



# TIE LINE

Newsletter

Fall/Spring 2009 Volume 31

[www.astorservices.org](http://www.astorservices.org)

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO

“Astor has been blessed with the  
outpouring of generosity...”

- James McGuirk, Ph.D.



James McGuirk, Ph.D.  
Executive Director/CEO

I want to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt “thank you,” to all our donors and volunteers who made our children’s Christmas a happy and memorable one. I know this is a particularly difficult time for our community, nation and world. We at Astor feel fortunate to have been blessed with the outpour of generosity we received during the Christmas season.

As you read though this issue of our newsletter, acts of generosity are highlighted throughout – from the seniors from John Jay H.S. donating their time, talent and treasures, to the many individuals and organizations in our community who participated in our Adopt-A-Family/Secret Shopper Program.

As this newsletter goes to press, reports on the worsening economic conditions dominate the media as well as the potential cuts in government spending for much needed programs. While I do not know when or how this will be resolved, I do know that Astor will continue to provide high quality service to the children and families we serve. Now more than ever we need your help as we navigate through these turbulent times and are thankful for all your support!



# ASTOR'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ASTOR HOME FOR CHILDREN/ ASTOR LEARNING CENTER

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## ASTOR APPOINTS NEW BOARD MEMBER



Lawrence Weisberg

Lawrence (Larry) Weisberg was elected Chair of the Board of Directors of The Astor Home for Children by Catholic Charities Alliance. Larry has had a 40-year career in advertising, marketing and education. He returned to Dutchess County in 2002 and became involved with Astor in 2004, when he began volunteering at the residential program in Rhinebeck. He joined the Board in 2006. Larry recently retired from his position as a director of communications for the large healthcare philanthropy, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Larry is a native of the Town of Poughkeepsie and a graduate of the Arlington School system. He received his BA and MBA from Columbia University in New York City. "The Astor family feels very fortunate to have Larry as the new Board Chair. He brings a wealth of knowledge and leadership experience to this position. We are especially grateful for his dedication to, and compassion for the children and families we serve," said James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children.

## PUBLIC POLICY BREAKFAST

The Sixth Annual Public Policy Breakfast, hosted by The Astor Home for Children and the Dutchess County Regional Chamber of Commerce took place on Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Poughkeepsie Grand Hotel. The event was a great success, attended by over 100 business and community leaders from around the Hudson Valley. Dr. Sandra Bloom, Board-Certified psychiatrist, addressed the audience on the topic "Does Childhood Matter to Adults?" by presenting information about childhood trauma and the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study.



Dr. Sandra Bloom

The ACE Study was conducted in collaboration with the Center for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente. It is perhaps the largest scientific research study of its kind, analyzing the relationship between multiple categories of childhood trauma, and health and behavioral outcomes later in life. Dr. Bloom made a strong case for investing in programs that provide safe environments for children as one method for control health care costs in the future.

"I feel fortunate that we were able to have Dr. Bloom, a world renowned psychiatrist, address our community on the importance of supporting families of young children so that they may have a healthy start in life; and it is our responsibility as a community to play a role in that," says James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children. "On behalf of Astor and the Dutchess Regional Chamber of Commerce, a sincere thank you to all who participated and made our sixth annual Public Policy breakfast a great success!"

# ASTOR HAPPENINGS

## ASTOR DEDICATES NEW BIKE PATH IN THE BRONX

on November 13, 2008, Astor dedicated a new bike path in honor of the late Jean Hogan Hickey at The Lawrence F. Hickey Center for Child Development in the Bronx. The bike path was made possible in part by the generous donations by friends and family members in her memory.

“This new bike path is a wonderful addition to the Bronx facility and we are pleased to honor the Hickey legacy of generosity and charity by creating this beautiful outdoor space for the children to enjoy,” said James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO, The Astor Home for Children.



*The Hickey Family during Bike Dedication Ceremony*

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION

### MONOLOGUES FROM FIRST LADIES

The Setonite girls and staff from the residential program put on a great performance in honor of Black History Month on February 11th. Children and staff alike were educated on the contributions of some of the most influential and famous African-American women, and treated to dance performances, monologues, and even a bit of singing!



*One of the Setonite girls performing a monologue.*

### ASTOR'S CHILDREN ART GALLERY CELEBRATES PRESIDENT OBAMA & DR. KING'S HOPE AND DREAMS.

The art gallery at Astor's Rhinebeck, N.Y. location recently had a show of the children's work that celebrates the watershed historic appointment of Barack Obama to the Presidency of the United States as well as pay homage to the many achievements of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The show, Dream and Reality, celebrated the life of Dr. King and President Obama through a presentation of visual statements that depicts their connections and journey – one had a dream while the other made that dream a reality. One particularly poignant piece in the exhibition was the opportunity the children were given to parallel their greatness with that of President Obama's and Dr. King's- why President Obama and Dr. King were special and why they, too, are special.

## ASTOR RECEIVED NEW IBM KIDSMART COMPUTERS

On November 25, 2008 Astor and IBM celebrated 10 years of working together at a ceremony commemorating their combined efforts to bridge the digital divide in early education. To mark the occasion, Astor received a donation from IBM of seven KidSmart Young Explorer computer learning centers to help children with disabilities and their classmates learn to use computers together. Jim McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO of The Astor Home thanked IBM for their generous donation and years of continued support.



*Sheila Appel, Manager, Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Affairs.*

# ASTOR CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS: GIFTS & DONATIONS

## SENIORS FROM JOHN JAY HIGH SCHOOL BROUGHT CHRISTMAS CHEERS TO ASTOR'S CHILDREN

The senior class officers (Jimmy Dietrich, Matthew Newman, Michael Belluzzi and Michael Chaichai) from John Jay H.S. in Hopewell Junction, NY, under the leadership of their teacher, Michael Ambron, raised funds and chose the children in Astor's Residential programs as the beneficiaries.

The seniors, with one member dressed as Santa Claus, delivered the donated gifts to a very receptive, cheerful, and thankful audience. "It was amazing to see how happy each child was as they heard their name being called for a present – it was truly a priceless moment and I thank the senior class officers from John Jay H.S. who can't imagine the impact they made through their act of generosity," says Brian Day, Associate Director of Childcare.



Senior class officers from John Jay High School.

## CHRISTMAS DONATIONS "THANKS"

On behalf of the children and families we serve, we want to thank all our donors who made it possible for our children to have a happy holiday season, especially during these hard economic times.

In the Hudson Valley region, donors assisted over 1,000 children and families. Thanks to the many individuals, schools, youth groups, churches and businesses who "adopted" children and families through Astor's Adopt-A-Family/Secret Shopper Program.

The community showed its support in many ways: gifts were collected from

malls and workplace toy drives, and some very gracious families made the decision to purchase gifts for Astor's children in lieu of buying gifts for each other. Many companies and individuals adopted families or children, donating toys, home goods, and other items.

Astor extends its heartfelt thanks to many individuals, families, organizations for their generous donation, support and compassionate dedication to the success of our community's family's donors.

## FAMILY HOLIDAY PARTY-HOME-BASED SERVICES

On December 10th, the Home-Based Services held its annual holiday party at Locust Grove, Samuel Morse Historical Site. There were 29 families consisting of 75 children, 48 parents and guardians, 3 Parent Advisory Board volunteers, 2 Youth Leadership Group volunteers, 10 Astor Staff members, and The Big Joe Fitz Band. By the end of the evening children were snapping their fingers, tapping their toes, dancing and "air guitaring" to the catchy beats of the wonderful music. The Family Holiday Party was a great way to kick off the holiday season with warm memories of family and new friends.

## ASTOR'S ANNUAL ST. NICK'S CRAFT FAIR: A WORK OF LOVE AND FRIENDS



Astor's Rhinebeck location held its annual St. Nicholas Day Craft Fair on Saturday, December. Children, staff and volunteers from the many Astor locations, worked all year long to create unique handmade crafts, delicious baked goods and beautiful holiday plants to raise money for children who receive Astor services.

The craft fair featured a variety of kids' art, decorations, wreaths and arrangements, knitted items, ornaments, cards and more. It was a fun filled day for shoppers, and even Santa couldn't resist getting a little holiday shopping done!

# ASTOR CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS: GIFTS & DONATIONS

## ASTOR'S CHILDREN PARTICIPATED IN THE SINTERKLAAS PARADE

A small group of Astor's children in the Residential programs participated in the annual Village of Rhinebeck Sinterklaas (or St. Nicholas as he is known today) celebration. This Dutch holiday festival celebrates the world in all its diversity and incorporates elements from African, Mexican, Native American, English, Irish, Dutch, Swedish, Balkan, German, French, Russian, Australian and Israeli cultural traditions. Sinterklaas brings light, love, generosity, warmth, and is the guardian of children.

In preparation for the Sinterklaas Parade, that took place on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the children attended a puppet workshop and created puppets to include in the day of the celebration. The day



*An Astor child practices carrying her puppet for the parade.*

of the parade, 24 children went to the branch and crown activity at the church, participated in the parade and attended the various performances scattered around town. Even with the cold, the celebration was a big hit!



*Astor children in the Sinterklaas parade.*

## BRONX HOLIDAY PARTY

Stephen Jackson, RoaDDoggZ Productions and Patrick Plummer, Secretary/Treasurer, CWA Local 1182 Union (Traffic and Sanitation) helped make it a wonderful holiday season for 36 children in the Bronx. On December 22<sup>nd</sup>, they played Santa by catering lunch and bringing gifts from each child's wish list, while donning a Santa costume. The children were very delighted and thankful!

"It was a great experience to spend yesterday with the students and staff. I'm really glad that the students liked the gift. As always, when I interact with Astor I have a great time," said Stephen Jackson. The staff and children at Astor's Adolescent Day Treatment Program were very thankful to Mr. Jackson and Mr. Plummer for contributing to a day the children truly enjoyed!



*Santa with the volunteers*

## PROGRAM NEWS

### ASTOR OFFERS MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING THROUGH THEIR CLINIC-PLUS PROGRAM

(DUTCHESS COUNTY AND BRONX, NY)

The Child and Family Clinic Plus program (Clinic Plus), introduced to Dutchess County and in the Bronx, NY (Highbridge Section) in early 2007, is a part of a state-wide initiative by the NY State Department of Mental Health to transform mental health services for children and families. The purpose is early identification and intervention of social emotional problems in children ages 2 to 18. Astor is the only provider designated by the NY State Department of Mental Health to provide mental health screening of children in this age group in Dutchess County; and is one of four agencies in the Bronx to receive this classification as the result of a competitive bidding

process that was held throughout the five boroughs.

The Clinic Plus model requires the implementation of a public health approach to the delivery of mental health services bringing screening services to the broader community and into locations where children and adolescents can be found: schools, Head Start programs, day care centers, and their homes. The voluntary and confidential screening process is provided free of charge to all participants residing in Dutchess County and the Bronx.

Since the program's inception, the Dutchess and Bronx programs have screened thousands of new children. In addition, hundreds of children and their families are receiving treatment in their homes. These figures surpassed the state-wide goals by over 20%.

"The most important part of this program is that we no longer just sit back

and wait for children to have problems and then help them. We use the screening to find children who may be heading toward social and emotional behavioral problems and help them before they start losing friends, failing in school, and even getting into trouble with the police," says Dr. Konstantinos (Gus) Tsubris, Assistant Executive Director, Community-Based Services. Dr. Joan DiBlasi, Assistant Executive Director, Bronx Programs, concurs and added, "dedicated staff member's leadership in implementing Clinic Plus is helping to bring services from the confines of office based practice to the wider community."

Both programs will continue to increase the number of children receiving assessments and working with more children and their families, whose assessment results are positive.

## Children's Artwork



# EMPLOYEE NEWS

## ASTOR RECOGNIZES LONG-TERM EMPLOYEES AT ANNUAL DINNER



*From Left to Right: Dianne Terpening, Deputy Director (30 years of service) Sean McLaughlin, Director of Agency Operations (30 years of service) Cynthia Coons, Administrative Assistant (35 years of service)*

We held our annual Staff Recognition Dinner on Thursday, October 16th at Villa Borghese in Wappingers Falls, NY, where we recognized and thanked our long-term employees for their years of service, high level of commitment, and dedication to the children and families we serve. We were delighted to have over 400 staff, family and Board members in attendance. This year there was a record 89 staff members celebrating employment milestones that received special recognition: one employee was recognized for 35 years of service; four for 30 years; 13 for 20 years; 21 for 15 years; 17 for 10 years; and 31 for 5 years.

## ASTOR EMPLOYEE RECEIVES SHAKER AWARD

Katie (Kate) Lynn Castell, LCSW-R, Program Director, Astor’s Dutchess Community-Based Services, was recognized by the Greater Southern Dutchess Chamber of Commerce as a recipient of The 4th Annual Forty Under 40 Shaker Awards. These awards are given to forty individuals under the age of 40 who are committed to shaping our region and making it a better place for everyone.

“We are all very proud of Kate. Her dedication and commitment to children, families and her community is extraordinary. Kate always goes the extra mile to ensure they are getting the best possible service. She sees strengths in all the families we serve. The Shaker Award is a fitting way to honor Kate,” says James McGuirk, Ph.D., Executive Director / CEO, The Astor Home for Children.



*Katie (Kate) Castell*

“I am humbled and honored to be recognized for living my life in serve to others,” said Katie, a 14-year employee of Astor, upon receiving notification of her Shaker Award.

Kate and the other award recipients received their awards on March 9, 2009 during a dinner celebration at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center. Family members, friends and colleagues joined in her celebration.

## ASTOR EMPLOYEE PUBLISHED IN BOOK ON PLAY THERAPY

Athena A. Drewes, PsyD, RPT-S and Director of Clinical Training and APA Internship was recently published as editor of the book, “Blending Play Therapy with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.”

The book, released on February 24, 2009, features contributions from renowned leaders in the fields of play-based and cognitive behavioral therapy. Dr. Drewes has over 25 years of clinical experience with children and adolescents and has been published numerous times before on the topic of Play Therapy (the most recent of which was in the 2006 book, “Cultural Issues in Play Therapy”). Congratulations Dr. Drewes!

### PROMOTION ANNOUNCEMENT

Dianne Terpening has been promoted to Deputy Director for Astor’s Dutchess Community-Based Programs. Over the last six years, Dianne has been an integral part of the Dutchess programs. She has served with many Assistant Executive Directors and each has relied on her intelligence and expertise. Please join Astor in congratulating Dianne on her accomplishments!

# SAVE THE DATE!

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**May 1, 2009**

The Astor Home for Children Foundation's  
**8th Annual Benefit Dinner**

*Because every child deserves a CHILDHOOD...*



Mark your calendar for an evening of elegant dining with **Pamela's Travelling Feast** and wine pairing with **Benmarl & Millbrook** wineries.

Hosted at Locust Grove  
The Samuel Morse Site  
Poughkeepsie, NY

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Invitation to follow  
For more information call: 845-871-1171

**May 1, 2009**

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual Benefit Dinner**

Locust Grove, The Samuel Morse Site  
*Poughkeepsie NY*

**June 16, 2009**

**NYC Cocktail Reception**

The River Room, *New York NY*

**June 25, 2009**

**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Stenberg Cup  
Golf Tournament**

Dutchess Golf and Country Club  
*Poughkeepsie NY*

The Astor Home for Children Foundation  
*Because every child deserves a CHILDHOOD...*



**SAVE THE DATE**  
THURSDAY  
**JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup> 2009**

**11<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL STENBERG  
CUP GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Dutchess Golf and Country Club  
Poughkeepsie, NY

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For more information call: 845-871-1171

## DID YOU KNOW...

- ▶ ASTOR serves over 6,500 children, adolescents and their family each year, in over 25 locations in the Hudson Valley and in the Bronx, NY.
- ▶ ASTOR is a trusted provider of quality children's services for over 55 years.
- ▶ ASTOR is accredited by The Joint Commission since 1974.
- ▶ ASTOR is recognized as a National School of Excellence by the US Department of Education.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.ASTORSERVICES.ORG](http://WWW.ASTORSERVICES.ORG) OR CONTACT US BY EMAIL: [ASTOR@ASTORSERVICES.ORG](mailto:ASTOR@ASTORSERVICES.ORG)

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*...Because Every Child Deserves a Childhood*

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