

Save the Date

Monday, August 17, 2009
Summer Golf Outing
Mill River Club
Nassau Country Club

Thursday, November 5, 2009
Harvest Ball
Garden City Hotel



Spring 2009



MercyLink

connecting the MercyFirst Community

Building on the Dreams of Her Father and Mother: *Sharing Tennis With Under-Privileged Youth*

Teaching tennis to under-privileged children may seem like a novel idea to many, but it was one that John H. and Joan Dunn, founders of the Cold Spring Valley Tennis Club, held dear. And it is a tradition that their daughter Coleen and her husband Kevin O'Rourke continued when they assumed the reigns at Cold Spring Valley nearly two years ago. About 14 teen-age boys from MercyFirst can be found on the beautiful red clay courts on Monday afternoons. There's a lot of laughing and joking as Kevin, who is the Director of Tennis and a retired banking executive, teaches them the finer points of back-hands and volleys. But there is serious learning going on also. Not only had these boys never set foot on a tennis court before, none of them had even considered the sport before their first afternoon. One participant exclaims, "I always liked basketball, but I'm not very good at it. I'm actually good at tennis, though. I can't believe it."

This is exactly the type of reaction Kevin and Coleen had been hoping for when they started partnering with MercyFirst in June. The partnership came about when MercyFirst Board Member and Cold Spring Valley Member, John Koehler began talking to Kevin about the boys living on the Campus just around the corner. "We're very fortunate that we are a family-owned, family-run club. It gives us the flexibility to open our courts up to these young men and expose them to a new sport," explains Kevin, whose brother-in-law Daniel Dunn shares club responsibilities with Coleen and him. Not only is the club family-run and operated, Daniel Dunn was responsible for the club's design and literally built the club with his own two hands, with the help of the rest of the family.



Kevin O'Rourke teaches tennis to the young men from MercyFirst

In addition to learning basic tennis skills, the boys run laps and learn about court maintenance and tennis etiquette. The program has been such a success that there are plans to try to expand it to include boys and girls from MercyFirst's other programs, including its after-school programs.

"Read" All About It- Verizon Pioneers and MercyFirst



The Pioneers host a basketball challenge with the boys at MercyFirst

Under the project coordination of Mary Ruane of Verizon, the Verizon Pioneers were awarded a \$5,000 grant titled "Library of Hopes and Dreams" for the residents of the Syosset Campus. Verizon Pioneer volunteers will work with MercyFirst staff to assemble bookshelves and purchase books. The library is scheduled to be up and running by the summer months.

Thank you Verizon, Mary and the Pioneers!

A Living Legacy Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. Scholarship Fund Founded

“To whom much is given, much is expected.” Luke 12:48

Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. thought he was the luckiest man in the world, and he lived his life trying to share his gifts with people who faced barriers to their success and happiness. He was well known in actuarial circles, not only for his own extraordinary abilities, but for his willingness to reach out and teach others. When he died suddenly on 9/26/08, his friends, colleagues, and family honored that spirit with an outpouring of generosity, and established the Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. Scholarship Fund at MercyFirst. Young men and women in foster care face innumerable challenges, and are just the kind of people whom Dan wanted to help.

These scholarships will help youth attend college or vocational school and are the first endowed scholarships set up as part of our Scholarship Fund, which provides young men and women with the extra financial support they need to succeed in advancing their education and opportunities. Most of these young men and women have no permanent family structure to support them, and therefore face countless difficulties and high drop out rates. Dan deeply believed that education and a strong network of support were crucial for success.

Dan was extremely active in advancing education within his profession. He began his career at Equitable Life, then joined Milliman, among the world's largest independent actuarial and consulting firms. He served as Chairman of the firm for seven years, was President of the American Academy of Actuaries, spent six years as a member of the Actuarial Standards Board, was on the board of the Society of Actuaries, and served as the first International Secretary of the American Academy of Actuaries, traveling all over the world to represent the U.S. actuarial profession at many international organizations. In recent years, he served as President of The Actuarial Foundation, a philanthropic group whose mission is to serve the public by developing education and research programs that harness the talents of actuaries and looks to expand diversity in the field.

Dan's commitment to education was a fundamental part of his family life. He met Virginia, his wife of 49 years, when they were students at Fordham University, and all six of their children graduated from Catholic Universities. Most of them also went on to earn Graduate degrees. Dan and Virginia have fifteen grandchildren, four of whom have already begun to pursue their higher education.

In spite of his busy career and family life, Dan was deeply devoted to his community. He was very actively involved at St. Benedict Roman Catholic Church for decades, having served on the Parish Council as President and as Chair of the Finance Committee, taught religious education courses, played in the bridge league, and singing in folk group.

To further honor Daniel McCarthy for his commitment to helping those less fortunate, the Board of Directors has decided to name our annual scholarship dinner The Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. Scholarship Dinner. Every year five young people will be awarded a scholarship at the dinner in his name. Our first class of scholarship recipients will celebrate their accomplishments at the first dinner to be held June 10, 2009. Dan's spirit and love of family and friends lives on through those young men and women who will be better equipped to survive in a competitive world.

For more information on The Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. Scholarship Dinner contact,
Kerri Sneden, Director of Resource Development
516-921-0808 x 114 or ksneden@mercyfirst.org



Five students will receive the Daniel J. McCarthy, Jr. Scholarship this year.

MercyFirst Passes COA Re-Accreditation With Flying Colors

Last fall, MercyFirst was re-accredited by the nationally known Council on Accreditation. The COA re-accreditation process involves an in-depth examination of the Agency's compliance with best practices. During a four day site visit, all aspects of the Agency were reviewed. The process included a series of staff interviews, an analysis of financial, human resource, risk management and continuous quality improvement practices, as well as an assessment of our conformity with thirty-nine service related standards.

COA accreditation attests that an organization meets the highest national standards and is delivering the best possible services. The Council, which is recognized by many regulatory bodies and managed care organizations, was impressed by the depth, quality and integration of the services and programs that we provide at MercyFirst.

RTS Foundation Donates \$125,000 to Bridges to the Future

The RTS Foundation, under the leadership of Richard Santulli has donated \$125,000 to support the *Bridges to the Future* Program. Our innovative *Bridges to the Future* Program provides today's struggling youth with the support and skills they need for the bright future they are capable of achieving. The initiative supports under-privileged kids as they complete their education, develop workforce skills and prepare for the future.

“The RTS Family Foundation is pleased to continue its support of the work of MercyFirst,” say Trustees S. Mary McGrory and S. Pat Hartigan. “Their programs for children, families and teens are much needed.”

“We appreciate the support we have received over the years from the RTS Foundation,” explains MercyFirst CEO Gerard McCaffery. “In addition to the care and support that goes on everyday in our programs, our Bridges to the Future Program provides a range of youth development services to help prepare teens for when they leave our care. This area is a priority of the agency as we seek to strengthen how we provide our youth with the skills and training they need to secure jobs that can support them, scholarship assistance to attend college, and financial help to live independently in the community. We are grateful to have the RTS Foundation's support in this effort.”

We also received a \$10,000 grant from the NYMEX Foundation and a \$5,000 grant from TD Bank's Charitable Foundation in January in support of the program.

MercyFirst's RTF Program Scores 100%

Each year the Office of Mental Health conducts an IOC (Inspection of Care) Survey for the Mckeown RTF (Residential Treatment Facility). The RTF is located on the Syosset Campus and provides specialized care for boys with emotional and/or mental disorders. The reviewers spent approximately two days reviewing charts, interviewing residents and staff, and touring the facility to ensure that we are meeting all standards of care. Our program scored 100% on the survey, indicating that we are not only meeting all standards of care, we are exceeding them.

Catherine's Corner

The Principal Path: MERCY

Catherine McAuley's experience of the Mercy of God, transformed her gratitude into acts of mercy for others. When the work at Baggot Street was completed in time for the house to open on September 24, 1827, the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, her companion, Anna Maria Doyle suggested that *MERCY* be the name placed over the door. Their ministry to people in need was doing the spiritual and corporal works of *Mercy*. From her youth until her death, *mercy* was Catherine's pathway to God.*

St. Thomas Aquinas defined *mercy*: “A heart suffering over the suffering of others.” To take into one's heart the misery of another, to humbly accept one's limitations in the face of suffering and need, and to know that attentive love is sometimes all one has to offer demands courage and faith.*

Today, the work of *MERCY* continues, thanks to many dedicated women and men at MercyFirst - Board, Benefactors, Administration and Employees. Our Programs and Services strive to meet the needs of our young adults, children and families bringing healing to their hearts and hope to their future.

May you and your loved ones be richly blessed by the God of *Mercy* as you share with us the Mission of *Mercy*.

M. Seton Agovino, RSM
VP of Mission Integration

*taken from *Praying with Catherine McAuley* by Helen Marie Burns and Sheila Carney