

OUTLOOK



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

"Making Room" Campaign Challenge Match

*Construction is under way and we now have a
\$200,000 Challenge Match to take us to our goal!*



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**Day of Demeter
Volunteers**

**Fond Farewell to
Dr. Karen Fried**

**Red Key Society
Hosts Racker**

SURVEY...Back Cover
**Take part in our
online survey and
you could win!**

***We are making great progress,
Your gift will help us reach our goal!***

Our "Making Room" Capital Campaign is raising funds to modernize our aging preschool, expand our community services, and create a Learning Center where staff, families and the community at large can gather to learn best practices and innovative techniques for helping people with disabilities in our community. We need to raise \$3.5 million and...

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Roger Sibley, Executive Director

Summer is a-comin' in. We northerners always look forward to this season, even if the winter has been mild. Living is easy, vacations, maybe a trip, barbecue, a dip in the lake, what's not to like?

This summer will be extra special for us. The renovated and expanded preschool at our Wilkins Road campus will be done, and kids and staff will move back in July. It has been entirely too quiet without them, and we look forward to parades, singing, and wonderful busyness.

We will also be finishing the "Making Room" Campaign. Our community, and you have been very generous at a time of severe economic uncertainty.

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Some of our greatest friends have created a Challenge-Match of \$200,000 to get us to goal. Any gifts received before September 1st will be matched. We look forward to reminiscing about the "Making Room" Campaign, and with your help, that will be soon.

I'm not sure that Franziska Racker Centers has ever "reinvented" itself. There is always a bit of the past in the present and a bit of the present in the future. But the Learning Center, as it unfolds, will certainly be a new chapter. Our long-standing commitment to gathering knowledge and sharing useful ways to bring that knowledge to people and situations will strengthen. The limits on government funding now and in the future require us to help each other in helping people in need.

We see the Learning Center as a community resource with a broad scope. It will bring knowledge of physical development, autism, babies with feeding problems, children with disruptive behaviors, and many others. It can be used to convene people from the community to address major challenges, such as families in distress and social isolation.

If you have questions, if you have ideas or wish to understand something more deeply that has to do with the human condition, the Learning Center will be here for you.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President: Howard Schler
- Vice-President: Brian McAree
- Treasurer: David McNeil
- Secretary: Elizabeth Gesin

[See a complete list of Board Members on our website!](#)

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 with others. We are committed to creating a culture of inclusion in our community, celebrating the richness that diversity and interdependence bring.

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.

OOPS! Correction to Spring 2012 Outlook Cover Photo Caption

Rick Darfler was incorrectly listed as the Facilities Manager when his title is actually Director of Facilities.

WOMAN'S BEST FRIEND

Since becoming a resident in one of Franziska Racker Centers' residential homes three years ago, Tessa has sought to improve her literacy skills through reading in different environments. In that time, she has read to the elderly at Cayuga Ridge, fellow housemates, and staff in her home.

Despite her achievements thus far, Tessa is still timid when reading to others. To continue increasing her confidence Senior Residence Counselor Nikki Babcock proposed an idea. "Someone told me about an experience with a young person who was having trouble reading," Babcock says. "She was introduced to a group that specialized in the use of companion animals. The purpose was to boost confidence within an environment of patience and tolerance." This led the house staff to reach out to Cornell Companions, a pet visitation program sponsored by the College of Veterinary Medicine, and a conversation with dog handler Jean Snow.

Having volunteered at Racker Centers' Wilkins Road preschool since 2005, Snow was no stranger to the Centers. Now as a volunteer with Cornell Companions Jean says, "I feel fortunate to be visiting Tessa and the other residents at Campbell Avenue. Everyone at the house is so hospitable and respectful."

For her animal to be certified as a Companion, Snow had to attend information sessions offered by the program's director, Robin Hamlich. Companion animals are also required to



Tessa reads to Jean Snow and Sophie as Residence Counselor Wendy Hoffman looks on.

illustrate proficiency in certain areas, including basic obedience and polite people greetings.

"I became involved with Cornell Companions after reading an article on Animal Assisted Therapy," Snow explains. "I've always loved working with people and working with animals; this seemed like a wonderful way to bring those two things together. Fortunately, I had the ideal animal for this type of activity." Snow's canine, Sophie, is a Golden Retriever that took to Tessa with great enthusiasm. "When I see Tessa's face light up as she looks at Sophie, I see something—a reaction—that another human couldn't evoke." Tessa agrees and says that Sophie makes her feel "happy."

Tessa's mother, Tanya, has been supportive of Snow's efforts. "Any

innovative programs that assist people with special needs are worth exploring," she says. "I would love to see Tessa get to the point where she can go to the library, check out books of her choice, and read them by herself. It would be such a mind-expanding experience, not to mention the pleasure it would give her."

Cornell Companions is dedicated to the development of the Human-Animal Bond. Volunteers and their pets visit children with disabilities, nursing home patients and hospital patients, with the belief that animals enhance the lives of all people. For more information: www.vet.cornell.edu/services/companions

~By Jon Ulrich, Opportunity Development Facilitator



DAY OF DEMETER VOLUNTEERS

Six volunteers from the Psi Chapter of the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority volunteered in the Margaret Gibson Preschool Atrium Garden on the Day of Demeter, April 21st. The volunteers weeded the flower beds, prepared the beds for new plantings and prepared the area for mulch. The garden will be taken care of by the preschool classrooms at the Wilkins Road preschool program. The Day of Demeter is an annual Greek-wide community service day.

The volunteers from left to right: Natalie Kim, Alex Jonker, Kelsey Young, Dani Sierra, Isabella Mongallo, Betsy Hurtado.

A FOND FAREWELL TO DR. KAREN FRIED

June 2012 will mark the end of over fifteen years of loyal service at Franziska Racker Centers for Dr. Karen Fried, Psy.D. BCBA-D, as she leaves her post as Director of Autism Services. Although she will be dearly missed, we are excited for Karen as she begins her position in Chicago, IL as Clinical Director of Little Leaves Behavioral Services.

Dr. Fried has been with Racker Centers since 1997. For the last ten years, she was a driving force in the development of services for children with autism spectrum disorders. She helped establish the Centers' Partnership Program in 2004, which is the agency's intensive classroom program, specialized for preschoolers with autism and is based upon principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA). Franziska Racker Centers' Partnership Program is one of the first ABA programs in the state to be integrated with typical daycare children.

While at Racker Centers, Karen achieved certification as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctoral (BCBA-D), a credential

that requires the recommendation of other practitioners, completion of rigorous standards in coursework and experience, and the successful passing of the BCBA examination. Dr. Fried has provided numerous trainings to Racker staff and the community at large, including the autism training mandated by the NYS Department of Education for certification in special education teaching or school administration.

Karen is committed to evidence-based intervention and community outreach. She has consulted to staff at area school districts and community organizations, including Fire and Rescue Departments and the Youth Bureau, to foster the use of effective strategies with all individuals on the autism spectrum.

Looking forward, the Partnership Program is going strong with a classroom located at the Cortland preschool site and a newly renovated classroom preparing to reopen and welcome students back at the Tompkins County Wilkins Road preschool this July. The Tompkins County classroom has been temporarily located at Immaculate Conception School for the



past year of the building renovation project. The Partnership Program, now in its eighth year, focuses on helping preschoolers with autism (and related disorders) learn fundamental skills and behaviors, especially in the areas of social interaction, communication and daily living. The search is currently in progress to fill the position Karen previously held, and the agency is in communications with a number of qualified candidates. Watch for more information in the fall 2012 Outlook.

Everyone at Racker Centers wishes Karen the best of luck in her new venture in the windy city! Thank you for your dedicated service over the past 15 years.

RED KEY SOCIETY HOSTS RACKER CENTERS

The Red Key Society is Cornell University's honors society for varsity athletes. It honors outstanding undergraduate contributors to both Cornell athletics and the Cornell Community. The Red Key Society plans and assists in many community service events throughout the year to further its purpose.



Tim answers a trivia question as Racker staff member, Dillon Thomson, and Red Key Society members, Kelsey Karys, Cam Simez look on.

Members of Cornell University's Red Key Society annually extend an invitation to a sporting event to the families that are served through Franziska Racker Centers' various programs. This year, the group hosted a number of individuals from our Community Support Services programs along with their Community Support Staff. Attendees enjoyed the February 10th Men's Basketball game against Yale University. Prior to the event, the Red Key Society hosted the Racker group for a pre-game dinner of pizza and a lively game of Sports Trivia. Individuals were able to answer questions and win giveaways the Red Key's were offering as prizes.

A special thank you to those students who helped organize this year's event including Kelsey Karys, Quninton Leith, and the Red Key Society advisor Christine Wlosinski!

CAMPAIGN MATCH...Continued from Cover

*Special Thanks to our Match - Makers
for making this Challenge Match possible:*

Cargill Deicing Technologies

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The United Way of Tompkins County Shpherd Fund The Triad Foundation

Tompkins Trust Company David and Christine McNeil



WE ARE ALMOST THERE!

Thanks to the generosity of a special group of donors we are calling our Match-Makers, we have a \$200,000 Challenge Match to take us to our goal. This match is given to help us raise the last dollars needed to complete our "Making Room" Campaign, and is also in honor of our Executive Director of 33 years, Roger Sibley.

Every dollar contributed will be matched to help us complete our fundraising and will enable us to name the large Learning Center room in Roger's honor.

PLEASE GIVE! Make a gift - or a pledge! But we need to hear from you by September 1st in order to meet the match deadline.

**Visit www.rackercenters.org to *read about our funds and donate now!*
Contact Perri LoPinto at 607-272-5891 Ext.234 or email perri@rackercenters.org for more information.**

THANK YOU BUSINESS PARTNERS*

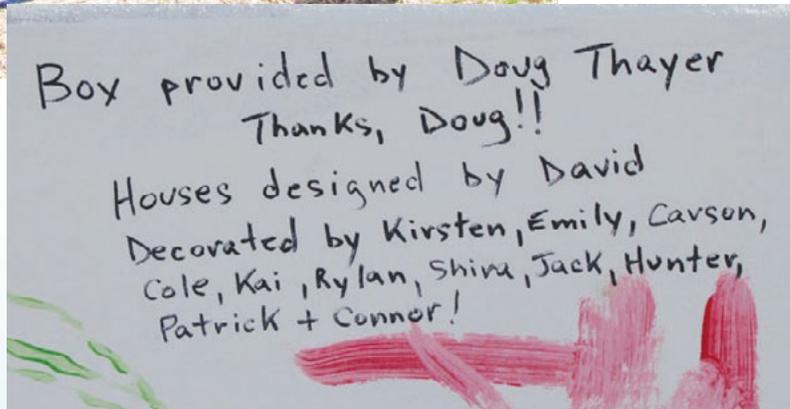
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** Business Partners are donors who make gifts of \$1,000 or above given in support of Annual Operating costs or our "Making Room" Campaign.*

FACES OF THE CENTERS



The toddler daycare classroom, temporarily located at Namaste Elementary School in Jacksonville, N.Y., spent a sunny spring afternoon building and painting a playhouse made out of recycled materials. A big Thank You to Doug Thayer for donating and delivering a large refrigerator box used by the classroom for this fun project!



SURVEY

INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW!

We are looking for feedback to learn more about you and how we can share important information about the Centers with you. Please take a moment to share your preferences with us by responding to this brief [online survey, click here to participate now!](#)

Everyone who responds will be entered in a drawing for a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate from the Glenwood Pines Restaurant and a Franziska Racker Centers' t-shirt.

EDITOR Heather Hughes, Director of Public Relations

DESIGN Dawn Bricen LaMorte, SUNRISE STUDIOS DESIGN www.SunriseStudiosDesign.com

CONTRIBUTORS Heather Hughes, Roger Sibley, Jon Ulrich

