

# Voice



## Back By Popular Demand: Arthritis Swim Classes



You asked, we listened. The Viscardi Center is once again offering Arthritis Swim Classes to the community. Two six-week sessions will be held this fall in the Center's indoor heated pool. Water exercises have been shown to relieve arthritis pain, improve range of motion, and promote relaxation when practiced regularly. Classes are ideal for adults who would like to reduce joint stress and boost overall fitness.

- Indoor pool heated at 90 degrees
- Small classes with experienced instructor
- Convenient parking outside pool entrance

### Fall class schedule:

Tuesday Session – October 10, 17, 24, 31; November 7, 14  
 Thursday Session – October 12, 19, 26; November 2, 9, 16  
 Time – 4 p.m.-5 p.m.

Space is limited. Reserve your spot today by calling 516.465.1508 or emailing [dvargas@viscardicenter.org](mailto:dvargas@viscardicenter.org).

## VISCARDI happenings



### Smile Farms at The Viscardi Center

Viscardi has launched its freshest initiative: Smile Farms at The Viscardi Center. The partnership with Smile Farms — a nonprofit that provides adults with disabilities meaningful work opportunities in agricultural settings — offers ten students in the Youth Transition Services program with paid employment in a hydroponic vegetable farm on the Viscardi campus.



### Project Accessible Oral Health

For the first time, The Viscardi Center is bringing together key stakeholders from a range of sectors who are working toward a shared mission: enhancing the oral wellness of people with disabilities. The Project Accessible Oral Health summit will be held on October 26 at The Viscardi Center and on October 27 at New York University. This is an invitation-only event.



### Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards

Nominations are now open for the 2017 Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards! This international awards series honors leaders in the disability community who continue Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr.'s legacy through the example of their professional accomplishments and advocacy work.

For the full scoop on these and other happenings, visit [ViscardiCenter.org](http://ViscardiCenter.org).

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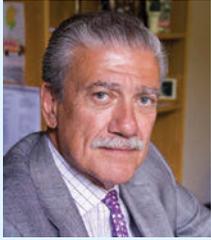


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## COMMENTARY

### Don't Put the Boxing Gloves Away Just Yet



The current administration may be moving on to other high profile topics it campaigned on, but the disability community is certainly not out

of the woods when it comes to its fight to ensure healthcare coverage. Thanks in part to the seven Republican holdouts, including Senators McCain, Collins and Murkowski, the Senate was unable to repeal law that has provided health insurance to millions of Americans, many with disabilities...for now.

Fortunately, steadfast disability activists like Judy Heumann, Marca Bristo, Becky Ogle and Viscardi's own Dylan and Debbie Cuevas, Denise Vargas and Viscardi Board member, Peter Thomas, have lent their "voices" on and off The Hill by sharing personal and professional perspectives on how Medicaid cuts would drastically change their lives and those of other students, working individuals, and families. Far-reaching effects that could prevent them from attending school and work, and ultimately, even their place of residence choices.

I encourage you to view the short, powerful video features about Dylan and Denise on The Viscardi Center's YouTube page. They provide further education about what Medicaid does and how cuts and caps would prevent individuals, like Dylan, Denise and myself, from pursuing our American dreams.

Advocacy takes on many forms and for many causes. Whether on a local, state or federal level, The Viscardi Center is committed to advocating for ourselves, others, systemic changes, and most certainly legislation to ensure we all have the opportunity to live a full life... one with purpose.

*John Kemp*  
President & CEO



Supporter

## Joe N. Savasta: Golfing for a Difference



When September rolls around, two things can be expected at Viscardi: its annual Golf Outing will once again be held in benefit of employment and youth transition programs and services for people with disabilities, and Joe N. Savasta will once again hit the greens in support of the cause.

For over four years, Savasta — President and CEO of J.N. Savasta Corp. and CEO of Broadreach Medical Resources, Inc. — has been a leading backer of the fall fundraiser, which enhances vital vocational training, job placement, and school-to-work services for thousands of adolescents and adults with visible and non-visible disabilities annually. He was named the Golf Honoree in 2015, and through his two businesses, is the presenting sponsor at this year's event.

A passion for bettering the lives of young people with disabilities urged him to get in the game, but something clicked for Savasta after meeting the children and adults directly affected by his generosity.

"Touring The Viscardi Center and the Henry Viscardi School was very eye opening for me. The work that's being done there needs to be seen," he said. "Since then, I not so slowly chose to become more involved."

In what he describes as a "whirlwind," Savasta dedicated himself to one of the Center's board of directors in early 2017, where he plays an instrumental role in shaping future initiatives. He additionally champions two other Viscardi fundraisers— Celebrity Sports Night and the Whiskey Flight.

Savasta now aims to encourage other community members to visit the campus. Because when it comes to philanthropy, Savasta says seeing is believing.

"You have to care about whatever it is you're doing. It feels good to be able to give back and know exactly who you're helping and how you're making a difference. As a supporter, that's what makes you want to stick around."

The Golf Outing, presented by J.N. Savasta Corp./Broadreach Medical Resources, Inc., will tee off at Glen Head Country Club on September 18. The day features a round of golf, a cocktail reception and elaborate dinner buffet, on-course contests and enhancements, and a silent auction.

**For more information about the Golf Outing, visit [ViscardiCenter.org/golf](http://ViscardiCenter.org/golf).**

# Meet Dayna

## The Second Chance That Changed Everything

Right now, 2012 Henry Viscardi School (HVS) alumnus Dayna Stropkay is exactly where she wants to be. With an Associate's degree from Queensborough Community



College under her belt and a new year at St. John's University just beginning, she's more determined than ever to complete her undergraduate studies before moving on to a master's program in education.

"It's because of the caring teachers and staff at HVS that I would like to pursue a career in

education like my sister," Dayna said. "I know it will be a hard road because I'm non-verbal, but nothing has ever stopped me before from trying to reach my dreams."

Several years ago, however, Dayna and her family feared she was approaching a dead end. As a teenager who uses a wheelchair, she felt more like a spectator than a participant at the public high school she attended. She wasn't passing exams, and because her large public school wasn't prepared to accommodate a student with a severe physical disability, it was made clear that fulfilling requirements for a local diploma wouldn't be possible.

Dayna never doubted herself, but even she was surprised by her academic prowess when she enrolled at HVS junior year. She flourished in the fully-accessible learning environment; acing tests, competing on the wheelchair basketball team, and assisting the school hearing specialist during free periods. Dayna also experienced the freedom of

traveling the halls and meeting friends in the cafeteria without an aide in tow at all times.

For the first time, Dayna believed her abilities preceded her disabilities, and having a greater degree of autonomy elevated her confidence to succeed.

"HVS taught me to be independent not only in my movements, but in my thinking," she said. "I learned to advocate for myself, and learned what worked and what didn't work for me."

Before graduating high school and moving on to frequent the dean's list in college, Dayna developed a joy for teaching as a volunteer in an elementary school classroom at Viscardi. Today she aims to use her personal experiences to encourage inclusion and accessibility in schools, so more students with disabilities have a chance to finally find their own voice.

**Meet Dayna and other Viscardi alumni at [ViscardiCenter.org/Stories](http://ViscardiCenter.org/Stories).**

# out & about



Good times, lots of selfies. That's the best way to describe the 2017 Senior Class Trip last spring. After endless hours spent studying and prepping for college, soon-to-be HVS grads finally had a chance to get away and share one last hurrah together. It was a rare occasion for seniors to have fun as a group outside of class, as many live far apart from each other and have varying medical needs.

Students and teachers boarded an accessible Amtrak train destined for Baltimore, Maryland, where they

toured the city and soaked up the perfect June weather. An afternoon at the Inner Harbor and National Aquarium were among the highlights of the week.

## AWARDS & ACCOLADES



Graduates, bedecked in caps and gowns, welcomed the next chapter of their lives June at the 50th annual Henry Viscardi School Commencement ceremony. Following a speech delivered by Dr. Christopher Rosa, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs at CUNY, seniors beamed with pride as they lined up to receive their well-earned diplomas — some of which included Regents with Advanced designation.

The graduating class of 16 was small in size, but big in accomplishment. Many grads have started college this fall to pursue study in a range of disciplines, from fashion merchandising to social work to law. Others are exploring vocational training and employment opportunities in their communities.

# NewsBytes



**We're blogging!** Now there's a new way to be empowered. Check out our new blog for tips on conquering college as a wheelchair user, insights on encouraging diversity & inclusion in the workplace, and more at [ViscardiCenter.org/viscardi-blog](http://ViscardiCenter.org/viscardi-blog).



### Promote Diversity & Inclusion This October

The National Business & Disability Council at The Viscardi Center is holding an informational event for companies in recognition of October's National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) on October 12.

To join us, call 516.465.3748 or visit [ViscardiCenter.org](http://ViscardiCenter.org)

## You're

I N V I T E D

### Champagne & Shoes

5 OCT | **The Shoe Box at Americana Manhasset, Manhasset, NY**

Sip, shop, support. Enjoy 10% discount. 15% of every purchase benefits Viscardi.



### Whiskey Flight

2 NOV | **Cradle of Aviation Museum Garden City, NY**

Take a tasting trip around the world! Meet distillers, master blenders, and more. #ViscardiRaisesSpirits



For tickets, sponsorships, and details, call 516.465.1595 or visit [ViscardiCenter.org](http://ViscardiCenter.org).

## YOUR LASTING IMPACT

For many philanthropists, making sure every charitable gift counts can be challenging. Enter the Long Island Community Foundation (LICF), a division of The New York Community Trust that connects donors with vetted nonprofits committed to addressing existing issues on Long Island. In identifying Youth Development as a major area of need, LICF and its donor base are broadening the horizons of at-risk youth in the PROSPER program at The Viscardi Center.

LICF's funding of PROSPER (People Reaching for Opportunities to Succeed Personally, Educationally, and Realistically), a one-year attendance retention program serving students from local public districts, enables young people to explore career paths during weekly vocational tours. These interactive experiences — at businesses and organizations like Covanta Energy, Lincoln Tech, and the Holocaust Memorial & Tolerance Center of Nassau County— teach life skills that can't be taught in the classroom, and have been found to decrease

student dropout rates. 98 percent of those who complete the program graduate high school to attend college and secure employment.

"LICF's staff and donors understand that not everyone can thrive in traditional school settings," said Executive Director Dave Okorn. "The PROSPER program aligns with our goal to advance the well-being and economic self-sufficiency of at-risk youth by providing opportunities for positive youth development and leadership."

According to Okorn, the goal is to promote opportunity for all to become contributing and productive members of society. With LICF's guidance and support, it's a win-win for donors and PROSPER certificate holders alike, who can both opt to leave a lasting impact on the community.

