

Perkins News

A C H A N C E T O B L O S S O M

Doctor Franklin Perkins School • Perkins Adult & Elder Services
Perkins Behavioral Health • Perkins Child Development Center • Rein in a Dream
Spring 2017

From the Desk of Michael Ames

As we look forward to spring and the coming of summer, we also look back and reflect on our recent accomplishments. This newsletter shares stories of recent events and looks forward to the end-of-year celebrations.

A highlight for me from this past winter was testimony provided by two of our students, Christian Pappas and Robert Wells, who were invited to participate in a briefing for state legislators on the importance of Private Special Education Schools such as Perkins. Both spoke eloquently and honestly about what a Perkins education has meant to them. Their speeches, along with the talks of others in attendance, helped our state representatives to better understand the importance of adequately funding private education for special needs students. Their ability to speak in front of a crowd was a wonderful testimony – not only to themselves but to the support they have received from family, teachers, and clinicians. The event underscored the incredible value of special education schools throughout the Commonwealth. They represented themselves, their families and Perkins in a way that made me very proud.

Continued on page 2

Perkins Well Represented at Mass State House Annual Briefing



State Representative Harold P. Naughton, Jr. joined Perkins students, their families, and members of the Perkins executive team at the State House.

The Massachusetts Association of Accredited Private Schools (maaps) Annual State House Briefing took place on Wednesday, February 8 in Boston. Christian Pappas, a 2016 Perkins graduate, along with senior Robert Wells, were among the featured speakers. Several State Representatives, including Representative Harold J. Naughton, Jr., were in attendance.

Robert spoke first explaining that he is on the autism spectrum, and that he had a hard time succeeding in a mainstream school. You can read more about them on page 3.

Continued on page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Desk of Michael Ames

Perkins Well Represented at Mass State House Annual Briefing

Perkins is Excited to Recognize Both New and Outstanding Employees

Upcoming Events

Dr. Charles P. Conroy Auditorium and Speakers Series Dedication

Renowned Poet Regie Gibson Wowed Perkins Students

Woven for Success

(From the Desk of Continued)

In January, we said good bye to our longtime CFO, Doug Reid, who retired after a 33-year career. While Doug will be missed, I couldn't be more pleased than to welcome Diane Fisk Johnson as our new Chief Financial Officer. You can learn more about Diane in the article below.

I also want to highlight the recent dedication of our auditorium and several upcoming events. On Sunday, April 30, we honored former Perkins Executive Director, Dr. Charles P. Conroy. Please see the pull-out included in this newsletter for more information. Looking forward, we have many terrific events coming up in the spring (Golf Tournament) and fall (Taste of Wachusett, Annual Gala).

Finally, I want to recognize the incredible commitment of the entire Perkins team. From our maintenance team who work steadily to ensure a safe and accessible campus, to those direct care staff and educators who keep quality services as the focus of their work, we are fortunate to have such a committed workforce – many of whom are named in these pages.

I wish you a wonderful spring and remain grateful for your commitment and support.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Ames, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer

Perkins is Excited to Recognize Both New and Outstanding Employees



Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer.

University, she describes herself as delighted to be a part of an organization with such a noble past and an exciting future. "I am honored by the trust that has been placed in me to follow up on former CFO Doug Reid's good work, and to continue to keep Perkins strong well into the future," commented Johnson, "I'm very grateful for the warmth and friendliness I've experience from everyone I've met."

Diane Fisk Johnson, MA, joined our team as the agency's new Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Johnson spent the last seven years as the CFO for the Arlington Public Schools.

Holding a bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, and a master's degree from Harvard

At the heart of what makes Perkins a dynamic community are our people. The staff members listed below are the embodiment of key Perkins values, and were recognized last fall for outstanding service.

Donna Buono – *Manor Receptionist*

Scott Calhoun – *Multimedia Professional and Teacher*

Heather Donovan – *Rein in a Dream Therapeutic Horsemanship Instructor*

Margaret Hladysz – *Training Coordinator/Human Rights Coordinator*

Chris Melvin – *Residential Supervisor*

Terri Philbrick – *Clinical Director*

Wendy Rock – *Math Teacher*

Will St. Hilaire – *Residential Supervisor*

Dianne Walsh – *Director, Perkins Behavioral Health*

Steve Young – *Facilities Director*

Upcoming Events

The **14th Annual Perkins Golf Tournament** is scheduled for Tuesday, May 23, 2017 at the Sterling National Country Club. Golfer registration and sponsorship information is available at golf.perkinsprograms.org.

Save the date for our delicious **Taste of Wachusett** on Wednesday, September 27 at Cyprian Keyes Golf Club in Boylston, MA.

Our November 3 **Evening Under the Stars Gala** is an event not to be missed. This evening, in support of those we serve, will be held at the International country club in Bolton and will feature Steve Pemberton, author and nationally recognized speaker. More information will be available soon. Sponsorships are available for events. Contact Kerry Flathers at kflathers@perkinschool.org or call 978-368-6449.



The 2016 Clinton Savings Bank team with Perkins CEO Michael Ames.

(State House Continued)

“It is schools like Perkins that gives kids (like me) the hope and happiness they deserve in life,” Robert said. Christian, and many of the other students, echoed the importance of being allowed a different way to learn. In his time at Perkins, Christian experienced many successes, but the one he is most proud of is his 120–pound weight loss. “My mental health improved exponentially and that translated to my physical health improving,” he said. He ended his impassioned speech with a plea to the representatives in attendance. “There are thousands of people just like me, and it is crucial that we keep funding for special education – not just in Massachusetts but in all of these great United States of America. Without special education we would not be able to tap into the full potential of these individuals, and we would never hear of the great feats they can accomplish.”

The maaps Action Network is an online, grassroots advocacy portal, and we need your help. To join visit <http://maaps.org/action-network-center/maaps-action-network-center/>



Christian and Robert proudly represent Perkins at the State House.

Renowned Poet Regie Gibson Wowed Perkins Students

Regie Gibson, who came to Perkins as part of our high school speaker series, sang his way into the psyches’ of his listeners using words from Shakespeare, the Iliad and other classics coupled with the music and beat of modern times. A uniquely gifted Poetry slam professional, Regie makes correlations between Shakespeare and contemporary music that offer a way for everyone to find their voice.

Born in Mississippi and raised in Chicago by a mother who was a Jehovah’s Witness and a father who was a Chicago police officer, life was full of diverse cultures. The work Regie performs has echoes of all who taught him. Regie notes that we are all connected and everything that was old will one day be new again.

A self-proclaimed believer in hope and the “brightness of life,” Regie shared all the reasons for humans to find joy while living regardless of their life circumstances.

“Don’t be afraid to speak to us (adults) in your language,” he said. “Be bold, be brave, be brash, study and get better. It is important that we, as adults, speak to and listen to young people and explore their ideas. As adults, we need to pass on what we know for the sake of the continuation of the species, but your ideas count, too.”



Quinn and Robert pose with Regie Gibson.

Regie took the students through the history of jazz, and the importance of Jimmy Hendrix and Edgar Allen Poe and how they contributed to his life today, “Words will make your life what it is to become,” he said. “It is our words and language that makes us unique from other species. Language, poetry, music and dance are the root of what it means to be human. Poetry and an understanding of language have taught me that everybody is more than what meets the eye. You have to dig down deep and find the secrets of each individual.”

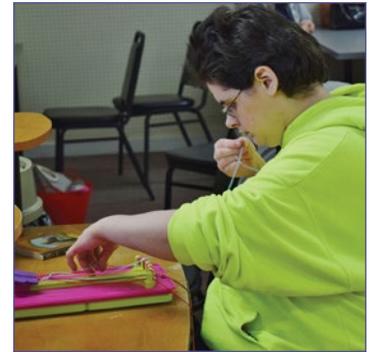
Woven for Success

Sue is a vibrant member of the Adult Day Vocational program, an avid crafter for the Perkins Coffee and Craft's Shop, and a vital member of the Clean Team.

"I find peace in repetitive tasks and similarity," Sue said. "My favorite things to make are friendship bracelets and key chains. I like to work with loom bands to make cell phone covers."

Perkins works hard to assure our participants are well connected; Sue has learned how to navigate an app called the i-loom which works in conjunction with her twenty-first century loom, and is now able to have a multitude of weaving patterns at her fingertips. "Weaving makes me happy, but working on the Clean Team allows me to get my exercise," Sue said. "My favorite thing to do at Perkins is work in the craft shop, but being on the Clean Team is important too because I like to be part of a team and I like to make things sparkle."

When Sue was a young girl her mom taught her many different types of arts and crafts as a way to make her calmer and keep her on a schedule. Perkins programs have allowed Sue to continue to experience those feelings while allowing her more independence.



Sue loves working in the craft shop.

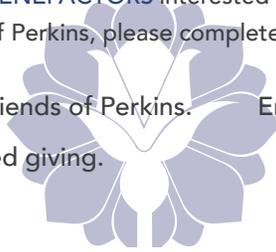
When not weaving, Sue enjoys keeping a journal and writing poetry. "I use my journal when I am trying to communicate and have a hard time finding the right words," she said. Sue notes that she finds peace in writing her feelings down when words are not cooperating. "It helps me to not get frustrated and still say what I mean."

We Appreciate Your Support!

PERKINS APPRECIATES THE GENEROSITY OF BENEFACTORS interested in furthering our work. If you would like to join the "Friends of Perkins," or continue your support of Perkins, please complete and return this section.

_____ Yes, I would like to support the Friends of Perkins. Enclosed is my contribution of \$_____.

_____ I would like information on planned giving.



Perkins • 971 Main Street • Lancaster, MA 01523 • 978/365-7376 • 978/368-8861 fax • www.perkinsprograms.org

Donald A. Lowe, President, Board of Trustees • Michael W. Ames, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer

Board of Trustees Martha Bayles, M.S. Ed.; Suzanne M. Frisch, Esq.; Dana M. Hollinshead, Ph.D.; Charles W. Hughes II, M.A.;
Jennifer F. Luisa; Carol Francolini Mueller; Beatrice M. Oakley; Christopher R. Philbin, Esq.;

R. Leslie Shelton, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.; Peter Stanton; Stanley B. Starr, Jr., M.S. Ed.

Trustees Emeriti Edwin L. Coward; Ann M. Kelly; Robert L. Mahar; Russell E. O'Connell

Executive Director Emeritus Charles P. Conroy, Ed.D.

Dan Fluet, Graphic Designer

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 17
Lancaster, MA
01523

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

A Comprehensive Human Service Agency for Children, Adolescents,
Adults & Senior Citizens
971 Main Street • Lancaster, MA 01523

Perkins



Perkins Extra

A C H A N C E T O B L O S S O M

Spring 2017

Dr. Charles P. Conroy Auditorium and Speakers Series Dedication

You know you have left a mark on a place when approximately 120 friends, family, and staff members – both past and present – gather to celebrate the contributions of a 28– year career. Sunday, April 30, marked the dedication of the Dr. Charles P. Conroy Auditorium and the Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speakers Series.

During the event, Perkins CEO Michael W. Ames, Ph.D. noted that he was in the auditorium the previous week for the annual Arts in Bloom presentation. “As I watched and listened, I thought about Charlie’s vision and his insistence on building this auditorium as part of the Janeway Education Center. For our students and for Charlie, a cafetorium wasn’t going to be good enough,” Michael stated.

The Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speakers Series is designed to continue the dialogue and encourage new champions in the years ahead. The series will focus on bringing members of our community together for lectures and discussion on a wide range of topics related to the various programs and services provided by Perkins. Speakers will focus on topics in the areas of child development, mental health, and education among other topics.



Dr. Charles P. Conroy admiring the signage for the newly dedicated auditorium in his name.

The Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speakers Series Committee and Board of Trustees is committed to raising funds to underwrite the series through an endowed fund. Underwriting the annual cost of running this Speakers Series will ensure access at no cost to members of the public. The series supports Perkins’ continued leadership in facilitating discussion, engagement, and learning in areas of education, mental health and disabilities.

It is through the generosity of committed friends of Perkins that this series will educate and inspire all who attend. To make a donation please visit our website at perkinsprograms.org/conroy-speakers-series or contact Kerry Flathers, Director of Organizational Advancement at 978-368-6449 or kflathers@perkinschool.org.