

MIDLAND MESSENGER



2023 FALL EDITION

MIDLAND

Midland Transforms Former Workshop into PT & Wellness Suite

For the past several months, part of The Midland School resembled an episode of *Extreme Home Makeover – Midland Edition*. Thanks to the generosity of The Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust, Affinity Foundation, The Tyler Foundation, and Union Foundation, Midland completely transformed what used to be the woodshop space into a state-of-the-art Wellness Center and Physical Therapy Suite.

The retirement of long-time woodshop teacher, Mr. Anthony Staropoli, coupled with the changing needs of Midland's student population, put this bittersweet plan into motion. "The end of the Midland Workshop and student-made crafts is certainly the end of an era here at Midland," says Midland's President & CEO, Mr. Shawn McNerney. "While we were sad to see this program close, we are excited to turn the page in this new, exciting chapter in Midland's history. It has fulfilled a real need for our students and staff and we are deeply grateful for the charitable partners who helped make this dream project a reality, especially The Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust. Their transformational gift that was the catalyst of these changes."

Midland began demolition in 2022 and completed the renovations this summer, just in time for staff training in preparation for the 2023-2024 school year. The new Wellness Center features interactive floor technology that projects images and activities on the floor from the ceiling above. Students can do movement and problem-solving activities such as "rake

leaves," sort shapes, and play a field sport like soccer, which can be cleaned up with the flick of a switch. Through the connecting doorway, the Physical Therapy Suite is now complete with accessible exercise equipment, mat tables, and a ceiling lift system to safely transfer wheelchair or walker dependent students and help them with gait, balance, standing and walking.

"The lift system has been an absolute game-changer for our department," says Physical Therapy Assistant, Ms. Gloria Argiro. "Physically moving students to the mats can be literally back-breaking. The lift not only makes it easier for us, but safer for the kids, too. Best of all, it has given Midland students the gift of independence and we love seeing their eyes light up when they master a new skill. We are so thankful to have more space and the tools we need to provide the best PT services to our students."

On September 14, Midland hosted a dedication event to reveal the spaces and

who made it all possible. Students and staff provided a tour of the new rooms, demonstrated the equipment, and shared personal stories about what it all means to them. Outside the space, a plaque now hangs proudly listing the Foundations and contributors who funded the project, and a few were able to attend and share remarks.

"Affinity is proud to provide support to enable self-sufficiency as well as to empower students at Midland to reach their educational, employment and most importantly, personal goals, says Affinity Foundation, Trustee, Ms. Michelle Jansen.

"While we provided some funding here, the true heroes are the folks that work at Midland," says Executive Director of The Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust, Mr. Mike Hanifin. "We were very impressed with the new PT Facility and Wellness Center, which were both well thought out. I know our "investment" in Midland will reap significant benefits for the staff and the kids for years to come."



From left to right (top row): Frank Settiani, Trustee; Shawn McNerney, President & CEO; Rachel Buxbaum, Affinity Foundation; Frank Giannelli, Affinity Trustee; Michelle Jansen, Affinity Trustee; Erin Witherspoon, Affinity Foundation; Sandy LoPiccolo, Trustee; Co-Trustees of Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust: Mike Hanifin and Kevin O'Donnell; John Tegeler, Trustee; Bill Bori, Former Trustee; Mike Castles, Retired Facilities Director; Karen Storm, Retired School Supervisor; and Julia, Student.

From left to right (bottom row): Jonas Singer, Physical Therapist (PT); Jonathan, Student; Amy Higgins, PT; Liliana Palma, PT; Deirdre McCarthy, PT; and Gloria Argiro, PT Assistant.



A Message from the President & CEO

Dear Midland Community,

Starting at three years old and continuing through one's life, Midland is dedicated to nurturing personal growth and empowering individuals of all ages to achieve independence. Our commitment is forefront on our website.

Midland. A lifetime of caring.

We provide assistance to a constantly changing student demographic with complex medical needs. For our adults, the process of aging also contributes to change. In the words of Margaret J. Wheatley, "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about."

We know we care and we know we must constantly adapt ourselves to the needs of the people we support. For more than six decades, we have made the Midland community's caring and connections our hallmark. Community is at the heart of all we do, across all of our programs. The common thread is our shared desire to help individuals build skills, gain independence, and find happiness in a safe, inclusive environment.

Our community recently partnered with a New Jersey-based foundation to transform the woodshop into a state-of-the-art Wellness Center and Physical Therapy Suite in order to meet the needs of current and future Midland School students.

We are fortunate to have established a strong and positive rapport with our local police and other first responders, an alliance that adds to the safety and well-being we provide. Through collaborative endeavors such as their participation in school and adult programs, we have deepened mutual understanding and responsiveness to our unique needs.

The strides we make at Midland and our profound connections within the community thrive thanks to the unwavering support of our loyal advocates, local businesses, and like-minded organizations. All these entities resonate with Midland's guiding principles, recognizing the universal human yearning for belonging, purpose, and impact.

It goes without saying that Midland's ability to provide – and continually expand – services and supports to individuals with disabilities starts with your support. Simply put, we could not fulfill our mission without you...our community.

Thank you for being a part of the tapestry that keeps Midland together and moving strong.

**Best regards,
Shawn M. McInerney**



MIDLAND CORP. ELECTS LEGA TO BOARD

The Midland Corporation is proud to announce the appointment of Mr. Peter Lega of Bethlehem, PA to the Board of Trustees.

Over the course of his 32-year career, Mr. Lega has worked in technology, strategy, and management, ranging from operating system development to managing director of equity trading at Bear Stearns and Vice President of Technology at CNet Interactive. Mr. Lega is currently the Global Lead of IT Strategy Realization Engineering at Merck, headquartered in Rahway, NJ. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from Moravian University and completed graduate coursework in Computer Science at Stevens Institute of Technology.

"Mr. Lega is a seasoned professional, active contributor to the community, and life-long advocate for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities," says Midland President & CEO, Mr. Shawn M. McInerney. "Midland is extremely fortunate to have someone with his expertise, compassion, and family perspective serving on the Board of Trustees."

"Midland has been an integral part of my brother's and family's lives over the last 40 years. His journey and life speak to the incredible dedication, strategy, and execution of Midland's vision for its community," says Mr. Lega. "His progressive growth and opportunities fulfilled speak volumes to the work of this organization. I am humbled and excited to bring my capabilities to help such a life changing organization."



Thanks to the generosity of The Summit Foundation, outdoor pool time at Midland went more smoothly this summer. The Summit Foundation funded an Ergo Shower Chair for Midland students who use wheelchairs in the pool during the Extended School Year (ESY) program. This waterproof wheelchair enables staff to safely wheel students into the pool using the ramp that enters the pool.

"We are so thankful to now have this piece of equipment to enhance the accessibility of our pool," says Midland's School Principal, Ms. Kristen Massimo. "Thank you to The Summit Foundation for making this possible for our students and staff at Midland!"

JUST FOR JOEY



Proudly celebrating its 20th year, the Just for Joey Golf Outing was held on June 23 at the Heron Glen Golf Course in Ringoes, NJ. Tom Bohlen, along with his family and team of volunteers, organize this annual fundraiser to benefit Midland in honor of his nephew, Joey. Joey attends Midland Explores and resides in a Midland group home. On behalf of all of us here at Midland, we sincerely thank the Bohlen and Capawana families for making this event a success once again!

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT MIDLAND

Raising funds by a canister is not reserved for dance teams and little leaguers. In fact, it's a technique The Knights of Columbus (KOC) Council 6930 from Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Whitehouse Station, N.J. used to once again raise an incredible \$1,650 to assist Midland's program and services. We are so thankful to the KOC for their ongoing partnership and support!



On June 30, Mr. Mike Thalacker (right) and Mr. Bill Fitzsimmon (center) presented Midland's President & CEO, Mr. Shawn McInerney (left) with the check from multiple member canister drives and discussed the latest Midland program updates.

Thanking & Recognizing Midland's Community Partners

Midland celebrated National Volunteer Month by recognizing the individuals, corporations and organizations who embrace the Midland mission and help us to better serve our students and adults. During Midland's 7th Annual Volunteer and Community Partner Breakfast held on April 21, Midland honored 7 individuals or groups deserving of special recognition.

"Each year the Volunteer and Community Partner Breakfast serves to recognize those who go above and beyond to fulfill the Midland mission," says Midland President & CEO, Shawn McInerney. Whether it's employing our graduates, guiding our students during their educational journey, or volunteering time and resources to strengthen our programs, each of our award recipients play an important role in the positive outcomes at Midland."

Congratulations to:

Employment Partner of the Year

Fiddler's Elbow Country Club

For providing training, employment, advancement, and community inclusion to Midland students and graduates.

Public Sector Partner of the Year

Ms. Maria Trovato

Bridgewater-Raritan School District

For embodying innovation, collaboration, and success in partnership with the Midland community, and supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Corporate Partner of the Year

Premier Development

For advancing Midland's mission through a valued, long-lasting partnership and exemplary philanthropy.

Community Volunteer of the Year

Holiday Express

For making a significant, positive impact to the Midland community through collaboration, volunteerism and partnership.

Heart of Midland - Lauren Levandowski

Heart of Midland - Michael Weber

Heart of Midland - Glenn H. Wilson

For demonstrating the principles of Midland – positive outlook, integrity, collaboration and support to peers.



Event attendees and award recipients left to right: Ronda Carter-Barnett, Eileen Higgins - Holiday Express (Community Volunteer of the Year), Michael Weber (Heart of Midland), Maria Trovato - Bridgewater-Raritan School District (Public Sector Partner of the Year), Tim McLoone - Holiday Express (Community Volunteer of the Year), Ande Tendler - Premier Development (Corporate Partner of the Year), Ryan Rella, Lynn Ritter-Cargill, Bill Liberatore, Irene Francis, Amy Zygmund, Tony Oxford, Eric Ware, Patricia, "Trish" Olsen - Fiddler's Elbow, Harry (Chef) Novljakovic - Fiddler's Elbow, Jason Keeth, Glenn Wilson (Heart of Midland), Edward Ryder - Fiddler's Elbow, Shawn McInerney, and Lauren Levindowski (Heart of Midland).

Save The Date



THE MIDLAND SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, October 12th
10am to 11:30am

To register, call Maureen at (908) 800-9961
or email finn@midlandnj.org

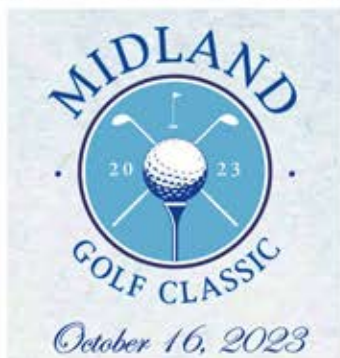
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Join Us for Midland's Fall Fundraisers

The Midland Golf Classic Monday, October 16, 2023

The Midland Foundation will host The 2023 Midland Golf Classic at Hamilton Farm Golf Club in Gladstone, NJ. Join us for a day of world-class golf for a great cause!

Visit <https://www.midlandnj.org/events/midland-golf-classic/> to register online or to learn more about the event, tickets, and sponsorship opportunities.



Midland Holiday Vendor/ Craft Fair Saturday, November 4, 2023

Get a head start on holiday shopping from a wonderful variety of crafters and vendors!

Time: 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Location: The Midland School
94 Readington Rd.

North Branch, NJ 08876

Admission is FREE!

To reserve your spot as a vendor for a \$50 fee, email:

rabouin@midlandnj.org

Learn more here:

<https://www.midlandnj.org/events/midland-holiday-vendor-craft-sale/>



Magic at the Museum with Midland & PNC Sunday, November 19, 2023 at The Morris Museum

NEW THIS YEAR – The event will feature the outstanding magic and mindreading entertainment of Henry Carlyle!

For further information, including tickets, advertising and sponsorship opportunities, visit <https://www.midlandnj.org/events/midland-goes-to-the-museum-with-midland-pnc/>



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Midland Thanks the following contributors for their generosity.

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SPECIAL THANKS

The Midland School Alumni Association
The Midland School Student Council
The Midland School Sunshine Committee

On Sept. 9, The Keating Family hosted the 22nd Annual Keating Family Croquet Tournament to benefit Midland in memory of their son/brother and former Midland student, Eugene Keating. Not even a few rain storms could stop attendees from supporting Midland and enjoying the day. From all of us at Midland, we thank the Keatings and their amazing group of family and friends for making a difference yet again!



Special thanks to The Blue Ladies for bringing back The Midland Crop scrapbooking event after the pandemic hiatus. It was a huge success and incredible day for the Midland community!



Committee pictured from left to right:
Giana, Francine, Nancy, Kathy & Robin.