

# Racker RIVALS BIG RED

presented by TOMPKINS  
Trust Company

NHL players, Cornell alumni hockey athletes, and local celebrities hit the ice in an exhibition style competition to raise funds for Racker's Early Childhood programs!

## Admission

Cargill's Friends & Family

Open Skate:.....FREE

Main Event:.....\$12 Advance

.....\$15 Day of Game

**Kids 7 and Under are Free**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Saturday July 13th, 2019  
Cornell University's  
Lynah Rink

3:30 - 5:00PM - Cargill's Friends & Family  
Open Skate

5:30PM - Game Time



## Inside This Issue

Racker Rivals Big Red • From The Desk of Topher Scott • The Swim Program • Cornell Men's Hockey Visit  
Fundraisers • Bubblemania • and more...





Topher Scott is a former Cornell hockey player and coach and currently is the event chair for Racker Rivals Big Red. He now runs a company called "The Hockey Think Tank" where he provides players, coaches, and families resources on hockey development...including one of the fastest growing hockey podcasts called the "Hockey Think Tank Podcast". He resides in Skaneateles with his wife, Emma, and daughter, Paige.

**com•mu•ni•ty**—a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals

I am so excited to be a part of the 5th Annual Racker Rivals Big Red (RRBR) Hockey Game this year! The Cornell Men's and Women's Hockey Organizations, teamed together with Racker, has proven to be such a great partnership within the Ithaca and surrounding communities – I'm anticipating this event to be our best one yet! This game has always been so much fun for everyone involved and I'm looking forward to raising some much needed funds and awareness for Racker's Early Childhood Programs.

*Community* is what this game is all about! Joining forces on the ice for this fundraiser will be current NHL stars, Cornell Alumni players and staff, local celebrities and business professionals. Off the ice we have honorary coaches, trainers, and a host of volunteers from the Racker Community! At the end of the day, that is what the vision of Racker is all about – *Envisioning a world where all people know they belong.*

I have been involved in the disability community and the hockey community for most of my life. Being able to join forces of two such committed groups for an event like RRBR helps to provide much needed awareness and funding to an unbelievable organization like Racker. It's no accident that this charity game has turned out to be something extremely special.

Thank you to everyone that has continued to support this event. I really appreciate it, Racker really appreciates it, and the many individuals and families that are a part of the disability community appreciate it.

We hope to see you at Lynah Rink on July 13! 🌲

Topher Scott

**SPOTLIGHT**

**TATTOO FUNDRAISER RAISES \$10,000**

Local tattoo professionals from reality TV show *Ink Master* held a tattoo fundraiser on April 20th at their Cortland based shop Alchemist Art Studios.

Over 10 tattoo artists, vendors, artists, sponsors and volunteers brought together the community for a great cause. The proceeds from this event went to support the Early Childhood programs at our Cortland preschool.

Together, close to \$10,000 was raised. Thank you to everyone involved! 🌲



Pictured are Thom and Erin Bulman and Josh Payne of Alchemist Art Studios. Also seen here are David McNeil, Dan Brown, and the many local tattoo professionals that donated their time and talents to make this event a success.



The Care Management Team from Cortland, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties say farewell

**SERVICE COORDINATION FAREWELL**

On June 30, 2019, we will say goodbye to the Service Coordination/Care Management Program for people with ID/DD at Racker. Service Coordination, in a variety of forms, has been an integral part of Racker for three decades in serving thousands of people with disabilities and their families.

The most recent change requires that Racker stop providing the service and transition all OPWDD Care Management to Care Coordination Organizations (CCOs).

Recently, we spent a morning celebrating the program and especially the remarkable staff in the Service Coordination Department. We shared stories, successes, and laughter. We are happy that the CM team is able to transition to LIFEplan CCO



NY and continue to do amazing work serving families. We are also heartbroken that we will not see them regularly and hear their laughter in the hallways! We wish them all the best! 🌲

# The Swim Program

*A 43 Year Collaboration  
Between Racker and Ithaca College*



Once a week, children from the Margaret Gibson Preschool at Racker eagerly await the buses that take them to The Swim Program at Ithaca College (IC). The preschoolers get to meet with their equally excited college swim buddies; and for many, explore this brand new environment for the first time. While some kids are nervous and others jump right in, everyone is eventually splashing around and exploring the water! Over the course of the semester at Ithaca College, each child builds on their independence and confidence while having fun with a new friend.

Since 1976, when Racker was known as The Special Children's Center, students enrolled in the inclusive preschool and daycare have attended The Swim Program facilitated by students from Ithaca College's Therapeutic Recreation Program. Dr. Sarah Rich – a now retired professor of Therapeutic Recreation at Ithaca College – and Jody Scriber – former Director of Preschool & Clinical Education at Racker – set the foundation for this long-

**"Working with the Racker preschool students during The Swim Program is the only time during the week where I'm not worried about exams."**

—Maddie, Understanding Disability TA

lasting partnership between Racker and Ithaca College. This collaboration has withstood over 40 years and two agency name changes! When The Swim Program first started, Racker sent kids they served with Cerebral Palsy and other physical disabilities to IC. As part of their course curriculum, the college students learned how to create lesson plans catered specifically to the preschool children. As Racker's preschool evolved and became fully integrated, all of the children with and without disabilities within the program have enjoyed getting to know their college buddies. Not only does this inclusive environment benefit the kids from our preschool, but it's also a benefit for their college swim buddies, many who might have not grown up getting to know people with disabilities.

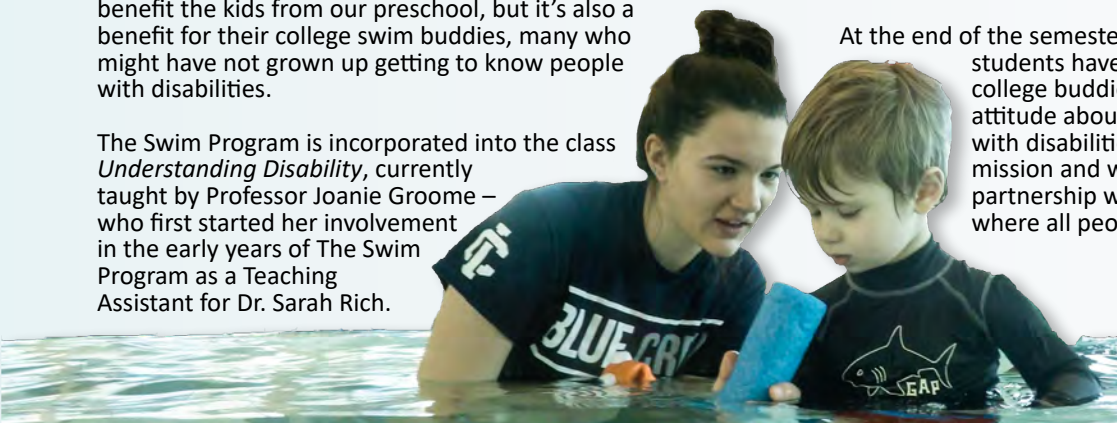
The Swim Program is incorporated into the class *Understanding Disability*, currently taught by Professor Joanie Groome – who first started her involvement in the early years of The Swim Program as a Teaching Assistant for Dr. Sarah Rich.

Like Sarah, Joanie helps her students understand how having a disability might change the lives of the individuals. The children from Racker's Early Childhood preschool and childcare center learn water safety, develop trust-based relationships, and improve their confidence and independence while their college buddies gain hands-on experience working with children with a variety of strengths and needs. The pool creates a learning based atmosphere that is both fun and relaxing for the kiddos as well as the college students. Maddie, a Teaching Assistant for the course, says that working with the Racker preschool students during The Swim Program is the only time a week where she isn't worrying about exams. It is no wonder so many Ithaca College students who take this course seek out more opportunities in the community to continue teaching children.

While the college students have the benefit of de-stressing from their busy lives and gaining valuable experience, the Racker kids are also getting life long benefits from the program. The therapeutic properties of the pool create an environment that make it easier for children to become more independent. They leave behind the comfort of their daily routines to explore the pool with a new friend. While this can be challenging at first, most preschoolers gain confidence in themselves and trust in their swim buddies – all while learning water safety!



At the end of the semester-long program, the Racker preschool students have gained new life skills and their college buddies have also expanded a more positive attitude about working and living with people with disabilities. This program truly represents our mission and we are grateful for such an impactful partnership with Ithaca College in creating a world where all people know they belong. 🌲





# RACKER RIVALS BIG RED

Pledge your favorite player! Every pledge will support children with disabilities in our community.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ This gift is anonymous

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT TYPE** ☐ credit card (enter information below) ☐ check enclosed (make payable to Racker)

Please bill my: (circle one) VISA / MASTERCARD / DISCOVER / AMEX

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ 3-digit security code \_\_\_\_\_

Name on card: (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return completed form (this full page) along with  
payment to Racker, 3226 Wilkins Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.  
Or make your pledge online at [www.racker.org/hockey](http://www.racker.org/hockey)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Topher Scott   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Brad Chartrand                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Jeremy Downs   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Anthony Angello                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Tony Eisenhut  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Tom Fox (Goalie)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Mike Schafer   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Dustin Brown                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Pat Ouckama    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Alex Tuch                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Bobby Shattell | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Benny Syer                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Chris Collins  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Wayne Mahar (Goalie)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Sean Flanagan  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Cole Bardreau                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Mitch Major    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Rob Morgan                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Tom Turk       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Bev Hartz (honorary trainer)      |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Chris Axtell   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ _____ Dan Brown (honorary referee)      |

Playing Hockey • Supporting People with Disabilities



Our Preschool Special Education, Early Intervention, Evaluation, and Clinical Services help children of all abilities develop the skills they need to build healthy relationships, achieve future school success, and gain confidence. Racker professionals, working together with individuals' families, help provide the tools and resources needed to best support and encourage children at home and in the community.

There is no doubt that these programs are life-changing for children, regardless of any specific emotional, cognitive, or behavioral challenges. Unfortunately, our Early Childhood Services, which are valued by many, are extremely underfunded and run at a remarkable deficit every year.

Your support for Racker Rivals Big Red helps provide essential funding for the Early Childhood programs and makes a huge difference to the children we serve. Whether it's pledging a player, buying a ticket, sharing the message, or even volunteering – WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

ALL PROCEEDS FROM THIS YEARS RACKER RIVALS BIG RED exhibition game will be put towards the much needed areas of our various Early Childhood Services. While we offer many support opportunities for people with disabilities through every stage of their life, our Early Childhood programs are some of the most underfunded.

An investment in Early Childhood programs can lessen the need for additional services later in life and sets the stage for continued success.

Thank you to all the sponsors that have already stepped forward to make this years Racker Rivals Big Red one of the best yet!

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Big Red Men's Hockey Goes to Preschool

For the last several years, Cornell's Men's Hockey Team has made it a priority to take time out of their busy schedule to visit with some very eager preschool students. This year was no different!



25 Cornell Hockey players came to Racker's Marget Gibson Preschool first thing on a Monday morning after a weekend of tournaments. The players spent time in several of the preschool and toddler classrooms. Many of the hockey players also spent some time in the gym having fun and enjoying their time with the students.

For some of the hockey players and preschool students, this was their first experience with each other. However, within no time, both

the hockey players and the Racker students alike were having fun and interacting like there was no age difference.

Many thanks to Coach Mike Schafer and the entire Cornell Men's Hockey Team for visiting the school and making a difference in the lives of many children! 🌟



Members of the Men's Cornell Hockey Team take a photo at Racker with student from the Beetles Classroom

Correction | A Horse of Course

In our Spring Outlook we featured a story about Equine Therapy titled *A Horse of Course*. Our story focused on the collaboration between OCM BOCES and the different equine therapy programs in our area, as well as the journey of Racker staff Susan Thomas in supporting Equine Assisted Therapy.

We need to honor a very important Equine Therapy program that was unfortunately omitted from the last article. Andrea Colella runs From The Ground Up Therapeutic Horsemanship, INC. The pictures featured, as well as the interview linked, were taken at From the Ground Up.

Andrea and her team have been integral partners to Racker for many years.



Andrea Colella (right) walks with a Equine Therapy participant at the From The Ground Up Therapeutic Horsemanship farm

More information can be found at [www.ftguhorses.org](http://www.ftguhorses.org)

RACKER AWARDED \$5,000



The Racker Cortland Preschool was a beneficiary of a \$5,000 grant from SUNY Cortland. Since 2011, Cortland University has been teaching a philanthropy based course in partnership with the Learning By Giving Foundation ([learningbygivingfoundation.org](http://learningbygivingfoundation.org))

The SUNY Cortland website reports that they have awarded 29 grants totalling over \$72,000 since the program first started!

This year marked the first time that Racker was a recipient of this grant. The money will go towards building and developing a sensory room and environment for the programs at Racker's Cortland Preschool site. 🌟



BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY HONORS CRIS DONOVAN

Racker's Associate Executive Director, Cris Donovan, recently received the *Delta Award* from Binghamton University's Department of Public Administration. This award honors distinguished public service by an alumna of the Binghamton MPA Program. Recipients of this award show a commitment to public service and professional accomplishment that distinguishes them, not only to graduates of the MPA program, but in public service in general.

David Campbell, Professor in the Department of Public Administration and also Vice President of the Racker Board of Directors, presented the award to Ms. Donovan. In his speech, Mr. Campbell remarked, "Through her leadership at Racker she helps me and other board members to understand the importance of seeing the full humanity of people with disabilities. In an incredibly complex field she remains dedicated to the Racker Vision and skilled in addressing the complex management problems that leading a large organization requires."

Congratulations to Cris Donovan for this prestigious honor and award! 🌟

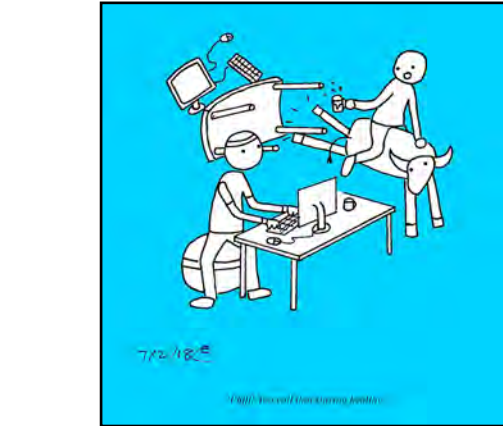
BUBBLEMANIA!

On Friday April 26th, the Racker Preschool in Cortland hosted a performance of *BubbleMania!* starring performer Doug Rougeux. Over 80 students, staff, and family members were in attendance to watch this enjoyable, imaginative, and very silly show. Small bubbles, big bubbles, dancing bubbles and even a bubble big enough to fit a student kept everyone laughing and clapping!



This show gave families a unique opportunity to join children, their teachers, and classroom staff for a shared entertainment experience. After the show, we asked some of the children what their favorite parts of the show were.

Here are some of their answers: "Seeing my friend in the big bubble!", "Getting to sit with Mommy", "He was hilarious", "It was awesome", "I liked the big bubbles", "It was funny when the bubbles popped!" 🌟



Ethan Carlson is a student at Ithaca High School. As an individual on the autism spectrum, Ethan sees the world a bit differently than most people. This is especially seen in his cartoons.

Ethan's drawings are purposefully minimalist in order to make readers focus less on the imagery, and more on the humor that is ingrained in it. Many of his cartoons focus on the absurdity of everyday life, while others examine the irony of surreal situations.

For the past year and a half, Ethan has been publishing comics in his highschool's magazine: *IHS Tattler*.

Thank you Ethan for sharing your excellent cartoons with us!



SUMMER 2019

# OUTLOOK

WWW.RACKER.ORG

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Direct Support and Community Support Professionals are jobs where compassion and human kindness are key traits to succeed. A job as a DSP or CSP means you get to support people with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives by providing opportunities to be connected with others and live in a world where all people know they belong.

Pay is competitive. Making a difference is priceless.



[www.racker.org/employment](http://www.racker.org/employment)

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