



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES

Brightening the lives of people with autism

"We thank everyone for an amazing job for the past year. It's been rough, but we got through it with the help, guidance, and support from the amazing and dedicated staff at Spectrum Services...thank you!"

– Carmine's mom, Laura

From Jamey Wolff, Founder Emeritus –



I send you a warm welcome to this issue of our Spectrum Services Newsletter. After co-founding Center for Spectrum Services 45 years ago, I have

finally retired as Program Director. This transition was postponed due to the COVID pandemic and our challenging programmatic need to develop new service delivery models. Fast forward a year and a half, and we have returned to in-person learning, with students and staff busy in classrooms, and hallways bustling with life and energy—we have successfully risen to the challenge. Now that we are back in-person educating our students, I feel ready to devote more time to my family and greater community, but will continue to assist Spectrum Services as needed in a part-time capacity.

Leaving a program I have lovingly developed over so many years, reminds me of a quote from A.A. Milne's beloved Winnie the Pooh, "How lucky am I that I have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

I am pleased to welcome Charlotte Mennona as the new Program Director at Spectrum Services, and you can read more about her here on the front page. Susan Buckler, who worked with me to start Spectrum Services, will continue as our Executive Director. I feel confident that these administrative changes will continue the history of excellence in programming that we have always strived to maintain.

I hope to see many of you at our 45th anniversary celebration on November 6th at Wiltwyck Country Club in Kingstons.

Warm regards,

Jamey Wolff



Our Sapphire Celebration will honor our 45th Anniversary, while paying tribute to the life-work of retiring Program Director and Co-Founder Jamey Wolff.

Saturday, November 6th at Wiltwyck Country Club

Let's Celebrate 45 Years!



We'll start with a Meet and Greet hour with fine hors d'oeuvres and open bar of superb wines and select beers, in addition to a cash bar for cocktails. Then, fine dining with a dinner menu crafted especially for the occasion by Wiltwyck's legendary chef Dominique. There will be online, silent, and live auctions, raffles and door prizes, historical perspectives, friends of Spectrum Services both old and new, and tons of celebrating.

Let's Honor Jamey Wolff!



Join us as we honor the life accomplishments of Spectrum Services Co-Founder Jamey Wolff, as she retires after 45 years of committed service to educating children on the autism spectrum, and helping grow the organization to what it is today. In fact, Jamey was supposed to have retired a year and a half ago, however due to the Covid pandemic, she stayed on to help guide the school through the most challenging period of its history.

You Can Be Part of the Celebration!
Sign up for the Online Auction (it's FREE!)
Make reservations and come to this milestone event
Make a donation, or take out a congratulatory advert in the program
All from our website at centerforspectrumservices.org

Spectrum Services Welcomes New Program Director

Spectrum Services welcomes Charlotte Mennona as its new Program Director, replacing Jamey Wolff, who is retiring after 45 years of service. Charlotte brings a level of experience, competence, and professionalism, and says she's "honored to serve as Program Director, and working to exemplify Spectrum Services' core values of excellence, innovation, respect, collaboration, and integrity."



Charlotte joins us with over twenty-two years of progressive experience and accomplishments in special education as

a teacher and administrator, and maintains proven leadership abilities to create and monitor policies and practices that promote a safe, successful, results-driven learning environment. In fact, Charlotte's passion for supporting children with special needs and their families was first sparked when she spent time as an intern at Spectrum Services (then called The Children's Annex) in the fall of 1998 to fulfill an undergraduate course requirement.

"We're delighted that Charlotte's career has come full circle," says Co-Founder and Executive Director Susan Buckler, "and that she's returning to Spectrum Services with a level of professional experience that makes her perfect for assuming this vital leadership position within the school."

Meet the Staff

Elizabeth Forte

Elizabeth first started at Spectrum Services as a substitute teacher assistant at our Kingston School from 2002 to 2004. "Working with the students and learning from the staff," she recalls, "is what made me decide this was what I wanted to do." Three years later, Elizabeth returned to Spectrum Services in Ellenville as a Family Service Coordinator after receiving her bachelor's in American Studies, and then a master's in Education specializing in School Counseling. Now, 14 years later, Elizabeth has touched the lives of hundreds of families, and has trained many new staff members.



Elizabeth Forte

This year, Elizabeth was the recipient of the coveted Ruby Rose Award, a peer-driven honor bestowed to a staff member whose colleagues believe embodies the values of Spectrum Services in professionalism, compassion, and commitment to our students and their families. "Elizabeth goes above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of so many of our students, their families, and her fellow staff," says Sandra Brownsey, Program Coordinator for Ellenville, who was thrilled to present the award to Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth brings honesty, humor, intellect, keen insight, and a heightened ability to bring people together to benefit our students and our program," adds Special Educator Janine Sprague. Lead Teacher Assistant, Katherine DeLaRosa, agrees, "Elizabeth has such great rapport with students and their families—helping them to solve problems and listening to their concerns."

"We are privileged to work with Elizabeth," says Sandy. "She brings enthusiasm, positivity, and a can-do spirit to our school community each and every day."

Meet the Student

Vincenzo Tropeano

Vinny Tropeano, a student in our Gold Class, came to Spectrum Services when he was just three years old. Since that time, Vinny has matured into a young man who is more than ready to take on the challenges of a new program. Vinny just graduated this year, and will be moving onto BOCES in fall.



Vincenzo Tropeano

In the years he's been here, Vinny has proven himself more than capable in mastering the educational work required of him. Further, he's quite the Renaissance man, and is as technically oriented as he is wonderfully creative and artistic. "In the years I've been working with Vinny, he has become a role model to his fellow classmates, showing them that they, too, can succeed," says Special Educator Brenda Mentz.

Vinny's family is very proud of his accomplishments while at Spectrum Services, and this is reflected every holiday season. "We've saved every Christmas tree ornament he's made at school during the years, and every year they're proudly displayed on the family tree," says his mom, Linda. "Vinny's success is Spectrum Services' success."

"Vinny is a person who has developed a great attitude about school," says his Family Service Coordinator, Sharon Koczaja, "and the most wonderful sense of humor." Vinny's humor is sometimes delivered dryly, but with a hint of a smile that is as disarming as it is entertaining. "He's certainly come into himself, and maintains a strong sense of self-awareness that will serve him well in the future...we're all very proud of him."

Community Support

As this is the first printed newsletter since Covid, we're making up for lost time in thanking so many local businesses, foundations, and individuals who have helped our Spectrum Services community when we needed it most.



Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union – Vanquishing Food Insecurities

Last year during the height of the Covid shutdowns, quite a number of our families were experiencing food insecurities due to under-employment. When our friends at Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union heard about this, they rose to the occasion and contributed \$1,500 towards our Family Food Support Program, helping to feed these families during such challenging times.

Ulster Savings Bank Gives Reason for Thanks at Thanksgiving

Word spread last year at Ulster Savings Bank that we were raising funds to supply full, Thanksgiving Dinners to several of our families who were financially challenged due to Covid. The Bank supported our Thanksgiving Food Drive with a generous \$1,500 donation, giving good reason for all of us here at Spectrum Services to be thankful.



Stewart's Foundation – Gardens are Growing

Stewart's Shops donated \$1,000 for raised gardens at our Ellenville School. Experts agree that for individuals with autism, there are many benefits to gardening. It is a calm, quiet activity in a natural environment, and provides an opportunity to follow instructions, while learning cooperation and how to work with others.

Klock Kingston Foundation Funds New Reading/Writing Program

Last year, Spectrum Services implemented a new reading program called Learning Without Tears, a successfully proven program in helping teach children with disabilities how to read and write. The implementation was made possible by an \$18,000 grant from the Klock Kingston Foundation. Our staff have been amazed at what their seeing, as the program's approach speaks to the way children on the Autism Spectrum learn, by using all of their senses. Because it relates to them in this way, the curriculum helps create a sense of self-efficacy and confidence, which in turn motivates them to keep trying. We also thank our three Department Heads, Phyllis Bliss, Laurie Hopkins, and Mary Alice Millham for carefully researching, reviewing, and implementing the program, including a full day training for staff.

Klock Kingston
Foundation

Community Support Continued

The Ice Cream Man is Coming!



Bob Siracusano, whose generosity to our students has shown no limits, brought his original 1967, fully-restored Good Humor Truck to Spectrum Services during the summer, and handed out ice cream and ice pops to all our students. Dressed in his Good Humor man's outfit, he brought smiles and giggles to our students' faces. Thank you, Bob!

M&T Bank

M & T Bank Charitable Foundation – Helps Cover Medical Staffing Expense

When school re-opened as Covid restrictions were lifted, Spectrum Services had to promote two staff members with medical backgrounds to help with staff and student daily screenings, required documentation for local Departments of Health, and other duties. M&T Bank stepped forward to help fund the added \$2,500 staffing expense to help keep our students and staff safe.

Help Us Celebrate our 45th Anniversary by Facebook Fundraising – It's as Easy as A, B, C!

- First, log into your Facebook page, find on the upper right of your page the white, downward arrow that clicks your pages drop-down box. In that, you'll see "Create Fundraiser," and click on that to bring up the Create a Fundraiser pop-up box, and then click "Get Started."
- On the next box, you'll be given options on who you're raising funds for, from which you'll click the middle option for Nonprofit, which opens a box allowing you to select what nonprofit. In the textbox up top, type "Center for Spectrum Services," which will bring the Spectrum Services fundraising option. Click that, and follow the rest of the set up instructions for your goal and duration of your fundraiser.
- That opens the "Tell your story" box, where you can tell your Facebook friends you're raising funds to help celebrate Spectrum Services' 45 Anniversary. Then, simply click "Create" to start your fundraising.

Hudson Valley Philanthropists Provide Learning Gazebos for Students and Staff

When our classroom occupancy requirements were reduced because of Covid, we needed a creative solution to maintain adequate social distancing in our classrooms, so that all our educational areas were safe. The solution was to bring in four screened-in gazebos with electricity and Wi-Fi, where students would receive one-on-one education sessions, speech and physical therapy, and more.

Long-time supporters of Spectrum Services, Marianne Murray and Richard Rowley, stepped forward to help. "We felt the concept of the Learning Gazebos was brilliant, and critical to bringing the full student body back to school," says Marianne. The couple were thrilled to make this happen with a \$60,000 donation.

The Learning Gazebos have exceeded expectations in expanding our safe areas, provide exceptional space for learning and therapy, while allowing us to meet state and local room occupancy guidelines.



Lemonade Aid: One Student's Fundraising

Our Gold Class student Jesse ran his own lemonade stand over the summer, raising money to help purchase backpacks for area students whose families are financially challenged. He was able to raise enough to purchase over 50 backpacks and supplies, with 15 going to Spectrum Services students.

Jesse's lemonade stand is called "Little Hands Big Goals," and had many local names stopping by to cool off with a glass, including State Senator Michelle Hinchey, and Saugerties Police Chaplain James Louis (pictured), just to name a few



Spectrum Services thanks the following businesses for their support of our students through Annual Sponsorships.



Center for Spectrum Services is a not-for-profit organization designed especially for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. We are approved by the New York State Office of Education of Children with Disabling Conditions and the New York State Health Department.

Since our inception in 1976, Spectrum Services has served as a model special education program. With two centers located in Kingston and Ellenville, our outreach extends to children and families from throughout New York's Hudson Valley. In addition to our educational programming, we also operate the Spectrum Services Outreach Program, providing comprehensive diagnostic evaluations to children, adolescents, and adults in the community. It also offers Social Skills Groups, individual counseling, and professional and family trainings and workshops.

Annually, we sponsor trainings and seminars for professionals and families, and are nationally recognized for our leadership in the field.

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845-647-6464

www.centerforspectrumservices.org