



CENTER FOR SPECTRUM SERVICES

Brightening the lives of people with autism

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"You all have been such a huge part of Emerick's success and his increasing independence. The love and kindness Emerick has experienced here at CSS has given him a solid foundation and helped him learn to love school."

– Emerick's Mom

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Welcome Message from Charlotte Mennona, Program Director



Charlotte Mennona

Last fall, I was introduced to you here on these very pages as the new Program Director for Spectrum Services. After completing a full year, I want to share with you

how amazing the year has been!

Starting a new job can be stressful, but I have to say that my experience was not as such. Staff were welcoming and provided tremendous support. I feel that I was successful in establishing a foundation built on trust and mutual respect. This, by far, was the smoothest professional transition in my career.

It also helps when you have a supervisor who collaborates with you, puts their trust in you, provides ongoing feedback, and gives you just the right amount of space to start to make things your own. For this, I genuinely thank Susan Buckler, our Executive Director.

Most of this year was spent observing and understanding the established culture of the program. I did the best I could to learn all of the staff and students' names in both our Kingston and Ellenville Schools, and immersed myself in the daily operations whenever possible.

Amidst this, I experienced firsthand the amount of community support we receive. It is absolutely incredible and humbling.

I am so lucky to be here; I am honored and delighted to welcome friends, family, volunteers, board members, staff, and supporters to the 2022-2023 school year.

As Program Director, I want to genuinely thank you.

Charlotte Mennona

A Celebration of Autumn

Saturday, November 5th from 6-10pm – Wiltwyck Golf Club, Kingston

After a three year hiatus, our Harvest Hop returns giving you more time for great food, enjoying live music to dance to, and visiting with friends!



Taking the stage and playing the metrical beat to some amazing dance music is Joe Veillette and The Phantoms, both acapella and plugged in. Joe's grandson Ethan is a Spectrum Services alumnus. Joe says, "We know what this organization did to help Ethan and his classmates reach their highest potential, so it's our privilege to donate our time and talent." Jasmine, Ethan's mother, is delighted to continue the Harvest Hop tradition and support the school. The music will once again provide the perfect medium to get out on the dance floor and boogie.

Guests will start the evening with elegant hors d'oeuvres and select delicacies from Wiltwyck's Harvest Table, including domestic and international cheeses, Baguette, Crudité, and smoked meat. Hors d'oeuvres include roasted veggies and goat cheese on focaccia, hummus on pita, turkey salad on baguette with bacon, and filet mignon on baguette with béarnaise sauce. Dinner menu includes roasted turkey, crusted halibut, fried chicken, and squash medley. Coffee and autumnal desserts follow.

To keep the evening fun, flowing, and uninterrupted, we'll have our Harvest Hop silent auction, allowing you to bid at your leisure throughout the night. The online silent auction will have a wide selection of goods, gifts, services, and more, all with wide-ranging values that are sure to fit any wallet. We'll also have door prizes for added fun!

There's still time to make reservations, and for local businesses to support our students through our Annual



Sponsorships. Sponsorships are a great way to show the Hudson Valley your company or business cares about children with autism. Visit our website at centerforspectrumservices.org for details and to reserve your spot!

If you can't make the Harvest Hop, you can still help raise funds to support our students by becoming a Harvest Hopper, and raising needed funds on your Facebook page. See page 3 for details.

Meet the staff

In the same two months this summer, we saw the departure of Sandra Brownsey, Program Coordinator of our Ellenville School, and the retiring of Phyllis Bliss, our decades-long Program Coordinator of our Kingston School. Replacing both Program Coordinators around the same time might seem a daunting task for any other school, but when each of the previous Program Coordinators' right-hand colleagues have the best in experience and training, it only follows they were promoted to these positions.



Mary Alice Millham: Program Coordinator, Kingston School

Mary Alice had previously worked for Spectrum Services, but rejoined it in 1998, where she taught school-age and preschool classes; within two years she was supervising a number of classes. By 2003, due to her previous experience,

talent, and ability, she was asked to become the Educational Department Head.

Since then she's been managing many of the educational aspects of the school, and providing an excellent learning environment for our students with autism.

Having earned her MS in Special Education at the College of Saint Rose, Mary Alice is also the recipient of the prestigious Outstanding Special Education Teacher Award from the National Association of Special Education Teachers. Mary Alice takes pride in working with such compassionate and dedicated colleagues, who all believe that every child can learn, and who celebrate each student's successes.



Elizabeth Forte: Program Coordinator, Ellenville School

Elizabeth began as a substitute teacher's assistant in 2002 at our Kingston School, working summers while home from college. After receiving her MS in Education from the College of Saint Rose, Elizabeth returned to the Hudson Valley,

taking on the role as Family Service Coordinator at our Ellenville School. During her time in Ellenville, she has further developed her skills, increasingly taking on additional leadership roles and responsibilities, leading to her current role as Ellenville's Program Coordinator.

Elizabeth earned an advanced certificate in Educational Leadership at SUNY New Paltz, and is a Ruby Rose Award recipient, a peer-driven honor bestowed to a staff member who exemplifies the values of Spectrum Services. Elizabeth believes the greatest growth for students comes when families and schools have a collaborative working relationship, and she takes great pride in the countless positive outcomes of students and families with whom she's worked.

Meet the Student



Meet Roy Nugent, affectionately called Junior by family, friends, and our staff. When Junior started as a preschooler in our Red Class, he was dealing with difficulties that roughened the diamond we knew lay within him. He presented with communication challenges, social skills difficulties, and other issues that caused him much frustration, which manifested itself in a number of behavioral concerns.

Our Red Class staff, speech pathologists, and occupational therapists were able to help Junior by alleviating some of the frustrations he was experiencing. Although he had a lot of work ahead of him, this progress certainly put him on a track for success, and prepared him for his aging-up move to our Bronze Class.

"It was evident Junior needed a lot of structure, and his mind was just working so fast, oftentimes too fast, and we needed to slow that down," says Heather Gulnick, our Bronze Class special educator. "This little boy showed great potential, and had such a sharp sense of humor, but his mind and body raced too fast and out of control for him to absorb all that his environment had to offer," Gulnick adds.

Slowly and steadily, the time spent with Bronze Class's caring and attentive staff greatly improved Junior's ability to focus, while at the same time teaching him how to better balance his behavior. It was about this time we started seeing faint glimmers from Junior's diamond in the rough.

Junior moved up to our Silver Class this past Summer Program, where Special Educator Marissa Proper says he transitioned well. "He just has this awesome sense of humor, and wants to be helpful, and to be a big boy, and part of that is being independent, and so we've been giving him space to grow, do things on his own, and expanding his self-determination."

Selecting Junior as our student highlight was an easy choice, and all our staff who've worked with him agreed he certainly is one of our Spectrum Services success stories.



Our New Founders Fund

In honor of Center for Spectrum Services' founding in 1976 by Susan Buckler and Jamey Wolff, and in celebration of the organization's 45th Anniversary, its Board of Trustees, through a unanimous resolution, created the Spectrum Services Founders Fund in their honor.

The Fund will be used to help offset emerging expenses that exceed the reach of NY State funding associated with providing educational and therapeutic services, such as supporting a more robust music and arts program, or perhaps offering our students time with therapeutic support animals, as well as opportunities for more experience in life and vocational skills.

In order to deliver our students the exemplary educational programming and therapies they deserve, please support the Founders Fund with a donation. Simply write "Founders Fund" on your donation check, or go to our website, click on Ways to Give, and select Founders Fund.

Community Support



Bob Siracusano (standing, right), discussing an auction bid with Neal Smoller (seated).

Sawyer Motors & Village Apothecary Set the Pace for Our Founders Fund

As you read at the bottom of the previous page, our new Founders Fund, a donor-driven investing tool that will benefit our students, will allow the expansion of programs, services, and innovative new curricula.

When our friends Bob Siracusano, owner of Sawyer Motors in Saugerties, and Neal Smoller, proprietor of Village Apothecary in Woodstock, heard of the new fund, they each pledged \$5,000 to support new, innovative programs and services for our students on the autism spectrum. “Both Bob and Neal, in so many ways, are anchors within our caring community,” says Spectrum Services Executive Director, Susan Buckler, “and we are so very grateful to be included in the list of organizations each of them supports in both time and generosity.”



MHV's Regional Market Impact Representative, Michael Campbell, with HR Coordinator Kathy Duda (l) and Program Director Charlotte Mennona (r).

Mid-Hudson Valley Federal Credit Union Supports Spectrum Services Staff

In addition to already being an Annual Sponsor of Spectrum Services, our friends at MHV also understand how important our staff are, and wanted to do what they could to help support staff development and team-building. MHV went out of its way for Spectrum Services by offsetting the cost of staff building events over the year, with Pizza Days, Bagel and Coffee mornings, and sandwich luncheons. During these, MHV included give-ways and raffles to keep things fun. Thank you, MHV for supporting our staff this way!



Ulster Savings Bank CEO Bill Calderara (r) presenting a generous donation to David Juhren, Development & Public Relations Officer (l).

fund, they didn't hesitate supporting it with a generous donation. Thank you, Ulster Savings Bank, for being an annual sponsor, as well as helping us with our special funding needs.



Become a Harvest Hopper!

Help Raise Funds for Children with Autism by Becoming a Harvest Hopper on Facebook!

Whether you're joining us for our Harvest Hop on November 5th or not, you can help make this event even more successful by raising needed funding for Spectrum Services, and creating your own fundraiser on Facebook, thus becoming a Harvest Hopper.

It's as easy as A, B, and C

A) 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."

B) 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 which nonprofit. In the textbox up top, type "Center for Spectrum Services," which should display the Spectrum Services fundraising option. Click that, and follow the rest of the set up instructions for your goal and duration of your fundraiser.

C) That opens the "Tell your story" box, where you can tell your friends you're raising funds to help support Spectrum Services, a school for children on the autism spectrum. Then, simply click "Create" to start your fundraising.

What Next?

Then, share with all your Facebook friends on your page, or if you know friends who might be more responsive to a Facebook message, you can send it to them that way, too.

How it Works

Each time a friend makes a donation to your fundraiser, the donation goes to Facebook's Spectrum Services fundraising account, and then transferred to Spectrum Services, where it is then used to support our life-changing programs for children with autism.



Become a Harvest Hopper Today!



You can change the life of a child with autism!
Making a donation is as easy as going to our website
www.centerforspectrumservices.org,
and clicking the Donate Now button at the top of the page.

Spectrum Services Annual Sponsors



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 attract hundreds of visitors, sponsor trainings and seminars for professionals and families, and are nationally recognized for our leadership in the field.

KINGSTON
845-336-2616

ELLENVILLE
845-647-6464

centerforspectrumservices.org