children and families who very much need their services" he said. "What Astor does to improve the quality of life in these communities is vital," said Senator Leibell.

"We really depend on the public and on private partnerships to make sure we have the resources that make our work possible," James McGuirk, Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children said. "One of the things we do know, is that investing in young children pays significant dividends in the course of a child's life."

(LEFT) Pat Comeford Delivers Quilts to the Children

GIFTS & DONATIONS CONT.

How your donations are helping...

We are very grateful to all our donors who make such a difference in the lives of children and families that we serve. Now more than ever, we need your support. There are many ways in which you can help to have a positive impact in our children's lives, whether it is through cash, matching gifts, gifts of securities, gifts made in memory of a loved one, or in-kind donations. All of these gifts help us to fulfill our mission; to promote the well being of children, youth and families. To learn more about making a donation please call (845) 871-1117 or visit us online at www.astorservices.org. Thank you.

HACKETT FOUNDATION DONATES \$30,000 TO RENOVATE COTTAGE

The Hackett Foundation donated \$30,000 to support the renovation of the children's bathrooms in the "cottage" which is part of the Residential Programs in Rhinebeck, NY, and is now over 100 years old. "The cottage provides a wonderful haven for the children. It is located on a stream in a very tranquil setting. The renovation of these bathrooms will improve the quality of the children's living conditions, something we are deeply committed to. We are so thankful to the Hackett Foundation for this generous gift" said James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children.

EMPLOYEE NEWS

ASTOR HONORS CHILD CARE DIRECTOR

Beatriz Vides, Child Care Director of Astor's Residential Programs, received the Joel Robert Crenshaw Award for 2008. This award is presented to a staff member and student each year during the awards ceremony for the children's Residential Programs, and our award winning special education school, The Astor Learning Center, in Rhinebeck, NY. David Crenshaw, Ph.D., member of Astor's Board of Directors, presented Beatriz with this award, which is made in honor of his brother. Recipients of this award best exemplify the "Spirit of Astor" by demonstrating caring, resiliency, compassion and a commitment to others. Ms. Vides was recently appointed to the Board of the Mid-Hudson Coalition for the Development of Direct Support Practice. She is "looking forward to working with all the partners who support the professionalism of direct care workers".

NEW APPOINTMENT AT ASTOR



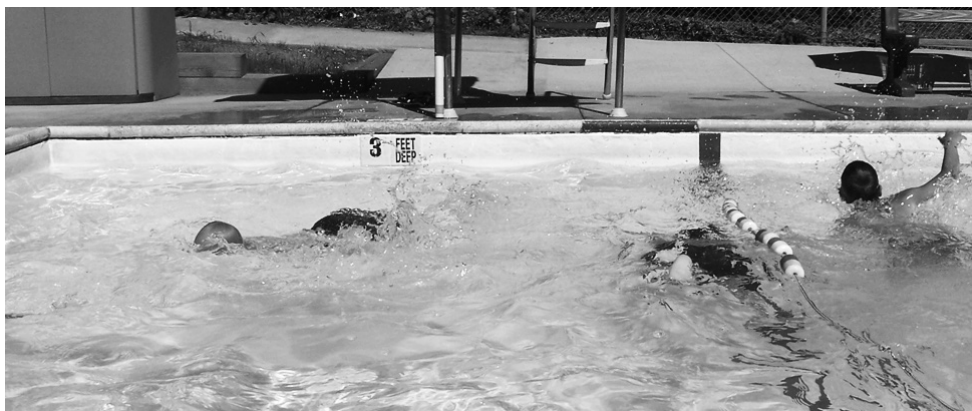
Yvette Bairan was appointed Corporate Compliance Officer for Astor. This new position was created in order to proactively address the increased emphasis on compliance in Medicaid billing and to protect the interests of Astor's Medicaid-funded services by complying fully with government regulations. Ms. Bairan holds a Masters in Public Administration from New York University, and has held leadership, oversight and development positions in human services and not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Bairan will work closely with service area Assistant Executive Directors, program

leadership and program-specific compliance staff to ensure the appropriateness of services, levels of reimbursement, and documentation of services billed under our Medicaid programs. "If you don't know who the Corporate Compliance Officer is, look for the person in the back room who is always reading through publications containing columns of almost indecipherably tiny print. I will be the one probably saying 'no' to your 'yes' when there are uncertainties in the regulations but compliance is a responsibility that we all share," says Ms. Bairan.

ASTOR PSYCHOLOGIST TO HEAD ASSOCIATION

Jamila Codrington, Supervising Psychologist (Bronx, NY), was elected president of the New York Association of Black Psychologists, a chapter of the National Association.

EVENTS CORNER



Proceeds from our 2008 Sponsorship Campaign, Annual Dinner and Annual Stenberg Cup Golf Tournament, as well as direct donations, went to support the renovation of the swimming pool. We thank all our donors who attended and supported our events. Your donations have had a direct and positive impact on the quality of life for our children!

(LEFT) Renovated Swimming Pool

ASTOR'S 7TH ANNUAL DINNER HELD AT LOCUST GROVE



Shawn Pratt (left) receives Award from Sr. Rose Logan

Our 7th Annual Dinner was held on May 9, 2008 at Locust Grove, The Samuel Morse Historic Site, in Poughkeepsie. It was a wonderful evening of wine pairing, music, dancing and fun. We honored former members of the Board, Walter Cadette, Mike Mazzarella and Shawn Pratt for their dedication to Astor and to the community. Mike Mazzarella was presented with the Serena Branson Award by Senator Salland, Shawn Pratt, and Walter Cadette were presented with the Rose Logan Volunteer Service Award and the Louise Marillac Public Service Award, respectively, by Sr. Rose Logan.

We were delighted to present Anthony Gargiula and his brother Louis, who performed. Anthony, the youngest person to sing at Carnegie Hall, has been featured on the Today Show and the Ellen DeGeneres Show!

Mark your calendar for our 8th Annual Dinner at Locust Grove, on May 1, 2009

10TH ANNUAL STENBERG CUP GOLF TOURNAMENT

A good time was had by all who attended our 10th Annual Stenberg Cup Golf Tournament, held on June 19, 2008, at Dutchess Golf and Country Club, in Poughkeepsie, NY.

This fun-filled day included 18 holes of golf, barbeque lunch and a gourmet buffet dinner. The weather was perfect for golfing!

Mark your calendar for the 11th Annual Stenberg Cup Golf Tournament in June, 2009



Mazzarella Foursome

EVENTS CORNER CONT.



Hickey Family

FIRST PHASE OF THE JEAN HICKEY GARDEN BIKE PATH IS COMPLETED

On April 8, 2008, Mr. Lawrence F. Hickey (for whom the center is named) along with his daughters Magee Hickey, Jane Hickey Sexton, Elizabeth Lavin and son, Frank Hickey, visited the children at the Lawrence F. Hickey Center for Child Development. The Hickey's were greeted with warm welcomes and a special singing and music presentation by the children.

The Hickey's were also presented with a design of the soon to be dedicated "Jean Hickey Garden Bike Path", courtesy of Mr. Anthony (Tony) Feoktistoff, Architect. This bike path, made possible by the donations received in Mrs. Hickey's memory, will provide the children with many years of enjoyment – a fitting tribute to this selfless woman!

BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

The Hudson Valley Chapter of Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A) held their annual Barbecue and Backpack Run on August 17 to benefit Astor's Residential Programs in Rhinebeck, NY.

Bikers Against Child Abuse is an international non-profit organization that promotes the protection of children against all forms of child abuse. Over 150 bikers participated, with each making a donation that went toward backpacks filled with school supplies for the 75 children in Astor's Residential Programs in Rhinebeck, NY. Following the bike run, the riders and kids were treated to a barbecue and live music. The children enjoyed face and nail painting, judging the best bikes and other bike competitions. It was a full day of fun and excitement for the children and the bikers!

2008 Holiday Adopt-A-Family Program

YOU CAN HELP THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!

This year, more than ever, we need your help to donate gifts to the children and families in our programs. Our Holiday Secret Shopper Program matches children and families in need with volunteers that are able to buy gifts. Many of the children that we help need basic goods and toys, such as:

- Winter Clothing
- Books
- Arts & Craft Supplies
- Stuffed Animals
- Hats and Mittens
- Board Games
- Sport Supplies
- Gift Certificates

**Every child deserves to have happy memories of the holiday season.
Please lend your support to make this wish come true.**

Call Stephanie Habich at (845) 871-1171 to learn more about how you can help this holiday season with gifts to families in need, or visit us online at www.astorservices.org.

DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ **Astor** serves over 6,000 children, adolescents and their families, annually.
- ▶ **Astor** is located in Rhinebeck, NY and in multiple locations throughout the Hudson Valley and in New York City (Bronx).
- ▶ For over 55 years, **Astor** has offered nationally-acclaimed programs.
- ▶ **Astor** led the creation of the Dutchess County Zero to Three Partnership.
- ▶ **Astor** is credited by the Joint Commission
- ▶ In 2005, **Astor** opened ASTOR at Highbridge, a new children's mental health clinic in the Bronx, NY.
- ▶ **Astor** is recognized as a National School of Excellence by the US Department of Education.
- ▶ **Astor** provides services in early childhood, community-based and residential mental health



SAVE THE DATE!

DECEMBER 6, 2008

ST. NICK'S CRAFT FAIR

MAY 1, 2009

ANNUAL DINNER

JUNE, 2009

STENBERG CUP GOLF TOURNAMENT

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.ASTORSERVICES.ORG OR CONTACT US BY EMAIL: ASTOR@ASTORSERVICES.ORG



THE ASTOR HOME FOR CHILDREN

...Because Every Child Deserves a Childhood

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