



**RACKER CENTERS**  
Creating Opportunities for People with Special Needs

# OUTLOOK

QUARTERLY | SPRING 2010

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## Department of Health and the Centers Partner to Provide Early Intervention Services

"Early Intervention works for everyone," says Sylvia Allinger, Director of the Children with Special Care Needs Division at the Tompkins County Health Department. "My support staff and service coordinators are smart, dedicated, and passionate people who meet a crucial need within the Tompkins County community by providing critical services to very young children."

Explaining that the Early Intervention (EI) program is a federally mandated program, Sylvia adds that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part C, states that "any child at risk or suspected of having a developmental delay is eligible for an evaluation and, if they qualify based on the evaluation, they may be eligible for services." The program was

initiated in response to the number of children entering kindergarten who needed to catch up developmentally before they could concentrate on learning. With a focus on children from birth to age three, EI works to help babies and toddlers achieve better outcomes once they enter the school system and throughout their life.

**EI also helps families that may be experiencing a crisis or challenge with many types of medical, physical, social, or emotional needs.**

*Continued on page 8*



*Pictured left to right: Jody Scriber, Director of Clinical and Educational Services – Franziska Racker Centers; Marie Hedge, Developmental Psychologist – Franziska Racker Centers; and Sylvia Allinger, Director of Children with Special Care Needs – Tompkins County Health Department.*

# ROGER WRITES

Isaac Newton was quoted as saying: "If I have seen further it is only by standing on the shoulders of giants." Some three decades ago when I came to our little organization, it was clear to me that I was with giants. Perhaps the greatest was our Medical Director, Dr. Racker.



For her entire 27 year career with us, Dr. Racker never accepted her salary, but rather created a fund to support learning opportunities for staff. She understood that if we were to truly fulfill our mission to support people with disabilities in our community, it was essential that our staff have the latest information. So we sent people to conferences, brought experts in, and purchased books and periodicals for our staff and for families.

Our commitment to providing learning opportunities for our staff and for families continues to be strong. Because so much of our work is done in collaboration with others, we also invite folks from other organizations to learn and share with us.



Voltaire, who was always candid, said that "better is the enemy of good." In all endeavors, "good enough" is the road to doom. The community created and sustains Franziska Racker Centers to help people with disabilities and their families, not to run programs, and certainly not to run programs in the same way we did ten years ago.

Human services is a dynamic field. There is always new information about human development, about the effects of a disability, about effective ways of helping people.

We, with our families and partners, are not satisfied with the state of the art. We need to do better.

There is an old saying that a rising tide lifts all boats. Actively sharing knowledge and ideas is good for each and all of us. It is our legacy, and our future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger".

Roger Sibley  
Executive Director,  
Franziska Racker Centers



*Editor's note: In this issue you will find a new section of our Outlook newsletter that focuses on education and training. The Centers sees opportunities for learning as essential step of our continuous journey to be better.*

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## State Energy Grant Makes ‘Cents’

Rick Darfler, Director of Facilities Services at Franziska Racker Centers, wants funders to know that the agency works hard to spend their money wisely! “It’s in everybody’s best interest to reduce operating costs,” says Rick. With this in mind, he recently applied for, and received, a substantial grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) to conduct energy efficiency studies at the Centers’ Ithaca and Cortland preschool sites.

Using the grant money, Rick hired Taitem Engineering to complete energy audits for the Centers’ two schools. At the Cortland site, with Rick’s help, Taitem reviewed things like the preschool’s lighting, insulation, heat, ventilation, cooling, and hot water and made recommendations about where he and his staff could expect to find energy savings. A similar visit is planned for the Ithaca site in the near future.

Rick jokes that he plans to keep the final report in his back pocket so that he can stay focused on future items that will keep the Centers moving in an environmentally friendly direction.

According to Rick, there are other benefits to being energy conscious as well. He believes that improvements such as reducing air infiltration and insulating attic spaces keep the Centers’ air warm and fresh which benefits the

Centers because “People will react better to their environment and the kids will learn better and stay healthier.”

Rick has also taken advantage of the Weatherization Assistance programs offered by two local organizations, Tompkins Community Action and Cortland County Community Action Program. The Centers are able to benefit from these programs because they operate residential houses in the two counties. Early results from these energy improvement projects reveal that the majority of the houses that have been weatherized have shown a dramatic reduction in gas use. Additionally, one home had a large decrease in electricity use after replacing its old lighting with compact fluorescent bulbs.

With an eye to the future Rick notes, “The Ithaca preschool is fifty years old and is showing its age.” He adds that many of its mechanicals are obsolete and will eventually need to be updated to meet current codes.

“Doing this energy study through NYSERDA opens up the door to seeking out more grant money to help defray the costs of larger projects that may need to be done in the future,” he explains. “The study gives us valuable long and short-term information about our energy use which makes the work it takes to write this type of grant well worth it.”

— Susan Henninger

*Rick has been a part of the Franziska Racker Centers team for 5 years.*



*Tim stands proudly in front of the garden at his home at Hook Place.*

### OTHER GOING GREEN EFFORTS

Our residential houses are stepping up to help save the planet by getting reusable water bottles instead of disposable plastic ones and using cloth bags for grocery shopping (courtesy of Wegmans). Others are implementing reusable microwave covers instead of paper towels and installing energy saving light bulbs. Some houses have planted their own gardens and are sharing seeds with other locations so they too can grow their own herbs this spring. Our preschool sites are recycling cans, bottles and paper and the Ithaca site is saving bottle caps to donate to the Sciencenter for their craft area. Way to go green Racker Team!



## My Lady, Deborah

I first met Deborah one year ago at her then home in Trumansburg, NY. In those first months, she communicated to me almost entirely with the few words most important to her: “the mall,” “cheesecake,” and “pizza”. When we were in a public location, she tended to use a simpler vocabulary of “yes,” “no,” and “me too” to suggest that she agreed with something I had commented on or suggested we do. Deb rarely offered to initiate conversation, minus the occasional mention of our destination or to list fast food restaurants as we passed them. Once or twice weekly, we would visit a local restaurant for lunch. On these occasions, servers would typically ask me what Deb would like, or Deb would look in my direction if they first asked her. I always encouraged her to comment on her feelings or desires verbally, but she only did so minimally.

After two months of working together, Deb and I visited New York Pizzeria in Trumansburg, NY. There, we met a friendly employee who greeted us with a genuine smile. As we approached the counter to order, this woman did the simplest thing in the world. She looked at Deborah and asked her what type of

**I was thrilled to hear Deb respond, “the pizza—the cheese and pepperoni.”**

pizza she would like for lunch. At this point, Deb and I had eaten together several times at various restaurants, but this was the first time someone had addressed Deborah directly, instead of looking to me for her order. I was thrilled to hear Deb respond, “the pizza—the cheese and pepperoni.” Whether this was a milestone for Deb or more of a milestone for me in realizing Deb’s capabilities, I may never know. Since that



*Deborah in the park*

afternoon, nearly every time we visit NY Pizzeria and see our favorite server, Deb will exclaim her characteristically emphatic, “Hi!”, sometimes before we even reach the counter. She also continues to order lunch for herself and has added “a Pepsi” as her drink order.

As Deb and I continued to spend more time together in familiar locations in Ithaca and Trumansburg, we began to meet new friends, and run into old ones. Deb would occasionally greet others if they greeted her first, or respond to “yes” and “no” questions if asked repeatedly. The day that we ran into two friends and Deb greeted them with a grand “Hello, how are you?” is one I will never forget.

Fast forward six months. Deb and I continue to have lunch each Wednesday and Deb interacts with the servers, answers questions, is more conversational and makes suggestions for activities and

places to visit. Her communication skills continue to improve and her spontaneous laugh often sparks a domino effect in those around us. Her success is my joy and I look forward to the next six months and the progress it brings.

*Our Community Support Staff work with children, teens, and adults with developmental disabilities to create opportunities for learning and achieving their dreams for success and happiness. For more information on this program, contact Renie Petrovic, Director of Family Resources at 607.272.5891 x240 or visit [www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org).*

*— Claire Prichard, Senior Community Support Staff*

## Centers' Staff Present on Mindfulness Techniques at International Conference

In October 2009 two counselors from Franziska Racker Centers' Counseling for School Success program had the privilege of presenting at the Reclaiming Youth International Seminar held in Nashville, Tennessee. Travis F. Winter, LCSW-R, and James Haines-Burnham, LCSW-R focused their presentation on using mindfulness-based approaches with at-risk youth.

**“James and I were honored to be a part of this great event. It gave us the chance to talk with other colleagues and learn about their challenges and successes.”**

For the past six years Travis and James have provided mindfulness training to students and staff during summer sessions. This effort began after several of the staff found this method useful in their personal lives and began to strategize about the possibility of

teaching students with behavioral and emotional problems how to use these techniques to empower themselves and gain more control over their behavior. It was hoped that such teaching would help students develop some insight into their own reactions and behavior. Many of the students in Counseling for School Success programs also struggle with attention issues. Travis, James and other staff believed that teaching mindfulness might give these students techniques to use that would help them to monitor, self-regulate, and self-correct when they are struggling to focus.

Mindfulness can be defined as learning to be aware of what is happening internally and externally without judgment. It is the appreciation of the present moment without distraction of an internal dialogue and external stimuli. This kind of internal dialogue can become the fuel for continued struggle as we critique our own thoughts and create a narrative that can be self-deprecating. Acceptance of your experiences and resulting actions/reactions allows us to examine our feelings without bias, hopefully, leading to acceptance of yourself and others. This is a powerful

way to create a foundation for insight, compassion, and empathy, all of which support Franziska Racker Centers' mission of inclusion, diversity and interdependence.

Travis and James' breakout session at the conference presented an opportunity to share their experience of teaching Mindfulness Techniques to the

students they work with on a daily basis. They reported that the most success is seen when techniques are presented to students in a gradually more progressive manner. Students and staff all participate together for a period of about 30 minutes a day. They start with education about stress, about how stress can negatively impact a person and their relationships, and then they talk about positive ways to manage stress. As students become more comfortable, more challenging techniques, such as extended meditation and creative visualization, are added. Feedback from families, students and staff along with some preliminary research suggest a reduction in impulsive behaviors and an increase in attention span in students. In addition, teachers report an overall calmer classroom environment and parents say that their child has started to teach them the techniques at home. Finally, students report that they use these techniques with great success because they are so simple and can be implemented privately both at home and in the community.

Travis and James' session was well-received by the nearly 100 attendees at the Reclaiming Youth International Seminar. They both look forward to continued work with staff and students around incorporating mindfulness practice into their lives.

Counseling for School Success is a collaboration between the Centers, BOCES and the local school districts to help young people with emotional and behavioral needs through individual and group counseling, proactive in-classroom treatment supports, and supported after-school activities in the community.



*Pictured left to right: James Haines-Burnham, LCSW; Dr. Martin Brokenleg; Travis F. Winter, LCSW; Dr. Steve Van Bockern*

# TRAININGS & EDUCATION



## Dr. Temple Grandin's Visit Draws a Crowd into the Thousands

Dr. Temple Grandin, well-known author and Professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University presented to a diverse crowd of over a thousand people on February 23rd at the TC3 Athletic Facility. Dr. Grandin's visit was a collaborative effort between Franziska Racker Centers, TC3 and Cornell University. Being autistic herself, Temple spoke from both her heart and personal experience in a very memorable presentation. Watch for more on this wonderful event in our Summer Newsletter!



## The Centers' is Approved to Provide Training in the Needs of Students with Autism

In response to the growing number of children being diagnosed with autism, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) regulations were amended in 2008. The amendment requires that: all persons applying for certification as a special education teacher OR certified administrators assigned to a special education position after September 2, 2009 complete course work or training in the area of students with autism.

The law requires that this training be obtained from an institution or provider that has been approved by the State Education Department and which follows NYSED's autism syllabus and teaches the coursework in a time frame of at least three hours. Franziska Racker Centers is pleased to be one of the approved providers of this training. Dr. Karen Fried, BCBA, the Centers' Director of Autism Services, completed the requirements to teach the coursework and held her first session in January. "The first training went really well. It was a motivated and diverse group," she

comments. "A handful of them had traveled great distances to attend." The NYSED invites approved trainers to submit additional paperwork to be approved to offer the training in a long-distance format, such as a webinar or a video conference; however, at this time the only trainings offered are in-person and thus require travel. Dr. Fried hopes to seek approval for conducting the coursework in a long-distance format so that the Centers can offer the training in a manner that is more convenient for trainees, regardless of where they live.

**The Centers' will host its next Training in the Needs of Students with Autism on Friday, April 16th, 2010 from 10 – 2pm (sign in is 9:30 – 9:55am) at their Ithaca site on Wilkins Road.**

For more information visit our website at [www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org). To register contact Mary Johnson at 607-272-5891 x246 or [maryj@rackercenters.org](mailto:maryj@rackercenters.org). For clarification regarding who is required to complete this autism training, please email [appinfo@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:appinfo@mail.nysed.gov).

## SUNY Grant Secured to Provide Essential Trainings

The employees of Franziska Racker Centers have the opportunity to upgrade their skills and improve their job performance, thanks to a grant secured from the SUNY Workforce Development Training program through community colleges. The competitive grants are designed to provide workforce development training courses to businesses and organizations to promote employment opportunities and increase employee retention in the local community.

It all started when Jessica Jones, Assistant Director of Quality Enhancement at the

**Terie has assisted communities in implementing Bridges Out of Poverty concepts in redesigning policies and services for families and youth in generational poverty.**



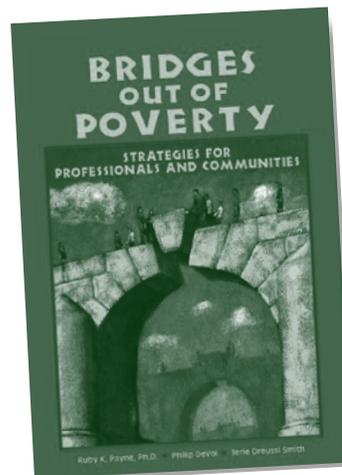
Centers, responded to an email about the SUNY grant program sent by Susan Greener, Business Development and Training Specialist at TC3.biz. "I realized the impact that the availability of this training could have for our staff and other community organizations and wanted to find out more," Jones comments. From there, Susan and Jessica worked together to design the training program. "I met with each of our program directors," says Jones, "and discussed where they see areas of need, challenges, or desire for a broader knowledge base." From those meetings the desired trainings were outlined, a budget developed, and the Centers reached out to the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County to be a partner on the project along with TC3.biz. On this partnership Susan comments, "the Centers and the Advocacy Center were a logical fit since both agencies share the same values and believe in the power of education and in sharing best practices." TC3.biz applied for—and was awarded—the training grant, and the program was scheduled to begin in early 2010.

At this time, trainings made possible by the grant have included sessions on 'Attachment and Early Childhood Development', 'Striking a Work/Life Balance', and 'Generational Differences in the Workplace.' The upcoming workshop entitled 'Bridges Out of Poverty: the Affect of Poverty and/or Rural Communities on Services Provided' will feature Terie Dreussi

*Terie Dreussi Smith, co-author of Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*

Smith, M.A. Ed and OCPS II, the co-author of the book *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*. Terie is a former public school teacher and served as adjunct faculty for several colleges focused on empowering adult students transitioning out of poverty. Terie is now a grant

writing consultant and social program manager for youth-based service agencies, community coalitions and schools. Terie has assisted communities in implementing *Bridges Out of Poverty* concepts in redesigning policies and services for families and youth in generational poverty.



The Centers expects over 300 of their staff to take advantage of this upcoming training and is thrilled to be partnering with the Advocacy Center of Tompkins County and TC3.biz to stay on top of the curve at addressing the impact of poverty on families and communities and the unique set of challenges poverty presents. Susan sums up her work on this grant saying, "this type of collaboration builds networks of support and knits communities together. And assuming that this funding is approved in the state budget," she continues, "we'll be able to make these grants available again next year."

*More information on customized training, non-credit professional development workshops, and grant funding is available by contacting TC3.biz at 607.844.6586 or at [www.TC3.biz](http://www.TC3.biz). For more information on upcoming trainings through the Centers, contact Jessica Jones at 607-272-5891 x206 or [jessicaj@rackercenters.org](mailto:jessicaj@rackercenters.org).*

The Early Intervention program is regulated by the Department of Health in New York State and the Tompkins County Health Department is the lead agency for EI services in Tompkins County. Sylvia explains that her department often receives referrals from either families themselves or from pediatricians or nurse practitioners. EI also helps families that may be experiencing a crisis or challenge with many types of medical, physical, social, or emotional needs. According to Sylvia, there are no income or citizenship requirements for families to qualify for EI services.

Once the family is involved with the Tompkins County Health Department they're scheduled for an evaluation to see if they qualify for services. Sylvia states that Franziska Racker Centers is one of the primary agencies that they contract with to provide these evaluations and any services needed as a result of the assessment. Jody Scriber, Director of Clinical and Educational Services at Franziska Racker Centers, says that two staff members complete this initial evaluation and assess the five areas of development which include motor, social/emotional, self-help, communication and cognitive development. Once a child has been identified as qualifying for assistance through the EI Program the family, service coordinators, and evaluators meet to develop the initial IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan) which determines what services are put into place. Services can include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, special education, and counseling and the amount of service varies from a session or two to several times per week based on the needs of the child and their family. Services are provided through Franziska Racker Centers and other private providers and take place in a variety of settings including the home, daycare, the

Centers' clinic or preschool locations, and in the community. The EI service coordinators and the therapists are in frequent contact to make this a great experience for children and their families and the service coordinators are always there to offer support and encouragement for both therapists and families.

**Jody feels this collaborative relationship of "good people and great resources" between Tompkins County Health Department and Franziska Racker Centers is also positive for the personnel at both organizations.**

Describing the process between the two organizations as "seamless", Jody believes their high level of collaboration and teamwork is crucial for families who may be feeling apprehensive about the process. "There are many hard things in life but being worried that your child isn't developing normally and hearing it from someone else is one of the most difficult things for a parent to go through," she comments, adding that having resources that help parents learn what they can do to help their child often eases the strain and empowers them during this time. Sylvia agrees, saying that "Many times the parents we see are going through a grieving period around the loss of having a typical child so we work really hard to help the family in the way they feel is best so they can move forward." She adds, "Early Intervention is about working with the entire family, we're teaching the parent or guardian how to work with their

children but we're also helping them meet their needs for support and addressing other environmental stressors that may be impacting how the family is functioning." Jody appreciates how well her therapists and Sylvia's staff work together to streamline the process for families and Sylvia observes that she and Jody are always working together as well, "thinking outside of the box" to find ways to address both the programmatic and regulatory challenges they frequently face.

Jody feels this collaborative relationship of "good people and great resources" between Tompkins County Health Department and Franziska Racker Centers is also positive for the personnel at both organizations. Sylvia agrees that this is a unique collaboration for two large agencies and she's especially impressed by the "mutual respect we have for what we each bring to the table".

What is the best part of their job? Jody says, "When my therapists tell me about wonderful progress that's been made, and success stories that have been achieved." According to Sylvia, it's "working with some of the most compassionate and fun people that I know, who genuinely care about each other and the families they work with, as well as knowing that what we all do really makes a difference."

*For more information on Early Intervention Services in your area, contact your local Department of Health or visit [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov).*

*Franziska Racker Centers also partners with the health departments in Tioga, Cortland and other surrounding counties to provide Early Intervention throughout the areas they serve.*

*—Susan Henninger*

## A Note of Thanks

I wanted to take a moment and let you know how important Erin, our Respite Caregiver, is to our family and specifically to our daughter, Mari who has Down Syndrome. Erin came to our family a little over six months ago but it seems as though she has been part of our family for much longer. Erin has become like a big sister or a favorite aunt in Mari's life. Mari remembers specifically all the activities she has done with Erin, from picking apples to playing 'Dumbo' in her bedroom with her stuffed animals.

Erin provides an essential service to our family. We have had many providers over the years, but none quite like Erin. Her extremely professional and responsible manner is accompanied by a warmth and genuine affection for all my kids, but especially Mari. They have a unique bond with one another. It is gratifying as a parent to see the smile on Mari's face as Erin walks in the door every Wednesday evening and every Sunday morning.

I trust Erin implicitly. I trust her to take Mari out into the community and Mari feels as comfortable and safe with Erin as she does with her family members. That level of trust is priceless and I can't thank Franziska Racker Centers enough for providing us with a caregiver of such high caliber. I hope Erin is part of the Centers' family and our family for years to come.

Sincerely,  
Christina Luglan



Mari with Erin, her Community Support Staff

# MAKING FRIENDS

## Thank you Business Partners

*for your generous support and unfailing commitment to the mission and vision of Franziska Racker Centers.*

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## Your Gift Makes a Difference – Thank You!

When you become a Friend of the Centers, you help us provide people with disabilities the services, supports and opportunities they need to do the things that are important to all of us: learn, have new experiences, enjoy friends and family, and be contributing members of our communities.

## Funding Options

### UNRESTRICTED ANNUAL SUPPORT

Allows us to respond to areas of immediate need.

### BOHN FAMILY FUND

Created by Donna and Tom Bohn, provides resources and supports for families with children having special needs.

### FRANCES G. BERKO LECTURESHIP FUND

Created with a leadership gift from the JM McDonald Foundation in memory of Dr. Berko, the Centers' executive director from 1964 to 1974. It supports community education and professional development for those working in the disability field.

### FRANCES V. WILSON MEMORIAL FUND

Created by Margaret Gibson, provides financial support for needed items not covered by traditional funding sources.

### FRANZISKA W. RACKER MEMORIAL FUND

Created in memory of our former medical director and the agency's namesake, supports early childhood services, an area that was dear to Dr. Racker's heart.

### RICHARD M. LEAVITT, M.D. MEMORIAL FUND

Created by Judy Leavitt and her sons, provides support for special experiences for children and young adults with disabilities.

### SCRIBER/CASH FAMILY FUND

Created by Jody and Kent Scriber and David and Lori Cash, supports community-based experiences for preschool/elementary age children with special needs.

### TOMPKINS TRUST COMPANY BRIDGE FUND

Supports otherwise unfunded clinical services for children throughout the year.

**For more information on making a donation to Franziska Racker Centers, call Perri LoPinto at 607.272.5891 x.234 or e-mail [perri@rackercenters.org](mailto:perri@rackercenters.org).**

## Knitted Items Provide Warmth Inside and Out

RSVP's Silent Knitters helped many people stay warm this winter. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which is part of Lifelong, provides opportunities to seniors to use their skills and volunteer in the community. The Silent Knitters, one RSVP's volunteer groups, spent many hours knitting and crocheting dozen of warm

items for the children and family members of those served by the Centers. Sis Johnson, a Silent Knitter herself comments on the nickname of the group saying, "Perri LoPinto, Director of Community Relations and Development, gave us that name and it is fitting. We knit for charity from our own homes and then deliver the items to the staff at

RSVP. They take care of getting them to the local organizations that need them, such as Franziska Racker Centers." For more information on RSVP call Lifelong at 273-1511.

**RSVP**



## Food Baskets Fill The Body and Heart

Franziska Racker Centers' board member, Steve Lipinski and his wife Kathy, once again put together beautiful food baskets for families served by Franziska Racker Centers. Staff compiled a list of those families that needed help this holiday season, and the Lipinskis generously donated their time and resources to assemble the baskets and help with delivery.



Sarah Hall, Service Coordinator, Steve Lipinski, Board Member and Alan Wilkinson, Service Coordinator

## A Helping Hand Makes All the Difference

Over a decade ago Cayuga's Helping Hands was created by Darlene O'Neil, Administrative Assistant at AES Cayuga. The inspiration was AES's commitment to social responsibility. The group, made up entirely of AES staff, volunteers



their time to raise money for local people and groups in the community through various fundraising activities. The Helping Hands Committee then donates to local causes that help families in need. This year Cayuga Helping Hands donated \$400 to the Centers that was used to purchase food cards for families that needed extra help over the holidays.

Gift baskets are loaded and ready to be delivered!



## Team Racker Steps Up to the Plate

The staff of Franziska Racker Centers wanted to do something for families that might need some help over the holidays. "Kids are home from school and having enough food to go around, and something special for a holiday dinner can be challenging," comments Perri LoPinto,

Director of Community Relations and Development. Nearly 50 gift cards to local grocery stores were donated by Racker Staff and given to families served by the Centers' various programs in Cortland, Tioga and Tompkins County. Way to go Team Racker!



# OUTLOOK



**RACKER CENTERS**  
Creating Opportunities for People with Special Needs  
*...Serving the community since 1948*

[www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org)

Franziska Racker Centers  
3226 Wilkins Road  
Ithaca, NY 14850

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
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Permit No. 780  
Ithaca, NY 14850

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

## VISION

We are inspired by the vision of our founding families: that all people with disabilities will be valued members of a welcoming and supportive community.

## MISSION

We are dedicated to helping people with special needs and their families have good lives, with opportunities to learn, to be responsible, to feel cared for, to share, to be connected to others. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusion in our community, celebrating the richness that diversity and interdependence bring.

## Faces of the Centers

In mid December the Ithaca Youth Bureau did an ice skating program at Cornell with some of the men's hockey team. A few people skated but the rest of us got pushed around in chairs by the hockey players. We got to use the players' hockey sticks and tried to make goals. I had a great time and the players also had a great time and they hope to do it again with us. I know some of the players as they have come to the Centers to visit the classrooms. Because I have Cerebral Palsy, I did not ice skate. I was one of the participants who got pushed around in a chair but I did make a couple of goals against the Cornell goalie!

— Kelley Snedeker, Administrative Assistant and Classroom Aide



Cornell hockey player Jarred Seymour pushes Kelley in a chair on the ice at Lynah rink.