



# AABR

## Newsletter Winter 2010



### Harvest Ball 2010

For the past 8 years, the members of Local Union #3 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have sponsored the Harvest Ball for 500 consumers and their families. Local #3 members not only volunteer but bring their families to help out. Led by the Greek and Motorcycle Clubs, 90 volunteers set up the hall, prepared and served a three-course meal.

says Christopher Weldon, Executive Director. "It's the event they [our consumers] look forward to with great anticipation."

"When the consumers arrive, the excitement in their eyes, it's the whole thing for me," says Local #3's Business Representative, Raymond Kitson. "As long as AABR wants to do the event, we'll be there for them," he adds.



"In terms of events for our consumers, this is by far our best,"

To all the volunteers of the Harvest Ball, thank you.





On October 2nd, former New York Mets Darryl Strawberry joined Joan Jett, John Sebastian and other musicians in Bedminster N.J for a day-long festival to raise funds for NYCLI and four other schools dedicated to students with autism. The event, called "Bedstock," after the famed Upstate NY festival "Woodstock," was sponsored by the AMA charitable foundation.



## Karen Zebala, MSC of the Year

Earlier this year, the Queens Council of Developmental Disabilities awarded Karen Zebala, the honor of "Medicaid Service Coordinator (MSC) of the Year."



As their title suggests, MSCs coordinate medical services for people with developmental disabilities. But their job is far more than that. MSCs are required to be on call 24/7, manage an average caseload of 22 individuals and set up appointments with physicians, clinicians, psychologists, teachers, administrators, parents or guardians.

"You can't do it for the money," Karen says, then matter-of-factly states she works six days a week, for 50 to 60 hours.

"I worked once for three straight days to get an orthopedic walker," Mrs. Zebala remembers, now a Residential Habilitation Supervisor.

## A Legacy of Service

Audrey Sachs, AABR's Board President, follows in the footsteps of her late mother-in-law, Yetta B. Sachs, who served on AABR's Board for close to four decades.



"When I married my husband, Ken, I married AABR," says Audrey. Now in her 13th year of service and sixth as Board President, Audrey is ever present at AABR. What many people don't realize is how much of her time she graciously gives to AABR. Besides her presidential responsibilities, she works side-by-side with staff, parents and consumers. She actively participates in fundraising efforts, working behind the scenes in a quiet way.

"She's a driving force behind AABR," says Christopher Weldon, adding, "She will go to the nth degree for consumers and staff." Just as AABR was lucky to have Yetta, our good fortune continues under the steady stewardship of Audrey J. Sachs.

Congratulations Karen!  
You deserve it!

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## NYCLI in the News

The renowned reporter, Denis Hamill of The New York Daily News wrote a full-page article on NYCLI entitled, "Right school changed autistic boy's life." To read the article in its entirety, please visit [aabr.org](http://aabr.org). NYCLI's reputation keeps growing ....



On October 21st, Comedy Central aired "A Night of Too Many Stars," to raise funds for autism research and programs, of which NYCLI was a beneficiary. Hosted by John Stewart, comedians Lewis Black, Steve Carell, Stephen Colbert, Tina Fey, Chris Rock and many others—came out to support the cause. In between skits and laughs, Stewart spoke in a sobering tone about autism, which now affects 1 in 94 children born today.

## Inspired by Art

Art inspires Poppi Kikos. She first experienced its stirring nature when her eighth grade art teacher asked her to sketch classical pieces of art. Ever since, she's been hooked.



Now an Art Instructor at St. Pascal's, Poppi passes on her artistic passion to our consumers.



"What drives me is discovering the abilities of our individuals," she says and then tells the story of Barry, who is deaf and only used to scribble on pads. Once given paint, his innate creativity burst through.

"When he paints, he goes right to it," Larry says, his one-on-one counselor. "The only thing that gets him excited like that—is food!"



Poppi explains in her soft Australian accent the art process, "We have the idea, they do the painting." One day, the background is painted; the next, another layer with different colors. The outcomes are spectacular. "It takes patience," she says, "painting is like carpentry."



Poppi emphasizes letting the consumers do the work, a sentiment echoed by Michael Arnold, Director of St. Pascal's. "Here we stress no hand over hand. We let them [the consumers] do as much as possible."



Students paint on canvas, bowls, mugs, plates and ceramic dishes. They thread colorful beads together to create key chains, bracelets and necklaces. They also create collages.



All are invited to St. Pascal's for their gallery opening, "Beyond the Canvas," on Friday, December 3rd, from 5:30 to 7:30 PM. Attendees are sure to be surprised.

# HOLIDAY GIFT 2010

Every year AABR sponsors a Holiday Gift drive to ensure our consumers receive a gift for the holidays. In addition, AABR gives gifts to families in need served by our Family Services Department.

This year, we created a Wish List on Target.com so that anyone can participate, from anywhere with ease. To purchase a \$15-20 gift, visit [aabr.org](http://aabr.org) and click on the banner, "Holiday Gift Program 2010."

Spreading the holiday spirit is only a click away



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