

News



A newsletter for the friends of FECA • Foundation for Empowering Citizens with Autism • Winter 2017

FECA Spring Gala – The Yale Club – April 4, 2017

The Foundation for Empowering Citizens with Autism (FECA) held its 22nd Annual Spring Gala on Tuesday evening, April 4th, welcoming more than 250 guests to New York City's Yale Club for the second time. The event raised more



Phil Orlando presenting Strategas with FECA's Lifetime Achievement Award.

than \$200,000 to help FECA continue its mission of ensuring that individuals with autism-spectrum disorders lead meaningful and productive lives.

The benefit was chaired by long-time Board members Elise & Phil Orlando and Melanie & Drew Schaffran, bringing together supporters to celebrate both the achievements of our young people and FECA's broader new mission to create employment opportunities for adults with autism.

Gina DeCaprio once again chaired an incredible silent auction full of exciting and unique items, such as theater tickets, golf outings, autographed sports memorabilia, tickets to sporting events, fine



Don Rissmiller, Partner & Chief Economist of Strategas, graciously accepting their award from Phil Orlando.

wines, restaurants, jewelry, designer handbags and two unique maps of France over 330 years old. The silent auction contributed significantly to the financial success of the annual event, as

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Extraordinary Ventures New York Opens New Site in Mt. Kisco

It is extraordinary what might arise from a ping pong table, a candle making kit and hours of shopping and experimenting with simple seasonal decorations. Of course, the key ingredient to any successful enterprise always rests with the intrepid humanity behind the effort.

Extraordinary Ventures New York (EVNY) began as an idea prompted by



EVNY employees enjoy the camaraderie as they work.

the offer of mentorship by the original North Carolina group of the same name. EVNC has, in their ten years of operation, advanced the microbusiness concept to embrace distinct enterprises, finely tuned to the interests and skills of adults on the autism spectrum. The question before the small but mighty EVNY board was whether our community of potential employees would want or be able to make candles and if they would actually sell.

Now two years into the enterprise, the answer is a resounding yes! Through the "extraordinary" commitment, dedication to purpose and multi-faceted training, the EVNY candle business has grown into EV Gifts with the addition of a line of beautiful beaded bracelets. Under the talented leadership of EVNY Director



Cutting the ribbon to officially open EVNY!

Liz Oliveto, candle sales have expanded to embrace over a dozen venues still affording the opportunity for the seasoned sales team to apply both their skills and their charm directly to local communities throughout Westchester. Community sales have ranged from the first ever EV sale at the Chappaqua Bell Middle School to the Yorktown Grange Fair to the Peekskill and John Jay Homestead Farmer's markets, to Frosty Day in Armonk, St. Patrick's Fair in Bedford, and the Holiday Lights festival in

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Thornwood, all revisited again this year. EVNY rounded out the season with a special invitation to sell at the ever-popular Tarrytown Music Hall. The candles have also been ordered for private functions, weddings and bar mitzvahs.

Earlier in the year, a line of beaded bracelets with festive charms were added to the EV Gift line. The EV production team is barely keeping up with demand, which though originally targeted to women, now includes sweetly adorned bracelets for girls. A local school's boys lacrosse team also purchased a specially designed bracelet with a unique lacrosse stick charm.

Local businesses are also stepping up to the plate. The ever-popular Country Willow, a Bedford Hills home furnishing store, proudly displays and sells EV seasonal candles at their front desk and recently added a special baby powder scented candle to their Country Willow Baby store. The Katonah children's store, & James, is now selling bracelets with special gift packaging for young girls.

As Ms. Oliveto oversaw the further growth and development of products and increasing sales opportunities, business manager Ann DiChiara presided over the onerous task of finding properly zoned space and with that, the complete transformation into the beautiful facility that emerged in September. EVNY legal counsel, Drew Schaffran, with an enormously generous pro bono team from the Morgan Lewis law firm, provided countless hours of advice and counsel required of a nonprofit corporate start up.

And on September 25, just two years after its first public sale, Extraordinary Ventures New York officially moved out of the Schaffran basement and into formal headquarters at 350 Lexington Avenue in Mt. Kisco.

None of this would have been possible without the initial startup funding that FECA has provided which enabled production and sustained growth and the



hiring of staff to direct and manage the developing businesses. The acquisition of rental space and the substantial construction required to create functional work space completed the circle that now will enable the hiring of additional EV employees to achieve the goals of each developing business. The two pivotal grants follow FECA's mission of supporting programs that advance employment opportunities for adults on the spectrum.

As we go to press, EVNY proudly staffs employees for production and sales. A bulletin board at the site proudly displays the beaming smiles of each employee as they receive their first paycheck.

An intimate ribbon cutting on the first day of operation was followed by a celebratory open house that welcomed friends and supporters as well as a community of current and potential employees and their families.

The new EVNY headquarters at 350 Lexington Avenue in Mt. Kisco will house the expanded EV gifts operation, an office essentials business and a laundry service. A job training and assessment business for graduating high school students is under development.

MBIA Continues its Support for Computer Training at DAP

The MBIA Foundation, through its partnership with FECA, continues to serve its mission of enhancing the overall quality of life in

communities. MBIA's sustained support has enabled Devereux Adult Program consumers to continue to receive IPAD training from

Jordan Jankus, ARC's technologist. The program teaches consumers better access to and use of the tools available through mobile devices.

Gala

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most of the items are donated and secured by members of the Benefit Committee and the Board of Directors. A few select items were hotly pursued, as guests were in a feeding frenzy to go home with their coveted prize.

FECA's always-terrific raffle drawing concluded the evening with lucky guest Amy Alexander winning the top prize, a vacation to Cancun, Mexico.

The highlight of the evening was FECA's presentation of the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award to its honoree, Strategas, a global institutional investment advisory firm. Strategas has been behind FECA for the past decade and continues to generously support it, as FECA endeavors to provide employment and volunteer opportunities for young adults with autism.

Our 23rd Annual cocktail party will be held on Tuesday night, April 10th, 2018 at The Yale Club. Details will follow after Christmas, but please mark your calendars.

22nd Annual Spring Gala – April 4, 2017



FECA Welcomes Two New Board Members

Within the past year, two Westchester residents graciously agreed to bring their talents and passionate advocacy to the FECA Board of Directors.

Marc Carter, who is known throughout Westchester for his commitment to a diverse community of charities and non-profits, completed his first year with FECA in September. Marc has served on the Scarsdale School Board, the Mount Pleasant Cottage School Board and the Hawthorne



Marc Carter

Foundation to name just a few. He currently serves on the Scarsdale Village Council on People with Disabilities. He has had a long and distinguished career as a management consultant specializing in healthcare information systems technology. Marc is married to Liane Kupferberg Carter, author of the bestselling memoir "Ketchup is My Favorite Vegetable."

Phyllis J. Lombardi first became known in 1999 to Westchester with the publication of a New York Times article heralding her extraordinary commitment and drive to find and obtain educational services for her son Joey. Not content with his ultimate attendance at the exem-



Phyllis J. Lombardi

plary Ardsley School District program, Phyllis created the Special Needs Committee which continues to thrive under her leadership. She has served on the board of Westchester ARC and as a family mentor fellow at the Westchester Institute for Human Development and chair of the Westchester East Putnam Region PTA. She also administers one of the most active county Facebook pages, the "Special Mom's Network." She is a client relations specialist for the law firm, Barger & Gaines which specializes in Education Law.

Welcome and thank you Marc and Phyllis!!



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ONEE Continues to Advance a Mission of Expanded Volunteer Opportunities

FECA's Opportunity Network for Employers and Employees continues to expand its reach throughout Westchester as it seeks to locate and offer day habilitation providers and individuals on the autism spectrum volunteer opportunities.

Participants in the Devereux Adult Program travel to the Walgreens in Ossining where they work alongside employees combing through inventory to ensure stock is appropriately maintained. "The staff are so grateful for the extra help," explains Ariefa Inayet, store manager as "The detailed work the young men perform on the floor, helping to maintain the shelves and showcase the product so customers can locate them easily, allows staff the time they need to assist customers for a better shopping experience." DAP consumers have been invited to participate in daily

staff meetings, a first for ONEE.

ONEE's newest agency partner is the Hawthorne Foundation which, for 35 years, has provided hundreds of individuals with disabilities with education, habilitative, vocational and recreational programs. ONEE is seeking to expand volunteer opportunities for adults in their program. Elizabeth Noble, Hawthorne's director said, "Matching the Hawthorne Foundation Day Hab consumers with the tasks they enjoy doing is a key component for our collaboration with ONEE."

ONEE is also partnering with Volunteer New York and the Readiness through Integrated Service Engagement (RISE) program to access vocational training through a program designed specifically for day habilitation participants.

Westchester Medical Center, ONEE's first volunteer partner, continues to provide diverse opportunities throughout the hospital. Marshalls store is another new ONEE site added to the DAP roster. Gisel Rodriguez, Marshalls store manager stated that "The young men that come to volunteer at Marshalls do a great job and take pride in being able to assist us. With the 2017 holiday season around the corner, we look forward to another busy year."

Check out FECA's website,
www.fecainc.org

Make sure to follow us and
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Foundation for Empowering
Citizens with Autism!



23rd Annual

FECA Spring Reception

Tuesday, April 10, 2018 • 6:30 – 9:30 pm

The Yale Club of New York City, 50 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY
Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction • Invitation to follow