



Community for All

Spring 2019

LARC News
Spring Edition
www.litchfieldarc.org

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**CAMP MOE
OPEN HOUSE**
Saturday, May 11
1:00 - 4:00 p.m.
www.campmoe.org
860-618-2800
1145 Brandy Hill Road
Torrington

Introducing the new zip line and climbing wall

- * Meet staff
- * Get info and schedules



Camp MOE — A Bit of History

by Jeanette Brodeur and Katherine Marchand-Beyer



Photo donated by Joseph Palmer

In 1968, Camp LARC became a formal licensed day camp. Prior to this, it was a four-week summer program for children, teens and adults with special needs. During the years 1976 to 2008, Camp LARC partnered with the Northwest YMCA's Camp Torymca. In the beginning, all campers shared the same buses and facilities, but had separate groups and programs. In 1978, after one young Camp Torymca camper asked to play with one of LARC's campers, the programs slowly began merging with all campers playing, learning and growing together. This program became the first integrated day camp in New England.

In 2009, Camp Torymca closed its outdoor camp program and moved to an indoor model. Camp LARC, which still wanted to maintain an outdoor program, partnered with Shookie Recreation in Torrington for two summers before Shookie closed its doors in August of 2010.

In 2011, Camp LARC changed its name to Camp MOE (Memorable Outdoor Experiences) and became one of the first reverse inclusion camp programs in the nation. This innovative program creates the perfect opportunity for special needs children to experience friendship, activities and interaction with similar-aged campers to enhance their summer learning.

In 2016, LARC purchased 167 acres of land on Brandy Hill Road, where the former site of Camp Maria Pratt, the Northwestern Connecticut Girl Scout Council's camp in Torrington, to become the permanent home for Camp MOE. Situated in the northern corner of Torrington, Camp MOE celebrates diversity with an integrated program welcoming campers with different abilities and provides children and teens from ages 5 to 15 the opportunity to develop friendships, leadership skills, self-awareness and respect for others. Camp MOE provides campers the chance to explore and thrive. (continued on pg. 6)

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Executive Director
 Michael Menard, Ph.D.

Given that Spring is a season of new growth and beginnings, it is appropriate that this LARC Newsletter reports on many new and innovative programs and partnerships—such as the ever-expanding list of community and business partners whose support for our agency and the individuals we serve provide wonderful opportunities to learn, engage, and earn money. In these pages, too, we focus on long-standing enterprises such as LARC's Annual Wine Tasting, which provides much needed financial support to our agency, and Camp MOE, which provides high-quality day camp for youth throughout the county. There is music, and art, and the success of one of our School to Community Transition program alumnae. I thank you for taking time to learn about some of the many extraordinary people and programs that are part of LARC, and as always, I thank you for your ongoing support of all that we do.

Michael Menard, Ph.D., Executive Director, LARC

**LARC's Annual Meeting
 It Takes a Community —
 Honoring LARC's Partners
 and Supporters**

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Tall Timbers
 1145 Brandy Hill Road, Torrington, CT
 5:30 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Honored guests:

Bob Nilsson, President, A.N. Designs
 Leslie Munson, Quality Control, BD
 Stephen Lewis, President/CEO, Thomaston
 Savings Bank
 Robert Rosenheim Foundation
 Susan Caufield, Draper Foundation Fund
 Michael Sweeney, Torrington Savings Bank

Entertainment by LARC singers Lee Brown &
 Lisa Rondano

Hors d'oeuvres by Ciesco Catering
 Beverages by The Cork Wine & Spirits

R.S.V.P. by May 15
 860-482-9364 ext. 16

Make an impact!

Consider making monthly donations to LARC. A \$10 monthly gift is easier to budget. Annually, it adds up to \$120—an amount that makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the hundreds of people we serve.

LARC receives no governmental support for many of the services, programs, and other expenses that make life better for the hundreds of people served by LARC on a daily basis.



Monthly Payment

Monthly donations can be set up on LARC's website www.litchfieldarc.org. Questions? Call Meg at 860-482-9364, ext. 16. Thank you!

Seitz LLC Hires 2 Individuals from LARC’s Vocational Program

By Deb Aleksinas

On Monday, January 7, Praful Kathuria and Katie Stillson started their new jobs as Manufacturing Operator 1st Shift with the Seitz LLC of Torrington. Prior to their direct hire by the company, Praful and Katie had successfully completed a two-week “working interview” arranged by LARC’s vocational program to ensure that the positions would be a good fit for both employees as well as the employer.

“Seitz LLC feels that building a reserve of goodwill and strong commitment to our community not only benefits those we engage with but our own employees,” said Hilary A. Delage, Human Resources Manager. “By doing so, we are boosting our team engagement and encouraging team building. Our goal is to create a positive impact on our community by bringing growth and innovation to the community and creating opportunities for future employees.”

The new partnership with Seitz is the most recent example of LARC’s commitment to providing competitive integrated employment to the individuals it serves through its vocational program, and the most recent example of a successful new partnership with a local employer.

Over the past year, 12 individuals from the agency’s vocational program landed direct-hire jobs at competitive wages at numerous local businesses. They are, in addition to Seitz, Sterling Sintered Technologies, Wisdom House Retreat and Conference Center, Stop & Shop, Dymax Corporation, Camp Jewell YMCA and Nardelli’s Grinder Shoppe. Also, discussions are underway with several employers regarding future possible placements.

Seitz LLC, located at 212 Industrial Lane in Torrington, is a leading plastic injection molding company designing, engineering, tooling and manufacturing custom parts and complete assemblies. The company turns product concepts into exceptionally well-engineered and well-made realities using plastic injection molding and complete custom design and assembly solutions.



Katie Stillson, left, and Praful Kathuria were hired competitively by Seitz, LLC on January 7, 2019.

Family Hearing Day—A Tremendous Success!

Forty-six legislators were in attendance at Arc of CT’s 2019 Family Hearing Day on Feb., 25 at the Legislative Office Building. More than 35 people testified, 11 of those being self-advocates, the largest number of self advocates to testify at a Family Hearing Day.



Following is the link to the hearing on CTN: <http://www.ctn.state.ct.us/ctnplayer.asp?odID=16058>

LARC's 12th Annual Spring Wine Tasting was a huge success. Over \$40,000 was raised in support of programs and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thank you to all of our sponsors, food vendors, donors, and volunteers! We couldn't achieve our goals without you!

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Right: Cindy Bombard, President/CEO of Central CT Chamber of Commerce, Stephen Lewis, President/CEO Thomaston Savings Bank, and Rodney LeBlanc, owner of RKL Technology.



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- Brush & Palette
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- Café 38
- Cake Gypsy
- Catalpa Tree Candles
- Cheryl Bartley Folk Art
- CT Science Center
- DiFranco’s
- DSO Migeon Avenue
- Energy Fitness
- Flamig Farm Earch Products
- Foothills Pet Salon
- Friends of LARC
- George’s Restaurant
- Great Falls Brewing
- Hartford Yard Goats
- Holland American Cruise Lines
- Honey Bee Photography
- Infinity Hall – Aztec Two Step (Hartford)
- Kelly Crystals
- KidsPlay Children’s Museum
- KOTA Copiers
- Laurel Lanes
- Lily & Vine Florist
- Lime Rock Park
- Lisa Rondano
- Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy

- Lowe’s Home Improvement
- Mad River Music
- Maid My Day Cleaning
- Marino’s Restaurant
- Marketplace Restaurant
- Matterhorn Mini Golf
- Morsel Munk
- Natalie & Penelope Richardson
- New Britain Museum of Art
- Pasta Vita
- Patricia Rondano
- Pinewoods Health & Racquet
- Pinette Family
- Powder Mill Photography
- Raise A Glass for Research
- Salon Q
- Salt Water Grille
- Sasso’s Wood Fired Pizza
- Seven Angels Theatre
- Stashes & Lashes
- The Cookie Jar
- The Village
- Thorncrest Farm
- Torrington Manor B&B
- Torrington Country Club
- Vineyard Vines
- Wal-mart
- Warner Theatre
- WB Mason
- Zini’s



Jeff Geddes and Kim Brown, Torrington Savings Bank



Wine Tasting committee members Cindy Lavoie, Kim Brown, Meg McGinn, Cheryl Flanagan and Dorothy Beckley,



Carmen Romeo, Owner, Fascia’s Chocolates

Please support these generous vendors!

Food Friends

- Applebee’s The Bake House Litchfield Candy Company
- Carbone’s Salerno’s Greenhouse Tavern
- Dos Amigos Mount Claire Edison Grill New England Pasta



Jason Combes, LARC, serving up Carbone’s sandwiches

Camp MOE (continued from pg. 1)

Camp is in session from June 24 to August 16 and offers four two-week sessions. The daily schedule runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., rain or shine, with extended day options available. Free lunch is available daily as well as transportation to and from Torrington, Winsted, Harwinton and Litchfield. Campers get to choose from a wide variety of activities to participate in including archery, arts and crafts, boating, rocketry, Gaga, a LEGO workshop, swimming, a ropes course, a brand new zipline, and climbing wall. No cell phones intrude on the camp experience.

Before camp begins, parents play an active role in making inclusion possible by providing important information about their child to create a positive camp experience for everyone. For campers with special needs, the director meets with the camper and their parent(s) or guardian(s). The support staff also contact the parent or guardian to introduce themselves, ask and answer any questions. Each day, the staff fills out a communication journal for the camper and if there's an issue, the director calls the parents to resolve any concerns.

Camp MOE has not only changed the lives of many campers, it's also changed the lives of the staff. According to Katherine Marchand-Beyer, long-time camp director, "staff members have changed their career paths after having a positive experience at camp. Many have gone on to become teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists and speech therapists and often earn advanced degrees. As with our campers, our staff develop friendships which often last a lifetime."

Camp MOE is the only program within LARC that involves children starting at five years of age. Through camp, many children have become involved with LARC's recreational and Special Olympics programs as well as vocational, clinical, day, transition and advocacy services.



Transition Program is Real Life 101

By Jeannette Brodeur

Thanks to the LARC Transition Program, we're seeing a lot of amazing developments at our house these days. Our son, Aaron Schein, 19, started the program in August and we are thrilled with the positive changes we are already seeing. He is barely out the door of LARC each afternoon before he starts telling me

all the latest news stories of the day and what job site he worked at. He also goes to the gym several times a week with the group. With their many programs, including bowling, movies and game nights, Aaron's younger sister complains that his social life is busier than hers.

When he turned 18, Aaron no longer qualified for many camp programs in the area and we were concerned how he would spend his summers. I had heard many good things about Camp MOE throughout the years and decided to check out their Trekker program. It was perfect for Aaron. He made friends and was excited to go on all of the field trips. He loved seeing the schedule for each week and happily packed his lunch each day. They kept him very busy.

One day while picking up Aaron from the program, I met Pam Fritz, LARC's Transition Program Director, and she asked me where Aaron would be doing his transition program after high school. As a mom and former president of our town's special education PTA, I'm a bit embarrassed to say that I never knew that we even had a choice where to send Aaron for transition. I thought we had to send him to our school district's program, but Pam encouraged me to check out all of the programs in the region, including LARC's. I researched a number of places, but I kept coming back to LARC, especially since I was so impressed with the Trekker program and the staff.

After meeting with the staff several times and asking plenty of questions, the whole family decided LARC was the perfect place for Aaron to complete his transition program. My favorite part of the program is that Aaron is not just learning about different jobs, he's getting actual experience working, earning real pay for his work, and has his own debit card. He now pays to get his hair cut with his classmates, he saves up for things he wants to buy and is learning how to manage his own money. LARC's Transition Program is Real Life 101...everything we want Aaron to learn to live a full and engaging life as independently as possible.



Aaron Schein



St. Patrick's Concert

The concert in honor of St. Patrick's Day held on March 12 at LARC's DSO Migeon program site was a festive occasion. LARC's Bill Creighton played guitar alongside Liz Raymond, a professional violinist. The pair played several tunes frequently heard this time of year, as well as a few fun-to-sing favorites. Several vocalists from LARC's DSO program, including Lee Brown, Kim Zawadzkas, and Gretchen Ramsdell accompanied Bill, making for a very special concert. "It was a wonderful event," noted Veronica Epres, DSO coordinator. "Bill and Liz engaged the audience and many of us sang along. It certainly put us in a festive mood."



Bill Creighton at the recent St. Patrick's Concert at LARC's DSO Migeon program site.

LARC's Transition Program According to One Graduate

by Julian W. Silver

Since graduating from LARC in 2012, I was hired by Region 6 Schools in March 2013 as a custodian, and then later on I transitioned to the role of an office clerk. I've officially held this position, and my role in Region 6 for five consecutive years. Currently as an office clerk for Wamogo High School, my daily duties include assisting students in checking out computers as well as books in the school's library. In addition to that, I also have responsibilities in the district office that can vary from day-to-day. During the after-school hours, I mentor players on the school's basketball team, and I also make myself available for any questions that the players may have regarding things that they go over in practice.



Julian W. Silver

In my spare time I indulge in a lot of artwork of my own and also create paintings that are available for sale to those that look to make a purchase. I am very grateful and happy about the time that I spent at LARC and wouldn't trade anything that I experienced there for the world. I would like to extend my thanks to the program coordinator Pam Fritz, and her staff, for continuously going above and beyond to put everyone in the program in the best position to succeed not only during their time at LARC -- but far after they venture beyond the walls of that environment.

For updates on Julian's art, please visit [Instagram/com/juliansabstractart](https://www.instagram.com/juliansabstractart)



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Our vision, *Community for All*, strives to achieve inclusion for all individuals.

The principles which have guided LARC in its delivery of programs since 1964 are individual empowerment, choice, respect and dignity.

COMMUNITY FOR ALL