

Barber Spirit

JUNE 2017
VOL. 13 NO. 2

BARBER
NATIONAL
INSTITUTE



BEATING THE "MINI" BEAST



President's Message



Making dreams come true.

Dear Friends,

It is very exciting to see the new look of our adult day facilities – the latest in a series of renovations to our main campus – taking shape this summer. Watching the changes underway, it is especially rewarding to realize how this transformation will enhance the experience for our adults, families and staff.

The latest phase of our construction project involves buildings on the northeast portion of our campus that currently house our nursing and medical suites, and adult day and developmental programs. This complex, often referred to as Buildings 101 and 99, is undergoing the first major renovation since its construction in 1982. A large section of the front of this complex will be razed later

this summer to create a circular drive that will facilitate a smoother, safer transport of our individuals.

This project, totaling \$4.2 million, includes completion of the second floor on our north building, expanded parking and other enhancements. While the renovation will benefit those who use and work in our programs, we also believe that it is a very visible investment in the future growth and stability of our Bayfront neighborhood. This significant undertaking creates a positive physical space, and provides an environment to foster growth and encouragement to meet higher standards for quality and innovation.

When all renovations are completed this fall, we look forward to inviting all of the community to celebrate the opening of this beautiful space. Donors interested in investing in the project, or in learning more about naming rights for the new facilities, should contact Laura Schaaf, director of giving, at 814-874-5802.

Each June, we say goodbye to graduates who will be going on to adult programs and community employment, as well as students from preschool through high school age who will take what they've learned here and continue to grow and flourish in their home school districts. Their graduation is but one example of the work that we do every day to help our individuals and families achieve their goals. On their behalf, thank you for supporting our mission of *making dreams come true.*

Sincerely,

John J. Barber
President & Chief Executive Officer



On the cover: Sammy Morris and Molly Elliott, students in the Happy Hearts inclusive preschool program, navigate the Mini Beast obstacle course.

Mission Statement

We "Make dreams come true." We provide children and adults with intellectual disabilities and behavioral health challenges and their families the education, support and resources needed to be self reliant, independent and valued members of their community. In addition, we provide the professionals who serve them with world-class education and training.



Nickolas Stratton explores the treasure chest on a giant ship.



Physical education teacher Gage Bunker helps a student balance on the giant swing created to look like a boat.



Mini Beast is Mighty Fun

Students showed that they have what it takes to “Beat the Beast” in the Mini Beast created by Elizabeth Lee Black School faculty. Youngsters participated in the elaborate obstacle course challenge set up in the gym that offered a variety of challenges adapted for students of all ages and physical abilities.

Some of the activities included jumping on lily pads, balancing on swings, crawling through tunnels and raising flags.

The annual event has become a much-anticipated celebration marking the end of the school year.



A Day at the (Musical) Zoo

It was a zoo without cages, fences or even animals, but students had a great time! Musicians from the Erie Philharmonic brought their string and percussion instruments for a musical petting zoo for all students at the Elizabeth Lee Black School.

Children from preschool through high school age had the opportunity to hear a variety of musical sounds, and even get a chance to touch and play the instruments.



A student enjoys playing the cello with Jean Verdiccia.



Violinist Louis Nicola looks on as a student tries the violin.



Art Show Amazes

More than 255 adult artists and more than 250 youth artists had their work on exhibit at the Art Show & Sale sponsored by the Barber National Institute. 2017 marked the 10th anniversary of the show, which has grown to become one of the largest and most diverse in the region.

Arts enthusiasts should mark their calendars for next year's event in April 2018.



The presentation to adult winners included, pictured from left, Bridget Barber, director of External Affairs at the Barber National Institute; Debra Stevens, Honorable Mention winner for her watercolor, "Acceptance"; John Barber, president and chief executive officer; Rebecca Merry, Honorable Mention winner for her paper sculpture, "Eagle"; Terry Pytlarz, Best of Show Photography Award for "Windows and Reflections"; Derick Fiedler, Honorable Mention Photography Award for "Blues on Bourbon Street"; David Ball, one of 14 artists in the Best of Show collaboration, "Mapscape"; Frank Fecko, supervisor of the Fine Arts Program; Carrie Kontis, vice president for Intellectual Disabilities Services; Dennis Garczynski, an artist in the collaboration; and Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, executive vice president.



Bridget Barber, director of External Affairs, and John Barber, president and chief executive officer, left, are joined by Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, right, executive vice president, in congratulating youth artist award winners, from left, Timmy Taylor, Honorable Mention Award for his charcoal and pastel drawing, "Buddy"; Camryn Catalde, Best of Show Photography Award for "Reflection in a Drop"; Cia Carr, Honorable Mention Photography Award for "If I Could See My Dream"; John S. Underhill, Honorable Mention Award for pen and ink drawing "Slow Going"; and Emily M. Matczak, Best of Show Award for her watercolor, "October." Also receiving an Honorable Mention Photography Award was Luke Weaver for "My Friend."

People's Choice Awards Selected by visitors to the 2017 Art Show



Rebecca Merry won the award for adult artist for her paper sculpture, "Eagle."



Victoria Quirk, a junior at Villa Maria Academy, won in the youth category for "Obi," a colorful acrylic painting of a dog's face.

DONOR PROFILE

Making a Difference

Rena Wierbinski loves her hometown. Since her parents emigrated here from Italy more than nine decades ago, she has come to appreciate all that it has to offer. And, she believes that it is important to support organizations in this community – particularly those helping people who can't always help themselves.

Mrs. Wierbinski has selected six organizations, including the Barber National Institute, to which she regularly makes financial contributions. "You can really see where the money is helping," said Mrs. Wierbinski. "It is something that I feel very deeply about."

Years ago, family members lived near Dr. Gertrude Barber in the east Erie Bayfront neighborhood, and Mrs. Wierbinski had the opportunity to meet the well-known educator. "I did not know her well, but of course I knew the work that she did," said Mrs. Wierbinski. "She helped so many people for so many years, and the organization became a big part of our community."

Then, in 1978, the Wierbinski family would come to know the Institute in a more personal way. At the age of 22, Rena's son, Steve, was involved in a car accident, which resulted in the loss of a leg and a serious head injury. He was in a coma for four months, and has vision and memory deficits that still affect him today.

Steve had been a good athlete, lettering in several sports while attending Cathedral Prep that led to a Cornell University scholarship. After two and a half years of rehabilitation, he came home to a much different life. Without an immediate memory, and being confined to a wheelchair, his activity was restricted.

When Mrs. Wierbinski learned about the pool at the Barber Institute, which had a floor that could rise to deck level for easy access, she thought it would be something he would enjoy. Pool staff also devised a low table to help with transfer and changing. "The staff was so good to him there," said Mrs. Wierbinski. "They were all very attentive – and they are that way with everyone."



Rena Wierbinski with her son, Steve.

Over time, Mrs. Wierbinski also became acquainted with her sister-in-law's sister who moved into a Barber Institute group home after residing at Polk Center for years. She marveled at how the woman developed tremendous skills as an artist, with her paintings of chickens and hens frequently exhibited in shows.

Today, Mrs. Wierbinski sees the Barber Institute as an organization that has grown into a monumental establishment by giving all those receiving services the help they need to grow and have a better quality of life. She frequently supports the annual Art Show and Ladies Only Luncheon, and has also started making a recurring monthly donation to the Barber Institute.

"My attitude about money is that after necessities are taken care of, it is something to give away," said Rena. "If you spend it on yourself, it only benefits one person. But if you can donate it to something that benefits many people, I've found that makes me feel a lot better."

For information about making a gift to the Barber Foundation, visit BarberInstitute.org/giving or contact Laura Schaaf, director of giving, at 814-874-5802.



BEATING LIFE'S BEASTS

When Renee Dommermuth crossed the Barber Beast on the Bay finish line last September, she achieved something she was not sure she could ever do. Two days later, she would be facing an even bigger challenge as she underwent a double mastectomy for breast cancer.

"Here I was, in the best shape of my life, at my lowest weight in years," said Renee. "I felt wonderful."

Renee, age 56, said the Beast had been on her "bucket list" for a while. After volunteering for two years, she decided she wanted to participate. "I had so much fun watching the people. Sometimes, I would see someone and think 'if she can do it, I can do it, too.' I wasn't going to volunteer and watch everybody else. I just thought—I've got to do it," said Renee.

FITNESS JOURNEY

Renee had been what she calls "an exercise person" for two years, arriving at Iron Oxygen (formerly Best Fitness) every day at 5:30 a.m. for a varied workout of classes, weights and other activities.

With the Beast looming, Renee also started "boot camp" at Frontier Park, where she added up- and down-hill running to her regimen. A friend had to drop out of the Beast in early summer because of a back injury, but Renee met other people at boot camp, including Carol Geiger, who were working toward this shared goal.

In June, in the midst of her fitness pursuit, Renee thought she felt a lump in her right breast. With her annual physical and mammogram just a few weeks away, she put it out of her mind.

Just before the July 4 weekend, she was called in for a repeat mammogram and a sonogram, and on July 17 she had a biopsy.

Days later, she got the phone call: invasive ductal carcinoma.

"Here I was, golfing, going on long bike rides. There was no breast cancer in my family," said Renee. "I was in shock."



Renee Dommermuth crawls through one of the obstacles in the Beast course.

Surgery for a double mastectomy was scheduled for Sept. 13, and Renee thought that it might be the end of her dream of doing the Beast. She was surprised, then, when her surgeon encouraged her to go ahead with the event. "I took that as a sign that I should do it," said Renee. "I also found that it kept my mind off of the surgery."

BEAST DAY ARRIVES

On the morning of Sept. 10 she showed up early, hoping to connect with others from Best Fitness. She was happy to find Carol Geiger, who, Renee said, "turned out to be my buddy through the whole event."

Renee didn't know it, but a large group of friends had also decided to drive along the course that day, cheering her on at almost every obstacle. "I had support at every station," said Renee.

Renee walked some of the course, and did all but two obstacles, arriving at the finish line in less than three hours. She recalled running up the hill into Waldameer, where she saw a friend's sons walking up the hill. "I said 'are you going to let an old lady pass you up?' They laughed and both said 'go for it.'"

Two days later, it seemed like everyone at the hospital knew about her accomplishment. "All of the doctors and nurses were asking me how I did," remembers Renee.

A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

Renee considers herself fortunate. No cancer was found in the lymph nodes, so she did not need follow-up chemotherapy or radiation.

Even though she couldn't work out for eight weeks, she almost immediately started taking short walks on the treadmill, and thinking about doing this year's Beast.

(Continued from page 6)

"I tell people that they don't have to run the 10 miles," Renee said. "I tell them it's just about getting out and doing it. People stick together—they really help you. It is just so much fun."

Renee is hoping that her husband and some of the women she has met through the Linked by Pink support group will join her, and she is giving them a lot of reasons to join in.

"It supports such a great cause," Renee adds.

Last December, Renee underwent reconstructive surgery, and was back working out soon after that. She believes that being in good shape helped her recover from the two surgeries more quickly.

And, she still believes that finishing the Beast is her greatest accomplishment. "I have the medal hanging in my kitchen and every time I look at it I think, 'wow, I really did that.'"

That is a gift that Renee hopes to inspire other women – and men – to achieve.



Renee, left, celebrates finishing the Beast with course buddy Carol Geiger. Two days later, Renee would undergo a double mastectomy for breast cancer.

WANTED: CHEER ZONES

Are you part of a fun, energetic group that likes to help people and community causes? Then sign up to be a Cheer Zone at Barber Beast on the Bay. You can do just about anything – sing, dance, or just cheer your heart out to encourage participants through the course. As one participant wrote, "Cheer Zones really do perk you up and help get your stamina back—thanks so much!" You'll know you really helped someone when they needed it, and your organization could win a cash prize. Sign up at BarberBeast.org/cheerzone.



BARBER BEAST 2017 – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Saturday, Sept. 9

10-mile course through Presque Isle State Park.
Sand, trails, water & roadway

25+ obstacles • Cost is \$125

Fundraise for a free registration.

Have the time of your life! Sign up now at BarberBeast.org.



Have you done the Beast every year? To celebrate our 5th anniversary, we have a special gift for all of those who have participated all four years, and are beasting again in 2017!



Be part of the region's coolest event! Become a Beast Sponsor! Contact Laura Schaaf, director of giving, at 814-874-5802 or lschaaf@BarberInstitute.org.



THANKS TO 2017 SPONSORS



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Frank photography





Executive Vice President Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey explains the equipment for the new playground to Jim Stevenson, northwest Pennsylvania president of PNC, and students in the PreK Counts class. The playground, designed for students three to eight years of age, is funded with donations from PNC, Erie Insurance, Charities for Children, and donors to the Barber Foundation.

Donations Fund New Playground

Students returning to the Elizabeth Lee Black School in the fall will be greeted by a new playground that offers fun opportunities for preschoolers of all abilities. Installation of the new equipment will begin in early summer with completion expected in July.

While an interactive playground is available for elementary and middle school age students, younger children don't have a play area tailored for their needs. "We are looking forward to having a playground that is appropriate for students from three to eight years of age," said Nina Wolfarth, early childhood specialist at the Barber National Institute. "This has been our dream for three years, and it is exciting to see it become a reality this summer."

The playground is being funded through the generosity of a number of community partners and friends. Erie Insurance provided a \$25,000 grant, as well as a contribution through the EITC Education Improvement Fund. The PNC Foundation made a \$10,000 donation, Charities for Children donated \$1,714 and a gift was received from longtime supporter Pauline Stevens.

The new playground will offer several activity play spaces, including two curvy balance beams, three play shaper posts, two talk tubes, and a rock and ring panel which will be at ground level. The layout will include a grassy area where students will be able to plant flowers and stage different types of activities.

Donations are still being accepted to cover the costs associated with the new playground; for information about making a gift to this project contact Laura Schaaf at 814-874-5802 or lschaaf@barberinstitute.org



Barber Behavioral
Health Institute

Barber Behavioral Health Earns Trauma Certification

The Barber Behavioral Health Institute at the Barber National Institute became one of only 18 facilities nationwide to be certified this year as a Trauma Informed Care Community by the National Council of Behavioral Health.

The certification was awarded in April following an intensive year-long process to heighten understanding across the organization of the role that traumatic events and experiences can play in behavioral health treatment.

A growing body of research suggests that trauma is a near universal experience of individuals with behavioral health problems, but it is often denied or ignored. Trauma is considered any exposure to actual or threatened death, violence, neglect and sexual or domestic abuse.

Without proper treatment, research also shows that childhood trauma can lead to physical and mental health problems later in life. "The results of trauma can include an increased risk of heart disease, diabetes and some cancers, as well as high-risk behaviors, addictions and depression," said Dr. Rochelle VonHof, Director of Clinical Programming & Services at the Barber Behavioral Health Institute.

With help, children and adults can recover from the effects of trauma, according to Dr. VonHof. "With treatment, we know that people can learn how to look at living their life differently, and move on to a better, healthier life."

Prolonged exposure to trauma during childhood can change the architecture in the brain, affecting a child's cognitive and emotional development.



More than 60% of youth age 17 and younger have been exposed to crime, violence and abuse.



Children with trauma experiences are 2.5 times more likely to have repeated a grade in high school.



Increases the risk of:
heart disease
diabetes
some cancers
high risk behaviors
addictions
depression



Childhood trauma can damage the ability to form healthy relationships and makes it more likely that an adult will engage in risky health and lifestyle behaviors.



Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, left, executive vice president of the Barber National Institute, joins Nina Ferraro, Senior Community Affairs Analyst at Highmark Health, in seeing one of the new treadmills available in the school's fitness center. Physical education teacher Gage Bunker works with students Nathaniel Black, center, and Dennis Black to set up the treadmill for an exercise session. Highmark's Building Sustainable and Lasting Changes in Schools grant provided two commercial treadmills and heart rate monitors that will be used to expand exercise frequency as well as chart student progress toward fitness goals.

Highmark Grant Improves Student Fitness

Students in the Elizabeth Lee Black School at the Barber National Institute are improving their fitness and cardiovascular health thanks to a grant from the Highmark Foundation.

The \$4,900 Building Sustainable and Lasting Changes in Schools grant has funded new exercise and monitoring equipment for the school's fitness center, which is used by more than 50 middle and secondary school-aged students every day, as well as by students during physical therapy and one-to-one instruction.

Funding was provided for two commercial treadmills and heart rate monitors that will be used to expand exercise frequency as well as chart student progress toward fitness goals.

Since the fitness center opened in 2004, school faculty have noticed a significant impact on student physical and behavioral health through participation in exercise programs.

"Rates of obesity are higher among children and adults with special needs, and we want to encourage them to develop lifelong fitness and exercise activities," said Christina Gross, a physical therapist in the Elizabeth Lee Black School. "We have seen that the steady pace and continuous feedback provided by walking on the



treadmill really improves participation in a fitness program. With the grant, more students can access the treadmills and walk for longer durations."

With the new equipment, students who use the treadmills will be encouraged to participate in 20-30 minutes of treadmill training two to three times per week, increasing the speed, duration and frequency of the exercise. Target heart rate will be measured in a pre- and post-program report. The goal is to increase the percentage of time students spend exercising in their target heart rate zone by at least 10 percent over baseline during the course of the school year.

"Students will now have greater access to the treadmills, and we will be able to better monitor their progress toward individual goals," said Gross.

The Elizabeth Lee Black School at the Barber National Institute serves more than 240 students ages 3 – 21 from 22 school districts in northwestern Pennsylvania.



Lydia Chronister was recently recognized at an award ceremony in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh Celebrates Accomplishment

The Barber National Institute Pittsburgh program celebrated the recent recognition awarded to a young woman who recently transitioned into its Adult Day Services. Lydia Chronister was recognized at the "Celebration of Success" hosted by Pittsburgh Mercy, one of the largest independent health and human service nonprofit organizations and employers in southwestern Pennsylvania.

At the ceremony, Pittsburgh Mercy noted that Lydia has thrived since joining the Barber Institute, and is motivated to increase work-related skills. "Since attending Barber, Lydia has shown growth with her ability to socialize with her peers on an individual and group basis," noted the award program.

Lydia is working to build job skills for community employment.



Bon Appetit with Giant Eagle

Adults in Pittsburgh Day Programs recently enjoyed a cooking class at the Giant Eagle Market District store. Instructors shared information about nutrition and demonstrated common food preparation steps, and adults had the opportunity to help prepare a few recipes. The experience is one of the life skill building activities adults undertake in the community.



Teacher Receives National Award

Exceptional Parent Magazine named Laura Wisinski, a teacher in the Elizabeth Lee Black School, as one of its Special Education Teachers for 2017. Laura has taught high school-age students in a life skills support room for two years, where she is recognized for her adaptable, fun-loving approach to education. She integrates total technology, including iPads, touch screen computers and TAPit interactive boards, to help students learn everyday life skills as well as core subjects. Congratulations, Laura!

Philadelphia Welcomes New Employer

Fresh Grocer, a supermarket in the Philadelphia area, recently began offering community employment through the Barber National Institute Supported Employment program. Congratulations to Margaret Davis, the first employee hired, with several other adults interviewing for employment.



Barber Hits the Big Screen

Moviegoers at select theaters in the Philadelphia area will be seeing a message from the Barber National Institute shown before the feature films. The :15 video featuring staff and adults is promoting job opportunities with the Barber National Institute in residential and day programs in the Philadelphia region. For more information about current openings, visit BarberInstitute.org/careers.

Calendar of Events



Shillelagh Golf Tournament
June 15
 Riverside Golf Course



Beast on the Bay Volunteers Meeting
Aug. 30
 Barber National Institute Forum



Barber Beast on the Bay
Sept. 9
 Presque Isle State Park/Waldameer Park

Camp Shamrock and ESO Camp
June 26 – Aug. 4
 Barber National Institute



Beast on the Bay Packet Pick Up
Sept. 6 & 7
 Barber National Institute North Lobby

Ladies Only Luncheon
Nov. 18
 The Kahkwa Club



Connections Camp
June 28 – Aug. 8
 Penn State – The Behrend College



Barber Christmas Ball
Dec. 9
 Bayfront Convention Center



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Bright Beginning Early Intervention (birth-age 3)
The Elizabeth Lee Black School (Approved Private School)
Autism Center
Happy Hearts Day Care & Inclusive Preschool
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program
Adult Education & Literacy
Pre Employment Transition Services for Youth

THERAPIES

Outpatient Behavioral Health Clinic
Traditional & Specialized Family Based Mental Health Services
Advanced Children's Therapies (ACT) Program
Speech Therapy
Occupational Therapy
Physical Therapy
Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services
Psychiatric & Psychological Services
Nutritional Services
Trauma and Grief Counseling
Health Services Department
Social Skills Training
Parent Child Interactive Therapies

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Respite Care
Lifesharing through Family Living
Supported Living in homes and apartments
Residential Group Homes
Community Habilitation

DAYTIME COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Club Erie
Community Endeavors
Prevocational Services
Transitional Work Services
Supported Employment
Adult Training Facilities
Older Adult Daily Living Centers
Mental Health Partial Hospitalization

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

Blended Case Management for Children & Adults
Family Support Services
Family and Sibling Support Groups
Agency with Choice, Habilitation Services

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Connections Summer Camp for children with high functioning Autism/Asperger Syndrome
ESO Dances and Summer Camp (Expanding Social Opportunities)
Camp Shamrock Summer Program
Time for Me

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Before/After School & Summer Child Care Programs
Consultative services to schools & professionals
Swimming Lessons & Water Exercise Classes
Kids on the Block Puppet Troupe
Gift Shop

For more information, call the Barber National Institute at 814-453-7661 or visit www.BarberInstitute.org.



Barber Spirit

Barber Spirit is a quarterly publication for friends of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc.
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Be ready for warm summer weather with the new Barber Institute T-shirt now available online and in the Gift Shop at Barber Place. You'll find a great selection of Barber-wear and Beast on the Bay attire, as well as cards, gift bags and other items handmade by adults in our day programs. The Gift Shop is open on the main campus weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., or **shop anytime at barberinstitute.org/store.**