

# Voice



## ‘WICKED’ Star Celebrates Opportunities for Children with Disabilities

The 35th annual Reach for a Star Luncheon delivered a “wicked” good time to 500 attendees and guaranteed another year of opportunities for children with severe disabilities.

Special guest Jennifer DiNoia, now playing Elphaba in the long-running Broadway musical *WICKED*, performed “Defying Gravity” and several other songs at the fundraiser, which draws supporters to the Crest Hollow Country Club each Spring. The event raised nearly \$300,000 in benefit of afterschool programs and extracurricular activities at the Henry Viscardi School (HVS).

“Today is a true milestone,” The Viscardi Center’s President & CEO John D. Kemp said. “Not only because it’s the Reach for a Star Luncheon’s 35th anniversary, but also because of the record-breaking attendance and monies raised.”

HVS students often live far away from one another and require life-sustaining medical supports throughout the day, limiting options for socialization outside the classroom. The Reach for a Star Luncheon raises support and awareness for programs and activities — like adapted sports, the arts, and recreational overnights — which make it possible for students with disabilities to explore interests and enjoy a sense of independence.

Students can also share unforgettable experiences with their friends. Some recent memorable moments made possible by supporters have included: frosting a baker’s dozen with Dunkin’ Donuts, brushing up on adaptive fashion with Mindy Scheier of Runway of Dreams, playing wheelchair hockey with the New York Islanders, and taking the stage with a Broadway star.

Last year’s event enabled HVS to double its Friday Night Recreation sessions. This year Kemp announced the growth of the school’s STEAM curriculum, with the addition of a digital fabrication workshop, or Fab Lab, equipped with cutting-edge 3D-printing technology. Starting in the fall, two college-level courses will be offered to high school students looking to earn actual college credits prior to graduation.

“These and other experiences at our school allow our students to nurture their love of learning, form friendships, create school spirit, and most of all, dream,” Kemp said. “Thanks to our supporters, these opportunities will continue to expand and grow.”

**Stay tuned for news about next year’s Reach for a Star Luncheon at [ViscardiCenter.org](http://ViscardiCenter.org)**

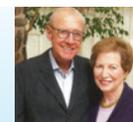
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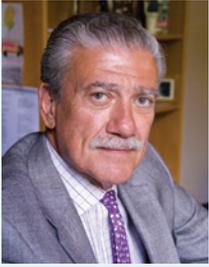


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*Ken*  
COMMENTARY



Spring marks new beginnings here at The Viscardi Center, and there's no better time to reflect on the

academic and professional achievements made by the children and adults we serve.

- ★ Kindergarteners, fifth, and eighth-graders will move up and continue their journey of learning and self-advocacy.
- ★ Over 50 “at-risk” adolescents will complete our PROSPER program with newfound confidence, maturity, and life skills that can be used to chart their next course.
- ★ We'll celebrate our Youth Transition Services participants as they, too, move on the meaningful employment and community-based programs.
- ★ Many of the adults who attended our recent Career Fair for People and Veterans with Disabilities will enjoy financial independence and all of the positive benefits being employed brings with it.

It's also a time for new endeavors for The Viscardi Center, as a whole, as we expand our veterans employment programs, take an active, leadership role in raising the awareness of accessible oral health and collaborate with Smile Farms to open a farm right here on our campus which will employ individuals with visible and non-visible disabilities.

As you can see, Viscardi is alive and growing thanks to supporters like you! Come by for a visit... and see for yourself.

*John D. Kemp*  
President & CEO



Supporter  
Henry Schein:  
Making a Healthier  
Viscardi



Henry Schein is “helping health happen” at Viscardi. Henry Schein Cares, its global corporate social responsibility program, regularly donates bulk medical supplies and equipment that nurses and therapists at the Henry Viscardi School need to treat and work with students every day. Now, the company also seeks to make oral health care more accessible to people with disabilities.

Operating under the philosophy of “doing well by doing good,” Henry Schein has collaborated with experts from Viscardi to launch **Project Accessible Oral Health**, a global public-private partnership to raise awareness of the significant need to enhance oral health care of individuals with disabilities and improve overall health and quality of life.

Dental providers often lack the training and equipment to accommodate patients with a wide range of disabilities, and low reimbursement rates from insurance providers can block patients from receiving modified treatment. Together with Viscardi, Henry Schein hopes to eliminate these barriers.

“We quickly realized the scope of the programs at The Viscardi Center and the ways we could provide for and learn from its health care needs,” says Steven Kess, Vice President of Global Professional Relations, Office of the Chairman & CEO and President of Henry Schein Cares. “What we’re doing goes beyond philanthropy. We want to enhance health care access to the full spectrum of the community.”

On to matters of the heart, Team Schein and the Viscardi Cougars both got a full cardio workout when they faced off against each other in a game of wheelchair basketball. The Cougars, as they often do, won. But spending time with the children they support — and planning for the future — was considered a winning opportunity.

“The vitality of the students and the staff is contagious,” says Kess. “Henry Schein and The Viscardi Center fit together naturally.”

# Meet Miguel

## A Seamless Transition into the Working World



June is a month of endings and beginnings. It marks the close of the school year, the start of summer — and, for Miguel, the final step into adulthood.

Miguel, a student at Viscardi's Youth Transition Services, is on track to graduate this summer. Leaving the program and

entering the workforce will bring new experiences, but according to Assistant Program Manager Deborah Brave, Miguel won't be navigating unfamiliar territory.

"When I first met Miguel, he lacked the self-confidence to advocate for himself. Now, he has no qualms about communicating his needs," says Brave, remarking on how she watched Miguel develop from a struggling teenager in the Freeport School District into a twenty-one-year-old with concrete goals for the future. "He flourished in the program, learning important financial, writing, and social skills over the course of seven years that will help him succeed in a job."

Youth Transition Services readies young people with disabilities for independent living through career development and community integration via work-based learning. By rotating through a variety of worksites, Miguel tested out and adapted to different employment settings before landing

a paid internship at The Home Depot — a role he hopes will become permanent after graduation. He has already prepared his résumé for submission.

While June isn't far off, Miguel has plenty to do in the meantime. When he's not practicing for interviews, he assists staff by training fellow students at worksites as a junior job coach and immerses himself in volunteer initiatives, like collecting donated business attire for veterans returning to work.

Another priority for Miguel, who was nominated class president for a second consecutive year, is to be crowned Prom King at the program's annual spring formal. Brave says winning the title would be a much-deserved conclusion to a successful student career.

"Miguel has become a leader. He's still getting used to the idea of moving on, but he's ready."

## out & about



Center's Culinary Skills program arranged intricate hors d'oeuvre platters topped with fresh veggies and cheeses. Youth Transition and Henry Viscardi School students also showcased several paintings made for the occasion, adding extra pops of color to the event's floral displays.

Opportunities are in bloom! Smile Farms — an organization that creates gardening and farming jobs for adults with disabilities — announced a growing partnership with The Viscardi Center during the annual Spring Flower & Garden Show at Hicks Nurseries in Westbury. Resources provided by Smile Farms will bring an extensive vegetable garden and paid employment to students at Viscardi.

In keeping with the evening's farm-to-table theme, participants from the

## AWARDS & ACCOLADES



Disability took center stage for the first time at the Long Island Business News Awards. Henry Viscardi School alumnus Hon. Robert E. Pipia, a Nassau County District Court judge, and Henry Viscardi Achievement Awards recipient Dave McGill, vice president of Legal Affairs and Reimbursement at Össur, were among twenty-seven men and women honored with a Diversity in Business Award.

Viscardi President & CEO John D. Kemp delivered the event's keynote and addressed attendees about the importance of workplace diversity before honorees were bestowed the award, which recognizes leadership excellence across all areas of diversity, including age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion — and, now, disability.

## NewsBytes



Watch the 2017 **Reach for a Star** video and find out how education goes beyond the classroom at the Henry Viscardi School, where students with disabilities are presented with unique learning experiences made possible by our kind supporters. Visit our YouTube channel for this video and more, at [youtube.com/AbilitiesOnline](https://youtube.com/AbilitiesOnline).

201 I.U. Willets Road  
Albertson, NY 11507



### Cocktails in the Courtyard

*Presented by the  
Viscardi Advisory Council*

Enjoy a sophisticated night in NYC!  
Includes top-shelf open bar, hors  
d'oeuvres, live music, and silent  
auction. **Wednesday, July 12, 2017**  
from 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. at the Jue  
Lan Club.

Visit [ViscardiCenter.org/vac](http://ViscardiCenter.org/vac) or call  
**516.465.1548**

## You're

I N V I T E D

### 5th Annual Golf Outing

18 | **Glen Head Country Club**  
SEP | **Glen Head, NY**

Includes round of golf,  
cocktails and dinner,  
on-course enhancements,  
and silent auction.



### Whiskey Flight

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

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



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

## YOUR LASTING IMPACT

Frank and Rita Castagna have worked to enhance the quality of life on Long Island as principals of Castagna Realty Company, their real-estate development and management firm, and through their luxury retail operation, Americana Manhasset. Helping those in need is also an integral aspect of the Castagna's mission, and their commitment to our community is evident in their dedication to many worthy causes.



Strong supporters of The Viscardi Center, Frank and Rita's generosity has been instrumental in the expansion of education and work readiness programs for children and adults for many decades. Rita remains committed to the Henry Viscardi School (HVS) as a member of the Reach for a Star Luncheon Committee, where she plays an active role in planning the event. This year, facilitated by the couple, Americana Manhasset made a special contribution by becoming the Presenting Sponsor of the 35th annual Luncheon, which raised record funds for students at HVS.

On a larger scale, Frank and Rita's philanthropic endeavors are widespread. Americana Manhasset has brought in nearly \$10 million for over 100 nonprofit organizations — Viscardi included — during its annual holiday shopping benefit, Champions for Charity®. Perhaps Champions for Charity is the best way to describe the Castagnas, who do so much to bring out the best in their local community.

Learn how you can make a lasting impact by contacting the Development Office at  
**516.465.1594**