Expanding Life’s Options
Yesterday was the day for me to take the Bryn Mawr Rehab Driver’s test, which is given randomly to those lucky few who are over 85 and under 100. It was a 2-hour involvement and it cost me $290 for the privilege. I had decided not to chit-chat nor to utter a word but to pay strict attention to the directions my tester was giving me. As for my test-giver, I was not sure what he had decided but he was paying strict attention to me, perhaps wondering why I was not chattering away.

First he had to run me through a coarser sieve. The easy steps: red light, green light. Press the brake whenever you see the red light. I did - - - ten times. Then on to eye tests, which signal was closer to my eyes, basic stuff. Next, off with my shoes to see whether or not I was suffering with neuropathy. Then I found myself looking at snapshots of stylized pictures of dismembered things providing one-word answers, such as fish; which resembled no fish that I had ever seen.

Then pushing colored push-pins to copy exactly a somewhat complicated pattern on another board in as few moments as possible and at the same time every fifteen seconds throw away a green one into another box. That was pressure for me. I only missed one. (Oh, please, let me brag a little.)

Then THE DRIVING TEST! My first tester wanted to tag along for the ride too so he slipped into the rear seat and was there the next hour. No, he never asked. “First, we must drive from one side of the road to the next.” “No, do not go on the grass.” Didn’t! Then he said, “Find any parking spot and pay attention to where the car is parked. When we return, find the exact same spot and park there.” We then went on a circuitous route through parking lots, turn left and turn right, now in back of and then in front of buildings. Then we stopped in mid road and he said, “Now go back to the main building and park there.” I swallowed hard and God took over. I wasn’t sure where I was nor where I was going but just kept turning right then left. Sure enough I ended up on target. He turned to me and said, “Is this it?” I smiled and asked him “Do you think it is?” It was.

After the drive, I went back to his office while he and his cohort stayed there in the “student driver” car together. Their verbal report a bit later was that they could not find one thing to mark me down on and were forced to pass me. No Congratulations, no “good work old gal”, no faint word of praise would drip from their lips, so we shook their dust from our sneakers and my friend and I took off with faint smirks lingering on our lips having disposed of $290 for this dubious honor.

I called Enterprise that afternoon, and with enthusiasm and confidence, made plans to expand life’s options.

Miggy Krentel
Co-Founder

Miggy with great grandchildren Caleb and Annabelle.
Dear families and friends,

I hope the holiday season is a pleasure for everyone. It certainly is active and joyful here at Melmark.

This Messenger brings alive what “Expanding Life’s Options” is all about. Everything we do here at Melmark is designed to expand the possibilities of a full life for those we serve. As you just read on the Founders page, Miggy starts us off with a story about continuing her life’s options by passing the “over 85 and under 100” year old driving retest with flying colors!

Our parent recognition section honors Melmark Board Member, Joy Sussman, who is also a Melmark parent. Joy dedicates herself in so many ways to the well being of Melmark, from being, with her husband Len, our top procurer of advertisements for the Program and Ad Book for all four of our Galas, to providing a weekly pizza party for Doug and his housemates.

At Melmark we have been, as seems always to be the case, building and renovating our spaces to increase life options with improved learning and training facilities. We had a wonderful ground breaking ceremony for our Adult Training Center/ School Expansion Project and a dedication ceremony for our new Meadow’s Greenhouse. As pictured within, we had a glorious day and many donors, board members, family, friends and staff were there to celebrate.

Life is a song and Justin King, our Music Teacher, takes us into the world of high tech music performance and production by our school students. The music room is a place where everyone is smiling and proud to display their musical gifts as they prepare for performances in a variety of venues. I think you would all have fun there too!

Melmark New England has a creative brick sale campaign: “Paving the way for a brighter future.” The day students are also learning to shop for, prepare, and eat their own meals to increase their skills towards independence and community integration. The Early Childhood Program is going on regular field trips that might otherwise not be possible for a parent to do individually.

We also highlight two talented leadership staff and share some of the activities of our residential programs.

Our centerfold celebrates the Melmark Players premier performance at the Arden Theater in Philadelphia in June of this year. It was such a magnificent event and we are very grateful to our staff who have brought them this far and to the Arden staff who opened their hearts as well as providing training and coaching.

We also had two very successful golf tournaments, one in July in Andover and the second, here in Pennsylvania in October. We cannot thank the hard working, dedicated volunteers enough for all that goes into planning and executing such outstanding events.

I thank all of you for your ongoing support that allows us to keep our children’s options increasing. I hope each of you experiences an ongoing increase in your own life options.

Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Ph.D
President and CEO

“I thank all of you for your ongoing support that allows us to keep our children’s options increasing.”
Joy Sussman is a true Melmark Champion. Among her many Melmark roles, the most important is that of parent. Joy’s son Douglas, “Doug,” has been part of the Melmark community for 17 years. Joy and her husband, Leonard, learned of Melmark while Doug was attending a summer camp in northern Pennsylvania in the early 1990s. They felt it was time for a residential program, which would offer their son a chance to be with peers and benefit from a highly structured living and learning environment. Joy recalls their first visit to Melmark “Everyone was very professional and extremely warm and nurturing. We knew then, there was no question, he had to be at Melmark.”

Today Doug enjoys a full life, which includes employment in the Meadows Country Garden Guild, sharing a beautiful home with five other gentlemen, performing with the Joybells, an English Handbell choir, and grabbing the spotlight as an actor in The Melmark Players theatre troupe. Doug participates in a wide array of social, cultural and recreational activities on and off campus and has made life-long friends at Melmark. In Joy’s words “Doug has grown so much. Melmark has been more than we could ever hope for. He is living the good life.”

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Joy has always been there for many others served by Melmark. She regularly supports the Joybells and the Melmark Players, attending performances, encouraging their involvement and recognizing their accomplishments. She regularly supports a variety of campus based activities, such as holiday parties and without fail, provides a special pizza dinner for her son and his housemates on a weekly basis. Joy is not only very committed to ensuring that her son has every opportunity to reach his potential, she is there to support and nurture many others.

In addition to Joy’s role as parent, dear friend to many individuals, and partner with Melmark staff, she is a member of Melmark’s Board of Directors, serving in this capacity since 2003. She has also participated on the Melmark Bi-Annual Gala Committee since it’s inception in 2001 and has been instrumental in securing sponsorships and underwriting for the Program and Ad Book, attracting new donors, and boosting attendance. In 2008, Joy and Leonard accepted the job of Gala Co-Chairs and helped strengthen the committee and single-handedly increased support of the Program and Ad Book taking the publication to a new level. The Gala’s extraordinary success is due in large part to Joy’s tireless efforts. With her support, the Melmark Gala has raised over $1.2 million throughout its history, making a significant impact on Melmark’s programs and services and the individuals served.

“Over the years Joy has given so much of her time, energy, expertise and resources in support of the children and adults served by Melmark” states Dr. Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Melmark’s President and CEO. “We are most fortunate and honored to call her family, friend, partner and Champion.”

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On Thursday, June 25, 2009, the Melmark community gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony celebrating the planned expansion of the Adult Training Center and the Melmark School. Family members, donors, and members of the Board of Directors joined children and adults served by Melmark as guests gathered on the construction site. A reception at the Meadows followed the ceremony.

Fundraising for the $2.8 million project began in 2007 and was recently completed through the generous contributions of many individual donors, corporate contributors, and private foundations. “We are very thankful for the dedication and support of our donors who have made these exciting projects possible,” said Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Ph.D., Melmark President and CEO. Contributions from the Connelly Foundation, the Hoxie Harrison Smith Foundation, the Charles A. Frueauff Foundation, as well as a generous matching grant from the Spray Foundation, made the fundraising effort for this vital project a success. In addition, proceeds from the annual Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic and corporate sponsors from the life sciences industry such as GlaxoSmithKline, Cephalon, Cytokine PharmaSciences and Pennsylvania Biotechnology Association, to mention a few, have made major contributions to this project as well. A generous grant from the Davenport Family Foundation, one of Melmark’s newest supporters, helped us complete the two-year fundraising effort. As Dr. Donovan stated at the ceremony, “This project reflects a true partnership with those who believe in our mission.”

This two-story capital renovation will enable Melmark to expand and modernize the Adult Training Center and significantly increase the educational space within the Melmark School. The expansion will include: additional classrooms and increased space for the adult program focusing on pre-vocational, social development and life skills training. The facility will also allow for the addition of a computer lab and resource room, a new Art Room and an evaluation and family consultation suite.

We are very thankful for the dedication and support of our donors who have made these exciting projects possible.
The Melmark Music Program introduces digital recording on campus.

So many of our students and residents enjoy participating in music, not only as listeners, but also as performers. There is a lot of talent here, and countless ways to express it. Because of that, I am excited to announce a new recording program at Melmark that enables us to capture and share these musical experiences.

A few months ago, the Music Program began using ProTools: a hardware and software combination for digitally recording, editing, mixing and mastering music. We are also running iTunes: software that allows students to create and manage their own accounts for purchasing and downloading music on-line. Now anyone with an iPod and a love of music can plug in and access a wide variety of songs in our digital library.

You can only imagine the fun we’re having. During 1-1 music sessions, many students are working through the song writing process to create their own pieces of music. Others are performing their favorite tune in their own unique way. In both cases, we are able to record and listen back to each session. What an experience it is to watch someone as they hear and respond to their own creation… the smiles are everywhere.

It gets even better. Each song recorded in our studio can be burned onto a CD or turned into an MP3 file and shared with family through email. We are now on the brink of releasing our first Melmark School CD to share with you. Over 20 songs, featuring as many students, will be appearing on a self-produced album and every step in the process has been completed here in the music room. More information will be available on how to get your own copy.

It’s been one of my goals that our new program reflect the best part of music: the ability to share and experience it’s magic in a way that brings people together and builds a more positive environment. We’re excited about what’s happening here and look forward to sharing it with you.

Justin King, Music Teacher
The Melmark School

What an experience it is to watch someone as they hear and respond to their own creation…

the smiles are everywhere!

**PAVING THE WAY**

to a brighter future

Our new legacy walkway is an opportunity for contributors to create a permanent footprint at our beautiful Andover school – and fund on-going capital improvements and special projects for our students. Located directly in front of the main entrance to our Andover school, the new brick walkway recognizes special memories, milestones, and honors families, students and friends.

For more information, or to request an order form, please contact Margot Regan in the Advancement Office at 978-654-4342 or mregan@melmarkne.org.

As our walkway will be built brick by brick, our teachers step by step educate our children each day toward a brighter future.
Lots of chocolates for me to eat!
Lots of coal makin’ lots of heat.
Warm face, warm hands, warm feet,
Oh, wouldn’t it be lovely?
Yes, Eliza Doolittle it was lovely! For the first time since its formation as a theater troupe, the Melmark Players took their show on the road performing “My Fair Lady” at the award-winning Arden Theatre Company in Old City Philadelphia on June 8th… and what a special way for Melmark to thank its donors.

Co-Founder, Mildred Krentel, started the Theatre Program at Melmark many years ago with memorable performances of the “Nutcracker”. She saw the creative potential of our individuals and believed in their ability to perform on stage. Joy Pott, and now Kris Benach, have expertly and creatively carried on that tradition.

With much gratitude for the training and coaching received from the Arden Theatre volunteers, the Melmark Players continued to dazzle its audience, this time from a professional stage. The night of June 8th was a special event not only for the Players, but also to recognize Melmark’s outstanding donors. Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter greeted the crowd of Melmark donors and supporters and congratulated the Players on their special debut. Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Ph.D., Melmark’s President and CEO, expressed Melmark’s deep appreciation for the generosity of our donors and the Arden Theatre Company for making dreams come true.

Liza Jones, Director of The Meadows Program, noted “The magic that is Melmark never ceases to amaze me. The men, women and children that are part of the Melmark family have such unique talents and abilities. I have been touched by so many throughout the years. The Melmark Players premiere performance of My Fair Lady at the Arden Theatre was one of the highlights of my career.” While Cyndie Martin, Director of Corporate and Community Affairs, remarked: “It takes many hands to put such an event together. Thank you Melmark Players for giving it your all, the Arden Theatre for lending your expertise, and to our guests for encouraging us with their presence.”

The Players had rave reviews from donors, parents, and friends in attendance: “Spectacular!” “Remarkable!” “Exquisite!” “Wonderful!” “Brought tears to my eyes!” “A privilege to be there!” “If we could bottle what was floating around in the air, we could save the world!” The sister of the lead actress could not contain her joy following the superb performance of the Melmark Players. She had been hesitant about traveling many hours in her car, but was so thrilled that she was there to see Meg carrying on the family theatrical tradition with such “par excellence.” Their mother was an opera singer and their father a make-up artist in the theater. In fact, Meg used the kit her father used for that evening’s make-up!

As one of the Players proclaimed after their performance, “Broadway here we come.” What a thrill for all involved, a night to remember indeed!
Meal Preparation Group

Teachers and Therapists guide the students through the menu, the shopping, the cooking, and ultimately the tasting.
Sloppy Joes. Quesadillas. Pigs in a blanket. Salads. Ice cream sodas – all made by our day students.

Through Melmark New England’s Meal Preparation Group, more than 20 day students over the past year have learned to make those meals and many more with the help of the school’s Speech and Occupational Therapists.

Lindsey Borseti, Speech and Language Pathologist, said parents of day students voiced concern about the need for their children to learn meal skills. The therapy department started the program, and while the focus is on how to prepare meals, the students also expand their vocabulary and language skills, learn how to navigate a grocery store including payment transactions, follow directions, take turns and share. The students also improve their fine motor skills through measuring, pouring and cutting, as well as learn safety skills associated with cooking and traveling out in the community. For some, it’s also a chance to try new foods. The recipes are either visual (pictures depicting each step), or written out, depending on the skill level of the children participating.

“We send home written and visual recipes that we use each week so parents can try them at home,” said Borseti. This past May, the students, with the help of their teachers and therapists, made cookbooks for their mothers for Mother’s Day.

Off to the Market Basket grocery store we go for food selection and purchasing.
JESSICA WOODS

Dr. Jessica Woods grew up in rural West Virginia. Jessica recalls, “One of the best things about growing up there was the close-knit extended family.” An avid cheerleader, Jessica was voted “Most Likely to Succeed” in her high school graduating class.

Jessica received her bachelor’s degree in psychology in 1994 and master’s degree in child clinical psychology in 1997 both from West Virginia University. In 2001 she earned another master’s degree in Clinical Psychology and then in 2004 she earned her doctoral degree in clinical psychology both from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Jessica is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Dr. Woods began her employment at Melmark as the Director of Professional Development and Training. Most recently, Jessica was promoted to the Executive Director for Children’s Services. Jessica said recently, “I am honored to work with so many dedicated professionals at Melmark. Their commitment and dedication to the children goes above and beyond expectations, both in their clinical expertise and passion for the children.”

“We have made great strides this past year to recruit high quality staff, to implement highly technical clinical programs, and to bring out the best in each child,” said Jessica. In the coming year, Jessica hopes to enhance constructive community settings and improve recruitment and retention within the department through additional training of supervisors and enhanced training for new hires.

When not at Melmark, Jessica and her husband, Rich, are enjoying their first home where they live with their two family pets: Hank, their lovable black lab, and as Jessica describes, Lenny, the not-so-lovable kitten.

BRIAN HANKEY

Brian Haney grew up in the town of Glenside, PA and spent many summers at his parent’s house in the Pocono Mountains. His father is a retired pilot and his mother is a nurse. Brian has said; “Looking back, I now realize that I probably chose this life of serving others, through years of watching my mother work tirelessly for those in need.”

Brian earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology from West Chester University and a master’s degree in Healthcare Administration from Chestnut Hill College. He recently completed graduate coursework in Applied Behavior Analysis through Temple University and the University of Massachusetts.

For ten years prior to coming to Melmark, Brian worked at a healthcare provider in New Jersey. He provided direct care services to children with developmental disabilities and severe challenging behaviors. He went on to become a Clinical Case Coordinator, a Clinical Supervisor and finally working in the Quality Management Department.

Brian first heard of Melmark at an ABA Conference in Toronto. He initially joined Melmark as the Operations Coordinator where he supported leadership in numerous strategic initiatives and collaborated on the development of manuals for various departments. He currently serves as the Director of Children’s Residential Services. Brian looks forward to seeing increased opportunities for activities and socialization for the individuals, more in-depth training for the supervisors within the department, and to continue to improve recruitment and retention of staff.

Brian and his wife Patty have been married for seven years. They have two children, Colin and Nora.
**GIRL SCOUTS**: Jennifer Copeland, with the assistance of a member from the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania, started a Melmark troop in January 2009 with five students. The troop met a few times over the summer. They took nature walks, made friendship bracelets, and had a movie and pizza night. One of the highlights was the “camp out,” which included pitching a tent in the gym. The rain did not dampen the troop’s spirits! Fun was had by all! This fall the scouts will be working towards earning badges, selling Girl Scout cookies, and adding members. Over the next year, the Melmark Girl Scouts also hope to pair up with another local troop and go on trips or earn badges together.

**MIRACLE LEAGUE**: We had nearly 15 children participate in the Lehigh Valley Miracle League this past spring and summer. The Melmark Dodgers held practice every Tuesday afternoon to help build their baseball skills. Everyone was invited to come out and participate in practices. It was great to see the progress many of the youngsters made either being able to hit the ball or running the bases. After a winter break, we will look forward to spring training.

**RUNNING/WALKING CLUB**: The Running/Walking Club was formed in August and is open to all children who reside at Melmark. The club meets once a week at the walking trails of local parks. Some walk, some jog, some pause to take in the beautiful surroundings. Everyone moves at their own pace, but everyone is moving! After enjoying a park’s trails for a few weeks, the club then moves onto another local park to enjoy some new scenery. The club participants benefit from physical exercise and socialization in the great outdoors.

**MELMARK BISTRO**: We offer a fine dining experience where selected residential students get to choose who they would like to go out to dinner with for the evening. We have held both casual and “formal” bistro events. During these events we encourage proper restaurant etiquette: ordering meals, waiting for them to be served, conversation with peers while at the table, silverware usage, and paying (plus tip) for the meal. The Frome Center is transformed into a restaurant atmosphere complete with decor and music. Staff serves the Melmark Bistro guests and Sodexo staff does a great job of preparing wonderful gourmet meals. The group refining their restaurant skills will move onto a restaurant in the community and a new group will begin at the Melmark Bistro.

**FAMILY BBQ**: The Children’s Residential Department held a family barbecue on a beautiful summer day in July. There was a great turn out of family members. Families were treated to typical barbecue foods served by both education and residential staff members. In addition to good food, many enjoyed the Family Kick-Ball game while others participated in soccer, basketball, and art activities. To conclude the event, a piñata was brought out for the children and their siblings to take a crack at. Everyone had such a good time, we held another family barbecue in early October!
For the past several summers, students in Melmark New England’s Early Childhood program, along with their parents, have participated in Community Field Trips. These trips have included visits to the Museum of Science in Boston, Davis Farmland, the Andover Fire Department, the Tewksbury Public Library and visits to local ice cream establishments.

“Every field trip was a learning experience for each child because the location was tied into an area that was being addressed in the curriculum in their class at that time, such as socialization, community helpers, seasons, weather, food and nutrition,” said Helena Maguire, M.S., BCBA, Senior Director of School Services.

She added that some parents chose to join their children on these trips so they could see their child interact with their peers in a community setting.

“This is a challenge for some parents to accomplish with their own child,” said Maguire, adding that some children may not have otherwise had the opportunity to go on trips such as these. “These trips were a huge success and enjoyable for the kids as well as the staff and parents who got to see the kids having fun outside of the school walls.”
On July 27, 160 golfers took to the links at the Andover Country Club as part of the 4th Annual fore Melmark New England golf tournament. Over the past four years, Melmark New England’s largest annual fundraiser has raised nearly $1 million helping us make improvements to our new school building in Andover as well as for helping to purchase program materials and provide professional development opportunities for our staff.

This year’s tournament was the largest and featured local radio personality Matt Siegel of KISS 107.9 FM who golfed with each of the foursomes and served as auctioneer. The live and silent auction featured golf trips to Ireland, Red Sox tickets, tickets to see Paul McCartney, U2 and Rascal Flatts and autographed sports memorabilia.

Jim Alex, Event Co-Chairman and Presenting Sponsor, with his wife Angela and his son Charlie. Below Charlie hits the tournament’s opening drive.

Below Andover Country Club Golf Pro Mike Menery gives last-minute instructions to the players.
Melmark New England friend Robert Constantino (left) and his golf team.

The Alex Family with Matt Siegel of KISS 107.9 FM

One of the golf teams takes a break to snap a photo with their caddie. Each foursome has their own caddie.

Residents near the Andover Country Club have a perfect view of the action.
Against a beautiful Fall backdrop, more than 300 golfers and guests gathered in support of the fourth annual Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic.

The Schoemaker Classic, with GlaxoSmithKline serving as Title Sponsor and Cephalon and Accenture the Co-Presenting Sponsors, took place on October 19 at three premier area golf courses: The ACE Club, St. David’s Golf Club, and Waynesborough Country Club. The event included a golf tournament, dinner, and silent and live auctions.

Proceeds from the Schoemaker Classic will be used toward a number of capital projects that are designed to move Melmark’s educational, residential and recreational programs to ever increasing levels of service excellence.

Melmark extends its sincere thanks to the Schoemaker Classic leadership, sponsors, guests and volunteers for making this a great event.
Dr. Donovan with this year’s Co-Chairs Shawn O’Brien, Denny Willson, and Laura Liotta

Anne Faulkner Schoemaker with Dennis “Mickey” Flynn, past Co-chair of the Schoemaker Classic

Anne Faulkner Schoemaker with Joybells musicians Bill R. and Ron G.

Team Cephalon enjoying the day

Team GlaxoSmithKline gets ready to tee off

Team PhRMA at Waynesborough Country Club

Ellen Donohoe discusses the evening’s events with Tracy De Vlieger

Pilot Freight Services’ team steps off the green

Brian Block, Chris Franklin, Chris Luning and Rich Decker check out their winning score

Dr. Donovan greets Bev Ahrensdorf and Arjun Bedi, Global Managing Partner, Accenture

Lesley Russell, MB, Ch.B., MRCP expresses Cephalon’s support for Melmark’s mission

Lee Ahrensdorf (3rd from right), Founder of the Schoemaker Classic, and guests

Melmark’s Joybells receive a standing ovation
Save the Date

**MAY 1, 2010**
Melmark Gala at Park Hyatt at the Bellevue

**JUNE 12, 2010**
Spring Festival at Melmark

**JUNE 17, 2010**
Autism Conference with Dennis Reid and V. Mark Durand at the Desmond Hotel

**JULY 26, 2010**
fore Melmark New England

**SEPTEMBER 20, 2010**
The Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic