

connection

NEWS & HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PRICE CENTER



Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell

Annual Gala an Evening of “Inspirational Idols”

We’ve all had an idol. Someone who dazzles us. Someone who inspires us to dream big and think about the possibilities.

That’s why The Price Center will use “Inspirational Idols” as the theme for our 24th Price Center Annual Gala on Saturday, October 18. It not only fits our spectacular headlining talent—rock & roll legends Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell—but also honors the everyday idols involved in the work we do: The job coach who helps a client earn their first real paycheck; the habilitation therapist who unlocks potential no one else could see; and, of course, the amazing clients who inspire us every day.

If you’re talking about rock & roll idols, Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell practically invented the genre. More than just incredibly talented singers, musicians and performers, they helped shape American teen and popular culture.

“People just love them—their music is upbeat and happy and makes people feel fantastic,” Gala Chairwoman Michelle Fineberg said. “It’s going to be a spectacular show, our biggest ever.”

The Gala will return to the elegant main ballroom

of the Boston Marriott Copley Place, where The Price Center’s biggest annual event has had two record-setting years in a row. Doors will open at 6:30 for pre-concert cocktails and an expanded menu of passed and stationary hors d’oeuvres. The concert will begin at 7:30, with the two headliners

“It’s going to be a spectacular show, our biggest ever.”

onstage singing together. Then they’ll split up and perform two mini-sets of their own material before coming back together for the finale.

Avalon and Rydell have been touring together recently as “The Golden Boys” with fellow teen idol Fabian, but their paths have crossed a number of other times over the years. As fledgling rock and rollers, they played together in a band called Rocco and the Saints in Philadelphia, where they grew up. Both featured prominently in the movie musical “Grease,” where Avalon played a character called The Teen Angel and sang “Beauty School Dropout,” while the movie producers gave Rydell a shout out by

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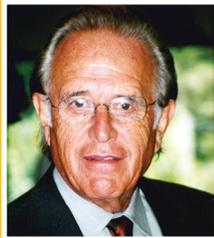


American Girl Store Showcases Potential
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Donor Profile: Remembering Fred Slifka



The Price Center family mourns the loss of a great friend and supporter, Alfred “Fred” Slifka. Longtime Price Center compatriot Gerald Fineberg said Slifka’s generosity

and kind spirit will never be forgotten.

“Freddie and I knew each other for 50 years and he was both a close friend and an advisor,” Fineberg said. “Freddie lived life to its fullest and was an inspiration to everyone he touched. He was generous and kind to everyone he met and will be remembered as a great humanitarian.

Slifka was the Chairman of Global Partners LP, one of the largest energy logistics and marketing companies in the Northeast. He is survived by his wife Gilda, his sons Adam and Eric, his daughter Jennifer, his brother Richard and their families.

ASCENT Shows Off Talents

Mario Gonzalves was dead on as Elvis, doing a rendition of "Hound Dog." Chris Kuklinsky donned a wig and danced to "Poker Face" by Lady Gaga. Linda Rao belted out "Let It Go" from "Frozen."

Almost a dozen acts wowed the crowd at Lassell College's Rosen Auditorium last month, in the ASCENT Program's spring Talent Show. The group planned the event earlier in May as part of their Wednesday "Planning My Social Calendar" exercise, and decided the event would be open to all ASCENT and Work\$mart participants.

"Everyone was really excited," ASCENT coordinator Danielle Niakaros said. "And they definitely learned to get up in front of people and try something new. But the biggest thing was that they all supported each other and cheered on each other, so it was great for camaraderie."



Lisa and Danielle team up at the Talent Show

Price Center Employers Received MWOC Awards

The Metrowest Work Opportunity Coalition (MWOC) recently gave awards to two local businesses that employ Price Center clients.

The first award went to The Computer Guys, who hired Marty Headd over a year ago. Marty dismantles and disposes of old hard drives for the firm's clients, preventing identity and data theft by thieves who mine junked computers for information.

The company has given Marty more hours and expanded responsibilities over time. He has also been fully integrated into the company's workforce, attending company outings and even the occasional poker night.

MWOC, a subsidiary of the Metrowest Chamber of Commerce, also gave an award to the American Girl Store in Natick, which employs Price Center clients Philip Jasset and Kerri MacLellan. (see story on the third page of this issue.)



President's Perspective

As we finish another fiscal year, I am glad to report that The Price Center had a good year both fiscally and programmatically. We have seen significant

growth in our Employment and our Community Based Day Services Program which has been very popular with students turning 22 and transitioning into adult services. We are also in the process of trying to open a new day program to serve individuals with autism, and have hired a board-certified behavior analyst and psychologist, Jim Ellis, who is helping us to start the program.

As we move into next year, the implementation of the Chapter 257 rate reforms will help increase funding for our residential programs. There also has been a significant increase in the Medicaid day habilitation reimbursement rate of about nine percent. These rate increases will help us improve the salaries of our direct care staff.

The big event of our year is always the Price Center Gala, and this year is no exception. Frankie Avalon and Bobby Rydell will perform at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, and because the site will allow us to accommodate more people, please encourage all your friends to attend. The Gala Committee is already very active in preparing for the event and we need everyone's help if we are going to reach our goals.

Finally, we are in the first year of our five year

strategic plan, which is posted on our website. The committees responsible for the implementation of the plan are working hard. The committees are: Assuring Quality, Employment and Community Based Day Services, Residential Services, Behavioral Services, Facility Expansion, and Marketing and Resource Development.

One area where we have been making significant progress is our search for an improved facility. I hope to have more to announce about a new facility in the near future. A new building could dramatically help us achieve many of our program objectives.

With all the positive changes occurring this year, we find ourselves more and more dependent upon the financial support of our donors to bring them to fruition. We are grateful for your continued generosity and support, which allows us to continue our mission of serving people with developmental disabilities.

We are fortunate to have so many dedicated staff, family members and donors. Thank you for being part of the Price Center family. We cannot change lives without you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Sallaway".

Justin Sallaway
President

GALA, *continued from page 1*

naming the film's fictional high school after him.

Both idols ruled the charts as young recording artists, with Rydell earning 34 Top 40 hits including million selling singles "Volare," "Wild One," "We Got Love" and "Forget Him." Rydell's career also includes numerous appearances in television and film, perhaps most famously his starring role as Hugo Peabody in the 1963 movie version of the musical "Bye Bye Birdie" with Ann-Margret and Dick Van Dyke.

Avalon, meanwhile, charted 31 singles on the Billboard lists from 1958 to 1962 and his hits include "Venus," "Why," "I'll Wait for You," and "A Boy Without a Girl." He has also had an extensive film and television career, perhaps best known for his iconic beach party comedies with co-star Annette Funicello. A versatile performer, he also played dramatic parts in major Hollywood films including "The Alamo" with John Wayne.

In addition to touring, Avalon is an ambassador for the National Arthritis Foundation, and runs his own company that sells natural health products. Rydell is now an outspoken advocate for organ donation after he himself had a life-saving liver and kidney transplant in 2012. (After a remarkable recovery, he returned to performing just six months later.)

After the show, guests will enjoy cocktails and gourmet small plates as Boston-based performer Tracy Clark makes a by-popular-demand return engagement, singing jazz standards, show tunes and more.

The Gala is The Price Center's major fundraiser of the year. Individual tickets are \$200 each, but special \$150 concert-only tickets are being made available this year to allow more people to attend. All ticket and sponsorship packages and prices are available on The Price Center website : www.thepricecenter.com.

Families Give A Course in Hands-On Helping

When most people drive past a mini-golf course on the Ashland-Holliston line and see a sign that says "Putts & More," they figure the "more" is probably go-carts, or perhaps a video arcade or laser tag.

But thanks to new Price Center Treasurer, Jim Giammarinaro of Ashland, and two other families, the "more" in this case is an extraordinary experiment in providing employment opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities while providing fun and recreation for the surrounding community.

Jim and his wife Marion adopted their son Nick from an orphanage in Russia at the age of two. Nick has struggled with learning disabilities and anxiety, but Jim said that sports and working outdoors, particularly gardening and landscaping, work wonders for him.

With Nick approaching his early 20s and the end of school-provided services, Jim and Marion knew

they had to find a way to keep their son busy and focused. When they saw that The Water Hazard, a 4-acre mini golf course facility had closed and was for sale, a light bulb went off.

"This was a chance to help Nick do the things that he loves," Jim Giammarinaro said. "If we have the ability to help these kids out, we should help them out."

The Giammarinaros teamed up with two other families they knew from Nick's special needs hockey team, the East Coast Jumbos. Ray LeBlanc, a Waltham firefighter who runs the hockey program and has worked as a volunteer for the Price Center, will also work there with his son Shane and wife Stephanie. Alan and Rhonda Banks of Walpole are also involved, along with their son Alan Jr. The three couples bought and renovated the facility, which opened to the public late last month.

Price Center staff will run the facility during the first few hours of daily operation, and workers



Nick and Jim

will also come from three other local nonprofits: The Accept Education Collaborative in Natick, the Milford Community Use Program, and Crossroads School in Natick, which specializes in education for young people on the Autism spectrum.

Putts & More is located at 750 Concord Street (Route 126) in Holliston, and is open from 2:30 to 9 p.m. on weekdays and noon to 9 p.m. on weekends. In addition to mini-golf, employees from the Price Center and the other agencies will also run a snack bar and a farm stand with local produce.

American Girl Store Showcases Potential

The American Girl store in Natick is full of inspiring stories—shelves and shelves full of books and dolls that tell tales of girls who've triumphed over adversity, both personal and historic.

But upstairs in the American Girl Bistro restaurant, where young girls dine on fruit fondue and gourmet mac and cheese and happily display their new treasures to each other and their parents, an equally inspiring story is transpiring.

At a nearby table, a young man in a stylish pink apron, black tie and a neatly-trimmed goatee is setting silverware on a table that was just cleared and cleaned. His name is Philip, he's a Price Center client and member of the Work\$mart Program.

"He's just a pleasure to work with, he has a great disposition, and he's really adapted to the team," American Girl Bistro Manager Gabriel Stipo said recently, as Philip expertly navigated the crowded server station area to refill his tray. "As an American Girl Bistro family, we couldn't be prouder to have him on board with us."

Through a swinging set of double doors and inside the bistro kitchen, Kerri, another Price Center client, was carrying a shining stack of freshly-washed plates from her dishwashing area to the order prep line in front of the cooks.

"She comes in, she goes right to work, she doesn't play around," her supervisor, Kitchen Manager

Rob Dupont said. "Kerri sets up the dish area, keeps up with all the dishes, scrubs the pots—she's very efficient at what she does. She always has a smile on her face, too. I don't think she's ever in a bad mood!"

Kerri and Philip were placed at the American Girl store earlier this year, and Price Center job coaches work with them consistently to make sure they are productive, happy and well-integrated into the operation. Stipo said the Price Center's job coaches have been "phenomenal."

"(The job coaches) are very intuitive, they ask questions," he said. "They do a great job and they're very cooperative. They just get better and better."

With hundreds of thousands of shoppers young and old going through the busy store each year (there are only 16 American Girl stores in the US and the Natick store is the only one in New England), Kerri and Philip's placements may be The Price Center's most high-profile to date.

Barry Schwartz said the Price Center is immensely grateful to American Girl and its parent company, Mattel, Inc., for their dedication to building strong, inclusive communities.

"We appreciate American Girl's commitment to hiring from The Price Center, and hope other potential employers realize the benefits of hiring



Kerri and Philip

people with disabilities," Schwartz said. "Our clients are reliable, hard-working and show up every day with smiles on their faces—all while earning a paycheck, paying taxes and living as independently as possible. This is a win/win for American Girl and The Price Center."

Stipo said having the two Price Center clients has "definitely made our American Girl community a lot tighter and stronger."

"Everybody in the kitchen loves Kerri and Philip. Everybody in the front of the house loves Kerri and Philip. They just bring a smile to everyone's face and they're a joy to have around," he said. "It's inspirational, and for us to be able to do that—and team up with the Price Center—it's just a great opportunity to show what we're made of and what we stand for."



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New Board Members Bring Skills and Life Experience



Brian Sullivan

Brian Sullivan brings a wealth of skills and knowledge to The Price Center as an independent consultant specializing in business development and education reform. A former teacher, he says he was drawn to The Price Center thanks in part to its motto: "The individual is our focus."

"I am a big believer in individualized instruction," he said. "I believe every human being deserves individual attention and that they deserve to be met where they are."

An award-winning former math teacher in the Baltimore Public Schools, Brian holds a degree in Business Administration from Babson College and a Master's in Education, Leadership and Administration from Johns Hopkins University. He founded TSL Consulting in 2012.



Denise Yurkofsky

Denise Yurkofsky of Wayland began advocating for the developmentally disabled at a young age, when she helped her mother find services for her youngest brother, who was brain-injured and lived with cerebral palsy and epilepsy.

The local school system stuck him in a basement, virtually alone. Luckily, she said, there was a lawyer in a nearby town who helped the family find him better services and a supportive group home. Now she's an attorney herself, specializing in estate planning, long term care and public benefit advocacy.

"I've always looked for clients that have children with special needs," she said. "It's an important part of what I do."



Jim Giammarinaro

New Price Center Treasurer Jim Giammarinaro owns Freedom Printing in Ashland.

It's not the sort of business experience that would naturally lend itself to running a mini-golf course. But like The Price Center, Giammarinaro believes in taking a hands-on approach to finding employment for people with intellectual disabilities and better integrating them into their communities.

"You can't argue with the mission. It's so obvious," he said. "It's all about making people aware that those folks can contribute. And it's imperative to find a place where they can do that."

Read more about Jim and his new business venture that employs his son Nick and a number of Price Center clients on page three.