



VOLUME 12, ISSUE 2
SUMMER 2006

H.A.L.O. Reports

A Foundation for Children with Neurological Impairment



Terrific Teen Donates Hundreds Of Books

Even before Leanne Fleming stood before the congregation to read Hebrew from the sacred Torah at Temple Chayai Shalom in Easton, MA, she was already a model of responsibility.

To add deeper meaning to her bat mitzvah rite of passage, 13-year-old Leanne collected and donated 100 books to residents at New England Pediatric Care, in Billerica, MA, a skilled nursing facility for children, and another 500 books, to Family Circle in Norwood, MA. Family Circle is a joint program of the H.A.L.O. Foundation and Jewish Family & Children's Services and provides resources and support services to families who care for children with disabilities.

"I wrote a letter to my classmates asking



Leanne Fleming and Patty Reardon Starr (right), shelve some of 500 books Leanne donated to Family Circle.

them to donate a gently-used or new book for the children," said Leanne, who is an avid reader and cheerleader, dances and also plays on a basketball team.

(Continued on page 2)

Wheelchair From H.A.L.O. Gives Ryan A Lift

Nine-year-old Ryan Rodrigues has a very busy schedule.

He attends Barbieri Elementary School in Framingham, MA, where his education is supplemented by speech, occupational and



Ryan at school

physical therapies (OT and PT) and vision exercises. Tuesdays after school he travels to therapeutic horseback riding, and Thursday evenings for more OT and PT. On Sundays Ryan attends church with his mother,

Monica, and brother Neil, 15. At home he loves videos, music, flashing lights and pounding on a drum pad.

His mother is grateful to the Help A Little One Foundation for helping the family purchase a Conviad Basic Cruiser Transport Wheelchair.

"The chair makes it so much easier to transport Ryan to where we need to take him," said Monica. The chair is collapsible and can be kept at the back of the car, since the family does not have a handicapped accessible van, she explained.

(Continued on page 4)



Please visit us
at
www.halo.org

Founder's Message:

Friendship Is A Gift

Dear Friends,

You, our friends, are the most important component of the Help A Little One Foundation.

This issue of our newsletter focuses on the gift of friendship:

Thirteen-year-old Leanne Fleming (Page One) chose to dedicate her Bat Mitzvah rite of passage to children with disabilities. She collected and delivered hundreds of books to a pediatric nursing home and to the H.A.L.O.-supported Family Circle organization, and has now committed to this act of friendship on a regular basis. The story of a baseball team that befriended "Shay" (Page Three) will have you holding back the tears. According to Snopes. Com, this widely-circulated Internet tale is a modified version of a true story by Rabbi Paysach Krohn, entitled "Perfection at the Plate" in his 1999 book, Echoes of the Maggid.

Ryan Rodrigues' mother (Page One) was so touched by H.A.L.O.'s gift of a wheelchair—made possible by YOU—she pledged friendship to us all.

It is my pleasure to announce that one of H.A.L.O.'s founding board members (also my medical school classmate and very dear friend of 40 years), I. Leslie Rubin, M.D. has published Medical Care for Children and Adults with Developmental Disabilities. This 700+page tome is the definitive text of up-to-date information on the science and clinical aspects of treatment of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Les and co-author Allen C. Crocker, M.D., of Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital are indeed friends of children with neurological disability.

Over the past 13 years the H.A.L.O. Foundation has nurtured many new friendships. In the past year, the Edith Glick Shoolman Foundation on behalf of the late Mrs. Shoolman, has joined the ranks of those helping us serve our children and their families. I am grateful for their munificence and look forward to a lasting relationship.

As always, I thank you for your support and friendship.

Sincerely yours,

Alan Pinshaw

Leanne's Project: 'More To Life Than Just Me'

(Continued from page 1)

"The response was great. Then the guests at my bat mitzvah brought hundreds more books. It was overwhelming!"

"This was definitely a maturing experience for Leanne," said her mother, Rhonda Fleming. "The bat mitzvah is exciting for the kids, but the significance is that you are now considered a responsible young adult. This project showed her there is more to life than just 'me'."

"Our families appreciate the gift of books for their children, and so many will benefit from the library we've established in our office," said Patty Reardon Starr, Family Circle director. "Leanne's compassion and dedication to this project tells parents that someone is aware of the challenges their children face on a daily basis."

Leanne is already planning to make the book drive an annual affair. She is considering a career working with children with disabilities.

Great News: Awards, Donations And Grants

H.A.L.O. Holidays

The H.A.L.O. Board of Directors has voted to provide funding for overnight family bonding "vacations" for residents of New England Pediatric Care, Billerica, MA.

For the past five years NEPC has arranged two or three night educational excursions to Cape Cod's Coast Guard Beach or Camp Maude in Andover, MA.

"The trips have provided new opportunities for families to connect with their children," said Ellen O'Gorman, NEPC Executive Director. "Not only do families get to spend time together in a "normal" setting, but with full on site medical support, they explore nature, and learn more about their child's capacity for growth and communication."

H.A.L.O. will contribute up to \$6,500 in the coming year to supplement other funding that pays for transportation and substitute staff to fill in



H.A.L.O. asks grant recipients to match gifts with funds from other sources. Each May, friends and families at New England Pediatric Care run in the annual 5K Cool Kids Road Race/Walk to support recreational activities.

for NEPC staffers who accompany the children. H.A.L.O. will review program needs annually.

Family Circle Funded

H.A.L.O. has renewed its commitment to the Family Circle support program for up to \$215,000 over the next five years.

Family Circle, in partnership with the non-sectarian Jewish Family & Children's Services, provides resources to more than 100

families caring for a disabled child in the Greater Boston area.

Shoolman Grant

H.A.L.O. has received a very generous gift of \$5,000 from the Edith Glick Shoolman Children's Foundation of New York, New York.

The funds will be used to help children with neurological impairment to develop their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical skills to their full potential.

H.A.L.O. Holidays

"The trips have provided new opportunities for families to connect with their children."

Ellen O'Gorman
New England Pediatric Care

Baseball Team's Effort Brings Shay Home

Condensed from the Internet

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one student extolled the dedicated staff, then said: "I believe that when a child like Shay comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself."

Then he told this story:

Shay and his father had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball.

"Do you think they'll let me play?" Shay asked.

Shay's father knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but he also understood that if his son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-

needed sense of belonging. Shay's father approached one of the boys on the field and asked if Shay could play.

The boy looked around for guidance and, getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, "We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth."

(Continued on page 4)

Shay Scores With A Little Help From Team

(Continued from page 3)

In the bottom of the eighth, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. At the top of the ninth, Shay put on a glove and played in the outfield.

Even though no hits came his way, he was grinning from ear to ear, clearly ecstatic just to be in the game. In the bottom of the ninth, Shay's team scored again. With two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base.



Shay was next up, and surprisingly, he was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball. But as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps closer and lobbed the ball in softly so Shay could at least

make contact.

Shay swung clumsily at that first pitch and missed. Again, the pitcher took a few steps forward to toss the ball in softly. As it came in, Shay swung and hit a low ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The pitcher could have easily got Shay out at first base, and it would have been the end of the game. Instead, he threw the ball on a high arc to right field, far beyond the reach of the first baseman. Everyone started yelling: "Shay, run to first! Run to first!" Shay scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

The right fielder, who could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, intentionally threw it high over the third-baseman's head.

The crowd urged Shay: "Run to second, run to second!"

Meanwhile the runners ahead of Shay pounded home.

The opposing shortstop turned Shay in the direction of third base. Once he touched the base, members of both teams cheered him home.

Shay stepped triumphantly on the plate, and was hailed as the hero who hit the "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears rolling down his face, "the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world."

Ryan's Wheelchair

(Continued from page 1)

Born two months prematurely, Ryan was diagnosed with cerebral palsy when he was nine-months old. He is legally blind, but able to finger feed himself and sit with support. However, he requires frequent therapy to maintain muscle strength.

With support from other sources, Ryan receives intensive physical therapy and hyperbaric oxygen therapy in Florida each year.

"I want him to do all he can," his mother said.

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H.A.L.O. Foundation
1330 Boylston Street
Chestnut Hill, MA. 02467
(617) 423-HALO