

Family Foundation Helps Special Kids Attend Camp

By GINA LEVINE-LEVY
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE — In Mountainside, the Maxwell family name is tantamount with Maxwell's Furniture Restoration, a fourth-generation family business owned for the last 27 years by Donald J. Maxwell.

But the family business, which is more than a century old, is not Mr. Maxwell's only undertaking.

Eighteen years ago he started the Dorothy Ann Foundation, named for his late sister Dorothy Ann Maxwell Hall, to send special needs children to camp.

It's a cause that was close to his sister's heart.

Mrs. Hall died in 1984 at the age of 32, after a nine-month battle with breast cancer.

"We were very close growing up," recalled Mr. Maxwell. "When we became adults, I took over the family business and she became a (special education) teacher...her idea was to have a summer camp for special ed students. There are very few places for them to go."

Mr. Maxwell said he shared his sister's dream with her. And after she died, he decided to see it through in her memory.

The foundation has since awarded camp scholarships to 120 special needs children, totaling \$105,000. It awards \$9,000 to \$11,000 in scholarship money each year.

The scholarships go primarily to children at Westlake School in Westfield, a school for special needs children operated by the Union County Educational Services Commission. Mrs. Hall taught at Westlake for 10 years at its former location in Berkeley Heights.

"She was really involved and very well liked," said her brother.

A former colleague of Mrs. Hall's, Tertia Moore, said she "just had a feeling for handicapped kids that was unusual...she put her heart and her effort and her intelligence into her work."

She added, "I think it would be important (to her) that there is a continuation of that."

Ms. Moore, who still teaches at Westlake and helped to organize the foundation, said she has seen the students benefit.

"These are mostly urban kids who wouldn't have the opportunity to be at camp without this," she said. "This gives them a whole experience in nature, in a rural place, in camp life...it gives them a whole experience socially and environmentally."

She added, "The kids come back and had a great time."

Most of the children attend Camp Star in Rahway River Park, run by the Arc of Union County.

The all-day camp, for ages 6 to 21, offers the arts, sports and social activities.

Single Jewish Friends Plan Bannigan's Lunch

AREA — The Circle of Single Jewish Friends 49+ will hold a Meet and Eat Lunch on Sunday, September 17, at noon at Bannigan's Grill and Tavern, located at 65 Route 1 South in Metuchen (near the Edison border). The cost will be \$3 plus the price of a meal from the menu and tip. Interested persons are asked to call Roberta at (908) 668-8450.

and will add an educational component next summer. Camp Star costs \$200 per week. But most families cannot afford it.

"With the help and support of generous givers like the Dorothy Ann Foundation, we can provide scholarships for children so their fee is either reduced or eliminated," said Deborah Pamiemek, associate executive director of the Arc of Union County.

"The children just blossom," she said. "Kids come back year after year and just truly enjoy it."

Nineteen-year-old Darrin Robertson, who has cerebral palsy and developmental delay, is one of those kids.

Darrin was one of 11 scholarship recipients from the Dorothy Ann Foundation this year. Her mother, Janis Arrindell, said she could not have afforded camp on her own.

"It's a wonderful thing for people that need it...otherwise we wouldn't be able to afford to do anything for our children."

She added, "recognizing there is that need and providing for that need is a fabulous thing."

Mrs. Arrindell, who described her daughter as "happy, loving and caring" and "a teenager," said camp allows Darrin to have friends, just like her peers.

"I know that she does not have the ability to express isolation but it doesn't escape her. I think she would be feeling very isolated if she did not have camp to go to," Mrs. Arrindell said.

"If I had it my way, camp would run all year," she added.

Leonard Bryant, said his 16-year-old son, Damian Chavis Bryant, would be sitting home "looking out the window" if it weren't for the Dorothy Ann Foundation.

The foundation has sent the special needs teenager to camp for five years. His father says he's never had a chance to thank the foundation because he didn't know who paid.

Mr. Maxwell said he does not have contact with the kids and they usually don't know "how they got there or who's paying for it."

He said Westlake School chooses the recipients based on need, and the camps will sometimes make requests on behalf of families who need assistance.

For Camp Star, the foundation spends from \$630 to \$1,200 per child.

Mr. Maxwell said some other camps cost more, depending upon the "severity of the handicap."

He said there are about 40 people who donate annually to the foundation, but there is still a big need for contributions.

The foundation began with a \$10,000 commission check from the sale of a family property and has since relied on family, friends, teachers and some other donors to keep it going. "It's getting harder and harder to have the funds available each year. When they're short, my father and I make up the difference...we still do it each year no matter what."

He said this year, they'll contribute an extra \$5,000 to cover the scholarships.

Mr. Maxwell said the foundation is fully accredited. He added, "100 percent of the money that comes in goes out again" because there is no overhead. He said he doesn't even take stamp money for direct mailings out of the foundation's funds because he wants it all to go to the children.

"You're not doing it for yourself, you're doing it for the kids who don't have anything."

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

WHS Open Lunch Controversy Never Ends

By SARAH QUELLER

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

The controversy over open lunch at Westfield High School (WHS) seems to be never-ending: parents are afraid of their children roaming the streets unpervised during school hours, citizens are worried students will trash sidewalks with their Wendy's wrappers and teachers are afraid underclassmen will sneak out the back doors. Students, on the other hand, just want 45 minutes of fresh air.

As a senior, I hope I'll finally be able to enjoy everything WHS has to offer, including the privilege of open lunch. Or at least I hope that when it snows again on my birthday, I'll have gone out to lunch a few times before then.

Sarah Queller, Westfield Leader intern, is a senior at Westfield High School.

start on my homework.

There were days, too, when the sun was shining so brightly I couldn't resist the temptation to ditch my canned jelly for Panera cream cheese. For some reason, though, something always went wrong. I had to meet with a teacher only available during my lunch period. I couldn't find my friends fast enough to eat and return before English class, or I didn't have enough money to splurge on eating downtown.

When I entered junior year, I had every intention of going out to lunch. Even if I didn't make it a daily habit, I would at least eat out a few times per month, or at least on sunny autumn or spring days. I soon learned how to spot a junior in the cafeteria.

Seniors were nonexistent. (They were out to lunch.) Freshmen and sophomores were eating lunch, laughing and occasionally initiating low-key food fights. That left the juniors: they were the ones sitting with binders spread open in front of them, lunch bags plunged to the side.

They were always multi-tasking: holding a sandwich in one hand, writing with the other. I was a member of the junior class: as hard as I tried to reserve my lunch period for solely eating lunch (and maybe occasionally eating it downtown), there was always something I needed to do.

Perhaps I was too conscientious, or perhaps I just procrastinated too much; either way, I always had work to do fifth period.

There were many times throughout the year when I made feeble attempts to escape the WHS hallways. When my birthday rolled around, I made all of my friends clear their lunch periods so we could celebrate beyond the WHS corridors. It sneaked on my seventeenth birthday. I sat in the cafeteria, ate a bagel and got a head

SPFHs Alumni to Hold Meeting September 19

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHs) Alumni Association will meet September 19 in room 101 at 7:30 p.m. at the high school. The program will be "A Walk Down Memory Lane," with tales of the past and present SPFHs alumni.

Planning for the dedication for the Alumni Walk, which is now in place at the rear of the high school extending up to the football field, will also take place. Bricks can always be purchased to add to this walk.

All are welcome at the meeting and refreshments will be served. For more information regarding the purchase of bricks, call (908) 889-2084.

SP-F BOE to Hold Reception For New Superintendent

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education invites all students, staff members and residents of Scotch Plains and Fanwood to attend a reception for Margaret Hayes, the newly named superintendent of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood public schools, on Monday, September 11, at 7:30 p.m. in the Evergreen School's new multipurpose room.

Ms. Hayes, who has served in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood schools for four years as assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment, was appointed

Solon Graduates Colorado College

WESTFIELD — Lauren Solon, daughter of Deborah and Richard Solon, graduated from Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado, on May 22.

Lauren graduated cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Romance Languages and a minor in Studio Art. She was awarded the Felisa Llorente Award.

Lauren is a 2002 graduate from Westfield High School.

by the board to succeed Carol Choye as superintendent as of September 1.

Ms. Hayes joined the district with experience as a social studies and English teacher, a supervisor of social studies and an elementary school principal.

All are welcome to come and greet Ms. Hayes as the 2006-2007 school year begins under her leadership.

MTV Celebrity Jeff Yalden to Speak in SP

SCOTCH PLAINS — MTV Celebrity and internationally renowned youth motivational speaker, Jeff Yalden, is scheduled to speak on September 7 at the Union County Vocational Technical High School in Scotch Plains.

A motivator and educator, Mr. Yalden strives to be a role model for youth. He has spent the last 12 years touring the world, delivering his motivational speech to youth, educators and parents to help them make better life and family choices. He has been credited with saving lives and impacting youth to live a life of purpose and commitment.

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September 2006 Events at the Westfield Memorial Library
Library Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 AM-9:00 PM
Friday & Saturday 9:30 AM-5:00 PM, Sunday 1:00-5:00 PM

ADULT PROGRAMS

Sep 15	1:30 PM	TGIF: Westfield's Colonial Cemetery
Sep 19	10:00 AM	Computer: Travel, Travel, Travel!
Sep 22	1:30 PM	TGIF: Charles Addams, Cartoonist
Sep 27	10:00 PM	Computer: Puzzled by the Internet
Sep 29	1:30 PM	TGIF: Classic Movie: <i>On the Town</i>

CHILDREN'S & TEEN PROGRAMS

Sep 17	1:15 PM	Musikgarten 0-6 yr. olds w/ special needs
Sep 17	2:00 PM	Musikgarten 0-18 mos.
Sep 17	2:45 PM	Musikgarten 16 mos.-3 1/2 yrs.
Sep 17	3:30 PM	Musikgarten 3-5 yrs.
Sep 19	10:00 AM	Toddler Group
Sep 20, 27	10:00 AM	Tot Storytime
Sep 20, 27	1:30 PM	Preschool Storytime OR
Sep 21, 28	10:00 AM	Preschool Storytime
Sep 22, 29	10:00 AM	Baby Rhyme Time
Sep 25	7:00 PM	Pajama Storytime
Sep 28	3:45 PM	Art History Adventures
Sep 30	10:00 AM	Mother Goose Comes to the Library
Sep 16, 23, 30	10:00 AM	Chess

Restrictions regarding pre-registration or age may apply to some programs.
Call the library for further information.
550 East Broad Street, Westfield, NJ 07090 ☎ 908-789-4090 www.wmlnj.org

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