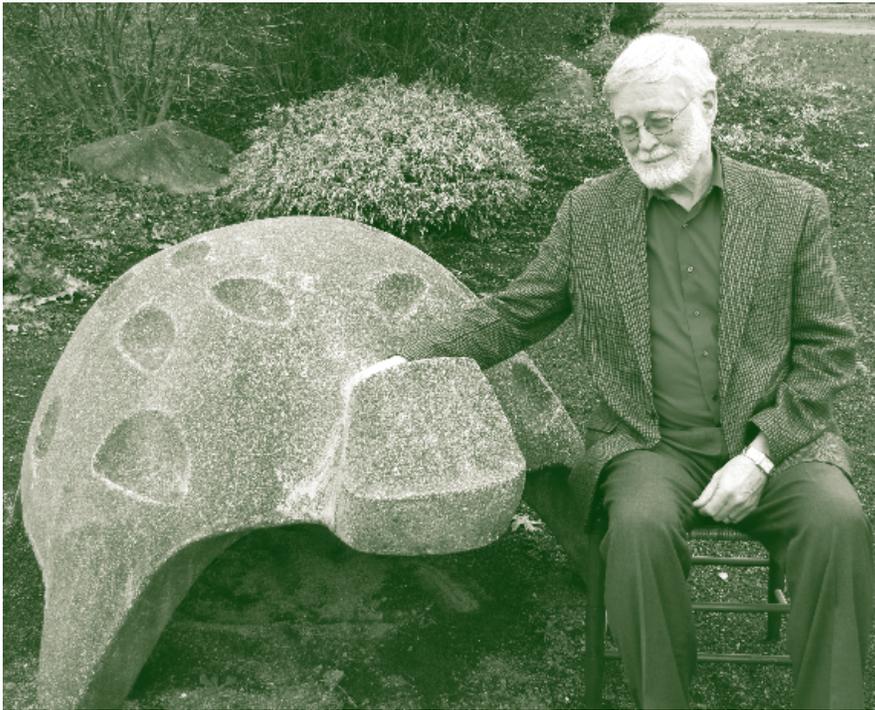


# OUTLOOK



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



*Roger's mentor, reminding him "slow and steady wins the race."*

## *Roger Sibley Retires after 33 Years*

Picture this. A young man with a deep desire to make a difference in this world is invited with his wife and young daughter to lunch at the former Tower Club. He is seated facing the north window overlooking beautiful Cayuga Lake. He is then asked by a committee of caring staff and volunteers from an agency that is working to help children with disabilities, "Would you like to come work with us?" In this case, it resulted in 33 years of service and dedication, helping to mature a key community organization impacting people with disabilities and their families across a five county area.

Roger Sibley has worked in human services since college. Choosing to remain with his pacifist roots, he was granted the opportunity to pursue "alternative service" rather than go to war when he was drafted. His service leads him to the role of a Residence Counselor at The Elmcrest Children's Center serving children with emotional problems. Soon thereafter he was appointed to his first administrative role as Director of Education at Elmcrest, remaining in the position until 1977. When the organization began facing financial trouble and Roger was faced with having to layoff staff, he chose the course of laying himself off first. He then pursued other administrative roles focusing on special education, which eventually led him to The Special Children's Center in Ithaca, NY.

Although it was an easy decision for Roger to accept the Executive Director position at The Special Children's Center in 1979, he was not without his insecurities. Even with a Masters Degree in special education, and a proven history of working successfully with tough kids, Roger felt he lacked knowledge specifically in the area of speech and physical therapy. He began holding regular meetings he called "roundtables" with a diverse cross-section of staff to learn as much as he could. He met with the programs' Directors, as well as the agency Psychologist, Social Worker, and the Home Service Director. At the time of Roger's hiring, the agency operated the preschool in Ithaca, had a small number of therapists at TST BOCES, and had an outreach team that Roger fondly calls, "The station wagon full of ladies," that provided therapies and evaluations to children in Owego, Montour Falls, and Cortland. Roger was a fast learner, and a good listener. Responding to the needs of the community, preschool sites were opened in Tioga and Cortland Counties. Throughout the mid- 1980's planning continued and the agency grew. The agency worked towards providing more therapy for adults, and started providing mental

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**Trees Donated**

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Ribbon Cutting**

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## WELL WISHES FOR ROGER

"I would like to pass along my congratulations to Roger upon his retirement...He has truly been a role model for many of us who lead organizations that serve our community. His humility, calm demeanor, and delightful sense of humor are an inspiration to all who have had the opportunity to engage with him in one capacity or another."

~ Carl Haynes, President TC3

"If, in your dedication to people in need, you had merely discharged your responsibilities in a diligent, highly capable and honest way, your success would have been assured. But you have done all those things and more. You have brought good humor, insight and rare wisdom to the task in a way that has enriched and inspired the many fine people who share your work, as well as those who benefit from it."

~ Mark B. Wheeler, Harris Beach PLLC

"I have only known Ithaca with you at the helm of Racker (though its name has changed), and present on so many community boards and committees...I am a big fan. You have a deceptively quiet style – so one can be lulled into thinking you are an easygoing kind of guy. But I know better. Your core beliefs are rock solid and because of that you say what you think, always with a smile and a twinkle in your eye." ~Mary George Opperman, VP for HR and Safety Services, Cornell University

"Roger, you have been the heart and head of Racker Centers for 33 years. For the Leavitts you have been THE center. When Dick was asked to serve on the Board, and when he would see the kids and families as patients, he felt so happy he could be of service. When you and Dick visited other residential facilities, before The Centers opened theirs, you gave Dick the gift of yourself – your expertise, your humor and your vision. He absorbed your dedication and felt even more committed to doing whatever he could to advance and support the programs and people who made such a difference to the clients. You created that for him--- and later, for me. Our family will continue to do all we can to continue your legacy and the love we have for Racker Centers. Roger, you made it happen and we will MISS YOU very much." ~ Judy Leavitt

In 1979 I was the board president of the then Special Children's Center, a small human service agency helping children with special needs in our community. We hired this bright-eyed guy name Roger Sibley to be our new Executive Director. As board president I thought it my job to meet regularly with him and talk about the things that board presidents and their agency executive directors talk about. I don't know whose idea it was, but our meeting place was always Kelly's Dockside Restaurant. I think it was because they had the best black forest cake in town and Roger and I were both big fans. Oh, the things we talked about while we ate cake! Our conversations were rich (like the cake). Who knew that so many years would pass and that bright-eyed guy would mature into one of the most respected Executive Directors around. Thanks Roger, for making such an important difference in the lives of so many people in our community. This worked out better than I ever imagined! ~Dave Dunlop, Emeritus Director

"Roger, you've done alright for yourself. But I knew you would. You have made a difference for the families. I'm very proud of you." ~ Margaret "Gibby" Gibson, Emeritus Director

"Roger Sibley is in every way a remarkable individual. Roger's very presence inspires respect, demands integrity and still puts one at ease. His passion for helping those most in need and his tireless work towards that end over these many years will serve us well as an ongoing reminder of what is possible and what is yet to be done." ~ Howard Schler, Board President

"It is very difficult to share just a few words about Roger. I met Roger when interviewing for the interim leadership position at United Way. He made an impression. That evening I was speaking with Karen back in Colorado and told her about meeting this guy. If we were to move here, I said that he was someone I would like to get to know. Of course, I had no idea of what was ahead. Over the past 15 years, Roger has surprised, supported, frustrated, inspired, challenged, and caused me to challenge and frustrate him more than I thought was possible. Two very different wise men gave me the same advice years apart as I was moving from their respective communities. Each said, you can measure your work and life in many ways. If somewhere in the results people say you are a good man, you have succeeded. Roger is a good man who has made a life of helping people live better lives." ~James Brown, United Way of Tompkins County



Roger visits classroom.

## ROGER RETIRES...Continued from cover

health support in the schools which made it possible for kids to get the help they needed without pulling them out of their educational environments. In January of 1989 Racker Centers opened the first residential house in Dryden. Since then, twenty more houses have opened throughout three counties, serving all ages.

When Roger was hired in 1979, the annual agency budget was \$600,000. And there were 35 staff. Now, as Roger prepares to retire, the agency employs over 700 staff with an annual budget of \$27 million. And Roger is not a competitive person. His goal was not to "grow" the agency. The goal was to be a good listener and respond to the needs of the community, to best serve the people who have come to depend on Franziska Racker Centers.

When asked what he feels his largest accomplishment is, Roger jokes saying, "bringing the agency into the age of plain paper copying." He then quickly directs the conversation back to what others have done and are continuing to do. The strategic thinker in him does reflect fondly on his ability to articulate the meaning of it all, focusing always on a bigger sense of purpose. Roger states, "I always go back to the mission, asking, are there other things we can do to be helpful?" He continues, "Our Mission is not to provide a particular service, but to be engaged in the community with what is needed, that is what we are here for." He is proud of the people and the culture of the agency, stating, "Values and beliefs are crucial, to individuals and to organizations." Roger's constant reminder of this has shaped Franziska Racker Centers into the caring organization it is today.

Roger believes we still have more to do. Social barriers still exist for individuals with disabilities in our society. He hopes to continue to do his part to "change the world" which has always been his utmost goal, to help society change the way it views people with disabilities. When it comes to organizational goals at Franziska Racker Centers, Roger states, "Where the organization will be in the future is exactly as clear as it was 5 or 10 years ago. We don't know. What is important is, we know who we are and what we are trying to do, we know how we are going to do it, and how to make sure it's working. We know our mission." Roger feels confident that the future of Racker Centers is in capable

hands. "Dr. Racker was my partner for the first 20 years, and Dan has been my partner for the last decade. He's been in on all of it and I know he will do a great job," states Roger.



Dan Brown and Roger.

Dan Brown, currently the Associate Executive Director, has been with the agency for over twelve years. Joining the Board of Directors in 1995, he assumed several leadership roles including President. He became the Director of Finance in 2000, and fourteen months later was promoted to Associate Executive Director. Dan is a recognizable face, often seen out at Racker Centers' numerous sites, and is an active leader in the community. Moving forward Dan plans to engage with staff, people with disabilities, families, community partners

and the board in the development of a strategic plan. Dan states, "Roger's mentoring has put me in this truly enviable position. I am nervous about the large shoes to fill, but know his valuable input is only a short drive or phone call away."

Staff, Board and families at Racker Centers are excited, looking toward our future with Dan. Looking back, we are somewhat nostalgic but thankful for the long go of it. We will always remember Roger's fond metaphor for our work from the classic, *It's a Wonderful Life*. In the movie, Frank Kapra tells how a small town would have been affected had George Bailey never been born. Roger truly believes that we are enriched by the presence and participation of everyone. "If Franziska Racker Centers didn't exist – the community would be different."

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## EXPERT IN THE AREA OF AUTISM SERVICES JOINS RACKER CENTERS

Franziska Racker Centers is thrilled to have the opportunity to welcome Dr. Andrea Chapman as the new Licensed Clinical Psychologist. Dr. Chapman comes to Racker Centers from Endicott, N.Y., where she provides clinical services including comprehensive psychological evaluations and treatment services for children, adolescents and young adults, specializing in autism spectrum disorders.

Franziska Racker Centers developed one of the first preschool programs in NYS using Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) principles, an evidence-based practice, in an integrated preschool setting. The first Partnership Program classroom opened in 2004. "We have completed the initial goals that we set out to achieve in developing the Partnership Program, opening classrooms in both Tompkins and Cortland Counties," states Jody Scriber, Director of Clinical and Education Services. "These classrooms consistently have fewer openings than what families and the community are asking for. With Dr. Chapman's help, we are working to do more of what we've successfully been doing in our Partnership classrooms, expanding some of the services to all of our preschool classrooms," continues Scriber. "We want to provide greater in-depth knowledge and support in order to support more children in a more advanced way."

As the number of children with autism continues to grow, our society faces the challenge of the increasing demand for autism services. One in eighty-eight children is diagnosed with autism (autismspeaks.org). The need for resources and more evidence-based practices, as well as for skilled professionals in the area of ABA in our community, is clear. In response to requests from families and other agencies, we are working to expand our ability to provide information and referral services, diagnostic services, and trained professionals in the principles of applied behavior analysis to respond to these needs.

Andrea is also working with Pat Montanez, Director of Residential Services, while Pat prepares to open one of Racker Centers' newest houses for individuals on the autism spectrum. Andrea is consulting on areas specific to sensory needs, sound-proofing and auditory sensitivities throughout the building process. Additionally, Andrea provides valuable insight to Community Support Staff, working with them on ways to best support individuals on the autism spectrum, and providing training as needed.

To answer the need for more diagnostic services in our area, Dr. Chapman will now be able to provide evaluations to those throughout our community. This alone meets a huge need, as people are currently forced



to remain on long waiting lists and travel outside of the area so that they can even receive a diagnostic evaluation, extending their wait for services.

Franziska Racker Centers is also responding to the fact that the need for support doesn't stop once children age out of our preschool programs. Racker Centers serves individuals with autism in our residential houses, and throughout our community. As we move forward in our efforts to meet the community's needs, Dr. Chapman will provide leadership, working across all levels of our agency to support program staff and to help further develop services that are provided for those of all ages throughout Franziska Racker Centers' programs.

*Information and referral services are available for families we serve or members of the community by contacting Annemarie Mattison, MSW, LCSW-R at [annemarieMCL@rackercenters.org](mailto:annemarieMCL@rackercenters.org)*

## RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM CONTINUES TO EXPAND

Franziska Racker Centers is pleased to announce the addition of their 21<sup>st</sup> house to their residential services program. The single story, ranch style home located on Warren Road in Ithaca was opened in part to support the Broome Developmental Community Placement Program. The house includes a large eat-in kitchen, double garage, six bedrooms, two full baths, an office space and a back patio and yard area for outdoor activities. Highlights of the home include a track system -an assistive lift device that allows residents to be transferred between a bed and a chair or other similar resting places using hydraulic power. The house is also equipped with a Parker bathing system, which provides easy access and promotes skin integrity, especially for individuals that are non-ambulatory. The house was designed to provide a dignified and effective way for staff to care for residents, ensuring that the needs and preferences of those living in the home are being met.

The concept of person-centered planning guides the Residential Program as it continues to grow with four additional

*Continued on Page 6...*

## STAFF AND COMMUNITY HONORED AT RIBBON CUTTING

**CORNERSTONE DONORS** were recognized for their key role in the success of the "Making Room" campaign.

(Left to right): Dave and Peggy Dunlop, Margaret Gibson, Russ Givens - Cargill Deicing Technologies, John Poli - Tompkins Trust Company. Missing from photo Steve Snyder - Borg Warner Morese TEC.



**THE RACKER AWARD** is given to a staff person whose work reflects the values of Dr. Franziska Racker, the Centers' namesake.

Racker Awards were presented to Director of Community Relations and Development Perri LoPinto (left) and Psychologist Marie Hedge (right).

Bob Bantle, former Board President and Making Room Cabinet member (center) was named an **EMERITUS DIRECTOR**.

**25 YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS** went to Marion Hallam, Program Coordinator (left), Community Support Staff Sandra Schoenfeldt (right) and (not pictured) Physical Therapist Susan Ruswick and Speech Therapist Sheryl Edwards.



**THE INSPIRATION AWARD** went to the Facilities Team for their tireless efforts throughout the construction process.

Pictured (left to right) Director of Facilities Rick Darfler, David Hunsberger, Ed Haight, Paul Mulks, Jim Schafrik. Missing from photo: Dan Fuller, Steve Tanner, Jim Charnley, and Jeff Sandsted.

Dear Jody,

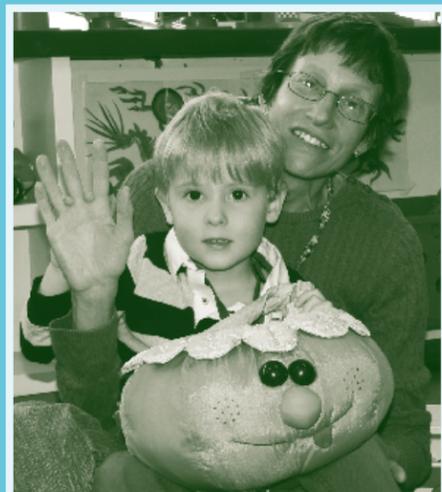
On the eve of my son Miles' third birthday, I have been reflecting on how far he has come in just a short time while attending Franziska Racker Centers' day care. He is a very sweet boy with a lot of energy, but unfortunately much of that energy was being directed in a negative manner. This past July I decided to start him at your day care while I went back to work at our family vineyard. It was one of the best decisions that I've ever made.

We had a little bit of a rocky start. Miles was apprehensive at drop off and it was necessary for his teacher, Kirsten Anthony, to shadow him most of his day. In just a month, Miles is thriving at your school, and I owe much of his success to Kirsten. She is so caring, compassionate and understanding. She is patient beyond words. Miles loves coming to school and loves seeing Kirsten. Of course, many have played a part in his success. Staff work as a team with the Early Intervention therapists that Miles is working with, Barb, Cheyenne and Meg (to name only a few...) I know he is in good hands all day long. I just can't express enough how grateful I am for your staff and for all that they do everyday for children like Miles.

I am sure they are commended regularly for their hard work, but please pass along my appreciation and gratitude for their commitment to the children who attend your center. I am in awe of their devotion to early childhood development.

I never fully understood what Franziska Racker Centers was all about, but now I do and I feel very lucky to be involved with your organization.

Sincerely,  
Nicole Maguire



Miles and Kirsten Anthony

**RESIDENTIAL EXPANDS...Continued from Page 4**

houses planned to open throughout the next year and a half. Two more six bedroom houses will be constructed in the Owego-Apalachin area to provide new homes for individuals from the Broome Developmental Community Placement Program. The other two new houses will support individuals on the autism spectrum and be part of a pilot project through the New York State Autism Platform, which is working with agencies on how to better develop a residential home that supports individuals on the spectrum. "There will be assessments done with residents, their



families and staff to understand how the process impacted each of them," explains Pat Montanez, Director of Residential Services. "We hope to better understand the types of trainings and the preparation that can be done in the future to ensure a smooth transition to a new home for individuals with autism and the people that care for them."

**SWIM PROGRAM CONTINUES THANKS TO DONATION**



IC Student with pre-schooler during Swim Program

Nearly four decades ago, Dr. Sarah Rich received a phone call from Dr. Franziska Racker requesting a lunch date. Dr. Racker was interested in the Therapeutic Recreation program that Dr. Rich was teaching at Ithaca College (IC). For Dr. Rich, that first meeting resulted in a lifetime connection to Racker Centers and the development of a collaborative swim program that is still going strong. Today, the program is led by Joanie Groome, a former graduate student of Dr. Rich's, who participated in the swim program during her time as a student at IC. Children from Franziska Racker Centers' Tompkins County preschool are bused to a weekly therapeutic/recreational swim session in which they are paired up with students from IC's Special Populations class. Each IC student works with a child in the pool throughout the semester, incorporating goals from the child's educational plan. "Swimming is a means to achieving results. The goal doesn't have to be swim related, the pool provides the connection," says Dr. Rich.

At risk of seeing the program end due to rising transportation costs, Dr. Rich recently made a donation to help cover some of the transportation costs from the Racker Centers' Wilkins Road campus. With the program now in its 35th year, Dr. Rich is pleased that the partnership between Racker Centers and Ithaca College's School of Health, Science and Human Performance is healthy and that IC is committed to this program. "I think the college sees the program as an important part of their involvement in the community and as a very beneficial part of college programming for students," states Dr. Rich, "I hope to see the program continue for years to come."

Dr. Sarah Rich currently serves as an Associate Director for Franziska Racker Centers and participates in the Incident Review Panel. Thank you, Dr. Rich for your continued support.

**TREES DONATED**

As part of the "Making Room" Capital Campaign, Cayuga Landscape stepped in as an in-kind donor to help complete the project by providing beautiful landscaping around the renovated campus. A total of 26 new trees have been planted.



Thank you to David Fernandez from Cayuga Landscape and his staff seen here: (left to right) Matthew Brown, Steve Hoaglin, and Ryan Parseghian.

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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.



## LEARNING INITIATIVE NEWS

**SAVE THE DATE** for the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute's **Spring Distinguished Speaker, Elizabeth Perkins, Ph.D., RNMH,** which will be held **Monday, February 11, 2013.**



The Gerontology Institute in partnership with Franziska Racker Centers will host Elizabeth Perkins Ph.D., RNMH, Research Assistant Professor and Health Coordinator at the Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at the University of South Florida, as the Institute's spring 2013 Distinguished Speaker.

The free public presentation will focus on aging and intellectual and developmental disabilities. Dr. Perkins is trained specifically in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities and many of her clinical experiences focused on geriatric and residential care. **Stay tuned for more information at [www.rackercenters.org](http://www.rackercenters.org)**

## RIBBON CUTTING OFFICIALLY OPENS NEW BUILDING

Franziska Racker Centers held the official ribbon cutting of the renovated Margaret I. Gibson preschool and the new Jean Dunlavey Learning Center on October 12th. "The Ribbon Cutting Celebration signifies the success of Franziska Racker Centers in continuing to provide essential services to individuals with disabilities and their families," stated Senator Kirsten Gillibrand via official letter sent in support of the event. The "Making Room" Capital Campaign came to an official close September 1, 2012 after surpassing the goal and raising a total of \$3,634,587. The ribbon cutting was followed by a presentation in the Roger R. Sibley Conference room that thanked donors to the campaign as well as recognized Franziska Racker Centers' staff and volunteers for ongoing contributions to the work The Centers does throughout the year. (Turn to Page 7 to see those recognized at the event.)



*Margaret "Gibby" Gibson cuts the ribbon at Franziska Racker Centers' official Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. (left to right): Executive Director Roger Sibley, Campaign Co-Chairs Bob Bantle and Margaret Gibson, Board President Howard Schler, Campaign Co-Chair Dave Dunlop, Associate Executive Director Dan Brown. (front) Children from the Margaret Gibson Preschool.*