

*The Guild For
Exceptional Children's*

65TH
ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION

Commemorative Journal

Sunday, October 29, 2023



IN MEMORIAM
JOSETTE B. SIRAGUSA
1953-2022



OUR DEEPEST AND MOST
HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO THE GUILD
FOR THE DECADES OF LOVE, CARE AND
COMPASSION GIVEN TO JOSETTE

NICK AND LUCY SIRAGUSA

NDS REALTY CORPORATION



Welcome Message
From Anthony J. Cetta
President GEC Board of Directors

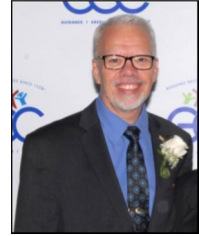
Welcome to the 65th anniversary celebration of the Guild for Exceptional Children. The GEC is a trusted provider of services enabling individuals with a wide range of disabilities to gain greater independence and reach their highest potential. This is made possible due to our dedicated staff and supporters like you.

Today's honorees have played a significant role allowing the GEC help our community of disabled children and adults live productive and happy lives. We are eternally grateful for their support.

Our first honoree is Judge Matthew J. Demic. For more than 20 years Judge Demic has been a member of our board of directors and has provided invaluable advice and council to our organization. We have had the privilege of observing his unwavering commitment to helping the disabled and most vulnerable of society. He has been a driving force shaping the GEC into the organization we are today. Judge Demic's dedication extends beyond the GEC. As a respected jurist he actively engages with the legal community and exhibits exceptional leadership skills both within the legal profession and in his support of the GEC.

Our second category of honorees is comprised of a group of GEC residential managers who have a long tenure with the GEC and weathered the pandemic. This group talented professionals has developed a culture of compassion and love, which allowed the GEC to distinguish itself as a community-based organization helping the most vulnerable of society live productive and happy lives. It is said that the two most important days in one's life is the day you were born and the day you find out why. This may sound profound, but the "why" is easily answered by this group of honorees. They recognize the need for the services we provide and agree with our mission and its dedication to our participants.

Congratulations and a heartfelt *thank you* to all our honorees.



Welcome Message
From Joseph L. Riley
Executive Director/CEO GEC

Greetings, and thank you so much for joining us as we celebrate the 65th Anniversary of the Guild for Exceptional Children!

Let's stop and think about that for a moment. For 65 years (since 1958), the Guild, or GEC, has provided loving care, support, and education to children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). We were one of the first private organizations to do this kind of work and the very first to open up a 24/7 residence in Brooklyn for adults with I/DD. Good thing too, because it was around 50 years ago that the scandal broke about the terrible neglect and abuse that was happening at the state-operated Willowbrook School. Sadly, what happened at Willowbrook was not unique, as many other less infamous institutions had equally horrific track records for care. The parents who formed GEC in the 1950s and the staff they partnered with were pioneers in setting the standard for the individualized, person-centered care that we see today. That's quite a legacy!

We chose carefully when selecting honorees for this important milestone year. Each of these exceptional people embodies the spirit of those early families who wanted to "build better lives for people with developmental disabilities." The Residence Managers are the vanguard of the care that our agency provides to the scores of individuals living in a home operated by GEC. They lead the professional team at each residence like a captain leads a crew. Many have been working at GEC for as long as I have. They are caregivers, friends, and often surrogate family members to the residents they support. They rejoice with them when they succeed, and cry with them when they feel sad. And they are incredibly responsive to the needs of the people they serve at all hours of the day and night. It takes a special kind of person to adopt that level of dedication.

Judge Matt D'Emic has been involved with GEC for over 50 years, first as a volunteer and ultimately, as a long-time member of GEC's Board of Directors and a principal architect in developing the agency. This year, he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the NYS Association of Judges and Psychiatrists for his work within the criminal justice system on behalf of people with mental illness and I/DD.

Tennis legend Arthur Ashe was often called a hero for breaking through the racial barrier in that sport. Always humble, Ashe famously said that "true heroism is not the urge to surpass all others, whatever the cost, but the urge to serve others whatever the cost." For our 65th Anniversary, GEC has chosen honorees who, in their humility and through their service to others, are heroes, in the truest sense of the word.

Finally, I want to thank all of you, for supporting our worthy mission. We couldn't do this work without the help of people like you.

With Great Thanksgiving,

Joseph L. Riley, GEC CEO



GEC's 65th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, October 29, 2023

Gargiulo's

The GEC is pleased to honor these exceptional individuals for their overwhelming support, and dedication to our mission of care.

GEC's Exceptional Honorees

The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

Administrative Judge

Kings County Supreme Court – Criminal Term- 2nd Judicial District

GEC's Managers

Francine Boyle- Martini Residence & Supportive Apartment #3

John Downey-Quinones Residence

Veronica Iqbal – Olga's House

Anthony Martinez – Supportive Apartment # 1 & 2

Siobhan Masterson – English Residence

Concetta (Tina) Musolino – Santangelo Residence

Stephen Neave -Sedita Residence

Ellen Paternostro – Conklin Residence

Ruthlyn Solomon – Cassone Residence

Maryann Sullivan – Charter Residence

Elizabeth (Cookie) Tiedemann- Sichenze Residence

Despina Xenakis – Narrows Residence

Jessica Young – DeFelippo Residence



**Thank
You**

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October 29, 2023

Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Guild for Exceptional Children for hosting its 65th Anniversary Celebration. This is a remarkable milestone for us to celebrate.

Additionally, I applaud the work of this year's honorees: Honorable Matthew D'Emic, Francine Boyle, John Downey, Veronica Iqbal, Anthony Martinez, Siobhan Masterson, Concetta Musolino, Stephen Neave, Ellen Paternostro, Ruthlyn Solomon, Maryann Sullivan, Elizabeth Tiedemann, Despina Xenakis and Jessica Young. This year's awardees have truly gone above and beyond in their service to support children and adults living with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Their dedication to our community is worthy of our praise.

For 65 years, the GEC has provided a very strong support system and has furnished numerous resources for those in need and, also for their families. The Guild's goal to help people reach their fullest potential while leading fulfilling lives has certainly been proven a success story many times over!

Once again, I send congratulations to the GEC and look forward to seeing them continue to serve our Brooklyn community for years to come.

Sincerely,



Nicole Malliotakis
Member of Congress

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October 29, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of the Guild for Exceptional Children,

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Guild for Exceptional Children on the momentous occasion of your 65th Anniversary! This remarkable milestone represents six and a half decades of unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in improving the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is a testament to the incredible impact your organization has had on our community and the lives of countless individuals and their families. As you celebrate this momentous occasion it is a time not only to reflect on the organization's remarkable history but also to look forward with hope and determination. The Guild for Exceptional Children's continued dedication to service is a shining example of the positive change that can be achieved through compassion, inclusivity, and unwavering commitment.

Founded in 1958 by visionary leaders such as Senator William T. Conklin, Assembly Member Luigi Marano, and supported by so many others, the Guild for Exceptional Children has played an instrumental role in creating a civil rights movement for people with developmental disabilities. Your commitment to advocacy, education, and support has not only transformed the lives of those you serve but has also reshaped our community's perception of individuals with developmental disabilities. Under the current leadership of Joseph L. Riley and his inimitable team and with the support of Board President Anthony Cetta, Director Emeritus Hon. Matthew D'Emic, Parliamentarian Stephen Chiano, Esq and the board of directors, your contributions continue to change lives daily.

Your organization's tireless efforts have provided countless services and support to children and adults with developmental disabilities, allowing them to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. The impact of your work resonates far beyond your immediate community, inspiring others to follow in your footsteps and champion the rights and well-being of those with developmental disabilities.

As you celebrate this significant milestone, may you take pride in your achievements and draw renewed strength to continue your vital mission. Here's to the Guild for Exceptional Children and the next 65 years of creating a brighter and more inclusive future for all!

Yours in service,

Andrew S. Gounardes
Member of Senate

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October 29, 2023

The Guild for Exceptional Children
260 68th St
Brooklyn, NY 11220

Good evening,



I extend my greetings to all attendees of the Guild for Exceptional Children (GEC)'s Sixty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration. Founded in 1958, GEC evolved from a dedicated group of parents volunteering to an advocacy agency at the forefront of developmental disability advocacy and services. GEC works to promote independence, self-advocacy, and life skills for individuals with developmental disabilities. The organization provides day habilitation, PreK for all, early childhood education, residential services, and an arts and recreation program. Today, GEC services over 500 individuals and family members each day and provides a full range of services and supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Thank you to the board, staff, and volunteers for their incredible service. Congratulations to The Guild for Exceptional Children on the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary. On behalf of New York State's 17th Senate District, I wish you another successful year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Iwen Chu'.

Iwen Chu
NYS Senator



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GEC's Exceptional Leaders

Founder

Julia Carosella*

Founding Mothers

Pauline Agro*

Olga DeFelippo*

Helen Dukes*

Mae Dougherty*

Edith Robertson*

Mary Sabatelle*

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Mary Santangelo*

Calvin Fischetti*

Anthony Santoro*

Anthony Cetta

Arlene Rutuelo

Frank J. Sena PhD

*Deceased



GUIDANCE / EXCELLENCE / COMMUNITY
Building Brighter Futures Since 1958





In 1970, Governor Nelson Rockefeller attended the opening of GEC's Conklin Residence, NYC's first group home. Pictured are Assembly Member Luigi Marano and Senator William T. Conklin, with founding parents, Pauline Agro and Olga DeFilippo.

Mission Statement

"To help children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities lead dignified and satisfying lives, reaching their fullest potential and assisting families in every step of their journey."

Vision Statement

"The GEC is dedicated to providing exceptional support and services that will enable children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities to lead respected and fulfilling lives on their community."



Our Services & Programs

The Carrie Mastronardi Early Childhood Education Center
Pre-School and UPK

Residential Services

Jessie & William Conklin Residence: 310 67th Street
Joseph DeFelippo Residence: 216 Ovington Avenue
Gabriel P. Martini Residence: 311 Senator Street
Hon. Luigi R. Marano Residence: 541 72nd Street
Lucy Quinones Residence: 350 85th Street
Jeannette & Frank Cassone Residence: 7015 Colonial Road
Charter House: 27 Marine Avenue
Mary Santangelo Residence: 8910 Colonial Road
Olga's House: 619 73rd Street
Narrows Residence: 7001 Narrows Avenue
Harry English Residence: 443 72nd Street
Andrew Sichenze, Esq. Residence: 170 88th Street
Josephine Sedita Residence: 918 79th Street
Supportive Apartments

Programs

Calvin & Era Fischetti Resource Center
Mastronardi Day Habilitation Program
Hope C. Morrison Day Habilitation Center
Peter J. Mulligan Day Habilitation Program
Without Walls Day Habilitation Program
Family Support Services
"Four Seasons" Senior Day Center
Greenhouse & Horticultural Therapy Program
Art & Ceramics Program
Social Recreation Programs
Music Therapy Program



The GEC will at all times provide high quality, individually tailored and reliable services and supports to children and adults with developmental disabilities.

We **STRIVE** Each Day To Adhere To The Following Values:

Service –

We demonstrate each day that we recognize the importance and worth of the individuals in our care and the GEC exists solely to serve them, helping them live fuller and more productive lives.

Teamwork –

We recognize that the best results are achieved when all stakeholders work together to achieve a mutually valued and agreed upon goal. We strive to demonstrate the phrase:

TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE

Respect –

We respect the individuality and diversity of the individuals in our care, as well as their families and our fellow workers. We strive to provide an atmosphere where ALL can learn and grow together. We respect the resources, facilities and equipment with which we have been entrusted and strive to work efficiently and economically.

Integrity –

We hold ourselves accountable to the individuals in our care and the families who have entrusted their family members to us. We strive every day to treat people we serve and those who work with us in a manner that we ourselves would like to be treated.

Vision –

We strive to help the individuals in our care lead lives where they are valued by others in the community and appreciated for what they can achieve and contribute. We strive to keep the “big picture” in mind at all times and attend to the details of care that contribute to the fulfillment of our Mission and create a “quality” experience for those we serve.

Excellence –

We provide top notch, person-centered, individually tailored services in clean, aesthetically pleasing and helpful environments and are dependable in our service delivery 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Heaven's Very Special Child

A meeting was held quite far from Earth!
It's time again for another birth.
Said the Angels to the LORD above,
This Special Child will need much love.
His progress may be very slow,
Accomplishments he may not show.
And he'll require extra care
From the folks he meets down there.
He may not run or laugh or play,
His thoughts may seem quite far away,
In many ways he won't adapt,
And he'll be known as handicapped.
So let's be careful where he's sent,
We want his life to be content.
Please LORD, find the parents who
Will do a special job for you.
They will not realize right away
The leading role they're asked to play,
But with this child sent from above
Comes stronger faith and richer love.
And soon they'll know the privilege given
In caring for their gift from Heaven.
Their precious charge, so meek and mild,
Is HEAVEN'S VERY SPECIAL CHILD.

by Edna Massionilla

December 1981

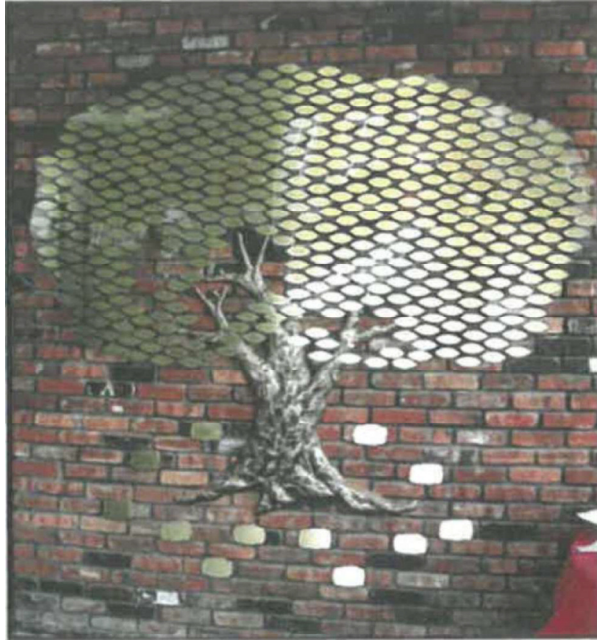


Dedicated in Loving Memory



The Guild for Exceptional Children Honors
in Memoriam
The Children and Adults
Who Were in Our Care
and
Their Parents Who Worked to Support the Mission

"Building Brighter Futures"
For Their Children
and
Future Generations



The Tree of Life

Sponsorship of a leaf or stone provides the donor with an opportunity to give an exceptional gift for all occasions. It is a permanent tribute to memorialize a loved one or commemorate a special occasion such as a birthday or anniversary. This beautiful bronze tree is prominently displayed in the lobby of GEC's main building. The net proceeds from the "Tree of Life" program help support the Building Fund.

For information on how you can sponsor a leaf or stone, please contact the Development Office at
718-833-6633 ext.228



Program

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation & Grace

Welcome & Congratulatory Remarks

Sponsors Acknowledgement

Honoree Award Presentation

Dinner & Dancing

Raffle Drawing

Special Acknowledgements

The GEC would like to thank all those who attended our 65th Anniversary Celebration, supported our Journal and/or Raffle, or made a donation of any kind. Your generosity will help improve the quality of life for children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Special Note: Please understand that every effort was made to proof the contents of this journal. We extend our sincere apologies if anyone was overlooked, or an error was made. Thank you.



A Very Special Thank You to GEC's Development Committee for Their Support

Peter Ferraiuolo, Esq. Chairman

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Celeste Sena

Special appreciation and recognition to Frank Sena for all the dedicated hours spent in preparing the journal!

A huge thank you to Gerri Cassone, Marion Cleaver, Kali Gabriel, Arlene Keating, Eleanor Schiano, & Celeste Sena for their help with pre-event activities!

Many thanks to Dr. Demetrios Gabriel for his assistance and support to help make the event an overwhelming success!



Distinguished Honorees

The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic



Matthew J. D'Emic is a graduate of Fordham University and Brooklyn Law School. He was appointed to the bench in 1996 and currently serves as Administrative Judge for Criminal Matters in Kings County Supreme Court and Presiding Judge of the Brooklyn Mental Health Court.

Judge D'Emic is co-chair of the New York State Judicial Task Force on Mental Illness and has served on mental health initiatives for Mayors Bloomberg, DeBlasio and Adams. He is a member of the Independent Commission on New York City Justice and Incarceration Reform (Rikers Island Commission) and the National Task Force to Examine State Courts' Response to Mental Illness. He is also past chair of the Supreme Court Gender Fairness Committee and a member of the New York State Judicial Committee on Women in the Courts from which he received the 2023 Leadership Award.

The Judge has been recognized for his work by the National Alliance on Mental Illness and American Bar Association among others. In 2023 he received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Council of State Governments as well as the award for Outstanding Jurist from the New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Judge D'Emic is a board member emeritus of the Guild for Exceptional Children, and Xaverian High School and has served on the board of Mercy Home. He is also an adjunct professor at Brooklyn Law School and lectures frequently on criminal justice.

The GEC sincerely appreciates this opportunity to honor and recognize Judge D'Emic for his decades of support and friendship. We thank you for the difference you have made and continue to make to improve the quality of life for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.



Distinguished Honorees

Francine Boyle



Brooklyn born and raised, Francine Boyle boasts that she continues to reside in the same Marine Park home that she was born and raised in for over fifty years. Fran enjoys travel, cooking/baking, gardening and reading in her spare time.

Fran began her career at the GEC in February of 2010. She started as a weekend DSP at Olga's house, but soon branched out doing coverage at multiple sites. Those experiences taught her so much about the GEC and the people that it serves. While working at Olga's house, Francine finished her degree in Health and Human Services. In July 2014, she was promoted to

Assistant Manager at Sedita Residence. There she had the pleasure of working with Tim Klein whom she states was an excellent teacher, and she learned so much from him. In July 2016, she was promoted to Manager of the Martini Residence.

The Martini Residence provided many challenges, but with the help of her Assistant Manager at the time, Veronica Iqbal, they dedicated themselves to providing ongoing excellent care. Francine always shares that Martini Residence is a wonderful place to work. Francine shares she has enjoyed working at the Guild for the last 13 years and looks forward to the next 13. We welcome this opportunity to honor Fran for the difference she had made in our community.



Distinguished Honorees

John Downey



John Downey was born to Flo and John Downey Sr. and raised right here in Bay Ridge Brooklyn. John began his career at the Guild for Exceptional Children in 1993 as a DSP at the Marano Residence. John was always willing to be interviewed by auditors, and his engaging personality lent itself to positive interactions.

In 2000, John started working with individuals residing at home doing at home respite and recreation. Next, John had the opportunity to supervise our men's supportive apartment programs. Needless to say, he was well loved and respected by the men he served. When our Narrows Residence opened back in 2003, John became the Assistant Manager and remained in that position until 2017.

With years of managerial experience, John was next offered the manager's position at Quinones Residence, where he remains today. John enjoys traveling in his leisure time, as well as performing in Community Theater. In fact, theater brought John to the GEC family. He met Joe Riley years ago while doing Community Theater and the rest is history. The GEC greatly thanks John for all his dedicated and compassionate service.



Distinguished Honorees

Veronica Iqbal



Veronica Iqbal is currently the Manager at Olga's Residence. Veronica hales from Staten Island and resides with her loving son Ryan. She began her career with The Guild for Exceptional Children some 24 years ago as a DSP at the Marano and Sedita Residences. Veronica then went on to work in the Hope Morrison Day Hab program as an HSP. With her wealth of experience, she moved up and became the Assistant Manager at the Martini Residence.

Veronica shares that The Guild for Exceptional Children has afforded her many learning opportunities, room to grow in the agency, and as a person. Along the way, she made many new friends and enjoyed working with wonderful colleagues.

Although Veronica defines herself as a City Girl, she loves to visit the Pennsylvania countryside with her family and close friends in her down time. The GEC is happy to honor Veronica for her many years of service and dedication.



Distinguished Honorees

Anthony Martinez



Anthony Martinez has been employed at the GEC for 21 years. Throughout these years, he has worked at various residences and day programs. Anthony is a staunch advocate for the individuals he serves. His tireless efforts in lobbying in Albany to help improve services for program recipients, and increase staff wages is greatly appreciated.

For the past several years, Anthony has been the supervisor for the men's supportive apartments 1 & 2 and the Assistant Manager at the English Residence.

When he finds the time, his hobbies include sculpting with clay, and enjoys socializing with friends. The GEC is grateful to honor Anthony for his dedication and compassionate care.



Distinguished Honorees

Siobhan Masterson



While attending Our Lady of Perpetual Help High School, Siobhan Masterson volunteered for the Ryken Service Club at Xaverian High School. During this period, she discovered that she had a passion for working with people with developmental disabilities. In 1999, at the age of nineteen, Siobhan began working part-time as a Direct Service Professional at the Guild for Exceptional Child while attending college.

In 2001, Siobhan became full-time, and in 2013, she was promoted to the position of manager of English Residence. Over the many years of her career at the GEC Siobhan has provided services to adults in many of the residences. Siobhan takes great pride in her work and the impact of her care results in positive outcomes every day. She has over 20 years of building relationships not only with the women at English Residence, but with their families too.

Siobhan is a lifelong Bay Ridge resident and currently lives locally with her partner and their daughter, Averie. In her leisure time, Siobhan volunteers with the Girl Scouts of Greater NY and leads her daughter's troop. Siobhan is looking forward to another twenty years at the GEC! The GEC appreciates and congratulates Siobhan for her dedication and service!



Distinguished Honorees

Concetta Musolino



Concetta “Tina” Musolino is the current manager of GEC’s Santangelo Residence. She was born and raised in Brooklyn and is married to a former GEC employee and they have two beautiful sons. In early 1992, Tina interned for NYS Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly, who along with other N.Y. legislators, closed the Willowbrook Institution. Tina’s exposure to legislation surrounding the field of intellectual disabilities made her more curious and led her to The Guild for Exceptional Children.

In October of 1992, Tina worked as a DSP at the Marano Residence. By 1994, Tina was promoted to assist in managing Charter House, the first Individualized Residential Alternative in Brooklyn. In 1996, Tina was promoted to manager of The Santangelo Residence. Tina stated that the most valuable lesson in managing Santangelo Residence was and is today: meeting the needs of the individuals that we serve, creating a therapeutic environment, individualizing care at home/community and securing that the individuals are well cared for and feel safe. She has been a camp counselor and Director at Mid-Hudson Valley Camp, lobbied in Albany, attended Lake George conferences, and accompanied individuals when the Pope came to town at JFK.

She met Ralph her husband in 1996 while working at Charter House, and they have been happily married close to 25 years. She is mom to Ralph and Matthew, and her brother Peter has made his home at Cassone Residence as well. Tina would like to thank her family, Ralph, Ralphie, Matthew, Mom, Dad, Colleagues (some of the closest people in my life) and all who have supported her career at GEC. Tina shares that the individuals that she serves are her greatest teachers; she has learned from them to be more courageous, to persevere and to embrace resilience. The GEC congratulates Tina for all her hard work, and dedication to help improve the quality of life of those in her care!



Distinguished Honorees

Stephen Neave



Stephen Neave was born and raised in the borough of Brooklyn. Coming from a large, loving family, Stephen enjoys spending time with his father and his many siblings. Stephen LOVES his children, J & Z and the Individuals who receive services at the GEC. To quote Stephen, he has worked at GEC for a long, long, long time.

Stephen began his career at the GEC as a Direct Service Professional at the Quinones Residence. In his role as a DSP, he formed close friendships with the individuals living at Quinones ensuring that they lived out their lives with dignity and the fulfillment of their dreams. Stephen later took on the responsibility of working as a Medicaid Service Coordinator at the GEC. He then embraced management roles, first as an Assistant Manager of Marano IRA and then Manager of the GEC Sedita ICF, where he is currently.

Stephen is a tremendous client advocate, always helping to foster independence and supporting our individuals in achieving their dreams. The GEC appreciates and congratulates Stephen for his dedication and service!



Distinguished Honorees

Ellen Paternostro



Ellen Paternostro, a Brooklyn native and long- time GEC employee currently lives with her loving husband Carlos, and son Jonathan in Staten Island. Ellen enjoys traveling, music and spending time with friends and family. When she was 17 years old, she began her career at the Guild for Exceptional Children in February 1984 at the Martini Residence. Ellen will often tell others that day changed her life. She fell in love with the GEC, and all of the people she met. Sadly, Ellen’s parents passed away when she was young, and the GEC became her extended family. Ellen spent many holidays with our folks making amazing memories.

Ellen was promoted to the position of recreational specialist at Martini Residence and learned how to plan activities and vacations. She then became the Assistant Manager. Ellen went on to accept the position of Manager at GEC Conklin Residence some twenty years ago where she now works. Ellen has always said, “ it is not a job, but a calling working with our individuals.” For the last 40 years , the individuals and the GEC has been her family.

She states that she has grown up in this agency, and has formed many wonderful friendships and memories; to Ellen, this place is her family. The GEC is happy to honor Ellen for her many years of dedicated service. You make a difference!



Distinguished Honorees

Ruthlyn Solomon



Ruthlyn Solomon hails from the beautiful island of Jamaica, West Indies. She exemplifies the qualities of a hardworking, loving, kind and trustworthy person. Well determined, yet pleasantly calm, describes Ruthie to a tee. Ruthie is married and has three beautiful children. She encourages family and friends to fight for what they desire in life and believes nothing comes easy. Ruth's faith keeps her balanced and she firmly believes that God makes everything possible.

Migrating to the United States at the age of sixteen, along with her older sister and younger brother was somewhat of a challenge. Ruthie attended Samuel J. Tilden High School. She continued her education at Touro College achieving a Bachelor's degree in Human Services. Over the past 26 years, Ruthie has been employed at the Guild for Exceptional Children. She started her career at GEC as a DSP at the Cassone Residence. Ruthlyn worked as the Recreation Specialist at this residence for a short while and then became the Assistant manager. For the past seventeen years, Ruthie has managed the Cassone Residence with a tremendous work ethic and loving compassion for the individuals that she serves. Ruthie is quoted as saying she truly cherishes spending time with the individuals.

She also cherishes the friendships she has made with fellow staff members, and the professional relationships she has forged. During her leisure time, Ruthie passionately enjoys event planning and decorating, where she works closely with her clients to create a theme and making the overall atmosphere and physical appearance of the event breathtaking. Reading and listening to gospel music are amongst her other hobbies, but Ruthie's greatest passion is spending quality time with friends and family. The GEC congratulates Ruthlyn for her dedication and the compassionate care she provides to the residents in her care.



Distinguished Honorees

Maryann Sullivan



Maryann Sullivan boasts that she has spent the last 10,395 days of her life as a part of the GEC family, some of them as a DSP, some as an Assistant Manager, but mostly as the Manager of Charter House. Each day contained love and laughter, some of the greatest triumphs and some of the hardest challenges. She experienced joyful highs and heartbreaking sorrows, and says she would not change a single minute of it. Maryann shares that she cherishes the friends and relationships forged over the past 28 years.

The GEC does not just contain her metaphorical family, but has also included members of her immediate family – from her mother, may she rest in peace, Mary Sullivan Giles who first said to her “Go to the Guild, they are looking for people to work” – to her brother, her wife, nieces and nephews, and daughter Grace who has been “volunteering” at Charter since she understood what it was we were doing to support “the guys.”

When not immersed in the GEC, Maryann enjoys spending time with her extended family and friends, traveling, and thinking about what adventures lie ahead. The GEC is pleased to honor Maryann for the difference she has made these many years!



Distinguished Honorees

Elizabeth Tiedemann



Elizabeth “Cookie” Tiedemann was born, and raised a Bay Ridge, Brooklyn girl to her parents Adele and Robert Ellis. She is the loving mother to Molly Tiedemann, Francis and Jonathan Wlazlowski. “Cookie”, or Grandma as she is better known as now, and adored by her five grandchildren: Luke, Jameson, Remi, Finnegan and finally her first granddaughter Adelaide.

“Cookie” began her career with the Guild for Exceptional Children as a Direct Support Professional opening up Martini Residence in April of 1981. After excelling in that role for two years, she earned the position of Assistant Manager for DeFelippo Residence working with her sister Debbie. Together they made DeFelippo a wonderful place to live. Her eighteen years at DeFelippo Residence provided amazing memories with their famous trips to Ridin-Hy Ranch, Disney, and much talked about Holiday Parties. When the GEC made the decision in 2001 to open up the Sichenze Residence, “Cookie” was tapped to become the manager and gives her all to the folks at the residence.

Her management style has gotten positive results over the years with a lot of joy and many amazing stories. “Cookie” also continues her education and training of staff via the SCIP programs, ensuring the needs of the residents are always met proactively and safely. Sichenze Residence is lucky to have such a fantastic, and dedicated manager since it has opened, and for all the years to come. The GEC congratulates “Cookie” and we are very grateful she is part of our community!



Distinguished Honorees

Jessica Young



Jessica Young, Manager of DeFilippo Residence, started her GEC career over ten years ago. She began her journey at the Guild while studying to become a court reporter. Jessica soon realized her passion for helping others and committed herself to this field.

As a Direct Support Professional at Santangelo Residence, Jessica learned what group home life was all about. She learned there is no cookie cutter approach to working with the individuals we service. She quickly learned that a person-centered approach is the foundation for quality care with our individuals. Within a few years of learning and growing as a counselor, she took the role of Assistant Manager at Santangelo. During that time, she worked to develop her communication and leadership skills, which helped to prepare her for the Manager position at DeFilippo. Jessica cites that having the pleasure of working with individuals in two distinctly different homes has helped her to grow in the field and watching them all thrive has warmed her heart. Jessica values the relationships she has formed with colleagues, many of whom she calls friends.

Jessica also feels blessed in her personal life. She is happily married to her husband Alex, and gets much enjoyment from her two fur babies, Trip and Penny. In her spare time, Jessica enjoys crafting, creating holiday wreaths and socializing with her large group of family and friends. The GEC is happy to honor Jessica for her many years of dedicated service.



Distinguished Honorees

Debbie Xenakis



Debbie Xenakis began her journey at the GEC in 1995. Debbie was a student at Long Island University at the time and worked part time as a counselor. Debbie recalls sharing such positive experiences with the individuals, her peers and mentors, that they inspired her to pursue a career here at the Guild.

Through these years, Debbie has worn many hats at the Guild, such as; Direct Support Professional, Residential Habilitation Specialist, an Assistant Manager and currently as a Residential Manager of the Narrows Residence, a SCIP-

R Instructor and a GEC Investigator. Debbie feels that the experiences she has gained and the relationships she has developed over the years prepared her to be a valued professional, a staunch advocate and a better person.

Debbie's passion is to advocate on behalf of the individuals she serves and hopes this inspires others. Debbie cites that despite the difficulty of the daily work she does as manager, it is fulfilling and rewarding in and of itself. She is extremely proud of what she does every day. In her spare time, Debbie enjoys baking specialty cakes and socializing with family and friends. We are pleased to honor Debbie for her dedication and service to our community.



In Loving Memory of Joseph & Vivienne DeFelippo



Noel P. DeFelippo, MD
Michele T. Visconti, PhD



In loving memory of our parents and grandparents.

Dr. Michael P. Gabriel

&

Dr. Stavroula Gabriel



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Your enduring dedication to improving the lives of individuals with exceptional needs is truly commendable. We also extend our appreciation to your exceptional staff and 2023 Honorees for their invaluable contributions to your mission.



Warm regards,

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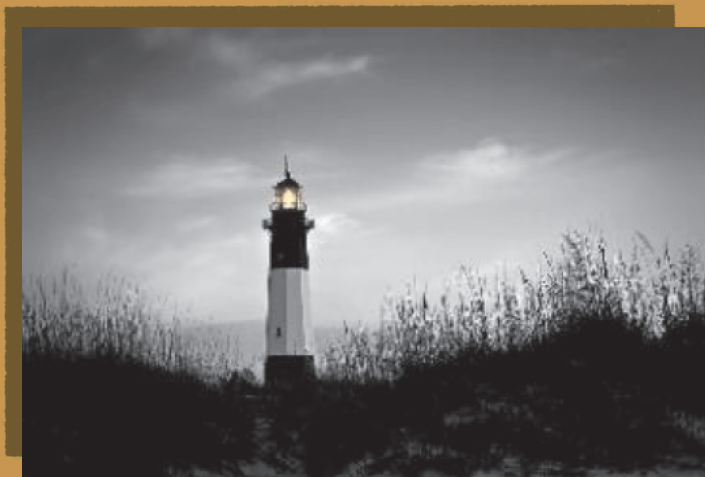
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Congratulations
to the GEC on their
65th Anniversary & to all the
Honorees





***Best wishes to
The Guild for Exceptional Children
On their 65th Year Anniversary
&
Congratulations to the Honoree
Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic***



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On their 65th Year Anniversary
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Congratulations to the Honoree
Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic





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*Congratulations and best wishes to the GEC and
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*honorees honored at the 65th Anniversary
Celebration!*

*We wish the GEC continued success on your
mission of care.*



He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother (lyrics by B. Scott and B. Russell)

The road is long,
With many a winding turn
That lead us to who knows where
But I'm strong
Strong enough to carry him
He ain't heavy, he's my brother

If I'm laden at all
I'm laden with the sadness
That everyone's heart
Isn't filled with the gladness
And love for one another

It's a long, long road
From which there is no return
While we're on the way to there
Why not share
And the road doesn't weigh me down at all

He ain't heavy, he's my brother
So on we go
His welfare is my concern
No burden is he to bear
We'll get there
For I know
He would not encumber me
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

**Thank you to the GEC and congratulations to the honorees for helping our siblings
live their best lives.**

**Congratulations on your "65th Anniversary"
The Siblings, Families and Friends Committee**



CONGRATULATIONS
TO
HONORABLE
MATHEW D'EMIC





*We are pleased to be part of
The Guild's Family
and we wish you continued success
for many years to come*

God Bless

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CONGRATULATIONS

TO

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Congratulations to the 2023 Honorees

Judge D'Emic

The Managers of
The Guild for Exceptional Children

Warm Wishes & Blessings to All

The DeMatteis Family



*Congratulations
To
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*Congrats
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My husband Tony, passed away on June 3, 2022.

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His love for all The Guilds' children, showed in his smile.

He will always be in our hearts and never be forgotten.

My family wants to congratulate all the Honorees for always giving their support and love to the GEC. A special blessing to Ruthlyn Solomon and staff of the Cassone Residence for their care and love they give to our Tony Boy.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Ann, Tony Boy, Vincent, Annemarie, Stephen,

Angelina & Anthony



In loving memory
of

My Special Brother,
Eugene T. Casey, Jr.
and

Our Devoted Parents,
Betty and Gene Casey, Sr.

Marianne M. Casey



We offer our sincere
Congratulations and Thanks to the GEC
on 65 years of Service
and to its Honorees:

The GEC Residence Managers
&
The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

Your steadfast dedication to the
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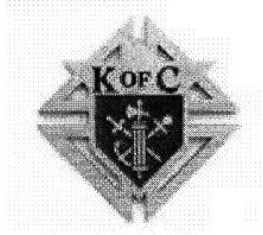




In Loving Memory
of my
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Adele & Filippo Fabrizio



With Love,
Your Very Proud Son,
Stephen



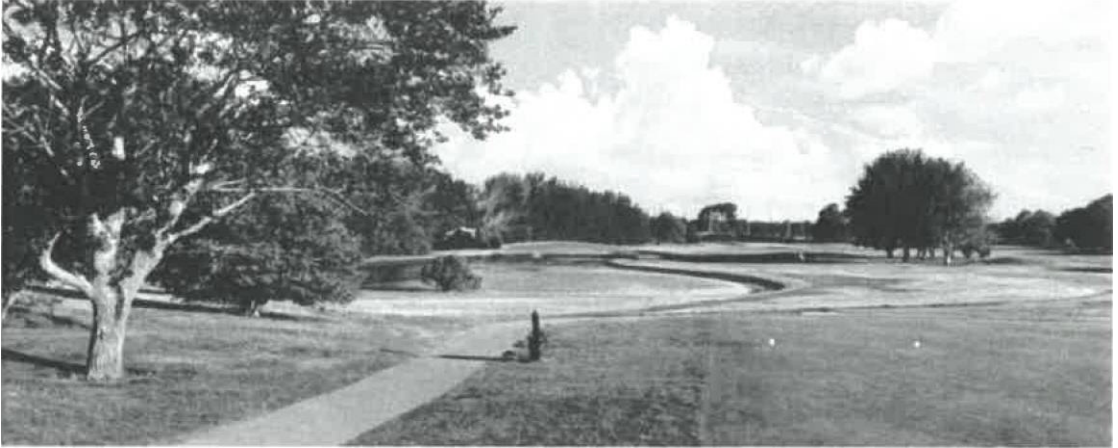
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ON YOUR 65TH ANNIVERSARY**

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AND**

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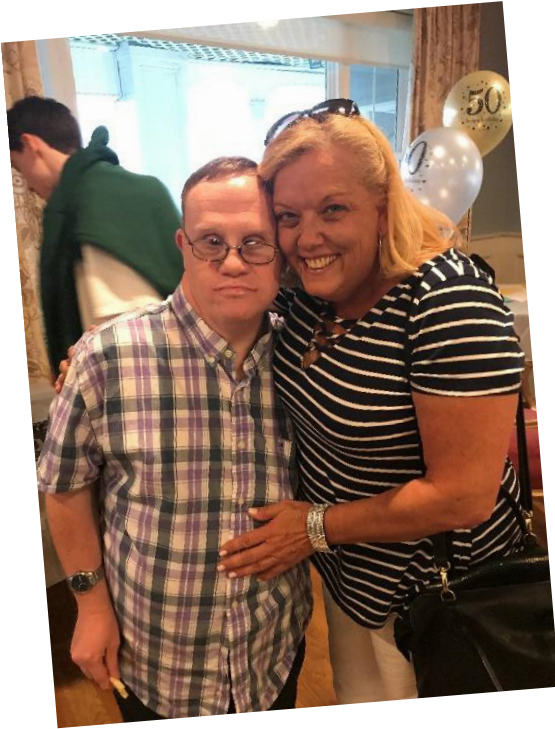


*"If you light a lamp for someone else, it will
also brighten your path."
—Buddha*

**The Guild for Exceptional Children has
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**Congratulations to the Honorable Matthew
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Tina Musolino

“There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others.”

Many thanks to you and your entire staff for giving “our” Paul an amazing future filled with love.

With gratitude,

The DeVincenzo Family

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And Especially to***

Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

and GEC'S Residential Managers

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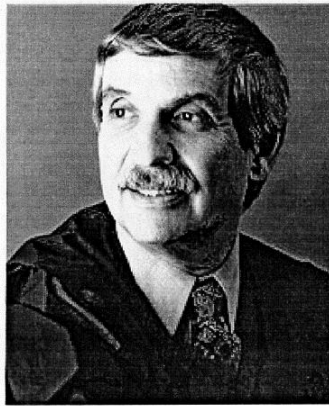


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We honor, sincerely thank, and deeply appreciate our friend, the Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic and the other "Exceptional 2023 Honorees", for all they have given our GEC.



In memory of a truly exceptional man.

*A loving Husband - Father - Grandfather -
Supreme Court Justice*

Gerard H. Rosenberg

The Rosenberg Family



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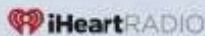
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Congratulations and Best Wishes

to 2023's Exceptional Honorees:

especially

The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

and

GEC's Managers:

Francine Boyle; John Downey; Veronica Iqbal; Anthony Martinez;

Siobhan Masterson; Concetta Musolino; Stephen Neave;

Ellen Paternostro; Ruthlyn Solomon; Maryann Sullivan;

Elizabeth Tiedmann; Despina Xenakis; Jessica Young

Thanks to all who support the GEC in building brighter futures

for the children and adults in our care.

Eleanor Schiano



*We join in celebrating the work of the
2023 Honorees for their tireless efforts on
behalf of the GEC!*

*We join in celebrating 65 years in the life
of the GEC!*

Frank, Celeste, and Elizabeth Sena



Congratulations
to
The Guild for
Exceptional Children
and the
Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

Sincerely,
Dean & Helen Rasinya



Congratulations

to

Hon. Matthew J. D'Emic

and

All of the amazing

GEC Managers.

Your hard work and dedication

to the

GEC is truly inspiring!

The Chiaino Family



Our best wishes
to
The Guild for Exceptional
Children, Inc.
for another great year!

Our best,
Charles and Nereida Wong



Congratulations & Thank You

to All the Honorees

**for Your Dedication,
Service & Commitment
to the GEC**



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Happy 65th Anniversary GEC



**With heartfelt gratitude, the Harrison & Lopez
Family congratulates Cookie. In the words
of our sister, Roberta, we say to
ALL the GEC house managers:**

“Thanks for all you do for us!”



Fontbonne Hall Academy
congratulates

The Honorable
Matthew J. D'Emic
and
 Managers

Rosemary Trotta D'Emic '66
Kate D'Emic Lynch '02



The Honorable Mathew J. D’Emic

Congratulations Grandpa!

**Reece, Drew Jr.,
Matthew III, Finn &
Sawyer**



Congratulations
to all
my fellow Managers.
It's a pleasure to
work with you!

Love,
Cookie



The GEC Board of Directors
Congratulates the GEC on 65 years of
service and our 2023 Honorees!

The Honorable Matthew J. D’Emic
&
The GEC Residence Managers

Your work and generosity have been
invaluable in improving the lives of
individuals with intellectual/developmental
disabilities.



“To be successful is to be helpful, caring and constructive, to make everything and everyone you touch a little bit better.” Norman Peale

Congratulations to the GEC Residence Managers who have touched the lives of so many. I am grateful for all of the numerous things each manager does in the course of the day to enhance the lives of the residents.

Teddy Roosevelt said, “Nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.” The Honorable Matthew D’Emic has never failed to show just how much he cares for the GEC and the people we support. We are so fortunate to benefit from his care and wisdom over the many decades he has been involved in the GEC.

In appreciation to our honorees

Patricia Romano



Congratulations
to The Guild for
Exceptional
Children on its
65th Anniversary
and to all the
2023 honorees



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**Congratulations to the 2023 Honoree,
The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic.**

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**WISHING PROFOUND AND LOVING
CONGRATULATIONS
TO EACH OF OUR DESERVING HONOREES:**

**FRANCINE BOYLE
JOHN DOWNEY
VERONICA IQBAL
ANTHONY MARTINEZ
SIOBHAN MASTERSON
CONCETTA (TINA) MUSOLINO
STEPHEN NEAVE
ELLEN PATERNOSTRO
RUTHLYN SOLOMON
MARYANN SULLIVAN
ELIZABETH (COOKIE) TIEDEMANN
DESPINA XENAKIS
JESSICA YOUNG**

***And...*
THE HONORABLE MATTHEW J. D'EMIC**

***Thank you for serving others,
whatever the cost.
Your selfless, true heroism inspires us all!***

***With Love and Gratitude,
Joe & Kim Riley***



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*May God continue to bless all GEC Officers, Board Members, Director,
Parliamentarian and Administrations*

Congratulations on your 65th Anniversary Celebration

*We Congratulate our friend the Honorable Judge Matthew J. D'Emic and all
honorees, for Their Support and Dedication and care.*

*It is our pleasure to offer Our Ultimate Support to a such
wonderful organization*

**John & Sonia Abi-Habib
Theresa Abi-Habib**



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A silver sedan car is shown from a front-three-quarter view, parked on a reflective surface. The car is a modern model, possibly a Chevrolet Cruze, with a sleek design and alloy wheels. The background is a light blue gradient.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO “THE GUILD FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN” FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL WORK FOR 65 YEARS.

BEST OF LUCK FOR THE FUTURE!

Barbara R. Desiderio
President



*Right at Home of Brooklyn and Staten Island Supports and Congratulates
The Guild for Exceptional Children's on its' 65th Anniversary and all the
"exceptional " honorees...*

The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic

Administrative Judge

Kings County Supreme Court – Criminal Term- 2nd Judicial District

GEC's Managers

Francine Boyle- Martini Residence & Supportive Apartment #3

John Downey-Quinones Residence

Veronica Iqbal – Olga's House

Anthony Martinez – Supportive Apartment # 1 & 2)

Siobhan Masterson – English Residence

Concetta (Tina) Mussolino – Santangelo Residence

Stephen Neave -Sedita Residence

Ellen Paternostro – Conklin Residence

Ruthlyn Solomon – Cassone Residence

Maryanne Sullivan – Charter Residence

Elizabeth (Cookie) Tiedeman- Sichenze Residence

Despina Xenakis – Narrows Residence

Jessica Young – DeFelippo Residence

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Congratulations to
HON. MATTHEW J. D'EMIC
and
**ALL OF THE AMAZING GEC
MANAGERS**

At the 65th Anniversary Celebration
**YOUR WORK IS TRULY
INSPIRING**

**From your friends at the
BAY RIDGE LAWYERS ASSOCIATION**



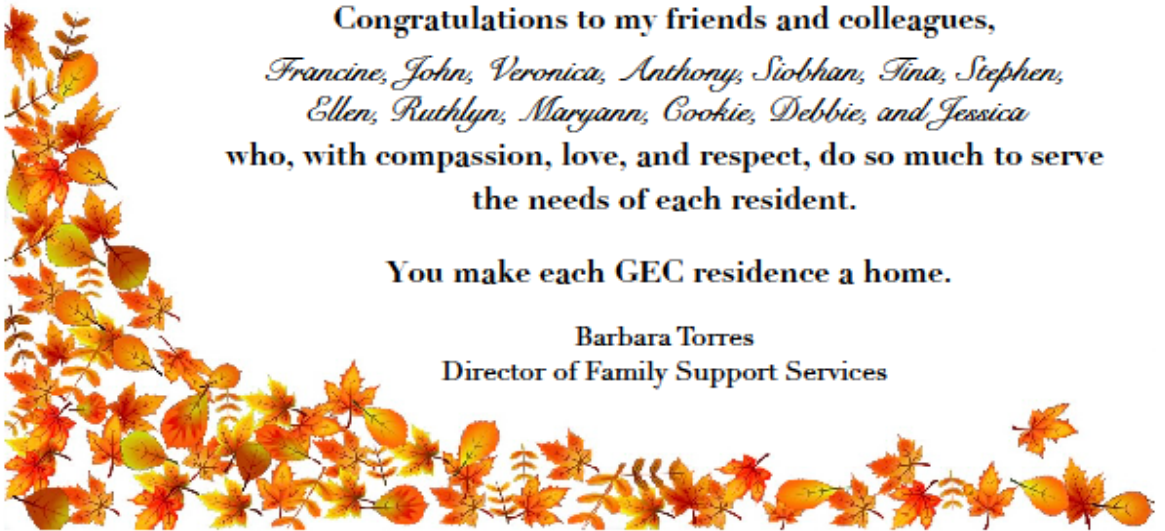
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Congratulations to my friends and colleagues,
Francine, John, Veronica, Anthony, Siobhan, Tina, Stephen,
Ellen, Ruthlyn, Maryann, Cookie, Debbie, and Jessica
who, with compassion, love, and respect, do so much to serve
the needs of each resident.

You make each GEC residence a home.

Barbara Torres
Director of Family Support Services





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Congratulations
To The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic
And all The Honorees

Best Wishes from
Anthony J. Lamberti, Esq.
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We sincerely thank everyone at
The Guild
For everything you do every day.
We appreciate it greatly!
Phil, Sue & Brian Adams

***Congratulations to the GEC on their
65th Anniversary
& all our distinguished honorees!***



The joy of grandchildren is measured in the heart.” – Unknown

Caroline Mansuetto



“The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well: and doing well whatever you do....”

Congratulations
to The Honorable Matthew J. D’Emic
Your friends Cathie & Ray Gearity

Congratulations Judge D’Emic
From
the McGuire and
Gilda Families



Congratulations to all the Honorees.

With gratitude,

James, Gloria and Lauren Morello

Congratulations to the GEC and this year's Honorees

Dedicated in memory of the Carlton Family,

Peter Carlton
Florence Carlton
Nancy Carlton

Who served and were served by this exceptional
organization.



Congratulations GEC for 65 years of creating a wonderful life for our exceptional family members!
Congratulations Judge D'Emic and all house managers and Cookie!



Sichenze house and dear friend Nicole celebrated Roberta's 50th Birthday.

Heartfelt thanks, Lopez, Huston and Scott families

Congratulations to the GEC on it's
65th Anniversary and all the honorees.
Your continued support and dedication to our
mission here at the GEC is truly amazing.

Thank you,
Michael and Carol Amodio



***There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way
to make life beautiful for others.***

Mandy Hale

To The Honorable Matthew J. D'Emic, and Managers Francine Boyle, Veronica Iqbal, Anthony Martinez, Siobhan Masterson, Tina Musolino, Stephen Neave, Ellen Paternostro, Ruthlyn Solomon, Maryann Sullivan, Cookie Tiedemann, Debbie Xenakis, and Jessica Young:

Your tireless efforts on behalf the Guild for Exceptional Children inspires us all.
Your generosity, compassion, and resourcefulness enrich the lives of the individuals we support and our dedicated staff members.

With much admiration,

Stacy Miciotta, Director of Quality Assurance

Elaine DeBerardine, Director of Compliance

Congratulations to the GEC Managers!



You're simply the Best!

Better than all the rest

Better than anyone

Anyone I've ever met



Thank you for all you do!

Laura, Sue and Tim



Colonial Voluntary Benefits helps America's workers preserve and protect the things they work hard to build. We are grateful and supportive of the GEC.



Congratulations on your 65th
Anniversary.

Here's to continued success
and remarkable achievements.

K of C Christopher Council #4257
Saint Patrick's Church, Bay Ridge



Congratulations
to all the honorees.

Your dedication to the individuals and the agency is
inspiring.

I would also like to say a heartfelt thank you to the
day program staff for their hard work and dedication.

Jennifer Herusso

Congratulations Cookie!

For all the love and care you've given
Timothy and the beautiful Sichenzie
Residents, we honor and thank you!

The Mullally Family



**Congratulations to my dear friends at the GEC on your 65th
Anniversary and all the honorees.**

**The loving care that is spread throughout your organization is
truly inspirational.**

Love you,

Susan Sajiun- Fitzharris & Richard Sajiun



**Ready to find
strength in
our differences.**

Citizens is proud to support the Guild for Exceptional
Children's 65th Anniversary. When individuals thrive,
communities flourish.

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Congratulations to the GEC on their
65th Anniversary and to all the exceptional
honorees.

Michael Caramico, D.D.S., P.C.

To all the managers of the GEC, especially to our
daughter, Tina Musolino.

Thank you for all that you do to make the GEC a
very special and unique organization.

You always strive to give our children the care,
love and individual attention that they deserve.

Fran & Michael Fanto



Congratulations

Judge Matthew D'Emic

for all you have done for the Guild, our community
and our family.

Sheryl and Arthur Rosenberg

Agne and Joshua Rosenberg and Family

Congratulations

Your Honor

Jerry Mammolito, Esq.

Vicki Mammolito



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