



Matheny Matters

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Good Day Sunshine



Matheny student Scott Gordon is surrounded by family and friends. Clockwise from left, his parents Julie and Andrew Gordon of New Providence, NJ; Greice Cruz and Gisele Neres, visiting from Brazil; his aunt Charlotte Gordon of New York City; sister Whitney and brother James; and cousin Eloise from NYC.

After last year's rainy weather, the sunny skies were a welcome site as participants, volunteers and supporters congregated in downtown Peapack for the 16th annual Miles for Matheny on Sunday, April 21. Occurring less than a week after the tragic events of the Boston Marathon, there were also concerns about safety, but added police presence and other security measures put everyone at ease.

WCBS-TV traffic reporter Alex Denis kicked off both the Lu Huggins Wheelchair Walk and the 5K Road Race, but, in between, she spent time visiting with Matheny students, patients and their families. "I heard about the support that families receive from Matheny," she said, "and their surprise that their sons and daughters are able to do things such as go to a prom or go bowling or attend a sporting event. At Matheny, there appear to be no limitations."

In addition to the Wheelchair Walk and 5K, there were five different Cycling routes, a Kids Fun Run and The Friends of Matheny's "Breakfast of Champions", followed by luncheon refreshments in the park. The more than \$100,000 raised will help support the Matheny Center of Medicine and Dentistry, which provides medical, dental and therapy care to Matheny's inpatients and people with disabilities in communities throughout New Jersey.

Matheny student Katherine Gaudio with social worker Kelly Haldaman, left, and Bedminster volunteer Uma Patla.

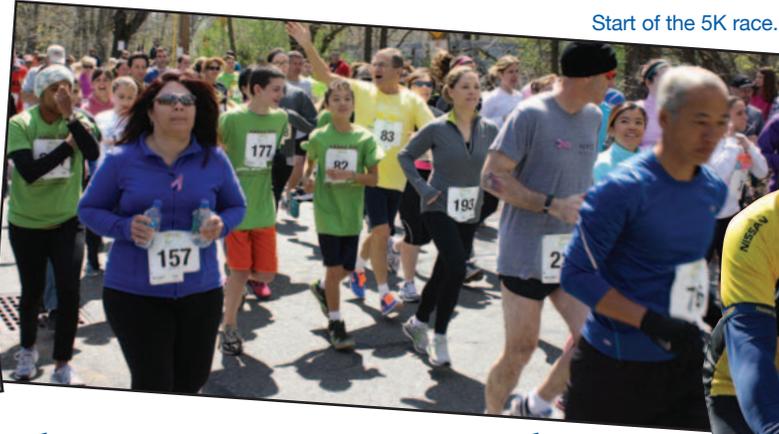
WCBS-TV traffic reporter Alex Denis.



For more on Miles for Matheny and a list of sponsors, see pages 2-3, 10-11



Members of The Friends of Matheny, clockwise, from lower left: Kathy Sisto, Liz Geraghty, Nancy Cruse, Nancy Hojnacki, Karen Thompson, Cathy Wild, Renee Wild, Dorothy Carter and Linda Horton.



Start of the 5K race.



Andre Petras of Somerville, NJ, on the 50-mile bike ride.

Miles and Miles Of Smiles



Team Mason.



Kids Fun Run.



Team Camille.

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Matheny student India Jones with, from left, volunteers Rich Schwenn of Bogota, NJ, Frank Scacciaferro and Kevin Moore of Berkeley Heights, NJ, and Matheny OT Dominique Scacciaferro.

Team Go Bo. Matheny resident Bozena Geraghty with, from left, her brother Lary of Cranford, NJ; Melinda Ionnorone, Clifton, NJ; Barbara Iorio, Bayonne, NJ; father Michael Geraghty, Cranford; and Janet Kalwa of Lake Hiawatha, NJ.



'Matheny Has Provided Our Brother With an Exceptional Quality of Life'

When you meet someone with a severe disability," said Justin Lash, "it's hard to imagine what their quality of life would be. But Matheny has provided my brother Andy with an exceptional quality of life for more than 35 years, for which we are forever thankful." The Lash family – parents Fred and Suzanne Lash of Denville, NJ; Justin, his wife Melissa and son Jack of Randolph, NJ; and sister Morgan of the Oak Ridge section of Jefferson Twp, NJ -- formed a team, Andy "Flash" Lash, to raise funds in support of Miles for Matheny.

"Matheny has given Andy so many opportunities."



Andy Lash with, from left, Dan Kane of West Milford, NJ; Melissa, Jack, Morgan and Fred Lash.



Melissa, Jack and Justin Lash.

Andy Lash, now 41, became a Matheny resident in 1977 at the age of six. For the past 11+ years he has resided at Matheny's community residence in Franklin Township, NJ. He's an avid New York Yankees fan and, when he lived at Matheny, Justin recalled, "We always joked that he was the mayor because he would be soloing through the halls, and everybody knew him and liked him." What continues to amaze Justin Lash is "the creativity at Matheny that enables people like Andy to have as normal a life as possible. It became clear as Andy got older that he was so comfortable in his own environment at Matheny."

Justin and Morgan were interviewed by WCBS-TV weekend news anchor Cindy Hsu on Saturday, April 20, and they talked about what Matheny has meant to both their brother and his family. "We have a real hard time putting it into words," Justin said, "but Matheny has given Andy so many opportunities." Morgan spoke about the 'family feeling' at Matheny. "They have afforded, not only Andy, but the rest of the residents there, with so much self-confidence, as a family would do," she said. At presstime, Andy "Flash" Lash had raised \$4,865.



Justin and Morgan Lash with WCBS-TV's Cindy Hsu.

New Matheny Principal is Ultimate 'Team' Player

Sean Murphy has two favorite words: “community” and “team”. He uses them frequently to explain the success of The Matheny School and to express his passion about its students, their families and his staff. “Together,” he says, “we tackle every issue. It’s important for teachers to see parents as partners and for the parents to see teachers as partners – everyone pulling together in the same direction for the benefit of the students. To create true opportunities, it takes a community, and it takes a team.”

Murphy, who grew up in Chesterfield, England, started working at Matheny 19 years ago as a personal care assistant and was named principal of The Matheny School in March. A resident of Washington, NJ, he received his BA in special education from New Jersey City University in 2001, became a special education teacher and was named vice principal in 2008. He also has an MA in urban education/administration and supervision from NJCU and is an adjunct professor in the psychology and education program at The College of Saint Elizabeth in Morristown and on the advisory board of the Education Department at Centenary College in Hackettstown.

assistive technology into every single program that we have. If there’s something that someone cannot do without technology, you use technology to even the playing field. Because of technology, our kids can walk using adapted devices; and they can communicate because of technology. They can do practically everything; we just have to figure out how.”



Sean Murphy reads to Matheny student Ari Golub while Ari’s teacher Stacy Lafargue looks on.

“We integrate assistive technology into every single program that we have.”

Matheny’s students all have multiple disabilities, and many of them are non-verbal. That, in Murphy’s opinion, should not prevent them from reaching their highest level of academic achievement while also obtaining maximum independence. One way the school helps them reach those goals is through technology, but Murphy insists that Matheny “does not have an assistive technology program. Instead, we integrate

A key priority of Murphy’s is to help Matheny’s students develop practical transitional skills that will help them in the community after they graduate. “With transition, we have come a long way, but we have a lot further to go. It should be our goal to have our graduates integrated into popular society as much as is humanly possible.” Some of the ways Matheny is accomplishing this is by involving the students in service learning projects, authentic work experiences and community-based activities.

“We’re constantly recreating ourselves,” Murphy says. “We do that by using professional learning communities. The one thing that sets this school apart is the team-based experience. It’s not just rhetoric; people are vested to make things happen.

“The tenacity and innovation here is second to none. I’m just lucky to be able to leverage the skills of people who are already here.”



Congressman Leonard Lance Visits Matheny

Congressman Leonard Lance (NJ-07) took one look at an untitled painting by Arts Access artist Jason Christie and exclaimed: "If you had told me that was a Jackson Pollock, I would have believed you!" Lance toured Matheny last winter, starting in the Robert Schonhorn Arts Center where he praised staff members, students and patients for being awarded a 2013 Fast Track Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

**Save the Date! Full Circle 2013: Reflections
Arts Access 20th Anniversary
Saturday, November 2**

He visited with artist Luis Rodriguez in the visual arts studio and then watched Rodriguez work on his choreography with two dance facilitators. The Arts Access Program enables people with disabilities to create fine art, assisted by professional artist-facilitators. In February, Rep. Lance was named co-chairman of the Congressional Arts Caucus, a bipartisan group promoting the arts on the federal level.

"I was pleased to talk with staff and patients at Matheny

and learn more about the facility's first-class art program for residents," he said. "I was also impressed with the high quality of care that is provided to patients at this top notch facility in Peapack." The NEA grant was awarded to help support the 20th anniversary celebration of Arts Access.



Congressman Leonard Lance and Arts Access artist Luis Rodriguez.

Arts Access on Display in Summit

The mission of Matheny's Arts Access Program is to provide individuals with disabilities the freedom to create in the visual, literary and performing arts. Along with the freedom to create, comes the opportunity for the artists to have their art displayed in the community. A recent example of such community exposure and support was an exhibit of visual art and written works by Arts Access artists at the MONDO Summit building in Summit, NJ.

The exhibit was on display in February and March, and a special reception to celebrate it was held from 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, March 17, at the 94-year-old reconstructed brick building, which is dedicated to all kinds of art. In addition to viewing the visual art at the reception, visitors were treated to a reading of some of the literary art. Arts Access, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, enables people with disabilities to create fine art, assisted by professional artist-facilitators.



From left, George Vanderslays and Kate Jackette of Watchung, NJ, Arts Access director Eileen Murray and Diane Revel of Bernardsville, NJ.



Betty and Joe Christie, parents of late Arts Access artist Jason Christie, next to his painting "Wolverine"; at right, their niece Leslie Bergman of NYC.

Matheny Prom: How Sweet It Was!

Lelica Palecco, a vocalist with the B.D. Lenz All-Star Band, surveyed the room at The Skylands in Randolph, NJ, and proclaimed: "I've never seen a better looking group." The occasion was The Matheny Prom. The stylish crowd was a mixture of Matheny students and adult patients, family members, volunteers from the community and staff members.

This eagerly anticipated event is but one example of how Matheny does everything possible to enhance the quality of life for its students and patients. The theme of this year's Prom was "A Sweet Escape", and for four hours everyone did just that – forgetting about their disabilities and concentrating on having a good time.

The Prom was funded by a generous contribution from the Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation in East Hanover, NJ.



Prom Queen Kaila Jones.



Marie Detgen with her son, Matthew.



Adult patient Mike Cornely with speech-language pathologist Christine Mayercik.



Volunteer Hayley Hendricks of Middletown, NJ, and adult patient Jenny Cox.



From left, teaching assistant Julie Farrell, teacher Dawn Williams and student Raven Bennett.



Volunteers Rachel, left, and Alyssa Scher of Holmdel, NJ, with Prom King Yasin Reddick.

Future Occupational Therapists Trained at Matheny

Matheny has established several training programs to make sure that students entering such healthcare fields as medicine, nursing and the various therapies are ready to undertake and meet the special healthcare needs of people with developmental disabilities. Recently students from the new Associate of Science degree program in Occupational Therapy Assistance (OTA) from UMDNJ School of Health Related Professions took part in a special training day.

Matheny's OT department set up four informational rotations that included instruction in seating and mobility

(power and manual wheelchair access); switch, computer and activities of daily living (ADL) access, focusing on adaptive feeding and bathing equipment to improve accessibility; augmentative communications; and the collaborative role of OTs and speech-language pathologists in enabling a student or adult to access speech and computer needs.

UMDNJ academic fieldwork coordinator Karen Kowalski accompanied the nine students through the rotations and ensuing discussion. The next day she reported that, "the students couldn't stop talking about the wonderful experience they had at Matheny." 

"The students couldn't stop talking about the wonderful experience they had at Matheny."



UMDNJ student Lisa Burke of Bridgewater, NJ, learns about switch access from Matheny OT Wendell Lumapas.



UMDNJ student Christine Pappas of Wanaque, NJ, familiarizes herself with a power wheelchair, assisted by Matheny OT Veronica Armellino.

Students' Learning Experience Enriched by iPads

The primary purpose of the Mendham Rotary Club's donation of two iPads to the Matheny School was to enhance the communications ability of students who were restricted to their homes or hospital rooms due to illness. Video

inexpensive apps designed specifically for people with disabilities; and offer touch screens that provide greater accessibility for those with little or no fine motor control.

When the iPads are not needed for ill students, however, they don't

iPad screen."We could make as many shapes as we wanted," she says, "and then find the perimeter of the shapes."

This is but one example of how the Matheny School uses technology to help its students reach their highest level of academic achievement while also



Karen Dakak helps student Nicholas Barros draw a shape on the iPad.

conferencing technology permits children to attend class remotely, even when they are sick or avoiding contagion. The iPads are especially valuable to Matheny students because they are less cumbersome to hold than laptop computers, can be used with

sit dormant. They are used in the classroom for a variety of enriched learning experiences. One recent example was during a lesson on "perimeters". The classroom teacher Karen Dakak was able to help the students make different shapes on the

obtaining maximum independence. The Mendham Rotary's generosity has helped open up worlds for Matheny students, not only in the classroom but also by enabling remote contact between students and their friends and families in the community.



Winter Madness: High School Hoops Teams Visit

The Somerset County Vo-Tech Jaguars and the Delbarton School Green Wave basketball teams brightened the winter months for Matheny students and patients by making special visits.

Ahmed Mackey, coach of the Somerset Vo-Tech Jaguars wanted his players to see that life is about more than just basketball. So he had his team organize a toy drive, and they delivered toys to Matheny on Christmas Day.

Bryce Curnin, a member of the Delbarton varsity, described his team's visit as "a great experience. We all really

appreciated the opportunity to help out."

The Somerset Vo-Tech team arrived Christmas morning, bringing several hefty bags of toys and games. According to Janice Kriegman, development officer, who was at Matheny that day, "the boys seemed to instinctively know how to interact with each resident. I was touched by how natural and caring they were. They had just the right touch."

The Delbarton team participated in adapted basketball contests with Matheny students and patients.

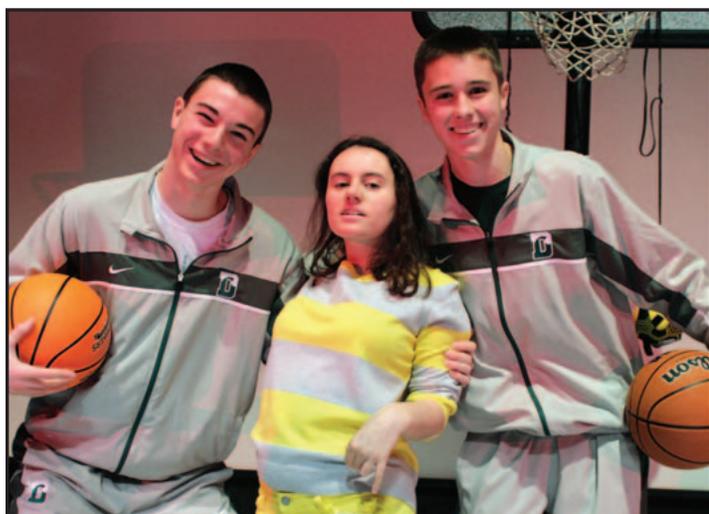
Matheny physical education instructor Jim Hintenach and recreation therapy director Sean Bielefeldt created a variety of basketball games designed to level the playing field, and the event resulted in an hour packed with fun and camaraderie in an arena-type atmosphere. The Delbarton players finished off the morning by tossing t-shirts into the audience, similar to what is often done at NBA games. "It was humbling to see the students at Matheny," added Curnin, a resident of Basking Ridge, NJ. "I hope it meant as much to them as it did to us."



Matheny student Richard Kozlik with Somerset Vo-Tech assistant coaches Mike Remeta, center, and Erik Bowers.



Somerset Vo-Tech basketball player Devon Gardner and Matheny student Yasin Reddick.



Delbarton players Bryce Curnin, left, and Ryan Murphy with Matheny student Catherine Aragona.



The Delbarton team cheers on adult patient Jason Weiner, who sunk several baskets.

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Full Circle 2013: Reflections

Celebrating the 20th
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Fine art exhibit and stage performance featuring all
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Saturday, November 2

The Robert Schonhorn Arts Center

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New Training Program for PCAs

Matheny has introduced a revived, comprehensive training program for new personal care assistants (PCAs) within the nursing department. PCAs play a unique role in providing for the most basic care of Matheny's patients and students. So, consistency in staffing is critical in order to promote early detection of changes in patients' and students' physical or emotional condition. PCAs and residents develop a

strong bond of trust and companionship.

Twenty-six current PCAs have completed an updated mentor training program, administered by Bonnie Rodgers, director of staff development. Continued training will take place annually for new mentors. PCAs are vital members of the interdisciplinary team at Matheny, and their input and observations are essential for effective care planning. 



The new mentors received certificates recognizing their completion of training.