

connection

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRICE CENTER



Nate Orlov and Sarah Orlov

Rising to Meet the Challenge

Nathan Orlov is on the rise, and his family credits ASCENT, the Price Center's after-school social skills program, with helping the 18-year-old blossom.

"He's really come out of his shell," said Nathan's mom, Sarah. "It's opened a whole new world for him."

Like many of the kids at ASCENT (Advocacy, Social Skills, Career Exploration, Networking and Transitions), Nathan, who has autism, came to the program having outgrown mainstream programs designed for younger kids.

"One of the challenges of having a child with fairly involved disabilities is some of them can't stay home alone," said Sarah. "As he got into high school, it became very difficult."

Concerned she would have to quit her job or hire a babysitter, Sarah was relieved when a friend told her about the young program at the Price Center. She enrolled Nathan when he was 14, and there was a learning curve for both Nathan and the staff.

"When he first started, autism was starting to be a population that was growing. They really went to work, learning a lot about it and seeking out training and resources.

"He's really come out of his shell...It's opened a whole new world for him."

"They really committed to learning how to do it," she added.

Trips to the grocery store, the bank, and Target have all expanded Nathan's skill set. He's learned both simple tasks (walking across a street safely) and can grasp abstract concepts such as observing appropriate boundaries when interacting with people in the community.

"It builds independence," said Sarah.

Yet ASCENT's greatest impact on Nathan may be in the friendships it has helped him form.

"It used to be he would do whatever we planned for him for the weekend, even if it didn't involve anyone his age," she said. "Since he's been at ASCENT, he asks to see friends. He wants to go to the movies or bowling with them. He cares about peer connection. It's awesome."

Wishing you a joyous and peaceful holiday season.

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Lew Bergins

WITH GRATITUDE Outgoing Board Chair Lew Bergins Passes Torch to Rick Sheehy

Lewis "Lew" Bergins stepped down as chairman of the Board of Directors this fall, leaving the Price Center a solid legacy of financial stability.

"My prior outside experience as CEO of a hi-tech company gave the board a different perspective on viewing things (budgets and contracts)," he said. "The thing I'm proudest of is how well financially the center has survived in spite of these economic times."

Lew initially joined the board seven years ago after retiring from corporate America. His son, Michael, was a longtime participant in the Dedham Day Habilitation program until his death last year, and the program is still dear to his heart.

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GALA 2011



Ron Della Chiesa, Jerry Fineberg, Neil Sedaka, Dan Frank, Nancy Comenitz, Norma Frank, Elliot Comentiz



Morris Gordon and Gloria Sonnabend



Michelle Fineberg, Lillian Sandler, Bill Sandler, Jerry Fineberg, Sandy Fineberg



Michelle Fineberg



Matthew Johnson, Sara Trafton, Adam Fineberg, Gwen Fineberg

President's Perspective



As we begin the holiday season, the Price Center has much for which to be thankful. Our fall fundraiser featuring Neil Sedaka was successful — and a terrific night, by all accounts. We have had a good year

both fiscally and programmatically. A positive development during 2011 has been the opening of our Supported Apartment Program in the Auburndale section of Newton. We are already supporting four young men who, for the first time, are living independently, and we are actively looking for one more individual to fill the program.

During the past year, we have experienced some challenges, the most trying of which was the late-summer van accident which injured twelve Price Center participants on their way to our Newton Day Programs. Several were seriously injured, and one person remains in a rehabilitation facility. I want to thank our supporters and members of the community for their help during that difficult time.

Another piece of tough news has been the departure of John Giusti from the Dedham Day Habilitation Program. John did a terrific job as program director for more than two decades, and he will be missed by staff, individuals, and family members alike. We wish him well in his future endeavors, and are thankful for his dedication to bettering the lives of all the individuals served in the program.

But the Price Center will end 2011 well positioned for the future, and much of our strength comes from our dedicated Board of Directors and its committees. This past fall, Lew Bergins retired as board chair. Lew had been a great help to me during his chairmanship, and I called upon his management expertise frequently. Happily, he will remain a board member. As Lew stepped down, Rick Sheehy stepped up as new Board Chair, and I look forward to working with him as well as incoming Vice Chair Scott Laughlin.

Two-thousand eleven marks the final year of our three-year strategic plan, and we are on track to accomplish many of our goals. In 2012, we will fashion a new three-year plan. We will need the input of all stakeholders — individuals, families, corporate funders, volunteers, and community partners — to ensure success. We will enter into conversations with all of these groups in the coming months.

Our mission requires consistency and continuity so that our clients may choose from the best options to serve his/her needs. We find ourselves ever more dependent on the financial support of others, and we thank you for your generosity and support.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

Justin Sallaway
President

A Gala Night

Charismatic crooner Neil Sedaka performed for the sold-out crowd

As this newsletter went to print, donations were still pouring in from the Price Center Annual Gala, which was held at the Holiday Inn in Brookline. But organizers said the September 23 night was a smashing success, having already raised \$427,000 from the generous crowd.

Several sponsors doubled their gifts, and the generosity seemed to be contagious.

"It was better than what I hoped it would be," said Michelle Fineberg, who planned the evening with the help of her family and longtime friend Dan Frank. "Life is good."

Fineberg credited headliner Neil Sedaka for providing the star wattage for the evening. The

legendary singer-songwriter supplied the sweet sounds to the Gala, and wowed the sold-out crowd of more than 425 guests with his repertoire of classics, his skill at the piano, and his infectious sense of humor.

Fineberg said Sedaka seemed to appeal to all ages.

"Everybody liked him," she said.

The energy in the room was palpable, and Fineberg said she was also inspired by the diversity in the supporters. "You see people you don't know who are connected to the center," she said. "It's a wonderful testament to the organization and what they do."

"It was a great night."



(L-R) Ralph Antilus, Tara Fortunato, Nicole Mello, and Karen Manning, director of ASCENT

DIRECTOR'S CUT

> Interview with Karen Manning

Director, ASCENT (Advocacy, Social Skills, Career Exploration, Networking and Transitions) after-school program

How did ASCENT get started?

A couple of families with children still in the school system approached us. They felt like their kids needed something to do in the afternoon, but they didn't want a traditional after-school program. It started as a recreation program to keep these young people from being isolated.

What do participants learn?

They spend a lot of time building life skills and social skills. We have to teach them every step we can think of. If they work on cooking, they do meal planning, making a list or a menu, going to the store, finding the items, going through self check out, preparing it and cleaning up — the whole gamut. We go to the post office, use public transportation — all of the things that will build their futures.

Tell us about your staff.

I have three paid staff — Ralph Antilus is the manager and Sarah Trafton and Tara Fortunato are group educators — and two interns from Lasell College. The program is very dependent on the team we've created. They rely on each other. Without my staff, forget it. It just wouldn't work.

How many participants has ASCENT served, and where are the graduates now?

ASCENT has served dozens of young people since it opened in December 2005, and almost half of our current clients have conditions on the autism spectrum. A goal of ASCENT is to have graduates, who age out of school entitlements at 22, move into our Day Habilitation, Work\$mart or residential programs. Today five ASCENT grads are at Work\$mart, and one just moved into the Price Center's new supervised apartment program.

How does the community benefit from ASCENT?

Because we bring participants into the community, people become more exposed to the skill set they have. We want the community to be open to the fact that individuals with developmental disabilities can do for themselves. They can order themselves. They can go up to the counter themselves. They're not just an extension of whichever staff member is with them."

To learn more or to refer an individual to the program, contact Karen Manning at kmanning@barrypricecenter.org or call 617-244-0065.

Neri Avraham



How much does Neri Avraham look forward to his afternoons at ASCENT?

So much that when he is home sick, he tells his mother, "No, no, no. I don't want to stay home."

Neri's affection for the Price Center after-school program has been a triumph for the young man whose autism initially required him to have a 1-to-1 aide.

"Within a year, he was 1-to-5," said Neri's mom, Nirith. "He grew up emotionally."

ASCENT director Karen Manning said Neri's progress has been "tremendous." And though his disability still makes it difficult for him to sit still, "he can participate in any activities we have."

Nirith said superb training and consistency of staff provided the right environment for Neri, 20, to thrive.

"They treat them as young adults and not poor, disabled kids," said Nirith. "They respect them, and the language they use makes a difference."

In his fourth year at ASCENT, Neri has learned social skills — asking for help from a store clerk, for example — that he has been able to adapt into his life outside the center.

"We go to BJ's (Wholesale Club) once a week, and he does the shopping for us," said his proud mom. "We stay in the front and have coffee, and he does the whole thing. And it's good."

As independent as Neri (which translates as candle in Hebrew) has learned to be, he is equally empathetic.

"Today he will be the one to step in if someone else is upset," said Nirith. "He feels part of the group, that he needs to take care of them."

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"You have to see the operation to appreciate it," he said. "They really treat the clients there as extended family."

Though he has passed the chairmanship to Rick Sheehy, Lew will continue to serve on the board. "I believe in the Price Center and the wonderful job they did with my son in his life."

As for the future, Lew believes that his unique background is helpful — to a point.

"It's always a tricky balance. When you're in hi-tech and you hit tough times, you look at projects and say, 'We have to cut.' But here you're dealing with human lives," he said. "We spend a lot of time analyzing budgets, but we're always keeping in mind we can't sacrifice the care we give these individuals."

Equally passionate about the Price Center's work is new chair, Rick Sheehy, whose parents were one of the founding Price Center families.

"I've been involved almost since it was founded," said Rick, recalling yard sales held for the Price Center in the 1980s.

As chair, Rick, whose background is marketing, hopes to utilize social media to better brand the non-profit.

"It's going to be a challenge, but I enjoy challenges," he said. "If you have interesting ideas, I want to hear them."

Giving 2011

Donate Appreciated Assets — Receive While Giving More

Giving to the causes you love always makes celebrating the holidays more meaningful. Did you know that you can support The Price Center's mission by donating appreciated securities like stocks, bonds or mutual funds? It's easy, and it can be less expensive than writing a check.

Say you write a donation check for \$3,000. If you are in the 35% (federal and state) tax bracket, you'll realize a \$1,050 deduction, making the net cost of the gift \$1,950.

But if you make a gift of appreciated stock that you have held for more than one year, with a fair market value of \$3,000 (and cost basis of \$1,000), you can claim the same \$3,000 charitable income tax deduction and avoid paying capital gains tax on the security's increase in value. With the additional \$400 in savings, the net cost of the gift to you is just \$1,550.

And, what if your asset lost value this year? Sell it! Take the tax deduction and donate the cash to The Price Center. Or, if you don't want to part with your investment, give it to The Price Center anyway. Use the cash you would have donated to our programs

to purchase new shares of the same stock, increasing your cost basis. This may provide you with an even greater tax savings in the future.

We strongly advise you to consult with your financial advisor before making a decision. And remember, to lock in your 2011 income tax deduction, the transfer must be completed by December 31.

Questions? Contact Lois Cohen, Director of Development at 617-244-0065 or lcohen@barrypricecenter.org.



Brendan Durkin, 18, at ASCENT after-school program

"ASCENT, for me, I like to be active. I don't want to stand around the TV or computer. (Here) you can interact with people in the community. It's fun dealing with people."

Brendan Durkin is a senior at Newton North High School, and manager of the school's varsity basketball team. He is passionate about school and sports, and said ASCENT is a great place to come.

MATCHING GIFTS

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