

# Melmark Messenger

WINTER 2019

MELMARK NEW ENGLAND  
CELEBRATES 20 YEARS





Congratulations to Rita Gardner, President and CEO of Melmark, who was honored to be named #35 on The Commonwealth Institute's list of the Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts for 2018. This is the 17th year that TCI, a nonprofit that supports female business leaders, has created the list. The Top 100 ranked list appeared in the October 28th *Women and Power* edition of *The Boston Globe Magazine*.

*At the event are (from left) Peter Troy, M.B.A., Vice President for Business Operations, Helena Maguire, M.S., LABA, BCBA, Executive Director, Melmark New England, Rita Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA, and Frank Bird, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer*

## OUR MISSION

Melmark is a multi-state human service provider with premier private special education schools, professional development, training, and research centers. We are committed to enhancing the lives of individuals with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and their families by providing exceptional evidence-based and applied behavior analytic services to every individual, every day.

## MELMARK SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Frank L. Bird, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA  
VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF CLINICAL OFFICER

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SENIOR DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, PENNSYLVANIA

Mercy Mutindwa, M.A., PHR, SHRM-CP  
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES, NEW ENGLAND

Ellen M. Kallman  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, NEW ENGLAND

Michael J. Talarico, M.Ed.  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, PENNSYLVANIA

## CONTRIBUTORS

Rita M. Gardner  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Erin Houlihan  
ADVANCEMENT OFFICER, NEW ENGLAND

Ellen M. Kallman  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, NEW ENGLAND

Trish Bradley Lockett  
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Michael J. Talarico  
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT, PENNSYLVANIA

Regina Milan, Milan Design

Nancy Biddle, Biddle Design

Meri Bond, Adam Nebhut, Pavel Romaniko  
PHOTOGRAPHY

**Messenger is published twice a year for the families and friends of Melmark.**

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# A Message from the President and CEO

In this issue of *Messenger*, we highlight Melmark New England's 20th Anniversary and celebration event, aptly titled "Mission Possible," recently hosted at Shire in Cambridge, Massachusetts. I am humbled every day by the commitment of my fellow co-founders of Melmark New England: Frank Bird, Peter Troy, and Helena Maguire. I cannot thank them enough for their dedication to making Melmark a mission first, premier human services provider in New England and beyond. My many thanks to them and our incredible staff, who give of themselves to the children and adults we are honored to serve. They make our mission possible, every day.



We are incredibly excited to share plans for the construction of a new school facility on our campus in Berwyn, Pennsylvania. With a thoughtfully planned 20-classroom design, the new Melmark School will expand our ability to provide the most appropriate physical space to serve the needs of our children's school program, and will also include a student cafeteria, and professional development and training center. This new school building will ensure that Melmark remains the provider of choice for families who require sophisticated educational and clinical services for loved ones now, and for years to come.

Also in this issue, we proudly announce the opening of Melmark Carolinas, an approved, private special education day school in Charlotte, North Carolina, which will serve children diagnosed with autism in the southeastern region of the United States. Our goal is to be a model of what care should look like for all individuals who require services. We extend the Krentels' vision that services should be close to home. It should not be that you have to be lucky enough to live near Andover, Massachusetts, or Berwyn, Pennsylvania, to obtain proper educational and clinical support for loved ones. This is just the first step in expanding our mission footprint, as we work to bring services to families in need, regardless of where they call home. While we may not always build new programs, we will build partnerships to extend and raise the level of care to others.

Finally, we highlight our amazing staff, volunteers, supporters, and events that bring families and friends together to celebrate Melmark. Because of your support, we are able to advance the level of special education, clinical services and life-skills training for all of Melmark's current individuals, with thoughtful and intentional organizational planning for those who will come after them. We simply could not do it without you.

Thank you for making our mission possible, for every individual, every day.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rita M. Gardner".

Rita M. Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA  
President and CEO

On Saturday, October 27, Melmark New England celebrated its 20th Anniversary at Shire headquarters in Cambridge, Mass., with a fundraising event aptly titled **Mission Possible**. Through the generosity of families, staff and friends, this inaugural event raised more than \$247,000, which directly supports the individuals that Melmark New England serves every day.

The **Mission Possible** committee, co-chaired by MNE parents, Mara Mayer and Mary Ellen Royer, transformed Shire's already-chic lobby into an oasis for dining, dancing, and more. The sold-out event featured a raw bar and catering by Vinwood Caterers, floral décor provided by Les Fleurs, Andover and Star Market, Fenway, live and silent auctions, a Wine Pull raffle, a candy buffet and entertainment by the world-renowned **Roomful of Blues**. Students and adult day program participants painted Melmark Milestone rock photo holders and assembled potted succulent plants in our **Green Thumbs** vocational program, as guest gifts.

Heather Hegedus, Boston 25 News anchor, was Master of Ceremonies. She shared that her son, Brooks, was diagnosed with autism just about a year ago at 18 months. Heather was joined by David O'Leary of *Morning Magic*, MAGIC 106.7, who served as auctioneer for the evening. Melmark President and CEO, Rita Gardner, took our guests through the highlights and milestones of Melmark New England's 20-year journey. In recognition of their outstanding commitment to MNE and to autism advocacy across the Commonwealth and nation, the **Vision of Hope** award was presented to The Cancro Family. Peter Troy, currently Vice President for Business Operations, Melmark, Inc., and New England, and one of MNE's founders, was honored with a **Lifetime Achievement** award.

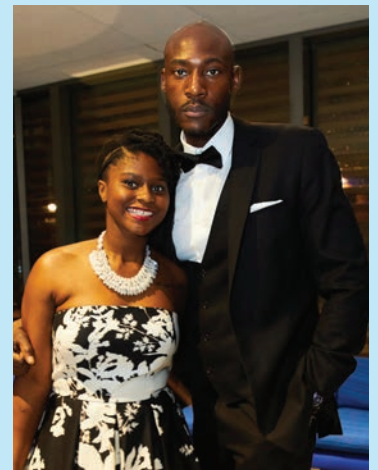
Our mission would not be realized without the help of others. We appreciate and are so thankful for the generous support of so many family members, staff and friends who share our vision to be **Mission Possible** and **Mission First: Every Individual, Every Day**.



Committee member  
Kari Newman and her  
husband, Jason



Melmark staff: Heather Hirst, Peter Troy and  
Helena Maguire



Residential staff, Vil and  
Tatiana, all dressed up and  
ready to go!

1998



Opened the first  
children's residence  
and residential school

1999

Opened the  
children's  
day school  
  
Opened two  
additional  
children's  
residences

2000

Developed outreach  
and consultation  
services  
  
Opened an additional  
children's residence

2001



Frank L. Bird is  
the first employee  
to become a Board  
Certified Behavior  
Analyst (BCBA)

2002

Developed a graduate  
training program at  
the University of  
Massachusetts-Boston  
which was the first  
approved graduate  
sequence by the Behavior  
Analysis Certification  
Board (BACB) in  
Massachusetts (one of  
13 in the United States)  
  
Opened an additional  
children's residence

2004



Opened the children's early childhood program  
  
Created clinical biweekly project software  
  
Received the regional Innovative Programming  
Award for the UMass-Boston graduate sequence  
from the University Continuing Education  
Association (UCEA)

2003



Published Melmark  
New England's and  
Melmark's first  
article in a peer-  
reviewed journal

2005

Received legislative  
earmarks eventually  
totaling over \$1 million  
  
Received the national  
Innovative Programming  
Award for the UMass-  
Boston graduate sequence  
from the UCEA

2006



Moved to the Andover campus  
which enabled us to further expand  
our children's day school census  
  
Started the first *fore* Melmark New  
England charity golf tournament

2007

Assisted in the development  
of the Autism Medicaid  
Waiver bill  
  
Opened an additional  
children's residence and  
sold one children's residence

2008

Developed the Expert  
Speaker Series





**Heather Hegedus, Boston 25 News Anchor and Mission Possible Master of Ceremonies**



**Rita Gardner with Peter Troy after accepting his Lifetime Achievement Award**



**Melmark New England's Julia Hrdina, Frank Bird, and Lauren Carter**



**Rita Gardner with Luise Cancro accepting the Vision of Hope Award given to The Cancro Family**



**(from left) Bill Ahearn, Director of Business Operations, Melmark New England, Tom Crofcheck, Director of Finance, Melmark Pennsylvania, and Joe Zakrzewski, Melmark CFO, enjoy the evening**

2009

Established the Chief Clinical Officer role for Melmark (Frank Bird)  
Developed the After School Program

2010



Assisted in the passage of the Autism Omnibus bill and the Act Relative to Insurance Coverage for Autism (ARICA)  
Opened an additional children's residence  
Rita M. Gardner received the "Essential Piece" Award from the Teamsters Local 25 at their Light Up the Night Gala for Autism

2011



Rita M. Gardner appointed to the newly established Autism Commission by Governor Deval Patrick  
Established adult residential services with the first adult residence

2012

James T. Chok receives the Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy (BABAT) Jerry Shook Practitioner Award

2013

Assisted in the development and passage of the Behavior Analyst licensing bill  
Jill Harper receives the BABAT Jerry Shook Practitioner Award

2014



Opened two additional classrooms in the Andover school  
Opened an additional children's residence  
Started home-based insurance services

2015

Opened second adult residence  
Expanded adult services with the day facility in Lawrence, Massachusetts  
Established the Green Thumbs horticultural vocational program in collaboration with Konjoian's Greenhouses  
Rita M. Gardner reappointed to the Autism Commission by Governor Charles Baker  
Frank L. Bird receives the BABAT Jerry Shook Practitioner Award

2016

Completed [The Clavin Center for Professional Development](#), a state-of-the-art lecture hall made possible through the generosity of the Clavin family and their friends  
Opened the third adult residence  
Opened three School Age classrooms in the Lawrence facility

2017



Opened four new children's residences on the Andover school campus with the generous support of the Yawkey Foundation  
Opened a new Early Childhood classroom in the Andover school  
Dedicated the adult day services facility in Lawrence as [The Cancro Center for Adult Services](#) in honor of Larry and Luise Cancro, longtime advocates and dedicated parents

2018

Opened the [Melmark Café](#)  
Opened the fourth adult residence  
Melmark Carolinas will open in Charlotte, N.C., an expansion of Melmark's Mission footprint

2018



## Building for the Future

### How you can support the new Melmark School facility in Pennsylvania

Melmark estimates that the total project will cost \$12 to \$13 million. We currently have \$8.2 million raised for the project through a recent capital campaign and two significant family gifts.

A project of this magnitude will take the help and hearts of many to complete. We invite you to join us in this transformational project for our organization, and, more importantly, for the individuals we serve. For more information, please contact Mike Talarico, Director of Advancement, at 610-325-4996.

When Paul and Mildred Krentel established Melmark in 1965, the initial mission was to provide a safe and nurturing home for their daughter, Melissa, and other children with developmental disabilities. Melmark has maintained our commitment to care for the children originally served when it was founded, who are now aging into their senior years. However, we have also intently prepared our organization to serve the significant rise in individuals with autism and developmental or medical disabilities who require different specialized educational and clinical services, and a facility that most appropriately meets their unique needs.

In late 2016, Melmark Pennsylvania retained an architectural and design/build construction firm to create an ideal school plan to fully meet the space needs of students with autism. Cost analysis revealed that renovating the original mansion (now over 110 years old) into usable classroom space was more expensive than erecting a new school building. It would simply not provide the new and updated spaces needed for the children served at Melmark. Given the changing and complex needs of our students, the new plan calls for the demolition of the mansion and the construction of a 20-classroom, modern educational facility in its place. By constructing it on this site, it can be tied into the remainder of the facilities that were built between 1968 and 2007. These facilities include a gymnasium with a performance stage, an indoor pool with locker rooms, a commercial kitchen, staff cafeteria, and the existing classrooms which will be re-purposed into administrative support spaces.

#### New School Highlights

- Two classroom floors accessible on-grade
- Twenty expanded classrooms with additional learning and work space for students and teachers
- Offices with observation windows between every two classrooms, and clinical support offices strategically located within the facility
- A student cafeteria
- State-of-the-art professional development and training center, also used for staff orientations, family information sessions and expert speakers
- Bathrooms between the classrooms or group toilets located in close proximity for training
- Third floor which will offer possibilities for growth and future classroom expansion
- New school store

#### Post-Construction Highlights - some of what we hope to accomplish

- New offices and observation rooms will provide closer physical proximity between classrooms for clinical and professional staff.
- Larger classroom space will mean more usable workspace for students, teachers and staff.
- The new school lunchroom will increase socialization and engagement opportunities.
- The professional development and training center will be modeled on the recently constructed Clavin Center at Melmark New England, and will be utilized for new-hire orientation, on-going staff re-certifications, the ability to offer graduate education training programs for staff interested in pursuing a higher-level degree, family information sessions, and our expert speaker series that draws internal and external audiences on topics pertaining to ABA and other interests.

#### Impact on Adult Programs

Our ability to expand our children's services solidifies the foundation of knowledge, expertise and resources to implement and stabilize programs for adult individuals as well. The children's program allows for enhanced clinical and educational resources which permit us to design and develop service infrastructures that extend to all ages, especially our adult population.





# Melmark Expands Educational Services to Charlotte, North Carolina

Earlier this year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its biennial update estimating that one in 57 children in North Carolina is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) each year. This new estimate is 15 percent higher than previously reported. According to N.C.'s Department of Public Instruction, 302,170 students were served in Charlotte and the surrounding counties. A rough calculation would suggest that there are approximately 5,301 students with autism in those same counties.

Given the consistently high incidence rate, and the increased need for expert clinical and educational programs which are currently lacking in North Carolina, Melmark has been working in collaboration with a team of educators and clinicians affiliated with the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools, Programs for Exceptional Children, to develop an approved non-profit special needs school, which will be known as Melmark Carolinas. The first classrooms, currently located at Lincoln Heights Academy in Charlotte, will serve children from the Charlotte/Mecklenburg School District, as well as children residing in nearby communities in North and South Carolina.

Following the 2017 Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District decision, a child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) should be "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress in light of the child's circumstances." Melmark's program will focus on those children not making adequate progress due to the severity of their educational disability, challenging behaviors or the realization that they require additional supports to make behavioral and academic progress.

"With the support and expertise of Melmark's professional staff, we will utilize a proven and established educational and clinical model to provide high quality, integrated special education services to this population in the Carolinas," says Rita Gardner, M.P.H., LABA, BCBA, Melmark President and CEO.

Under Rita's leadership, two former Melmark New England employees will oversee the Melmark Carolinas initiative. Bradley S. Stevenson, Ph.D., BCBA, will serve as the Director of Program Administration and Clinical Services, and Keri Bethune, Ph.D., BCBA-D, is the Director of Educational Services.

## Welcome to Brad Stevenson

We welcome Brad Stevenson, Ph.D., BCBA, back to the Melmark family, as the Director of Program Administration and Clinical Services for Melmark Carolinas.



He entered the field of special education, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and human services as an undergraduate student in 2004 while he served at Melmark New England, on the Andover campus.

After he relocated to Charlotte, N.C., in 2009, he worked in the local public schools as a teacher of students with autism. "Every child deserves to make progress. This is the promise of public education," Brad recalls of his time as a teacher. "Unfortunately, due to their unique needs, some of the more complex children aren't able to realize that guarantee with conventional supports." He then transitioned to a career as a consultant providing ABA services and worked with schools, families, and other professionals to assess and design behavior analytic programs for children with autism and other developmental disabilities across the Carolinas and Georgia.

In 2008, Dr. Stevenson completed his master's degree, and the Behavior Analysis Certification Board course sequence at the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2009. He earned his Doctorate of Philosophy in Special Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC-Charlotte) in 2017. Upon graduation he accepted a position with Melmark New England with the purpose of opening a location in Charlotte, N.C. During that time, he also served as part-time faculty in the Department of Special Education and Child Development at UNC-Charlotte.

Brad is a member of the Association for Behavior Analysis International, North Carolina Association for Behavior Analysis, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), and the North Carolina CEC. Dr. Stevenson looks forward to serving children in the Charlotte area and beyond. "Organizations like Melmark are needed here," he says. "Through Melmark's service model, these complex individuals are given the chance to learn and grow, realizing that promise of public education. This is why I am proud to help bring that opportunity to the children of the Carolinas."



The 13th annual *fore* Melmark New England (MNE) Golf Tournament was held September 10 at the Andover Country Club. Despite a little afternoon rain, the event was a great success once again, netting over \$124,000! This special event has been our largest fundraiser over the years, allowing us to continue to expand our educational and clinical services for the children, adolescents and adults we serve in Andover and the surrounding area.

We extend our appreciation and special thanks to the event committee including Melmark Board member and MNE parent Jamie Stahle, Board member Jim Alex, MNE parent Harold 'Skip' Short, John Reilly of Fred C. Church Insurance, and Andrew Santos of Enterprise Bank.

Golfers enjoyed choosing gifts from the Pro Shop's pop-up shop, watching four-time Long Drive Championship finalist Mike "Moose" Watson hit his crushing Long Drive on the 10th hole (and hit one themselves for a chance at prizes). Ira Lexus of Danvers sponsored a Hole in One contest, offering players the opportunity to win a lease on a new Lexus. Melmark moms, family members and friends enjoyed an afternoon of pampering at Martini, Mani and More. An extra highlight was having members of the Boston Bruins Alumni join us for the day. Thank you to Ken Hodge, Rick Middleton, Frank Simonetti, and Bob Sweeney for their generosity and support.

We were delighted to have Kendra Petrone, Executive Producer and Social Media Manager for *Morning Magic*, MAGIC 106.7 join us this year as Emcee along with auctioneer Paul Gilligan a nationally known comedian who has supported MNE for years. Together, they entertained a captive audience and helped us raise funds through the Live and Melmark Partner Fund A Need auctions. Thank you again to all of the MNE parents, family members, friends and staff who made donations, participated in the event or volunteered to help.



*Congratulations to our winning team from BWK Construction! They were thrilled to have famed Boston Bruins alum, Rick Middleton, join them this year.*



*Melmark students and staff cheer on the golfers as they hit the links.*



*Perusing the Silent Auction offerings before dinner.*



This year, 232 golfers and supporters joined Melmark PA at the 13th Annual Hubert J.P. Schoemaker Classic, held at two of the area's most exceptional courses, Gulph Mills Golf Club, and – for the first time – at the Philadelphia Country Club in Gladwyne, Pa. The rain held off just long enough to allow the golfers to enjoy their day on the links, with proceeds topping the \$255,000 mark.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to the Schoemaker Classic Advisory Board members and all of our sponsors who make this day an overwhelming success each year.

We especially acknowledge the work of Advisory Board co-chair Denny Willson, who will be retiring after 13 years at the helm. His involvement began after Hubert Schoemaker passed away in 2006. Denny, along with Hubert's wife, Anne Faulkner Schoemaker, and his inner circle of friends, wanted to honor him for his leadership in the region's life sciences community, and also perpetuate Hubert's ongoing commitment to Melmark, which served his daughter, Maureen, for 28 years. Since its inception, the Schoemaker Classic has raised over \$5M to support children and adults served at Melmark Pennsylvania, and their families.

Under Denny's unwavering leadership, the Schoemaker Classic has flourished, and is continually one of the most successful and prominent golf events in the Philadelphia region each year. Melmark is grateful for his years of exemplary service and support. He will be missed!



*A golfer chips on the green.*



*Denny Willson, co-chair of the Schoemaker Classic Advisory Board, addresses the invitees.*



*Rita Gardner, President and CEO, Melmark, speaks with Anne Faulkner Schoemaker, former Advisory Board member of the Classic, former Melmark Board of Directors member, and widow of Hubert Schoemaker.*



*Participants lined up before the evening festivities for the putting contest.*

## SUCCESS STORY

# IT'S JOE



Josh began at Melmark New England's day school in January 2003, and joined the residential program in May 2006. Upon admission, Josh demonstrated limited social and communication skills and exhibited aggression, noncompliance, property destruction, yelling, and tantrums, particularly when he attempted to escape from a non-preferred activity or when denied access to a desired object or activity. He had difficulty comprehending complex directions, novel concepts and abstract language when presented verbally.

He also exhibited deficits in expressing his emotions, notably when he became frustrated. Josh also demonstrated difficulty with communicating in an appropriate vocal tone, making eye contact, and stating perseverative questions and comments. Despite these difficulties, Josh enjoyed socializing with his peers and took initiative to volunteer his thoughts and ideas during group lessons.



After significant skill and behavior improvement made by Josh, as a result of the intensive work done by Melmark and his family, he proceeded to transition back to living with his family in January 2011. In 2017, Josh, at 22, joined Melmark New England's Adult Day Program at the **Cancro Center for Adult Services**. While at the Center, Josh enjoys clerical jobs, shopping for program items and assisting with the preparation for group activities, such as the Human Rights Committee. Excited to be reunited with former teachers and peers at the Cancro Center, Josh expressed a strong desire to interact with his peers and staff, and to secure a job in the community. Working with staff on interview and problem-solving skills when in need of assistance, as well as enhancing conversation skills, Josh progressed to completing the interview process at Lawrence General Hospital, and was offered a volunteer position. At the hospital, he helps in the Lost and Found, and completes special tasks for the volunteer department such as creating training binders and logging patient satisfaction information. Josh is also gainfully employed in the **Melmark Café** at MNE where he manages cashier duties.

Although he enjoys his community-based volunteer position, one of his future aspirations is to secure a job within the community. He would also like to learn more about managing his own money and more about computers. With the guidance from Melmark staff, and Josh's own determination, he will surely achieve his goals.



## SUCCESS STORY

# EMMA



*Emma with her teacher, Elizabeth*

**Emma came to Melmark Pennsylvania in April 2015**, after her family and school district determined that the state in which she lived could not provide appropriate services for her. At that time, Emma demonstrated clear motivation for social interaction and meaningful relationships, but did not possess an appropriate skillset to make these interactions successful. Whenever attention was limited or diverted, Emma would often engage in challenging behaviors, and had a long history of limited interaction with peers and adults due to the intensity and topography of these behaviors. She also had difficulty completing assigned tasks without becoming aggressive or disruptive, which greatly limited her opportunities in school, at home, and in the community.

A behavioral goal set for Emma by her teacher and staff was to complete one safe task in order to earn a 10-minute break. To facilitate this goal, staff verbally warned Emma when they would be removing their attention to retrieve something from across the room or to address a peer. Staff devised a very rich schedule of reinforcement and provided very limited peer interaction due to her challenging behaviors. The result was that Emma spent much of her school day engaged with staff and separated from her peers.

With the diligent work of staff, Emma made significant gains with task completion, nearing a 100 percent success rate when working for 20 safe, consecutive minutes. She was able to access a five-minute break when she was successful in her independent and 1:1 work, as well as her peer group activities.

Graduating in May 2018, Emma was accepted to a residential program in California. While sad to see her go, her staff, with help from her family, has prepared her to continue her steady path of personal growth and improvement.



# Expert Speaker Series

January 31, 2019, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

## Exploring Ethical Decision-Making

**David J. Cox, Ph.D., M.S.B., BCBA**

*Research Fellow, Behavioral Pharmacology  
Research Unit, Johns Hopkins Medicine*

► THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE BROADCAST FROM MELMARK PA TO  
MELMARK NE.

February 7, 2019, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

## Advocacy, Ethics and Applied Behavior Analysis: Applying our Science in an Anti-science Culture

**Richard M. Foxx, Ph.D.**

*Professor Emeritus of Psychology, School of  
Behavioral Sciences and Education, Penn State  
Harrisburg*

► LIVE PRESENTATION IN MELMARK PA

For more information about these events and other professional development opportunities at Melmark, please contact:

Jill Harper, Ph.D., LABA, BCBA-D, *Director of Professional Development, Training and Research*  
**Melmark New England** | 978-654-4356 | jharper@melmarkne.org

Jennifer Ruane, M.S., BCBA, LPC, *Clinical Training Coordinator, Professional Development*  
**Melmark Pennsylvania** | 610-325-2931 | Jenniferruane@melmark.org

March 7, 2019, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

## Transforming Your Classroom with Response to Intervention

**Jessica E. Frieder, Ph.D., BCBA-D**

*Associate Professor, Western Michigan University*

► THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE BROADCAST FROM MELMARK PA TO  
MELMARK NE.

May 9, 2019, 3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

## Supporting Sleep in Individuals with Autism and their Families

**A.J. Schwichtenberg, Ph.D.**

*Assistant Professor, Co-Director, Purdue Autism  
Cluster, Purdue University*

► THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE BROADCAST FROM MELMARK NE TO  
MELMARK PA.

# Attaining Excellence

Senior staff from **Melmark New England (MNE)** and **Melmark Pennsylvania (MPA)** contribute to the global research field by conducting training sessions in Applied Behavior Analysis and special education for local and national professionals; presenting research posters, papers, and symposia at regional and national conferences; and publishing research studies in peer-reviewed research journals.

MNE's **Andrew Shlesinger, M.S.W., LICSW**, Director of Clinical Technology, **Frank Bird, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA**, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer, **Kimberly Duhanyan, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA**, Senior Director, Residential Services, **Jill Harper, Ph.D., LABA, BCBA-D**, Director of Professional Development, Training, and Research, and **James K. Luiselli, Ed.D., ABPP, BCBA-D**, Director of Clinical Development and Research, co-authored "Evaluation of a Comprehensive Health-Wellness Intervention on Weight and BMI of Residential Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders," which appears online in *Advances in Neurodevelopmental Disorders*.

**Mary Jane Weiss, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, Senior Director of Research, and **Frank Bird** co-authored "Obesity and related issues in individuals with ASD: The scope of the problem and potential solutions," which appeared in the spring 2018 issue of *Autism Spectrum News*.

**Mercy Mutindwa, M.A., PHR, SHRM-CP**, Senior Director for Human Resources, MNE, wrote "Bringing Wellness Initiatives to Melmark New England," which appeared in the spring/summer 2018 issue of *SEEN (Southeast Education Network)*.

**Shawn Quigley Ph.D., BCBA-D**, Senior Director of Clinical Services and Professional Development, MPA, co-authored "Toward an Understanding of the Essential Components of Behavior Analytic Service Plans" and "A Call for Discussion About Scope of Competence in Behavior Analysis," which currently appear online in *Behavior Analysis in Practice*.

MPA's **Sharon Onda, M.Ed., BCBA**, **Kylee Formento, M.A., BCBA**, **Erin Way, M.S., BCBA**, and **Vanessa Laurent, Ph.D., BCBA-D**, Assistant Directors of Educational Services, The Melmark School, co-authored "Creating Individualized, data-based, and effective IEPs," which appeared in the summer 2018 issue of *Autism Spectrum News*.

**Andrew Schlesinger** wrote "Analyzing Health Informatics to Ensure Safety and Wellness," which appeared in the fall 2018 issue of *Autism Spectrum News*.

**Mary Jane Weiss, Karen Parenti, M.S., Psy.D.**, Executive Director, MPA, and **Jennie Labowitz, M.S., NCSP, BCBA**, Director of Educational Services, MPA, wrote "Collaboration," which appeared in the fall/winter issue of *SEEN*.

**Jill Harper** and **Jim Luiselli** collaborated with others on "Intervention, Stimulus Control, and Generalization Effects of Response Interruption and Redirection on Motor Stereotypy," which appeared in *Behavioral Interventions*.

MNE's **Kristina Goings, M.S., BCBA**, Curriculum Coordinator, **Lea Carr, M.S., BCBA**, Educational Coordinator, **Helena Maguire, M.S., LABA, BCBA**, Executive Director, Melmark New England, **Jill Harper** and **Jim Luiselli** co-authored "Improving Classroom Appearance and Organization Through a Supervisory Performance Improvement Intervention," which appears online in *Behavior Analysis in Practice*.



# Melmark New England Brings its Expertise to BABAT 2018



The Berkshire Association for Behavior Analysis and Therapy (BABAT), brings together experts and professionals in the field of ABA, autism, developmental disabilities, ethics, behavior medicine, and staff development. It is an affiliated chapter of the Association for Behavior Analysis International and the Association of Professional Behavior Analysts. Leadership and staff from Melmark New England proudly participated in the recent 2018 BABAT Conference.

## SYMPOSIA

### **“Physical Restraint Regulations in Schools: Contribution of Behavior Analysis to Implementation, Training, and Outcome Evaluation”**

**CHAIR:** James K. Luiselli, Ed.D., ABPP, BCBA-D, Director of Clinical Development and Research

- “Overview of Massachusetts DESE Regulations Governing Physical Restraint,” by Silva Orchanian, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA, Senior Director of Day Services
- “Translating Physical Restraint Regulations into Effective Practice: Training, Supervision, and Performance Management Strategies,” by Helena Maguire, M.S., LABA, BCBA, Executive Director, Jill Harper, Ph.D., LABA, BCBA-D, Director of Professional Development, Training, and Research, and Frank Bird, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA, Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer
- “Outcome Evaluation of Physical Restraint Regulations on Incidence of Physical Restraint and Restraint-Related Injuries,” by Jill Harper, Helena Maguire and Frank Bird

### **“Health and Wellness of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities”**

**CHAIR:** Jim Luiselli

- “Overview of Behaviorally Based Health Promotion and Intervention,” by Jim Luiselli
- “Assessing Pain in Adults with Intellectual Disability: Ratings and Impressions Among Care Providers,” by Jim Luiselli and co-presenters from the Seven Hills Foundation
- “Evaluation of a Comprehensive Health-Wellness Intervention on Weight-BMI of Residential Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders,” by Andrew Shlesinger, M.S.W., LICSW, Director of Clinical Technology, Jim Luiselli, Kimberly Duhanyan, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA, Senior Director of Residential Services, Jill Harper, and Frank Bird

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

“Establishing an Effective Treatment: Completing a Component Analysis within a Competing Items Assessment,” by Erin Sherman, M.S., LABA, BCBA, Clinical Coordinator, and Jill Harper

“Comparing Effects of FR1 Edible Reinforcement vs. FR1 Token Reinforcement on Expressive Skill Acquisition,” by Colleen O’Grady, M.A., BCBA, Educational Coordinator, and Heidi Marquardt, M.A., ABA Classroom Counselor

“Evaluation of Systematically Fading Protective Equipment to Decrease Problem Behavior and Increase Academic Skills,” by Kristina Harty, B.A., Educational Coordinator, Lauren Carter, M.Ed., LABA, BCBA, Director of School Age Services, and Silva Orchanian

“A Case Study: Integration of Different Therapies to Produce Socially Significant Changes in Behavior,” by Mark Smith, M.A., LABA, BCBA, Assistant Director of Residential Services, Frank Bird, and Silva Orchanian

## PANEL DISCUSSIONS

“Behavioral Skills Training: A Comparison of Four Pre-service Training Models”  
Jill Harper represented Melmark NE

## WORKSHOP

“Conducting Behavioral Consultation in Educational and Treatment Settings” by Jim Luiselli





Melmark PA celebrated its second annual Salute to Summer, a staff appreciation event, this August. Hosted by the Melmark Family Organization, the day featured games, fun activities and snacks. This event is a thank you to staff in Pennsylvania for all they do for the individuals we serve.

## Thank You to Our Volunteers...

Thank you to students from **The Episcopal Academy** (pictured here) and our other volunteers from **Janssen**, and **Shire**, who helped do general clean up in the Meadows Garden. Thanks, too, **Fox & Roach Charities** for painting in Shoemaker, and to **SAP** and **Lansdale Catholic** students who made Halloween such a fun time of year on campus in Berwyn!

Additional thanks to the **Melmark Family Organization** in Berwyn, who distributed snacks after October's Flu Shot Blitz Day, and slices of pie during Thanksgiving Pie Day.

If you are interested in a volunteering opportunity for yourself, your group or your organization, please contact Cyndie Martin, Director of Corporate and Community Affairs, Melmark PA, at [cyndiemartin@melmark.org](mailto:cyndiemartin@melmark.org), or 610-325-4976, or Ellen Kallman, Director of Advancement, Melmark NE, at [ekallman@melmarkne.org](mailto:ekallman@melmarkne.org) or 978-654-4371.



Melmark New England became Red Sox Nation as (from left) Brandon, Amanda, and Devon sport their Red Sox gear before their favorite team captured a World Series victory.



# MelmarkNews



Tyler with staff, Anthony, donning their "Superhero" look during Thanksgiving Spirit Week in Andover. Prizes were awarded daily to the student and staff member that best represented the theme of the day.



It was a beautiful fall day for Melmark New England's Family BBQ. Parents had a chance to hear updates from Rita Gardner, President and CEO, and other leadership staff in the Clavin Center. Family members and students alike enjoyed great food and recreational activities, making the annual tradition a fun day for all, including Brady and his staff, Sean.



Congratulations to Melmark PA nominees for the 2018 PAR (Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability) "We Are Worth It" awards. (from left) Naomi Stevens, aide in Engle, Claire-Stewart Castner, participant at the Meadows, Evie Gilsky, program specialist at The Meadows, and Aytiah Love, residential aide at Thomas House. Naomi, Evie and Aytiah were nominated as the Southeast Region Direct Support Professional of the Year, while Claire was nominated as the Southeast Region Self Advocate Employee of the Year. Well done!



Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week is held annually in September. Melmark PA closed the week with lunch for all staff in Pennsylvania being served by members of Leadership. (from left) Dani Block, Director of Nursing, and Karen Parenti, Executive Director, serve food in the Multipurpose Center.



# MelmarkNews

Melmark New England's campus played host to the Boston Northeast chapter of the Antique Automobile Club of America's Classic Car Show.

More than 80 classic and antique cars graced the lawn on a hot, sunny August day. Visitors had a chance to vote for the People's Choice Award.

They were treated to a BBQ lunch from the Melmark Café, enjoyed snacks sold by MNE students and parent volunteers, and goodies from show sponsor, East Boston Savings Bank. Proceeds from the show topped \$5,000!



Melmark PA Adult Services welcomed Thomas P. Murt, Republican member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, who represents the 152nd legislative district. With him (from left) are Ashley Benedetto, M.Ed., Director of Adult Day Program, Grace and Megan, Karen Parenti, M.S., Psy.D., Executive Director, and Rodney Alleman, M.A., Director of Adult Day Program.

Rep. Murt, a leading advocate for people with special needs and their caregivers, has testified before the Appropriations Committee since he was elected to seek additional funding for families who care for adult children with special needs. He visits providers across Pennsylvania where individuals with special needs live and receive care. We were honored to have him visit Melmark, and meet with the children and adults we serve.





# Melmark PA Staffer has a Positive Impact on the World

One of the Core Commitments outlined in Melmark's comprehensive strategic plan is "*compassionate care*." You'll often see that care as you spot **Heather Hirst, D.P.T., PT**, Director of Rehabilitative Services at Melmark PA, working with a child or adult in the Physical Therapy Room. Not only do you see that compassion at Melmark, but you will see her provide exemplary services to several causes close to her heart. One of which is iHi International, a local non-profit dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable people worldwide. Her work with iHi over the years has taken her twice to Uganda. However, her most recent week-long trip, to Duhok, a city located in the Kurdish region of Iraq, was her most impactful.

While she was in Iraq, she had the unique opportunity to work with iHi's collaborative partner, Operation Mercy (OM), an international relief and development organization. Her focus was to evaluate individuals who had been identified by OM staff and were housed in refugee camps, mostly comprised of Syrian refugees and Iraqis displaced by internal conflict and religious persecution.

OM's mobility team – 10 exceptionally bright and dedicated staff members – had been in the camps themselves and wanted to give back. "They are eager to learn and help the families in the camps improve their quality of life, increase independence, and continue to rebuild their community," says Heather.

Traveling from tent to tent, Heather evaluated individuals and provided recommendations to children and adults for equipment, exercises, and education on how to increase their strength and independence, meet their positioning needs, and to improve their overall quality of life. She was also able to train OM staff on various exercises and precautions for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities. In turn, the individuals Heather and the team worked with were beyond grateful for the exceptional education and training they received.

"We are a part of a global society and each of us can have a positive impact on the world," says Heather. "I have been blessed with the education, skills and experience to educate and train family members to better assist their loved ones with intellectual and physical disabilities."

Heather's hope is to return to Kurdish Iraq to continue the mobility project with OM. In the meantime, she provides her expert consultation by Skype with the team where they discuss treatment plan modifications and her opinions on new cases they identify on an ongoing basis.





## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Karen Blake-Fox

*Matthew (right) with his brother, Nick, who is a corpsman and medic in the U.S. Navy*



**Karen Blake-Fox** will tell you that when her son, Matthew, came to Melmark Pennsylvania's Residential Treatment Facility (RTF) program in 2009, after six months at Kennedy-Krieger Institute, his life was dramatically altered in a multitude of ways.

Matthew underwent life-changing spinal fusion surgery soon after coming to Melmark. He improved immensely after months of committed rehab with Melmark's excellent physical therapy staff. With tremendous work by Matthew and his dedicated RTF team, his extreme challenging behaviors lessened, and Karen saw that everything for Matthew was falling into place.

She, and past parent, Michelle Chess, wanted to be more involved at Melmark, mainly to show their gratitude for the care shown to their sons. However, they found that there weren't many opportunities, so they decided to create their own, inviting other individuals' family members to volunteer at staff appreciation events.

In 2016, Karen went to Rita Gardner, President and CEO, and Karen Parenti, Executive Director, PA, and proposed plans for the Melmark Parent Organization [now the Melmark Family Organization (MFO)] in Berwyn. "Both Rita and Karen were onboard right away, since the New England division has a similar and successful organization, and greenlighted us to continue and formalize the group," recalls Karen.

Karen and Michelle organized their first event – Pie Day – close to Thanksgiving, where MFO volunteers distributed pie to staff in the Eatery, Melmark PA's staff cafeteria. They also had sent paper leaves to families for them to put words of thanks to special staff who took care of their loved ones. They displayed the leaves on a paper tree on the wall, and staff were so touched when they read about themselves and the gratitude expressed by families.

Volunteer opportunities – the Family Walk and Roll, and Salute to Summer events, volunteering for the Flu Shot Blitz, distributing coffee and donuts and other treats – have grown since Pie Day. The variety of days and times of events help the group target staff who work on and off campus, and work different shifts, so that all staff can participate.

Karen gives to Melmark in other ways, too. Two years ago, she served as a committee member for the Dream Maker's Ball, Melmark's biennial gala, which has raised over \$4M for the individuals and programs at Melmark PA since 2001. This past year, Karen co-chaired the Dream Maker's Ball volunteer committee, along with her husband, Jim, and longtime parents, Joe and Donna Duffey. Under their leadership, Melmark enjoyed its most successful gala since its inception, netting over \$356,000. It's no wonder that in 2017, Karen was named Melmark's Volunteer of the Year, in recognition of all she does at Melmark.

Karen is a neonatal nurse practitioner at Nemours Children's Clinic – A.I. duPont Hospital for Children – Main Line Health Division at Bryn Mawr, Paoli and Lankenau Hospitals. Karen is also an adjunct clinical professor at Villanova University, where she has also guest lectured undergraduate nursing students on the unique care needed for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This year, Karen was asked to participate as community voting member in Melmark PA's Human Rights Committee/Restrictive Procedures Committee. The committee meets to discuss and promote safety and independence and reviews restrictive protocols. "I'm just so grateful to have the people at Melmark in my life, and in Matthew's life," Karen says. "They're just so inspiring! I would be there every day, if I could!"



*Karen with Matthew*

## ABOUT THE MFO

**The Melmark Family Organization (MFO) supports staff at Melmark PA by thanking them through a variety of events it hosts throughout the year. Please consider volunteering an hour of your time if you're near to Berwyn. If you don't live locally, there are still ways for you to support the MFO. Contact Karen Blake at [MFO@melmark.org](mailto:MFO@melmark.org) to find out how.**



# Ways to Give

There are a number of convenient gift opportunities available to support Melmark's mission. Gifts received may be unrestricted or designated for restricted purposes. Donations can be made by cash or check, or made securely online through Melmark's website.

## Annual Giving

Annual support allows Melmark to maintain excellence and provide specialized services and programs to individuals with special needs. We rely on the generosity and spirit of our friends and families to enhance our ability to attract and retain a team of gifted staff, provide innovative programs and sustain our facilities.

## Gifts of Stock

One of the most advantageous ways to contribute to Melmark is through a gift of stock. Making a gift of securities is simple and offers a number of valuable financial benefits:

- You can donate appreciated stocks, bonds or mutual funds.
- Total value of the stock upon transfer is tax-deductible.
- No obligation to pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciation.

## Matching Gifts

One way to double the impact of your gift to Melmark is to participate in your company's matching gift program, which may match a percentage or your entire gift. Each company will have different requirements and procedures; your human resources department should be able to answer your questions.

## Tributes and Memorial Gifts

Honoring or remembering a loved one through a charitable gift is an especially meaningful way of paying tribute. Gifts may commemorate a special event, such as a birthday, anniversary, wedding or retirement, or may be made in lieu of flowers at one's passing.

## Planned Giving/Krentel Legacy Society

The generosity of planned giving donors strengthens opportunities for the children and adults we serve, along with their families. The planned giving office is here to help you determine the best vehicles to meet your financial needs and make a lasting impact at Melmark.

**The Paul and Mildred Krentel Legacy Society**, founded in 2010, includes individuals who have named Melmark as the ultimate beneficiary of their estate plan. Such gifts can include a bequest or beneficiary designation in a retirement plan and/or charitable income gifts, such as:

- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Charitable Remainder Unitrusts
- Gifts of Life Insurance

## In-Kind Gifts

A Gift-In-Kind is a contribution of goods or services that can be used to advance Melmark's mission, or can be readily converted to cash and may qualify as a charitable deduction.

## Pennsylvania United Way

A number of Melmark's donors prefer to make their contributions through the United Way payroll deduction program. Melmark is a participating donor choice agency in the United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania; the code number is 1012.

## Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC)

The Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (PA EITC) program allows businesses in the Commonwealth to earn a tax credit of up to 90% for certain Pennsylvania taxes when they make a donation to a "scholarship organization" or an "educational improvement organization," a special category under the state tax code. Melmark has been approved as an Educational Improvement Organization (EIO). Funds received under these programs provide funding for technology to enhance our students' experiences.

## Corporate, Foundation and Organization Giving

Melmark has been very fortunate to have the support of local corporations, foundations and organizations. Over the past five years, these benefactors have extended their valued time and financial resources in support of our mission. Many prominent organizations regularly include Melmark in their contributions budget.

## New England Legacy Brick Walkway

Located just outside the front doors of Melmark New England, the legacy walkway features engraved bricks with custom messages. This is a wonderful way to pay tribute or honor special people in your life or to recognize special memories and milestones. Each brick can be customized with a personal message, tribute, important dates, names of family members, thank yous or corporate logos.

## Special Events

Special events share Melmark's mission with the community at large, in support of our highly specialized programs and services. From black tie galas to family-style picnics, our events provide family, friends and community partners with the opportunity to engage with one another while giving of their time, talent, and treasure.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GIVING TO MELMARK, PLEASE CONTACT:

New England Advancement Office | 978-654-4300 | Donate online at [www.melmarkne.org/supporting-melmark](http://www.melmarkne.org/supporting-melmark)  
Pennsylvania Advancement Office | 610-325-4996 | Donate online at [www.supportmelmark.org](http://www.supportmelmark.org)



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**1 | 59**  
**children**

are diagnosed  
each year with  
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Disorder (ASD)

*\*estimated by The Centers  
for Disease Control and  
Prevention (CDC)*



**Over 300**  
**adults**

participate in our day  
programs and **150**  
live residentially.



**94%** of students at Melmark  
**New England** have been  
**diagnosed with ASD**



**21% of adults**  
served in day and residential  
programs in Pennsylvania  
are **medically fragile**.



**86%** of Melmark students in  
**Pennsylvania** have been  
**diagnosed with ASD**

Melmark serves



**over 250**  
**children and**  
**young adults**

ages 3-22, including  
100 residential  
students in two states.

Melmark NE serves  
another

**500 children**  
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1900 Newcastle Street  
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