

B A R B E R

WINTER 2022

SPIRIT



CELEBRATING ART

JAY & MONA KANG ART SHOW & SALE



CELEBRATING THE
POSSIBILITIES





Finding New Ways to Stay Connected

PreK Counts students use Teams and their interactive white board to play bingo from their classroom with parents and families at home or work.

Sofia's mom usually can't break away from her busy job as an operating room technician to attend activities in her daughter's PreK Counts classroom. But for December's Christmas performance, she was there – in her scrubs, with the hospital in the background.

Sofia's mom and other PreK Counts parents were able to watch the children perform live through new technology implemented at the start of the pandemic. Other working parents watched the show in a recording later that day, giving all families the opportunity to see and hear the holiday show, as well as other lessons and activities held throughout the year.

"Dealing with the pandemic has created so many challenges for schools, but one positive aspect is the greater use and comfort level with technology," said Kathy Bastow, PreK Counts director. "Staff had to become very nimble, often going back and forth between remote and in-class learning, and we are so proud of our faculty for the way that they have responded."

Teachers are using a variety of technology including iPads and interactive white boards to take photos and videos and stage live events and activities. They connect what's happening in the classroom through Microsoft Teams, a platform that allows them to share with individual parents or groups of families. The interactions may be live – such as the holiday show – or recorded so that parents can view them at their convenience. Teachers can also connect to chat in real time to respond to a parent's questions or follow up with ongoing conversations about their child.

In school-age programs, teachers say the technology helps parents see what is happening in the classroom to better understand how to reinforce progress at home. "Many parents find it helpful to actually see the teacher or therapist working on a skill so that they can replicate the lesson at home," said Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey. "We've seen many 'a-ha moments' that probably wouldn't be possible without this technology."

ON THE COVER

The Jay and Mona Kang Art Show & Sale.
See details page 5.



Barber National Institute Mission Statement

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.

Before Covid restrictions, parents would typically walk their preschool children to their classrooms, touching base with teachers and getting a sense of what was happening throughout the week. But with current limitations for visitors, teachers looked for a new way to stay connected.

"Teams is a really good platform for communication in the 21st century," said PreK Counts teacher Kristin Fisher. "Parents used to come in every day, but now we stay in touch through Teams. We post photos and news every day. We can see parents are commenting all day or night. It is there for them 24/7."

At the start of the school year, every Pre-K Counts family received an at-home learning kit with crayons,



PreK Counts teachers sent home photos of each student to reassure parents on the first day of school.

markers, flashcards, playdough, and counting tools such as dominos to use if the classroom, or an individual student, have to learn remotely. "Really, no one has to miss out if they can't come to school because of illness or a quarantine," said Fisher.

For the Week of the Young Child in April, PreK Counts will bring back the "Book Bingo" that was so popular last year. Teachers will send home bingo cards, and students will play from the classroom with their parents from their home or work.

"The children and the families loved it," said Fisher. "It's another way that we all get to know the families, and that families get to know each other."

In a sense, the pandemic has brought lemons for schools and students alike. Kudos to the Elizabeth Lee Black faculty that has been able to turn them into lemonade.

Thanks to donors to the Barber Foundation who have helped fund the latest technology for our school. For more information about making a gift, visit BarberInstitute.org/donate or contact Laura Schaaf, director of Giving at 814-874-5802 or lschaaf@barberni.org.



Barber Team Provides Autism Training

The Barber National Institute presented a training on autism for staff at the State Correctional Institute – Albion in November. The sessions, developed for correctional staff who work with inmates who have an autism diagnosis or are suspected of being on the autism spectrum, covered the signs of autism, common behaviors and communications challenges, and strategies for preventing crises. Ann Ellison, left, a nationally board-certified behavior analyst, and Andrew Heidt, right, a licensed behavior specialist, presented the training and are pictured with Dr. Susan Evans and Steven Reilly, LPM, from the facility in Albion.



Celebrating O'Mari's Success

When O'Mari Dance started school at the Barber National Institute at the age of three, he faced many challenges. Since then, years of hard work and determination have paid off. His kindness and thoughtfulness have made him admired by his teachers and classmates throughout the Elizabeth Lee Black School.

Now, his progress is being recognized on an international level. O'Mari has been presented with a 2022 Yes I Can! Award from the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest association of educators dedicated to advancing the educational success of children and youth with exceptionalities. Each year, the awards are presented to 12 children and youth throughout the U.S. and Canada who have demonstrated success in six academic, advocacy or community involvement areas.

At age 21, O'Mari's award for the area of "Transition" recognizes his development academically, socially and emotionally as he grew into a young adult. His teachers say that he is an excellent role model because he is so friendly and accepting of his peers, making others feel right at home in the school.

"O'Mari has transformed into such a positive influence in the classroom," said Samantha Wheeler, who has been O'Mari's teacher for five years and nominated him for the award. "His peers look up to him and he is an exemplary student."

Also known as a hard worker, O'Mari has taken new responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment, such as maintaining the school's fish tank and helping in the cafeteria. This attitude extends to responsibilities at home, where he takes care of the family dog and often babysits for his little sister. In preparation for living on his own someday, O'Mari has learned to cook simple meals by himself and walk to his neighborhood store on his own.

O'Mari has also worked hard to deal with behavioral challenges by learning to manage his negative emotions, use anger management skills and communicate his feelings and preferences effectively. "He has changed so much," said paraeducator Coleen McKinnon. "He has begun to understand the consequences of his behavior and developed many coping skills."

Award recipients were honored at a ceremony in January at the CEC Convention in Orlando, Florida. Although he wasn't able to attend, O'Mari was still recognized during the ceremony. A school-wide celebration was held through Teams so that all of those who know O'Mari could share their words of congratulations.

"O'Mari is one of our success stories," said Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey. "I have seen him grow from a preschool child with limited skills and many behavioral challenges into an adult who is self-directed, independent and ready to enter the world of work. I am proud of his accomplishments and pleased that we have been there with him to help him achieve his goals."



O'Mari Dance, with teacher Samantha Wheeler, takes great pride in caring for the school's fish tank. (Photo taken before Covid restrictions)

CELEBRATING ART

JAY & MONA KANG ART SHOW & SALE

"In addition to giving comfort and joy, art also has the miraculous ability to let us live in other men's skins, to test our perceptions and beliefs against theirs, and perhaps to be changed as a result."

Author Terry Teachout

The life changing and life-affirming qualities of art will be celebrated at the 2022 Jay & Mona Kang Virtual Art Show & Sale sponsored by the Barber National Institute. The online exhibit will feature the creative work of youth and adult artists from throughout the tri-state region in the media of painting, photography, drawing, sculptures, mixed media and fiber arts.

Here are key dates for this year's event:

March 24, 25 & 26 – Artwork submission at the Barber National Institute. Artists are encouraged to preregister their artwork at BarberInstitute.org/artshow. Entries can include an artist statement about their work.

April 21 – 24 – Donor Debut, providing donors and participating artists early access to view and purchase artwork.

April 25 – May 6 – Online galleries open to the community.

For the fourth year in a row, the show is being sponsored by Jay and Mona Kang, two area physicians who are dedicated patrons of the arts and supporters of the mission of the Barber National Institute.

What's new for 2022?

- **Increased Awards:**

Best of Show in the categories of overall artwork and photography for both adult and youth artists will be \$300.

Honorable Mention Awards will increase to \$100.

- **You asked for it, so it's back!**

The People's Choice Awards will be presented to artwork created by an adult and a youth artist voted on by viewers of the show. Each winner will receive \$100.

Artists and arts appreciators are invited to join us in "Celebrating the Possibilities!"



Support the Art Show as a Benefactor (\$250), Patron (\$100) or Friend (\$50). You will be recognized online and receive access to the Donor Debut. Visit BarberInstitute.org/ArtShow or mail your gift to Art Show, Barber National Institute, 100 Barber Place, Erie PA, 16509 by April 8.



For First Place Finisher, The Beast is Personal

Jeopardy has its Ken Jennings and Amy Schneider. For the Beast, the undisputed record setter is Andy Hellmann.

The 33-year-old fitness instructor has taken the first-place spot six times and has the awards to prove it. Hellmann displays the awards, many featuring original artwork from individuals in Barber National Institute art programs, at the Snap Fitness facility he owns in Harborcreek.

"I really like the fact that these awards are created by people at the Barber National Institute," said Hellmann. "I didn't put these up to talk about myself, but to be able to tell my customers about the event and how it supports children and adults at the Barber National Institute."

The awards have also been the backdrop for a donation table that Hellmann created at the fitness center. He has raised as much as \$1,000 in a single year to donate back to the Barber National Institute.

Hellmann said that while it was his competitive drive that led him to first participate in the Beast, he did already have an appreciation of the work of the Barber National Institute. More than 25 years ago, Andy's aunt and uncle, brother and sister John and Helen Yager, moved to Erie from their family home in Centerville, PA and began receiving services at the Barber National Institute.

Staff remember that John excelled at running a drill press and shredder in the program at Building 101. Helen developed cleaning skills in the program now known as Small Group Employment.

"Helen took exceptional pride in cleaning Dr. Barber's office and sitting room," recalls Joe Geppert, a staff who worked with the brother



and sister. "She was so proud to be a part of the Barber National Institute. She had a photo of Dr. Barber that she kept as kind of a symbol of her independence."

John and Helen both passed away several years ago, but the support they received reminds Andy of how important the Barber National Institute is for so many individuals and families.

While he thrives on training and competing in fitness challenges, the fact that the Beast supports the mission of the Barber National Institute is an added plus for him.

"This was the first year that I went to the Barber Christmas Ball because it was another way that I could support the organization," said Hellmann. "As I've gotten to understand the work that is done, I want to do more to support it."



Baby Steps

While Andy Hellmann is a distance runner who works out year-round, he tells his clients at Snap Fitness in Harborcreek that anyone can participate in the Beast – but be sure to train first. His advice includes:

- Cardio workouts to build stamina for the 10-mile course.
- Closer to the event, move from distance running to speed work outs.
- Focus on upper body strengthening.
- Take baby steps. Start slow so you don't get injured.

Hellmann holds Beast training sessions throughout the year; information is available at Snap Fitness Harborcreek, 814-314-8588.

Ready to Take the Plunge?



Make 2022 the year that you Beat the Beast. Barber Beast on the Bay is set for Saturday, Sept. 10 with the 10-mile obstacle course challenge at Presque Isle State Park and the one-mile adapted course at Waldameer Park and WaterWorld.

Ten-mile course participants can fundraise for the Barber National Institute and receive a free registration. Visit BarberBeast.org for information about registration and becoming a fundraiser.



Christmas Magic Returns

A tradition that has spanned more than 50 years returned in 2021 with "Sharing the Magic," the Barber Christmas Ball. Participating in opening ceremonies to kick off the holiday gala were, from left, Chief of Staff Robert Barber; President/CEO John and Bridget Barber; 2021 chair couple Chris and the Honorable Phil English; Courtney Edwards and fiancé Patrick Barber, Vice President Treasury Management. The date for the 2022 Christmas Ball is set for Saturday, Dec. 10 at the Bayfront Convention Center.



Bringing Back Volunteerism

Team leader Julie Little, right, offers encouragement as Matt Johnson and Amy Murphy measure out ingredients for the cookies they are preparing as part of their volunteer activities in Club Erie.

Amy and Matt carefully measure out cups of chocolate chips and add them to a batter swirling in a large industrial-sized mixer. Soon, they are shaping tablespoons of batter into small round balls and placing them onto baking sheets. Amy and Matt won't be enjoying the delicious cookies they are preparing, but they're happy just the same. They know that the treat they've helped prepare will be served later that night at a dinner that the Church of the Covenant hosts for its neighbors in the inner city.

Every month, Amy and Matt are part of a group of adults and staff from the Club Erie Program who help church staff prepare the dinner. They do everything from setting the tables to cutting vegetables and assembling the ample salad that can certainly feed a crowd.

The activity is one of several volunteer opportunities that adults can select in the Club Erie program. The experiences can help prepare adults for employment, as well as develop communication and social skills interacting with other volunteers and representatives of the organization they are helping.

"The volunteer opportunities are really a 'win-win' for our adults and for the community organizations we are helping," said Jenifer Gross, operations manager. "They give our adults many new experiences with different

activities and people, and the satisfaction of helping someone else. Like all of us, it is important that they are able to give back to their communities, too."

Volunteer activities were a popular part of adult day programs in all locations before they had to be suspended in March 2020 due to pandemic restrictions. They have been building back for adults in Club Erie since fall 2020 and now include:

- Assembling 1,350 gift boxes at First Alliance Church that Operation Christmas Child then shipped around the world so that children in developing countries had a gift on Christmas.
- Packing 600 lunches every month at the Erie City Mission.
- Assisting the Second Harvest Food Bank. Just in November, staff and individuals donated 45 hours to sorting for expired foods, packing senior and military boxes, and organizing the full boxes onto pallets to be stored or shipped to other areas of Pennsylvania served by the Food Bank.
- Helping the Asbury Woods Nature Center with yard work such as weeding and sweeping the walkways, cleaning and refilling bird feeders, filling the frog pond and sanitizing surfaces on indoor displays.



Tony Formica and Dan Zimmer volunteer to clean classrooms at Asbury Woods Nature Center.

Even as adults and staff go out into the community, Gross said that they remain focused on taking all safety measures to prevent exposure to Covid 19. Everyone wears masks while in cars and at the site, they wash their hands frequently and practice social distancing as much as possible. "While it is really important for the adults to have these opportunities, their health is our first and highest priority," said Gross. "Our staff are very committed to making sure that the experience is a fun and rewarding one, but first make sure that it is safe for everyone."

The experiences have helped many adults develop skills that have led to employment as well as new recreational interests. Just maybe, for Amy and Matt, it could also mean more delicious homemade cookies are on the way.



Frosty Comes to Life

Is it really Frosty? Student Haleigh Kafferlin checks out everyone's favorite snowman as he came to life with a recent visit to Room 107. All of the children loved getting their photos taken with Frosty. Their smiles would melt your heart!

Tee Up for Tournament

Never mind snow and brisk wind chills – golf season will be here soon! Make plans now for the Shillelagh Tournament on Thursday, June 16 at Whispering Woods Golf Course. Golfers have their choice of 7:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. tee times for the shotgun start.

Many great sponsorship opportunities are available for this popular event. Visit BarberInstitute.org/golf for more information.



Thanks, Employers!

In celebration of National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, our Philadelphia Supported Employment Program presented awards to all of the businesses that hired adults for community-based employment. Program participant Wayne Pickett, right, presented the award to Brian Overton, general manager of the Wawa Food Market Belmont. The awards recognized and thanked the businesses for making the dream of employment come true for adults with disabilities.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ART SHOW SUBMISSION

March 24, 25 & 26

Barber National Institute North Lobby

JAY & MONA KANG ART SHOW & SALE

Donor Debut, April 21 – 24

Online Galleries Open April 25 – May 6

BarberInstitute.org/artshow

WARREN GIVES

May 18

ELIZABETH LEE BLACK SCHOOL GRADUATION

June 7

SHILLELAGH GOLF TOURNAMENT

June 16

Whispering Woods Golf Course

LEARN-TO-RIDE BIKE CAMP

July 6, 13, 20 & 27

For more information about all events, visit BarberInstitute.org



Barber National Institute

Making dreams come true for 70 years.

70th Anniversary Celebration



The year was 1952, and a small group of children and teachers, led by a determined and charismatic educator, gathered in a borrowed classroom for the first time. None of those involved likely realized that the journey they were starting would eventually have an impact on thousands of children, adults and families across a city, across a state and across a country.

In 2022, as the Barber National Institute marks its 70th anniversary, it commemorates not only a storied past, but also celebrates the achievements of the present and the dreams of tomorrow. As those first teachers and families could not have envisioned the progress that the next seven decades would bring, those who today carry forth their legacy are setting a course for people, challenges and hopes that we cannot yet see – but know that we are committed to serving.

When Dr. Gertrude Barber began that first class for children with disabilities, she was doing something that few thought possible. But she believed that all children were entitled to an education in their own communities, and, if given opportunities, could have fulfilling lives.

As word spread of her work, classes for more children and programs for adults began to grow at locations throughout Erie. Then, with the discovery of the polio vaccine, the City of Erie was able to close its communicable disease hospital on the east Erie bayfront and lease it for what became the Barber Center. “We finally had a place that we could really call home,” said Dr. Barber.

As more was done, it seemed that even more could be possible. In 1962, the fledgling school earned state accreditation.



Physical therapist Martha Lundgren, center and teacher Ellen Eppler, right, join other staff and students in one of the first classrooms.

Achieving the Dream Across Pennsylvania in 2022

6,200 CHILDREN AND ADULTS SERVED ANNUALLY

2,000 EMPLOYEES

564 INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES SERVED
IN AGENCY WITH CHOICE

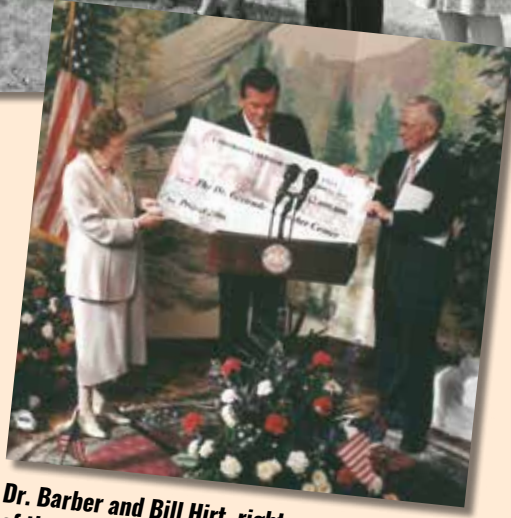
230 STUDENTS AGES 3 – 21

95 RESIDENTIAL GROUP HOMES

Dr. Barber, right, presides over groundbreaking ceremonies for the new pool complex.



Gov. Tom Ridge visits the school to kick off the 45th anniversary celebration in 1997.



Dr. Barber and Bill Hirt, right, co-chairman of the Project 2000 Fundraising Campaign, accept a \$2 million grant from Gov. Tom Ridge for the building project.

Today, it is recognized for innovative programs serving more than 240 students from 24 school districts and was named a School of Excellence for the 15th year in a row by the National Association of Special Education Teachers.

In the early 1970s, adults sent to state centers as children, many carrying their belongings in a paper bag, returned to live in Barber Center homes in their community. Today, more than 300 adults live in Barber Institute group homes across Pennsylvania, where they are active members of their families, churches and neighborhoods. Many others reside in their own homes and apartments with support from Barber National Institute services.

Because of the vision of Dr. Gertrude Barber, and the donors, families, employees and friends who believed in her dream, what was not thought possible is now an everyday reality. As we celebrate 70 years of achievement, we look to making the next possibilities the realities of tomorrow.

*Throughout our 70-year history, we have been able to serve children and adults in need because of the support of so many generous donors and friends. You have been committed to carrying out the legacy that Dr. Barber established in 1952, and we are grateful. Now, we have established a **70th Anniversary Club** for donors who want to ensure that our mission will continue for generations of children, adults and families yet to come.*

Join the 70th Anniversary Club today:

___ \$70 Anniversary membership ___ \$1,952 Founding membership
___ \$150 Platinum Jubilee membership ___ Other amount. All gifts are appreciated.

Donors will be recognized on our website and in a special celebration in Barber Spirit. To be included, please make your gift by July 1 at BarberInstitute.org/70 or by mail to 70th Anniversary, Dr. Gertrude Barber Foundation, 100 Barber Place, Erie PA, 16507 in the enclosed envelope.



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
Intensive Behavioral Health 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 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

Recreational Opportunities

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

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@BarberInstitute.org
BarberInstitute.org

John J. Barber
President/Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey
Executive Vice President

William Gloekler
Chairman, Board of Directors

Bridget Power Barber
Vice President, External Affairs & Strategic Initiatives

Mary Rotunda Cuneo
Director of Strategic Communications

Anthony Esposito
Communication/Social Media Coordinator



Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 355
Erie, PA

Going for the Gold

Students and faculty got into the Olympic spirit last month with a week-long activity in the gym. They took turns trying their hand at curling, hockey, luge and other activities. In addition to having fun, everyone was a gold medal winner! The event also marked the first time that students left their classrooms for a gym activity. Classes participated individually, and extra time was built in to sanitize surfaces between groups.



Happy Hearts
preschool students
show off their hard-
earned medals.



Teacher Brent Manti
and physical therapist
Barbara Gleason cheer
Zainab Alafrawy as she
scores in curling.



Manti guides a
student through
the luge.