

# 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  
Spring 2018

## From the Desk of Michael Ames

The start to 2018 has been an enjoyable one at Perkins and we are confident it will continue to be a great year with many personal accomplishments of those with whom we work and with a number of agency successes we will enjoy as a community. One accomplishment was the success of our recent Legislator's Day in February. The morning was a great opportunity for students and staff to proudly show off their school to Senators and Representatives and included wonderful comments from a parent and student who have benefited from our services.

Our Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speakers Series is everything we had hoped for when planning for our inaugural three-speaker series. You will read more about Lynn Lyons, Dr. Ruth Potee and our upcoming speaker, Dr. Stuart Ablon. The impressive attendance evidences that parents and community members appreciate this free educational series. Perkins is proud to serve as a resource for those who join us in our pursuit of well-being for all members of our community.

This edition of Perkins News highlights the work of some of our unsung heroes. *Continued on page 2*

## Senators and Reps from Across the State Visit Perkins

On Friday, February 9, Perkins hosted eight senators and representatives from across the state in celebration of Legislators'



Senator Dean Tran and Representative Jennifer Benson on Legislators Day.

Day. The event provided guests the opportunity to meet students and staff, tour the school and speak with parents about why schools like Perkins are important.

Cheryl Harrington, the mother of a current Perkins student, addressed the audience and explained how Perkins changed the lives of not only her daughter, but her family, as well. "What started out as frequent moments of distress turned into daily struggles and finally a crisis that needed to be addressed," Mrs. Harrington explained.

*Continued on page 2*

## Independent Living Classes Underway for our Adult Division

One important goal for the adult individuals who participate in Perkins services is to help them work towards living and working independently in the community. With that in mind, Perkins offers an independent living class.

The 20-week sessions are scheduled twice a year for both members of the community and Perkins residents.

The class covers menu planning, apartment living, budgeting, as well as home and computer safety. It is tailored

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

Adults who reside at the Barlow Apartments and members from the local area are well on their way in completing our Independent Living Class. This course, designed for those with developmental disabilities, has become a favorite class and social opportunity as it teaches participants a number of important skills in preparation for apartment life.

I'm delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. Kathy Savage Mills who joined us in January as the Director of Research and Innovation. Dr. Mills will further expand Perkins' capability to evaluate its programming and to translate outcomes into quality and service improvements, as outlined in Perkins' strategic plan. A member of the executive team, Dr. Mills will also support the

departments of Quality and Performance Improvement and Organizational Advancement.

Please mark your calendars for our exciting fundraising events this year. These events allow us to expand our services and the number of individuals who are impacted by our programs. You can help by suggesting a business as an event sponsor, donating an auction prize or attending one of these memorable events. We are most thankful for your support and friendship.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Ames, Ph.D.

President and CEO

### *(Senators and Reps Continued)*



Cheryl and Cody take the podium at Legistlators Day.

"I came into Perkins feeling like a failure as a mother, and left with a feeling of hope."

The Harrington's daughter also spoke, noting that much of her success at Perkins can be attributed to her feeling like she matters. "In public school I was a student, but here at Perkins, I feel like a person," she said.

The event was co-hosted by Perkins and the Massachusetts Association of 766 Approved Private School (maaps). Executive Director of maaps – James Major – talked about the importance of funding chapter 766 schools. He

advocated for a fully-funded circuit breaker account for FY19 and a supplemental budget of \$36,633,756 for the same account for FY18.

Senator Jennifer Benson – who attended the event- said, "I enjoyed visiting Perkins and had many thoughtful discussions with administrators, staff, students, and parents. Seeing firsthand the impact Perkins has on the lives of its' students highlighted for me why it's so important to keep fighting for fully- funding the Special Education Circuit Breaker. I'm looking forward to continuing my work with maaps this session to ensure that every child in Massachusetts has access to the high-quality education they deserve."

### *Save These Dates and Make a Difference at Perkins*



**The Perkins 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament** will take place at the Sterling National Country Club in Sterling MA on **Tuesday, May 22, 2018**. This is a great opportunity for business networking and a wonderful day for our golfers to hit the links and support those with whom we work. Everyone can participate in our new on-line auction.



**The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Taste of Wachusett** will be held at Cyprian Keyes Country Club located in Boylston, MA on **Wednesday, September 26** from 5 to 8 PM. We are seeking vendors, sponsors and tasters. It is never too early to mark your calendars for this popular event.



**Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Evening Under the Stars, Creating Bright Futures Gala** will once again be a night to remember at the International in Bolton on **Friday, November 2** from 6 to 10 PM. Would you like to sponsor this event, or do you have an online auction prize to share? If so, please let us know. For more information or to sponsor any of these events, please contact Kerry Flathers at 978-368-6449 or [Kflathers@perkinschool.org](mailto:Kflathers@perkinschool.org)



The Perkins Annual Golf Tournament is a staple event and always a good time.

## (Independent Living Classes Continued)



Students attending independent living classes.

to the needs of each person. One of the most important components of the class is on safety. Participants are taught about financial exploitation and how to avoid it, how to conduct safety inspections of their living space, how to respond in case of fire, and how to call for help for a medical emergency or feeling their personal safety is threatened.

Since its inception in 2014, over 60 people have benefitted from the course. There are currently 14 people enrolled in this current session which is run by Independent Living Supervisor Lonna Lagasse and her co-worker Steve

MacAuley. According to Ms. Lagasse, advances are seen when an individual takes the time to think about the things discussed in class more fully and then puts the understanding into practice. "We see strides when we go grocery shopping and observe individuals shopping smartly, or when we talk about different subjects in class and individuals contribute to the conversation with confidence," she said.

Role-playing is well known for its effectiveness in teaching, therefore allowing students to participate in an activity from beginning to end gives them not only the understanding of each step, but also the experience of doing it themselves with support and then on their own. Practiced often enough, the process expands an individual's confidence - helping them to believe that living alone is achievable. "This program helps people realize that independent living is within their reach," Ms. Lagasse said.

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## Speakers Series Educates Hundreds

Perkins was excited to kick off the Dr. Charles P. Conroy Speaker Series with two great speakers and a third expected to join us in May. The series kicked off in November when anxiety expert, Lynn Lyons spoke to a packed auditorium. The author of several best-selling books including *Anxious Kids*, *Anxious Parents*, she offered practical advice on how to best deal with anxiety based on her years of research and experience.

The 200 people that attended the presentation learned new tools to address anxiety. "Having Lynn Lyons present as part of our speakers series was wonderful," said Perkins Clinician Bridget Matte. "Her expert approaches were delivered in an inspiring and entertaining way, which left people feeling more capable to take action with managing anxiety in their lives. The feedback we received from attendees was excellent." For more information about Lynn Lyons visit: [www.lynnlyonsnh.com](http://www.lynnlyonsnh.com).

On Thursday, February 15, addiction expert, Dr. Ruth Potee spoke to professionals, parents and community members about the *Physiology of Addiction*. Ruth is well-known across the Commonwealth for her laymen's explanation of how the brain reacts to substances like alcohol and opioids and how best to handle helping a person affected.

Dr. Potee explained how prolonged exposure to these substances and behaviors injures the brain. She also explained that there are three predisposing factors that put individuals at risk for addiction: genetics, childhood trauma, and early exposure to substances when the brain is still developing.



Dr. Ruth Potee speaks on the physiology of addiction.

She spoke extensively about how the narcotic and drug industry works to target children. "This is a pediatric disease," she said. To learn more about Dr. Potee, please visit [www.ruthpotee.com](http://www.ruthpotee.com).

The third speaker in the series, Dr. Stuart Ablon will be at Perkins on Thursday, May 3 from 6:30PM to 8:00PM. The topic of his talk is: *Parenting, Teaching and Treating Challenging Kids: The Collaborative Problem Approach*. To learn more or to register visit [perkinsprograms.org/conroy-speakers-series](http://perkinsprograms.org/conroy-speakers-series). To learn more about Dr. Ablon visit [www.thinkkids.org](http://www.thinkkids.org).

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## Rein in a Dream Reaches Match Goal

Congratulations to Program Director Cherie Ansin and the *Rein in a Dream* team for meeting their goal of raising \$12,500 in a month's time so as to receive a matching gift. The \$25,000 raised will be used to bring therapeutic horsemanship to more people across the region - many of whom could not afford it without financial assistance. The match - presented by Mr. Ronald Ansin - will be used to fund scholarships. We express our gratitude to Mr. Ansin for his generosity and long standing commitment to *Rein in a Dream*.



### *Kathy Savage Mills Joins Perkins Team*

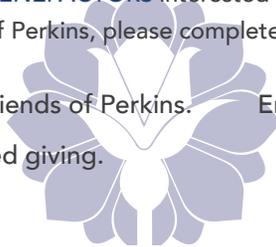
We are excited to announce the appointment of Kathleen J. Savage Mills, Ph.D., LICSW as our Director of Research and Innovation. Dr. Mills brings over twenty years of experience in the fields of child welfare, domestic violence, and early childhood mental health to Perkins.

"I feel fortunate to be part of an organization that values program evaluation and is eager to examine what they do well, in addition to what they can work to improve. It's this growth-oriented mindset that attracted me to Perkins," Mills said. "My diverse work experiences have allowed me to observe, explore, and learn about the challenges facing clients, families, and staff from a variety of different angles. It is a privilege to join the Perkins' team, and I look forward supporting their important work."

Kathleen J. Savage Mills, Ph.D., LICSW bring over 20 years of experience to Perkins.

## 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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