

MIDLAND MESSENGER



2024 SUMMER EDITION

MIDLAND

MIDLAND DIVES INTO AQUA THERAPY PROGRAM

A new Aqua Therapy Program is causing a big splash at Midland. Launched in July during the Extended School Year (ESY) Program, Aqua Therapy combines the benefits of Physical Therapy and the gravity reduction of water to help students exercise and grow stronger both physically and mentally. Midland students now benefit from weekly sessions in the Midland pool to improve their coordination, flexibility, balance, and overall body awareness.

Spearheaded by Midland Physical Therapist, Jonas Singer, PT, DPT, the Midland team began a year-long process to implement Aqua Therapy, including certifying three additional staff members, Liliana Palma, PT, DPT; Cathy Munro, MS, OTR; and Suzanne DeGerolamo, COTA. All the equipment, including swimwear, exercise gear, and a storage shed, was generously underwritten by the Midland Blue Ladies—the committee that ran the “Crop for the Kids” scrapbooking fundraiser for 15 years.

“I brought aquatic therapy to Midland because I have worked in aquatics for many

years and could see the vast benefits aquatic therapy could bring to our students,” says Dr. Singer. “It has been so incredible to see how motivated our students are in the water and to see how they move better, with more confidence and control. This translates to their movement on land every week and it is very encouraging.”

“The impact from introducing Aqua Therapy has been unreal,” adds Midland’s Supervisor of Related Services, Mrs. Cindy Migliore. “These sessions not only improve our students’ physical abilities but boost their confidence and overall well-being. Students with limited mobility, and even fear of the water, gain strength and overcome challenges thanks to this program.”

Midland student, Spencer, was one of those students. At first, Spencer, who is visually impaired, admits he was fearful of the water. After a relatively short time in the program, he does not hesitate to get in the water alongside Dr. Singer for physical therapy services. Spencer describes Aqua Therapy as “so much fun” that he wishes he had his own

pool at home. Spencer is relaxed, motivated, and working toward his goals with a huge smile on his face during each lesson.

The same is true for Midland students Sadhika and Teddy, who both utilize wheelchairs and walkers on land yet are freer – and happier – in the water thanks to water’s natural buoyancy and the reduced stress on their bodies.

Using the benefit of weights, both Sadhika and Teddy can walk without the confines of their wheelchairs in the water. Sadhika admits weights are not her favorite part of therapy, but she “loves going in the pool” so much that it more than makes up for it. As for Teddy, he is a big fan of the weights and the pool and says the best part is “walking in the pool.”

“Aqua Therapy has been an amazing addition to an already robust program,” says Midland’s new School Principal, Mrs. Jeanette Owens. “Our students really seem to enjoy it and we hope to continue and grow this program for many years to come!”



Midland Student, Spencer (right) enjoys aqua therapy with Dr. Jonas Singer (left).



Midland Student, Teddy, receiving aqua therapy from Suzanne DeGerolamo, COTA (left) and Liliana Palma, PT, DPT (right).



Midland Student, Sadhika (right) is all smiles during aqua therapy with Liliana Palma, PT, DPT (top left) and Suzanne DeGerolamo, COTA (bottom left).



A Message from the President & CEO

I hope this message finds both you and your family in good health.

I am taking this opportunity to write about the critical role of advocacy for and within our community. You are reading this because in some way, you are connected to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Which means you are acutely aware that more, much more, needs to be accomplished in the fight for inclusion. Advocacy is a prime conduit for people to be heard. As such, we need to advocate in the most powerful ways to address the critical needs of individuals with I/DD and their families.

The current New Jersey State budget, adopted on July 1, 2024, provides funding for an additional 400 individuals who came off the waiting list. This represents approximately one-tenth (1/10) of the estimated 4000 individuals on the waiting list in our State. There is a shortage of quality employment and day programs services for adults, among a list of other supports that individuals and families need. Each person, each family, has different needs. We can identify the inadequacy of resources in place. We know the problem. Now we have to work to solve the problem.

Advocacy has a direct impact on how laws are crafted to better promote and ensure the rights of persons with I/DD. It also plays a fundamental role in protecting the dignity of choice and safeguarding each person's human rights. Our advocacy efforts are crucial in promoting the availability of services and supports.

Advocacy also serves an educational purpose. Effective advocacy is essential for informing elected officials at the local, county, state, and federal levels of government. It fosters empathy and understanding, which, in turn, has a positive impact on policymaking, legislation, and budgeting decisions.

Advocacy fosters empathy, which is integral to uniting various groups that serve individuals with I/DD around common issues, leveraging strength in numbers. It helps us all become better informed and direct our energies and efforts in meaningful ways.

Advocacy goes hand-in-glove towards working for the outcomes we all seek. We have an imperative to see things through. Advocacy is the vehicle for achieving; whether it be meaningful education and related services for a child, quality health care, safe communities, adequate transportation, economic stability, or culturally sensitive services and supports. It all matters.

We are connected by our community, connected by our passion for advancing independence for children and adults. As part of our advocacy, we need to consider how to bring others in. Advocacy leads to extending our community so that others are connected to us. Not outside looking in.

Many of you will recognize the established motto of the disability movement: Nothing about Us, without Us. Advocacy is baked into that motto. I like to think that the 'us' can be all of us: teachers, families, businesses, neighbors, professionals, and other concerned stakeholders.

Finally, your advocacy is crucial to Midland's mission. Within Midland, advocacy is central to our core principle of promoting dignity and choice. With your help and support, Midland remains strong and continues to be a pivotal provider of services. Together, as a community, we make a difference. Your partnership means more than you might realize. Thank you for all of your ongoing

**Best regards,
Shawn M. McInerney**

Appointments & Promotions

Midland Welcomes New School Principal



The Midland Corporation Board of Trustees is proud to announce the appointment of Mrs. Jeanette Owens as the new Midland School Principal, effective July 1, 2024. Mrs. Owens took over for Mrs. Kristen Massimo, who after an 8-year tenure at Midland, returned to the public sector as the Director of Special Services for the Bound Brook School District.

Mrs. Owens comes to Midland with 20 years of experience in education, having previously served as the Principal of the Lord Stirling School, and most recently, the Supervisor of Education at the Lakeview School in Edison, NJ. Mrs. Owens holds BA and MA degrees from Rutgers University. She also attended the University of Phoenix and completed her Principal Certification through NJ EXCEL. Mrs. Owens resides in Hillsborough with her husband and two sons where she is a coach for the Junior Raiders Track Team.

"Mrs. Owens exhibits the traits we sought in our next education leader," says Midland's President and CEO, Mr. Shawn McInerney. "Her experience, coupled with leadership, communication, broad-based knowledge, and energy, will be highly beneficial to Midland."

Midland Promotes Swiatek to COO



Midland is proud to announce Mrs. Natalie Swiatek has been promoted to Chief Operations Officer (COO). Most recently, her role was Midland's Director of Strategic Planning where she facilitated additional behavioral supports and provided oversight to the Midland Explores adult day habilitation program she developed.

"Since joining Midland in 2017, Mrs. Swiatek has been instrumental in guiding Midland through Fee for Service, a requirement for all DDD/Medicaid approved provider agencies, and securing Work Center accreditation through CARF, The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities," says Midland's President & CEO, Shawn McInerney. "Her leadership and commitment to Midland and our mission is evident in every aspect of the work she does."

Mrs. Swiatek's extensive work history spans both the public and private sector including several positions with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Department of Human Services. Her prior work has included support of individuals who were experiencing homelessness, supporting individuals with mental health issues, and co-founded a for-profit partial care program. Mrs. Swiatek has over 25 years' experience in advocacy and providing services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She holds a BS from Drew University and an MSW from Rutgers University.



On June 7th, 14 Midland students proudly took the stage and graduated from The Midland School. Graduates gave speeches about their accomplishments, future plans and what they love most about Midland. After the ceremony, grads gathered to celebrate the milestone with friends and family. (From left to right): Graduates, Ryan, Jason and Alina show off their Certificates of Completion.



The 9th Annual Move for Midland Sponsored by PVH Corp. "Out of this World" space themed event was held on June 1st and raised over \$80K for Midland's programs and services! More than 350 people joined us for a community day full of dancing, demonstrations, games, food, face painting, sand art and best of all, a Splash the CEO contest that resulted in President McInerney covered in green alien water! Special thanks to all the incredible volunteers, sponsors, participants and donors who made it all possible. Save the date for the 10th Annual Move for Midland: May 31, 2025.



On July 11, The Merck Fire Department, led by Mr. Frank Wagner, came to The Patricia Murphy Work Center and Explores for a presentation on fire safety and rescues. Participants in both programs got to ask questions, interact with the crew, and see the equipment up close. Special thanks to Merck for making this experience possible for the adults Midland serves!

On April 26, Midland hosted its 8th Annual Volunteer and Community Partner Breakfast to thank and recognize the individuals, corporations, and organizations who support and embrace the Midland mission.

Congratulations to:

Community Volunteers of the Year: Rotary Club of Branchburg & The Midland Blue Ladies

Corporate Partner of the Year: AbbVie Ability Group

Employment Partner of the Year: Wawa

Public Sector Representative of the Year: Lizet Zuniga - North Plainfield School District

Public Sector Representative of the Year: Branchburg Township Police Department

Heart of Midland Awards:

Gail Johnson, Lindsay Kreinberg & Meredith Azenheimer



Just for Joey Event



Upper left: Joey C. shows off "Just for Joey" swag at the outing in his honor. Upper right, from left to right: Event Organizer and Joey's Uncle, Tom Bohlen; Midland Explores Participant, Joey C.; and Midland Parent/Volunteer and Joey's Mother, Tish Capawana. Bottom photo: The 2024 "Just for Joey" Event Volunteers.

On June 21, the 21st Annual "Just for Joey" Golf Outing was held at Heron Glen Golf Course to benefit Midland Adult Services. This outing, spearheaded by Tom Bohlen, happens each year in support of Tom's nephew, Joey C., who currently participates in the Midland Explores adult day habilitation program. On behalf of the entire Midland organization, we want to thank the Bohlen and Capawana families, along with their incredible team of friends and volunteers, for putting together another incredible community day to benefit Midland's program!



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FALL OPEN HOUSE
THE MIDLAND SCHOOL

Join Us October 10th
10am to 11:30am

To register, call Maureen at (908) 800-9961

2024 SUMMER EDITION

Join Us for Midland's Fall Fundraisers

The Midland Golf Classic

Monday, September 30, 2024

The Midland Foundation will host
The 2024 Midland Golf Classic at
Hamilton Farm Golf Club
in Gladstone, NJ.

Join us for a day of world-class
golf for a great cause!

For more information, including
registration and sponsorships, visit
[https://www.midlandnj.org/events/
midland-golf-classic/](https://www.midlandnj.org/events/midland-golf-classic/)



Midland Holiday Vendor/Craft Fair

Saturday, November 2, 2024

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!

For a \$50 fee, reserve your spot

For additional information, email Brianne
Rabouin, Assistant Development Director,
at Rabouin@midlandnj.org; call 908-800-
9942; or visit [https://www.midlandnj.org/
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Magic at the Museum with Midland & PNC

Sunday, November 24, 2024
at
The Morris Museum

This year the event will feature the
outstanding comedian John Pizzi!

For additional information, including
tickets and sponsorships, email De-
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Save the Dates for the 2025 Basket Bash – February 2 & Move for Midland – May 31

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