

Connecting a Community to a Cause by Patrick Bohn

When the puck is dropped for the 2nd annual Racker Rivals Big Red hockey game on July 11th, Topher Scott, Cornell Men's Assistant Hockey Coach, will be one of the many players who will be taking part in the memorable event.

But to him, the event represents more than just a chance to raise money and awareness while skating the Lynah Rink ice again. The event has grown into something bigger: a chance to connect a community to a cause. "I remember walking out of the tunnel onto the ice for the game last season, and seeing the 2,700 people in the stands," he said. "I looked at a couple of my teammates and said, 'Wow, this is amazing.'"

"I think there were some guys who were looking at the event as another chance to put on skates," Scott continues. "But seeing that level of support showed them something else. It showed them that the Ithaca community recognizes that Racker Centers does a lot of meaningful work for individuals with disabilities. And that drove home the message that we weren't just playing for a team, but for a cause."

The Cornell hockey program has long had a special relationship with Racker Centers. Scott vividly recalls going down to the Wilkins Road special education preschool with his players and spending time with the children there. "It's one of the most rewarding experiences I've had," he said. "I see the look on our guys' faces when they work with the kids, and they're blown away by how hard the children there work. And interacting with the kids has really shaped our players. They see the same traits we ask them to exhibit on the ice—hard work, perseverance, dedication—in everything those kids do, and it really changes them."

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See celebrity players!

BEN SCRIVENS
JOE NIEUWENDYK
DUSTIN BROWN

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SUPPORTED Decision Making

by Cris Donovan



On most days, I rely on other people in my life: my friends, family, neighbors, paid professionals, co-workers, and more, to help me make decisions. Seemingly simple decisions (what should I wear to my high school reunion) to more complex decisions (end of life planning), are all done with the support and guidance of others. In some instances, my knowledge of the topic is practically zero (retirement investments) and I trust that those people I've chosen to help me are doing so with my personal goals, comfort, and dreams in mind. Sometimes, I've made some pretty awful decisions, even with the full support and guidance of people who were there to help. Sometimes, I've made decisions that went against everybody's advice, but that ended up having some of the best results. In the end, whatever the topic, it's my decision, one in which my will and preferences are intact, but my decision-making processes are always supported by many other people in my life.

For people with disabilities, there is often an assumption that unless the person can make all decisions fully on their own, they are not capable of decision making. Structures and safeguards have been put into place to make decisions on behalf of people, "in their best interest." These structures, while certainly designed to help and support people with disabilities, can have the unintended impact of minimizing the will, preferences, and dreams of people with disabilities. As counterintuitive as it may seem, doing things in the "best interest" of people, may in fact be contrary to what the person actually feels is the right decision for them. As with some of my decisions, what is ultimately right for me may well not be perceived as being in my best interest, but nevertheless, it's still the best decision for me.

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was adopted in 2006. The document is designed to help shift the paradigm of people with disabilities as people to be cared for to people with disabilities as equal members of society with all the human and legal rights of others. Article 12 of the CRPD addresses the role of Supported Decision Making for people with disabilities. Supported Decision Making is a service-system phrase for what we all use to make decisions – getting the help we need to make the decisions we need to make. Article 12 includes the right of people with disabilities to make their own decisions, the obligation to provide supports (where needed) to help someone exercise their legal rights, protections against exploitation, abuse and violence, and accommodations needed to make it all a reality. What does that mean for us? It is a shift - from making decisions for people, to helping each person make decisions that are meaningful for them.

Change in our collective behavior takes time, and while sometimes it feels as though paradigm shifts for people with disabilities move at a glacial pace, there is movement, and there are things that we can all do to help. Start young, help children with disabilities to realize and recognize their preferences; involve older children in making decisions about their world; help people with disabilities access needed accommodations so that they have the opportunity to make important decisions in their lives; help people with disabilities build strong relationships so that they have other people surrounding them who know their preferences, goals, and dreams and can help ensure that decisions made are in line with their will. As the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities tells us, it is our duty "to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity" - in short, to help them to form caring, supportive relationships. Just like we all need.

TIOGA

News Radio WEBO Your Hometown Station

The Tioga Celebration was sponsored in part by:

Inspiration Award:



Vanessa Ede – Tioga
County Family Resource
Team Leader



Joshua Skellett
– Opportunity
Development Facilitator,
Residential Program

Tioga Community Partner:



Linda Fagnoli (second from left) and the Fagnoli Farms Team



Special Friend:

← John Crosby

Mick Chorny →



TOMPKINS

OCTOBER 15, 2015 EMERSON SUITES

Inspiration:

Katie Deutsch. – Human Resources Administrator

Pauline Conroy – Medication Coordinator/RN,
Turning Point Program

Special Friend: Gene Yarussi

Tompkins Community Partner: Mary Meeker,
Principal, Exceptional Education Department at TST BOCES

CORTLAND

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015 - RAMANDA INN

Inspiration:

Nancy Bruce - Physical Therapist, Preschool Program

Joanna Welch – RN, Residential Program

Special Friend: David McNeil

Cortland Community Partner:
Puzzlesolvers – Kim Friedman

This year the **Dr. Racker Award** is presented to Sue Budney – Director of Quality Enhancement and Standards for her continued work in the spirit of Dr. Franziska Racker.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR AWARD RECIPIENTS!

RACKER RIVALS BIG RED

sponsored by
TOMPKINS
Trust Company

July 11, 2015 at 7:00pm
Lynah Rink, Cornell University

See celebrity players!



BEN SCRIVENS **JOE** NIEUWENDYK **DUSTIN** BROWN

An exhibition hockey game featuring Cornell University men's and women's coaches, celebrities and local community players to raise funds for individuals with disabilities in our community.

TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW! \$12 in advance/ \$15 at the door (Youth 12 and under just \$5)

BUY YOUR TICKETS at the Cornell Ticket Box Office, at any Ithaca /Trumansburg **Tompkins Trust Co.** Branches, OR online at www.rackercenters.org/RackerRivalsBigRed

PLEDGE YOUR FAVORITE PLAYER by filling out the pledge form on page 7 and returning it in the included envelope, or go online at www.rackercenters.org/RackerRivalsBigRed to make your pledge.

ENTER! Follow the Racker Facebook page and enter the Racker Rivals Big Red Sweepstakes for a chance to win one of six exciting prizes, plus the opportunity to win a spot at the Celebrity Autograph Session with Joe Nieuwendyk, Ben Scrivens, and Dustin Brown!

July 11, 2015 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

4:30 p.m.	Rink opens to the community
Before Game	Celebrity Meet and Greet for 20 lucky winners!!! Enter the Sweepstakes found on the Racker Facebook page for your chance to win.
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Cargill Deicing sponsored Family Open Skate – Lynah Rink Come with your own skates or rent skates at the rink and come and skate with the players!
5:00-intermission	Silent Auction (signed jerseys, hockey sticks, Corning Museum of Glass art piece and more)
7:00 p.m.	Game starts 1970's Cornell Men's Hockey Championship Team drops the puck! 20 minute half Intermission featuring a match played by The Ithaca Mites 20 minute half Shoot-out

*See the updated roster of players at www.rackercenters.org/RackerRivalsBigRed

Connecting a Community...continued from cover

Getting a chance to work with the population that Racker Centers serves has proven an eye-opening experience that also serves to drive home the importance of an event like Racker Rivals, Scott said. "A lot of the guys I talked to have said it's helped them realize how critical it is that individuals with disabilities and special needs have the support and opportunities that many of us take for granted," he said. "I know they've learned more about the challenges these individuals face, and other ways they can give back."

Above all, Scott is glad that the Big Red hockey program has a chance to rally the community around an event such as Racker Rivals. With Men's Head Coach Mike Schafer, Men's Associate Coach Ben Syer, Women's Head Coach Doug Derragh, and Women's Assistant Coach Edith Racine also taking part, the Cornell hockey family has a large footprint on the event.

"This is something we talk to our players about often," Scott said. "They understand that our hockey programs are important to the community. But that also means we have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to give back to the community that supports us. And if we can use our notoriety to help make more people aware of the great work being done by everybody at Racker Centers, then I think we've accomplished a lot."

Scott added that he's proud of what the community has shown in support of Racker Rivals. "Last year, we really got an idea of how special the Community really is," he said. "There are a lot of communities that wouldn't get behind an event like this, and we had a packed arena. That tells you that people appreciate all the hard work that's being put into an event like this, and what makes it so memorable."

Speaking of memories, Scott said one of his fondest was getting a chance to play with former teammates during the event last year. "Being in the locker room with the guys before the game and talking with them was a lot of fun," he said. "And there was also a feeling that we had to go out there and put on a good show. Yes, it was only an exhibition game, but we still wanted to play a good game and give fans something to talk about, and I hope we can do that again this year."



The trifecta behind RRBR CU Mens Hockey Coach Mike Schafer, Tompkins Trust Co. President and CEO Greg Hartz, and CU Men's Hockey Assistant Coach, Topher Scott



The 2014 Racker Rivals Big Red 2014 teams

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MAGUIRE

Playing Hockey - Supporting People with Disabilities

RETIRING STAFF Will Be Missed

Two longtime Racker Centers’ staff, Cheryl Moore and Barbara Marmora, will be retiring at the end of the 2015 school year after a combined 48 years of service at Racker Centers. Barbara has worked at Racker Centers as a special education teacher for 22 years, most recently as the teacher of the “Owls” classroom at the Tompkins County preschool. Barb has many wonderful memories of her years in her classrooms, first in Dryden and then at the Tompkins County Racker preschool site, and the many young lives that she has impacted. Starting at Racker as a 1-to-1 aide in the classrooms, Barb pursued her Master’s degree in early childhood education and then went on to receive her special education degree. Barb also has a long history of art and art education on her resume and looks forward to doing more of her specialty, Katazome – a technique of fabric dying, in her retirement. We also look forward to seeing her around the Racker preschool from time to time as she hopes to serve as a substitute in the classrooms.

Cheryl has been with Racker Centers working as a Physical Therapist for 26 years. Beginning her career in the geriatrics field, she then took a position with Racker Centers in Cortland. Working with children was a new experience for Cheryl; however she says, “People were so willing to help, and there was a lot of opportunity to learn.” Throughout those early years in her career in Cortland, the Racker Centers’ therapy team was on the road a lot, traveling to and from people’s homes and area schools. Cheryl worked in the Cortland Program for 9 years before moving to the Tompkins County preschool site where she has worked for the past 17 years of her career. An avid quilter, Cheryl looks forward to doing more quilting with the Ithaca Modern Quilt Guild and the Tompkins County Quilters Guild, in addition to spinning yarn, knitting and spending time with her grandchildren.



Cheryl Moore (left) and Barbara Marmora (right)

When asked what they will miss the most, both Barb and Cheryl immediately respond, “the kids,” with Barb noting her additional fondness for the connection she often formed with the entire family of each child in her class. Cheryl remarks on how much she’s enjoyed the teamwork among the staff in the classrooms and how supported she has felt throughout her career.

If you would like to send a note to Barb or Cheryl you can do so by sending it in care of:
Racker Centers
The Margaret Gibson Preschool
3226 Wilkins Road, Ithaca, NY 14850

Gratitude and congratulations to both Barb and Cheryl on a wonderful retirement!



The 2014 Annual Report will be available online July 1st. Watch for it to catch an interactive glimpse of last year!

For a complete list of our Business Partners visit www.rackercenters.org



PLEDGE FORM

Pledge your favorite player! Every pledge will support individuals with disabilities in our community. Make your pledge using this form OR online at www.rackercenters.org/RackerRivalsBigRed
IT ALL HAPPENS AT 7:00 P.M. ON FRIDAY, JULY 11TH AT LYNAH RINK.
SEE THE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS ON PAGE 4 FOR GAME DAY ACTIVITIES.

- ☐ \$ _____

Greg Hartz
- ☐ \$ _____

Topher Scott
- ☐ \$ _____

Mike Schafer
- ☐ \$ _____

Todd Scriber
- ☐ \$ _____

Ben Scrivens
- ☐ \$ _____

Jenny Scrivens
- ☐ \$ _____

Dustin Brown
- ☐ \$ _____

Nicole Brown
- ☐ \$ _____

Joe Nieuwendyk
- ☐ \$ _____

Jeremy Downs
- ☐ \$ _____

Brandon French
- ☐ \$ _____

Matt Hedge
- ☐ \$ _____

Ben Syer
- ☐ \$ _____

Pat Ouckama
- ☐ \$ _____

Ben White
- ☐ \$ _____

Marc McCutcheon
- ☐ \$ _____

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Alysa Gagliardi

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Sean Schmidt

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Tony Eisenhut

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Roger Dennis

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Doug Derrough

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Tom Fox

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Jan Pajerski

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Edith Racine

☐ \$ _____

Svante Myrick, honorary coach

☐ \$ _____

Richie Moran, honorary coach

☐ \$ _____

David Archer, honorary coach

☐ \$ _____

Kent Scriber, honorary trainer

☐ \$ _____

Bev Hartz, honorary trainer

☐ \$ _____

Courtney Gray, honorary trainer

☐ \$ _____

Ed Kelly, honorary trainer

☐ \$ _____

Daniel Brown, honorary referee

☐ \$ _____

Arthur Mintz, announcer

TOTAL \$ _____

More players being added, look for updates online!

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Name on card: (please print) _____

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Please return completed form along with payment in the enclosed envelope. Or make your pledge online at www.rackercenters.org/RackerRivalsBigRed

SUMMER 2015

OUTLOOK
www.rackercenters.org

Franziska Racker Centers
3226 Wilkins Road
Ithaca, NY 14850



MISSION STATEMENT

We support people with disabilities and their families to lead fulfilling lives by providing opportunities to learn and be connected with others.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a world where all people know they belong.

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Hannah laughs with Nancy, her Community Support Staff.



To learn more about Hannah's story, watch her video on the Racker Facebook page:
Go to www.facebook.com/franziskarackercenters and click on the videos tab