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Spring 2016

School Hours
Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday
10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

The Social and Learning Institute

Where Socializing and Learning are Key to Growth

40th Anniversary Celebration Honoring James J. Guerrucci May 21, 2016

The Social and Learning Institute is proud to commemorate forty years of service to adults with intellectual disabilities. This milestone celebration will honor the life and contributions of co-founder James Guerrucci.

OUR STORY:

During the years of 1973 through 1976, the State of Indiana funded an experimental program at The La Porte County Therapy Center located in Michigan City called, the “Adult Activities Class.” This program provided intellectually and developmentally disabled adults with opportunities to grow in their social and learning skills, as well as instilling the special camaraderie of similarly disabled individuals in a safe, nurturing, and protected environment.

In the spring of 1976 the funding for this test program ended. The state-funded program which grew out of, and then replaced, this “Adult Activities Class”, was more directed toward vocational training for disabled individuals. Unfortunately, the new program excluded many of the earlier program’s participants who were more



James J. Guerrucci 1952-2015

*please
join us*

RSVP by April 30th

We look forward to sharing our treasured memories with you.

A committee has been formed to prepare for this meaningful occasion. Additional volunteers are welcome. If you would like to contribute photographs or stories to highlight Jim’s devotion to the Institute and its students, please contact the school.

severely disabled and could not be trained with marketable vocational skills.

Suddenly evidenced, was a desperate need for a program

to serve these more severely intellectually disabled people of our community. Through the dedicated work of the parents of these individuals and countless local volunteers, led by, the late Marguerite Gardner and James Guerrucci, the groundwork was laid for what would become **The Social and Learning Institute.**

With the invaluable aid of a long-time advocate for the disabled people of the State of Indiana, the late State Senator Anita Bowser, assisted this group with the legal mechanics of establishing the fledgling organization with non-profit status and incorporation. Senator Bowser was also credited with having inspired the name for **The Social and Learning Institute.**

During this time of transition, the Institute’s charter students were in need of a place to gather. Fran and Patricia Mark quickly converted their home’s garage into a classroom for their daughter and her classmates to meet during the warm summer months. By the fall of 1976, First Presbyterian Church of Michigan City had offered to provide space for the school

OUR STORY ... continued

as a community mission and public service. **The Social and Learning Institute** finally had a place to call “home.” As happens with all growing households, **The Social and Learning Institute’s** program would eventually outgrow even the Presbyterian Church’s generous provision of space.

Relentless fund-raising efforts by parents, caregivers, and volunteers raised the money needed to provide the equipment and supplies needed to support the Institute’s first official classes in September of 1976. Years of diligent fiscal responsibility, continued grant support, faithful donors, and constant fund-raising activity, allowed **The Social and Learning Institute** to purchase its own building in 2007. It was not long before enrollment required even more space. The expansion project was completed in 2013 followed by a grand opening celebration in May 2014.

Fund-raising efforts continue to be a part of the Institute’s ongoing struggle to meet the financial requirements needed to keep its program operating. Over the years, the dedicated support of many generous families, local fraternal organizations, churches, and businesses have provided support to maintain an affordable tuition rate and allow for enhanced student activities. In addition, the Institute has been awarded grant funding from local, state and national sources to support various aspects of its

specialized program. When, for instance, the number of enrolled students outgrew the Institute’s volunteer arrangements for transportation to activities and events, two local benevolent organizations, Barker Welfare Foundation (in 1990) and Michigan City Community Enrichment Corporation (in 2006), stepped forward with the funds for the Institute to purchase two, fifteen-passenger vans for this purpose. Unity Foundation of La Porte County and Duneland Health Council have also provided grant funding to support student programming.

As it prepares to celebrate its 40th Anniversary, **The Social and Learning Institute** has grown to serve twenty-eight students with a regular part-time staff of four and multiple volunteers. Its first class was comprised of only five students with a single teacher and six regular volunteer assistants.

For thirty-nine years, James Guerrucci devotedly served as a teacher and executive director of **The Social and Learning Institute**. Its family of students, staff, associates, and friends were deeply saddened by Jim’s unexpected passing in March 2015. Devoting his life to serve and raise awareness of the needs and abilities of the disabled population provided an exemplary example of love and commitment. It is the Institute’s desire to honor, celebrate, and

continue his legacy.

Reaching forty years of service is a notable milestone, however, it may never have been accomplished without the determination of Jim Guerrucci. Jim believed that although **The Social and Learning Institute** was incorporated as a non-sectarian and non-discriminatory non-profit organization, it was essential to conduct all operations under Christian ethics. Working in the Lord’s service, the Institute has been greatly blessed. Under the direction of its Board of Trustees and loyal staff, **The Social and Learning Institute** continues its mission to bring joy, meaning, cultural enrichment and a sense of self-worth to those it serves.



Barbara Brown and William Levandoski
Students and friends from the beginning—
sharing forty years of SLI memories.



The Social and Learning Institute—Building Purchased 2007
201 East Garfield Street, Michigan City, Indiana



The Social and Learning Institute—Building Expansion 2013
Design—Roger Potratz, dh:w Architecture
Contractor—Kip Schult, Kips's Integrity Builders

ROOF FUND UPDATE ... THANK YOU BARKER WELFARE FOUNDATION!

Sincere gratitude is expressed to Barker Welfare Foundation for providing additional funding to pay off the loan secured in August 2015 to replace the roof covering the original structure of **The Social and Learning Institute**. In January 2014, the area where the new addition and old roof connected began to leak. The aged portion of the roof deteriorated quickly and replacement became a structural and safety necessity. The Institute was fortunate to receive initial grant funding from Barker Welfare Foundation to establish **The Social and Learning Institute Roof Fund**. Once



work began, it was quickly determined that the damage to the flat roof and underlying surfaces was even worse than expected. With additional contributions from NIPSCO, generous individuals, and a line of credit extended by Horizon Bank, The Institute was able to move forward with the roof replacement. The dedicated effort of AA Rain-Tite Roofing allowed for the completion of this project prior to the beginning of the school year. Barker Welfare Foundation has been a consistent supporter of **The Social and Learning Institute**. The Institute is grateful!

MCPD ... SHOP WITH OUR COPS ... CHRISTMAS 2015

The Social and Learning Institute was one of several organizations invited to participate in the third annual Shop With Our Cops event at Michigan City's Walmart on December 7th. Each student brought their own shopping list, was paired with one of over thirty Michigan City Police Department officers, and ventured through the

store to select their items. Each student was able to spend \$70! This program was funded through donations from unions working on NIPSCO's scrubber project. Nearly \$14,000 was donated to support the 2015 shopping extravaganza. The students welcomed Santa and Mrs. Claus, enjoyed the entertainment of a magician and animals from

Washington Park Zoo, had their faces painted, and enjoyed pizza and tied balloon creations! Thank you to Sergeant Chris Yagelski of the MCPD for coordinating this memorable event, the officers, Mayor Ron Meer, and multiple other volunteers for sharing their time and holiday cheer, Walmart, NIPSCO, and the generous employees of participating trade unions.



thank
you

GALLERY OF LOVED ONES

The "Gallery of Loved Ones" has found its permanent home at **The Social and Learning Institute**. Students created portraits of their loved ones from provided photographs. This "special arts" exhibition was on display at Lubeznik Center for the Arts throughout the past holiday season. Debra Sawyer, art instructor, assisted in moving the original pieces and creating a new display at the Institute. All are welcome to visit during regular school hours to view the works created and meet our talented



"Director Jim, Our Guardian Angel"
Artist: Andy Toma



"My Wonderful Mom Mary"
Artist: Robin Kloss



"Love You Grandma"
Artist: Melissa White



Social and Learning Institute students receive weekly instruction at Lubeznik Center for the Arts through generous funding from Duneland Health Council.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The students of **The Social and Learning Institute** have been busy preparing to celebrate Easter and the arrival of Spring. The routine of library visits, bowling, art, cooking, yoga, and music classes continue to enhance their social and learning experience.



Preparing "Happy Easter" cards for patients at Riley Children's Hospital.

Happy Easter



Painting Easter bunny yard decorations



Visiting Michigan City Public Library



Music class rhythm exercises. Grant funding for music class awarded by Unity Foundation of La Porte County.

CRITICAL NEED ... STUDENT TRANSPORTATION VAN

The Social and Learning Institute is currently formulating a fundraising campaign to offset the expense of replacing one of its two fifteen-passenger vans. The age, safety, reliability, and costs associated with maintaining the 1990 vehicle are of great concern. The van lacks modern safety features such as airbags and its unpredictable breakdowns have resulted in costly repairs as well as disruptions to the Institute's offsite activities.

The students of **The Social and Learning Institute** currently attend a



REMEMBER WHEN—1980's: Former student Greg Swinehart climbs into Marguerite Gardner's station wagon.

weekly art program at Lubeznik Center for the Arts, a monthly program at the Michigan City Public Library and bowl each month at City Lanes. There are also regular trips to the grocery store, activities at county parks, Washington Park Zoo, La Porte County Symphony Orchestra performances and live theatre productions. Engaging students in the community encourages self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and boosts self-esteem. These experiences require safe and reliable transportation. Campaign contribution information will be distributed in the coming months.



THEN—1990: Jim Guerrucci and SLI students excited to ride together in their brand new van.



NOW—2016: The 1990 van is still going but in need of regular and expensive maintenance.

Then & Now

LONGABERGER BINGO

Longaberger Bingo returned to the American Legion Post #37 on Sunday, May 6th. Along with countless hours of planning and preparation, Longaberger consultant Diane Warnke and her husband Kevin donated more than

40 Longaberger baskets, accessories, and home decor products for this event. Multiple other donors volunteered their time, provided bingo & raffle supplies, arrived with bonus raffle prizes, baked treats, and prepared food items all to benefit **The Social and Learning Institute**. As a result, the Institute raised \$3,286 to support its programs.

THANK YOU to all who attended and supported **The Social and Learning Institute** through this wonderful event.



Opportunities to Support The Social and Learning Institute

201 E Garfield Street, Michigan City



Where **Socializing and Learning are Key to Growth**



Order online ANYTIME! papajohns.com

You save 40%*

The Social and Learning Institute earns 10%

Promo Code:
SALI

*Must order online. Discount off regular menu price. Valid at 8 participating NW Indiana locations including Michigan City, La Porte, Chesterton, and Valparaiso.

Tuesday, March 22nd

11:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

5226 Franklin Street - Michigan City



On this special day, we will receive a donation for every purchase made at the Michigan City **Five Guys** location! No coupon required ... simply notify cashier you are attending the fundraiser and make sure **"Fundraiser"** is on the receipt for **The Social and Learning Institute** to receive credit for your purchases.

Five Guys will donate: **20% of fundraiser sales and an additional \$1 for every milkshake**

HOLLY'S

Restaurant and Pub

Gives Back \$\$\$\$\$

Group: The Social and Learning Institute

Date: Tuesday, May 24, 2016

Location: 3705 S Franklin St, Michigan City

You must receive this token from your organization prior to your event. Distribution of this token on Holly's property will disqualify the organization from receiving any proceeds.

GIFT CARDS OR SCRIPT MONEY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED TO MAKE PAYMENT FOR YOUR PURCHASE WITH THIS TOKEN.



Tuesday, May 24th

11:00 a.m.—10:00 p.m.

3705 Franklin Street - Michigan City

On this special day, we will receive a donation for every purchase made at **Holly's Restaurant and Pub!** Simply cut and present this coupon at time of purchase for **The Social and Learning Institute** to receive credit for your purchases.

END-OF-YEAR BEACH PARTY CELEBRATION

June 22, 2016 - 1:00 p.m.

Join Us!

You're invited to visit **The Social and Learning Institute** as the students showcase their activities and accomplishments of the 2015-2016 school year. This end-of-year celebration is a wonderful opportunity to experience what The Institute is all about ... being a place where **SOCIALIZING** and **LEARNING** are **KEY** to growth. Prepare for a festive gathering including summertime treats and musical good vibrations! The event will conclude with the drawing of our annual raffle prizes.



ANNUAL RAFFLE

TICKETS SALES WILL BEGIN

May 5, 2016

\$1.00 or

\$5.00/6 tickets

Top Prize \$500 Cash

RAFFLE DRAWING

June 22, 2016

Need not be present to win
(but you won't want to miss our celebration!)

Do you know a local business owner looking for an opportunity to spread the word about their products or services? If so, consider suggesting donating an item or gift certificate for our raffle. Thank you!

RAFFLE PRIZES WILL BE LISTED ON

www.socialandlearning.org

Visit often for updates!

The Social and Learning Institute

201 East Garfield Street
Michigan City, Indiana 46360

Phone: 219-879-2200

E-mail: contact@socialandlearning.org



**Where *SOCIALIZING* and
LEARNING are *KEY* to Growth**

SAVE THE DATE ...

**OPEN AND DISCOVER
OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT
THE SOCIAL AND LEARNING INSTITUTE**

Five Guys Give Back Day: March 22, 2016

Holly's Give Back Day: May 24, 2016

Annual Raffle: June 22, 2016

The Social and Learning Institute

40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Honoring James J. Guerrucci



May 21, 2016

2:00—5:00 p.m.

Blue Chip Hotel, Casino & Spa

FIRST THURSDAY'S

The first Thursday of each month has been designated "We Recycle Day!" at **The Social and Learning Institute**. Students consolidate donated cans and prepare them for transport. All proceeds from the sale of collected aluminum are utilized for the purchase of gasoline for our two school vans. You may drop your cans off (in a secure plastic bag) at the school during operating hours. If you need someone to pick up a large load please call us at 219.879.2200.



ALUMINUM CANS

BEACH PARTY CELEBRATION & ANNUAL RAFFLE

Enjoy some summertime
fun as we celebrate our
student's achievements.

Raffle Information Inside

June 22, 2016 - 1:00 p.m.

