

## FECA Spring Gala – The Yale Club – April 10, 2018

The Foundation for Empowering Citizens with Autism (FECA) held its 23rd Annual Spring Gala on Tuesday evening, April 10th, welcoming more than 250 guests to the Yale Club for the third time. Several guests flew into New York City from all parts of the U.S. to attend the event, which raised more 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 wines, restaurant certificates, jewelry and designer handbags. The silent auction contributed significantly to the financial success of the annual event, as the majority of items are donated and secured by members of the Benefit Committee and the Board of Directors. A few select silent auction items were hotly pursued late into the evening, as guests were in a feeding frenzy to

go home with their coveted prize.

The highlight of the evening was FECA's presentation of the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award to the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, which has provided extensive support to the autism community for the last two decades. The Flutie Foundation was instrumental through grants to FECA over a three year period which made possible the creation of DMLC's vocational program.

Nick Savarese, Flutie's Executive Director, was present to receive FECA's gratitude and acknowledgement of their extensive leadership and support on behalf of children and adults on the spectrum.



Nick Savarese poses with the FECA Board after accepting the honoree award for the Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism.



Phil Orlando, Board Member and emcee, addresses the crowd, thanking them for their support.

Our 24th Annual cocktail party will be held on **Wednesday, April 3, 2019** at The Yale Club in NYC.

Details to follow after Christmas, but please mark your calendars.

## FECA's Support Enables Continued Growth for Volunteer and Employment Initiatives Serving the Autism Community

On the eve of a seminal event, a quarter of a century anniversary, FECA remains committed to our mission of helping individuals on the autism spectrum have a brighter tomorrow. Our "key" symbol represents the services we promote to unlock their potential, through education, community integration and employment opportunities.

Our first project, a school, will be celebrating its 23rd year at its expanded site in Mt. Kisco. Devereux CARES, formerly the Devereux Millwood Learning Center, continues to provide a state of the art education to 48 students from the New York metropolitan area. The Devereux Adult Program, the second collaboration with our service provider partner, continues to provide a meaningful community inclu-

sion experience for 14 adults whose opportunities have been greatly expanded through FECA's ONEE program. The Opportunity Network for Employers and Employees has expanded volunteer experiences to new sites throughout the county. FECA also supports recreational activities through a bimonthly SPARC program and is in its third year of funding a computer training program, that has





Three EVNY businesses now operate under one roof



Devereux CARES students set up for an event at Mt. Kisco Lutheran Church, a ONEE site



Gregg organizes the shelves at Walgreens, a Devereux ONEE site



Max wishes happy holidays to Walgreens staff member with an EVNY candle



Folding laundry for a happy EVNY customer



Hawthorne dayhab consumers wish happy holidays to Croton Free Library, a ONEE site with an EVNY candle

expanded access to further learning and recreational activities with iPad devices.

Just down the road from the Mt. Kisco school site is Extraordinary Ventures New York (EVNY). EVNY is FECA's principal business partner supporting our third mission, to provide employment opportunities for adults. September 2018 marked the one-year anniversary of the opening of EVNY's Mt. Kisco location, which originated in the basement of an EVNY founder. FECA supporters provided the critical funding needed to substantially prepare and renovate this business site. Their support also funded staffing needed to grow EV's first business, EV Gifts, to expand a second business, EV Office Solutions and to launch a third, EV Laundry.

EV Gifts continues to grow. The popular scented and seasonally accented candles are a favorite holiday purchase at community craft and gift fairs. EVNY employees enjoy making the creatively adorned bracelets offered in a multitude of colors, with charms representing a wide range of sentiments from high school athletic teams to bar mitzvah celebrations, birthdays and more. The possibilities for personalizing both the candles and bracelets are endless and provide an opportunity for EV employees to express their artistic talents.

The current Office Solutions enterprise neatly fits into a perfect niche between the other two businesses, both figuratively and literally. An active shredding business provides both the "excelsior" for candles and gift bags and packaging for shipping candles. This also provides an interim work activity, as the laundry cycle requires time for the machine to finish its work before employees can continue theirs. The business became so successful that a high-powered shredder became immediately necessary as the donated machines tired of their constant use and simply wore out. This business offers a range of solutions to modern-day business needs, in-

cluding mailing and assembling packages, and gives EV the opportunity to contribute to a better world by repurposing paper products that traditionally make their way to a recycling center.

Last, but certainly not least, is the EV Laundry business, launched during the winter months under the expert direction of program manager, Andrew Tedder.

Pivoting from a several decades long career in the retail field, Andrew played a principal role in the creation of the enormously successful Prospector Theater in Ridgefield, Connecticut, which proudly employs dozens of adults with disabilities. Next he took on the dog biscuit world, directing the successful Good Reasons enterprise in South Salem, New York which also employs adults on the spectrum.

Under Andrew's direction, EV Laundry has expanded its reach to residential customers throughout northern Westchester as well as to local hair salons. Training and a critical eye for a professional product are the essential ingredients in the growth of this business, which included the introduction of the camp bag experience at EVNY this summer. These gargantuan duffels, that return to overwhelmed parents after long, hot summers with weary campers, landed at the EV site with a delightful thud and were returned to satisfied customers almost overnight, ready for the next summer season.

Employees not only sort, wash, fold and package laundry, but pick up and deliver it to the home and business door as well. Recently, EV promoted Alex as their first fully-independent delivery driver. He is using his tenure as a proving ground in his quest to become a full-time school bus driver.

FECA's mission to promote and enhance the productive lives of adults on the spectrum continues to be fully realized through our sustained support for the ONEE program and the businesses created through EVNY.



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### FECA Continues Tradition of Granting Scholarships

FECA continues its twenty-year tradition of granting scholarships to individuals furthering their education in the fields of special education or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). This year there were three recipients of FECA scholarships.

The first scholarship was presented to Karissa James, who is studying at St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia. The second recipient was Sara Lerich, who is working towards her Master's in Special Education at CUNY Queens

College. The third scholarship was awarded to Kelly Bergin, a special educator working towards her BCBA certification. To date, this brings FECA's total scholarships granted to over \$100,000.





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Foundation for Empowering  
Citizens with Autism!



# 24th Annual FECA *Spring Reception*



**Wednesday, April 3, 2019 • 6:30 – 9:30 PM**

The Yale Club of NYC, 50 Vanderbilt Ave., New York City

Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction • Invitation to follow