

news from

**VENTURE  
FOUNDATION**

april 2010

# foundation FOCUS

Working for People with Developmental Disabilities at Camp Venture



Charles Schumer

## Camp Venture to Honor Sen. Charles Schumer April 16

**a**N EXCITING GALA IS BEING PLANNED for United States Senator Charles E. Schumer, the *2010 Honoree for Camp Venture's Annual Awards Party*, when he arrives in Rockland County on Friday evening, April 16, at the invitation of Honorable John Murphy, Camp Venture's president.

Senator Schumer is popularly perceived as one of the most influential members of the U.S. Senate, and one of our nation's most influential government leaders for everyone, including the disabled.

You are cordially invited attend the Awards Party on Friday, April 16. Help us welcome Senator Schumer to the County, and take part in this tribute to the Senator for his life long support of people with special needs.

The Nyack Seaport, nestled on the historic Hudson River in downtown Nyack, is the venue for this extravagant Cocktail Reception where delicious foods, an open bar and a Viennese table of scrumptious desserts await our guests. This is definitely one party not to be missed!

### About Chuck Schumer

Over the past three decades in public service, U.S. Senator Charles "Chuck" Ellis Schumer has built a reputation as a leader in finding common-sense solutions to national issues and a tireless fighter for New York.

Chuck was born in Brooklyn, NY and still resides in there with his wife, Iris Weinshall, and their daughters Jessica and Alison.

After graduating from Harvard College and Harvard Law School in 1974, Chuck returned home and ran for the New York State Assembly, becoming, at 23, the youngest member of the State Legislature since Theodore Roosevelt. In 1980, at 29, Chuck ran for and won the seat in the 9th Congressional District.

Chuck represented the 9th CD in Brooklyn and Queens for eighteen years, where he established his reputation as a pioneer in the fight against crime and as a consumer advocate. Chuck authored the Omnibus Crime Bill, which put 100,000 new cops on the street. He was the leading sponsor of the Violence Against Women Act, to combat domestic violence and sexual assault, and the Brady Bill, which instituted mandatory background checks for handgun purchases. He co-wrote the Assault Weapons Ban, and sponsored the Hate Crimes Prevention Act,

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...and much more!

### Camp Venture's Annual Awards Party

Friday, April 16, 2010  
beginning at 6:30 p.m.

### The Nyack Seaport

21 Burd Street  
Nyack, NY 10960  
Valet Parking Included

**\$150 per person**

See our website for our generous  
'Two for One' ticket offer  
Advanced Reservations Required

[www.venturefoundation.org](http://www.venturefoundation.org)  
(845) 624-5402

# May Dedication for Andrew Thomas House

**T**o honor the life of Andrew Thomas, the Camp Venture organization has chosen to rename and dedicate the Venture Crest home as the Andrew Thomas House. A ceremony and brunch will be held midday on Sunday, May 23, in the backyard of this lovely West Nyack home. Joining his family and friends, our Venture Crest families, staff and neighbors are invited to the event at which time a new scholarship, established by Andrew's parents in his memory, will be announced.

## Remembering Andrew

by Dan Lukens

It was a grey, overcast day that I had chosen to drop in on Venture Crest the residence in West Nyack. Decamel Delphin, a longtime staff at the house, was about to go on a walk with Andrew, one of the house's 14 residents, and I joined this impromptu outing. The three of us made our way down Marycrest Road, the quiet residential street that faced the Venture Crest residence.

Andrew set the pace and tenor for our little excursion. A six-foot tall, robust young man in his early thirties, Andrew seemed determined to make this walk an event. Intermittently walking and then running, Decamel and I had to work to keep up. And, if Decamel and I tried to speak to each other, Andrew would chime in with some odd sound designed to interrupt our conversation.

It was an interesting and insightful walk for me, but for Andrew it was all good fun as he laughed and smiled and bounced along, all the while bounding back and forth into his good pal Decamel. There was a happy bond between these two; the kind that people in my position hope exists between the staff who provide care and the

people who call Camp Venture home.

As we walked, I came to understand a little bit better what it means for a person with a developmental disability to have a place in the world, what it means to be part of this thing we talk about here, this "Venture Family." Andrew was happy and safe at home—at the time I found solace in that.

On a late October afternoon in 2008, Andrew died suddenly and tragically. The man who had added so much to the lives around him was gone. And all the concern and value we had for this man, it seemed, was for naught.

Andrew was not a powerful man in the sense that we understand power. He had no honors. He was denied many of the gifts that most of us take for granted. And yet, he affected the people around him deeply. His presence in our lives here at Venture spoke to the kinder gentler aspects of our nature—most especially to the people who were with him every day. He had a way of inspiring our concern, commitment and a kind of pride in the people who worked directly with him.

In the time since Andrew's passing, I have relived that moment we shared on Marycrest Road over and over. I don't know how we could understand this man or his life except by faith. But even in faith we are presented with a challenge.

We hold that the innocent are special people, and that their care is a divine purpose, a calling. It's a divine purpose and yet we are not divine. We aspire to be all things to the people we love, but ultimately we are bound by our own limitations.

*"The stone that the builder has rejected*

*has become the cornerstone."* That passage from Psalms reminds me of the man I knew. Andrew became a cornerstone of our lives. For many of us here, that relationship began as a part of our work lives or as the coincidence of circumstance or need and yet it became personal. Upon this man we piled the stones of our concern, our affection and even a part of ourselves.

Now that he's gone, we are left with this sense of loss and this crushing feeling of



helplessness. But you see, that is the stone that we must not reject because with it comes a gentle man who spoke to the better part of us.

Andrew, I know, will always be with us. Not as a sad memory but as an affirmation of the ways in which he touched our lives and of the things that we hold most dear. His purpose now is our purpose and his memory our sacred trust. So that when from time to time the image of his face or the sound of his laugh finds its way to our mind's eye, that it serves to remind us to try a little harder, to speak a little more softly and, most of all, to care more deeply. ■■

## AAUW Tribute to Kathleen Lukens

John Lukens and his granddaughter, Meghan Byrne, shown at right, attend the AAUW tribute to accept an award for Kathleen Lukens, who was honored with 24 outstanding "Women Who Made a Difference" in Rockland County, NY. The American Association of University Women hosted the ceremony at the SUNY Rockland Community College Cultural Arts Center to fête the women and to commemorate Women's History Month.

Kathy Lukens, founder of Camp Venture, worked within the organization for nearly 30 years to build a lifetime of care and opportunity for people with developmental disabilities in Rockland County. The Lukens family and members of Camp Venture's family joined a large gathering of people who came to celebrative the lives of these extraordinary women.



# Indoor Arena Nears Completion by John Murphy



**a**S YOU APPROACH the Camp Venture north campus in Stony Point, the new indoor Therapeutic Equestrian Center almost takes your breath away. With construction nearing completion, the stunning red pole barn and the untold opportunities it brings has come to life.

Nineteen years after Venture's Therapeutic Equestrian Program started under its director Ken Freson, along with Sheriff Jim Kralik's guidance and support, and many wonderful volunteers to numerous to be named in this space, Venture plans to dedicate the brand new SEN. THOMAS MORAHAN-KEN FRESON THERAPEUTIC EQUESTRIAN CENTER all-weather, indoor arena this summer.

It's another Venture 'miracle' made possible by your generosity over the past four years, which will enrich the lives of the adults and children in Venture's care as well as many from our sister agencies and the public.

Freson's program is one of the most effective resources in Venture's arsenal to make lives just a little sweeter than they would otherwise be—and the arena is Ken's dream come true. Every year, over 200 people with disabilities and special needs have enjoyed a very positive unique personal experience on the back of a horse.

This recent journey as overseen by George Hoehmann, Venture's chief operating officer, began with Ken's request for a solution to the weather issues. The project has been arduous and sometimes frustrating, but like the disappointments experienced by our riders when Mother Nature made the weather impossible for riding, they will soon be forgotten.

Yet when the ribbon is cut by NY State Senator Tom Morahan—without whose help this day would never have come—and Ken Freson, the arena will not be totally the way

we want it and we need more financial help. To this end, Barbara Reece, executive director of Venture Foundation, is offering these opportunities for you to be a part of this milestone achievement:

## HERE'S HOW TO HELP

*Use enclosed Remittance Envelope or visit our website: [www.venturefoundation.org](http://www.venturefoundation.org)*

Our gift to thank you for donating is an opportunity to place your name on a 12-foot **Giving Tree** that will stand tall in the new Equestrian Center lobby. It has 650 leaves for engraving, with giving categories noted by the color of the leaf, for messages and remembrances of every sort. Giving Tree donation amounts begin at \$100, through \$1000+.

## Room Dedications Offer Naming Opportunities

Specific contributions are requested for sponsorship and naming opportunities within the new facility. We offer naming the **Lobby**, (2) **Horse Stalls**, the **Tack Room**, the **Viewing Area**, the **Giving Tree** and more. Individual plaques will be placed during the dedication noting your name/business name to show your participation in this momentous project, and to note your devotion to the people at Camp Venture.

## The Venture Heroes

In recent years the Camp Venture organization had been memorializing its founders and pioneers, many who have spent these 40-plus years in service to the people at Camp Venture, by naming and dedicating places in their honor throughout Rockland County.

### The Ray Bader Memorial by John Murphy

PROUDLY FLYING in the wind in the front of the Venture Center on Route 340 in the hamlet of Sparkill is an American flag on a majestic flag pole.

It is the base of this pole that **Eagle Scout Evan Glynn** of Old South Highland Avenue in Pearl River chose as his Eagle Scout project. He built a walkway and a stone wall that absolutely enhances the site, which will soon be dedicated to a real American and Venture hero, the late “Coach” Ray Bader.

The first director of the 1969 summer camping program, which gave our agency its name, *Camp Venture*, Raymond J. Bader, Jr. truly epitomized this country’s *Greatest Generation*—people who endured incredible hardship and lived and fought not for fame and recognition, but because they believed it was the right thing to do.

Ray was a scholar, teacher, mentor, honored veteran, community leader and volunteer, but most just called him “Coach.” A devoted family man, the title that likely

brought him the most joy was “Paka,” as his 16 grandchildren lovingly called him.

Descended from German pioneers who settled in southeastern Pennsylvania in the



Mary and Ray Bader

early 1700s, Ray grew up as one of eleven children in Allentown, Pennsylvania. His work with the handicapped first began with the care of his older brother, Fritz, who was confined to a wheelchair as a child.

He later married his wife of 52 years, Mary Bader, who was a founding parent and long time Camp Venture Board member. Together they raised their seven children in Tappan, including the eldest Kathleen, who has been a member of the Venture family from the beginning.

Ray was instrumental in organizing and starting up Camp Venture. He also later organized the first Special Olympic Games at Tappan Zee High School, where he spent most of his teaching and coaching career.

Ray’s service to others spread beyond his immediate and Venture families. Continuing the tradition of his ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, he served his country as a Veteran of World War II, where he fought in both the Battle of the Bulge and the Normandy Invasion, and received the Purple Heart, Bronze Star, and other commendations for bravery.

### Suffern’s Arline Rodgers House

SINCE LAST SUMMER, a beautiful home in Suffern is now named for parent/founder Arline Rodgers. The six adults who call Rodgers House their home are pleased that Arline is their neighbor, and she’s become a regular guest at the house, often bringing goodies to share.

Rodgers was honored for her devotion as a founding mother of Camp Venture, for her many years as an agency administrator, for service with the board of Camp Venture, and later Venture Foundation, and service on several of the agency’s HUD corporations.

At the ceremony, Camp Venture President, John Murphy, described Arline as an “intrepid parent-advocate” whose commitment to the cause of the advancement of our community’s developmentally disabled citizens was an achievement that forever changed not only the lives of people like her son, but also the social and moral landscape of our community.

Having worked closely with Kathy Lukens as Assistant to the Executive Director, and as Summer Camp Administrator until her retirement in 2001, Arline is currently a member of the Venture Foundation board.



Arline Rodgers

### Horan House on the Horizon

VENTURE’S CONCORD HOUSE in New City is soon to be renamed The Clarence and Patricia Horan House.

Being in the presence of Clarence and Pat Horan of Stony Point always brings a smile and a laugh, if Clarence has his way. A joyous and devoted couple, the Horan’s, parents of Gary, Gregg, Robin and Kevin have been with Venture since the start. Ask them about how they met Kathy Lukens, and you’ll soon be witness to the dreams they shared and the miracles these pioneers brought about.

In those early days Pat and Clarence spent hours at the old Stony Point “campsite” to get the summer camping program opened, and they continued giving their volunteer hours for years to come. Pat’s long tenure on Camp Venture’s board, most recently working with the Quality Assurance Committee, just ended last year.

The Horan’s were courageous parents at the opening of Venture East in New City as crowds came out in protest. Coincidentally, their son, Gregg, moved to Concord House during the past year, so this dedication will be especially joyous. Watch for further details of the dedication ceremony.

Clarence and Patricia Horan



# An Artful Life: A Song of Myself

by Dan Lukens

**a**T CAMP VENTURE'S Venture Center, they are the hometown players. Whether it's The Electric Friends band or the performers of the Creative Arts program, this is their stage. The performances of these special players are authentic, and that is evident in the genuine quality of

that resonates with their life experience.

"When I look at some of the painting and sculpture that our day program people are doing, or see them dance or hear them singing the songs that they have written, I imagine them reaching beyond us," said Dan Lukens, Camp Venture's Executive

arts, thanks to the support of the Venture Foundation.

"This effort has been made possible mostly through support of the Venture Foundation," explains George Hoehmann, Camp Venture's Chief Operating Officer and the day programs' principal administrator.

"We've brought in some incredibly dynamic and creative people to work with our people, headed by Krista Behrends and including Sam Leopold, Steven Sicher, Cyndi Hoover, Jeff Spindel and Allan Chapman," Hoehmann said, "They're providing the means, but the real magic is coming from our people. It's like it was always there and they just needed a way to get it out."

"There's something about seeing someone who can barely move their body playing the harmonica on stage, or a man who doesn't speak painting these beautiful haunting abstract images, that I believe really reflects the value of this program.

Most importantly, it's the joy that is apparent in these artists that really make this all worth it," Lukens said.

"I am a singer, that's who I am," Robert, a Creative Arts program participant and active member of The Electric Friends explained to his peers recently at a self-advocacy forum. As the group acknowledged his statement with applause, Robert responds with a smile from ear to ear. ■■■



The Electric Friends

the experience. It's definitely not *American Idol*, but to anyone who really appreciates this kind unique expression of identity and pure joy, it's pretty amazing.

With Sam Leopold leading a Creative Arts group on stage in numbers like *I Want a Brand New John Frank for Christmas*, an ecstatic Mr. Frank and his compatriots belt out a tune with their own kind of zeal. For us, it's a funny, playful lilt, but for these players and their audience who are a part of his disability culture, it's an original song

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

from Song of Myself by Walt Whitman

Director, "They're finding their own voices and, that's a really beautiful thing."

In addition to the volunteer work, recreational activities and operation of the Venture farm that have been the mainstays of our day programs, in recent years the agency has refocused its attention on the

## Venture Artists Nominated for County Executive Arts Awards

Listed among the 2010 nominees for the County Executive Arts Awards in the Visual Artists category are Peter Mundheim and Maria Sanchez, both outstanding artists actively involved in Camp Venture's Creative Arts Program.

The Arts Council of Rockland (ACOR) will host the County Executive Arts Awards on Thursday, May 6 at 7:30 p.m. at the Cultural Arts Theater at SUNY Rockland Community College.

"The County Executive Awards is an annual celebration of art, those who support and those who create it," said Mark Judelson, ACOR's executive director. "These nominees represent community service and artistic excellence." The Camp Venture organization is among six nominees for the Supporter of the Arts award.

Tickets for the May 6 ceremony are \$20, and can be purchased at the door or in advance from ACOR, 845-947-3660. Winners will be announced that evening.

**Don't miss... The Camp Venture Creative Arts Dept. Presents**

**We Love The Beatles**

**A Special Dinner Theatre Concert  
Thurs., June 10 at 5:45 p.m.**

**Venture Center Auditorium, Sparkill, NY**

**Call Krista Behrends for reservations  
845-365-1316**

# You'll be excited, too.

Come back to the 'Rock' for the  
12th Annual Kathy Lukens  
Memorial Golf Tournament

MONDAY, JULY 12, 2010  
Spook Rock Golf Course, Suffern, NY  
Morning and afternoon shotgun starts



For Sponsorship and Reservation information  
go to: [www.venturefoundation.org](http://www.venturefoundation.org)  
Bill Schule, Tournament Chairman

## Wingmen

MOTORCYCLE CLUB OF ROCKLAND COUNTY



### FIRST ANNUAL RUN

Sunday, April 25, 2010

Rain Date: Sunday May 2, 2010

To Benefit the Children's Equestrian Program at Camp Venture

For More Information Contact  
Joe Meyers at 646-721-1247  
29blaster@comcast.net  
[www.9339mc.com](http://www.9339mc.com)

Team sign-up at 10 a.m.  
Run starts at 12 Noon  
Location: Camp Venture  
58 Oak Colony Road, Stony Point, NY 10980



\$20 per person

## A Letter to Venture's Golfers

Fellow Golfers,

If you remember Ralph Kramden and Ed Norton of the Honeymooners (for those that don't—think blue-collar Seinfeld) there was an episode where Ralph and Ed tell the wives that they are going bowling, but they were really sneaking out on one of their hair-brained schemes. The real plan for Ralph and Ed was summed up with: "We're going bowling, but we ain't going bowling!"

Playing in the 12th Annual Kathy Lukens Golf Tournament, presented by the Venture Foundation, is kinda like that: "Going golfing, but you ain't going golfing".

Yes, you are playing a round of golf on one of the nicest and most challenging public courses in Rockland County. Yes, Barbara Reece and the Venture Foundation crew set up a terrific event, from the luncheon to the on-course service to the superb dinner. Yes, Spook Rock Head Pro Tony Musto is extremely talented and an amazing artist with a golf club. And, yes—any day of golf is better than a day of work. All of that is true. But you're not just playing golf; you can do that in lots of other places. What you are really doing is participating in arguably the most worthwhile event the County has to offer.

What's so special, you wonder? It's the cause, of course. Camp Venture exists for the sole purpose of providing top-flight life-care to the people that need it most: those friends, neighbors, children, brothers, sisters and cousins that have developmental disabilities; those that really need and deserve your help. By just "playing golf" you are also helping to fulfill their needs, and it just doesn't get any better than that. So come have fun with friends both new and old, and spend your day (and some of your money) to do God's work, as John Murphy calls it. It's the BEST use of your time. So go golfing...but do more than go golfing!

If you would like to know more about Venture, why it's so critical in the lives of so many and how else you can help, feel free to reach out to me.

Warm regards,  
Bill Schule, Tournament Chairman  
[bschule@yourwebpilot.com](mailto:bschule@yourwebpilot.com)



Above, Venture Inn's Nuteyev Bosquet introduces earthquake survivor Jovins Lin Dorestan. Below, the Aid to Haiti benefit T-shirt logo.



## Venture Staff Give 'Aid to Haiti'

A BENEFIT CONCERT was held on February 20 for the victims of the January earthquake in Haiti, organized by the Camp Venture Aid to Haiti Committee.

On the bill for this benefit was Rustico Acoustico, a Latin reggae band featuring Jeff Spindel, of the Venture Creative Arts program; The Park Project led Venture Academy's Allan Chapman, and our own The Electric Friends.

Speaking on behalf of the Aid to Haiti Committee, Gerard Lafleur described the work that the committee had done since its inception in 2004. He also talked about the committee's contacts in the city of Gonaïves and about their previous missions to Haiti.

In addition to the money raised by this event, the Committee is coordinating the collection of clothes, shoes, household items and personal hygiene items for shipment to Haiti. The com-

mittee's hope is that they can support on-going efforts to help Haitian families rebuild their lives.

"We continue to be inspired by the Haitian peoples' ability to keep starting over, and our own staff who continue to work diligently here at Venture while carrying their own heartaches quietly and prayerfully," Dorothy Cox, committee member, said.

An appearance by Haitian police officer Jovins Lin Dorestan put a very human face on the tragedy in his homeland. Struggling a little with the language, Dorestan's missing leg spoke perhaps better than his words of the of pain that his nation has endured.

"L'Union fait la force" Aid to Haiti T-shirts are still available in all sizes for only \$10 each. Contact Maryanne Modafferi at 845-624-3860 or [mmodafferi@campventure.org](mailto:mmodafferi@campventure.org) to order your shirt or if you're interested in helping the Aid to Haiti Committee. ■■■

Make sure to visit our newly re-designed website [www.campventure.org](http://www.campventure.org)

## Venture Honors Schumer

which organized data on crimes of bigotry and allowed federal authorities to prosecute these crimes. He also sponsored legislation that required banks and credit card companies to provide greater disclosure to consumers.

In 1998, Chuck was elected to the U.S. Senate; he became New York's senior senator when Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan retired in 2000. Chuck kicked off his first Senate term by announcing he would visit each of New York's 62 counties every year, a tradition he continues today.

Throughout his time in the Senate, Chuck has made improving New York's economy his top priority, bringing affordable air service to Upstate New York and the Hudson Valley and delivering over \$20 billion in aid to New York City following the attacks on September 11, 2001. Chuck was the author of legislation that eliminated barriers that delay low-cost generic medications from entering the marketplace and led the charge to make college tuition tax deductible.

CHUCK HAS A LONG HISTORY of fighting for New Yorkers with disabilities. He has been a long-time supporter of the Community Choice Act. This legislation guarantees that individuals with disabilities

Continued from front cover

who have an institutional level of need and who are financially eligible for Medicaid are able to receive personal assistance services. This bill also provides grants to help states like New York strengthen their ability to provide home and community based services for persons with disabilities. Chuck is fighting to have the Senate Budget Committee fully fund the Social Security Administration for Continuing Disability reviews in order to reduce the long wait times that many applicants face. In 2006, he helped Congress pass the Combating Autism Act, which helped coordinate and increase funding for federal research and education about autism.

HERE IN ROCKLAND COUNTY, Chuck has been working with Legislator John Murphy to establish a veterans housing village for homeless and disabled vets at historic Camp Shanks. He delivered close to \$1 million in the 2010 budget for the project and is working with colleagues in the Senate to pass the Home for Heroes Act, which would authorize 20,000 HUD-VASH vouchers annually and establish a \$200 million assistance program that would allow community and non-profit organizations to build, purchase, or rehabilitate housing for low-income veterans. ■■■



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# Camp Venture annual awards party

friday, april 16, 2010  
beginning at 6:30 pm  
the nyack seaport

A premier facility nestled on the Historic Hudson River

Enjoy a fabulous Cocktail Party venue with Open Bar with delicious foods and desserts served by our host, Angelo Rubino. Reservations are requested in advance.

honoring



united states senator  
charles schumer

Tickets are \$150 per person.  
To review our generous "Two for One" Party Ticket offer,  
go to: [www.venturefoundation.org](http://www.venturefoundation.org)