Building on our Strength
We laugh and yet – think about it. A dream is born in the middle of the heart sometime between waking and sleeping. Watered by tears and fired by imagination, it grows into a giant-sized project by morning’s light, somewhat like an octopus which captures every waking thought. Soon it has gotten hold and takes up residence within. For now it is the master and we the soldiers marching to a different drum beat. That was how Melmark was born. In the middle of a tear-stained night.

Born in the hearts of two parents, strengthened by their faith in God, Melmark began just like that. Not a presidential commission nor a knighthood assignment to seek the Holy Grail, just that quiet conviction that this was something they could do for their daughter with Down syndrome and others just like her. And if they didn’t do it, who would?

But from the very start they knew they could not fashion a dream as big as Melmark without help; God’s help and the help from so many others that stretched out their hands to join us. People just like you.

The foundation was solid, the focus was faith and the secret was God. And the miraculous glue that cemented us all together in this giant project was nothing more complicated than love – the good kind that wants only the best for the one that is loved.

And because Melmark’s foundation is solid, then what follows is able to mature into a thriving community that encourages and challenges those precious lives entrusted to her care. Come along and grow with us. Forty-two years have passed and Melmark’s phenomenal growth startles us once again into a quiet thanksgiving ceremony. Join us.

Miggy Krentel
Co-Founder
Dear Families and Friends,

I hope wherever you are that you are enjoying the same spectacular spring that we are having here in Pennsylvania. I will never get over the wonder of watching the beautiful new flowers miraculously rise from the ground year after year. Another thing I love watching is the growth of new programs that are building on the strength of what we have learned over the years. This Messenger focuses on those programs.

In the early pages, we are reminded of the strength of Mildred and Paul Krentel who gave Melmark the solid foundation on which all else has been built. In our two Board Member profiles, we see the caliber of persons whose talent and generosity are building on the strength of our existing Melmark, Inc. and Melmark New England, Inc. Boards.

The first profile is followed by a moving story of two brothers who have built a uniquely close relationship where each finds strength in the other. The remaining pages speak to expansion of programs and the growth of those individuals served by them. In addition, scattered throughout are many pictures of the increasing ways we have fun together, including our elegant and successful Gala ’08 which took place this past March.

Because our school has grown so much we have welcomed a new social worker who will provide additional social, emotional and transition services to our children and their families.

One of our most well known students who came to us at age six, eleven years ago, seriously burned, in a coma, brain damaged and unable to walk or talk, is moving on to a wonderful new foster home with his most loved Melmark Staff. He will go to public school where he will walk while he talks to his new friends along the way.

Our comprehensive staff training program has expanded in the last two years to include a peer mentoring program for new staff. New staff now have an experienced peer by their side to help them navigate the intense learning curve of the first year.

We are adding to our school program at both ends of the age spectrum, younger children aged 5-8 and young adults post 21 who are actively involved in our new vocational program. Other adults in our Adult Day Training program are assisting with a number of community based volunteer activities.

Melmark New England, Inc. continues to build on its strengths by increasing the number of children served as well as expanding the early childhood and consulting services dramatically. The excellence of services is building a solid reputation on which future programs and services will be built.

I hope you enjoy this Messenger and will take pride in what your ongoing support and generosity has made possible.

Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Ph.D
President and CEO
Eric Zee was born and raised in Hong Kong, at a time when the “fragrant harbor” (as it is called in China) was the Asian jewel of the British Colonies.

As the son of Michael Zee, a successful international businessman who traveled frequently, Eric developed an interest in international business and a passion for aviation at an early age. He accompanied his father on many overseas trips in the corporate jet. He flew in and out of Hong Kong’s Kai Tak Airport, the busy hub for which his father had designed and installed the electronic landing system.

In the late 60’s, the Zee family came to New York to seek a lifesaving treatment for Eric’s mother, who was suffering from advanced cancer. All the family’s resources were spent in a desperate attempt to save her life. Tragically, Mrs. Zee passed away. In addition to this deep personal loss, the Zee family also suffered a severe financial setback because they were not able to access appropriate health insurance coverage. Even at an early age, these two events would help to shape Eric’s future personal and professional life. Eric’s father, Michael, relocated the family to New Jersey where he became an executive for Wheaton Industries and where Eric attended college. Mr. Zee is still active with Lonza, the company that purchased Wheaton, as a Director and Chairman of several subsidiaries in China.

Eric began his own career as an Executive Benefits and Compensation strategist with Northwestern Mutual Insurance Company. He then transitioned to the management of a regional employee benefits consulting firm prior to co-founding Radnor Benefits Group. Eric has developed an extensive consulting practice within the not-for-profit community.

“I truly enjoy my association with Melmark and strongly support its mission. I love to help people and my personal goal is to help someone each and everyday. I suppose my childhood experience has defined two of my passions: helping others and flying,” he says. As far as his interest in aviation, Eric smiles broadly and notes, “If I were to choose another line of business, running a small airport would be very appealing.”
As a boy, I remember being terrified of virtually everything – dogs, a dark bedroom at night, and especially heights. My brother, Dan, who participates in Melmark’s Meadows Program, shared some of my childhood phobias, but along the way he also offered me an unforgettable moment of support.

As a child, I attended Camp Swatara, in Bethel, Pennsylvania. I enjoyed the camp experience except for one rite of passage-scaling the 40-foot climbing wall. As a camper with a serious fear of heights, the best I could ever do was to reach the 30-foot mark of the wall before panic set in, and I had to repel to the ground.

As I grew older, I advanced from camper to counselor-in-training with Dan joining me as a camper himself. I was assigned to be his one-on-one aide, working with him on activities. It was a great experience watching him become physically stronger and an active camper. However, when we walked past the climbing wall, Dan made it very clear that he would not be climbing the wall this summer or any other summer! I did not share with him my own fear; my hope was that I would be a better coach than climber.

The dreaded day of reckoning came: the Climbing Skill Test. When it became Dan’s turn to scale the wall, I saw the look in his eyes that said, “Please don’t make me do this.” I realized that I could not expect him to do something that I was afraid to do myself. So, I rearranged the ropes and switched places with him. I instructed another counselor to help Dan belay (secure) me and took my first position on the wall. As I climbed, Dan tightened his end of the rope, keeping me snug in my harness; we were tied together in this venture. At the 30-foot mark, the Spirit of Summers Past swept over me; I slipped and hung in the air for a moment. Dan quickly secured me and although I regained my footing, I began to shake and tremble. By now, Dan had rallied the other campers and counselors with a “Go, Will” chant. Frozen in fear and suspended 30 plus feet in the air, I was jolted back to reality by a sudden, firm pull on our rope. Dan, always a strong athlete, was now hoisting me up the wall. I quickly regained my footing and composure, and, remembering not to look down, I climbed the last 10 feet with Dan’s help. When I smacked the top of the wall with my palm, it was like touching the sky. As I listened to the cheers, Dan’s stood out from the rest.

Since our days at camp, Dan and I still talk to each other about life’s challenges and how we can face them. We continue to learn and support each other, but I will always remember that afternoon, when he lifted me up when I needed it most.
In late February, Melmark welcomed a second social worker, Jenny Lee Coplan, MSW, to the Social Services Department. Jenny will be working closely with Abby McGillivray, LCSW, to serve the children, adults, and families at Melmark.

Jenny is a 2007 graduate of the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her master’s degree in social work. She comes to Melmark with over 10 years of experience serving individuals with disabilities and is eager to put her skills to work in this setting.

Jenny will be an additional resource for families of younger students, and will also assist with transition planning for those nearing graduation. Jenny’s unique skills and enthusiasm for her work have already been a great asset for the social work department.

Please join us as we wish Jenny a warm welcome to Melmark!

Chris recently participated in a Black History Month celebration sponsored by the Delaware County Literacy Council. Chris, along with his soon-to-be foster mother, Charlotte Hobson, a Melmark staff member, sang a beautiful gospel song in front of guests at the Drexel Neumann Academy in Chester, PA. Attending the event were Chris’ fan club – friends from Melmark’s adult Community Waiver program.

Chris came to Melmark at the age of six, after a house fire left him severely burned, bed-ridden and unable to walk or talk. Melmark’s miracle workers knew that Chris was a fighter as he worked with the staff on his rehabilitation needs. With extensive therapy, Chris regained the use of his legs and has tremendously improved his verbal communication.

After some house modifications are complete, Chris will join Charlotte and attend the local public school. Once he is settled, Chris’ friends and staff are planning to visit him. We will keep everyone up-to-date on Chris’ big move.
As new staff members join Melmark, the complexities relating to the services we provide can be daunting. In order to support our new employees in the early stages of their employment, Melmark offers a unique and supportive mentoring program.

Initiated in the summer of 2006, Melmark’s Peer Mentor Program provides new employees with peer guidance during the employee’s first year of employment. The program allows experienced staff (mentors) to share their knowledge base with a new staff member (protégés) as the new employee transitions to Melmark’s work environment and culture. This support is critical as the protégé learns how to implement clinical procedures and access Melmark’s resources.

There are 42 employees participating in the Peer Mentor Program. Recently, the program expanded to include our educational staff, a group that includes Mary Ann Harris and Dana Rueger.

Mary Ann (mentor) and Dana (protégé) work together as teacher assistants in the Melmark School. “The Peer Mentor Program has been very helpful to me as I become familiar with Melmark and my responsibilities,” Dana notes. “Mary Ann’s support has been invaluable, particularly when she shares her experience as I face a new situation. The program works and has really helped me to serve the students.”

Mary Ann has also enjoyed serving as a mentor in the program. “Working with our special students requires a dedicated staff member who must become familiar with a number of key areas very quickly. When I first joined Melmark, I was a protégé in the Peer Mentor Program. It was a great resource for me and I am glad that I can help Dana adjust to the new work environment and grow professionally at Melmark”.

Mary Ann Harris, Dana Rueger and the other mentors and protégés in the Peer Mentor Program represent the best of Melmark’s commitment to teamwork and a well-trained staff. In addition to the positive working relationship that develops between a mentor and a protégé, the Peer Mentor Program promotes the development of individual skills, new approaches to problem solving and stronger clinical programs for the children and adults we serve.
By Erin Pracher, Naila Faruqui, Marie Cadet, Bennetta Komah, Carissa Bassett, and Cindy Hoyle

Chelsea, is a wonderful young woman who resides in Schoemaker House and attends Classroom 4, at Melmark School. Although Chelsea has multiple disabilities, this has never stopped her in her desire to communicate with others.

For the past two years, Chelsea’s Speech/Language Pathologist and classroom staff have worked on a collaborative model to help Chelsea interact with those around her. Chelsea has been using an interactive augmentative communication aid that allows her to select a range of conversation choices. The device, mounted on her wheelchair, contains 30 category pages, that in turn, link to additional subject/item pages. This increases Chelsea’s ability to communicate during her school day and in her campus home, significantly improving her quality of life. Chelsea participates in discussions by answering questions, commenting on topics of interest and openly expressing her feelings and emotions. She regularly carries on conversations with others, asking questions about a person’s life and interests.

Chelsea uses her arms all day to operate the communications device, which can be very tiring for her. Chelsea and her team are now exploring a new sophisticated, augmentative communication aid that would rely on Chelsea’s eye gaze to facilitate her communication selections. It is an expensive communications device; Chelsea’s team is looking for ways to fund and pay for the equipment before she graduates in June. As Chelsea transitions into young adulthood, this will help her communicate with her growing circle of friends and prepare her for other life experiences, both at Melmark and in the community.

If you see Chelsea please give her a warm “Hello”. You will be greeted back with open arms, loving eyes and a great big smile.
The Melmark School is proud to announce the opening of a new classroom for young students ages five to eight. This new program is designed to provide early intensive behavioral intervention for young students with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities.

The new classroom (accommodating six students), will be part of Melmark’s Elementary School Program, which already includes a classroom of six students who are 9 to 12 years of age. As with all of the students in The Melmark School, the behavioral team for each student will work closely with the classroom staff, arts and physical education teachers and related services therapists to ensure the development of an individualized educational, behavioral and therapeutic plan.

“We are looking forward to expanding this integrated Elementary Education Program,” noted Norm Dahl, Ph.D., Clinical Director for Children’s Programs. A major factor contributing to our students’ overall educational and clinical success is early behavioral intervention. Families and referring school districts have contacted Melmark’s Admissions Department requesting that we consider increasing the capacity of this program. We are glad to meet that request and work in partnership with families, school districts and other human service organizations as we continue to develop this key component of our program continuum.”

Our New Elementary School Classroom
What a time we had...

From Halloween to Hanukkah and Santa’s Brigade, to our Christmas play (Wicked) and then to the school play (Pinocchio) and also the very popular Valentine dance, our Multi Purpose Center and other parts of our campus were buzzing with fall and winter events.
Our Events keep getting bigger and better!
On March 29, over 350 guests gathered at the historic Park Hyatt at the Bellevue in Philadelphia for an extraordinary evening of dinner, dancing and an exciting live auction. The theme of the Melmark Gala 2008 was Reaching for the Stars. The evening included outstanding musical selections performed by the Melmark Joybells, an English hand-held bell choir that includes 12 of Melmark’s adults.

The Gala was a great success, raising $515,000 in support of Melmark’s programs and services. The event’s success was due, in large part, to the overwhelming generosity of many local and regional corporate, foundation and individual contributors. Our very special thanks to Pilot Freight Services, Reaching for the Stars Presenting Sponsor. Our sincere gratitude to Commerce Bank, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Kent, Mr. H. Robert Marcus and Ms. Audrey Flack, and Clay & Garrett Kirk as the Super Star Sponsors. Special recognition to our anonymous donor who sponsored our publications, and to a former Melmark family who made a significant contribution to this year’s Gala. To all other generous sponsors and advertisers we extend our sincere thanks for making the 2008 event exceptional.

Melmark was honored to have Dave Roberts of Channel 6, WPVI-TV, Philadelphia, as the Master of Ceremonies and Auctioneer. Dave skillfully generated lively and competitive bidding for the live auction and happy winners went home with beautiful vacation getaways, a new car, and overnight stays and dining packages at some of the best spots in the greater Philadelphia area. We are most grateful to Dave and his wife, Patti, for their years of friendship and dedication to Melmark.

A most important part of the evening was the presentation of the Melmark Humanitarian Award to Pennsylvania Speaker of the House, Dennis M. O’Brien, for his tireless work on behalf of individuals with disabilities. For over 20 years, Speaker O’Brien has marshaled resources for Pennsylvanians with intellectual and learning disabilities and has been recognized throughout the state for advocating for those with autism spectrum disorders. Speaker O’Brien embodies the values and mission of Melmark. He is a true champion to thousands of individuals with special needs and their families, and certainly a treasured friend of Melmark.

The ballroom lit up with twinkling stars pinned on tuxedo lapels and beautiful gowns of all those who made a Melmark wish come true - through a donation to the Wish Book. The Wish Book provided information about various program needs, among them, specialized equipment for physical therapy, gardening tools for the horticultural program, touch screen computers for the school and funds for cultural and recreational activities, just to mention a few.

Our heartfelt thanks to everyone who joined with Melmark and made the evening magical and full of hope and promise for brighter futures for children and adults with special needs.
Melmark’s Vocational Program has been growing with great success. Working with Melmark staff, two of our students have recently started new jobs in the community, and based on the results so far, it has been a great experience for all.

Louie is a friendly twenty-year old, who came to Melmark in 1998. With the support of his staff, Louie M. started a new job at Villanova University where he works in the Connelly Center’s cafeteria. Louie is assigned to the Coffee Bar, where he makes sure that the area is kept clean and stocked with supplies and paper goods. Louis and his supervisor at Villanova, Michelle Moss, have a great working relationship. Many of the students give Louie a warm “Hi, Louie” as he works, and he responds in kind with a friendly “Hello” and a wide smile. In addition to his Villanova supervisor, Melmark’s Vocational Program staff have been very pleased with Louie’s progress and dedication and how much he enjoys being a Villanova Wildcat!

Another Vocational success story is Peter V. and his new job at Genuardi’s Family Markets. Peter’s job includes bagging and transporting groceries to customers’ cars. Peter has been at Melmark since March 2006 and quickly won the hearts of his peers and staff. His Genuardi’s supervisor is very complimentary about Peter’s work ethic and his relationship with the customers. Peter now lives in the community and comes to Melmark for day program. He also is taking art classes in an art center in the community.

Peter represents the best of Melmark’s residential, educational, and vocational programs as he actively contributes to his community.
Meals On Wheels

Every Thursday morning, by 11:00 AM the adults in Workshop 13 finish up their on-campus projects to begin their volunteer work with Meals on Wheels. The group goes by van to Pembrook, picks up prepared hot meals and other foods and begins their delivery route. The volunteer work includes visiting five home-bound individuals, transferring the meals and food, and checking to make sure that each person visited is doing well.

Two adults in particular, Greg S. and Martha M., have really grown through their experience with Meals on Wheels. Before participating in the program, Greg and Martha were cautious and reserved in interacting with others. Now, both look forward to their weekly volunteer work and warmly greet each individual they visit. This is a great accomplishment for Greg and Martha, and allows Melmark to, in turn, “give back” to the many community members and volunteers who continue to support us.

From Campus to Community

Another Melmark success story is Greg M, who has participated in the Adult Day program for the past year and a half. When Greg first started in the program, he was involved with a variety of vocational activities on campus that helped him to develop the skills, confidence, and maturity to address workplace situations. With the help of his staff, Greg improved his problem-solving skills at work. Greg now regularly participates in package and supply delivery, coin counting, and clerical support assignments. Greg has done so well in the Adult Day Program that he is now part of a group that is participating in a training program at a nearby McDonald’s.

Greg not only is becoming involved in a community-based work activity, but he is also making new friends as well, a sure sign of success.

Second Time Around... Shopping with our Friends

For those adults who remain on campus for their day program, the 2nd Time Around Thrift Shop offers a great opportunity to interact with Melmark’s staff and other customers. The adults help to collect, sort, price and display the donated items in the shop. Staff works closely with the adults, helping to develop customer service skills. The shop offers special “Sales Days” to its supporters, which is greatly appreciated by all.

Located in the Adult Day Center, the 2nd Time Around Shop offers a relaxed atmosphere for true bargain hunters.

For the schedule of hours and information about the 2nd Time Around Shop and its fantastic sales staff, please contact: Barb Gardner 610-325-4999 or Joanne Galligan 610-325-4924.
Many people believe that the Melmark Players began 10 years ago with the production of *Grease*. However, the acting bug was instilled in most of our players long before the first note of Greased Lightning resonated from our stage.

Early in Melmark’s history, Miggy Krentel directed the very first Melmark play, *God’s Trees*. The following year, *Conrad the Cobbler* was presented and it featured a volunteer dancer who caught Miggy’s eye. The dancer, Joy Pott, later became the program director for The Meadows program, but Miggy had other plans first. She asked Joy if she thought our young players were capable of performing the holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. Joy felt that with a little support and encouragement, the players could do this classic, and so the Melmark Players were born.

Starting in 1975, the entire campus would focus on the Holiday Show from September to Opening Night in December. The show was a much-anticipated holiday spectacular that grew and improved every year. In 1990, with the expansion of the Meadows Program, the participants now became more involved with Garden Guild work, program responsibilities and other extra-curricular activities that would not allow them to commit to a full practice schedule for the Holiday Show. For eight years, the lights on the stage for the Holiday Show were darkened. Enter, stage right, a creative gym teacher who came along and saved the show.

In 1998, Kris Benach was directing the physical education program in the Gymnasium. As part of their extra-curricular activities, many of the Meadows Garden Guild members were attending fitness classes three times a week. Kris noticed that although 8-9 participants would show up regularly, the group needed ongoing encouragement to participate in the activities. One day, Kris asked the young adults what type of activities would attract more Meadows Garden Guild members and increase the overall level of enthusiasm. One participant, Bill R., said, “Let’s put on a play.” The rest is history.

After plans were set in place for a Holiday Show for late 1998, participation in the class jumped from 8-9 members to 18-24 participants on a regular basis. The debut production was the popular Broadway
and movie musical, *Grease*. The initial sets, costumes and props were all simple in design. Kris received strong backstage and technical support from a wide range of Melmark staff members and volunteers. It is the unselfish group effort by all – players, crew, advisors and the audience – that has allowed the Melmark Players to evolve into the first-rate theater group that they are today.

The Melmark Players have been entertaining audiences for over 30 years. Their productions reflect the best of the American theater and its spirit – *The Sound of Music, Annie, South Pacific, Oklahoma, Mary Poppins* – to name a few. Beyond these performances, to steal a line from Wicked, the players “have left a handprint on all of our hearts.” When asked recently why he enjoys being a part of the Melmark Players, Bill R. responded, “I love to show my friends and my family that I can be whatever I want to be. I love playing the individual characters of each play, but I really love being part of the whole team.”

Thank you, Melmark Players, for sharing your talents with an always-appreciative audience.

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**A partial list of plays from the early 70’s to now...**

1998 - *Grease*
1999 - *Sound of Music*
2000 - Annie & *The Wizard of Oz*
2001 - *South Pacific & Cinderella*
2002 - *Mary Poppins & Vignettes of Past Plays*
2003 - *Peter Pan & Beauty and the Beast*
2004 - *Grease & The Music Man*
2005 - *Disney & Oklahoma*
2006 - *Little Mermaid & White Christmas*
2007 - *Wizard of Oz & Wicked*
Larry C. Cancro, a member of the Melmark New England Board of Directors, loves volunteering his time and knowledge to Massachusetts organizations. The Boston Red Sox Senior VP of Fenway Affairs since 2003, Mr. Cancro is a 30-year veteran of Major League Baseball, the past 24 of which he has spent with the Red Sox. He joined the Red Sox in February of 1985 as Director of Marketing, becoming Vice President of Marketing in February of 1990.

Among his many duties, Mr. Cancro is responsible for the club’s relationships with Massachusetts and Boston government, with businesses in the Fenway neighborhood, and for securing recording artists for special concerts at Fenway.

In addition to his service to Melmark New England, he is a member of the Board of Directors of the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau and serves as chairman of their sports advisory committee. He was awarded the Bureau’s Spirit of Appreciation Award for his efforts in attracting sports-related conventions and tourism to Boston. Mr. Cancro currently serves on the Board of Visitors for the Boston University Medical School. He, along with his wife, Luise, co-chair the Parent’s Committee at Assumption College. He has served on the Jimmy Fund Long Range Planning Committee and is currently on the steering committee for The Greater Boston Association for Individuals with Cognitive and Developmental Disabilities and was honored by GBARC as “Man of the Year” in November 2004. He is also the President of the New England Chapter of Autism Speaks and served on the National Board of Directors for three years. In the spring of 2006 he was honored with the “Spirit of Compassion” award by the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health, Inc.

Rita Gardner, Executive Director of Melmark New England, is particularly appreciative of Larry’s commitment to the children and young adults served.

“Larry has been a wonderful resource for the entire Melmark New England organization. As a leader who has assisted a number of not-for-profit organizations, he clearly appreciates and understands the challenges of balancing our mission and the operating margin. With his experience in both the public service and autism fields, Larry brings a unique perspective and counsel when we address a significant planning or operating issue. We are very fortunate to have Larry on our Board of Directors.”

Mr. Cancro resides in Andover, Massachusetts, with his wife, Luise, and their daughters Laura Marie (a student at Assumption College) and Lisa (a student at Melmark New England).
Josh and Parker look forward to Wednesdays. For on that day they leave Melmark New England and go to D&R Market in Peabody, Mass., where they price items and stock shelves. Both boys started there in November and really enjoy working.

“Work is tiring but it is awesome,” said Parker. “I like getting a paycheck.”

“It’s great,” said Josh about his job. “At D&R I price the items. It is important to have a job to earn money.”

For seven years Vocational Services at Melmark New England has placed roughly a dozen students into the workplace, providing the teens with learning opportunities and helping them become contributing members of the local community. Some of the jobs are paying positions, while others serve more like internships, explained James Gowen, M.Ed., BCABA, Coordinator of Vocational Services. Workplace training, either within the school or out in the community, has always been a part of the curriculum for the older students, he explained.

“It is our goal that when our students leave Melmark they either have a skill set that is tailored to being employed or that our students will actually have a job when they leave,” Mr. Gowen said. Melmark New England students have worked in convenience stores, churches, retail chains, nursing homes, lumber yards, restaurants and in a pediatric practice. One student even kept his job at a doctor’s office after leaving Melmark and now works there full-time.

“Most of our students like being out in the community and interacting with different people,” Mr. Gowen said. “It’s great seeing the students demonstrating their abilities and capabilities to people other than their teachers.”

At the school, prior to working community jobs, students sample various jobs throughout the building, managing the library, hosting special events and delivering lunches and assisting with office tasks. Students also manage the school store which is open each day for several hours.

Employers also benefit from Melmark New England’s vocational program. Students are continuously supervised on-site by a Melmark professional to ensure that the work is done to the employer’s satisfaction. Because the students are brought to their jobs by a member of the Melmark team, there are low rates of tardiness and absenteeism. But the benefit to the students is even greater.

“Our students who work have the opportunity to experience the same things that their peers without disabilities experience,” Mr. Gowen said. “They feel responsible and that they’re doing something special. It is my privilege to work with these young adults.”

Josh and Parker hard at work at D&R Market in Peabody, Mass.
The mission of Melmark is to serve children, adults and their families affected by a broad range of developmental disabilities. We provide evidence-based, educational, vocational, clinical, residential, healthcare and rehabilitative services, personally designed for each individual in an environment of warmth, care and respect.

**The Journey to Adulthood**

Melmark invites you to a one-day conference addressing the needs of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Developmental Disabilities as they transition into adulthood.

**Keynote Speaker**

**Peter Gerhardt, Ed. D.**

*President of the Organization for Autism Research*

Panel Discussion to include:

Dennis McAndrews, Esq., Mary Maurer, RN (parent), Nick Lian, CFP (Merrill Lynch), Stephen C. Luce, PhD, Vice President for Programming, Training, and Research

For registration please contact Michael Donovan: MichaelDonovan@melmark.org

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**Melmark**

*expanding life’s options for children and adults with special needs*

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