



Nurturing Children and Strengthening Families Since 1879

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In Fond Memory - Barbara Keller

As many of you know, **Barbara Keller** passed away on May 6th, at the age of 85. A member of our President's Circle, Barbara was a loyal and generous supporter of FAMILYConnections, with a special interest in our School-Based programs, including The Loft at Columbia High School. She was also a highly skilled therapist herself, trained in both Occupational Therapy and Therapeutic Touch. Her memorial service at St. Stephen's Church in Millburn was led by fellow President's Circle member, The Rev. Dr. Robert Morris, who gave a moving tribute to Barbara's unique spirit. The service overflowed with people who will miss her. But an Indian prayer in the service program reads like a parting message from Barbara herself: *"When I am dead, cry for me a little, think of me sometimes, but not too much....While you live, let your thoughts be with the living."*

New Trustees

On behalf of outgoing President Roger Manshel, we welcome our newest Board Members, each of whom brings special skills and experience to our active Board:

Lisa-Renee Dumas is currently the Vice President of Enterprise Technology and Delivery at Bank of America. A graduate of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, Ms. Dumas is also a certified yoga teacher.

Clyde Otis, III is currently the First Assistant Corporate Counsel to the City of Newark. He is also the creator and owner of Music Talking, a communication tool for parents which uses popular music as a way to partner with their children in goal-setting and value orientation.

The Space at OHS Partners with Luna Stage

A Special Student from The Space Finds an Audience

Rocard was a young musician and songwriter in need of an audience. A Junior at Orange High School, he found his way to **The Space**, FAMILYConnections comprehensive on-site program at OHS. It's there that Rocard found his audience – and a new support system.

In March, The Space partnered with Luna Stage Theatre Company in West Orange. Luna held a special matinee performance of the



acclaimed new play "Mercy and the Firefly" for students from The Space. Several, aspiring writers, actors and musicians from OHS were selected to attend – and Rocard was one of them.

In the weeks following the play, Rocard continued to visit The Space and learned they were partnering again with Luna Stage to host a Poetry Slam – an opportunity for teen singers, dancers, poets, and musicians to share their talents on a real stage at a professional theater. Rocard wanted to perform – but he was nervous. The staff at The Space encouraged him, helping him rehearse his songs and build his confidence.

On May 18, Rocard performed three of his original works at the Poetry Slam – and he was a hit. Introducing his final song, he said he had low self-esteem about his writing, but the people at The Space made him believe in himself.

The Space is on-site at Orange High School, delivering mental health counseling, life skills training, prevention programming, academic and employment support, after-school enrichment and recreation, and building capacity and collaboration among school staff, parents and the larger community.

Seventh Annual Gala a Success!

For the 7th year, FAMILYConnections hosted its popular International Tasting on April 27, 2011 at

Andrew M. Shainberg recently joined Guardian Life Insurance Company in New York as Chief Compliance Officer for Individual Products Distribution. Previously, he was Vice President of Compliance at Prudential Financial, Inc. in Newark. He previously sat on the Board of Trustees at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills.

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the Orange Lawn Tennis Club in South Orange. This evening of music, fine food and wine benefits over 4,000 children, adults and families in Essex and surrounding counties with professional therapeutic and skills-building services.

This year's Gala honored Basking Ridge resident **Michael R. Griffinger, Esq.**, a Director at Gibbons P.C. in Newark, for his tireless work to strengthen and enrich the lives of people in Essex County and beyond. Mrs. Kim Wachtel, daughter of the honoree, offered a touching tribute to introduce her father.



Additionally, we welcomed former client and current employee **Nigel Greene** (pictured right with Mr. Griffinger) to the podium for a real-life perspective on the value of our programs and services.

FAMILYConnections is especially grateful for the sponsors of the Seventh Annual International Tasting:

- Prudential Financial Inc.**
- Gibbons P.C.**
- The Jennifer A. Chalsty Foundation**
- Peter R. and Cynthia K. Kellogg**
- Maureen Ogden**
- Lowenstein Sandler**
- Morgan Stanley Smith Barney**

The event was managed by David Ellis Personalized Event Planning and Catering, with fine foods donated by top area restaurants and caterers, including Serenade, Basilico, Fiorino Ristorante, Dabbawalla, Hat City Kitchen, Harrar Cafe, Nero's Grille, Muchies, Southern Belle and Martini Bistro & Bar. Decadent desserts were served by Bella's Bakery, Splurge, and Sweet Sisters. In addition, there were wine and cheese tastings provided by Amanti Vino and Whole Foods West Orange.

Click [here](#) to view a slideshow of photos.

DCF Commissioner Cuts Ribbon on StartStrong



On June 1st,

FAMILYConnections hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of StartStrong, it's new

Therapeutic Nursery in East Orange. StartStrong is an intensive five-day-a-week program serving Essex County children aged 2 ½ - 8 years old and their families. Services include innovative creative arts and play therapies, family support services and transportation. At StartStrong, children who have challenging behaviors or difficulty managing their emotions develop the skills they need to grow and thrive at home, at school, and with peers.

Dr. Allison Blake, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) and State Assemblywoman **Mila Jasey** (pictured above) cut the ribbon on the program's beautifully renovated East Orange home.

Welcoming the Commissioner, FAMILYConnections' **Executive Director Paula Sabreen** said, "We are so fortunate that the Department of Children and Families recognizes the importance of intervening early in the lives of children with behavioral challenges. It's at this age that we can have the greatest impact, launching children on a path of success in school and life."

"The Department of Children and Families is fortunate to have Family Connections as a partner in our ongoing efforts to strengthen families throughout the state," said Commissioner Blake.

"FAMILYConnections has a rich history of successfully providing services to our most vulnerable children and families, and I have no doubt that many children will benefit from this therapeutic nursery."

New Services for Older Adults

As part of a strategic initiative to meet the rising demand for services for older adults, FAMILYConnections has obtained grants from the Alliance for Children and Families and The Grotta Fund for Senior Care. With this funding, we have launched a new Older Adult Services committee to build our staff's knowledge and skills regarding the needs of older adults in our communities. We are also implementing Healthy IDEAS, an evidence-based model to identify and help older adults with mild to moderate depression. These new activities enrich our existing **SeniorConnections** and **CaregiverConnections** programs, providing in-home counseling, advocacy, and care management for Essex County seniors and senior caregivers.

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