

Fashion, Shopping and Fun at "Ladies Night Out"



The 3rd annual "Ladies Night Out" at the beautiful Harmony Residence was once again a fun and exciting night for the over 100 students, parents, staff, and friends of Harmony who attended. Francine's of Huntington provided the wonderful assortment of evening and casual wear modeled by the students and staff of Harmony. Ellen Benson, Executive Director, provided the commentary as our Harmony models sashayed down the aisle to the applause and cheers of the audience. Thank you to the Harmony staff models, Kim Caulfield, Michelle DiLorenzo, Sharon Giaconia, and Dorothy Marecki and to the Harmony student models, who all looked fabulous.

The shopping boutique was, as always, a huge hit as the ladies shopped 'til they dropped. Thank you to our vendors, Debbie Ceglio of PartyLite Gifts, Fine Jewelry by Cathy, Patricia Brintz of Painted Glass, Aerosoles, Debbie Aitala of Pampered Chef and Maria and Donna of Designer Look Likes Sunglasses, who generously donated a portion of their proceeds back to Harmony.

A new addition to the evening was the Chinese Auction. A very special thanks to Erica and Laurie Metaxas who worked so hard to put the beautiful baskets together as well as donate tickets to a New York Mets game. The Chinese Auction proved popular as well as very profitable.

Thank you to the Harmony fashion show committee, Gail Karp, Susanne Max and Erica and Laurie Metaxas who worked with the Harmony staff to make this a memorable evening. Kathy Nastri and her Residential staff once again outdid themselves transforming the residence into a special place.

The evening raised over \$4500 and "Ladies Night Out" was once again a magical night. *

SAVE THE DATE

"Autumn Afternoon" at the Harmony Residence.

Sunday, October 24, 2010. Invitations & Sponsorship information to follow.

A Message from Ellen Benson



Dear Parents, Students and Friends,

It seems every time I watch the news there is another case of cyber bullying which has destroyed another young person's life. Or something I heard this morning, even more difficult to understand, mothers bullying each other on-line, attacking each other's children and parenting styles. As we all know it is very easy to be vicious anonymously. Statistics prove most kids have some experience with either being bullied or being the bully. This has got to stop. I am sure we all remember the childhood mantra, "sticks and stones will break my bones, but names can never harm me." This is simply not true. We all know words do hurt and sometimes

leave indelible scars. Somehow, as parents and adults we must become actively involved in teaching our children tolerance of others and good "Cyber Hygiene." Our children must be taught that the internet is not the place to work out their anger and frustration against others. We must teach our children appropriate conflict resolution skills that will empower them in a healthy way. The staff at Harmony Heights is committed to teaching these skills to our students and we make every effort to maintain a "bully free" environment. However, as our students' lives and problems become more complex, sometimes this is difficult, but it is imperative that as educators we continue to lead the fight to eradicate bullying in all forms. Please join us in this effort.

Sincerely,
Ellen Benson

SAVE THE DATES



Graduation

Thursday

June 24, 2010

10:00am

at the Residence



Reunion

Saturday

June 26, 2010

3:00pm

at the Residence

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Lori Neazer, *Clinical Director*

Harmony Heights

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Ellen Benson and Lori Neazer Address Parent Group

Ellen Benson, the Executive Director and Lori Neazer, Clinical Director of Harmony Heights spoke on May 5, 2010 to the West Islip School District Special Education Parents and Teachers Association. (SEPTA) Their topic was "Surviving Adolescence: How Painful Does it Have to Be."

Ellen and Lori addressed the fact that adolescents today face unprecedented challenges. These include media and technology, drugs, school, bullying, eating issues and sexuality. They spoke to the parents about how young people can make healthy choices and develop a positive sense of self but need guidance from their parents. They also addressed the issue of how parents can determine what types of behavior to expect during the turbulent adolescent years and what the warning signs are indicating a child may need to seek professional help.

Ellen and Lori also spoke extensively on the topic of cyber bullying which has been in the news recently and is becoming a very serious concern for all adolescents and their parents. After the presentation, parents had the opportunity to ask Ellen and Lori questions on these topics.

Earlier this spring, Lori and Ellen spoke on this same topic to the East Islip SEPTA. They are available to speak on this topic to SEPTAs, PTAs and other groups that work with adolescents.

For information or to schedule a presentation, please e-mail Ellen Benson at ellen.benson@harmonyheights.org or call her at 516-922-4060.*

Harmony Heights Presents ANASTASIA



Once again the Harmony students were outstanding as they performed the play *Anastasia* on Friday, April 30 at the school. The play was directed by Donna Fiore Houman, the Director of the Harmony Heights Drama Program for the past four years. This is the fifth play Donna has directed for Harmony. She was assisted by Meghan Principe, who did the choreography for the show, and Susan Fiorillo as Assistant Director, as well as Barbara Sazani who was the costume designer. *Anastasia* tells the story of the Russian princess who escapes her executioners and ends up in a Russian orphanage, eventually

finding happiness and her way back to her Dowager Empress Grandmother. There were many fine performances as the students sang and danced beautifully. The scenery helped to bring to life early 1900's Europe. The sound and lighting system, recently purchased with money raised at the Harmony Heights gala, was a wonderful addition to the production and the theatre program. Harmony has always had a well earned reputation for producing outstanding theatre and this proved true in their production of *Anastasia*.*

Harmony Reunion



The Harmony reunion on Saturday, June 26th at 3PM at the Harmony Residence will be a day of memories and catching up with old friends and enjoying light refreshments. All former students and their guests are invited to attend this get together. There will be no charge for the event which is being sponsored proudly by the Harmony Heights Board of Directors. We are looking forward to catching up with our former students but ask that you please RSVP to Beverly Wayne at bwayne112@gmail.com.*

Congratulations Seniors!

Congratulations to our Seniors as they leave Harmony to pursue college, work, and vocational programs.

They were accepted or will be attending the following colleges:

Nassau Community College
Suffolk Community College
SUNY-Farmingdale
SUNY IT, Utica
Hofstra University
Siena College

"Suave" Joins the Harmony Horse Program

The horse program at Harmony is a hidden gem. Tucked away on the grounds of the Residence, Lori Ballinger oversees the program, which includes four horses, Sam, Buddy, Boo Boo and the recent addition, Suave. This Spanish warm blooded horse was generously donated by Kendall Graebner and has been enthusiastically welcomed by the girls.

The horse program is designed to give the students the opportunity to interact with horses, an activity which has proven to boost their self-esteem and confidence. During the year the girls come down to the stables twice a day, after school and after dinner. In the summer Lori runs a class at the stables.

The girls spend their time at the stables; riding the horses, grooming them and cleaning the barn and stalls. Although this is an optional activity, the girls are encouraged to come to the stables and give riding a try. Many times the girls are initially reluctant to try. However, when encouraged by Lori, a Harmony staff member for 14 years, they find that riding gives them a great sense of accomplishment. Some girls prefer grooming and keeping the barn clean and take great satisfaction in doing those tasks well.

All the horses at Harmony have been donated and were checked out to make sure they were gentle and amenable to working with inexperienced and sometime reluctant riders. Harmony is very appreciative of Kendall Graebner's donation of Suave which will provide the girls many enjoyable hours of riding in Harmony's outstanding horse program. *



Spotlight on Staff

Lori Neazer, LCSW, Clinical and Admissions Director

Lori Neazer, LCSW, has shined as a beacon of hope for so many girls in need over the 26 years she has been at Harmony. Lori first came to Harmony after completing her 5 year social work graduate program at Adelphi University. She initially was a social worker at the Residence on the evening shift, then moved to the school as a social worker and supervisor, and finally to her current position as Clinical Director and Admissions Director.

Lori's job demands her to multi-task as she does intake and admissions on all potential students, supervises the therapists, represents Harmony at school district Committee on Special Ed meetings, and works closely with each student's home district. She also works extensively with the Harmony psychiatrist and does crisis intervention when needed. She keeps her therapeutic skills sharp as she also has a caseload of students she works with directly. In addition, along with Ellen Benson, she runs the very important parent support group. All of these tasks are demanding and Lori does them with skill and compassion.

Lori feels that working at Harmony has been an honor and a privilege and helping the students heal has been an incredibly rewarding experience for her.

Along with her work at Harmony, Lori has a private therapeutic practice in Huntington and does volunteer work. Lori exemplifies the professionalism, compassion and dedication that makes Harmony the very special place it is. "Hope Happens" at Harmony and it is because of staff members like Lori Neazer. *



Check out our
New Web Site at:
www.harmonyheights.org