

ESNJ honors participants with special needs

Anysa Holder, Easter Seals NJ 5:01 a.m. EST November 1, 2015



(Photo: Photo courtesy of Easter Seals New Jersey)

NEW BRUNSWICK — Easter Seals New Jersey (ESNJ), a nonprofit that helps children and adults with disabilities and special needs, celebrated Disability Employment Awareness Month (October) at its 45th Annual Employment Services Awards Dinner & Dance on Oct. 22, at Pines Manor in Edison.

The gala brought light to the more than 200 program participants engaged in Employment Services at ESNJ's Raritan Valley Workshop (RVW) in New Brunswick, and the community of businesses and individuals who help support them. Guests enjoyed an evening of dinner and dancing, a gift auction, 50/50, and awards presentations.

In an official proclamation in support of the event New Jersey Governor Chris Christie said, "For more than 65 years, Easter Seals has been dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with special needs by providing them with opportunities to learn, work and integrate with their communities. I applaud the incredible commitment of all those involved with the Easter Seals' mission and commend those who will expand the organization's legacy into the future."

The month of October was designated "National Disability Employment Awareness Month" by Congress in 1988 and it has become ESNJ's kick-off month for year-round programs recognizing social and cultural contributions made by people with disabilities while, increasing awareness of the changes still needed to create equal opportunities and community inclusion.



Daniela Badesio (Staff), Marvin Stone, and Leslie Ferwerda (Staff), (Photo: Photo courtesy of Easter Seals New Jersey)

Mayor Jim Cahill of New Brunswick was the keynote speaker, while Mitchell (Micky) Landis was this year's special honoree for his legacy of support of RVW and his overall advocacy for employment for people with disabilities. Landis is also the chairman of the board of the RVW, and has helped to carry on his family's tradition of support for RVW that began with his Uncle Sam Landis decades ago.

About the Raritan Valley Workshop

The Easter Seals' Raritan Valley Workshop has supported individuals on their road to independence since 1967 by promoting employment resources and opportunities for adults with disabilities. Easter Seals job training and employment services help people with disabilities develop skills to successfully enter the workforce and independently earn an income, or to return to work after an illness or injury.

The lives of many individuals with disabilities are positively impacted by the employment opportunities presented to them through a flow of sub-contract work handling packaging and fulfillment services for area businesses. Recent cuts in funding for social service programs means the workshop now has to rely even more heavily on subcontract work in order to keep its participants employed.

Easter Seals New Jersey is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that has enriched the lives of people living with disabilities and special needs, and those who care about them, by providing opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities since 1948. Annually, nearly 8,000 people or families in New Jersey affected by developmental disabilities, including autism, physical disabilities, mental illness and other special needs participate in programs designed to help them address life's challenges and achieve their personal goals on the path toward independence. For more information on Easter Seals New Jersey and its statewide disability services, contact 732-257-6662 or visit www.eastersealsnj.org ([http://Easter%20Seals%20New%20Jersey%20\(ESNJ\).%20a%20nonprofit%20that%20helps%20children%20and%20adults%20with%20disabilities%20and%20specia](http://Easter%20Seals%20New%20Jersey%20(ESNJ).%20a%20nonprofit%20that%20helps%20children%20and%20adults%20with%20disabilities%20and%20specia) or www.facebook.com/eastersealsnj (<http://www.facebook.com/eastersealsnj>).

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