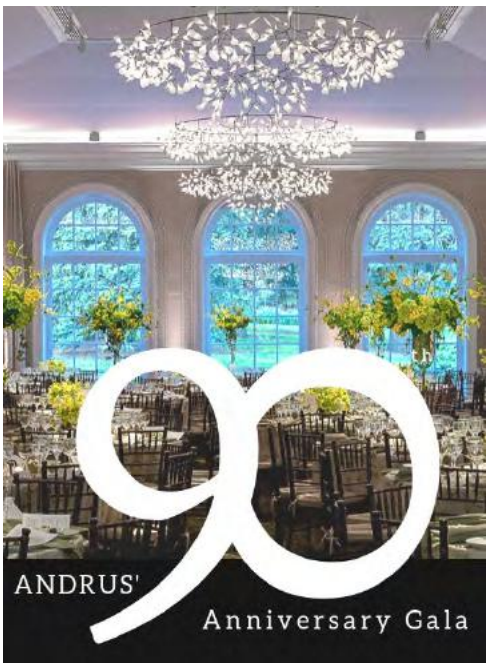
WE ARE ANDRUS

SEPTEMBER 2018 ANDRUS/JDAM www.andrus1928.org



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MISSION & VISION

ANDRUS nurtures social and emotional well-being in children, families, and communities by delivering a broad range of vital services and by providing research, training, and innovative program models that promote the standard of excellence for professional performance in and beyond our service community.

Communities where all children and families can thrive.

Dear ANDRUS Community,

We have had another busy and exciting season here at ANDRUS. The end of summer has brought us some exciting events that furthered our mission to serve children and families.

We kicked off the summer with our annual Golf Fore Kids outing! The Fund-A-Need was focused on the renovation of the tennis and basketball courts on our campus. These new courts will enhance our children's therapeutic and sensory programs. In June, we celebrated our graduates from the Orchard School; I was proud to witness how far the children have come on each of their ANDRUS journeys. With the help of Children's Hope Chest, Mercer, the Eastchester Rotary Club, and all who participated in our Supplies for Success campaign, we have ensured each child in our Campus, Community, and Mental Health programs will go back to school with a fully-stocked backpack!

Our campus' horticulture program has begun its rebirth this summer thanks to our friends at Levitt- Fuirst Associates, Ltd. Their team of volunteers spent many hours in our gardens and greenhouses working with our children and staff to transform and revitalize the spaces. In addition to learning in the garden, our children spent their summer days competing in NYPUM bike program events, teambuilding on our ropes course, and riding their bikes around campus!

Looking forward, we invite you all to join us at our 90th Anniversary Gala on November 2nd at the New York Botanical Garden. This year we look to raise important funds for reviving our campus' horticulture program, central to our therapeutic sanctuary, which ties us back to where this all began 90 years ago, at the Dyckman Family Farm.

This year also marks the ANDRUS Early Learning Center's 50th Anniversary; we look forward to celebrating 50 years of success as we look forward to our next 50 years!

We know that the work we do at ANDRUS is challenging while also being transformative. To each and every member of the ANDRUS community, from staff to supporters, thank you for choosing to devote yourself to this important mission.

Gratefully,

Bryan

We Are Fun!

Yonkers' City Hall Clock Tower

The City of Yonkers honored ANDRUS by lighting The City Hall Clock Tower in our blue and green to kick off our 90 for 90 campaign, counting down 90 days until our Anniversary Gala on Friday, November 2nd. MayorMikeSpano remarked: "Tonight, we light up the City Hall Clock Tower to recognize the partnership ANDRUS has had with the City of Yonkers. Congratulations to the organization's amazing staff on 90 years of contributing to the vitality of our great city. We look forward to building on what has been a wonderful partnership!"

Don't forget to check out our Blue & Green on the Clocktower on November 2nd!

Thank you to all who supported the 14th Annual Golf Fore Kids Outing!

We beat the heat for a great day on the green at Ardsley Country Club!

The day began with a breakfast buffet and ice cold Bloody Mary bar followed by a cocktail hour, dinner, live and silent auction and an ice cream sundae bar following the outing!

Guests each raised their paddles for the renovation of our tennis courts after one of our residents expressed the importance of this project to him!

90th Anniversary Gala

November 2, 2018

Join ANDRUS as we celebrate our 90th Anniversary of nurturing hope in children and families! We will be honoring our dear friends at Levitt Fuirst Associates for all of their support of our mission over the years. Join us for a night of great food and drinks, a supportive community, lots of laughs and a sharing of memories.

We Are Volunteers

Levitt Fuirst Associates, Ltd.

Annually, our friends from Levitt-Fuirst Associates, Ltd. have been bringing their staff - 60 strong! - to our campus to revitalize our greenhouses, garden and recreational spaces. Not only do they spend the entire day working hard, they donate essential supplies and foster beautiful relationships with our students and staff. It is amazing to see the connections formed over the years as we all work together to foster growth and change. For these reasons, and many more, we are thrilled to have Levitt-Fuirst as our honoree at this year's Gala!

LGBTQ Youth in Care

This month ANDRUS residential staff members participated in a dynamic and comprehensive training entitled "Enhancing Services for LGBTQ Youth in Care." The training, generously funded by the Office of Children and Family Services, was led by consultant and trainer Lyndon Cudlitz. Over the course of two sessions, Lyndon guided ANDRUS staff through engaging and informative material aimed at breaking down stereotypes and increasing awareness and sensitivity especially regarding the needs of trans youth. Additional training sessions are already scheduled for the operations team, the human resources team, admissions, and the residential leadership team. We will then develop or update our policies and procedures to ensure that they are LGBTQ sensitive and evidence based, especially for trans youth.

Lyndon Cudlitz, a consultant and trainer for more than 15 years for non-profits, colleges, and schools, created an environment where staff members, whose knowledge about LGBTQ issues had a wide range, were able to ask anything and use the learning environment to think carefully about gender and identity. Some specific areas we explored were sexual orientation, assigned sex, gender identity and expression, all distinctly different topic areas. We also explored the broad array of experiences of people who are LGBTQ, how to become more sensitive to and familiar with barriers experienced in care, learned about the physical and medical transition of people and youth, and examined how our understanding and awareness can contribute to the comfort and safety of LGBTQ youth in our program.

According to a survey conducted by the Human Rights Campaign with more than 10,000 LGBTQ identified youth, the experience of being LGBTQ in America is incredibly stressful, and the risks of depression, anxiety, homelessness, suicide and also physical and sexual violence are much greater solely for being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Below is a description of the top three things that LGBTQ youth would like to change compared to their non-LGBTQ youth counterparts. What the survey reveals is that the most difficult and painful factor is intolerance from family and community, and the safety risks associated with being who they are. In other words, the intolerance and hatred from other people is the most painful thing that LGBTQ youth experience.

Last year, for the very first time, the US Centers for Disease Control added two important questions to their annual survey of high school students: one was asking about sexual orientation and one was asking about the gender of partners. And yet, according to quartz.com, only 27 states agreed to ask these questions at all. Regardless, here's what we learned from the CDC survey:

At least 8% (and probably more) of high school students in America report being lesbian, gay, or bisexual. That's about a million and a half students. LGBTQ students reported being bullied more than twice their straight counterparts, they were more than twice as likely to avoid school because of fear; almost 30% of LGBTQ students reported attempting suicide, a rate four times more than straight students, and more than half reported being sad or hopeless. Because of all of these stressors, they also were more likely to use hard drugs, alcohol, and be at risk for harmful experiences.

These are startling statistics, especially given the fact that it's the first time the CDC has even asked about the specific experiences of LGBTQ teens. Surveys that have been going on for more years, such as in Massachusetts, show that the more explicitly the state and local policies reflect a commitment to supporting and accepting LGBTQ youth, the willingness to share their reality goes up and the risk factors go down. For example, in Massachusetts, the first survey was in 1995 and in it about 6% of the students identified as LGBTQ and about 35% of them said they had tried to commit suicide. Fast forward twenty years, and in the same survey about 13% of youth identified as LGBTQ and about 25% said they had attempted to committ suicide. Creating a culture committed to the needs of LGBTQ youth, and ensuring adults listen and support LGBTQ kids about their experiences, is one of the most important first steps to reduce risk and build trust, thereby increasing their safety and well being.

Andrus' Campus program serves approximately 150 children in our school, about half of whom live on campus. We are admitting more students who are trans youth, and Lyndon helped us understand that these students are not "deciding to change genders" or "confused." Challenging and exploring these concepts of gender, identity, attraction, and self expression was an essential part of the training, and what many staff members took away from it was that the most important thing they can do to support LGBTQ youth (or anyone) is to be supportive, to listen, to be open and non-judgmental, and to accept students for who they are. One staff member said that this training "opened my eyes," and another said that "it made me feel more sure that the most important thing I can do is be open and caring, and try to learn as much as I can about the needs of LGBTQ students."

The message was clear: how a person feels on the inside about their identity is far more important than anything else, including what they wear or how they look to us. And if we can strive to honor and celebrate students for who they are, we are doing our part to create a safer world for them to thrive. The world certainly needs more of that.

Back to School

Greetings Readers!

We are back in the classroom at the Orchard School after a wonderful, thematic summer. This summer our theme was Disney. Our students had a great time critiquing Disney Movies, studying the biography of Walt Disney and taking weekly field trips to build background knowledge. The summer ended with a Science Expo with a Disney Theme. This lasted over two afternoons as students both presented their work and viewed the work of others.

Last school year was an exciting one. Students participated in the usual subjects of math, reading and writing. We had great participation in our STEM challenge led by Ms. Santana. We are very excited about our Horticulture Program as Ms. Argentina has returned back to our school, bringing the Hope Space back to life.

We are looking forward to a great new school year.

Raymond Effinger, Ed. D.
Principal

Supplies for Success!

This year we were able to place hundreds of backpacks stuffed to the brim with supplies in the hands of the children in our campus, community and mental health programs. We are so thankful to all who supported us to send our children back to school confident and prepared!

Congratulations to our Graduates!

"From Chair to Air"

Here at ANDRUS, we are blessed to see miracles happen every single day. This summer, a truly amazing moment happened on our Ropes Challenge Course. For the first time, we were able to involve a child who is confined to a wheelchair on our "Flying Squirrel" element! In fact, this was the third element we were able to make safe modifications to in order for him, and other handicapable students, to take part in. ANDRUS staff were determined to give him a normative experience to share with his peers. It was an experience he, his class mates, and all the staff involved will never forget.

-Stephan Spilkowtiz, Sr. Manager of Therapeutic Programming & Youth Development

"Out of difficulties, grow miracles" - Jean De La Breyere

Hello Loula!

We are so excited to welcome the newest member of the PAWS team, our fluffy golden doodle, Loula! Loula will be the first therapy dog to provide services to ANDRUS' Mental Health Division.
The PAWS (Pets at Work for Sanctuary) team works in our Assisted Animal Therapy program assisting children and staff through sensory therapy.

Congratulations to our Westchester County Healthy Families Graduates!

Staff Spotlight!

Debra Argentina
HORTICULTURE TEACHER

Ms. Debra Argentina came to ANDRUS in January 2006. She has designed and implemented an organic gardening, art & nature study program that serves children ages 5-16. Ms. Argentina has two master's degrees, one in Environmental Conservation from New York University, and another in Waldorf Education from Sunbridge College. This past December, she earned a doctoral degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from Union Institute and University. Her dissertation topic was "Therapeutic Mindfulness Through Gardening, Art, and Nature Studies for Children with Special Needs."

Ms. Argentina's life ambition is to guide children to become environmental stewards to support the health of planet Earth. This goal is a two-way endeavor: children become adults with values that support environmental integrity, and the lessons of nature support the children's mental, social, and physical health. The Andrus Campus has a unique ability to offer nature's classroom which in invaluable towards this goal. We are very fortunate to have this amazing, beautiful campus where we can teach children the cycles of nature, from the timeless quartz crystals, to our lifetimes, to the year, the month, and the day. The greenhouses, garden, labyrinth, and forested campus create an excellent environmental education opportunity that can be experienced now and for generations to come.

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