

DONOR REPORT EDITION

BARBER

MARCH 2021

SPIRIT



WHY WE LOVE
OUR SCHOOL!
PG. 4



Barber National Institute



BUSINESS AND EMPLOYEE AWARDED FOR STRIDES IN COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

Carrie Kontis, left, chief officer for Intellectual Disabilities Services at the Barber National Institute, and Robert Barber, chief of staff, congratulated Robert Jones, recipient of the Self Advocate of the Year Award, and John Melody, co-owner of U Pick Six, the Community Employer of the Year.

Being a part of the community is important to John Melody, co-owner of the U Pick Six family of restaurants in Erie. And to John and his business, that means hiring individuals with intellectual disabilities as part of their team.

For their commitment to integrated community employment, U Pick Six was honored as the Employer of the Year in the western region by PAR, Pennsylvania Advocacy and Resources for Autism and Intellectual Disability. A U Pick Six employee, Robert Jones, was also presented with the Self-Advocate of the Year Award during PAR's annual award ceremony, held virtually in October.

U Pick Six hired its first employee through the Barber National Institute Supported Employment Program in 2009 and has since added three more adults through the program. Maggie Dimitriadis, director of Intellectual Disabilities Services for Adults, said the restaurants provide a welcoming environment and supports for the staff to be successful.


"U Pick 6 is a great example of how focusing on someone's strengths and abilities can benefit a company, a community and make a life-changing difference for a person with disabilities," said Dimitriadis.

One of those success stories is Robert, who was hired at the Tap House, a U Pick Six location in downtown Erie, in 2019. He provides cleaning support and was one of the first employees called back to work when the restaurant reopened with the easing of Covid restrictions.

When he isn't working, Robert participates in other Community Participation Supports Programs where he talks to his peers about working in the community and has become a role model for successful employment.

Providing opportunities to loyal, hard-working adults is something that Melody encourages other businesses to consider. "It can be a rewarding experience not only for the employee but for you, which it definitely has been for us," said Melody.

For more information about the Supported Employment Program call 814-455-5961.

 Watch an interview with John Melody about the U Pick Six experience with Supported Employment at BarberInstitute.org/Supported-Employment

ON THE COVER

Happy Hearts Preschool teacher assistant Kathy Nicholson and student Emma Jaruszewicz celebrate "School Choice Week."

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.

The
Jay & Mona Kang

Virtual
2021

ART SHOW & Sale

Sponsored by Barber National Institute
Monday, April 12 – Thursday, April 22
KeyBank Donor Debut April 8 – 11 for
donors and participating artists.

SUPPORT THE SHOW!

Donors are invited to support the Art Show with a donation to become a Benefactor (\$250), Patron (\$100) or Friend (\$50) by making a gift at BarberInstitute.org/artshow. All donors are recognized online and invited to the KeyBank “Donor Debut” online preview to view the art and make purchases before the public opening.

Information at
BarberInstitute.org/ArtShow

ART SHOW AGAIN GOES VIRTUAL

“Art matters,” said singer-songwriter Josh Groban, “because it is the one true great connector in a world that seems to be very unconnected.”

This treasured ability of art to connect, especially at a time when we are physically apart, will be evident in this year’s Jay & Mona Kang Art Show & Sale sponsored by the Barber National Institute. For the second year in a row, the event will be presented virtually online, where it offers limitless connections to the artistic expression of adult and youth artists from our region. Viewers will be treated with a wide variety of paintings, sculptures, photographs and other art forms available for sale.

The first virtual art show, undertaken in 2020 when restrictions first prevented in-person gatherings, was a successful event featuring more than 400 pieces of artwork. As a fundraiser, the Barber National Institute receives a minimum 25% commission of every sale to benefit services for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, autism or behavioral health challenges.

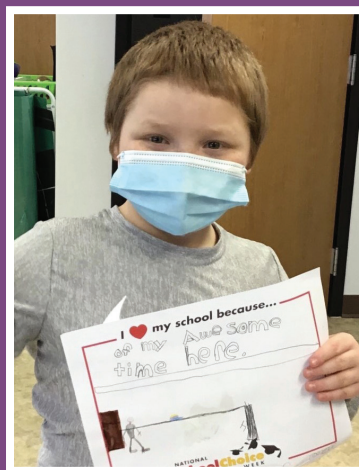
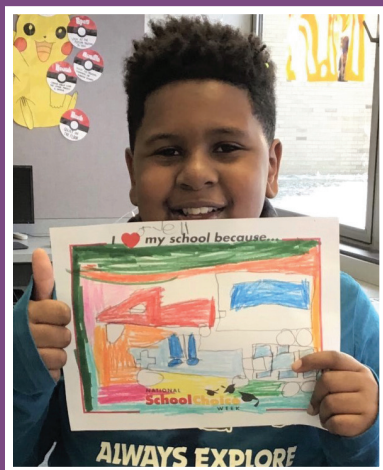
Drs. Jay and Mona Kang, two Erie physicians and dedicated patrons of the arts, are again serving as the primary sponsors for the event. “We are so grateful to the Kangs for supporting our mission and for fostering the arts in such a deep and personal way,” said Bridget Barber, vice president for external affairs and strategic planning at the Barber National Institute. “Their commitment is helping to ensure that this sharing of the arts is continuing at a time when we, as a community, can all benefit from coming together.”



“Made It to Times Square,” a mixed media and acrylic piece by Cynthia Lyons of Erie, was selected as Best of Show by a panel of judges in the 2020 exhibit.

The Best of Show in the 2020 Youth Artist Division was presented for “Pancake Deluxe,” a drawing in colored pencil by Jasmine Chen, a senior at Villa Maria Academy.





Above, two students in an Elizabeth Lee Black School classroom in the General McLane School District shared their thoughts during School Choice Week.

Students and staff were asked to share what they like most about the Elizabeth Lee Black School during School Choice Week, Jan. 24-30.

Their answers ranged from being with friends and learning to use the iPad to creating art and music and enjoying delicious lunches. And of course, students drew and wrote about their favorite teachers and faculty – proving once again that there is a lot to love about their school! Responses came both from students coming into the classroom for in-person instruction as well as those studying at home through remote education.

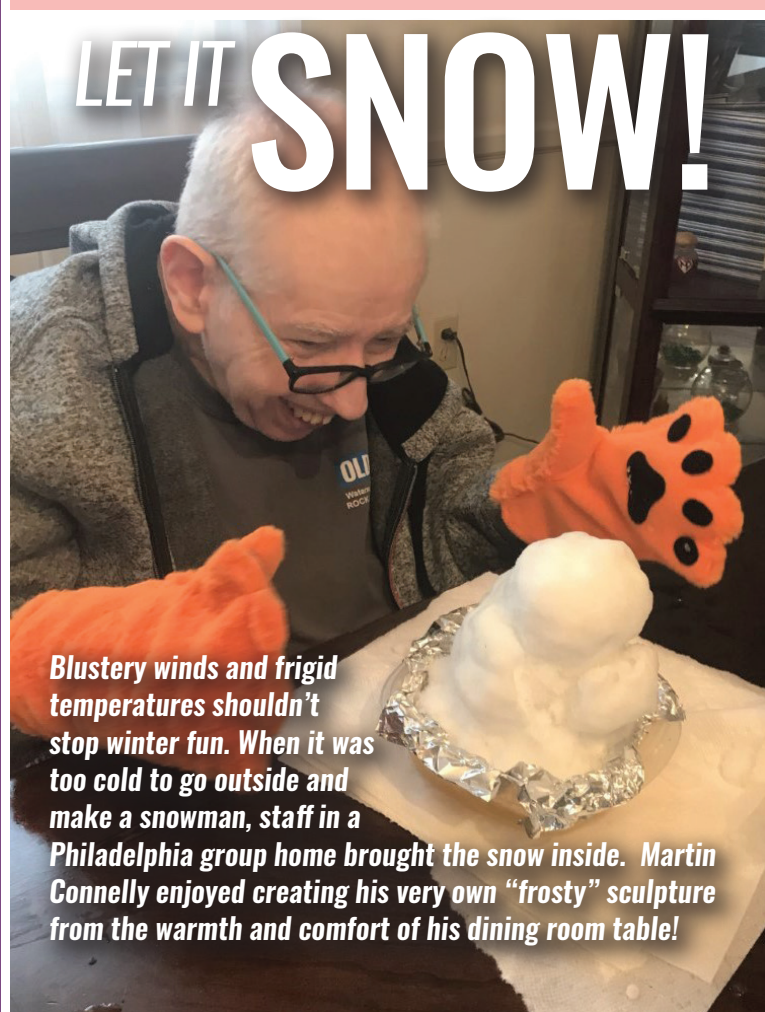
More than 220 students ages 3 – 21 are served in preschool programs as well as the approved private school program.

NOTHING STOPS SANTA



Even though Santa could not visit in person, he still received wish lists from students like Sophia Pagan and her classmates in the Pre-K Counts Preschool. Santa and Mrs. Claus, also known as Mayor Joe and Rhonda Schember, have been visiting classrooms at the Elizabeth Lee Black School for more than 30 years. For 2020, the couple visited with students through a video message that is available for all holiday enthusiasts at [YouTube.com/user/TheBarberInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/user/TheBarberInstitute).

LET IT SNOW!



Blustery winds and frigid temperatures shouldn't stop winter fun. When it was too cold to go outside and make a snowman, staff in a Philadelphia group home brought the snow inside. Martin Connelly enjoyed creating his very own "frosty" sculpture from the warmth and comfort of his dining room table!

GIFT HONORS BROTHER'S LEGACY

The life of Vincent McNamara, called “a Light, a Gift, a Treasure” by his large family, was memorialized with the dedication of the training suite at the Philadelphia campus of the Barber National Institute.

Family members from around the country gathered for the virtual dedication of the facility that will be used to train direct care staff to provide compassionate, high quality care for persons with intellectual disabilities.

Vincent, the youngest of nine children, was diagnosed with cerebral palsy soon after his birth in 1957. While doctors urged Vincent’s parents to send him to an institution, his siblings remembered that their parents were determined to raise him at home with the love and support of family.

Growing up, the family considered Vincent “just one of the kids,” and recalled how his brothers would take him out of his wheelchair to wrestle on the floor. “Vince was included in all family events where he was the indisputable center of attention,” they said.

With Vincent’s death in December 2017, family wanted to celebrate his sense of joy and unfaltering spirit by inspiring generations of caregivers for persons with disabilities. Their \$70,000 donation to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation established the Vincent McNamara Training Suite, which provides technology and other supports to train new employees as well as provide on-going education for current staff.



Vincent McNamara, seated left, was joined by his siblings at a family gathering.

“Dedicating this Training Suite to our brother, Vince, helps us to know that training will take place which teaches the importance of working with those with special needs and helping caregivers to be aware of those needs,” said Trish McNamara Fittipaldi, Vince’s sister. “What an amazing organization you are, and you have shown others the importance of caring for the ‘angels’ among us who can’t care for themselves. I am so happy that Barber is able to be an integral part not only of Vince’s legacy but of all of our lives as well.”

A plaque was unveiled during the presentation with the dedication:

— THE VINCENT MCNAMARA TRAINING SUITE —

Dedicated to the memory of Vincent McNamara

A loving son, brother and friend who touched the lives of many and helped all those who knew him learn to laugh more deeply, live more fully and love without boundaries.

May his legacy inspire generations of direct support professionals who care for those with disabilities to greater compassion and dedication to their mission.



NEWS ABOUT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE

A successful behavioral health program has received a new name and some new benefits for children and their families. The new program, Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) is a replacement for Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Services (BHRS), according to a change enacted by the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS.)

IBHS will provide intensive, short-term behavioral and mental health therapies to children ages 3 – 21. Families involved in the BHRS program made a seamless transition to the new service in January and continue to be eligible for services

in the home, school or anywhere that the support is needed.

The new IBHS offers families several new benefits including:

- Group services in addition to or in conjunction with individual services.
- Streamlining of many requirements, resulting in quicker access to services for children and families.
- More state-funded training for staff to enhance the quality of services.

For more information, contact Kaleena Howell, administrative program director, at 814-460-6218 or khowell@barberni.org.



Robert Barber, right, chief of staff at the Barber National Institute, presented the first-place award in the new Holiday Lights Contest for "Imagination Station," a display at the Corry home of Wayne and Laurie Huya and their daughters, Madyson and Meghann.

Neighborhoods throughout the region were brighter this holiday season with a Christmas Lights Contest sponsored by the Barber National Institute. Winners were chosen by online voting sponsored by Wabtec, which donated \$10,000 to support the contest and the mission of the Barber National Institute.

The contest launched on Dec. 12 with a socially distanced kick off featuring a drive-by visit with Santa and specialty popcorn from Pop Luck and other treats from area businesses.

The new fundraiser was undertaken after restrictions on gatherings prevented traditional events, including the annual Barber Christmas Ball, from taking place. "We deeply appreciated the support of all of the sponsors who helped to make this possible," said Laura Schaaf, director of Giving. "And it was really heartwarming to see the community embrace this new idea and bring so much cheer at a time when we all wanted to find a way to safely celebrate the holidays."

WINNERS IN THE ONLINE VOTING WERE:

- 1st Place Home** - Wayne and Laurie Huya, Ridge Street in Corry
- 2nd Place Home** - Bob Caldwell and his son, Bobby Caldwell, Colt Lane in Erie
- 3rd Place Home** - Tim Brown, Cherry Blossom Drive in Erie

In the business category, the first-place prize was awarded to Erie Masonic Temple while Mercy Center for Women won second-place honors.



IN THE HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Costumes, games and treats, of course! Erie Residential Group Homes would not let Halloween go by without a celebration. Residents and staff decorated their vans and took turns passing out goodies and greeting their friends in this socially distanced outdoor Trunk or Treat event.



While Thanksgiving was very different in 2020, staff and managers of Residential Group Homes made sure that the holiday was a memorable one for residents. Each home planned a special dinner celebration that focused on the many ways we were grateful this holiday.



Making fun props for a shared "virtual photo booth" was just one of the attractions during an online holiday party.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 11, 12, & 13

NO CONTACT ARTWORK SUBMISSION | North Lobby

APRIL 8 - 22

JAY & MONA KANG VIRTUAL ART SHOW & SALE | Online

MAY 19

WARREN GIVES | Warrengives.org

MAY 21-24

BARBER BEAST ON THE BLOCK | Virtual 5k

JUNE 17

SHILLELAGH GOLF TOURNAMENT | Whispering Woods Golf Course

SEPTEMBER 11

BARBER BEAST ON THE BAY | 10 Mile Course - Presque Isle State Park
Adapted Course for Persons with Disabilities - Waldameer

For more information about all events, visit BarberInstitute.org

LONGTIME SUPPORTER TO BE HONORED AT TOURNAMENT

Growing up in a working-class Erie neighborhood showed Joe Fries the value of hard work. It also taught him about the value of philanthropy, a lesson that has had a huge impact on the people and organizations that he has helped across his lifetime.

His longstanding support of the Barber National Institute, as well as other causes in the community, has led to his selection as the 2021 Shillelagh Man of the Year.

After retiring from the Prudential Financial Company, Joe became committed to using his financial background for civic improvements. He developed the "Thousandaires Club," a program directed to helping disadvantaged teens learn financial skills. By teaching students in the Erie community how to save \$1,000, he believed they would build a lifelong understanding of the importance of saving.

Joe also served on the boards of the Erie County Industrial Development Corporation, the Erie Development Corporation, Booker T. Washington Center, the Saint Vincent Health Center Board of Corporators and other organizations.

Joe's association with the Barber National Institute actually dates back



Joe Fries, 2021 Shillelagh Man of the Year

to his mother, who was a friend of Dr. Gertrude Barber. When Joe's sister Kathy struggled with special needs after graduating from high school, he said that Dr. Barber enrolled her in the Center's employment program. There, she learned the skills for her first job at Coin Laundry. Kathy would marry Dennis, a young man also served by the Barber Center, and Joe guided the couple as they purchased their own home. He still recalls when Kathy called to inform him that, through their hard work, the couple had paid off their mortgage.

Years later, Joe credits Erie Mayor Joe Schember for inviting him to attend his first Barber Christmas Ball. Since then, Joe and his wife, Debbie, a realtor with Coldwell Banker, have both attended and sponsored many Barber events. An avid Shillelagh participant, Joe is proud of winning the tournament in 1997 and still has the photo of Dr. Barber presenting the award to his foursome.

Joe and Debbie are the parents of three adult children and have four grandchildren.



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

- Family Based Mental Health Services
- Acute Children's Partial Hospitalization Program
- Speech, Occupational & 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

Community-Based Day Services

- Club Erie
- Community Endeavors
- Community Participation Supports
- Prevocational Services
- Small Group Employment
- Supported Employment
- 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
- Online Gift Shop

BarberInstitute.org

2021 SHILLELAGH GOLF TOURNAMENT

Thursday, June 17

Whispering Woods Golf Course

Return for this great event that includes lunch, dinner and golf on one of Erie's most scenic course.

All safety protocols will be followed.

Register or become a sponsor at
BarberInstitute.org/Golf



BARBER SPIRIT

Barber Spirit is a quarterly publication for friends of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc.
100 Barber Place • Erie, PA 16507-1863
814-453-7661 • FAX: 814-455-1132
BNIerie@BarberNI.org
BarberInstitute.org

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO TACKLE TWO BEAST CHALLENGES:



A virtual 5K that can be done anywhere, anytime from **FRIDAY, MAY 21 THROUGH MONDAY, MAY 24**. Last year, participants from 17 states and three countries took part, showing that you can choose when and where to have fun. If you're competitive, you can post your time for a first-place award. We will also have prizes for the best entries for team shirts, free-style workout, and creative finish. Registration is just \$30 and includes a shirt, car magnet and other goodies.



Shawn Carner, Jen Kanoza and Emily Kern celebrate after completing the Barber Beast on the Block virtual 5K in 2020.

The greatest 10-mile obstacle course challenge is back and better than ever on **SATURDAY, SEPT. 11** at Presque Isle State Park. New this year: discounts for essential workers who are helping us all through the pandemic.



Proceeds from both events support services for children and adults with autism, intellectual disabilities or behavioral health challenges at the Barber National Institute.

Learn more or sign up now
for both events at
BarberBeast.org