

Voice



Viscardi Goes for Gold at Celebrity Sports Night

Last May, The Viscardi Center rolled out the red carpet for its most successful fundraiser to date. Over 900 community leaders, philanthropists, and celebrities attended the Center's **50th Annual Celebrity Sports Night**, which raised a record-breaking \$4.47 million — largely thanks to several *sweet* gifts made by the Entenmann family — for the enhancement and expansion of its programs and services that serve children and adults with disabilities.

Celebrity Sports Night has drawn famous athletes to Albertson, N.Y., for five decades, but the Golden Anniversary lineup was a game changer. Headlining the milestone occasion was New York Giants quarterback, Eli Manning, host of HBO's *Real Sports*, Bryant Gumbel, and former New York Jets quarterback and four-time guest, Joe Namath.

Other all-stars in attendance included Sarah Hughes, Lee Rousen, Mookie Wilson, Mike Stromberg, Mick Foley, Ed Kranepool, Kym Hampton, John Schmitt, Karl Nelson, Bud Harrelson, John Dockery, and Wesley Walker.

Victoria Arlen, who became a Paralympic gold-medal swimmer and ESPN reporter after a rare disease put her into a vegetative state for four years, accepted the Roy Campanella Award for her achievements. "I stand before you today as a living example of the power of hope, and how with it, almost anything truly is possible," she said. "The Viscardi Center is all about hope for a better tomorrow."

Presented by the Ralph & Lucy Palleschi Family Foundation and Chaired by John J. Gutleber, President and CEO of Castagna Realty Co., Inc., the night honored long-time supporters Ralph F. Palleschi, President and COO of First Long Island Investors, LLC and Richard J. Daly, President and CEO of Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

Past honorees and chairs of the Legends of Viscardi Emeritus Board — Co-Chaired by Michael C. Pascucci, Chairman of Netrex LLC, and Stephen M. Ross, Owner of the Miami Dolphins — received a statue of Dr. Viscardi to recognize their lasting impact on the Center.

President and CEO of The Viscardi Center, John D. Kemp, thanked donors for investing in the future of children and adults with disabilities, while noting the challenges still facing the community. The Center's goal, said Kemp, is to "perfect" founder Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr.'s vision of inclusion by building new ideas and plans that provide individuals with the tools to overcome daily obstacles and, ultimately, lead fulfilling lives.

"The Viscardi Center is one of the very few places in the country that educates medically fragile children with severe disabilities, guides adolescents toward lives of independence, and trains and places adults with disabilities in jobs," he said. "All of you here tonight are Viscardi's biggest fans, our long-term donors who have seen your investment returned in students and consumers who graduate and become valuable, contributing members of our communities."

Stay ahead of the game and mark your calendars: next year's event is set for May 18, 2017.

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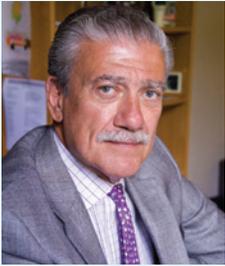
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During June, The Viscardi Center was abuzz with excitement and anticipation for the future as we celebrated the

achievements of our students. This celebratory time brings the joy and wonder of youth to the forefront as we share the enthusiasm, hope, and eagerness of those we serve.

We applauded three dozen at-risk Freeport and Westbury high school students for completing our PROSPER program and having the courage and strength to reshape their lives. Like guest speaker William T. Rolack, Sr., Senior Director of Workplace Strategy, Diversity, and Strategic Alliances at Major League Baseball said, "Your power is now. This is your moment. There's nothing that you can't do, be, or have."

(More at [ViscardiCenter.org](#))

As students graduated from Youth Transition Services, we learned about what lies ahead for them now that they have the skills to navigate the adult world — with many having already secured employment in their communities.

We beamed with pride as the Henry Viscardi School Class of 2016 received diplomas and set their sights on their next endeavors. Our valedictorian is heading to Adelphi University, and the salutatorian to Hunter College, then Marist, this fall. *(More on page 3)*

These spirited youngsters are our future neighbors, employees, leaders, and advocates. We hope you, too, will see their gifts and potential, and wholeheartedly welcome them to become an inclusive part of the world.

John Henry
President & CEO



JetBlue: Onboard for Change



JetBlue Airways has long aspired to be the top airline for travelers with disabilities. Judging by its unique contributions to The Viscardi Center, the Blue crew — led by President and CEO Robin Hayes — is en route to accomplishing its goal. From raising disability awareness at fundraisers, to marching beside Viscardi at the Disability Pride Parade, to preparing diverse job seekers for employment, JetBlue has proven its commitment to enhancing passenger and employee accessibility on the ground and in the sky.

For those who depend on powered wheelchairs and consistent medical care, flying can be a logistical challenge. In an effort to make air travel a reality for students from the Henry Viscardi School, Bob Bilak, the director of crew relations and compliance at JetBlue, began facilitating day-trips from New York to Boston. These flights provide a group of students, many of whom have never traveled in an aircraft, the chance to check-in at John F. Kennedy International Airport, observe the inner-workings of the cockpit, engage with crewmembers and pilots, and enjoy lunch in Boston's Logan International Airport. And Viscardi students aren't the only ones learning a thing or two on the journey — JetBlue's Corporate Facility team uses the experience to identify ways to improve the overall travel experience for people with disabilities and offer training opportunities for its staff.

For staff, the learning process continues after touchdown. As a member of Viscardi's National Business & Disability Council — an employer organization and comprehensive resource for disability best practices — crewmembers regularly consult with experts and access information related to hiring and retaining employees with disabilities. In turn, the crew regularly mentors participants in Viscardi's vocational training and employment placement services program, instilling eager job hunters with the tools and confidence to land an appropriate position.

Partnerships with companies like JetBlue don't just sustain the programs and services offered at the Center. They encourage social and corporate changes that help elevate the disability community to new heights.

Meet the Class of 2016

The future looks bright for Henry Viscardi School graduates



On an early summer evening, ten students from the Henry Viscardi School put on their white and blue caps and gowns. Each made their way into a gym packed with family, staff, and faculty. They received diplomas — some with honors. They met

with commencement speaker Senator Jack M. Martins. And then they bid farewell to the place that nurtured them for so many years and, like all new grads must, prepared for the next phase of their lives.

Meet Christopher Alvarez, Jabriel Graham, Christian Guillermo, Laura Kinney, Amber Madrigal, Chris Scharrer, Mariah Sepulveda, Jason Stuart, Jasmine Travers, and Matthew Zelen. They are the Class of 2016.

Many of the graduates have enrolled in college, while others are exploring employment opportunities in their communities. Valedictorian Christopher Alvarez will major in communications with a broadcasting focus at Adelphi University this fall.

“What I love most about HVS is that its doors are open not just for me, but for my peers who face the challenges of physical disabilities in their daily lives,” said Alvarez, who started in the pre-K program. “This school has been a respite of hope and strength.”

Like Alvarez, salutatorian Mariah Sepulveda has acted as a student ambassador in Albany and at fundraisers. She has her heart set on studying communications at Hunter College — and later Marist College in the spring — where she hopes to realize her dream of becoming a motivational speaker and writer.

“Being a student at Viscardi since Kindergarten has opened tons of doors for me throughout the years,” she said. “I’ve been involved in many extracurricular activities where I got to show my strengths as a leader, team player, and advocate for my fellow classmates and friends.”

President and CEO John D. Kemp ended the ceremony with words of encouragement.

“Continue to take pride in your disability and shape the world for all of us with — and without — disabilities,” he said. “Go out and embrace the new adventures ahead of you. You are well prepared.”



for People with Disabilities, celebrates diversity and promotes disability awareness in the metropolitan area and beyond.

Mayor Bill de Blasio declared July “Disability Pride Month” at the inaugural parade last summer to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the groundbreaking Americans with Disabilities Act, which legally prohibits discrimination against those with disabilities in all areas of public life.

out & about

Alongside the JetBlue crew and thousands of supporters, The Viscardi Center rolled and marched on Union Square Park to Madison Square Park at the second annual **Disability Pride Parade** in New York City.

The parade, hosted by the Mayor’s Office

AWARDS & ACCOLADES



It’s official. The Henry Viscardi School now has its very own National Honor Society Chapter.

At a traditional ceremony, the Faculty Council recognized seven sophomores, juniors, and seniors whose accomplishments exceeded high grades. Selection was based on academic achievements, peer leadership qualities, and involvement in extracurricular activities.

“We started this chapter because we knew our students met the national criteria,” said Chapter Advisor and Guidance Counselor Monica Snyder. “Going forward, membership in the National Honor Society could help lead to acceptance into prestigious colleges.”

NewsBytes



What does the Class of 2016 think about HVS? Find out by watching the award-winning short produced by graduating seniors, “The School That Love Built.”



Learn how PROSPER improved the outlook for “at-risk” youths by viewing the end-of-the-year video screened at the program’s Moving-On Ceremony.

Visit our YouTube channel to watch these videos and many more at www.youtube.com/user/AbilitiesOnline

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Inaugural Whiskey Flight!

Take a tasting trip around the world. Meet distillers and master blenders. Sample gourmet foods. **October 20** at the Cradle of Aviation in Garden City, NY

Stay connected!
#ViscardiRaisesSpirits | Purchase tickets at ViscardiCenter.org

You're

I N V I T E D

4th Annual Golf Outing

14 SEP | **Glen Head Country Club
Glen Head, NY**

Includes a round of golf, cocktails and dinner, exciting on-course enhancements, and silent auction.



Legacy Bike Ride

1 OCT | **The Viscardi Center
Albertson, NY**

Ride with Team Viscardi and enjoy festive fall fun for the whole family.



For tickets, sponsorships, and more information, visit ViscardiCenter.org or call 516.465.1595

YOUR LASTING IMPACT

Carole and Michael Marks know just how transformational “movement” can be. Their lives were transformed when Carole, a teacher who grew up on a small farm in Missouri, and Michael, a successful business executive and budding entrepreneur, moved cross-country with two young children and no jobs, to embark on what Carole describes as a “a joy ride.”

Now as a result of Michael’s business successes, the Marks are changing the lives of children with severe physical disabilities at the Henry Viscardi School at The Viscardi Center through movement — Dance Movement Therapy, that is. The initial benefactors of the School’s DMT program, they see how transformational the classes are for the students.

“We knew even the smallest movement could have a positive impact on their physical and mental health and quality of life,” explains Carole. “The ability to move around is often taken for granted.” The DMT program has helped Viscardi students find a

new sense of self, build confidence, interact with one another, and enjoy motion and music.

Michael recalls how his first experience at Celebrity Sports Night this year solidified his commitment to the cause. “It’s great to know that we are making a difference at this very special place.”

“Viscardi spoke to our hearts,” says Carole, who with her sister, Jan, designed and created a handmade Viscardi quilt to be displayed at the Center. “We are totally blessed to be able to give back.”

For more information about how you can make an impact, contact the Development Office at 516.465.1594

