

B A R B E R

NOVEMBER 2019

SPIRIT

ShamRockin' Christmas Ball



Barber National Institute
2019 Christmas Ball



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

How important is your independence? How about your sense of purpose or pride in accomplishment? We saw firsthand that those feelings that we all value are equally important to persons with disabilities when we marked Disability Employment Awareness Month in October. The message was delivered not only by adults looking for and succeeding in community employment, but by former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge.

In delivering the keynote luncheon address, Gov. Ridge recognized the Barber National Institute for our efforts at helping adults successfully find and keep jobs in the community. More than 50 adults have been hired over the past year at jobs in Erie, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Of course, we would not be making this progress without the commitment of more than 400 employers who have provided opportunities to these men and women to become enthusiastic, loyal employees.

We invite you to read more about Gov. Ridge's presentation as well as information about other news and upcoming events, including our annual Christmas Ball. This year, we are making a special effort to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our more than 3,100 employees who strive every day to make dreams come true for our children and adults. We invite everyone to join us, and have a wonderful time kicking off a festive holiday season.

As we prepare for another year to come to a close, I am struck by the commitment of so many friends and donors who invest in our mission. Our founder, Dr. Gertrude Barber, established a vision for a world that recognized "all persons are children of God." Thank you for supporting us as we work to make that dream come true.

Sincerely,

John J. Barber
President & Chief Executive Officer



Erie Community Foundation President Michael Batchelor presents donations from the 2019 Erie Gives to Bridget Barber, vice president for External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives at the Barber National Institute. The \$21,636.65 was raised by 146 donors and a pro-rated match from the Erie Community Foundation and its participating sponsors. Proceeds from this year's Erie Gives are helping to fund the new group home opening soon to serve adults with significant physical challenges.



IT'S A HOUSEWARMING And You're Invited!

Help us make our new state-of-the-art house into a home! Join us for a housewarming to see the new group home opening at 203 East Avenue.

Thursday, Dec. 19
3 – 5 p.m.

Join us to see this warm and welcoming facility that offers full accessibility to adults with significant physical challenges.

ON THE COVER

Preschool students Bernadette McCormick and Jayveon Thigpen are shamrockin' in the holiday spirit.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT



**BARBER
NATIONAL
INSTITUTE**

We "Make dreams come true." We provide children and adults with autism, 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.



For Rebecca Styn and her husband, Rob Mahrt, the best thing about the Barber Christmas Ball is the cause that the event supports. But, the great time that they have every year makes it pretty special, too. “This is the biggest party that we attend every year, and it is always one of the best,” said Rebecca. “The music, the ambiance, just the tradition of it all. And we love seeing so many people we know.”



The tradition continues with “ShamRockin’ Christmas,” this year’s Barber Christmas Ball, on Saturday, Dec. 14, at the Bayfront Convention Center. Continuous music will keep the dance floor crowded from 8 p.m. to midnight with Stiletto Fire, a dance and show band from Detroit, Michigan, and entertainment by Tony B.

The Ball has been a tradition for Claire Hogan since she began as a teacher in the Elizabeth Lee Black School in 2014. “I thought it would be good way to meet some of my new co-workers, and now it’s my favorite event of the year,” said Claire. “My family lives out of town so my co-workers have become my family here, and this is a way that we all celebrate. I enjoy the dancing and getting dressed up – but really, you can attend in whatever you are comfortable in.”

For Claire, the cause is especially important, too. “When I look at my students, I think about how this is something that is raising funds that will ultimately benefit them.”

Jon Cacchione and his wife, Shelly, also hold a special place in their heart for the Barber National Institute. Their son, Sam, graduated in June after attending school here since preschool. “It’s hard to think where we would have been without the Barber National Institute,” said Jon. “We are really fortunate to live in Erie where there is this world-class organization. The Ball is a great way to celebrate that.”



2019 Christmas Ball
Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019 | Bayfront Convention Center
 Event sponsorships available. Information and reservations at
BarberInstitute.org/Ball

BEAST FRIENDS

Nick Rivera, left, and Jason Randle, right, overcome unexpected adversity to conquer the 2019 Beast on the Bay.

At the urging of his childhood friend Jason Randle, Nick Rivera entered the 2018 Beast on the Bay. Leading up to his first-ever obstacle race, Nick joked that he'd finish the Beast even if it killed him.

Little did he know.

The Beast was Nick's first ever obstacle event, and he trained for it with a lot of cardio and weight lifting at the gym. "I felt like I was in good shape going into the race," said Nick.

But a week after the completing the Beast, Nick suffered a heart attack at the age of 44. After being rushed into life-saving triple bypass surgery, he had one goal on mind: To conquer the Beast in 2019.

"Right after the heart attack, I thought, 'I'm not going to let this beat me,'" Nick said.

His longtime friend Jason Randle of Pittsburgh wasn't so sure. A veteran of many obstacle races, Jason worried about his friend tackling a 10-mile endurance race again.

"We've been friends since sixth grade—we're like brothers—so at first I definitely didn't like the idea of him getting back out there," Jason said. "But Nick was so determined I had no other choice but to get on board."

So Jason quickly shifted from skeptic to supporter. It was slow going at

first. Doctors limited Nick's physical activity for several months after surgery. When he finally did try to run, he only made it one-tenth of a mile before he was completely exhausted.

"I couldn't even do push-ups, and I'm used to doing hundreds of push-ups," Nick recalls. "It was like I was a complete beginner starting from scratch."

As the Beast neared, Nick slowly made progress. He started running in half-mile stretches, and got back to lifting weights—and doing push-ups.

Jason kept in steady contact with Nick via phone, offering up encouragement, training tips, and making sure he was sticking to doctor's orders. Several times in the months leading up to the race, Jason traveled from Pittsburgh to go to the gym with Nick, or do some other training activity.

With the 2019 Beast a week away, Nick was nervous. He consulted with his cardiologist.

"He said, 'Nick, go ahead, you can do it. You know your limitations—just do what you can do. If you feel you need to stop, do it. Take your time.'"

That advice—and knowing Jason would be by his side—gave Nick the confidence he needed.

On race day, Nick and Jason stood at the starting line together. While Jason is highly competitive, he knew for this race he had one job: To see that his friend made it across the finish line.

"For me, this year was all about helping Nick make a comeback," Jason said. "There were times in the race he got really frustrated, but I kept reminding him what the actual purpose was—to prove to himself he could finish."

Indeed, Nick had to rest or slow to a walk a few times during the race. He passed on a few of the more challenging obstacles. Yet, about three hours after they started, Nick and Jason crossed the finish line, side by side.

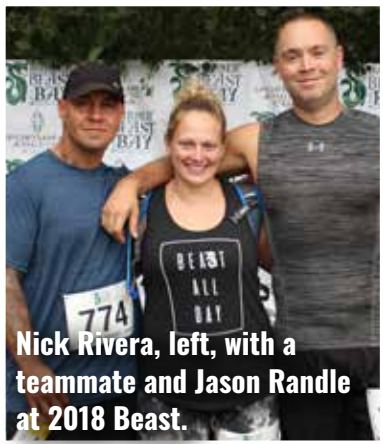
"A year later, I did it," Nick said. "I'm still healing, but I did it because I wanted to prove to myself I could overcome real-life obstacles—and, of course, the race is for such a good cause."

And he said he never could have made it without his lifelong pal.

"I love Jason like a brother," Nick said. "He's always been in my corner. Once he saw that I really wanted to do this, he did everything he could to help make it happen. He's a very inspiring person for sure."

For his part, Jason said Nick is the one who is the inspiration.

And the two friends hope to draw from that shared inspiration to tackle their next goal: Beast on the Bay 2020.



Nick Rivera, left, with a teammate and Jason Randle at 2018 Beast.



LOVING THE BEAST – *And Each Other*



The Beast is the first to congratulate Nick Wilburn and Megan Drago of Tyrone, PA on their engagement at Barber Beast on the Bay.

There are always a few surprises when you're doing Barber Beast on the Bay. But, for Megan Drago, the biggest surprise came after the event. That's when her boyfriend, Nick Wilburn, got down on one knee and presented an engagement ring.

"I just wouldn't have done it anywhere else," said Nick. "This truly was the best day of my life."

The couple, who had just completed the 10-mile course with a group of friends, actually met when training for the 2017 Beast. Megan was a student in a martial arts class that Nick was teaching. When Nick said that he needed to beef up his running to get ready for the Beast, Megan, a marathon runner, offered to help.

"We started running more and more often," said Nick. "Even though I did need help training, I really wanted to just be around Megan."

Nick bought the ring in May, and was trying to plan the perfect timing. The couple was leaving on a Disney vacation right after completing the Beast, but he felt like the location didn't have the special connection he was looking for. He thought about how the Beast actually brought them together, and knew it would be perfect.

Nick let a few of his teammates in on the secret, and planned to pop the question when they were getting pictures taken at the photo booth. Photographers – and the Beast – were there to share the moment.

The couple has set the wedding date for Sept. 26, 2020 – a few weeks after next year's Beast. "We'll be there," said Nick. "We may be a little bumped and bruised for the wedding, but we won't miss the Beast."

Ready to register for
the 2020 Barber Beast?
BarberBeast.org



HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Former PA Governor Tom Ridge Commends Barber National Institute and Employers While Calling for Increased Hiring of Individuals with Disabilities

Former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, now chairman of the National Organization on Disability (NOD), urged a sold-out crowd to “look closer” at hiring persons with disabilities during a luncheon sponsored by the Barber National Institute on Monday, Oct. 7.

Ridge served as keynote speaker at the event aimed at celebrating Disability Employment Awareness Month, which occurs every October and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor. As part of the program, awards were also presented to Grapevine Laundry and Linens as the 2019 Employer of the Year, and to Antonio Wentling as the Self Advocate Employee of the Year.

Ridge, an Erie native who served two terms as Pennsylvania’s Governor, is an outspoken advocate for increased hiring of individuals with disabilities in all sectors of the workforce.

He described growing up around persons with disabilities, saying that acceptance of disabilities should be “part of who we are as a country.”

Ridge said that while the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 has led to many important changes, “the numbers on workforce participation have not changed appreciably since World War II. ... Today we find ourselves at near full employment, and employers are scrambling to find new sources of talent. But for a few exceptions, most employers are not hiring any more persons with disabilities than they did when the ADA was signed into law.”

Looking around the capacity audience that included many area employers and Barber National Institute staff, Ridge added, “Thank you, Erie region—you’re certainly doing your part.”

Ridge called for action from “every business that hasn’t figured out to benefit from the problem-solving abilities, from the tenacity of men and women who spend most of their lives navigating a world that wasn’t built for them.”

The hope for the future, according to Ridge, is the recognition that disabilities issues cut across all partisan lines and can be solved by disabilities groups coming together. As part of his efforts with NOD, Ridge described a new program with national employers called Look Closer “to do precisely what the Barber National Institute is doing with employers in this region.”

In closing, he told employers looking for “competitive, resourceful, on-time, dedicated employees... Look closer.”

John Barber presents Gov. Tom Ridge with artwork created by an adult in the Fine Arts Program.





At the Disability Employment Awareness Month luncheon, Antonio Wentling, left, received the Self Advocate Employee of the Year Award for his determination to overcome challenges and achieve successful employment with Pennsylvania Blind Association Services; and Mary Beth Graml, owner of Grapevine Laundry and Linens, was presented with the Employer of the Year Award for hiring adults with disabilities and providing a supportive environment to help them be successful. Congratulating the award winners were former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge, the keynote speaker at the luncheon presentation; Mlongeca Malango, an employee of Grapevine Laundry; and John Barber, president and chief executive officer of the Barber National Institute.



SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Looking for loyal, hardworking employees?

The Supported Employment Program can help. All services are provided at no cost to the employer.

Contact the Barber National Institute Supported Employment Program in your region.

Erie – 814-878-4143

Pittsburgh – 412-220-6030

Philadelphia – 215-871-0731



Erie Insurance Donation Supports Pittsburgh Program

Representatives from Erie Insurance presented the Pittsburgh Program of the Barber National Institute with a \$6,500 donation that will be used for a new wireless computer system. The gift will help to fund equipment and software needed as the agency moves into providing electronic recordkeeping for the more than 200 adults served every day in its Bridgeville location.

The donation was presented during a summer picnic held Friday, Aug. 30, at Scott Park for adults, families and staff at the Barber National Institute. Nearly 20 agents and employees working for the Pittsburgh offices of Erie Insurance volunteered at the picnic, assisting with serving lunch and organizing games and other activities.

The Barber National Institute, founded in 1952, has been providing residential and adult day services and job training and placement in the Pittsburgh area since 2000, including six group homes in the South Hills area.

Leah Micholas, center, vice president and branch manager of the Pittsburgh offices of Erie Insurance, presents a donation to John Barber, president of the Barber National Institute. The \$6,500 gift will be used to fund equipment and software for a wireless computer system for the Bridgeville agency to provide electronic recordkeeping for adults with intellectual disabilities.



COURTYARD MARRIOTT NAMED EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

The Courtyard Marriott on City Avenue in Philadelphia has done more than provide community employment for five adults with intellectual disabilities in the Barber National Institute Supported Employment Program. The hotel staff and administration have provided an environment that has fostered greater independence, community inclusion and feelings of self-worth for the adults.

For their commitment to successful employment, the Courtyard Marriott was awarded the Southeastern Employer of the Year Award by PAR, Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability. The honor was presented at this year's annual conference held in Harrisburg.

The hotel was nominated by Gale Williams, supervisor in the Supported Employment program, who said that the business stood out for fostering a happy and safe environment for the adults they employ.

The Courtyard Marriott first contacted the Barber National Institute when they opened the hotel in the neighborhood in 2016. "Right from the start, they were enthusiastic about creating a collaborative partnership that would bring adults with intellectual disabilities into their workforce," said Gale.

Since the hotel hired its first employee from the Supported Employment program in 2017, Gale said that

the Courtyard Marriott has demonstrated a commitment to helping adults achieve success. The five adults are currently working in various positions in the hotel bistro, laundry and maintenance department. "The positions highlight the individuals' strengths and provide the greatest options for success," said Gale. "The Marriott maintains an open dialogue with our staff and has said they will provide an interview to any other adults who might be a good fit."

The Marriott advocated not just among their staff on City Avenue, but also to their affiliated hotels in other locations. According to Gale, "This type of commitment allows more people to have access to these wonderful and life-changing opportunities to meet new people, earn money, and make an impact in and around their communities."

PAR President and CEO Mark Davis, second from left, presents the 2019 Southeastern Region Employer of the Year Award to Laura Williams and Ron Balle, third and fourth from left, from the Courtyard Marriott City Avenue. Congratulating the hotel staff are Barber National Institute staff including, from left, Thad Jackman, director of southeast regional programs; Carrie Kontis, vice president for intellectual disabilities services; supported employment supervisor Gale Williams, and Monique Holmes, adult day program supervisor in Philadelphia.

GIVING THANKS BY GIVING BACK



Sheila Walmer, second from right, volunteer coordinator at Asbury Woods, presents the Group Volunteer of the Year Award to Club Erie staff Brenda Rodrigues-Torres, Maria Kaliszek and Lisa Hinspeter.

Every week, three adults and a staff member from Club Erie go to Asbury Woods to help clean various educational and display rooms at the Erie nature center. For the more than 119 hours of service that the group has given this year, they were named Group Volunteer of the Year at an awards presentation in September.

"It's so exciting to honor these individuals who exemplify the spirit of volunteerism and help us connect people of all ages to nature," said Jennifer Farrar, Asbury Woods Executive Director. "They help us ensure that the future is a place where respect and appreciation for natural places is a deeply held value."

The Asbury Woods volunteers are just a few of the many adults who volunteer for a variety of causes and organizations in their community.

In all, adults give back more than 120 hours each month. The experiences, while helping improve the community, also provide opportunities to learn new life skills and abilities that may help in their future employment.

"It's really a win-win," said Carrie Kontis, vice president for Intellectual Disabilities at the Barber National Institute.



BEing INSPIRED, INCLUDED AND INVESTED

In 1972, two Warren residents, Annabel and Clifford Bollinger, recognized the need to help adults with intellectual disabilities develop job skills and become involved in

their community. One of the first people they turned to was Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, who shared the success of the programs she initiated in the Erie region.

The new Warren-based services began as a pilot project of the Warren-Forest Counties Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) in a small storefront. Soon, the programs became known as Bollinger Enterprises Inc. (BEi) and grew into a 25,000-square foot facility that hosts a variety of job development and community participation supports programs.

In 2017, BEi affiliated with the Barber National Institute to expand services to adults and families in the Warren-Forest region.

Now, BEi is launching a \$1 million capital campaign that will bring new opportunities for community inclusion. The campaign kickoff on Nov. 15 included the announcement of the first major gift of \$430,000 from the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust to fund the purchase of new vehicles that will enable adults to engage in a wider variety of community activities of their choosing.

BEiinvested

Be inspired. Be included.

For more information about the Capital Campaign, visit BEiwarren.org/give

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: MCCALL FAMILY HONORS COUSINS

Jim McCall still remembers his aunt, Mary Froehlich, describe the sadness she felt when she sent two of her daughters away to Polk State Center. She cared for the girls, Janet and Mary Anne, as long as she could, and missed them so much when they went to a distant institution.

And, he remembers the joy their whole family felt when Dr. Gertrude Barber arranged for the sisters to return to Erie and live near their parents.

The memory of that homecoming, and seeing the support that his cousins received throughout their lives, has led Jim and his family to become faithful donors to the Barber National Institute.

“Having seen all of that I know how fortunate Erie is to have the Barber Institute here. Otherwise, what would people do?” said Jim.

Janet and Mary Anne were among the first group of individuals who returned from Polk to live in a residential group home, and frequently went to visit with their parents and other family members. The women participated in various day and recreational programs at the Barber Institute and, according to Jim, built very happy lives.

“They were with people who were very caring, who recognized that all people can and want to be productive,” said Jim. “People like to have a sense of accomplishment, and this was a place where that can happen.”

In addition to supporting the Annual Fund campaign every year, Jim and his siblings requested memorials to the Barber Foundation when their parents passed away over the past year. He believes that this is important for his family.

“When somebody helps somebody in your family, you want to give back,” said Jim. “In a small way, this is our family trying to give back.”



The McCall family has a legacy of supporting the Barber National Institute mission, going back to the late Rita and Jim McCall, seated, and extending to their children, standing from left, John, Ann, Kathy and Jim.

WAYS TO GIVE



Making a donation to the Barber Foundation is quick, easy and secure – and will make a change in the lives of children and adults with disabilities.

For more information about giving opportunities, contact Laura Schaaf, director of Giving, at lschaaf@barberinstitute.org or call 814-874-5802.

Here's how to donate today:

- A one-time or recurring donation **ONLINE** at BarberInstitute.org/giving
- **BY CHECK** made out to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation and mailed to: Barber Foundation | 100 Barber Place | Erie, PA 16507
Donations made online or by check can be made in memory of or in honor of someone special and the donor can indicate where an acknowledgment will be sent.
- **PLANNED GIFT** – designate the Barber Foundation in your will; gifts can include stocks, property, an insurance policy, etc.
- **EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT TAX CREDIT (EITC)** for participating businesses
- **SPONSOR** or attend our events!

CELEBRATING DR. BARBER'S LEGACY

Paraeducator Bonnie Johnson introduces preschool student Luther Gonzalez to a friendly animal at the petting zoo, one of the activities held to commemorate Founder's Day in September. The event is held annually to mark the birthday of Dr. Gertrude A. Barber and to commemorate her legacy that continues to bring hope and opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their families.



EMPLOYEES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Employee Service Fund enables Barber National Institute employees to have donations deducted from their paychecks to support charities of their choosing. Since 2016, \$208,885 has been donated to 83 charities nominated by staff in Erie, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Charities selected by staff include the Inner City Neighborhood Art House, Erie DAWN, Erie Zoological Society, Friends of the Pittsburgh Fisher House, SPCA of Montgomery County and Peters Township Volunteer Fire Department.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For more information about all events, visit BarberInstitute.org

NOV. 23

LADIES ONLY LUNCHEON THE KAHKWA CLUB

DEC. 8

SENSORY FRIENDLY SANTA MILLCREEK MALL

DEC. 14

BARBER CHRISTMAS BALL BAYFRONT CONVENTION CENTER

DEC. 19

NEW GROUP HOME HOUSEWARMING 203 EAST AVENUE

APRIL 17-20

ART SHOW & SALE BARBER NATIONAL INSTITUTE



Barber National Institute

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
Pre Employment Transition Services for Youth

THERAPIES

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

LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY

Respite Care
Lifesharing through Family Living
Residential Group Homes
Community Habilitation

DAYTIME COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES

Club Erie
Community Endeavors
Community Participation Supports
Prevocational Services
Small Group Employment
Supported Employment
Adult Training Facilities
Older Adult Daily Living Centers

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES

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

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Aktion Club
Connections Summer Camp for children with high functioning Autism/Asperger Syndrome
ESO Dances and Summer Camp (Expanding Social Opportunities)
Learn to Ride Bike Camp
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
BarberInstitute.org.

BARBER SPIRIT

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Erie, PA

ShamRockin' Christmas Ball

2019 Christmas Ball

Saturday, December 14, 2019 | Bayfront Convention Center



Doors open at 7 p.m. with ballroom dancing
Entertainment from 8 p.m. to midnight
with Stiletto Fire & Tony B.

Reservations are \$95 per person and include
delicious hors d'oeuvres, desserts and
two drinks per person; cash bar also available.
Complimentary valet parking.

Reduced overnight packages offered
at the Bayfront Sheraton Hotel, 814-454-2005
and the Courtyard Marriott, 814-636-1005.

Event sponsorships available.
Information and reservations at
BarberInstitute.org/Ball