



# Timelines



MAY 2005

## Successful Parenting Against All Odds *A Special Mother's Day Tribute*

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**Celebrating Mom**—Sean, Josh and Cheryl McRae relax at home

music. He does not speak and relies on his parents for all of his personal care needs. Although Josh's needs consume a great deal of his parent's energy, Cheryl and Gary make time to encourage Sean as well. He excels academically and has made friends in his neighborhood.

Working with Cheryl and Gary and their kids led The Arc of East Middlesex to establish the Successful Parenting Program five years ago. The Successful Parenting Program

includes education and support for parents with learning disabilities who are raising children with disabilities.

"We realized that their needs were altogether different," said Judy. "Cheryl paved the way. She is a role model for

**I**n celebration of Mother's Day, we are pleased to recognize a Mom who has overcome considerable challenges and done an outstanding job raising her kids. Although staff at The Arc of East Middlesex are impressed each day by parents toiling to give their children the tools they need to fully develop their potential, Cheryl McRae is at the top of our list.

Cheryl and Gary McRae are the loving and supportive parents of two boys, Josh, 16, who has significant disabilities and attends the Greater Lawrence Education Collaborative and Sean, 14, an honors student at Reading Memorial High School.

"Cheryl is like a general contractor. The Town of Reading has done a fabulous job in supporting this family, but she pulled all of the pieces together," said Judy Santa Maria, founder of The Arc of East Middlesex's Successful Parenting Program for parents with special needs and Assistant Director of our Family Resource Center. "She gives Josh his shots a couple of days a week; she's done the behavioral piece; she was the bus monitor when they couldn't find anyone else to do it and then she went to work in the afternoon. She's done an amazing job."

Josh enjoys his family and listening to

**"Cheryl is like a general contractor. The Town of Reading has done a fabulous job in supporting this family, but she pulled all of the pieces together."** —JUDY SANTA MARIA

the mothers in the group," she added.

In addition to raising their two sons, Cheryl increased her outside work hours when Gary was between jobs. She now works five days a week at CVS in downtown Reading.

How does she balance work and family?

"I don't know how I do it. I do it because it has to be done," Cheryl says.

On this Mother's Day, we salute Cheryl and all mothers whose love and dedication have made such a difference in the lives of their children with disabilities.



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## A Tribute to Mothers of Children with Special Needs

**T**his is a time to honor a group to which I belong—mothers of children who need life-long mothering. Our children get older and they may even move out of our homes someday. But, they never move out of our hearts.

Today, I am saluting us. We are a special bunch of warriors. We have accepted some of life's greatest challenges and still greet each day with enthusiasm. We have our bad days, but we think of them as challenges and dwell instead on the gifts our children bring us.

While I salute us, I am thinking of the mothers who came before us and made our travels so much easier. The Arc of East Middlesex is almost 50 years old and was established by mothers (and fathers) who had children who were not allowed to go to school and were not deemed worthy enough for life saving medical interventions. These parents rose up and demanded opportunities for their children. Because of their efforts, when my son was born almost 26 years ago, we were welcomed into the community of exceptionality by early intervention, family support, public education and the right to dream that anything was possible.

If you are a new parent, welcome to the club of responsibility. This is where we each have the obligation to build on the success of those who came before us. While we didn't ask to be in this club, this is what life has given us and I hope that it brings you as much joy as it brings to me.

Let me end with a story about my son, Jon. After Jon finished high school, he left home for the Riverview School's post-graduate program on Cape Cod. For visits home, he learned to take a bus from Hyannis to Logan Airport, where we would meet him at the USAir Terminal.

One particular Friday, the airport in Pittsburgh, a USAir hub, was closed. This created chaos at Logan as travelers tried to make other arrangements for cancelled flights. Several of the buses I expected Jon to be on came and went and Jon was not among the passengers. Then a bus got stuck in the terminal. All traffic was diverted. My efforts to get information only made my growing anxiety worse. There were two different police forces at the airport, the State Police and Massport's, and each gave me different information. I tried calling the bus company, only to be foiled by the long lines for phones and the bus company's voice mail system. My cell phone was with my daughter, then 15, who was preparing for one of those all important semi-formals. I was beginning to fear I would miss yet another one of her milestone events. I began to add up all the events I had missed because I was doing something related to disability. I hadn't forgiven myself for missing her first day of kindergarten.

I finally found a phone and demanded that the bus company radio the next bus to locate Jon as he was now 90 minutes late and that was too long for him to be unaccounted for. Suddenly, there was a tap on my shoulder. I turned and it was Jon. He had been dropped off at another terminal and took the airport shuttle back to USAir, all the while carrying a large duffel. Hugging him, I asked how he found me and he answered, "I have known you my whole life."

Whenever I meet a mother who shares the same journey, it as if I have known her my whole life. Happy Mother's Day.

## BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

# David Snover

**W**ho better than a salesman to serve as an ambassador for our programs? The Board of Directors recently recruited David Snover to join their ranks following his outstanding efforts to attract new donors to our organization through The Tucker Memorial Dinner & Auction and our Tribute Gift Program.

"David will be a great asset. His business experience, his personal connection to our mission and his enthusiasm made him an ideal candidate," said Barbara Crystal, Board President.

David, a Senior Mortgage Consultant for First Call Mortgage in Andover, has 27 years of sales experience. He worked in the printing and high tech industries for more than two decades before joining Arc of East Middlesex supporter Carl McFadden at First Call Mortgage two and a half years ago.

"I can see myself doing this for many years to come. It's fun helping people," David said of his work in the mortgage field.

David is originally from Endicott, New York, a community near Binghamton. In his teen years, he recalls majoring in fun, playing basketball and baseball and chasing girls.

"My older sister went to college in Boston. When I was in the eighth or ninth grade I visited her and over the

course of a few days we went to a dog track, out for Chinese food and by Fenway Park. That was all it took. I knew where I wanted to be," recalled David. After a couple of years of junior college, he became a serious student at Northeastern University, where he majored in Management and Marketing.

David and his wife Donna and their daughters Morgan, 11; Kayla, 9; and Lane, 8; live in Lynnfield. They became involved with The Arc of East Middlesex through the Family Resource Center after Kayla was born with Down syndrome. They are now *very* involved. They have been featured in an Arc video; Donna, an educational advocate, serves on our Family Council; and in addition to serving on the Board of Directors, David is a big booster of our Center for Emerging Artists and has taken a leadership role in making other dads feel welcome in our Fathers Group.

"I joined the Board for personal and professional development," said David. Currently being courted for several of the Board's committees, he has a particular interest in the "fun, social and athletic" programs we offer.

The Arc of East Middlesex is not



**Ladies' Man**—David Snover and the women in his life: (l to r) Lane, Morgan, Donna and Kayla.

the only organization to recognize David's leadership abilities. He is President of the local chapter of Business Networking International (BNI), which has been recognized as one of the top chapters in the state with the organization's Founder's Award. David is also co-chair of the Affiliate Committee of the East Middlesex Association of Realtors.

We are very fortunate that The Arc of East Middlesex is among David's passions. Welcome to the Board of Directors, David!

## FIELD NOTES

### News from our colleagues in the field...

The Arc of Massachusetts has notified us of two awards for members of The Arc of East Middlesex' senior staff. **Susan Ring Brown**, Director of Development, received a *Special Award for Outstanding Efforts to Expand the Visibility of The Arc in Massachusetts* at The Arc Annual Meeting on April 4th.

**Jo Ann Simons**, Executive Director, will receive a *2005 Arc of Massachusetts Distinguished Citizen Award*, for her outstanding efforts on behalf of people with disabilities and their families at a State House ceremony scheduled for May 18th.

*Riding the Bus with My Sister*, based on the book by **Rachel Simon**, will air as a Hallmark Hall of Fame Presentation on Sunday, May 1, 2005 on CBS starring Rosie O'Donnell and Andie MacDowell.

**Helen Barclay** has written *Nathan's Journey*, a book about her son and autism for children age 8 and up. Visit [www.nathansjourney.com](http://www.nathansjourney.com).

Sibshop guru **Don Meyer** has a new book due out this spring: *Sibling Slam Book: What it's really Like To Have A Brother or Sister With Special Needs*. Available through Amazon.com.

**Attorney Richard F. Howard**, who specializes in disability law, has left Kotin, Crabtree and Strong to open an office close to home in Ipswich. He may be reached at 978-356-5600 or through his website at [www.rfhlegal.com](http://www.rfhlegal.com)

The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research has a new publication—*DENTAL CARE EVERY DAY - A CAREGIVERS GUIDE*—focusing on oral health care for our constituents. Order free at: [http://www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/health/nohic\\_forms/orderpubs.asp](http://www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/health/nohic_forms/orderpubs.asp)

**Financial Support and Service**—Areta Vokrri, Reading Branch Manager for Bank of America, presents a donation of \$500 to Michael Berardo, COO of The Arc of East Middlesex, as Vokrri's staff looks on. Vokrri has been very helpful in assisting some of the individuals at our Reading residences set up accounts.



## Shop for The Arc of East Middlesex!

Mother's Day, Father's Day, Graduations, First Communion...there are so many occasions for gift giving at this time of year! Plus, you may need new gardening or barbecue tools to enjoy this long awaited sunny season! Save yourself some time and energy and help The Arc of East Middlesex by buying the items you need and want through our on-line Shopping Village!

You can support The Arc of East Middlesex—at no extra cost to you or us. Just buy your favorite products at our new online shopping village at [www.greatergood.com/partner/theemarc](http://www.greatergood.com/partner/theemarc). **Up to 15% of the price of your purchases go directly to our organization.**

Our shopping village includes brand-name items from leading online retailers like Barnes & Noble.com, Delta Airlines, DisneyStore.com, Dell Home Systems, Coldwater Creek, The Gap, Proflowers.com, and more than 100 more. You don't pay extra to buy things online. And your security and privacy are rigorously safeguarded.

Ready to do a little shopping? Visit our Web site at [www.theemarc.org](http://www.theemarc.org), click the online shopping button on the bottom left of our home page, and off you go.

What's more, you'll receive a great retailer special when you register. Please sign up today!

## The Arc of East Middlesex is Pleased to Acknowledge Gifts From the Following Donors...

### **Tsunami Relief** Susan Sewell

**Friends—**  
**Gifts up to \$100**  
USI New England  
Kathy and Fred Conover  
Lucie and Leonard Cripps  
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**Supporters—**  
**Gifts \$101 to \$249**  
Sharon and Roger Borggaard  
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**Sustainers—**  
**Gifts \$250 to \$499**  
Lucie and Leonard Cripps

**Grants**  
The Ronald W. Findlay  
Community Living Fund  
\$25,000 grant to improve accessibility at our Pitman and Newcomb Residences

**Tribute Gifts**  
Use the Pledge form on the fundraising page or our website ([www.theemarc.org](http://www.theemarc.org)) to remember a loved one or honor a friend or relative for a special occasion. We are please to acknowledge the following tribute gifts.

**Memorials**  
**In Memory of Norma Howland**  
Margery E. Conrey  
Annette N. Gibavic  
Nancy and Ralph D'Amico

**In Memory of Jean S. Wicks**  
Lynn Plastics Company LLC and its employees  
Mary A. Daiopulos

Tony and Marilyn Frederick  
Alfred F. Goldstein  
Karen E. Hebert

**Special Occasions**  
In loving memory of a special aunt, Elinor Harte, on the anniversary of her death, from Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Hunt

**Welcome New Members**  
Janet M. Profirio  
Pam Vacca

**In Kind Gifts**  
Computer, Speakers and Printer and subwoofer  
Ms. Janet SanFillipo

Microwave, microwave cart and household goods  
Carol Prisco

*Gifts received through April 8, 2005.*

# Tower Records Names Cathy Polito *Employee of the Month*



*Whistle While You Work—* Cathy Polito dusts CDs, her favorite task at Tower Records.

**R**ealizing potential. Achieving goals. It's the motto for The Arcs in Massachusetts and it sums up Cathy Polito's success story.

In June of 1997, a job developer from East Middlesex Industries (EMI), The Arc of East Middlesex's vocational program, matched Cathy with a job at Tower Records in Burlington. In February of this year, Cathy was named *Employee of the Month*.

"Cathy really deserves it. She's fun to work with," store manager Chris Chioccola said.

Cathy's role at Tower Records is to keep the store looking good. "I dust CDs, empty trash – two barrels, clean the counters on Fridays and clean the listening stations," Cathy said during a recent interview. Her other responsibilities include dusting tapes, washing the front doors and windows and stocking magazines.

There are benefits to being named *Employee of the Month*. The recipient's name and photo are posted in the store's back room and he or she receives a \$100 bonus. For Cathy, pride in a job well done seems to be the best perk.

"It's great," she said.

Cathy interacts with other members of the Tower Records team with ease. This wasn't always the case. When Cathy began at Tower, she was shy and wouldn't speak to some of her colleagues. "She's just communicating with all of the employees now," Chris said of her growth.

Cathy had the assistance of an employment specialist when she began her new job. The specialist's role is to help the new employee learn his or her job and to develop natural supports among their new coworkers. When both the employer and the employee are comfortable with the placement, the employment specialist reduces the time they spend at the job with the employee until he or she can work independently. When new tasks are assigned or other changes occur in the work environment, the employment specialist may be called back in to assist through the transition. Cathy has had employment specialists work with her at several points during her career at Tower Records and now works independently.

"Mom & Dad are proud of her," said Marilyn Polito, Cathy's mother.

We are pleased to join Cathy's family and coworkers in congratulating her on her achievement. Keep up the great work Cathy!

## Save These Dates! Workshops & Events

**Adult Sibling Group,**  
6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 3.  
Meets at Harrington's,  
West Water St., Wakefield.  
Contact Michelle Faugno at  
781-942-4888 ext. 1-4018.

**Yard Sale,** 8 a.m. to Noon,  
Saturday, May 7, at 20  
Gould Street, Reading.  
Proceeds benefit the  
Recreation Programs of  
The Arc of East Middlesex.

**Monthly IEP Clinics,**  
held at 20 Gould Street,  
Reading. Parents of children  
eligible for DMR services  
can meet with a seasoned  
educational advocate to  
discuss issues related to  
their child's Individualized  
Educational Plan (IEP).  
Remaining dates are **May 19  
and June 9**. To set a time  
to meet for a one-hour  
consultation, please call  
Deborah Crane at 781-942-  
4888, ext. 1-4019. A donation  
of \$10.00 is suggested.

**The Arc of East Middlesex  
Night at Fraser Field,**  
7 p.m., Friday, June 17. See  
a *North Shore Spirit* base-  
ball game at the renovated  
field. Artwork from our  
Center for Emerging Artists  
will be on display. Tickets  
are \$5 each, with a portion  
of each sale going back to  
The Arc of East Middlesex.  
For reservations, email  
info@theemarc.org.

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## Making Fitness Fun

**I**nstilling a lifelong commitment to fitness in children with disabilities is a passion of Jo Ann Simons', Executive Director of the Arc of East Middlesex.

"If we don't give children with intellectual disabilities the tools they need to make fitness a part of their everyday lives, as they age they will be at great risk of developing diabetes and cardiovascular disease, more frequently and at an earlier age than the general population," said Simons.

The Arc of East Middlesex offers several classes for pre-school age (3 to 5 years) children which encourage both physical fitness and cognitive development.

### **Movement and Music**

Our inclusive Movement and Music class is taught by Mary Beth Trapeni, Dance Movement Therapist. The goals of the class are to improve body awareness and movement repertoire; encourage socialization, creativity and self expression and to have fun.

"The kids just know it's fun," said Trapeni.

Classes, held Wednesday mornings at 20 Gould Street, Reading, include a warmup, a movement theme and a relaxation technique such as breath-



**Jumping for Joy**—Timothy Sahagian participates in The Arc of East Middlesex's inclusive Music and Movement class.

ing or centering. Themes have included *Rainbows and Springtime*, *Introductions and Names* and *Monkeys on the Bed*.

"People love it. We're very glad to have her on board," said Nancy Desmond, Director of the Recreation Department.

### **Tots on the Move and Movin' and Groovin'**

Longtime Arc Fitness Guru Cindy DiVincenzo launched the first in our current series of programs for pre-schoolers last year. That program, *Tots on the Move*, was established with support from the Harris Family Foundation. It was offered in collaboration with the North Suburban Family Network in Melrose and will resume in the fall.

Cindy and Carole Regan now run a similar class for Medford children age 2 ½ to 5 Friday afternoons at Medford High School. This program is designed to provide inclusive opportunities for children with and without disabilities. Developmental activities, gross motor skills, music and games are incorporated into each session. Recent activities have included playing musical instruments, parachute games, an obstacle course, a bean bag toss and limbo. It is a parent/child program and siblings in the same age group are welcome.

Movin' and Groovin' is offered in collaboration with the *Medford Family Network*. The class is made possible in part by Medford Community Development Block grant funding.

*For more information about recreation programs for pre-school age children, call 781-942-4888, ext. 4036.*