

# Perkins News

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

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

## From the Desk of Michael Ames

Dear friends,

At this year's recognition day, I spoke about the importance of grit. Grit, as defined by the author of the book by the same name, Angela Duckworth, is one's passion, stamina and ability to stick to goals, to persist and to learn from mistakes and failure. When I think about our students, the adults we work with in our residential and vocational program, and the individuals we work with through our behavioral health and therapeutic riding programs, I think about how central grit is to their ultimate success. The students who walked across the stage to receive diplomas and certificates of achievement did so because of their hard work and persistence, their passion, and their ability to learn from mistakes. I believe our Recognition Day student speaker Christian Slack



Christian Slack, student speaker, 2017 Recognition Day

had a complete understanding of perseverance and passion for the long term when he said in his student speech, "In life, in order to succeed, you need to keep on trying and never give

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## Adult Appreciation Day 2017



Mary Gustafson enjoys the Adult Banquet with sister Ann Marie Francolini.

The virtue of Mudita—in Buddha's teaching—is finding joy in the happiness and success of others. The adult and elder population at Perkins had mudita on full display at the end-of-the-year banquet that celebrated the accomplishments of many of them.

Perkins staff joined the party along with the families of the participants. Several awards were passed out including independent living certificates, the peer mentor award,

the vocational employee of the year award, and the most coveted of all, the most improved vocational employee. In true adult and elder fashion, the recipient of this award received the loudest applause and the most cheers because it is an accomplishment they all strive for—to be the best employee they are capable of being. Being employed is important to our adult vocational clients. It gives them a chance to feel fulfilled—to leave their mark on the world. *Continued on page 2*

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### *(From the Desk of Continued)*

up...never give up, never give in." It is that attitude—that deep seated belief—that will allow him to push forward through life.

At Perkins, one of the things I am proud of is our ability and commitment to supporting individuals to find their inner grit; and, with that, to overcome challenges to achieve their goals.

As we approach the fall and anticipate the beauty our area provides, we look forward to two special events organized to raise funds for our critical programs. You will read more about our September *Taste of Wachusett* and our November *Evening Under the Stars, Creating Bright Futures* gala. Consider an evening out with family or friends in support of our goal of creating bright futures.

Sincerely,

*Michael W. Ames, Ph.D.*

### *Sports Create Character*

Did you know that playing sports helps kids become better leaders and communicators, improve their self-discipline and be more attuned to strategic development? Mindful of this, we incorporate many different sports into our program offerings to our students. Over 80 students participate in one or all of the six sports that we offer: soccer, basketball, softball, dirt biking and *Rein in a Dream* therapeutic horseback riding, and martial arts.

The culmination of our sports program is a spring banquet, during which participants in each sport are recognized with a Coach's Award for being a good teammate and athlete. This year one of our coaches, soccer coach Blayne Murray, received a rare treat in the form of a thank you letter from a student he had coached for many years. We will call it the Coach's Reward.

Quinn had played soccer for Perkins since the day he walked through the door. He also played basketball. Recently, Quinn completed his senior year at Perkins and will be moving on to college. He wrote, "I would like to thank you for you coaching and teaching me all I know about soccer, I hope



All team participants received medals for each sport completed.

that your career here at Perkins as the soccer coach and as a program staff will be a good one. I would like to inform you that I plan to continue my soccer career by training hard and playing intramural sports at the college I will be attending."



### *(Adult Appreciation Continued)*

Along with the other awards, families were recognized for their advocacy of the program and several five-year service pins were presented.

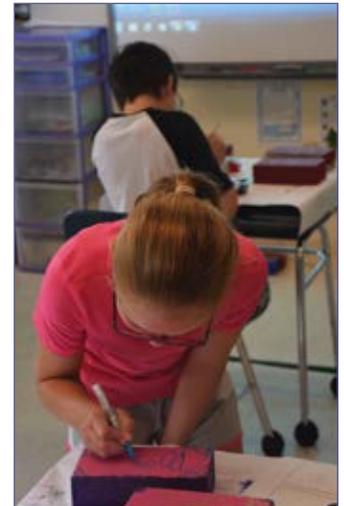
"As a parent, I love to attend the end-of-the-year banquet because it provides an opportunity for the staff to promote the growth of the participants in the adult programming," parent Mary Perreira said. "Clients, parents and extended family members love to hear of all the accomplishments made throughout the year. The entire staff works very hard to acknowledge all the milestones of each individual. It is an evening of fun and enjoyed by all."

Gilbert Guarin proudly displays his Vocational Employee of the Year Award.

## Who Is Your Hero?

This year's summer school theme was "heroes and leaders." During the seven weeks of summer, teachers taught lessons that focused on Nobel Peace Prize Winners, civil rights leaders, community and global heroes, extraordinary kids, and heroes of tomorrow. The lessons focused on the positive traits and talents of child leaders. This gave the students an opportunity to reflect on their own qualities, skills, and talents and to discover what makes them unique and special. During this section, students were challenged to write a nomination letter for someone they believed was worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. The one stand out was for a bus driver named Robert. "I think that my bus driver, Robert, should get a Nobel Peace Prize because he is able to drive every kid to their destination safely every day; even though some days he has to keep the peace," wrote one student.

Students also studied global leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, as well as local heroes. One teacher remarked, "The students really seemed to engage with the theme, particularly when researching heroic kids. It was fun for them to realize that some heroes are just regular people like them."



Students prepare artwork for the Perkins Labyrinth.

## Upcoming Events

### Steve Pemberton to be Featured Speaker



Steve Pemberton, esteemed author of *A Chance in the World*.

The deluge of support for last year's gala came in so many forms that we decided to do it again; although this time we are hoping to avoid the wrath of Mother Nature. We hope, however, to continue the surge of attendance and new support that we experienced last year.

Our second annual *Evening Under the Stars, Creating Bright Futures* gala will take place on Friday, November 3 from 6PM to 10PM at The International in Bolton. Our keynote speaker will be Steve Pemberton, author of the critically acclaimed book, soon to be a motion picture, *A Chance in the World*. Pemberton's memoir is about how he overcame abuse and abandonment in the foster care system. Pemberton is now a Senior Executive at Walgreens Boot Alliance, the first ever global pharmacy-led health and well-being enterprise in the world.

We are thrilled to have Mr. Pemberton as our keynote speaker. His message that small changes can make a big difference mirrors our agency's work of helping people rise above their own personal obstacles. It's an honor to present Mr. Pemberton and his remarkable story.

Perkins is expecting 200 plus attendees to help fund the programs that change the lives of those we serve. Specifically, event proceeds will support scholarships to *Rein in a Dream* and our Child Development Center, the *Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speakers Series* and other critical program needs.

To that end, we are offering several different sponsorship levels. To learn more, please visit [perkinsprograms.org](http://perkinsprograms.org) or contact Kerry Flathers, Director of Organizational Advancement, at [kflathers@perkinschool.org](mailto:kflathers@perkinschool.org) or call 978-368-6449.

This year's auction will be on-line and those not able to attend the gala can bid on silent auction items. Visit the gala event page at [perkinsprograms.org](http://perkinsprograms.org) for more auction details.

The *Evening Under the Stars, Creating Bright Futures Gala* is supported by our Gala Committee: Honorary Chair, Jennifer L. Flanagan; Honorary Chair, Representative Harold P. Naughton, Jr.; Honorary Chair, Robert J. Paulhus, Jr.; Dr. Michael W. Ames, Nancy Eckersley, Kerry A. Flathers, Carol Francolini Mueller, Walter V. Francolini, Stephanie D. Hyles, Deborah L. LaPointe, James B. Leary, Donald A. Lowe, Peter R. Stanton, and Susan C. Templeton.

Tickets are \$150 each and a table of eight is \$1,000. They can be purchased online at [perkinsprograms.org](http://perkinsprograms.org). Reserve early and save your spot for an unforgettable evening!

## Upcoming Events



Students and Perkins food services staff prepare at last year's event – offering an assortment of cannoli.

## Longest Running Tasting Event Celebrates 20 Years

Perkins 20<sup>th</sup> annual *Taste of Wachusett*, the longest running tasting event in the region, will take place on Wednesday, September 27 from 5PM to 8PM at the Cyprian Keyes Golf Club in Boylston. Expect to find many of your old favorites, as well as new vendors to entice your palette.

Advance ticket prices are \$30 each; \$130/5-pack; \$25 Seniors 65+. All tickets at the door are \$35. To purchase tickets visit [perkinsprograms.org/taste-of-wachusett](http://perkinsprograms.org/taste-of-wachusett).

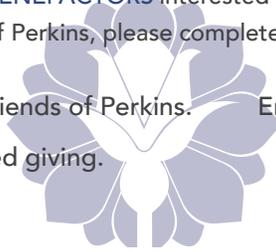
Being a sponsor of the *Taste of Wachusett* will help us to fund many of the programs we offer. From a *Rein in a Dream* scholarship, to equipment for our sport's teams, your dollars matter. If you are interested in sponsoring this event please contact Kerry Flathers, Director of Organizational Advancement at [kflathers@perkinschool.org](mailto:kflathers@perkinschool.org) or 978-368-6449.

## 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.



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