Summit Speech School Bids Farewell to Longtime PI Program Coordinator Miriam Esterkis.

After twenty years serving Summit Speech School’s Parent/Infant Program, Miriam Esterkis is leaving Summit Speech School to become the Director of Early Intervention Services at the Ear Institute of the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. Miriam guided countless families to find hope and comfort, build strong relationships with other parents, and acquire the tools they need for a successful journey to listening and spoken language.

We wish her much luck and happiness in her new adventure.

Welcome, Nancy Schumann!

We are thrilled to welcome Nancy Schumann as Summit Speech School’s new Parent/Infant Program Coordinator. Nancy comes to us with more than 30 years’ experience in the field of speech pathology in both the clinical setting and public and private schools. Nancy has had her own private practice and consults with the Pediatric Cochlear Implant Team at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. She also teaches at TCNJ. Nancy is committed to providing effective intervention to our birth to 3 population.

We are very excited to welcome her to our community!
Learning & Growing
Every Day!

Ahmad, Dajoun, and Karenpreet show off their handiwork on “Ice Cream Fun Friday.”

Fun-filled day for our preschoolers learning from Lt. Justine Kennedy and Det. Mike Hand about how the police keep all of us safe. It was extra special because Det. Hand is the husband of Summit Speech School staffer Jessica Samsel! Maybe there’s a future police officer among our kids!

Trick-or-treating, silly, fun costumes, and a parade with families to kickoff Summit Speech School’s Halloween festivities!

Thanksgiving feast with a delicious turkey cooked by our very own Dr. Pam! Smiles, laughs, and the sharing of what our preschoolers are most grateful for this holiday made for a memorable Summit Speech School Turkey Day!

Going over the ABCs of fire safety and prevention at the New Providence Fire Department, while also getting to check out the inside of a brand new, shiny red firetruck!

Ahbrey shared a treat with a goat when the Cloverland Stables petting zoo visited.

Friendship Day – our next-door neighbors from Sproutlings Childcare Center came over for a playdate in our courtyard.

Speaking Out is a publication of the Development Office. Every effort for accuracy has been made. We apologize for any errors or omissions.

Editor: Bruce D. Naidoff
bnaidoff@summitspeech.org
Contributor: Samantha Henry
www.summitspeech.org

Winter 2017

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Our sincere appreciation to Paul Lavenhar of PL Communications for his generous donation of design and production of the school’s newsletter.

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The idyllic Fiddler’s Elbow Country Club in Bedminster is once again the perfect setting for our 27th Annual Spring Benefit, featuring two events in one day! The 10:00 AM luncheon presentation and 6:00 PM dinner party will have fabulous silent and ticket auctions, grand raffle with cash prizes, a gourmet chocolate sale, and a wine pull. This year, we are thrilled to have Summit Speech School parent Randi Silverstein as event chair along with our passionate volunteer committee members. We are grateful for their commitment to our hearing impaired children.

This year, we will honor Ellen Hansen, Summit Speech School’s beloved pediatric audiologist, and feature Summit Speech School alumna Becca Von Langen. The luncheon will feature a floral presentation by botanist Samantha Rothman. After the luncheon concludes, the evening dinner party will kick-off with hors d’oeuvres, cocktails, dinner, and music. All event proceeds benefit our deaf and hard of hearing kids.

**STUDENT SPEAKER BECCA VON LANGEN**

Becca Von Langen is a 1996 preschool graduate of Summit Speech School. Becca was born with bilateral hearing loss and wore hearing aids from 11-months-old, until she received her first cochlear implant at age 8 and her second at 17. She credits her current career success to the education she received at Summit Speech School, her dedicated teachers, and the support of her loving family.

Becca graduated from SUNY Oneonta where she majored in anthropology. She authors her own blog “Hear Our Silence,” documenting her journey with hearing loss and is a speaker for Cochlear America events. Becca works at a veterinary hospital assisting in dentistry and oral surgery and is planning her wedding with fiancé Shawn for November of this year! We are so proud to call her part of the Summit Speech School family!

**LUNCHEON KEYNOTE SPEAKER SAMANTHA ROTHMAN**

Samantha grew up in between landscapes; having a father from Brooklyn and a mother from a rural farm community in Kansas translated into understanding both the people and lands of two seemingly different worlds. After studying plant ecology at Smith College, she went on to the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies where she realized that working with people and plants, together, was far better than working alone in the woods. Sam returned home to Morristown where she co-founded the non-profit Grow It Green Morristown, which operates New Jersey’s largest public school garden and an innovative eco-park/community garden. She and her husband purchased a long neglected Gilded Age mansion and grounds called “Fairview” and transformed the property into a model for sustainable landscape and permaculture design. Through Sam’s love of plants and flowers, “Fairview Farm and Flowers” was born, specializing in unique floral designs, locally grown blooms, and opportunities for creativity through their flower design classes.

**HONOREE ELLEN HANSEN**

Ellen Hansen, MA, CCC-A, is a beloved educational audiologist, serving patients from the community and Summit Speech School, where she heads the Audiology Center. Previously, she was a clinical pediatric audiologist with Central Jersey Otolaryngology and the director of the department of audiology at Children’s Specialized Hospital in Mountainside, NJ.

In her 38 years of providing incredible expertise, guidance, and support, Ellen has earned a very special place in the hearts of countless children and families. Parents who find themselves in a state of shock and confusion after their child’s hearing loss diagnosis, take comfort in knowing that Ellen is part of their child’s care. Families continue to be amazed at how supportive she is and how their children respond to her. Summit Speech School is extraordinarily grateful to have Ellen as part of their community and is thrilled to honor her at our 27th Annual Spring Benefit.

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**The Spring Benefit would not be the success it is if it were not for the help of our dedicated sponsors.** To date, our sponsors include: Lisa and Andy Abramson, C.R. Bard, Inc.; LouAnn and Irving Brothman; Judith E. Campbell; Diane and Robert Goldberg; Investors Bank; JT’s Confections; Pluckemin Inn-Gloria LaGrassa; Marie’s Italian Specialties—Chatham; The MCJ Amelior Foundation; Leslie Minsch/Stella & Dot; Cory and Greg Pine; Maggie Reilly/Pampered Chef; Sandy Hill Foundation; Hattie Segal; Poppy and Richard Segal; Josephine and Louis Silverstein; Randi and David Silverstein; vineyard vines—The Mall at Short Hills; and Gary Wayne Team @ Wells Fargo Advisors, Short Hills.

Invitations will be mailed out shortly. You can reserve your place now, donate an auction item, sponsor the Benefit, or place an advertisement or honorary message in our Commemorative Journal by calling the Development Office - Calli Heenan at 908-508-0495, or cheenan@summitspeech.org.
**Don’t Miss FAMILY FUN NIGHT!**

Be sure to join us on **Friday, February 24** for the ever-popular Family Fun Night. There will be food, fun, raffles, and entertainment featuring the Family Fun Night regular, Andy the Clown. Kids of all ages can enjoy crafts and activities while adults will find dozens of terrific gift baskets to win in our ticket auction! So mark your calendar, bring your friends, and put on a happy face!

**A Preschool Program that Gives Families Hope: A Look into the Workings of Summit Speech School**

At first glance, Summit Speech School preschool may seem like any other preschool. Bright colored cutouts adorn the walls, reading corners with books and stuffed animals fill classroom spaces, and a nap-time room with tiny cots is strategically placed in a quiet section of the building. But looking closer, you’ll notice some differences: an audiology center filled with hearing equipment and a sound booth, structured lessons that would resemble more of a grade school schedule than that of a preschool, and sound-controlled classrooms.

The preschoolers at Summit Speech School are all either deaf or hard of hearing. Their tightly-structured school day combines intensive listening and spoken language classes taught by a teacher of the deaf, individualized speech therapy sessions, and typical early childhood learning that includes reading, writing, and math. An educational audiologist, physical therapist, and occupational therapist are available to students who need those services. Despite the busy daily schedule, the students at Summit Speech School are not deprived of fun. The halls frequently echo with the sounds of laughing and playing.

Summit Speech School relies exclusively on listening and spoken language instruction. This approach trains students to learn to listen and talk for themselves so they can become fully-integrated, independent members of society. Children three and older can be referred by their local school districts and usually stay until they are five when they are mainstreamed into either kindergarten or 1st grade. In its most recent graduating class, Summit Speech School mainstreamed the majority of its students into the public school system, a powerful statistic given that many of the children who first enter the School are able to say only a few words, if any at all.

Summit Speech School is truly a unique, special place. Using advancements in modern technology, along with strong support systems and effective educational practices, the School enables kids with little or no hearing to talk and participate fully in the hearing world, a gift that not only greatly impacts the students, but their families as well.

As one parent of a former preschooler has stated: “There are so many little things that my son does every day that make me feel overwhelmed with gratitude. So many amazing steps of progress that he has made that are because of the education and love that he receives from this School. We believe Summit Speech School is a special place – a place that gives hope and help to families and children when they need it the most.”

By Samantha Henry, Development Associate

**Hit the Links at NEIL’S GOLF EVENT!**

The 15th Annual Neil’s Charity Golf Event will tee off at scenic Royce Brook Golf Club in Hillsborough, NJ on May 10, 2017. Organized by our longtime friend Neil Kleinwaks, this fantastic event features a round of golf, continental breakfast, and a buffet lunch with cocktails, as well as exciting contests and prizes. And of course – all the proceeds will benefit the children at Summit Speech School. So gather your golf buddies and come on out for a fabulous day of fun. For more information, contact the Development Office at 908-508-0495 or development@summitspeech.org.

**Bob Donovan, Eli Pogue, Carl Andreasen, and Daniel Crisham make a fine looking foursome. Bob and Carl are alumni of Summit Speech School.**
Summit Speech School Wins Top Contribution From Charity Program Event

Summit Speech School welcomed members of the Sue Adler Team, a Keller Williams real estate agency, on September 22nd to present the School with the top contribution of $10,000 from the Sue Adler Team 100th Home Sale Charity Program. “The Sue Adler Team couldn’t be happier that our 100th Home Sale Charity Program’s first place donation of $10,000 is going to help the children at Summit Speech School,” said Sue Adler. “The School community’s commitment to voting daily was amazing to watch and a true testament to what a great job Summit Speech School is doing in helping these children. Our heart strings were pulled again when we toured the school, and saw the dedication and caring culture, which is evident in every classroom. Congrats - well deserved. This has been a humbling experience for our team.”

Junior League of Summit Grant Helps Keep Our Toddlers in Motion

A generous grant from the Junior League of Summit enabled Summit Speech School to purchase educational/play equipment to be used by the toddlers attending the weekly group sessions of our Parent/Infant Program. The equipment helps us incorporate listening, speech and language with a broad range of activities, such as strengthening fine and gross motor skills, incidental learning, and social habilitation through play.

The 2016 Walk4Hearing was a Great Success!

On Sunday, October 16th, Summit Speech School family, friends, and staff participated in the annual NJ Walk4Hearing sponsored by the Hearing Loss Association of America. Many came out to support Summit Speech School and its incredible work to provide our deaf and hard of hearing children with a voice. The weather was beautiful and enthusiasm was high. Summit Walkers connected to Summit Speech School raised over $4,000 in this year’s Walk. Thanks to all who donated and participated!

Thank You to our Friends at C.R. Bard!

On September 27th, a group of amazing volunteers at C. R. Bard generously helped us stuff thousands of envelopes in preparation for our Annual Appeal mailing. They make the process so much easier, and we cannot thank them enough for their dedication to our School!
Steven Mianowski, age 20, is a Sophomore at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, majoring in Communications with a minor in Interactive Multimedia. Steven suffered a hearing loss due to meningitis and received a cochlear implant at age 5. His mother Denise attributes his success to the help and support he received at Summit Speech School.

Mark Scherzer, age 23, attended mainstream schools in the Randolph, NJ district, and graduated from Syracuse University in 2015 with a BS in Communications. He spent a year with Cushman & Wakefield in Rutherford, NJ, and now works as an Acquisition Associate with The Renatus Group, a privately held real estate investment and development company in New York. His family is thankful for the “great preparation and support” he received at Summit Speech School.

Jack Sullivan, 17, and A.J. Dansky, 16, were Preschool students at SSS when they were photographed together in 2004. The photo has had an honored place on our wall since then, and in October Jack and A.J. came back to the school and posed with their younger selves. Jack is a Senior at Summit High School, and A.J. is a Junior at Livingston High School.

Two new members were recently elected to Summit Speech School’s Board of Trustees, to serve a three-year term – Mark A. Thomas is a partner with the professional services firm of KPMG, based in their Short Hills, NJ office. He is a certified public accountant specializing in Life Sciences companies and companies that are publicly listed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Mark graduated from Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania in 1991 with a B.S. in Accounting and started with KPMG the same year.

Mark lives in Boonton Township, NJ with his wife Judy and two children Brittany (22) and Ryan (18). Mark and Judy have been active in their community through coaching their children’s sports teams or volunteering for school functions. In his personal time, Mark enjoys playing golf and is an avid runner.

Michele Williers is the Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Essex, Hudson & Union Counties (BBBS). She built a team with a solid base of partnerships including churches, community organizations, universities, and corporations – growing the organization from one to 20 employees. She has worked in the BBBS network for the past 17 years, 10 in Tampa Bay, FL and 7 in New Jersey. Michele received her B.S. in Criminology and Political Science from the University of Tampa in 1994. She also received a certificate for non-profit management through the University of Tampa’s MBA Program. For 20 years she has devoted her professional career to the management of community development and youth agencies. In 2015, she received the prestigious United Way “Legends” Award, and was one of 72 non-profit leaders in the country to graduate from the American Express Non-Profit Leadership Academy. Michele lives in Montclair, NJ with her husband Bryan and her 12-year-old son Beck.
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Louis J. Johansen  
Alice Johansen  
Evan Kramer  
Gail Chorney  
Madge and Tom Conway  
Tracy and Joe Dansky

Tributes Received: July 1 - Dec. 31, 2016 Gifts to our Tribute Fund are a thoughtful way to recognize an anniversary, remember a friend, associate, or relative while providing needed support for the children we serve. An acknowledgement is sent to the person or the family of the individual recognized. Your name and the purpose of the gift will be known, but not the amount of the gift. Your gift is tax deductible. Note: Minimum tribute donation is $25.00
Like us on Facebook!
facebook.com/summitspeech

Be a Friend to Our Children!

We teach a lot of things at Summit Speech School. Listening and talking, of course, but our kids also learn important lessons about the value of friendship. They gain confidence from helping each other and knowing that anything is possible by working together.

You can be a friend to our children as well, through your financial support of our Annual Fund.

Your generosity will ensure that they get all the resources they need – highly qualified and dedicated teachers, state-of-the-art equipment, and a nurturing environment that empowers them to succeed!

We want all our kids to grow and achieve to their highest potential. Please partner with us by donating today.

You can use the attached envelope or make a secure online gift at www.summitspeech.org/supportus. Questions? Call 908-508-0495 or email development@summitspeech.org.

Thank You!