

Golden Heart Gala

On October 18, 2001, Opengate hosted a "Golden Heart Gala" held at Abigail Kirsch at Tappan Hill. The event was held in honor of a wonderful couple ~ Roger and Alyce Rose. It was a pleasure to have such an occasion to bring recognition to the wonderful work, dedication and support that the Roses have bestowed on Opengate for many years. Their son Brett has resided at Opengate since 1991 and has thrived in this residential setting.

Dr. Roger Rose practiced otolaryngology for 37 years in Manhattan, and Alyce worked as a nurse at Lenox Hill Hospital in the early part of her career before working with her husband for the last fifteen years. The couple has recently retired to upper Westchester. Aside from being exemplary parents to their son Brett, maintaining the utmost involvement in his every day life, and spending time with their first grandchild, Una, they devote their time to The Homeward Bound Project, which they

founded in 1989 in response to the needs of developmentally disabled adults. This is a family foundation, of which their daughter Maura is the President, created to raise funds for programs such as Opengate, and has done so by providing computers for Opengate, the Menell gazebo, and a most generous contribution toward the horticulture project.



Alyce and Roger Rose with daughter Maura at the Golden Heart Gala

Opengate staff, Board members, family and friends enjoyed an elegant evening of dining and dancing to the music of the Gerard Carelli Orchestra. Throughout the evening, guests enjoyed participating in a silent auction in which friends of Alyce and Roger generously donated many of the items.

Alyce and Roger feel fortunate, rewarded, and fulfilled in their lives and are committed to sharing. They are also committed to the vision of Opengate. We once again thank them for their kind-heartedness and their incredible involvement in the gala.

Parent's Perspective

By Marion Silbert

As the Matriarch of Opengate, I have lived through many eras with a multiplicity of memories, good and bad. However, being a “cockeyed optimist” I usually cast away the bad and hold on to the good. The best memories have been of Opengate because our son Kenneth and Opengate are practically conjoined in that as Opengate has progressed, so has Kenneth!

Time and fate have a great influence on all our lives, and in particular, World War II drastically altered ours. Despite the fact that Milton was already a father and of the maximum draftable age, he was drafted and for three years we were separated. We were finally reunited and after a few years were presented with our second healthy son, Kenneth.

For two years we enjoyed the pleasure and pride of parenting this fun-loving, responsive toddler. He loved to sing along with his records, to play with the children at the playground, and even toss a ball quite accurately, until the first “Big Bang” occurred. Soon after his second birthday he caught a “cold”. He displayed the usual symptoms of a runny nose and general discomfort, but then developed a fever, which climbed suddenly to 105 degrees resulting in a seizure. We rushed him to the hospital where our pediatrician met us. Despite blood tests, which ruled out meningitis, and x-rays, the doctors were non-plussed. Finally, after reviewing his history, they realized he had recently been exposed to mumps! In Ken’s case the virus had not logged in the parotid glands (the neck area) but in the brain resulting in mumps encephalitis. Ken was in a coma for three days, but finally appeared to recover and continue to develop normally, though his speech seemed somewhat slower.

He had a flair for numbers, played cards – often beating us at casino and rummy, but when he was nine years old, we were again devastated. His apparent day dreaming, at weird times, occurred too often. Having worked for ten years as an employment counselor for the handicapped, I was familiar with these symptoms, so unhappily, diagnosed this as Petit Mal Epilepsy. EEGs and other tests confirmed this, and the condition was attrib-

uted to a brain injury due to the mumps encephalitis. Ken continued with his public school education through sixth grade, but there definitely was a toll. His reading, a cognitive ability, deteriorated. His colleagues began to shun him even though he was an active member of his Little League team that won the championship of the community.

Our primary focus was his emotional well being, but he too became aware that something was wrong when his friends and teammates began to withdraw from him. He often cried in secret and claimed he was having difficulty because he could not remember things in school.

We were finally confronted by his deterioration when he began to have Grand Mal seizures – falling down and becoming unconscious – more and more frequently. Doctors experimented with medications (individually and in combinations), and diets, none of which helped. In fact, the effects of the drugs were terrible, causing amnesia and personality changes, resulting in his becoming zombie-like.

To expand Kenneth’s social life, we sought out ways of adding to our own family activities. The organization NYABIC proved terrific, offering weekend and holiday trips and entertainment. We also benefited by getting involved as active parents. We attended workshops, learned more about government benefits and educational funding, and networked with other parents. Ken attended a special summer camp where he developed swimming skills and achieved an advanced Red Cross swimming award, worked and sang and acted in their weekend theatricals.

Our good fortune came when a total stranger, Karla Lissauer invited us to join the new founders of Opengate. Kenneth was accepted and became one of the first twelve pioneer residents. We were also accepted by the original founders and became dedicated, hardworking parents. Milton became Treasurer of the Board, and we both participated in many committees. We arranged for occasional entertainment and participated in

Continued on page 4

Residential Highlights

By Laura Selvaggi

Happy New Year to all! This past holiday season has turned out to be a most eventful time for all of those living and working at Opengate.

To kick off our holiday festivities, Opengate held its holiday luncheon at *Sciortino's Restaurant*. The residents and staff enjoyed an afternoon of dining and dancing.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, for the past four years our residents enjoyed breaking in the Holiday season by attending the holidays shows at Madison Square Garden and Radio City Music Hall. Due to the events of 9/11, this year we chose not to go into New York City. Instead, our residents began the Holiday season by attending the Westchester Broadway Theater's production of "It's a Wonderful Life". All who attended enjoyed dinner and a show. The Westchester Theater has become a regularly attended event here at Opengate. The next production will be "Jesus Christ Superstar" beginning in February.

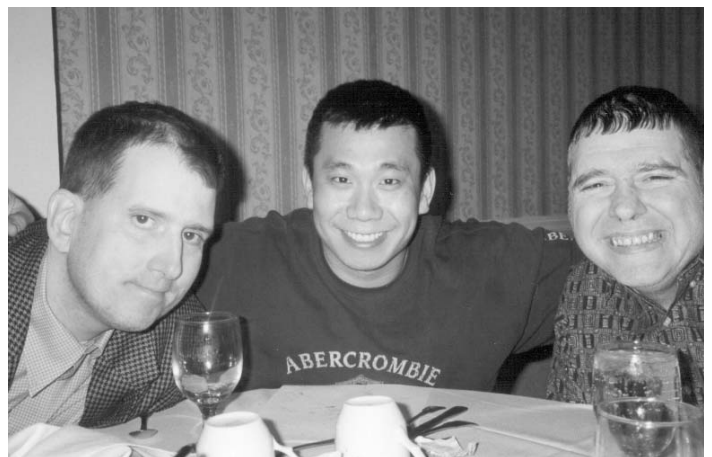
In addition to the traditional programs such as *Westchester County* sponsored dances at the *County Center*, *North East Swim Program* and *Special Olympics*, many of the people living in each of our seven houses have been enrolled in *Hidden Treasures* Theatre Arts Program. *Hidden Treasures* is an independent organization offering classes throughout the week in arts and crafts, dance and song. Several of our residents who chose to enroll in the dance program participated in a musical revue while others had their artwork displayed.

Terrific Times is another arts and crafts workshop. *Terrific Times* is affiliated with SPARC, Special Program and Resource Connection. Opengate has been sending a group out to *Terrific Times* each week in addition to attending all the fun filled SPARC theme dances which are held the fourth Sunday of each month. Several of our residents have also had the pleasure this year of attending SPARC's *Pet Connection*, which brings the residents in to meet a variety of animals and their trainers.

We are excited to report a new Aerobics program being offered at Opengate's main campus. The program is run in the gym for the winter months and will move outdoors during spring and summer. There will be a focus on modified stretching, movement and low impact aerobic exercise. The class is currently being held on Saturday mornings, however, we are planning to expand the program to include one evening during the week as well. The program has been well received by those participating.

Our Valentine's Dance was held at *Ceola Manor* this year. The event was a great success. Right around the corner is Awards Day – probably one of the most anticipated events, as it allows for reflection on where we've been and how far we've come. It is directly due to the support of our residents' families, that every year we are able to hold traditional events such as the Valentine's Dance, Awards Day, the Grasso Picnic, and Fallfest. We thank our Parents' Committee for their commitment and diligence!

Before we know it spring will be here and preparations for summer vacations will be in full swing! Until next time, all of us working in Opengate's Residential Department send out to you our best wishes and look forward to seeing and hearing from you soon.



Bill P., Steve Westerville and Eddie V. having a wonderful time at Opengate's Valentine's Dance

Support Across The Web

By Mary Anne Belanger, R.N.,c.

Support for parents of children with disabilities can be found in many places. One is as close as your home computer. You can now find support groups, medical information and sometimes answers to health questions that you may have on the Internet.

www.yahogroups.com can provide you with a support group online for a variety of medical conditions as well as developmental disabilities and mental health issues as well. After signing up, you post emails to the group (about your concerns, problems, etc) and you will get responses and support from them. There are eighteen areas of health concerns listed with as many as 15,000 groups available.

Most major health organizations also offer support in the form of websites that have informational portals available to the public. I have included a listing of web addresses of just a few of the sites that are available. I wish you well on your journey

Parent's Perspective *Continued from page 2*

fundraising activities. Changes in the administration, over the years, led to improved policies and regulations and to better staff. Today the mission of Opengate reflects the philosophy of the founding parents: that the disabilities of our children be recognized, but the abilities of each be developed to their fullest. Kenneth was appointed assistant manager of an on-campus store for residents, where he sold snacks and toiletries, etc. He learned to take inventory and to buy and replace stock, under the tutelage of a staff member. He participated in the wonderful agricultural program and was designated as a mentor of new residents to orient them to Opengate.

At that time, along with a few parents, I established the original Parents Association. As Program Committee chairperson, I arranged for lectures by officials of the State Services, surrogate judges and lawyers, in order to educate us regarding laws, rights, guardianship, etc. I became an Ombudsman between the parents, the Executive Director and the Board, in order to present constructive suggestions as well as complaints.

towards health and wellness in the New Year.

National Alliance for the Mentally Ill:
www.nami.org/

Autism Society of America: www.autism-society.org/

Intelihealth (partners with Harvard Medical School): www.intelihealth.com

NYS Office of Mental Health:
www.omh.state.ny.us/

Centers for Disease Control: www.cdc.gov/

Pain and Stress Center:
www.painstresscenter.com/

U.S. Pharmacopoeia: Information on Medication
www.usp.org/

National Library of Medicine: www.nlm.nih.gov/

National Institute of Mental Health:
www.nimh.nih.gov/

Finally, having suffered along with Kenneth, all the severe manifestations of his ongoing Grand Mal seizures, Kenneth's personal physician hit the jackpot with the medication that has effectively controlled his seizures for the last 15 years.

With the cooperation of WARC, and the training in their special workshop, Kenneth had adjusted to the discipline of work. Then, he was employed (by WARC's recommendation) by Blockbuster Video where he has worked for the past 5 years. He has been awarded the honor of Employee of the Month, twice, as well as a County Award. Having been trained independently by train and taxi, and with his father at his side, by subway, Ken is now able to travel home to visit with his family. He also handles his own money and controls his budget and bank account.

As his legal guardian, and with his older brother as stand-by guardian, I can now enjoy a certain quiet peace, stability, and comfort, and as the Matriarch of Opengate, I take special pride in Ken's advancement, and in the high standards, progress, and reputation our Opengate has achieved.

Opengate wishes to thank the following individuals for supporting our holiday staff party:

Mr. & Mrs. Al Channon
Mr. & Mrs. William Convery
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Auerbach
In Honor of Opengate Staff
Mr. & Mrs. John Bobolakis
Mr. & Mrs. Peter Sickinger
Dr. & Mrs. Roger Rose
Jean Petrofesi
Stanley Sands
In Memory of Helen Melnick
In Honor of staff associates at Bernstein
Harry & Louise Kelleher
Evelyne Feinsilver
Bernard & Beatrice Singer
Max & Marie Rehfeld
Ann Marie Sanders
In Memory of Angela Catullo
Norma Hill
In Memory of Jack Hill
Martha Guilfoyle &
Desmond McGahern
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Guild
Tom Guilfoyle
Estelle Sulsky
Elaine Scola
Paula Guilfoyle
Angela Maffei
Mrs. Gertrude Hirschorn
Alice Snow
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Stern
In Honor of Michael Stern
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Puckhaber
Kathryne Shotts
William Browne
In Memory of Lucille R. Browne
Mary Schmidt
In Memory of Mary & Wendel Lalak
Theresa Leuzzi
Joseph Fiore
In Memory of Gloria Fiore
In Honor of Debby Fiore
Celestine Lynn
Peter & Maureen DeAngelis
In Memory of Agnes & Robert Logan
Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Henoch
James Norton
Judith Solomon
In Memory of Martin Solomon
Robert Sanders

Marlene Hazlett Pizzi
Marion Silbert
In Honor of Opengate Staff
Richard & Charlotte Swanson
Louis Vaccaro
In Memory of Ann J. Vaccaro
Ellen Burkett
In Honor of Leslie Sands
Patrick & Lia Grasso
Marino & Barbara Capulli
Patricia Larsen
In Honor of Virginia Ann Browne
for her patience
Romeo & Emilia Bruno
Jacqueline Davi
Mr. & Mrs. Howard Harmon
Tze-Yee Tchang
Mary P. Murphy
Henry & Icilma Carter
In Honor of the
Dedicated Staff of Opengate
Ann McDonnell
David Moody & Eileen Guilfoyle
Ari DeLevie
Zindel Herbert Heller
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Allen
Snaider Santini
Mr. & Mrs. Hans Bloch
Ginny & Jeff Vreeland



Natalie S., John Bergherr, and Tracy D. have a laugh at the holiday party

Opengate wishes to thank the following individuals for their generous & kind contributions:

Linda M. Harrison & John Abbott
In Memory of Milton Silbert
Frank J. Antun Foundation
Harold & Shirley Auerbach
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Ralph & Arlene Stern
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Harold & Shirley Auerbach
In Memory of Paul S. Tracy Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Charnak
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Peter & Victoire Sickinger
*In Memory of the victims of the
9-11-01 tragedy*
Mary Schmidt
In Memory of Mary & Wendel Lalak
Angela Maffei
William J. Browne
In Memory of Lucille R. Browne
Snaider & Angelo Santini
Elizabeth Lund
Helen Klebanoff & Family
In Memory of Tess and Jack Epstein
Victor & Vivian Marcovici
Ronald Frumkes
In Memory of Bert Gleckel
Stanley & Debra Kronberg
In Honor of Eric Auerbach's Birthday
Elizabeth Rehfeld
Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Nelson
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Harold & Shirley Auerbach
In Memory of Irwin Rosenblatt
Irwin & Ellen Dolkart
In Memory of Helen Melnick
John & Rose Yankovich
Roger and Alyce Rose
The Homeward Bound Foundation
Louis Vaccaro
*In Memory of Mrs. Ann Vaccaro
In Honor of 28th Anniversary
in Heaven*
Mildred & Jerry Moshman
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Harold, Shirley and Marc Auerbach
In Honor of Eric Auerbach's Birthday
Dr. Morris & Julia Schajer
Mae W. Zlotnik
In Memory of Helen Melnick
Friends of the North Castle
Public Library

Herta Smorol
In Honor of Norma Hill
Tillie Gross
*In Memory of Rosalie Nastro
In Honor of Michael Stern*
Margaret Marshall
In Memory of Karla Lissauer
Sandy & Ronnie Rudd & Family
In Honor of Eric Auerbach's Birthday
Harold & Shirley Auerbach
In Memory of Rocco Forgione
Zindel Heller
In Memory of Harold Hurwitz
T.Y. Tchang
Alan & Alice Model
In Honor of Gordon Solomon
Evelyne Feinsilver
In Memory of Max Feinsilver
Shirley & Harold Auerbach & Family
In Memory of Hall MacMannis
Shirley, Harold, Eric & Marc Auerbach
In Memory of Leona Frankel
Arno Frankel & Allegra Hart
In Memory of Leona Frankel
JP Morgan
Sam & Bernice Fern
In Memory of Louis Calef
V.C. Vitanza Sons, Inc.
In Memory of Louis P. & Julia Vitanza
Mr. William Browne &
Patricia Johansmeyer
Ruth Lehr
In Memory of George & Barbara Lehr
Anthony and Joan Freund
In Honor of Roger Rose



Raphael B. and Ronnie Ann B. share a dance at the holiday party

Opengate wishes to thank the following people for their generous contribution to our holiday solicitation letter:

Ronald & Stephanie Stern

Mary Schmidt

In Memory of

Mary & Wendel Lalak

Jeff & Ginny Vreeland

In Honor of the unyielding

dedication of the Opengate

Staff

Robert & Ursula Martin

Evelyne Feinsilver

In Memory of Max Feinsilver

Zindel Heller

In Memory of Harold Hurwitz

William Browne

In Memory of Lucille R. Browne

Louis Vaccaro

In Memory of Ann Vaccaro

Helen Klebanoff

In Honor of Steven A. Klebanoff,

Lauren and Jonathan Altman

Vivian & Victor Marcovici

Mr. & Mrs. Al Channon

Gilbert & Sheila Henoach

In Honor of Andrew Henoach

Somers Security System

Joan Hansen

Jean Petrofesi

In Honor of Opengate Staff

Stephen Dratch

Judith Baiocco

Marguerite Borchardt

Curtis Covert & Laura Davi

Barbara Ughetta

In Memory of

Jeanne Berges Shaw

Ann Marie Sanders

In Memory of John C. Sanders

Martha Guilfoyle &

Desmond McGahern

In Memory of

Thomas & Patricia Guilfoyle

Norma Hill

Geraldine Major

In Memory of Bernard Major

Snaider & Angelo Santini

Eugene DeRose

In Memory of Jeanette T.

DeRose

Mr. & Mrs. Robert A. Drewes

In Honor of the Auerbach

Family

Andriano & Sons

Development Corp.

Anthony Ludovici

Dr. & Mrs. Robert Sperber

In Honor of Mr. Malcom Miller's

70th Birthday

Mark & Isabella Puleo

In Honor of Harold Auerbach

Annemarie Maass

In Memory of Karla Lissauer

Alice Snow

Jean Gilbert

In Memory of Milton Silbert

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Behr

Ellen Burkett

In Honor of Leslie Sands

Harold & Shirley Auerbach

In Honor of Marc Auerbach

Eric Auerbach

In Honor of Marc Auerbach

Mr. & Mrs. William Convery

Women of the Irvington

Presbyterian Church

Festo Electric, Inc.

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Harmon

In Memory of Robert S. Emison

Max & Selma Itzkowitz

In Memory of Milton Silbert

Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Larsen

In Honor of Virginia Browne's

50th Birthday

Jacob & Deborah Stern

In Memory of Fannie Gross

Robert & Deborah Rosenthal

Dr. & Mrs. Leslie Seigle

Marilyn Neuwirth

In Honor of Jane Melnick

Judith Alexander

Ethelyn Honig

In Memory of

Lester J. Honig, M.D.

In Honor of Deidre Honig

Robert Sanders

Theresa Leuzzi

In Memory of Peter Leuzzi

David Moody & Eileen Guilfoyle

Judith Solomon

In Memory of Martin Solomon

Norman & Joyce Saunders

John Nicolich

Joan & Ari De-Levie

In Memory of Karla Lissauer

Steven Silbert

Mr. & Mrs. Peter Sickinger

Max & Marie Rehfeld

Mr. & Mrs. Hans Bueler

Mrs. Marion Silbert

Borchardt Family Foundation, Inc.

Marcy & Bennett Grau

In Memory of Milton Silbert

In Honor of Marion Silbert

Jeffrey Feinliver

Arthur & Nancy Lee

Mrs. Te-Lou Tchang

In Honor of Brian Hulten &

Staff

Annette Diskant

Special Mentions

Opengate wishes to thank the Frank J. Antun Foundation for their \$5,000.00 donation, which will help fund our upcoming horticulture project.

Congratulations to Randi Rios-Castro for being the recipient of the 2001 Student Scholarship Award. Randi is graduating in May 2002 with a Masters of Science.

A very special thank you to the Homeward Bound Foundation and Dr. & Mrs. Roger Rose, for their kind and generous donation of \$43,000.00 toward the Opengate Horticulture Project.

October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month. On October 15, 2001, the offices of the Westchester County Executive and the New York Office for the Disabled held their annual awards ceremony. Richard Tchang received an award in recognition of outstanding performance on the job and for his triumphs of abilities over disabilities. Richard is very proud of his award and accomplishments.

The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Division of Quality Assurance continues to conduct annual surveys for all of Opengate's programs.

This year Opengate had a new survey team, who performed the annual surveys at Bernstein, Lissauer, Frankel and the ICF campus. In addition to the new survey team and their interpretations of both state and federal regulations, new guidelines were established by CMS (Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services, formerly known as HCFA) for the ICF houses. Opengate has worked diligently to comply with all state and federal regulations and continues to provide quality services to enhance the lives of its consumers.

Upcoming Parent Forum:

Guardianship and Special Estate Planning for Persons with Disabilities

Saturday, April 20, 2002 11:00 a.m. – Presented by Sonia Crannage, Esq.

For information and reservations please contact Gladys at 914-277-3661 X- 203 – please be aware that space is limited.

Location – Opengate's Day Program Building – 29 Warren Street, Somers, NY.

Opengate is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian, residential and day program facility serving developmentally disabled adults. All contributions directly benefit those we serve. A copy of Opengate's last financial report filed with the Department of State may be obtained by writing to Opengate or to the New York State Department of Law, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, Albany, NY 10271.



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