

## Finding Unconditional Love



Photo credit: Kerry St. Ours

### North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center

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The mission of North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center is to restore and strengthen the emotional well-being of children and families.

Peanuts creator Charles M. Schulz said it best: Happiness is a warm puppy. Or, for that matter, a cuddly kitten, or any animal who gives children unconditional love and acceptance.

While all kids benefit from their relationships with pets, animal-assisted therapy is an especially important tool for those who have emotional issues such as depression, anxiety or social isolation. Pets help kids not only feel loved, but also help them open up, learn to trust, and decrease stress and impulsivity.

A recent trip offers an example of how working with animals can be a transformative experience. Some of the teens from the Latina Girls Project—a North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center initiative designed to help teens who suffer from issues such as depression and

anxiety—spent the day at HorseAbility, an equine therapy program designed to promote the physical, social and emotional well-being of its participants.

Of the 18 girls who went on the trip, only one had ridden a horse before, so many of the others were nervous around such large animals. As the girls met the horses, the volunteers told them each one's story, including where they came from and how they were rescued. The girls quickly bonded with these majestic animals, and all were deeply moved by the stories of horses who had faced difficulties in their lives. Some of the horses had been abandoned, and many of the girls have also experienced abandonment or feelings of isolation and worthlessness.

The healing power of the animal-human interaction was a beautiful thing to witness, according to Regina Barros-Rivera, Associate Executive Director at the Guidance Center. Some of the girls who tend to keep to themselves opened up, talking to each other about the excitement of the day. They also were eager to take care of the horses, diving right into the chores. The HorseAbility volunteers commented on the girls' hard work, which gave the teens a strong sense of pride.

"We saw incredible growth through the experience," says Barros-Rivera. "One teen who acts as if she doesn't care about anyone walked over and hugged another teen whose anxiety about riding had her sobbing. It was a transformative moment for both girls, as one learned to overcome her fear and the other learned how to reach out with compassion to a peer."

Following the trip to HorseAbility, the teens met with our therapists to process what

*See Pet Therapy continued on Page 5*

# A Note from the Executive Director



## When Insurers Slam the Door

Have you ever sought mental healthcare for your child? What about drug addiction? Have you called multiple providers on your insurer's "list" and had the door slammed in your face? Or were you fortunate enough to make a good connection and then have the rug pulled out from under

you, with your insurer denying continued care?

Welcome to the club.

There are two pieces to this issue. One involves the **federal parity law**, which requires health insurance companies to treat annual or lifetime dollar limits for mental health and substance abuse the same as they do medical benefits. The other issue involves **network adequacy**, which requires insurers to provide clients with timely access to a sufficient number of in-network mental health professionals in their vicinity. But how many times have you looked on your list, called them up, and then heard, "We don't accept your insurance."

The reality is that, because private insurers pay much lower rates as compared to Medicaid for mental health and addictions care, middle-class families are finding it harder and harder to find providers to help their children. The lists of in-network providers are inadequate, outdated or just plain falsehoods.

On July 22, 2015, Assemblyman Todd Kaminsky wrote to the New York State Department of Financial Services (DFS) to express concern about the lack of insurance coverage for mental health services for middle-class families on Long Island. He wrote, "After hearing from numerous constituents and closely studying this issue, it is clear that commercial insurance companies do not have adequate mental health service networks for hard-working families. This lack of access to care is alarming, and I hope DFS will immediately respond by commencing a thorough study of this issue."

While Medicaid covers comprehensive mental health services, commercial insurance frequently does not, or if they do, the rates are miniscule compared with the cost of treatment. The reality today is that fewer community-based mental health clinics are accepting privately insured clients who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid, which leaves these families with nowhere to turn for affordable care.

I'm proud to say that, at North Shore Child & Family Guidance, we

never turn away anyone for inability to pay. But we are one of very few left who can make that statement.

By ignoring the enforcement of the federal parity law and the need for network adequacy, the majority of representatives in government are turning their backs on the millions of Americans who are in need of essential mental healthcare services. We cannot trust insurance companies, whose eye is on their bottom lines, to do the right thing. It's no exaggeration to say that lives have been and will continue to be lost unless we pressure our politicians to make this a top priority.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Malekoff".

## Take Action!

Here are some resources you can use to file a complaint and/or advocate about these issues:

### **Office of the Attorney General, Health Care Bureau:**

The Bureau's Health Care toll-free Helpline provides information and assistance to thousands of New Yorkers annually, including resolution of individual consumer health-related complaints, making sure consumers and patients get access to the health care they are entitled to.

- Consumer Helpline: 800-428-9071
- Complaint Form and Other Information: [www.ag.ny.gov/bureau/health-care-bureau](http://www.ag.ny.gov/bureau/health-care-bureau)

### **New York State Department of Financial Services:**

You have the right to appeal to the Department of Financial Services (DFS) when your insurer or HMO denies health care services as not medically necessary, experimental/investigational or out-of-network. This appeal is known as an external appeal. Health care providers also have the right to an external appeal when health care services are denied (concurrently or retrospectively).

- Consumer Hotline: 800-342-3736
- External Appeal Information and Form: [www.dfs.ny.gov/insurance/extapp/extappqa.htm](http://www.dfs.ny.gov/insurance/extapp/extappqa.htm)

# We've Been Busy

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## Lights, Camera, Action!



The Guidance Center was featured on a regional television program called My LI TV, which focuses on important issues through Long Island. The program, which can be viewed on our website at [www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org), shows how the organic garden helps emotionally at-risk children learn how to cope with their

feelings and learn that having “good soil,” like having positive support and outlooks, helps them grow into emotionally healthy children. The excess produce is brought to a local food pantry, which also makes the children feel very proud of helping others. The garden, our second, is located at our Marks Family Right From the Start Center. The first is at our headquarters in Roslyn Heights.

## Fresh Look for Our Headquarters

Last spring, work began to upgrade our Roslyn headquarters with an extensive renovation to remediate structural problems as well as increase energy efficiency, and we are pleased to announce that the work is complete!

“The aging infrastructure of the Roslyn site’s west and south-central sections of the building, known as Whispered Wishes, needed extensive renovations that were critical to keeping our clients and employees safe,” says Nancy Lane, Board President of the Guidance Center. “The renovations have made these areas bright and energy-efficient work spaces.”

Whispered Wishes was built in 1905 by the family of I.U. Willets and is believed to have been a wedding gift for one of the Willet descendants. A point of interest is that the building was purchased in 1920 by Charles Auchincloss whose son Hugh eventually became Jackie Kennedy Onassis’ step-father. She spent many summers at Whispered Wishes in the 1940s. The Guidance Center purchased the property in 1983.



## Joining Forces for Childhood Research and Parent Education

We’re excited to announce that we have entered into a research partnership with Northwell Health, formerly North Shore-LIJ Health System, that will study the use of a new medication and also healthy lifestyle interventions to help children and adolescents on the bipolar spectrum disorder who gained weight from the use of second-generation antipsychotics.

Also in partnership with Northwell Health’s Cohen Children’s Medical Center, the Guidance Center will be hosting a monthly series of lectures from pediatric experts on topics ranging from toilet training to the importance of immunization. The Positive Parenting Workshop, to be held on the second Tuesday of every month at our Marks Family Right from the Start site in Manhasset, will be a free program designed to educate community members about a host of issues related to raising healthy, happy children. Our March 8th workshop will focus on nutrition and feeding issues for infants and youngsters. Be on the lookout for the future lineup in emails or on our website!

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## Preschoolers Receive Early Intervention

A pre-school mental health consultant hired by North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center will now be working with youngsters in the Uniondale School district, one of the area’s low-income communities. The District has initiated a district-wide full day Pre-K program this fall but they do not have support staff to provide mental health intervention.

*Early Intervention continued on page 4*

## Social Media Update

The Guidance Center is pleased to announce the launch of our new website, now featuring a “responsive” design so it is easy to read on all mobile devices. We have also boosted our social media presence to include not only Facebook, but also Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. It’s a great place to keep up on all the news at the Guidance Center and also to learn about a host of issues, including how to fight stigma and advocate for mental health reform. Thank you to our new “Communications Advisory Council”—Liza Burby, Kerry Gillick-Goldberg, Ann Latner and Lisa Valentine, along with our Board President Nancy Lane and Board Member Ginny Glasser—for volunteering their time and expertise on this and other important projects so the Guidance Center’s message reaches the public. Also thank you to the staff at Morey Publishing for their expertise in our website design and social media know-how.

Find us on Facebook by searching for “North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center;” at Instagram at @the\_guidance\_center; and on Twitter and Pinterest at @NSCFGFC.

## Our Renaissance Man

The Board of Directors and entire staff at North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center are proud to announce that our leader, Andrew Malekoff, was honored at this year’s David Awards, which recognizes eight Long Island men who have excelled in business or academics and also accomplished outstanding heroic and humanitarian acts. Andy is a passionate advocate fighting against stigma and for the rights of those facing mental health challenges. He is a true hero to children and families in need, and we and the entire community are privileged to have him at the helm of the Guidance Center!

*Early Intervention continued from page 3*

The purpose of our collaboration is to provide an early childhood mental health professional as a resource to the teachers, students and parents. This consultant will work in the school several hours a month, providing training for parents and teachers, observation and support in the classroom and developmental screening to those in need. It is hoped that the families will view the consultant as a link to community resources.

## Taking Back Your Parenting Power

Have the terrible twos turned to the terrible tweens or the terrible teens? To help parents of children and teens of all ages, North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center hosted a workshop by psychotherapist and parenting expert Sean Grover called “When Kids Call the Shots: Stop Being a Bullied Parent.” The free workshop was held at the Guidance Center’s Roslyn Heights headquarters on October 23 to a capacity crowd of more than 50 people.

“If your child is pummeling you with demands and behaving disrespectfully, you’re not alone,” says Grover, the author of the book *When Kids Call the Shots*. “It’s not at all uncommon for today’s kids to boss their parents and even their teachers around. And it’s not only bad for the adults. Children who bully their parents suffer emotional, social and academic problems.”

Grover provided practical advice on how parents can stop surrendering their power to their children and better manage their own fears and anxieties by providing stronger leadership in their family. “When parents regain control, everyone benefits,” Grover says.

Alexis Siegel, chairperson of the Guidance Center’s Parenthood Advisory Council, which hosted the workshop, says, “Sean had an amazing way of making every parent realize that the issues they are having with their children are universal. Everyone came away with very useful tips on how to handle their children’s behaviors, no matter if they are big or small.”

Andrew Malekoff, Guidance Center Executive Director and CEO, also gave Grover high marks. “Sean has a talent for sharing very important information about parenting while also making it fun and engaging,” says Malekoff. “I’m sure that his advice will provide all of the attendees with useful and productive ways to interact with their children and teens that will help them grow into mature, respectful and responsible young people.”

The Guidance Center regularly holds workshops for parents and professionals. To find out more, visit our website at [www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org).



With author Sean Grover (left to right): Amy Cantor, Susie Suriel, Ruth Fortunoff Cooper, Alexis Siegel, Regina Barros-Rivera and Sandy Lafazan

# In Honor, In Memory or to Celebrate

Gifts to the Guidance Center can be made to honor or remember a loved one or to commemorate a special occasion. Make your online gift at [www.northshorechildguidance.org](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org) or by mail to the Development Department, NSC&FGC, 480 Old Westbury Road, Roslyn Heights, NY 11577 or call (516) 626-1971 ext. 337 for more information. Don't forget to include your name and address and the name and address of the individual for whom you are making the donation.

## IN HONOR OF

**Ali and Chrissy's Wedding** – Linda and Mark Ugenti

**Chris and Jack Bransfield** – Diane and Anthony Antonucci; Mary and Bill Moran; Estelle and Allan Rankin

**Amy Cantor** – Lori and Eric Friedman

**Frank Castagna** – Linda Taub

**Huxley Palmer Evangelist's Birth** – Ginny and Bob Glasser

**Josephine and Floyd Ewing, Jr.'s 50th Anniversary** – Ginny and Bob Glasser; Nancy and Lew Lane; Andrew Malekoff

**Ginny Glasser** – Barbara Glasser

**Jo-Ellen Hazan** – Tina and Raj Narayan

**Mollie Klipper's Birth** – Eileen and Melvin Klipper

**Nancy Lane** – Pamela and Laurence Tarica

**Nancy and Lew Lane for Chanukah** – James Ellison

**Layla Lazarus and Finnley Kremin** – Amy and Harold Novikoff

**Andrea and Michael Leeds** – Lisa and Bruce Clark; Debbie and Jordon Haber

**Andrew Malekoff** – Ronda and Lawrence Fein; Linda Seaman; Sandra Wolkoff

**Nancy Marks' 85th Birthday** – Ruth Blank; Sryl and Walter Frank; Lucille Kantor; Phyllis and Gerald Le Boff; Marion and Irving Levine; Andrew Malekoff; Carl Marks Foundation; Ernest Rubenstein; Rita Singer; The Staff at The Marks Family Right from the Start Center

**Dr. Jolie Pataki** – Nancy and Daniel Aronzon; Julie and David Samber

**In Honor of Eva McQuillan and in support of the Baby Jesus Shower she shepherded at Westbury UMC** – Edward Hale

**Marie Rautenberg** – Terie Gelberg

**Sandra Schoenbart** – Nancy Baroutas

**Alexis and Howard Siegel** – Kim and David Levine

**Carole and Richard Simon on the engagements of their two granddaughters** – Ginny and Bob Glasser

**Barbara and Edward Simpson** – Arlene Richards

**Mr. and Mrs. H. Singh's new granddaughter Alina** – Ginny and Bob Glasser

## IN MEMORY OF

**George W. Cain** – Myriam Cain

**Judy Cohn's Mother** – Ginny and Bob Glasser

**Lillian Epstein** – Ginny and Bob Glasser

**Louis Fortunoff** – Andrew Malekoff

**Cybil Easlyn Hudak** – Deborah and Frank Hudak

**Cecilia Jashembowski** – Linda and Mark Ugenti

**Leonard Rautenberg** – Andrew Borinstein

**Salvatore Sorrentino** – Linda and Mark Ugenti

**Mary Witt** – Kathleen and Peter Bahou

*Pet Therapy continued from page 1*

happened, and the girls were so proud that they managed to overcome their fears and were able to ride the horses. Many of them feel distant from others—a hallmark of depression—and working with the horses enabled them to express their feelings, which is essential to the process of healing.

A recent visit by pet welfare organization Bideawee to the Guidance Center provided another perfect example of the benefits of animal-assisted therapy. Lee Holtzman, who heads up our Family Advocacy Program, shared how one very shy girl lit up when she saw the dogs.

“She asked me if she could pet one of the dogs, and I told her she needed to ask the person from Bideawee,” says Holtzman. “Normally, it was almost impossible to get this girl to talk with new people, but her desire to spend time with the dog was so strong that it helped her overcome her fears and speak with the volunteer.”

Being with the therapy dogs also helped calm down a boy who has impulsivity issues and tends to be loud. “We explained how dogs get startled by loud noises or sudden movements, and that helped him learn a lesson about behaving calmly,” she says. “Those are skills that can be carried over into their lives.”

For all children, teens and yes, adults, too, animals are a true treasure, helping all of us be better human beings.

*A version of this story appeared in Blank Slate Media.*



## Mark Your Calendars!

- **Spring Luncheon - May 18 at the Glen Head Country Club**
- **Annual Meeting - June 14 at Crest Hollow Country Club**
- **Jonathan Krevat Memorial Golf & Tennis Classic - June 20 at The Creek**
- **Dancing With Our Stars - November 11 at The Garden City Hotel**

# They Could Have Danced All Night—and They Did!

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center is proud to announce that our Annual Gala, Dancing With Our Stars, raised \$420,000 to support the Guidance Center’s work to restore and strengthen the emotional health and well-being of children and families on Long Island.

“I’m so proud to play a role in supporting the amazing work of the Guidance Center,” says Sunny Hostin, CNN’s Legal Analyst and the honoree at the event, which was held at the Garden City Hotel in November and attended by 311 people. “Because of the organization’s dedicated staff and innovative programs, children and families in crisis are getting the help they need, regardless of their ability to pay. It’s no exaggeration to say the Guidance Center is saving lives.”

This year’s dancers wowed the crowd with their deft footwork, clearly the result of many hours of training. Our Dancing Stars were six

of Long Island’s finest business leaders and Guidance Center supporters: Frank Castagna, Castagna Realty; Charles Chan, Harvest International; Wayne Grossé, Bethpage Federal Credit Union; Jo-Ellen Hazan, Past President, the Guidance Center; Tracey Kupferberg, Daniel Gale Sotheby’s International Realty; and Sandra Schoenbart, Sandra K., Inc. Sales/Marketing.

The Guidance Center’s newest board member, Charles Chan, delighted the audience with his lively performance to the classic “Singin’ In the Rain.”

“I want to thank all the participating dancers for the grueling hard work and enduring sacrifice of their leisure time to put together a show we all would be proud of for a great cause—an experience and unforgettable moments that will last a lifetime!” Chan says.

The Guidance Center would also like to thank our Emcee, Sports Announcer/Author Len Berman, and



Rita Castagna, Frank Castagna and Daphne Zhou-Chan

Live Auctioneer Bernadette Castro. The evening’s wonderful co-chairs were Chris and Jack Bransfield and Andrea and Michael Leeds.

“Our annual benefit for children’s mental health was a terrific night,” says Andrew Malekoff, Guidance Center Executive Director/CEO. “The evening was filled with good spirits, great fun and strong support for our mission to serve those in need of care for mental health and substance abuse challenges.”



Auctioneer Bernadette Castro and co-chair Andrea Leeds



Joan Grant, Cynthia Rubinberg, Ruth Fortunoff Cooper, Helene Fortunoff, Esther Fortunoff



Maureen Ferrari, Valerie Rittaco, Sunny Hostin, Emmanuel Hostin



Andrew Malekoff with honoree Sunny Hostin of CNN



Andrew Malekoff, Michael Leeds, Andrea Leeds, Bernadette Castro, Len Berman, Chris Bransfield, Jack Bransfield, Nancy Lane, Regina Barros-Rivera



Professional dancer, Frank Castagna, Jo-Ellen Hazan, Charles Chan, Tracey Kupferberg, professional dancer, Sandra K. Shoenbart, Wayne Grossé, professional dancer

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**Guidance Center**  
 with AmazonSmile

shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)



## Email Updates

If you would like to receive our email updates, please email us at [development@northshorechildguidance.org](mailto:development@northshorechildguidance.org).

If you do not wish to receive future mailings, please call (516) 626-1971, ext. 337 or email us at [development@northshorechildguidance.org](mailto:development@northshorechildguidance.org).

 Visit us on Facebook.

## Grants

- **The Barker Welfare Foundation**—\$40,000 for Capital Improvements
- **The Dammann Fund**—\$7,500 for Good Beginnings for Babies
- **The Grateful Foundation**—\$18,000 for the Latina Girls Project
- **The Elena Melius Foundation**—\$1,000 for General Support
- **Nassau County Bar Association-We Care Fund**—\$2,500 for the Children’s Center at Nassau County Family Court
- **Nassau County Criminal Courts Bar Foundation - \$2,500 for the Children’s Center at Nassau County Family Court**
- **R&S Strauss Family Foundation**—\$5,500 for General Support
- **Charles and Mildred Schnurmacher Foundation**—\$7,500 for The Schnurmacher Bereavement and Trauma Program
- **Tulchin Family Foundation**—\$2,500 for the Wilderness Respite Program
- **van Ameringen Foundation**—\$85,000 for Mental Health Services

NORTH SHORE CHILD & FAMILY



GUIDANCE CENTER

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Roslyn Heights, NY 11577-2215

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This organization has earned the GuideStar Exchange Seal, demonstrating its commitment to transparency.

# GUIDELINES

*Save the Date*

North Shore Child & Family Guidance Center's

**SPRING** MAY 18  
**LUNCHEON** 2016

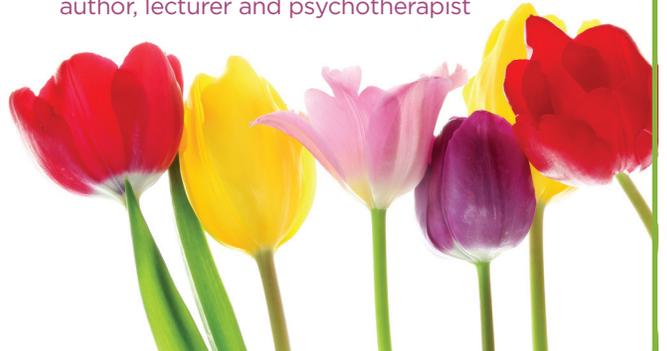
*at* **Glen Head Country Club**

**Boutiques and Mahjong,  
Canasta or Bridge**

**Keynote Speaker:**

**Dr. Sandra R. Wolkoff**

Nationally renowned child development expert,  
author, lecturer and psychotherapist



For information or to register, call (516) 626-1971 ext. 337  
or visit: [www.northshorechildguidance.org/events](http://www.northshorechildguidance.org/events)