



Friendship connects community of support at Annual Dinner

George Minasian (seated left front) shares a laugh with a few members of his circle of friends - (from left to right front row) emcee Ron Reeves, Bill Rogers, and Glen Amundsen (back row from left) Jim Kearns, Allan Rehwinkel, Dale Kendrick, Matt Coyne, and Carnig Minasian. Read story on page 2.

Community of Support Celebrates 60th Anniversary at Annual Dinner

Watching the hundreds of friends, family members, staff and program participants who attended the recent Annual Dinner at the Donald E. Stephens Ballroom in Rosemont, it was hard to envision Avenues' humble beginnings 60 years ago.

At that time only a handful of students were served, as Executive Director Bob Okazaki explained: "In October of 1953, friends of the First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge taught classes to ten children with developmental disabilities. What they did to advocate for children with developmental disabilities was a wonderful thing, and today you have the fruits of the investment they made back then." Bob also acknowledged how the decades long



"George's life started when he came to Avenues. We'll always be grateful to Avenues for giving George the biggest gift of his life – his independence."

Carnig Minasian, nephew of George.

commitment from friends such as Clarence Herbst, and the multi-generational support from families like the Wohlers and Ssassers has positively impacted Avenues, as well as the longevity of staff members. Bob added: "The administrative team represents 300 years of experience to the organization, and 18 staff members have served Avenues for 20 or more years."

Jacki Kimel, who has served as Chair of the Board the Directors for the past five years reinforced that commitment. "Sixty years ago parents got together with a dream and a vision, and Avenues has exceeded that dream and that vision. We can't ever stop dreaming. We will continue to do great things for 200 very important people and the countless more that will come to Avenues in the next 60 years."

One of those 200 very important people is George Minasian. Since he came to Avenues more than thirty years ago, George has become part of a large circle of caring, committed friends. Several of them were on hand to share their stories with the audience, including George's nephew Carnig, who believes that "George's life started when he came to Avenues, and he began to blossom. Before he came to Avenues, we didn't realize his potential. We'll always be grateful to Avenues for giving George the biggest gift of his life – his independence." Also sharing stories were former 1970's Board Member Jim Meyer, and Fred Sasser, who credits his parents and Avenues' Board of Directors with making the commitment to build Avenues' first group home, where George lived for many years.

George was also employed at Barnaby's Pizza in

Des Plaines for 23 years, and good friend and owner Dale Kendrick, his daughter Wendy, and manager Rob Stephens talked about the joys of working with George. Rounding out the circle of friends were George's roommates at Amundsen House, and their good friends Glen and Laura Amundsen, Matt Coyne, and Bob and Paula Mack. Paula expressed: "Our family grew when we met all of you. You taught us so much about unconditional love and passion for so many things."

Emcee Ron Reeves described the special friendship that George has with

Avenues and so many of his friends: "There's only one factor that may keep you from being a friend of George, and that's if you haven't met him. Now you're all friends of

George, and if you're a friend of George, you're a friend of Avenues."

a. Participant Bill Huening attended with his sister Laurie Gashkoff.

b. Avenues to Independence Foundation Board member Curt Rodin celebrates the festivities with his wife Linda.

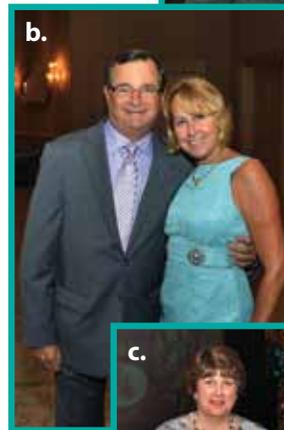
c. AT&T employees Teri Goodall and Michael Larks are pictured with the special appreciation award given to the Women of AT&T – Northern Illinois Chapter.

d. Alice Murphy poses with her sons Kevin (left) and Brian

e. Jacki Kimel (right) was honored for her leadership as Chair of the Board of Directors for the past five years. Sharing her tribute are Jacki's husband Shelly and daughter Janna.

f. Members of the 2nd and 3rd generation of Wohlers family supporting Avenues (from left) Jim, Andrew, Natalie and Nancy Malik.

More pictures from the Annual Dinner can be viewed in the media gallery at avenuestoindependence.org



Welcome New Board of Directors Members

Avenues warmly welcomes Peg O'Herron as Chair of the Board of Directors. Peg has served on the board for the past nine years, most recently as vice chair. Peg, along with her husband Bob Healy, Board of Directors Secretary, started the Irish Fest fundraiser 14 years ago. Peg is also step-mom to Avenues resident Kevin Healy.

Peg, who has masters degrees in business administration and organizational development believes, "This is a crucial time for Avenues as we move into the next phase of our capital campaign and also embark on a strategic planning process to determine how we want Avenues to evolve in the future. I'm honored to help all of us move forward, assisting individuals with developmental/intellectual challenges to live full, happy and productive lives."

Peg replaces Jacki Kimel, who served as chair for five years and will continue to serve on the Board of Directors. Jerry Feldman has been elected Vice Chairman. Jerry also has chaired the Campaign for Independence Steering Committee for the past three years.

At the recent annual dinner, Jerry made a presentation to Jacki thanking her for "chairing the Board of Directors with a steady hand and a focused agenda. Avenues is in really good shape and Jacki's fingerprints are all over that fact. It has been a great privilege to serve under Jacki's solid leadership and experience firsthand her passion for what Avenues is all about."

We also welcome Park Ridge resident Linda Buggy to the Board of Directors. Linda has served on the Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic Committee for the past five years, and is looking forward to getting more involved with Avenues.



*Peg O'Herron
Chair of the Board*

*Jerry Feldman
Vice-Chair*

*Linda Buggy
board member*

Foundations Support our Programs

Avenues is thankful for the generous grants and corporate gifts received since the Spring 2013 edition of Avenues

- **Wohlers Family Foundation**

For repaving the driveway, and the construction of a covered entryway at the work center

- **Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust**

For the Job Placement Program

- **The Service Club of Chicago**

For the new accessible bathroom at the work center

- **Boeing Employee Community Fund – Chicago**

For the computer center

- **Pert Foundation**

Unrestricted grant

- **Walter & Caroline Sueske Charitable Trust**

For the Recycling Avenue program

- **Safeco Insurance (through E.J. Coyne and Company)**

Corporate gift

Campaign for Independence Honors Generous Donors

The following donors were either omitted or listed incorrectly in the 2013 Annual Report. We sincerely apologize for these errors, caused by the conversion to new database software.

- **\$5000 - \$9999**

Joseph Marchetti and Joanne Casali Dale Kendrick

- **\$1000 - \$4999**

Des Plaines Kiwanis Foundation Patricia Grimes Susan Hopkins Jablon Family Foundation Nevin and Arlene Kryder Patricia Maroney and Joe Kogut Linda Paul Daniel Pinkert and Freddi Greenberg

John and Leigh Sasser Betty Sullivan Anne Stewart William Wolff

- **\$500 - \$999**

Anne Cadell Ed and Donna Dernulc Martin and Erna Kurschner Steven and Sandra Pernick Allen and Jeanne Wells

- **\$100-\$499**

Aaron Bernstein Henri Louis Bettenhausen Michael and Sue Bettenhausen George Bonomo Susan Bottum Douglas and Lisa Bushman Peter Cullotta William Dearhammer George and Ann Dorian Laura Dribin

Michael and Rene Carne Drogos Ward Dunlap Faith Dental Group Leo and Alora Foley Antoinette Frey Tim Gaida John and Marianne Grace Donald Grossman Timothy and Kyung-Soon Healy Nick and Gail Helmer Edward and Mary Hennessy Thomas and Kim Hohf Bruce and Halina Jancovic Geri Jarzombek Frank and Kris Johnsen Knights of Columbus Maria Council #4836 Ken and Kathy Korsch Hermann and Susan Leicht James and Dorothy Lynch Thomas and Kathryn Lynch Joanne McNamara John Mikos

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Campaign for Independence Honors Generous Donors

Avenues recently recognized several special friends of Avenues for their time, talent and generous contributions to the Campaign for Independence at two separate dedications. Executive Director Bob Okazaki stated that the contributions of Dale Kendrick, Al and Lorie Bartel, Graham Hills, and Shad and Rebecca Peterson, “will serve as a beacon for future generations to follow in their footsteps.”

Kendrick House Dedication

Surrounded by his family and many of Avenues’ friends and board members, Dale Kendrick was honored on June 27 at the residential home in Des Plaines that now bears his name. He believed it was “really important the residents have this house,” and thanked everyone who also helped make the purchase a reality. Affectionately known as “Mr. Pizza,” Dale has employed several workers at his Barnaby’s Pizza in Des Plaines, and has been a major donor for more than three decades.



Conference Room Dedications at Jane and Albert Wohlers Center

Other long time Avenues supporters Al and Lorie Bartel, Graham Hills, and Shad and Rebecca Peterson were honored at a ceremony and reception on May 30 at the Jane and Albert Wohlers Center at 515 Busse Highway.

Named in their honor are the Hills Conference Room on the first floor, the Peterson Conference Room, and the Bartel Training Room - both on the second floor. Additionally, photo murals featuring participants, volunteers, staff, and events throughout Avenues’ history have been placed in each of the dedicated rooms.

Upon viewing the murals Al Bartel remarked that “the visual images are really great – to see colleagues, mentors and role models on the walls. This is an amazing organization, and it has always been about the mission and the clients.”

The Hills Conference Room features a mural depicting several of Avenues’ volunteers and includes a title phrase: Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does. This is a phrase practiced by so many of Avenues friends, and is especially true for Dale Kendrick, Graham Hills, Al and Lorie Bartel, and Shad and Rebecca Peterson. We thank them all for making a difference.



- a. VP of Development Ann Marie Ehrlich assists Dale Kendrick as he cuts the celebratory cake.
- b. Suburban Partnership Board member John Sasser chats with Kendrick House resident David Tideman.
- c. Executive Director Bob Okazaki joins Dale Kendrick (2nd from right) and Kendrick House residents Kurt Kapustka and Craig Randall.
- d. Former Board of Directors member Graham Hills is pictured in front of the volunteer mural in the Hills Conference Room.
- e. Governing Board member Al Bartel and his wife Lori, both long-time Avenues supporters, pose in front of the mural hung in the Bartel Training Room.
- f. Shad and Rebecca Peterson stand in front of the Peterson Conference Room. Rebecca Peterson, daughter of Fred Sasser, is a third generation Sasser family member that supports Avenues.

First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge Celebrates Avenues 60th Anniversary



- a. Craig Randall (center) is surrounded by his Avenues family in the First United Methodist Church basement where he attended Avenues school nearly 60 years ago!
- b. Pastor Rich Darr extends a blessing to the congregation, including participant Bill Rogers (in white shirt). During the service, Bill spoke about living and working in Park Ridge and being part of the Avenues family.
- c. Parishioner and Avenues volunteer Lisa Shewfelt (center) is pictured with participants Mary Feight (left) and Ellen Moore, along with the gift bags they received from the church.

On Sunday June 2, the First United Methodist Church of Park Ridge welcomed guests and participants from Avenues at a special worship and celebration service. This was especially poignant to many in the audience, as Avenues' began in the church basement as the Park Ridge Aid for Retarded Children in 1953.

During the service, Avenues Board Chair Peg O'Herron thanked the congregation for the opportunities they have provided for Avenues over the years. "Sixty years ago it was you who gave space to a fledgling group of parents who wanted to start a school for their young children with developmental disabilities. What a tribute to this church and your sense of outreach that so many of you have responded to this need in our community." Peg was joined at the pulpit by resident Bill Rogers, who shared stories about being part of the Avenues family, including his employment and community life in Park Ridge.

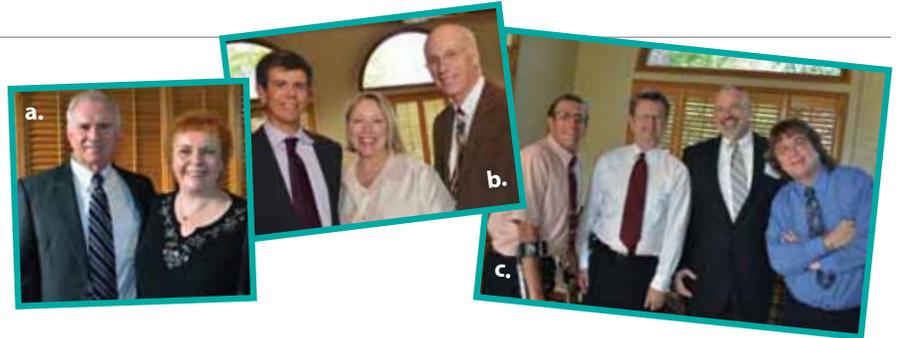
Following the service, everyone gathered for a "meet and greet" in the church parlor, followed with a cookout, luncheon and games.

We extend a special thank you to congregation members Al and Lori Bartel, and Lisa Shewfelt for all their work in coordinating this special 60th anniversary celebration!

A New Way to Donate on your Cell Phone!



A one-time donation of \$10.00 will be added to your mobile phone bill or deducted from your prepaid balance. All donations must be authorized by the account holder. All charges are billed by and payable to your mobile service provider. User must be age 18 or older or have parental permission to participate. By texting YES, the user agrees to the terms and conditions. Service is available on most carriers. Message & Data Rates May Apply. Donations are collected for the benefit of the "ENTER CHARITY NAME" by the Mobile Giving Foundation and subject to the terms found at www.hmgf.org/t. You can unsubscribe at any time by texting STOP to short code "ENTER SHORTCODE"; text HELP to "ENTER SHORTCODE" for help.



Sasser Society Invests In Avenues Future

Members of the Sasser Society met at a reception and dinner at the Park Ridge Country Club on May 22. Since its inception 13 years ago, Fred and Pam Sasser have graciously hosted the event. The Sasser Society includes those members who have included Avenues in their wills and estate plans. We are grateful to those donors whose future gifts will ensure the best quality of life for the people of Avenues in the generations to come.

- a-b. Welcome new Sasser Society members Jack and Barbara Cavalenes (left photo) and Marianne Nettlehorst. Marianne is joined by her husband Lou (on right) and the evening's host, Fred Sasser. We also welcome new member Mary Zungrone (not pictured)
- c. Board Member Matt Coyne (second from right) spoke about the benefits of hiring Avenues' workers. From left are three of the Avenues' employees at Coyne & Co. Insurance in Park Ridge – Louis Kaufman, Charlie Giera, and Brian Ray.

Read more about our 60th anniversary celebrations in Avenues blog, The Lives We Choose. <http://avenuestoindependence.blogspot.com/>

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25th Annual Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic a Swinging Success

Since its inception 25 years ago, thanks to longtime supporters Bill and Vivien Gorman, the Avenues/Gorman Golf and Tennis Classic has raised nearly \$2 million to support Avenues' programs. It's a milestone achievement for Avenues, and we thank the players, volunteers and sponsors who have made the Classic such a winning event.

This year was no exception. On July 22, 115 golfers, 12 tennis players and 200 dinner guests showed their pro spirit at the

Park Ridge Country Club. During dinner, emcee Ron Reeves and Avenues Board Vice-President Jerry Feldman informed the guests of the remodeling work needed in the handicapped accessible bathrooms at the work center, and more than \$16,000 was raised for this very important project.

Special thanks again this year to corporate sponsor MB Financial Bank, and Classic Chair Steve Wilson and his team of champions!



- a.** Avenues participants are eager to greet the golf and tennis attendees at the registration desk. From left, top row are Charlie Giera, Mary Grace Powell, Bill Rogers. Seated (from left) are Stephanie Kegermann, Jim Kearns, and George Minasian.
- b.** Avenues warmly welcomed three groups from Sasser Family Holdings, Inc. - Chicago Freight Car Leasing Co., Union Leasing, and CF Rail Services.
- c.** Stephanie Kegermann is all smiles as she gives Fred Sasser his registration bag.
- d.** George Chrisos (left) and Brian Wilk hit the course in anticipation of a great game!
- e.** Karen Finn kept her eye on the ball, and won 2nd place in Women's Tennis.
- f.** We got you covered! From left are Joel Streightiff, Tim Perry, John Bruner and Classic Chair Steve Wilson
- g.** Volunteers (from left) Eileen Swalla and Pat Spatafora helped raise more than \$900 on the "Hole in One" game.
- h.** Classic chair Steve Wilson (center) proudly gives the award for best golf game to (from left) Roark Siko, Mark Dym, John Twohy, and Dan Lesinski.

To view more golf outing pictures, please visit the media gallery at avenuestoindependence.org

Great Things Happen at Avenues!



a. Thanks to Chicago Partnership Board Chair Jolene Wise Silverman (front left), and member Lauren Lavarato (right), several participants were treated to a Cheerobix class - a fun, cardio dance class that uses pom poms.



b. To honor the memory of Tim Meyer, long-time Avenues resident, friends and family members gathered in June at Sasser Family House to celebrate his life. Thanks to staff member Neoma Spencer, live music was provided by Graffiti Unlimited, her husband's 50's band. It was a party Tim would have loved.



c. More than 15 volunteers from Keller Williams Realty in Park Ridge donated their time to plant flowers and vegetables at two of our homes and cleaned and organized our Thrift Shoppe on Touhy Avenue in Chicago. Thank you to everyone from Keller Williams!



d. Special thanks to the 11 volunteers from ComEd Exelon in Skokie who spruced up and painted the apartment doors at Sasser Family House.

e. Residents were treated to a picnic lunch, games and a gift bag compliments of the PepsiCo Enable Team. Special thanks to Chicago Partnership Board member and PepsiCo employee Karen Clarke, the other volunteers, and the popular canine friends who visited!



Matching Grant Challenge Exceeds Goal

Thank you to our community of donors who met the matching grant challenge of \$60,000. As Avenews goes to press, we have raised nearly \$80,000 - (\$20,000 more than our original goal) and our generous donor will match those donations dollar for dollar!

Avenues Hosts 3rd Annual Family Meeting

Avenues Executive Director Bob Okazaki welcomed more than 100 family members to the 3rd annual family meeting at the Northbrook Public Library on April 13. The meetings have become valuable sources of information to the families of our participants, and this year's was no exception.

Avenues partnership board member and State Representative Elaine Nekritz (D-57) spoke on the "State of the State" and why Illinois must continue to support programs like Avenues.

Park Ridge attorney Patrick Owens gave an overview on the importance of setting up special needs trusts and estate planning for participants in our program. His presentation was enhanced by Brian Murphy, brother of participant Kevin Murphy, who shared information on how his family has prepared for Kevin's future. Several family members attended a more in-depth information session about special needs trusts that Patrick conducted on August 22 at the Jane and Albert Wohlers Center.

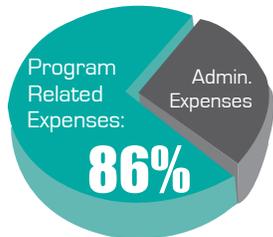
Next year's meeting has been scheduled for April 13, 2014.



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www.avenuestoindependence.org

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We are proud that more than 86% of all donations directly fund our vital programs.



Celebrate our 60th Anniversary at these upcoming events!

5TH ANNUAL SPOTLIGHT ON WINE

National Hellenic Museum
Thursday October 3
6 - 9 PM

Tea & Fashion Show

Sunday October 27, 2013
Cotillion Banquets
Palatine
2 pm

Recycling Avenue's 6th Annual Walk-n-Roll

Saturday, September 21, 2013
9:30 - 12:00 noon
Lake Arlington

Visit avenuestoindependence.org or call 847-292-0870 for more information and to register for these three events!

Calendar of Events

- 9/21 Recycling Avenue Walk-n-Roll
- 10/3 Spotlight on Wine
- 10/27 Thrift Shoppe Tea and Fashion Show

AveNews Fall 2013

Avenews is published three times a year for the friends of Avenues.

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Kara Allcox , &
Amy Reeves |

Avenues to Independence is dedicated to putting aside old ideas about what is possible.

We work in partnership with the community to support and encourage people with disabilities to lead the lives they choose. Our success will eventually be measured by how little we are needed.

Avenues to Independence is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing services for adults with intellectual, physical, and developmental disabilities. All services and employment are provided on an equal opportunity basis. Avenues is accredited CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities).



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