

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the week were to be presented to an area organization, and they selected PEI Kids.

Melda Grant, coordinator of the Trenton School Based Youth Services Program, explains, "Because our focus is on violence prevention, we searched for an agency that supported any efforts to educate and teach skills to those who may become victims or perpetrators of violence. During one of our advisory board meetings, a member suggested PEI Kids. After the suggestion was made, I perused the PEI Kids website and then presented what I learned about your agency to the staff and student committee, and we all agreed. This, for us as a staff, was an opportunity to teach and model community service and civic responsibility."

On May 23, PEI Kids' staff members Melody Powell, Barrett Young (both pictured with staff and students) and Nicole Cody visited TCHS to meet with Melda and some of the students who helped organize the week's events.

They thanked them for their efforts and talked about how their donations will help support our programs that, in turn, help prevent violence. Many of the students remembered programs that PEI Kids presented while they were in elementary school like *NJ Child Assault Prevention (CAP)* and *Kids on the Block* from elementary school and were pleased that their donations would go toward these types of initiatives. Melda and the students then presented the check with the proceeds raised to PEI Kids.



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Spring into  
Summer 2008  
**INSIDE:**

- ❖ Auction News
- ❖ Tips for Parents
- ❖ Friends Near and Far



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\* Company/organization names for identification, not endorsement, purposes.

**'Graduates' STRIVE to Succeed**

Imagine this. Teens are ordered through juvenile court or probation to attend PEI Kids' *Juvenile Outreach Offenders Program (JOOP)* on Saturdays for twelve weeks. After they graduate from the program, many continue to attend, facilitating discussions and expressing how beneficial the program has been to them. Why, on a Saturday morning nonetheless? The reason? They have found their 'place' — a place where they belong, a place where they feel safe, a place where adults care about what happens to them.



manager of New Horizons Computer Learning Center in Hamilton, and talked to Rodney about *STRIVE* and his client's interest in learning all he could about graphic design. Rodney was so impressed by *STRIVE* that he offered that the teenager take courses twice a week, all at no cost. To date, the high schooler (pictured, center, with New Horizons' liaison Rob Sacks, left, and the teen's mentor at New Horizon, Ron Colonna, right)

It was not enough that we offer them a sanctuary to go to from their everyday lives. We recognize that these graduates have unrealized potential which is why PEI Kids launched the *STRIVE* program earlier this year, thanks to a grant from The Florence V. Burden Foundation. Why call it *STRIVE*? These are kids who are *striving* to be understood, *striving* to be successful when the odds are often against them.

In February, Barrett Young was hired as the *STRIVE* program manager. Four 'graduates' of *JOOP* were initially selected to partake in *STRIVE* for a six-month period based on their interest in continuing to improve themselves and learn new skills. The primary focus is on the development of job readiness, academic and social skills.

Positive results have already occurred in just a few short months. One teenager who wanted to develop his computer graphic design skills is attending classes, thanks to the generosity of a local training center. Barrett met with Rodney Watson, the general

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*A Stand for Peace*

If you live in Mercer County and read the local newspapers, unfortunately you see stories about the increasing number of violent crimes in the vicinity, in particular in Trenton. The stories are disturbing, especially since many of these crimes involve young people as both victims and as perpetrators.

Frustrated by these stories, staff and students at Trenton Central High School decided to take a stand against the violence and take a stand instead for peace. The school designated the week of May 29 "Stand for Peace Week." The week's activities were organized by the Trenton School Based Youth Services Program. The kickoff activity was a "Change War" which served as a competition between each grade level to encourage students to raise money by donating loose change. Four water bottles were set up to collect donations in the school's cafeteria, each water bottle representing a grade level. Staff and students decided that the funds raised by the end of

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# Good Food, Good Times, Good Cause — PEI Kids' 17th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

*Laissez les bons temps rouler!*  
Translation – let the good times roll! And the good times rolled indeed as PEI Kids held its 17th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction on Sunday, April 6. Over 150 guests attended the Mardi Gras-themed event which raised approximately \$50,000.

This event was held for the first time in Rider University's Cavalla Room. Our wonderful volunteers joined staff members early in the morning to transform the Cavalla Room into New Orleans (and stayed late in the evening to transform it back to the way it originally looked). Before dinner, attendees perused over 80 donated silent auction items. Proceeds raised by bidding for special items on "Elaine's Table" were designated toward Zeitz Campership scholarships, established in memory of PEI Kids founding board member Elaine B. Zeitz. The scholarships will send several children from our various programs to camp for one week this summer, kids who may not otherwise been able to attend camp without these scholarships.

Evelyn A. Gill welcomed the crowd. Nola R. Bencze, Esq. addressed the audience for the first time as president of the board of trustees. Evelyn and Nola presented Vince Piacente, Nola's predecessor, with an award com-



memorating the years he served as board president and for his continuous service to the board and to the agency (pictured).

Jerry Rife's Rhythm Kings performed Dixieland and traditional jazz tunes for our guests listening pleasures. Guests were served a five-course Mardi Gras-inspired menu courtesy of chefs John Henry, Jr. and Joe Russo from John Henry's

Seafood Restaurant; Scott Harrington from Aramark Higher Education; Joe Derrico from Revere Ristorante; and Joe Chell from Angeloni's Cedar Garden/MCCC



Conference Center. Guests feasted on delicacies including gumbo, jambalaya and bananas foster.

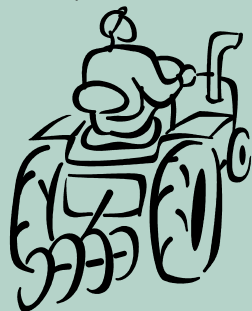
Our deepest appreciation goes to Aramark Higher Education for allowing the chefs to come into an exclusively catered place. The chefs (pictured) were honored at the end of the evening for sharing their talent and creating such innovative menus, making the dinner a memorable one each year.

The talented Brian Martin, president of Alison's Auctions, was once again our auctioneer this year, engaging our bidders to go higher and higher on ten live items that included a week stay in the Grand Cayman in an ocean-front condo at the Ritz-Carlton, a NASCAR package, tickets to Giants and Phillies games, and of course our

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## And An Auction of A Different Kind....

On February 29, a little over a month before PEI Kids 17th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, PEI Kids was involved with another auction. No one at this event was dressed in Mardi Gras garb nor was it held in a fancy ballroom. Instead of beads, these guests were bundled in warm clothing and the only decorations were the trees that adorned the great (and frigid) outdoors. Despite the cold weather, these auction goers — hard working farmers — came out to bid on tractors, seeders and other farming equipment. The auction site was Probasco Farms, LLC in Wrightstown, NJ, a longtime friend of the agency. PEI Kids' staff, board members and volunteers baked delicious treats that were sold at the auction, and many were on hand to cook and serve the hungry farmers meals and snacks throughout the day. The proceeds of the sales of the food went to PEI Kids. A special thanks to Probasco Farms for inviting PEI Kids to host their "concession barn" and to all the people who helped make the day a success!



## PEI Kids Receives Donations from Our Neighbors....

It's always great to have good neighbors! Here are the stories of two wonderful friends (one old, one new) of the agency, right in our backyard!

PEI Kids was honored once again to be the recipient of a grant from The Lawrence Township Community Foundation (LTCF). The Lawrence Township Community Foundation supports non-profit groups serving the needs of Lawrence Township, principally through grants contributed by its sponsors.

The foundation's support makes a significant impact on PEI Kids' *Crisis Intervention for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse Program*, as it helps to cover the costs of counseling for kids who reside in Lawrence Township. The foundation has provided support for this program for the past six years, and we at PEI Kids are grateful that the foundation continues to recognize how critically important it is to provide these children immediate intervention to facilitate the healing process for them and their families.



The awards were presented to Lawrence-based organizations at a ceremony on May 8 at Lawrence High School. Evelyn A. Gill, executive director of PEI Kids, accepted the check from foundation member, Joanne Adams (pictured, left, with Evelyn), and spoke to the audience about the services provided by the agency. She also thanked the foundation for their continuous support of PEI Kids and for the important role the foundation plays in the community.

Speaking of community, last fall, PEI Kids participated in Lawrence Township's Fall Harvest Festival with the

Lawrenceville Main Street Association and the Main Street branch of PNC Bank. During planning meetings, we got to know a wonderful lady named Donna Hopkins, who is the assistant vice president of the branch. Donna and PNC Bank are huge supporters of organizations in the community. When we asked Donna if she would be willing to collect stuffed animals on our behalf, she said yes immediately. Holding a few of the fuzzy creatures collected at the bank are, left to right, PNC Bank staff Mike McGee, Donna Hopkins, Jigna Desei, Michelle Griffith and Sauitha Vuppala.



## ....And Donations from Across the Miles



The "Kids Helping Kids" Campaign has now spread into another state. How did a Brownie troop from Yardley, PA discover PEI Kids and decide to direct their philanthropic efforts toward the agency? The credit goes to Renee Vecere Sudol, a former intern at PEI Kids. Renee's daughter, Margot, is a Brownie, and Renee wanted to do a project with the second graders in the troop on the importance of giving. With Renee's history with PEI Kids, she felt the agency was the perfect place to benefit from the Brownies' generosity.

First, the Brownies decided to donate \$100 of their proceeds from their Girl Scout cookies sales to PEI Kids. Then Renee asked if someone from PEI Kids would speak to the troop and if the girls could donate a 'few' stuffed animals. So on May 9, Nicole Cody spoke to girls about the meaning of philanthropy and PEI Kids and how the money they raised will go to support our programs and services. She also explained that donations are not just money but can be goods like stuffed animals, and how the stuffed animals they donated

would go to kids in our programs to help comfort them (note that the 'few' stuffed animals Renee spoke of were actually bags and bags filled with furry friends).

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infamous carved bear (pictured with the band). One live item, the "Chief for the Day" package, courtesy of Hopewell Police Chief and PEI Kids' board of trustees member George Meyer, created such a bidding war between two guests that Brian asked George if he would be willing to have two chiefs in town on two different days, and George happily agreed!

There are so many people to thank for making the evening such a success. There is not enough that can be said about our amazing volunteers. First, the volunteer committee for all of their hard work, including attending planning meetings, soliciting auction items, painting the dividers



that separated the dining area from the auction area on the weekend and as previously mentioned, setting up and cleaning up the Cavalla Room. Then there was our fantastic teen volunteer crew (pictured) who worked behind the scenes, organizing and packaging all of the items. Thanks to Sharon Cappella for volunteering to be our photographer for the evening. We would also like to express our gratitude to Rider University for providing us with such a wonderful space and for all of the help we received from their fabulous staff. Also, a special thanks to our corporate sponsors and our advertisers in our program booklet. Our sponsors included:

**Bourbon Street:** Verizon Communications

**Decatur Street:** Bloomberg, L.P.; Marty & Beth Deitchman; The Tuchman Foundation; and PNC Bank

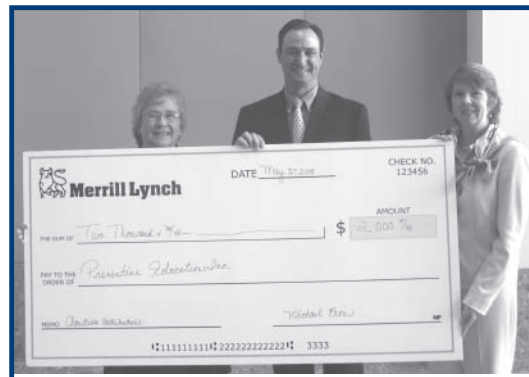
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**Orleans Avenue:** Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC; First Choice Bank; Riverfront Associates; Roma Bank; and V.J. Scozzari & Sons, Inc.



## The Story Behind PEI Kids BIG Check from Merrill Lynch

You may remember the story of Michael Pron that appeared in the Fall 2007 issue of *Postings*. To recap, in lieu of a party to mark his 25 years of service at Merrill Lynch, Michael asked his colleagues to donate the money they would have spent on a soiree to an organization near to his heart – PEI Kids. Michael and his wife, Nancy, have been ardent supporters of PEI Kids for years. the children we serve every day.



A check (a big one, literally) was presented to Evelyn A. Gill, executive director of PEI Kids, by Michael and his managing director, Deborah Shepherd at the Merrill Lynch offices in Princeton. "We at PEI Kids are grateful that Michael has selected us to be the recipient of this gift, which is such a wonderful way for Merrill Lynch to celebrate Michael's stellar career," says Evelyn. "His gift to PEI Kids will continue to touch the many lives of



## Tips for Parents

<http://ids.about.com/library/gallery/clipart/kateskipart/kids/>

*Tips for Parents is a semi-regular feature in the Postings newsletter. Note that the opinions expressed in this article by the writer are not necessarily those of PEI Kids.*

I started this article by asking parents what having a child leave for college is like. With that information and with my relatively recent experience of going off to school myself, I think I have a couple ideas that can help both the child and the parent in this transition.

What many people don't realize is that this experience can be just as scary and difficult for the parent as it is for the child. It can also be exciting and a wonderful beginning if you know how to cope with the situation. My biggest tip would be to sit down with your child before the day comes when they have to leave and create some general rules and understandings.

First, develop rules about communication. Are you going to call every other day? How often do you expect them to call? Maybe e-mail will work best at this time. E-mail may be the easiest way to communicate while you

## Leaving the Nest

by Jillian Roque



adjust to your new schedules. Second, develop ground rules about money. Will you provide them with an allowance? Will you give them a credit card? Is it only to be used for emergencies? Do you expect them to get a job? All of these issues should be worked out and discussed before the big day.

Now for the drop off day. Try your hardest not to become too emotional in front of your child. If your child does not display the emotions you wish they would, try not to take it personally. Remember, your child is probably torn between wanting their freedom and figuring out life on their own, without completely wanting to let go. Many parents experience the "empty nest syndrome" after the drop off. Do not expect yourself to get over it quickly. Give yourself and the rest of your family time to adjust, and remember your child will be home for holidays and most likely some week-ends during the semester. When your child does come home, they will most likely be excited about sleeping in their

bed and getting a home-cooked meal. As the parent you also have to realize that at college your child has not had a curfew, has not had someone who has to know where they are all the time, and has basically come and go as he/she pleases since school has begun. So try and sit down with your child and let them know your expectations of them while they are home.

It all comes down to open communication. Both the parent and the child have to be willing to compromise, and also willing to embrace this new time in their lives. If you only have one child, this change may seem to be slightly more drastic. But parents, this can be a time of new opportunities for you as well – perhaps a hobby that you did not have time for in the past. In time, you will come up with a system that works for you and it will become easier to cope with this new lifestyle.

*Jillian Roque is a recent Rider University graduate and former intern at PEI Kids. She received her BA in psychology and is planning to pursue her master's degree in the fall in school psychology.*

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has taken classes in PhotoShop and web design. Another young man will be working as a camp counselor this summer and was accepted into the Harris School's computerized accounting technology program.

PEI Kids has a few others to thank for helping the STRIVE program get off the ground. We recently received a grant from longtime supporter, Janssen L.P., for STRIVE and funding from a new supporter, The Merancas Foundation.

Now, the program has enrolled five more JOOP graduates, a total of nine teens in STRIVE. PEI Kids believes that for some of these youngsters this program could be just the beginning, the proverbial launching pad, for a far more positive future.

**Save the Date!** PEI Kids 11th Annual Golf Outing  
**Monday, September 15, 2008**  
 Falcon Creek Country Club  
 McGuire Air Force Base  
**Save the Date!**

PEI KIDS IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN.  
 PEI KIDS WORKS WITH THE CHILD, FAMILY AND CAREGIVER TO PROVIDE PREVENTION, EDUCATION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS RELATING TO PERSONAL SAFETY, SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE OVER ALL WELL-BEING OF THE CHILD.