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## Easterseals event at Sportika raises more than \$100,000

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The indoor turf at the Sportika sports complex in Manalapan swelled with supporters of Easterseals New Jersey during its new annual fundraiser, “Play with Purpose,” which took place on April 28.

The event was designed to educate the community about Easterseals and the work it does to support individuals with disabilities and special needs including autism, physical disabilities and mental illness, according to a press release.

Celebrity co-hosts for the day were Bill Spadea of New Jersey 101.5 and Matt Hamill of Ultimate Fighting Championship fame.

Event proceeds were in excess of \$100,000 and will be used for programming that enables Easterseals’ clients to achieve their personal goals and become active, contributing members of the community, according to the press release.

“Play with Purpose” highlighted the theme of inclusion with a message that anyone, regardless of ability, can and should have the opportunity to participate in recreation. It also underscored the premise that play is a vital ingredient in achieving overall wellness, work-life balance, and reducing stress, according to the press release.

The fundraiser featured recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities, with the festivities lasting from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. “Play with Purpose” supports Easterseals’ motto, “Live, Learn, Work, Play,” and its mission to build an inclusive community throughout New Jersey. Sportika boasts the largest indoor turf in the tristate area with approximately 170,000 square feet of recreational space.

“It was a great day for individuals of all ages, as they engaged with friends and family members in a variety of different kinds of play,” said Helen Drobnis, chief advancement officer for Easterseals New Jersey. “Our message is that play is an integral part of improving well-being and that everyone, regardless of ability, can benefit from physical activity. Our clients are a living example of the positive benefits of play.”

In addition to the recreational activities offered, the event offered door prizes and raffles, giving everyone a chance to go home with something. The event’s corporate sponsors included CVS, Century 21, Britt Worldwide Charities, Robert Half International, Lox Consulting, Mass Mutual, KPMG, Amway and others, according to the press release.

The New Jersey Chapter of Easterseals serves individuals age 18 and up with social service programs in all 21 counties that include community living services, adult day training, workforce development and employment solutions, senior community service employment programs, and camping and recreation options, according to the press release.

Youths under 18 are eligible to enroll in Easterseals Camp Merry Heart, one of the only fully accessible and inclusive camps in the area.