



Volume No. 5, Fall 2012

Barber Honors

Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation
Report of Donors 2011-2012



**Our Donors Making a Difference
Goal Surpassed: \$6,854,158!**

LETTER TO OUR DONORS

Dear Friends:

We have often talked about the many dreams that come true every day at the Barber National Institute. To begin this year's donor report, we would like to share one such story from this past year. Little Addison Borges had many serious problems to overcome when he was born 25 weeks premature in 2006. He was airlifted to Pittsburgh soon after birth, and spent his first 100 days of life in the NICU.

Addie has a profound hearing loss, and had many developmental delays when he began preschool here in 2009. His only means to communicate was to point, cry and yell, and he had tantrums every day. Addie began to make slow but steady progress, and in January, 2011 he received a cochlear implant. With the help of his teachers and speech therapist, Addie began using sign language, and is now even speaking well enough to be understood by familiar listeners. He now loves to learn and play with his peers. In June, Addie graduated from our preschool, ready to begin kindergarten in a hearing support classroom in his home school district.

Addie's story is just one of many that we share in every day, and is made possible by the generosity of our donors who are so deeply committed to our mission. Our founder, Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, was known for her inspiring optimism that always saw the glass as half full. In that spirit, we look back on the difficult economic times of the last year with an eye not so much to its challenges, but to the many friends and supporters such as you who have helped us reach many new milestones.

First, we are so grateful to have not only met—but surpassed—our goal of raising \$6 million over the four-year period from 2008-2012. This effort represented the first multi-year fundraising initiative that we have undertaken and we are happy to report donations of more than \$6.8 million.

As you probably know, we have been celebrating Dr. Barber's 100th birthday with many special commemorations, including a \$1,000,000 Challenge created in her honor. So many generous donors who knew Dr. Barber—as well as many more who know of her mission—came together to contribute more than \$700,000 to date. We are going to continue to work hard to meet our goal as we believe that Dr. Barber would want us all to do in support of the children and adults that were the focus of her life's work.



There is no doubt, however, that the difficult economic climate and reductions in government reimbursements pose an ongoing challenge. Midway through the 2011-12 fiscal year, the Governor's Office enacted cuts totaling more than \$5,000,000 for our organization. In the current 2012-13 budget, we experienced another 20% cut in reimbursements.

In spite of the significant decreases in funding, our children, adults and families continue to need services and support to overcome their challenges and reach their fullest potential. We have been trying to meet their needs and maintain quality while at the same time ensuring responsible financial stability for our organization overall. But the only way that we can continue to meet this challenge is with support through private philanthropy and friends like you.

On behalf of the more than 4,200 children and adults we serve, thank you for your commitment to our mission of *Making dreams come true.*

John J. Barber
President & Chief Executive Officer

Maureen Barber-Carey, Ed.D.
Executive Vice President

Mission

We "Make dreams come true." We provide children and adults with developmental disabilities 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.

On the cover:

The stained glass windows in the Barber National Institute chapel provide the backdrop for preschool students Kylie Sienicki and Nathan Kinzig.

FROM THE ADVANCEMENT OFFICE



Dear Barber National Institute Family,

Thank you for your contributions, your generous encouragement and your volunteerism. We are grateful for all that you do for this organization and for the children, adults and families we serve. Without your private support, we would not be able to make the impact we are making every day.

On the following pages of this year's *Barber Honors*, you will see how your contributions transform the lives of the individuals and families who rely on the Barber National Institute to reach their goals and realize their dreams. We couldn't make their dreams a reality without your help, so we dedicate this special publication to you – our friend and supporter – for the irreplaceable role you play in *Making dreams come true*.

This is a great time for celebration!

You may recall, in 2008 we set a four-year fundraising goal of \$6,000,000 to be raised by June 30, 2012. **We surpassed our goal with \$6,854,158 from 5,085 donors who gave 12,018 gifts!** This is an incredible testament to our donors, the communities we serve, and the faith you place in our employees who carry out the mission of this special organization every day. What makes this achievement most impressive is that it was attained in what some have called the worst economic time since the Great Depression. And you helped to make this happen.

Maybe you made a gift to our Annual Fund or gave a special donation in memory of a loved one. Perhaps you attended one of our great events, such as the Christmas Ball or Ladies Only Luncheon. Maybe you laced up your sneakers and ran a marathon or

participated in a bowling or golf tournament. Or maybe you made a special tribute gift in honor of a friend's birthday or marriage. However you chose to give, you made a difference. **Thank you.** You helped us reach our fundraising goal so that we can continue providing the highest quality of care and the latest, cutting-edge technology for our individuals with special challenges.

Let us enjoy this moment of achievement: But we still have "miles to go..."

For years the Barber National Institute and the people we serve have relied on government funding to support so many of our programs. **We have all seen serious cuts from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania over the last fiscal year, and the forecast for the future continues to look stormy. The need for our champions of philanthropy - for your continued financial support - is greater than ever.**

Last year we began celebrating our current success and rich history by commemorating the 100th Birthday of our late founder, Dr. Gertrude A. Barber. We honored this time in history: not just the vibrant past but our dreams for the future made possible by the foundation Dr. Barber put in place. We began the **Dr. Gertrude A. Barber \$1,000,000 Challenge** to raise \$1,000,000 for three new major goals:

- Enhancing the Annual Fund to \$250,000 (see pages 12 & 23).
- Taking the Barber National Institute Technological & Research Initiative to \$250,000 (see page 10 & 14).
- Increasing the Endowment Fund by \$500,000 (see page 5).

As we go to press, we have raised more than \$700,000 toward this goal. We received gifts from donors in 36 states and in Germany. These gifts will help advance our organization into the future – a future now more than ever dependent on your support.

Please join us in bringing this year's \$1,000,000 Challenge to a successful end in these final months of celebration in honor of Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, as together we continue *Making dreams come true!*

With best wishes and appreciation,

Gary L. Bukowski, CFRE
Vice President for Advancement

Our Guiding Philosophy

All individuals are people of God, with feelings, emotions, needs and capabilities unique to these persons and their heritage. In a world where all persons differ, everyone should have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

We believe that all persons can learn, have the right to learn and must be provided with experiences for growth and development: spiritually, morally, aesthetically, socially, physically and educationally. We further believe that learning is a continuous process from infancy through adulthood.

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Celebrating a Legacy: Dr. Gertrude A. Barber \$1,000,000 Challenge

The \$1,000,000 Challenge, which celebrates the 100th Birthday of Barber National Institute Founder Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, is more than halfway to reaching its goal with more than \$700,000 raised as of October 2012. Since the Challenge was initiated in July 2011, 2,230 donors representing 36 states have contributed 3,302 gifts to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation. Of those donors, 868 made a gift for the very first time.

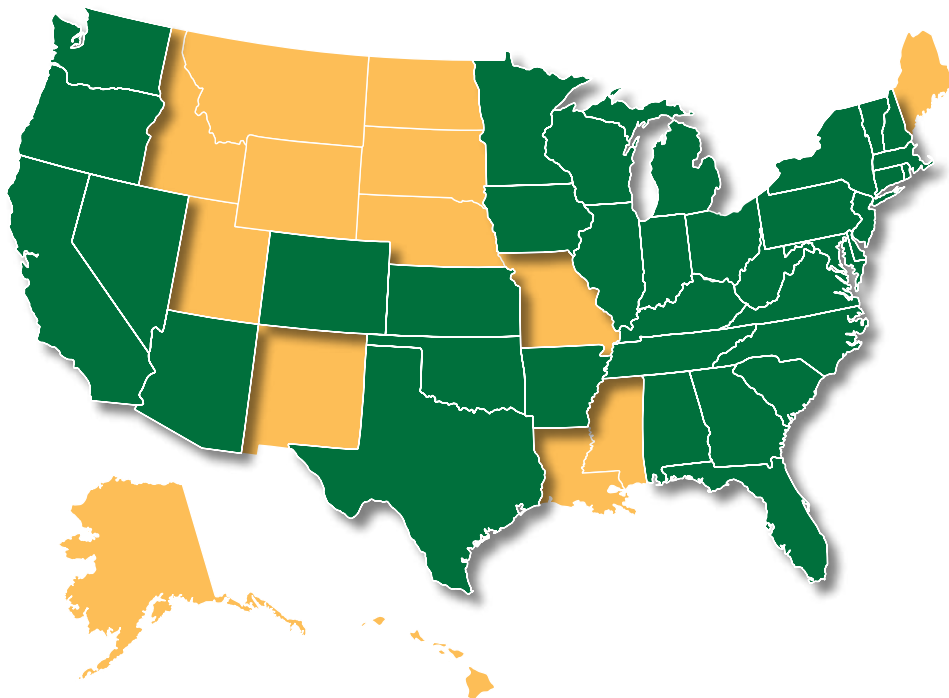
"The Challenge provides an opportunity for the many people who want to carry on Dr. Barber's vision of continuing to bring hope to individuals with disabilities," said John Barber, president and CEO of the Barber National Institute. "With your help, we are carrying out our mission of making dreams come true for our children and adults."



Donors to the Challenge will be supporting the **Annual Fund** to help meet the needs of programs for children and adults, boosting the **Technological and Research Initiative** to fund technology for learning, and enhancing the **Foundation Endowment Fund** to support long-term stability and growth at the Institute.

To learn more about the Challenge and how to participate, contact Gary Bukowski, CFRE, vice president for Advancement, at (814) 878-4033 or email GaryBukowski@BarberInstitute.org.

Donors from 36 states (shaded in green) from across the United States have made a contribution to the \$1,000,000 Challenge.



Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Legacy Society



As a young special education teacher in the Erie School District, Dr. Gertrude Barber often had to break the news to parents that their child would have to remain at home or be sent to a distant institution to receive an education because of a lack of programs available to serve children with

special needs. Believing there was a better way, Dr. Barber opened the first classroom for children with intellectual disabilities and hearing impairments in 1952 with the help of a small group of dedicated parents and teachers.

Since then, this single classroom became the Barber National Institute, which has evolved into a multi-faceted organization serving more than 4,200 individuals and families annually with a wide range of educational, vocational, residential and behavioral health programs.

In August 2007, the **Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Legacy Society** was established to recognize and thank the generous supporters who have expressed their belief in the future of this organization by making a planned gift. Planned gifts include bequests to the Dr. Gertrude Barber Foundation in a will or trust.

Since the creation of the Legacy Society, the Foundation has received \$5,346,798 through planned gifts. As of June 30, 2012, 31 individuals have become members of the Legacy Society by naming the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation as the beneficiary of a planned gift.

“The Legacy Society members have pledged their commitment to supporting the mission of the Barber National Institute,” said Gary Bukowski, vice president for Advancement. “Their promise will make a difference in the lives of the children, adults and families we serve by assuring the growth and development of this very special organization well into the future.”

To learn more about becoming a member of the Legacy Society or the variety of planned giving options available, contact Gary Bukowski, CFRE, in the Advancement office at (814) 878-4033, via email at GaryBukowski@BarberInstitute.org, or visit GertrudeBarber.org.

Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Legacy Society

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Four-Year Drive Exceeds \$6 Million Goal

The goal to raise \$6 million in four years, which ended this June, was a huge success thanks to the 5,085 donors who gave 12,018 gifts. The goal, which began in July 2008, was surpassed with a total of \$6,854,158 raised.

“The support of our many donors is more important than ever during this time of economic challenges and cuts to reimbursements,” said John Barber, president and CEO of the Barber National Institute. “We are grateful for our donors’ continued support and the belief in our mission to provide hope and opportunity to the children and adults with disabilities served by the Barber National Institute.”

The success in surpassing this goal is the result of several fundraising avenues including Colelli’s Challenge, significant planned gifts, Race with Grammy, enhanced annual fund efforts and special events that take place throughout the year.

Friends



On behalf of all of us here at the Barber National Institute, we offer our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made a special gift to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Your friendship and support mean the world to us. It is through your generosity that we can continue in Dr. Gertrude A. Barber's footsteps – providing hope, care, and opportunity to the more than 4,200 children and adults with intellectual disabilities who turn to our special organization every day to *Make dreams come true.*

We truly appreciate every contribution made to the Barber National Institute. Please note that every effort was made to ensure accuracy in the listing of our generous supporters. We apologize for any inadvertent errors or omissions. Please contact the Advancement Office at (814) 878-4033 if you have any questions or corrections.

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Associate instructor Erin Olsen, left, supervises as Karen Thomson shrink wraps plastic mugs on a new machine donated by Erie Insurance.

Erie Insurance Donation Makes Perfect Package

Every year, thousands of travel mugs sold in stores across the country have a connection to the Barber National Institute. The plastic mugs, manufactured by Whirley Industries in Warren, PA, were likely packaged by adults in Production Services. Their jobs became easier and more efficient thanks to a new shrink-wrap system purchased with a \$9,345 donation by Erie Insurance.

For Karen Thomson, one of more than 40 adults to use the system in her work, packaging Whirley mugs is her favorite job. Karen takes great pride in her work, says associate instructor Erin Olsen. In the two years that Karen has been working on assembly and shrink wrapping projects, she has become very proficient. "Karen has developed a good eye for the assembly, and she knows what to look for in spotting any pieces that are not up to par," said Erin. The process has helped Karen further develop her reading skills and instilled a great deal of pride in her abilities.

"And she really enjoys seeing all of the different mugs that come through," added Erin.

The new shrink system consists of an "L" sealer and a shrink tunnel. This system encapsulates the product with a plastic film, which then travels through an oven and shrinks to form a tight cover around the product. In addition to the mugs, the system is used to shrink wrap books, software packaging and other items in the consumer market.

Coffee mugs and straws are also packaged at the West 16th Street satellite while adults on the Corry and Girard campuses also prepare the straws for shipment. Whirley has been providing projects to the Barber National Institute for nearly 20 years to help streamline the packaging operations at their plants.



Staff and adults in Community Endeavors visit Philadelphia's Fireman's Museum, site of the country's first firehouse.

Philadelphia: Forging Bonds in the Community

In 2009, the Barber National Institute introduced a new concept to Philadelphia: a community-based day program that would enable adults to access resources in the community chosen to meet their interests and needs. The new program, Community Endeavors, opened in a newly renovated location in the Falls Center at 3300 Henry Avenue.

Since that time, adults have formed bowling teams, visited art museums and historic sites, volunteered at hospitals and delivered meals to shut-ins. The program has expanded to include nearly 100 participants, many of whom are developing new interests and skills that were not considered possible in the past.

"We have seen many participants who had very limited opportunities to socialize or experience activities in the community begin the program very hesitant to meet new people or visit new settings," said Traci Gardner, Philadelphia Region director. "It has been very gratifying to support these adults as they develop new social skills and the ability to more fully enjoy and learn from the resources in their community."

Traci said that families and supports coordinators have been very receptive to the new program as they search for alternatives to traditional facility-based programs. And the adults have learned many new things about the community—and themselves—through their experiences.

For more information about Community Endeavors, call (215) 871-0731 or email BNIphil@BarberInstitute.org.

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• = Matching gift

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Student Dennis Black enjoys working on the iPad with teacher Lindsay Oliveri.

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An Apple for Every Class

When Lindsay Oliveri tried to play a matching game with Dennis Black, he wouldn't even touch the set of cards. But when she approached a similar lesson on an iPad, the 7-year-old quickly matched all of the animal pictures and was ready for more. Within a few weeks, Dennis was completing matching games independently and using the tablet to learn and trace the letters of the alphabet.

The iPad, with its many onscreen movements and reinforcing sounds, is showing great promise in helping children with autism learn all kinds of important concepts.

Donations made to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation funded the purchase of three iPads for the Elizabeth Lee Black School in 2010. Since then, the electronic tablets have become increasingly popular with students and teachers. By the start of the 2012-2013 school year, all 23 classrooms had their own iPads funded by gifts to the Barber Foundation.

Like many other teachers, Lindsay began using the iPads as soon as they became available. She noticed that a lot of the concepts that her students struggled with could be successfully mastered on the new tablet.

"Many of our students have a hard time isolating one finger for tasks," said Lindsay. "When they approached the iPad using their whole hand, they quickly realized they would wipe out the entire screen. So, they learned to touch the icons with one finger, and now understand how to isolate their finger for other things, too."

Lindsay and many other teachers use the iPad every day in the classroom for individual lessons and group activities. She has noticed that students also learn how to wait patiently for their turn on the new device. "The iPad is such a strong reinforcement that students are eager to work for it as a reward, and don't want to do anything that might risk losing their turn."

A number of apps have been developed to teach communication and social skills to children with autism, while teachers adapt many other apps to fit the student's goals. Several popular apps enable teachers and students to record and play back words and sounds, helping children learn to imitate and ultimately build language.

While each student has unique goals, Lindsay has noticed that the iPad is an effective tool for nearly everyone. "Students are staying on task longer while having so much fun—they don't even notice that they are learning."



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Staff member Michael Sprake, right, assists an adult in the *Wheels in Motion* program. Together they create music on one of the new iPads that interfaces with the television screen.

Opening New Worlds

What does the iPad mean for a person with physical and motor skill challenges? "I asked that question, and one of the men described it in one word—freedom," said Patty Czulewicz, an instructor in Adult Day Services.

That freedom, and the ability to investigate whole new worlds, came with the donation of ten iPads to the "Wheels in Motion" program at the Barber National Institute. The gift was made recently by an anonymous donor.

As soon as the new electronic tablets arrived, participants have been using the devices to build many social, communication, math, reading and memory skills, as well as develop new leisure time activities.

"As soon as we got the iPads, our adults started to find apps for things that really appealed to their particular interests," said Patty Czulewicz, instructor in Adult Day Services. "They have been able to experience a great deal of independence from the whole new world that the iPads have opened up."

Many of the adults have been enjoying sports activities such as golf that they would not be able to participate in, while others enjoy using calculator functions to practice math problems. Often, adults will team up to play games together, building their social skills. Another adult is using the iPad to develop his interest in photography.

"The iPads have meant that they are really participants, not just observers," said Patty. "Without this donation, we would not have been able to offer these opportunities."

Donations to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation have also funded iPads for the Elizabeth Lee Black School, where each classroom now has at least one iPad to use in student lessons. Interested donors can make a gift to the Technological and Research Initiative that has been established in the **\$1,000,000 Challenge** by contacting Gary Bukowski, CRFE, vice president for Advancement, at (814) 878-4033 or emailing GaryBukowski@BarberInstitute.org. Online donations can be made at www.BarberInstitute.org/giving.

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Blaize Cheesman reacts to Brendan, an interactive robot, during therapy sessions with social skills therapist Mary O'Camb.

Research Collaboration Begins with University of Notre Dame

"Addie, come sit." Teachers and therapists had been trying to get four-year-old Addie Jost to respond to this verbal direction for some time without positive results. Then, in Addie's first therapy session in the robot research pilot phase, the interactive robot asked Addie to sit down.

"We all watched in amazement as Addie walked over and sat in her chair," said Jennifer Musolff, the certified behavior specialist administering the research project. "Addie's mom was also watching the session with us, and this was the first time that any of us had ever seen Addie do this."

Addie was among the first group of children with autism who participated in the pilot phase of a research collaboration with the University of Notre Dame that began in April. Children receive behavioral therapy with an interactive humanoid robot to reinforce the development of social and communication skills. The results of their progress are documented and compared to sessions conducted with the therapist alone.

"Even from just the initial pilot, we have clearly seen that the use of the robot increases the development of many skills," said Jennifer. Overall, the skills that experienced the greatest gains included:

- Following directives
- Joint attention – being able to look away at a distraction and return to the original subject
- Appropriate requesting for attention
- Spontaneous imitations – returning a greeting appropriately without prompting

Notre Dame began investigating the use of robots in autism therapy in 2011 with similar results. "We have found that children with autism seem to have a natural interest in technology and are very motivated by the robot," said Dr. Joshua Diehl, assistant professor of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. "Our goal is then to generalize the skills that they are learning with the robot to their communication with humans in their lives."

The pilot phase enabled researchers at the Barber National Institute and Notre Dame to refine the protocols and the research is now being expanded to include other children.

Since government reimbursement will not fund research on new treatments, the Barber National Institute is relying on private philanthropy to fund this important project. Individuals or businesses interested in giving opportunities should contact Gary L. Bukowski, CFRE, vice president for Advancement, at (814) 878-4033 or email garybukowski@barberinstitute.org.

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John Barber, left, president and chief executive officer at the Barber National Institute, greets Colin Wozniak and his parents, Diane and Dennis.

New Program Enriches Lives

When Colin Wozniak graduated from Baldwin High School in June, he and his parents already knew what they wanted for the next phase of his life. As part of the transition planning in his suburban Pittsburgh school, Colin began participating in the adult day program at the Barber National Institute one day each week, and the match seemed like a perfect fit.

But making the transition permanent took some effort. Colin's parents and staff worked hard to resolve funding blocks, and he finally returned to the program in August. "Transitions can be difficult for Colin, and he was a little anxious during the first few days," said Thad Jackman, "But he has a smile on his face every day now and he has really blossomed in the program."

In addition to the day program, where Colin enjoys music therapy and working on art projects, he also participates in the Community Habilitation Program. This program, which began in 2009, offers one-on-one assistance to develop daily living and social skills. The program is individualized for each participant, with activities ranging from personal hygiene to community outings such as bowling, where adults learn how to plan and pay for a leisure time interest. Like Colin, many participants have recently completed high school and are making the transition to their adult lives.

The Community Habilitation program has more than doubled in size since it began two years ago, and Thad expects additional growth in the future. "Many adults are completing high school and still living with their families, but need assistance to develop their abilities to gain greater independence," said Thad.

For more information about the Community Habilitation program, contact the Barber National Institute at 100 Villani Road, Bridgeville, PA 15017; (412) 220-6030 or email BNIPitts@BarberInstitute.org.

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“Grammy” Bev DiCarlo with her inspiration, grandson Aidan.

Running for a Cause

“Why am I doing this?” At some point when she’s running another half-marathon, Bev DiCarlo will ask herself that question. But then, she’ll start thinking about the reason that she undertook this 50-state, four-year challenge—her grandson.

“Even now, in every race, I tell myself that the last mile is for Aidan. If he can do it...if he can work so hard to achieve his goals, then so can I,” said Bev.

Since January, 2010, Bev’s goal has been to complete a half marathon in all 50 states by the time she turns 70 years of age in 2014. Her “Race With Grammy” began in Disney World, Florida, and has since taken her to every part of the country—including Hawaii. By the start of 2013 she will have competed in 43 states with only seven states and the District of Columbia left to conquer.

But the travelling and the running don’t tell the whole story. Because of her grandson’s experience with autism, Bev undertook “Race With Grammy” to increase awareness about autism, as well as to raise funds to support services for children and adults at the Barber National Institute. Over the past three years, “Race With Grammy” has raised \$30,585 to date for the Barber Foundation.

As she travels across the country, Bev is continuously amazed by the people who want to share their stories. “They see me with the autism logo on my running shirt, and want to tell me about their grandchild, their niece, their nephew,” said Bev. “I am still surprised by the number of people whose lives are touched by autism.”

For Bev’s family, the hope and help that they needed was found at the Barber National Institute. Now, Grammy is asking others to join her in supporting services for children and adults living with the challenges of autism. For every \$50 donation, Bev will send her donors a “Race with Grammy” t-shirt. You can make a gift and follow Bev’s progress toward her goal by visiting BarberInstitute.org, or RaceWithGrammy.com. For more information, contact Gary L. Bukowski, CFRE, vice president for Advancement, at (814) 878-4033 or email garybukowski@barberinstitute.org.

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EITC Donations Help Students

Many students who were once confined to wheel chairs are now getting the opportunity to safely move to an upright position thanks to new equipment purchased with funds from the Educational Improvement Tax Credit program. Qualifying businesses can make a contribution to this fund and receive a reduction in their Pennsylvania tax rate.

Since the Barber National Institute became approved for this program in 2004, more than \$216,966 has been donated through the EITC program to purchase a variety of equipment and supplies for students with multiple handicaps in the Elizabeth Lee Black School. The new EasyStand Evolv Youth Stander purchased this year allows therapists to gradually raise students from sitting to an upright standing position. Other equipment purchased through the EITC program includes a variety of devices to enable communication for non-verbal students.

The Barber National Institute is also approved to administer the preschool scholarship program which enables businesses to help fund preschool for families in need. Since this program began in 2004, donations of more than \$625,683 have helped 105 families ensure that their child receives a quality preschool education.

Businesses are invited to consider how they may benefit from this program and make a contribution that will directly help a child learn and grow. For more information, please call Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, executive vice president at the Barber National Institute, at (814) 878-5903 or MaureenBarberCarey@BarberInstitute.org

Physical therapist Christina Gross, MS, assists student Logan Edmunds to stand upright in equipment purchased through the EITC program.



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We share resources about disabilities, autism and link up with other nonprofits.



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“Looking back over the past three years and realizing the accomplishments my son has achieved and the obstacles he’s overcome are truly amazing. These things would not have been possible without your hard work and dedication. I know it has not always been easy, but you believed in him, pushed him, and then celebrated with him throughout these times. I will be forever grateful for all that you have done.”

**—Marci Smith
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Erie Insurance
Erie Maennerchor
Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority
Erie Seawolves
Eriez Manufacturing Company
Etzel’s Automotive
Evans Capital Management
Evelyn’s Hallmark
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Figgy’s Sweet Sensations
First Niagara Bank
Fisher Jewelers
Forquer Group, Inc.
GE Foundation
General Electric Transportation Systems
Giant Eagle
Great Lakes Building and Construction Trades Council
Greater Erie Community Action Committee
H & H Machined Products Company
Hagan Business Machines
Haircutz
Hallman Auto Group
Har-Kel, Inc.
Helping Hands Management, LLC
Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield
Home Instead Senior Care
Hubbard Bert Karle Weber, Inc.
Insurance Management Company
Interstate Mitsubishi

Jeff Connelly, Esquire, LLC
Jiffy Print
John Fries Auto Sales
Jordan Heating & A/C, Inc.
J. Thomas Tree Service
Kerrigan Automotive (Gatz Automotive, Inc.)
Kerr’s Tire Korner
Keystone Research Corporation
Kidder Wachter Architecture & Design
KIMKOPY Printing
King Communications
Knickerbocker Equipment Co., Inc.
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Knox, McLaughlin, Gornall & Sennett, P.C.
Krahe Bros. Collision
Kraus Department Store
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Lake Shore
LECOM
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National Fuel Gas Distribution Corporation



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 PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.
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Warren youngsters found success at the "Ready, Set, Ride!" camp.

As Easy as Riding a Bike

When Justin Cross first came to the learn-to-bike camp in Warren County this September, he just couldn't maintain balance on his bike without the help of training wheels. As an active and motivated seven-year-old, this was frustrating for Justin, and he began to lose confidence in ever being able to ride a two-wheeler all on his own.

Fast forward two weeks, and it's a completely different story. Justin was one of the first campers in the "Ready, Set, Ride!" bike camp to successfully ride a two-wheeler independently.

According to Nicole Parker, one of the camp leaders, Justin made great progress after staff discovered that his bike was too large for him. Once Justin got on a smaller bike, he was able to stay balanced and pick up coasting, breaking and other basic skills of bike riding.

"The great thing about this program is that it's set up to address each individual's needs," said Nicole. "Once we find out which obstacle needs to be overcome, we can work on doing that."

By finding success on the smaller bike, Justin began to rebuild his confidence. When he eventually tried the larger bike again he discovered that he could ride more comfortably. For the final two weeks of camp, Justin practiced weaving in and out of cones, following other riders and using safety skills.

"For Justin, finding his balance on the bike was key for him to ride with confidence," said Nicole. "When he was able to ride, he couldn't wait to have his grandmother come and watch him."

The "Ready, Set, Ride!" learn-to-bike camp is held each summer. For information on the Erie camp, contact Donna Roesch at (814) 874-5671 or for the Warren camp, contact Lindsay VandeVelde at (814) 726-8445.



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