Celebrating Champions
Dear Families and Friends,

I want to begin by congratulating our colleagues in New England for the World Series Champion Boston Red Sox. Special applause goes to Melmark New England Board Member, Larry Cancro; he is a champion for those we serve and works to advance our mission despite his busy schedule as Senior Vice President of the Boston Red Sox Fenway Affairs.

At Melmark, we are honored to interact with champions each day. From the children and adults we serve who overcome so many challenges in their daily lives, to our staff members who give so compassionately - we are surrounded by inspiring and humbling individuals. Their stories of greatness are many, and it is impossible to share them all in one edition of the Melmark Messenger.

Still, we have worked to bring you a sampling of the many wonderful things taking place at Melmark. In the pages ahead, you will read about Marcus and Deanna, two students who overcame many behavioral and social obstacles and are now back in their school districts and community. You’ll meet Patrick, a very social young man who enjoys his job in the community at AMC Theatres.

You will also read how senior staff at Melmark’s Pennsylvania and New England programs are collaborating with colleges and universities to support employees as they advance their education. These partnerships directly impact the people we serve by allowing us to provide the best possible practices in classrooms, workshops and residences.

Also in this publication, we will share with you how Melmark is viewed by our peers as champions in research. Our team’s current studies are helping shape best practices in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis.

Perhaps the most moving story of a champion in this Messenger is that of Melmark New England staff member, Kathy Crane. Kathy is a reservist in the U.S. Marine Corps and is one of the heroes who protects our freedoms. She, her fellow marines and servicemen and women are the reason we are able to live in a country where people with disabilities are not tossed to the side, ignored and disrespected. From one military member to another, I salute Kathy for her dedication, not only to our country, but also to the families who entrust their loved ones to our care.

My warmest personal regards,

Joanne Gillis-Donovan, Ph.D.
President and CEO
Denny Willson met Melmark through his involvement in the Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic, the golf tournament dedicated in memory of his old classmate and friend, the late Hubert J.P. Schoemaker. “I met the management of Melmark through my work on the Classic,” he said. “Once I visited the campus and met some of the children and adults being served at Melmark, I realized I wanted to become a part of this wonderful mission.”

Willson brings a combination of commitment and sincere empathy for Melmark’s mission. Though he did not have a family connection to Melmark, he brought to the job some deep impressions of work with people with disabilities while a college undergraduate. “While in college, I volunteered at the Indiana Children’s Hospital, which, thankfully, no longer exists. It was a nightmare,” he said. “The facility served a full range of intellectually and physically disabled children. Yet there was little effort made to do much of anything, except warehouse them. I still have bad memories of the smells, the moaning and groaning and the lost looks on the faces, not just of the children, but also those who worked there.”

Willson said these memories made him reluctant to even visit Melmark at first, however his initial steps in the Melmark community were greeted with smiles and laughter - a very different picture than what he had envisioned. “I immediately saw a happy place where children and adults are loved, educated and treated with dignity and respect,” said Willson. He was significantly impressed with Melmark’s staff. “I can’t say enough about the dedication they show and the love they put into their work,” he said. “Are they worthy of our support? Good heavens, yes! Am I worthy to serve them is a more apt question.”

“We are forever grateful for Denny’s involvement with Melmark,” said Joanne Gillis-Donovan, President and CEO. “Denny is a compassionate, giving person who brings a great deal of expertise to the Melmark Charitable Foundation Board. He is a kind, caring person who is always ready to step up to help us continue building upon the many successes at Melmark.”

In addition to serving on the Melmark Charitable Foundation Board, he is also co-chair of the Hubert J. P. Schoemaker Classic Advisory Board. Willson also supports numerous Melmark events throughout the year and attends concerts by the Joybells of Melmark as well as productions by The Melmark Players.

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The Paul and Mildred Krentel Legacy Society recognizes Melmark families and friends who have supported the organization through the designation of estate assets in the future, or through a gift from current assets that produce immediate benefits to the donor. These are often called “gifts anyone can afford”. Since a gift of this nature is established today to be fulfilled in the future, there is little or no impact to the donor’s family finances.

Donors to Melmark can make a Legacy Society gift through a provision in their will, a charitable annuity, a charitable trust or a life insurance policy. Gifts of this nature often come with tax benefits that diminish the cost of the gift, provide estate tax relief, or even a fixed income for life. Often a legacy gift allows the donor to make a more substantial gift than they would have otherwise. In any of these cases, valuable and generous support comes to Melmark that will ensure programs and services to the children and adults we serve.

Bequests are probably the easiest way for a donor to give to Melmark. Over the years, Melmark has benefited from over 42 gifts through a will or estate provision. Those gifts have totaled more than $6.6 million.

If you have made provision for Melmark in your will, let us know. While a bequest provision is completely revocable in one's lifetime, we are proud to recognize your intent to support Melmark by listing your name among other members of the Paul and Mildred Krentel Legacy Society.

Victoria P. Herd
A Legacy of Love

Victoria Herd, or “Vicki” to her friends, served as Trustee to the Constans Culver Foundation of New York City, established with Ms. Herd’s father’s assistance in 1965. She first learned about Melmark in 1989 when she responded to a request for support from Melmark. Since that time, she remained a faithful friend, donor and advocate of Melmark and its mission.

In over 22 years of giving through the Culver Foundation, Vicki gave more than $118,000. In spite of her own growing disabilities, she promoted Melmark to her friends and other funding agencies throughout the remainder of her life.

Sadly, Vicki passed away in September 2010, but her legacy of love for Melmark and the people it serves lives on through her bequest. To date her legacy to Melmark is close to $1.5 million. Even though she is no longer with us, we are so grateful for her generosity and foresight in supporting the work of Melmark.

For more information on making future provision for Melmark through a will or estate gift, please contact John Schlesinger, Director of Individual Giving: 610-325-4792 or jschlesinger@melmark.org.

You may also refer to www.melmark.plannedgiving.org.
Our daughter Laura became engaged to be married this past spring. At the time, she had not given much thought as to the type of wedding she wanted. There was only one thing she was sure of: she wanted her youngest sister, Madison, to be part of her special day. We knew from the start that Maddie’s presence at the wedding was going to be contingent on two things: having a fairly local reception, and ensuring Melmark was involved in the planning.

We approached Melmark with our need for help, and they immediately responded that they would help us make this goal possible. Melmark devised a plan that would enable Maddie to not only join her family, but to also participate as a bridesmaid in her sister’s wedding. None of us knew how Maddie would handle the day, since she can become overwhelmed very easily in social settings. We didn’t know how long she’d be able to stay at the reception, but we would be happy with whatever she could do.

Maddie’s teacher Claire, and Behavior Consultant, Amanda, brought Maddie to the Bucks Club where the wedding was taking place. The plan was for her to walk down the aisle with her brothers. The contingency plan, if Maddie chose not to walk, was for Claire and Amanda to escort her up the side to her seat with mom and dad. We told Melmark that all we were hoping for beyond that were a few family photos. Maybe she would enjoy a half hour at the event? Maybe long enough for one dance?

Laura’s wedding day was magical! Maddie proudly held onto her brothers’ arms, and maturely and joyfully, walked down the aisle to her seat. As we moved outside to take family photographs Maddie stood in her pretty bridesmaid dress with her family, and then again with the rest of the bridal party. She then was introduced into the reception room holding Dad’s hand, enjoying all the applause from family and friends. And when the band started playing, she danced with both her sisters and her Mom and Dad! We originally would have been happy if she stayed for half an hour; instead, Maddie stayed for THREE hours! A cousin said it best: “Maddie walked into that reception like she never gave anybody an ounce of trouble in her life.” Eventually though, Maddie did let us know she had enough, so Claire and Amanda took her back to her home at Melissa House.

This wonderful gift to Laura and our entire family was ONLY possible because of Melmark. We couldn’t imagine a wedding without Maddie, yet we didn’t know how it would be possible. Maddie was the “wedding champ”! And she was able to be part of the celebration because of Claire and Amanda. We have always been so grateful for all Melmark has done for our family since Maddie first started as a student 13 years ago. This was an extra special gift. Maddie being present at her sister’s wedding was a dream come true and meant more to our family than words can express. It was a day made more memorable by Maddie’s accomplishment.

Thank you Melmark, for helping to bring about this magical day!

Love,
The Duffey Family
“Melmark has given us back the son we longed for and even exceeded our expectations”.

A great testament to a unique Melmark success story.

Marcus, a then 10 year-old New York resident, came to Melmark in January, 2007. He was diagnosed with Autism, Landau-Kleffner Syndrome and complex challenging behaviors. Marcus’s behaviors included physical aggression towards others, self-injurious behaviors, inappropriate personal hygiene issues and darting (running from a room/location without regard to personal safety). After meeting Melmark’s staff and touring the programs and services, Marcus’s family was convinced that Melmark offered the best program for their son and the support he needed.

Upon admission, Melmark’s behavior analysts and residential and educational staff assessed Marcus’s behaviors to develop an individual support plan. The goal was to help this young boy gain the skills he needed to return to a community-based environment closer to his family. Melmark’s staff implemented ongoing Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) to determine/confirm the function of Marcus’s challenging behaviors. With an emphasis on antecedent management interventions and other behavioral procedures, Melmark’s staff worked with Marcus and responded to his challenging behaviors.

Melmark’s 24/7 Applied Behavior Analysis Learning Model proved successful in addressing Marcus’s needs. The intensity and frequency of his aggressive behaviors decreased drastically during his time at Melmark. Marcus demonstrated significant improvement in his self-care, communication and community integration skills. Reflecting Melmark’s commitment to a partnership in care, Marcus’s family actively took part in treatment planning and training programs.

After seven years at Melmark, Marcus recently returned to New York and a community-based program that is closer to his family. Melmark’s staff was particularly pleased with Marcus’s growth and progress, demonstrating what can be accomplished with support, patience and continuously focusing on a person’s abilities.

A Note from Mikeya’s Family

“Mikeya was a pure delight on her home visit this weekend. We had no issues of behavior, no head banging, no falling out; she usually runs across the street – which is a four way intersection – none of that occurred. She sat at the table and ate all her meals.

During her weekend visit, Mikeya engaged in good behavior with her sisters and showed her love for her brother. Mikeya’s bedroom is very neat – normally she takes everything apart – she did not make her usual mess.

I am happy to see such a change and pray it continues and as always, thank you Melmark.”
Deanna’s Move to Public Schools

Deanna arrived at Melmark New England in 2007 at the age of six years old. She came with a number of challenging behavioral issues including aggression, self injury, property destruction and tantrums. She had very limited verbal communication and had extreme difficulty with even the smallest changes in schedule/routine, as these were profoundly upsetting and unmanageable for her. Deanna was also not fully toilet trained and was very afraid of many everyday things like having her picture taken, walking by the elevator and hearing other children singing.

MNE staff quickly provided consistent routines and visual schedules, coupled with high rates of positive reinforcement and functional communication. Within a year, we saw a decrease in Deanna’s challenging behavior.

By 2009 almost all of her aggression, property destruction and tantrums had decreased to nearly non-existent occurrences. Deanna really started to thrive when her speech therapist introduced the Reading Mastery Curriculum. Her confidence grew as her ability to communicate and understand others increased.

We knew we were on the right track when Deanna’s relatives from out of state came to visit. Deanna was ten. They hadn’t seen her in about a year, and they marveled at how much she was talking and what a big change had occurred. Deanna was very proud of herself. It was about that same time that she really seemed to take ownership of her progress. She showed a significant increase in self-confidence and became more flexible about making small mistakes.

Deanna loves to talk about her favorite books, music and movies. She is a very expressive writer! She is independent with self-care tasks and loves to teach other people new things. This past June, Deanna presented a research project at the first MNE Science Fair. This kind of sophisticated activity demonstrates her tremendous progress.

Deanna transitioned back into a public school setting this past fall. She is in a classroom that focuses on academics, social skills and functional living. She is blossoming in her new setting, making new friends and learning to maneuver in a public school setting. All of her current teachers adore her, and her previous teachers miss her terribly.

Congratulations to Deanna on her academic growth and personal success, as well as to the Melmark New England teaching staff who helped her succeed.

*Deanna is a true Melmark success story!*
Declan arrived at MNE when he was five years old. He engaged in crying and whining, aggression, vocal and motor stereotypy. He had difficulty communicating due to a limited vocabulary and poor articulation and had a very small amount of food in his repertoire (grapes, chips and Lorna Doones).

We introduced a toileting program and subsequently a food program where we taught Declan to use a fork. We began by providing him with visual supports and a timer to signal a change in schedule. Declan was given high praise for transitioning from one activity to another.

Within thirty days, we saw a difference with his communication. Declan's requests increased substantially. Today, Declan can transition independently from one activity to another with minimal support and minimal whining. Declan can use a fork to eat foods like chicken nuggets, oatmeal, hot dogs, potatoes and macaroni.

His vocabulary continues to grow, and he is better able to communicate his wants and needs. He can answer yes or no questions, respond to his name, initiate greetings and farewells and interact with his peers during group activities. Declan has made what some may call superhero success since starting MNE. He continues to work hard and learn important skills necessary for his development. Declan’s team feels he will make great strides at Melmark, and we are excited with the successes the future holds for him.

The United States Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Organization recently honored Melmark New England and Kim Mayer, Director of Residential Services. MNE and Mayer received the Patriot Award for outstanding employment support to military service men and women.

Specifically, Mayer and MNE received the award for their support of staff member, Kathy Crane. 1st Lieutenant Crane is a reservist in the U.S. Marine Corps and has occasionally been called to the line of duty, away from her responsibilities at Melmark. During Crane’s activation periods, Mayer and MNE leadership worked together to cover all her responsibilities. They also provided encouragement and reassurance to Crane along the way.

After Crane’s two and three week deployments during the past few summers, Crane nominated Mayer and MNE for this great honor and recognition by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. We would like to personally thank 1st Lieutenant Kathy Crane for her service to our country, as well as her dedication to children and adults with special needs.

Declan’s Superhero Success

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Opening the Doors of Communication

Legislative Outreach

Much of Melmark’s success is determined directly by public policy. Without proper funding, the core mission of Melmark would be greatly affected. That’s why legislative outreach is so important. Leadership at program locations in Pennsylvania and New England work behind the scenes to make sure our lawmakers meet the people we serve and see firsthand what makes Melmark a Center of Excellence.

Massachusetts Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo recently toured Melmark New England. During his visit, Speaker DeLeo sat down with Rita Gardner, Peter Troy, Melmark Board Member, Larry Cancro and former State Representative Barbara L’Italien. The group held a constructive discussion about potential legislation affecting individuals with autism and their families. Speaker DeLeo met students and staff in MNE’s after school program.

In Pennsylvania, Dr. Donovan and Dr. Linke recently hosted Representative Warren Kampf (R, 157th District PA), as well as Deputy Secretary of the Office of Developmental Programs, Fred Lokuta, and Waiver Capacity Manager for the Southeastern Regional Office of Developmental Programs, Mary Citko. These visits gave us the opportunity to present Melmark’s programs and discuss the excellent services provided here, thanks to highly trained and compassionate staff.

During the Deputy Secretary’s visit, Dr. Donovan and other executive staff also explained some of the challenges faced due to changes in the system and the difficult budgetary environment in Pennsylvania. Lokuta and Citko were very impressed with what they saw during a tour of programs and were very receptive to our feedback on possible system improvements and changes. Deputy Secretary Lokuta has worked in human services supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities for 30 years. He has seen many programs over that time, and he could not have been more impressed with all that he saw at Melmark.

Melmark continues to actively participate in advocacy on behalf of the individuals we serve, our families, and our dedicated staff.

About the Cover

The Boston Red Sox won the 2013 World Series and did so at home for the first time in 88 years. This historic feat was celebrated with a citywide rolling rally aboard Boston’s famed Duck Boats on Saturday, November 2, 2013. MNE students and staff attended the pre-rally festivities inside Fenway Park. Once the Duck Boats rolled out, they had the opportunity to go down onto the field of Fenway Park - a once in a lifetime experience.

Congratulations Boston Red Sox 2013 World Champions!
Champion in the Community

Patrick’s Job at AMC Theatres

“He always has a smile on his face, and he cares about his customers.”
“Seeing him when I come into work brightens my day.” That’s how staff at AMC Theatres in Plymouth Meeting describe their co-worker, Patrick.

Through his work in the Christopher Maurer Vocational Program, Patrick has developed job skills that helped lead to his employment at AMC. He works at the theater on Mondays and Wednesdays, greeting moviegoers and collecting tickets. Patrick says his customers are his favorite part of the job. “I love giving them big smiles and showing them how to get to the right theatre,” said Patrick. He also enjoys talking to his co-workers and calling codes on the walkie talkie. Of course, with any job, there are challenges. “Training was the hardest part,” said Patrick. He went on to add that, in the end, all that hard work paid off. “Learning everything about the job was difficult, but it was worth it.”

Shanee Miller is a member of the AMC Theatre film crew. She says she admires Patrick’s positive attitude. “Working as part of our team shows him and our customers that, even though he has a disability, he’s just like everyone else,” said Miller.

Patrick joined AMC in February 2013. He started with a job coach, and when he was ready, that coach was faded out. Now Patrick works independently and is thrilled to be a part of the AMC team. “Working at AMC makes me happy,” said Patrick. “It’s an accomplishment.”

Tee’s Virginia Bakery

A member of Melmark’s Vocational Program has turned his love for baking into a business.

Two days a week, Tee rolls his bakery cart from office to office, selling homemade treats. His most popular item is his grandmother’s shortbread. “My mom taught me to bake when I was a little boy,” said Tee. “I love to be in the kitchen at my Melmark house baking family recipes.”

Tee’s Virginia Bakery is another example of creating opportunities for adults to share their many talents.
Hospitality and Success

Ryan and Kevin on the Job

In April 2013, Melmark New England forged a new vocational partnership with the Hampton Inn Hotel in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Twice a week, two MNE students perform a variety of tasks at the Hampton Inn. Ryan and Kevin restock the “Sweet Shop”, vacuum hallways and the breakfast dining area, perform basic kitchen preparations, clean the lobby doors and windows, tidy up the fitness center and restock pool towels. The two young men love their work, and other employees enjoy interacting with Ryan and Kevin.

This kind of partnership provides employment opportunities to our students that are so important to the mission of Melmark. It allows the continuum of education, preparing adolescent students for adulthood and adult responsibilities. These opportunities also help students develop daily living skills necessary for a more independent life.

We are grateful to the Hampton Inn’s General Manager, Jim Krusky, and to our other community work placement partners for these opportunities. The training provided through these partnerships is setting up Melmark New England students for successful futures.

Annual Lake Trip

For the last six years, Melmark New England’s Residential Program has taken an annual summer pilgrimage to Lake Ossipee in New Hampshire. The trip is made possible thanks to the lake house owner who offers MNE a modest rental rate, and the importance of the opportunity to our students. This annual trip provides students with a real-life camping experience. Students enjoy canoeing, hiking, fishing, campfires and s’mores.

MNE Director of Residential Services, Kim Mayer and her dedicated residential staff bring expertise, creativity and flexibility to allow students to experience these simple joys of summer within a beautiful New England lake region.
SAP Month of Service

Nearly two dozen volunteers from SAP North America, headquartered in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, participated in a fall festival for children and adults at Melmark. The festival featured fun games and rides designed to ensure access to people of all ability levels.

While several SAP volunteers staffed the games, others worked alongside Melmark clients to prepare the Meadows Garden for winter. SAP North America Head of Marketing, Dave Hutchison, helped organize the event. “At SAP, we are committed to being good neighbors who give back to the community,” said Hutchison. “Everyone on our volunteer team learned so much from the children and adults we interacted with at Melmark. It was a meaningful experience for everyone.”

The event at Melmark was part of SAP’s Month of Service. Each October, SAP executes 150 volunteer projects across the country with thousands of SAP employees participating.

MNE in the Community

Melmark New England proudly participated in the Greater Boston Walk Now for Autism Speaks at Suffolk Downs Race Track on Sunday, October 6, 2013. MNE shared information with families at the event’s resource fair. Students and staff members also formed a walk team and braved the rainy, muddy conditions for the cause.

MNE also participated in the 2nd Annual Greater Lowell Community Foundation’s River Ride Bike-a-Thon. This fun and unique event allows participating organizations throughout the Merrimack Valley to raise funds for and awareness of their mission. The organization provides philanthropic support to charities, community groups and other outlets.
Champions on the Golf Course

8th Annual Schoemaker Classic

On Monday, October 7, 2013, more than 250 golfers hit the links to help raise money for Melmark, despite heavy wind and rain. The 8th Annual Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic took place on three courses: Waynesborough Country Club, St. Davids Golf Club and Gulph Mills Golf Club. Accenture was the Title Sponsor of the tournament, which has become the premier event for the Greater Philadelphia life sciences industry.

After a half day of golf before the rain, everyone gathered for a cocktail reception, silent auction and dinner with a live auction, all held at Waynesborough Country Club. In spite of only getting in about ten holes, golfers remained to enjoy the evening.

The Classic was featured on CBS3 and FOX29 in Philadelphia, as well as in various newspapers. To see media coverage of the Classic, visit: www.melmark.org/videos.

The 2014 Schoemaker Classic will be held on October 6th. For sponsorship opportunities, contact EllenDonohoe@melmark.org.

The Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic has raised more than $3,000,000 for Melmark in its eight years.

Melmark New England Special Event Preview

Special events give Melmark New England families and friends the opportunity to support the children and adults we serve. Work is underway to prepare for several popular events at MNE.

The 3rd Annual Zumba for Autism event will be held on Friday, March 14, 2014. This year’s Zumba party will include a St. Patrick’s Day theme, live music, on-site vendor shopping and raffles. More than 15 instructors will lead participants in dance moves.

The 5th Annual Trivia Night to Benefit MNE is set for Saturday, March 22, 2014, and is sure to be filled with competitive fun for a good cause.

The 6th Annual Comedy Night to Benefit MNE will be held in May, 2014. Watch for details about a new location for this laughter-filled night.

The 9th Annual fore Melmark New England Golf Tournament for Children with Autism will take place on July 28, 2014. The event will be held at Andover Country Club.
Research is key to implementing successful programs for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. At Melmark, it is the cornerstone of creating positive change to promote the most independent lives possible for those we serve. James Chok, Ph.D., BCBA-D, is the Behavior Neuropsychologist and Senior Clinician for Melmark’s Residential Treatment Program. He is currently researching assessment procedures for distinguishing repetitive behaviors in children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Repetitive behavior, often referred to as stereotypy, is a fundamental characteristic of ASD. However, repetitive behaviors are also a defining feature of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). Determining why an individual is carrying out repetitive behaviors is important for a variety of reasons. For example, practitioners working with children with ASD might presume the individual is performing repetitive behavior because he or she enjoys the behavior. As a result, they might incorporate treatments that provide access to repetitive behavior.

However, individuals with OCD perform repetitive behavior to reduce distress. Individuals with OCD describe an unpleasant building urge to perform repetitive acts, such as handwashing, checking locks, or arranging items, that is relieved once they engage in compulsive behavior. Individuals with OCD would prefer to perform these actions at a typical frequency (e.g., washing their hands for 1 min, checking a lock one time before leaving a room) absent of distress, but the discomfort they experience often remains until these actions are performed much more frequently, or for longer durations (e.g., checking a lock 50 times, washing their hands for 20 minutes). The goal of treatment for individuals with OCD is to help them become more comfortable in situations that would typically trigger compulsive behavior, as well as to help them perform these behaviors at a much lower frequency or duration.

Jim’s current line of research is examining heart rate patterns in children with ASD who engage in repetitive behavior characteristic of OCD. One of the goals of the research is to determine if the building state of discomfort described by individuals with OCD can be captured by monitoring heart rate in situations which typically lead children with ASD to perform repetitive acts. Jim’s research is also examining whether traditional treatments for OCD are more effective for children with ASD who exhibit compulsive-like behavior, and also whether treatment can lead to calmer physiological states in the presence of materials which typically evoke compulsions.

Jim’s first study, co-authored with a former practicum student from the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP), Bryan Koesler, will be published in the near future in the journal, Behavior Modification. Jim, and his colleague from Melmark New England, Jill Harper, Ph.D., BCBA-D, recently presented new findings on this subject area at the Rockland Autism Symposium in Pearl River, New York. At the symposium, Jim was interviewed by the Autism Science Foundation, which has been posted on YouTube and can be viewed at www.melmark.org/videos.

Jim began this line of research at Melmark New England several years ago, where he also served as a Behavioral Neuropsychologist. He continues to collaborate with staff members at both program locations.

To watch Dr. Chok’s interview with the Autism Science Foundation, visit www.melmark.org/videos. You will also find a full list of Melmark’s published research projects on our website. Just look for the Attaining Excellence section.
Success through Continuing Education

Masters Programs at Melmark

At Melmark, we are dedicated to providing the best opportunities to succeed to those we serve, as well as to those we employ. Part of what makes Melmark a Center of Excellence is our collaboration with renowned colleges and universities, including Endicott College and Temple University.

Melmark partners with Endicott College to offer staff a unique graduate degree in autism and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Dr. Mary Jane Weiss, Melmark Executive Director of Research, developed the program and leads instruction. We are excited to announce that 11 residential managers at Melmark New England are enrolled in this program as they work toward their master's degrees.

The 39-credit program at Endicott provides an intensive and unique course of study for those working with individuals with autism. The program includes seven courses in autism, providing students with extensive state-of-the-art information about the effective treatment of autism spectrum disorders.

For example, students take an entire course in communication strategies, a course in social skills, and another course in developing functional goals for individuals with autism. In addition to courses in autism, the program includes a sequence of six courses in Applied Behavior Analysis. Upon successful completion of degree requirements, the graduate earns a master's degree, receives a certificate in autism, and will have completed the educational requirements for eligibility to sit for the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) exam. The BACB is the national board that certifies behavior analysts.

This degree offering is extremely rare, with less than ten colleges/universities offering this graduate degree nationally. Even more uniquely, the program is a hybrid online/face-to-face program. Students do the majority of their coursework online. This is a perfect match for residential staff, whose schedules are often variable, unpredictable, and intense. Many residential staff members cannot commit to a traditional program, where classes meet during residential work hours. This model has enabled key managerial staff in Melmark NE residences to pursue graduate degrees.

Over the last four years, Melmark has built a relationship with Temple University and has also provided a six-course sequence of graduate classes in Applied Behavior Analysis on Melmark's Pennsylvania campus for staff and community members.

The course sequence has been approved by the BACB to meet coursework requirements for national certification. The sequence, which is also approved by Temple University as a post-baccalaureate certificate program, includes one course per semester and takes two years to complete. Courses are taught by senior level faculty at Melmark.

As of this December, 19 students will have completed the entire sequence over the last four years, and many other staff have completed various courses in the sequence. As a result of this partnership, five Melmark staff members have been accepted to the ABA Master's Program at Temple University.

We are proud to offer these programs to support developing professionals in our field who impact the lives of the individuals with special needs served at Melmark and beyond.

For information about the Master's Program at Endicott College, email Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA-D at MaryWeiss@melmark.org

For information about the Temple ABA Course Sequence, email Amanda Fisher, Ph.D., BCBA-D at AmandaFisher@melmark.org
SAVE THE DATE!

**May 17, 2014**
Hyatt at the Bellevue
Philadelphia, PA

**July 28, 2014**
Andover Country Club
Andover, MA

**October 6, 2014**
The ACE Club
Gulph Mills Golf Club
Waynesborough Country Club