

School Days, School Days

This September marked PEI Kids 23rd year presenting programs in Mercer County schools. Each year, the agency tries to broaden our horizons and offer programs and services to more and more new schools in the area. For the first time, PEI Kids will be presenting the *NJ CAP (Child Assault Prevention)* program at The Bridge Academy in Lawrenceville, a school dedicated to educating and empowering students with learning disabilities, and at St. Gregory the Great in Trenton, a school in which we developed a relationship last year through parent workshop programs for their PTO. In addition to NJ CAP, St. Gregory the Great will also be receiving the *No More Bullies, No More Victims* program for the first time as will Greenwood and Langtree Elementary Schools in Hamilton.



PEI Kids' *Trauma, Loss and Depression* program has also been implemented in three new schools – the McKnight Elementary School in East Windsor and the Klockner and McGalliard Elementary Schools in Hamilton. Children from these schools who have suffered a trauma or a loss or are showing early signs of depression will receive services from a counselor to help them develop positive coping skills and help them to heal.

PEI Kids is also presenting the *WhyTry?* program in two new schools this year — Mott and Monument Elementary Schools in Trenton. These schools, along with Dunn Middle School in Trenton, are also piloting exclusively girls *WhyTry?* groups, which have been funded by the Princeton Area Community Foundation's (PACF) Fund for Women and Girls. We are very excited to be working in these schools! The more schools we are in, the more kids we help!

United Way
of Greater Mercer County



Non-profit org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #96
Princeton, NJ

231 Lawrence Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
609-695-3739
www.peikids.org



Winter 2008

INSIDE:

- ❖ BlackRock Rocks
- ❖ PEI Kids' Events a Huge Success!
- ❖ Happy Campers



Board of Trustees*

Nola R. Bencze, Esq., President
Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC

Thomas A. Bartlett
Verizon Communications

James Bortolotti
First Choice Bank

Martin J. Deitchman
TGS Management Corporation

Jane Lowe-Rodriguez
The Tuchman Foundation

George C. Meyer
Hopewell Township Police Dept.

Vincent A. Piacente
Inside Architecture, PC

Denise Pratico
Community Volunteer

Keith Smith
Merrill Lynch

Sarah J. Strout
PNC Bank

Nicholas Ventura
Ventura Wealth Management

Kristen J. Vidas, Esq.
Pelletieri, Rabstein & Altman

Andrew T. Zalescik
AAA Mid-Atlantic

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

Free Bikes = Kids' Smiles (& Lawyers, Too)

Do you remember the hours you spent on your bike when you were a child? The freedom you felt as you pedaled away from your home for the first time, no training wheels to slow you down, the wind blowing in your hair as you sought adventures — even if it was just around the block.

Doesn't every child want to experience that feeling of amazement and wonder on two wheels? Isn't that why bikes are on the top of many tikes' Christmas lists and a most frequently requested birthday and Hanukkah present? For many of the kids in our Crisis Intervention, Supervised Family Visitation and Trauma, Loss & Depression: Intervention for Young Children programs, holiday wishes came early this year. Santa came in the form of a company called Team Builders Plus and 100 lawyers from a global, NJ-based pharmaceutical company.

Here is the story. Evelyn A. Gill, PEI Kids' executive director, was contacted by Aaren Perry, the director of learning resources at Team Builders Plus, a company headquartered in Cherry Hill, NJ, about their Wheels for the World program. Wheels for the World is a team building program that combines physical and mental team challenges with the construction of a working bicycle. Groups create team names, compete to earn bicycle parts, negotiate for remaining parts and present marketing campaigns to promote their bikes. After the event is over, the bikes are donated to a local charity.

Team Builders Plus conducted the

Wheels for the World program for a November meeting held at the Hyatt Regency in Princeton for lawyers in a pharmaceutical company's global legal division. The company wishes to remain anonymous as they believe in giving back to the community without publicity. The company had Team Builders Plus research agencies that served children in the area and asked them to choose one to donate the bicycles. Team Builders Plus selected

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



New Name for JOOP

A decision was made recently to change the name of the *Juvenile Offenders Outreach Program (JOOP)* to the *Comprehensive Juvenile Offenders Outreach Services (CJOOS)*. Why JOOP to CJOOS? Since 1995, PEI Kids has been serving adjudicated youth through JOOP, and for the past six years, has been serving troubled youth in our *Anger Management/Violence Prevention* program. With the just completed needs assessment conducted by Mercer County's Department of Human Services and because of staff observations over recent years, PEI Kids has decided to restructure the programs that have served the juvenile probationers well in the past. The decision to combine came after careful scrutiny of both programs and identifying the similarities in each. What became clear as a result of this review was that the referents were sending to each program juveniles whose levels of offenses are similar and who are often experiencing similar circumstances. Most of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



"Striving" Down the River

On Thursday, August 28, Barrett Young, the STRIVE program manager, and Rob Fiorello, the CJOOS coordinator, took six clients (pictured below) from the



STRIVE program rafting at the Bucks County River Country.

The day was filled with team building exercises — and a lot of fun — for the young men involved. Using two man rafts, the pairs had to work as one to navigate the Delaware River and keep the raft on course. This activity taught the teens how to work as a team and how to really listen to one another. The clients had a great time and asked if they could do this again and perhaps also try

camping. They really enjoyed the fact that the trip was something that they had never done before and that they had to work as a team. "The young men were impressed with the fact that they were able to communicate with each other without arguing," explained Barrett. "They also discussed the fact that once they were able to listen to each other, they could then maneuver the raft much more easily. Every kid thanked Rob and me numerous times for taking them. The STRIVE trip was a great success because the teens were able to discover the importance of teamwork when it came to successfully navigating the river. The kids were able to experience an excursion they would have never experienced without their involvement in the STRIVE program."



Happy Campers

Childhood is supposed to be a carefree time in ones life, a time for kids to just be kids. The sad reality is this is not the case for most of the children that walk through the doors at PEI Kids. So every summer, we try to give these kids a happy reality. One woman dedicated to giving children happy realities was Elaine Zeitz, a founding board member of PEI Kids. In her memory, the Zeitz campership scholarship was established. The majority of the money raised for these scholarships are through proceeds from special items bid on at PEI Kids' annual auction and dinner, items that are displayed on "Elaine's Table."

With the proceeds raised from "Elaine's Table," as well as donations designated for these scholarships, PEI Kids was able to send four children to camp this summer. Twin brothers were able to attend a week of camp at the YWCA of Trenton. The activities included field trips, physical education, dance, music, games, and arts and crafts. Two children had fun this summer at the Hamilton Area YMCA. A seven-year-old girl had the opportunity to attend one of the Y's specialty camps, a horseback riding camp where she learned basic riding skills as well as the care, grooming, saddling and leading of a horse. As her mother explained, "She was head over heels for this horse camp. She enjoyed it so much. It was such a wonderful thing. We are so appreciative of PEI Kids. She had wanted to take horseback riding lessons and then we got the call about the camperships. So it was meant to be." The other child, a seven-year-old boy, attended a Jr. Sports specialty camp at the Y, one that provided this young man with instruction and guidance in sports such as soccer, basketball, baseball, football and volleyball.

Elaine's spirit is exemplified through the wonderful memories these children created at camp, memories that will last a lifetime. We'd like to extend our deepest appreciation to the Bagan family for designating the Zeitz campership as one of the memorial contributions after the passing of Elaine's mother, Beatrice Bagan, this past August. The summer of 2009 will generate many more happy memories and more happy realities for kids in our programs.

A Young Man's Book Drive Benefits PEI Kids



The PEI Kids' 'library' is growing, thanks to a philanthropic young gentleman from Hamilton! Cole Sugg, now a fifth grader at Yardville Elementary School, set out to collect 100 books for 100 kids last spring. What he got was over 10 fold!

As a part of an extra credit project for his brown belt in karate, Cole decided to work on a project that would help children in need in his surrounding community. He asked and received donations of new or gently used children's books from family, karate friends,

community members and classmates at Yardville Elementary School. While Cole thought a goal of 100 books would be attainable, he never thought that he would collect 1,043 books. In addition to PEI Kids, many Mercer County charities have benefited from his book collection. He was able to donate books to HomeFront, Child Care Connection, Carolyn Stokes Day Nursery, Mercer County CYO, and The Boys and Girls Club of Trenton. Cole (11 years old) has now joined forces with his sister Molly (7 years old) and they are now planning on expanding their project to reach more children across NJ!

"Books, to the reading child, are so much more than books -- they are dreams and knowledge, they are a future, and a past." Esther Meynell ~

Guest Speaker Offers Valuable Information to Parents

PEI Kids' *Crisis Intervention* program provides counseling to children who have been sexually abused and family members who have been affected by the abuse. Support groups for parents, siblings, and adolescents meet every second and fourth Wednesday of each month. As one parent stated who attends the support meetings, 'group' allows her to process her feelings in a way she could not normally do with others who have not gone through similar experiences.

Guest speakers are invited to address the group from time to time. The most recent speaker for the parent support group was John Carbonara, Esq., former chief of the juvenile unit with the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office. John joined the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office in 2003 as an assistant prosecutor in which he was involved with multiple units including the child abuse and sexual assault unit where he has worked on a variety of criminal cases, including ones involving Megan's Law. He was named the chief of the juvenile unit in September 2007 and a year later joined the trial unit.



John was able to offer parents and caregivers guidelines on the criminal prosecution of adult and youth sex offenders, non-legal advice, and words of encouragement. John told the group that the goal of juvenile prosecution is rehabilitation, not punishment, with the hope they will become productive members of society. There was an overwhelming positive response from the family members. One parent stated that she was glad that they were able to share thoughts and questions with the speaker who happens to be an expert. "It made it easy because he was informative and willing to answer all questions or refer us to the appropriate agency."

We are grateful to John for taking time out of his busy schedule to talk to our parents and for all of the work he has done for children and their families in Mercer County. For further information regarding support group meetings, including dates for meetings, please visit our website at www.peikids.org.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Anger Management referrals became youth on probation until in 2008 all the referrals were juveniles on probation. By combining and expanding our JOOP and *Anger Management* programs, we will be able to add more in depth programming, engage the juvenile in more goal setting

and life choices activities and serve more youth.

With all of these changes, the decision was clear — change the name to reflect the changing needs of the program.

BlackRock Rocks!

PEI Kids was notified that we were one of two agencies selected by BlackRock, a global management corporation with an office in the Princeton area, for their "Vendor for Charity" program. Here's how the program works. Vendors, including crafters, jewelers and food sellers, request to sell products onsite at BlackRock to their employees, especially during the holiday season. Instead of asking the vendors to pay a seller's fee to BlackRock, the company asks the vendors to donate 15% of their sales for the day to one of the two agencies in the "Vendor for Charity" program. BlackRock employees like knowing that a portion of the money they are spending is going to a worthy cause, and the vendors like that in lieu of a seller's fee, a portion of their sales are going toward a charity instead. PEI Kids has been the recipient of the proceeds from the 2008 "Vendor for Charity" program and are grateful to be able to benefit from the inclusion in this program.

BlackRock also has a small pool of money from which they can make donations to local non-profit organizations that improve the quality of life in geographic areas where their employees live and work. PEI Kids submitted an application for a donation and BlackRock approved the application. Evelyn A. Gill, PEI Kids' executive director, spoke to the committee about PEI Kids and how any funds received from BlackRock would be used to support current programs and services. One such program is *ACT— Adults and Children Together — Against Violence*. BlackRock's donation covered the cost of this program for a select number of local organizations and schools. This violence prevention program covers topics such as child development, discipline, anger management, and the effects of the media on children.

Our special thanks to BlackRock for their support through the "Vendor for Charity" program and through their charitable donation!



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

PEI Kids to receive 18 bikes for children (two of these happy kids are pictured in this article). After we heard the good news, phone calls were made to families that were thrilled their children would be receiving bikes, especially since many of them were unable to afford to purchase ones for their kids.

The children from our programs and their families made the trek to Princeton on November 5 to pick up their bikes. In addition to the exhilaration the kids were feeling that day, there was a surprise in store. The families hid in a Hyatt conference room as the meeting participants were in a tent outside building the bicycles. The lawyers were told they would be building a bicycle for a child and were given the child's name. They had no idea that the children would be there! When the bike building exercise was completed, the kids and their families arrived at the tent. One of



Team Builders Plus' facilitators announced to the stunned crowd of lawyers turned bike builders that the children had arrived to pick up their bikes! The kids anxiously ran into the tent to find the bike with their name on it (and the beaming bike builders). It was hard to tell who was more excited – the kids or the adults!

We are so grateful to the staff at Team Builders Plus for selecting PEI Kids to receive the bicycles and extra thanks to them for building two extra bicycles at the last minute for two siblings of children in our programs, 20 bikes total. Also, we'd like to express our appreciation to the pharmaceutical company for partaking in this wonderful program. "It is our company pledge and mission to give back to the community and what better way than to make a child happy with what I and many feel the most important 'remembrance' in a childhood," explains the company's global meeting manager.

What a 'remembrance' this day will be for all involved.

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 OVERALL WELL-BEING OF THE CHILD.

PEI KIDS' EVENTS A HUGE SUCCESS!

PEI Kids is happy to report that our Golf Outing and our "Tasting in Titusville" event were a huge success, largely due to the generosity of our event supporters and the enormous role our volunteers play in staging these events.

First, let's talk golf. PEI Kids would like to thank everyone who sponsored, supported and volunteered at its Eleventh Annual Golf Outing on Monday, September 15 on the greens at the Falcon Creek Country Club, located at McGuire Airforce Base. The day would have not been possible, of course, without our wonderful golfers and our corporate sponsors. Our generous sponsors include:

Eagle Sponsors: Beth and Marty Deitchman; Verizon Communications

Birdie Sponsors: BlackRock; First Choice Bank; PNC Bank

Par Sponsors: AAA Mid-Atlantic; Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney, PC; Tuchman Foundation

Pavilion Sponsors: Roma Bank; Pellettieri, Rabstein & Altman, PC

Putting Green Sponsors: Delectabell Management Inc./Taco Bell; dvPayroll & H.R.; Hopewell Township Police Local No. 342; William J. Keephart, CPA; Xerographic Document Solutions

Beverage Cart Sponsors: Chris & Denise Pratico; V.J. Scozzari & Sons, Inc.; TCI Management & Construction Co., Inc.

There were also 26 hole sponsors as well as over a dozen prize donors. Because of the bigheartedness of our golfers and sponsors, this was PEI Kids most successful Golf Outing to date. Thanks to Ret. Brig. General Robert Dutko for inviting us to play on the greens at Falcon Creek once again this year. We also want to recognize the entire staff at the club as well as our amazing volunteers for all of their work in making the day a success.

Now let's talk wine. PEI Kids' Third Annual "Tasting in Titusville" was another smashing success. The event, which was held on Friday, November 7 at the Union Firehouse, was attended by 200 new and veteran wine enthusiasts. Speaking of wine enthusiasts, there is not one bigger than Joe Grinbaum, the manager at ShopRite Liquors in Pennington and the event's ringleader. Each year, Joe (pictured on the right with a friend) spends countless hours preparing for the event, and he and his staff always come through to give us a memorable time. There were hundreds of wines, liquors and



beers available for the tasting. Fedora's Cafe was once again the provider of the delicacies that complemented the libations.

New this year was a raffle for three beautiful baskets, one featuring wine, another beer and the other liquor, all designed by our dynamic volunteer duo Dolores Piacente and Diane Lusdyk. A special thanks to all our volunteers for their hard work on the event.

Our special events would be nothing without the special people who attend them. Thank you to all who attend, support and volunteer at our events. We will see you at our events next year!

SAVE THE DATE!!!

PEI Kids' 18th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

Sunday, March 29, 2009

at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville