Dear Friends,

Nearly two years ago, Pennsylvania officially became an “Employment First” state, making community employment the goal for all persons with disabilities who would like a job. It’s been the goal of our Supported Employment program for more than thirty years, with a track record of more than 600 adults placed in jobs.

We celebrated our most recent successes during an awards ceremony in October for National Disability Employment Month and are sharing some of those stories in this issue. From an immigrant who lost his legs in refugee camps to a high school senior who is already on the road to employment, individuals are achieving their dreams with the support of area employers and the generous donors who help to fund these services.

We are already feeling the hustle and bustle of the holiday season as we prepare for our Christmas Ball on Dec. 8. Drs. Brian and Kate Stark bring a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to this festive event, and we know that by reading more about their story that you, too, will be inspired to join them in “Going for the Gold!”

This is also a time of year that we hear from so many of our generous friends and supporters who make donations before 2018 comes to a close. Their gifts are invaluable to us in providing opportunities for our children, adults and families, and are deeply appreciated. On behalf of the more than 6,100 individuals we are serving this year, please accept my wishes for a joyous holiday season and good health and happiness in the New Year.

Sincerely,

John J. Barber
President & Chief Executive Officer

NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR DONORS

How would you like to know that you can make an impact on someone’s life every month? You now can, with a recurring donation to the Barber Foundation.

Recurring giving is now available to donors who would like to automatically donate every month using their credit or debit card. The donations are processed through a secure site and donors will receive a monthly receipt for their gift. Monthly giving is a perfect option for supporters to spread the financial benefits of their giving across the entire year without a significant one-time impact on their budget. “Many donors have an idea of what they would like to give, but would prefer to donate in smaller increments,” explained Laura Schaaf, director of Giving.

“Recurring giving is a very easy way to do that without feeling the impact on your budget. It also enables our organization to better project donations for longer range planning.”

Setting up recurring giving is very easy, and it can be paused or discontinued at any time. Information about recurring giving or other options for donating is available at BarberInstitute.org/giving or by contacting lschaaf@BarberInstitute.org or calling 814-874-5802.

ON THE COVER
2018 Christmas Ball Chair Couple
Drs. Brian and Kate Stark join students in inviting you to “Go for the Gold” at this year’s event on Dec. 8.

FUND A DREAM

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For 42 adults in the Erie area, finding a job in the community became a reality this past year with help from the Supported Employment Program at the Barber National Institute.

This year, individuals found employment in fields such as food preparation, hospitality, janitorial, tailoring and customer service. Their successes were celebrated during an awards presentation in October, National Disabilities Employment Month. Stories of adults who achieved community employment include:

Danielle Rogan became the first employee hired at Ember + Forge, a new coffee shop that opened in December 2017. She performs cleaning duties in a job designed through customized employment, an approach that enables job coaches to build a job around the adult’s specific skills.

Jenna Schroeder has worked at the U Pick Six restaurant Harbor House for nearly four years. Her enthusiastic attitude and strong work ethic opened the door for two other employees to be hired at other eateries operated by the group. Geoff Gloekler was hired at the Tap House and Elisha Velez is training in food preparation at The Public House.

Mlongeca Malango, a native of Democratic Republic of Congo, lost both of his legs in a Tanzania refugee camp before immigrating to America. His job coach in Supported Employment, which also provides job search and coaching services to adults with physical disabilities, learned that he was skilled at sewing. Now, Grape Vine Laundry, which has hired several adults over the past year, no longer has to outsource alterations after hiring Malango to do its sewing and hemming.

Gabe McKean is developing the skills to be a machinist through PreEmployment Transition Services, a new collaboration with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) that enables high school students to explore careers and have internships at area businesses. He has been learning how to operate a variety of high-tech machinery at PHB, Inc., which has already offered him a job after graduation.

Currently, 47 adults are actively looking for employment in the Erie region. Area employers are invited to learn more about making these loyal, dedicated employees part of their workforce by contacting Supported Employment at 814-878-4120.
Every day, Drs. Kate and Brian Stark see people striving to achieve goals they may not think are possible. They see it working with their patients to reach health or fitness targets. They see it participating in athletic events such as Beast on the Bay. And, most of all, they see it in the mission of the Barber National Institute.

As chair couple for the 2018 Christmas Ball, they wanted to celebrate that spirit of achievement with the theme “Going for the Gold.”

“We’re committed to physical health and fitness, both personally and in working with our patients,” said Kate. “And this same drive to help individuals and families overcome obstacles is so evident at the Barber National Institute. The staff helps children and adults ‘go for the gold’ in so many ways.”

The couple keeps a busy schedule – Brian as a family practice physician and Kate as a pediatric hospitalist at UPMC Hamot – and as the parents of five children. Their oldest son, Michael, is a junior at the University of Dayton; Brian attends culinary school at Indiana University of Pennsylvania; Andrew is a senior and Philip is a sophomore at Cathedral Prep; and daughter Adelaide is in the eighth grade at St. Jude School.
Family is important to the Starks, and they see the Christmas Ball as part of that. “The Ball is an Erie tradition that can become a wonderful family tradition,” said Brian. “You can see three generations now coming to the Ball, and we want everyone to know that they are invited and will be welcomed.”

For Brian, going to a fun event where you will see so many people you know is made even better by the fact that it is a fundraiser for a good cause. “Even most larger cities don’t have a place that provides the kinds of services for children and adults with disabilities that we have in Erie because of the Barber National Institute,” said Brian. “And events like the Christmas Ball reflect that quality. It, too, is a cut above other events.”

Drs. Kate & Brian Stark celebrate at this year’s Beast finish line.
The 2018 Barber Beast on the Bay was the biggest and beastliest year yet! This past September, we took the 30 obstacles and 10 miles to a whole new level with a new course route and the addition of six new (and some improved) obstacles!

The sixth annual Beast – held Sept. 8 at Presque Isle State Park – brought in proceeds to help the more than 6,200 individuals supported by the Barber National Institute. It also set new records with:

• 1438 participants from over 20 states and Canada
• Over 130 individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities on the adapted course
• More than 200 volunteers
• More than 40 business sponsors
• 126 teams

Teams “Miles for Mathew” and “Suck it Up Buttercup” have participated the last several years and were just two of the more than 40 teams on the 2018 course.

“I loved the whole thing! Fantastic job. Fantastic volunteers. Fantastic cause. Loved it!”
“This is the best obstacle course I have competed in and cannot wait until next year.”
“This is such an important event for Erie. It really puts us on the map with a positive vibe for a great cause and draws people from all over. Please keep doing this!”
“I really enjoy the supportive, community atmosphere!!”

(Comments from 2018 Participant Survey)

More than 625 participants are already signed up for next year’s Beast that will be held Sept. 7, 2019. Registration is now just $75 through Dec. 31. Be a Beast and sign up today at BarberBeast.org!
The Beast started off strong with new obstacle, “Armageddon.” Fan favorite obstacles returned for another year to test competitors’ mettle.

ADAPTED COURSE

This year’s Adapted Course offered 14 unique obstacles over a 1.5 mile course that left the participants smiling.
For most Beast on the Bay participants, seeing the finish line is a triumphant feeling. But for Beth Kafferlin, crossing with her daughter, Haleigh, was even sweeter. Beth was near the final obstacle, the Wave Pool, when she saw her husband and daughter waiting for her inside Waldameer’s Water World. “It’s always a great feeling just to finish, but having Haleigh there to do it with me just made it so much better,” said Beth. “I probably would not have pushed myself to even try something like this except that I could do it for her.”

Doing the Beast is also important because of the cause, said Beth. “The Barber National Institute has been a big part of our lives for more than 15 years.”

Haleigh was just six weeks old when she began having seizures, and was soon diagnosed with Aicardi syndrome, a genetic disorder that occurs primarily in females and leads to malformations in brain development.

“It was a very bleak diagnosis,” said Beth. “The doctors told us that she would have a very poor quality of life, and would not be able to make any social or emotional connections.”

Haleigh began early intervention services with the Barber National Institute when she was nine weeks old, working with physical, occupational and speech therapists. As she made progress, her parents started feeling hopeful. Before her first birthday, Haleigh was sitting up on her own. “The doctors were amazed,” said Beth. “I attributed it all to the Barber National Institute and the services they provide.”

Now, just a few months from her 16th birthday, Haleigh is, in many ways, like other teenagers. She likes going to the movies, being outside and spending time with her new puppy. “She has a wonderful life,” said Beth.

In particular, Haleigh loves school, especially interacting with other students. “She is in a wonderful classroom with a great teacher, Julie Moore,” said Beth. “Julie uses a lot of music when she teaches, and Haleigh loves music.”

As Haleigh has grown, Beth wanted to be sure she could still move her daughter in and out of her wheelchair and take her on outings. So, a couple of years ago, she began running and working out, even doing 5K races. In 2017, Beth and a friend tackled the Beast for the first time. “It was such a great feeling of accomplishment to get through 10 miles and 30 obstacles,” said Beth.

This year, her friend had to drop out, so Beth did the event by herself. “People that were complete strangers were helping me over the obstacles,” said Beth. “It is really nice to see that kind of cooperation.”

This kind of teamwork—even among people who don’t know each other—is one of many things Beth likes about the Beast.

“It is fun to see how there are people of all ages, all fitness levels, even different employer groups. It is great to see everyone doing this in support of such a good cause.”

That’s why Beth encourages others to participate, volunteer or even just come out on the course to cheer everyone on.

And, she hopes more people will take on the Beast. “People should know that it is not as hard as you think it is. There are people overcoming much bigger obstacles every day.”
Barber Beast on the Bay participants who signed up to fundraise set a new record in 2018, raising a combined total of more than $21,000 to benefit the Barber National Institute.

The top three fundraisers awarded at the event included James Dobrich and Desiree Davis, both of Erie, and Emily Smeltz of Indiana, Pennsylvania. Patrick Eller, who has led the fundraisers for five years in a row, placed fourth in 2018, followed by Dr. Kate Stark, Daniel Wisinski and Sara Forman.

More than 20 participants qualified as fundraisers in 2018, raising a minimum of $500 to receive a free registration, with 13 of those exceeding the minimum amount in donations.

The top three fundraisers received prize packages donated by fundraising sponsor Scott Enterprises.

John Barber presented the fundraising awards to winners, at left, James Dobrich and his nephew, Blaize Cheeseman; Emily Smeltz; and Desiree Davis, at right, with her brother, Torsten Carlson, and friend Emily Winters.
What It Takes to Beat the Beast

Around the seventh mile at this year’s Barber Beast on the Bay, Greg Gnacinski had a leg cramp so bad that it stopped him in his tracks. For someone else, that might have meant calling it a day. But the medical team was able to work out the cramp and Greg went back on his way. “I was not going to quit,” said Greg.

“Quit” is not a word in Greg’s vocabulary. While the 41-year-old Fairview resident has cerebral palsy, it does not stop him from working out several times a week and running long distances.

“I know that I may have more problems than other people but do the best I can,” said Greg. “I may not be running as fast or lifting as much weight – but I know I’m working out.”

This marked the third year that Greg participated in the Beast – or what he calls “10 miles of torture.”

So why does he keep coming back? “It’s the challenge of trying to get it done,” explained Greg.

The most difficult part of the event for Greg was the phragmites, a swampy area of mud and vegetation on the course. “Yeah, it’s nasty. I was having trouble keeping my balance this year, but a group of guys helped me through it. We ran the course for a while and they helped me with several of the obstacles.”

Greg is always amazed at the way that complete strangers are so willing to lend a hand – literally. “Sometimes I’ll look up and there will be someone’s hand there to help.”

While Greg was impressed at the help offered so willingly by other participants, he might be surprised at how much his determination motivated others, including Dr. Brian Stark, Greg’s physician.

“We saw Greg on the trail and ran with him awhile,” said Dr. Stark. “It was incredibly inspiring to see this person who does not let a disability stop him. Seeing him cross the finish line was really moving for us.”

Greg’s one disappointment? He wanted to complete the course in three hours, but came in at 3:06. Still, crossing the finish line felt like a big accomplishment.

“I have a disability, but I want to prove to myself that I can build myself to do it.”

Crossing the swampy area of phragmites with a little help from some members of the Channel Lock Team.

Greg’s physician, Dr. Brian Stark, celebrates with him at the finish line.
New scarves “tie” artwork created by students in the Elizabeth Lee Black School with digital enhancements by students at Mercyhurst University. The result is “knot” less than stunning!

The charming neckwear was created for this year’s Ladies Only Luncheon and will be sold at the event’s Barber Boutique, which features items made by children and adults at the Barber National Institute as well as Barber-associated vendors.

Six scarves are made from original drawings created by students ranging from preschool through high school grades at the Elizabeth Lee Black School. Their drawings, inspired by nature, animals or geometric shapes, were then enhanced by students in a computer illustration class at Mercyhurst University.

The designs selected for the scarves range from abstract prints to vibrant patterns featuring whales, giraffes and tulips. One scarf portrays a student’s colorful interpretation of the shamrock, the longtime symbol of the Barber National Institute, in a contemporary and appealing motif.

Following the luncheon, look for any remaining scarves available for sale through the Barber Institute online gift shop.

THANKS TO YOU, WE EXCEEDED OUR GOAL!

Thanks to the 134 donors who very generously made a gift during Erie Gives Day, the Barber National Institute surpassed its 2018 goal. With the prorated match from the Erie Community Foundation and its sponsors, the Barber Foundation raised $20,159. The Beast from Barber Beast on the Bay joined Executive Vice President Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, second from left, in accepting the check from Maryann Yochim Flaherty, Erie Community Foundation board of trustees member, and Michael Batchelor, Erie Community Foundation president.
Margaret Davis learned more than valuable job skills while working with the Barber National Institute Supported Employment Program in Philadelphia. She also learned safety and communication skills that would help her in an emergency.

For her calmness and quick thinking, Margaret was awarded the “Act of Courage Award” during the Philadelphia region’s National Disabilities Employment Month celebration luncheon.

In August, Margaret was riding in a car when her residential staff member began to feel ill. After the staff pulled off to the side of the road, Margaret took the staff member’s cell phone and called the Barber offices to tell them about the emergency. Margaret was very calm as she gave clear directions so that supervisors were able to quickly reach their location.

“Margaret demonstrated the definition of courage,” said Employment Specialist Gale Williams. “She had the ability to control her fear in a difficult situation, and to be brave and confident to do what you believe in.”

Margaret had other good news to celebrate. In July, she accepted employment as a customer service representative with the Rite Aid Pharmacy, where she sets up store displays, helps customers locate products and services and performs custodial duties.

Other adults were honored for their employment achievements, and the Courtyard Marriott City Avenue was recognized for being nominated for the Northeast region Employer of the Year at the PAR annual conference.

Staff and adults at Bollinger Enterprises, Inc. (BEi) recently presented a donation to New Hope Dogs, a charity in Warren that raises puppies to become therapy dogs for individuals with intellectual and physical disabilities and behavioral health challenges. The funds were collected during the annual Fall Fest held at BEi for staff and individuals. BEi, an affiliate of the Barber National Institute serving the Warren and Forest region, holds activities throughout the year to support charities that assist adults with special needs, including Special Olympics, the Salvation Army and a “Backpack Program” that provides food to those in need.
Play ball! From batting practice to catching fly balls in the outfield, more than 100 students, adults and summer campers from the Barber National Institute had the chance to participate in day-long clinics with the Erie SeaWolves this summer. For the fifth year in a row, the Erie Siebenbuerger Club provided a donation of $6,000 to fund the experience.

During the clinics, Erie SeaWolves players and coaches taught baseball fundamentals such as fielding, throwing, pitching and base running.

The instruction ended with a game on the field where all participants had the opportunity to bat, play the field and run the bases.

The clinics were offered to children and teens in Connections Camp, students in the summer program at the Elizabeth Lee Black School, and adults in Club Erie, Community Participation Supports Programs and Supported Living.

The goal is to enable children and adults to be able to better enjoy recreational sports with their peers.
Every Friday, Doris Villari rides two buses and an elevated train to visit her cousin. The trip takes her an hour each way through Philadelphia’s crowded streets, but she says she made a promise to do it.

“When my uncle died, I promised him that we would take care of my cousin, Eddie. I am only ten years older than him—we grew up together—and he’s more like a brother,” said Doris.

Doris and her sister and brother-in-law, Carol and Steve Joanni, “pull together” to help with the care of Eddie Milke, age 69, now a resident in one of ten community group homes that the Barber National Institute took over from another Philadelphia provider last December and January. Doris expresses her concern about Ed’s vulnerability. She says that he can’t speak and now needs to use a wheel chair, and that he does not see or hear well, either.

But Eddie’s family says that the transition has been wonderful. “When Barber came in, they were great. All of the staff was well trained; everyone knew what to do,” said Steve. “If you have a question, you can call and you will get an answer. You can tell that they have a lot of experience.”

The family says that they also really like the atmosphere in the home. The walls were painted, new flooring installed, and Eddie and the other residents received new bedroom sets. For Eddie, this means a bedroom decorated for his favorite team, the Philadelphia Phillies.

“Ed’s favorite thing is to go to baseball games. He loves the Phillies, and has actually been able to go to a few games this season,” said Steve. “He’s going to places he hasn’t been to in years.”

Ed’s family has been most impressed with the opportunities Ed now has to go out into the community. They were happy that the home now has a van to transport residents, and Ed has gone to places such as the amusement park in Wildwood, Penn’s Landing and his favorite activity – bowling.

Recently, they went on an outing just for him. “They took him to his old neighborhood, and he hasn’t been able to do that for the last 16 years,” said Doris. “He got to see his old friends, and I met him there for lunch.”

With his old communication device not working well, Doris has been impressed at how the staff is teaching Ed to use an iPad.

While Ed has many challenges, he has dedicated family at his side, and caring staff to help support him. “He’s pleased that he is there,” said Doris. “And we’re pleased, too.”

Ed Milke enjoys frequent visits with his cousins, from left, Carol and Steve Joanni and Doris Villari.

For more information about all events, visit BarberInstitute.org
When Thad Jackman became regional director of the Barber National Institute program in the Pittsburgh area 15 years ago, he was one of a small number of staff working with fewer than 40 adults.

“We were a small group of staff working in a much smaller facility,” recalled Thad.

Since that time, the Pittsburgh location has grown to employ more than 135 full- and part-time employees, and currently serves more than 220 adults. The span of programs has grown with the addition of Supported Employment and In-Home and Community Habilitation that have been added to the adult day and residential programs that had been provided. The Pittsburgh program opened in 2000 with six residential group homes for adults who had previously been living in Western Center.

In 2014, the day program and offices moved to a larger facility located at 20 Emerson Lane in Suite 905 in Bridgeville.

One of the reasons that the program has grown dramatically is the dedication of staff that have been committed to the organization, explained Thad. Thirty-two employees who marked their 5-, 10- and 15-year service anniversaries were recently recognized at a luncheon celebration.

“We are really grateful to have so many staff committed to carrying out our mission,” said John Barber, in presenting the anniversary awards. “Every day they show how dedicated they are to helping our individuals and their families achieve their dreams.”

**It’s Christmastime in the Gift Shop**

Shop local this holiday season with a visit to the Gift Shop at Barber Place. You will find a great selection of holiday décor and wreaths, cards and gift bags created by students and adults at the Barber National Institute, as well as a great selection of jewelry, candles and accessories. Shop for the latest in Barber-wear fashions at the shop and online at BarberInstitute.org/giftshop. Store hours are weekdays from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Barber Spirit is a quarterly publication for friends of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc.
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Bridget Power Barber
Vice President, Health Services & External Affairs
Mary Rotunda Cuneo
Manager of Strategic Communications
Anthony Esposito
Communication/Social Media Coordinator

2018 Barber Christmas Ball
Saturday, Dec. 8
Bayfront Convention Center
Dancing 8 p.m. until Midnight
Music by Stiletto Fire from Detroit, Michigan
Doors open at 7 p.m.

Reservations $95 per person
Includes delicious hors d’oeuvres, desserts, soft drinks and two cocktails per person.
Cash bar also available.
Complimentary valet parking provided.

Information and online reservations at BarberInstitute.org/ball or call 814-878-4096