20 Years of “Play Dates”

UCP’s Lekotek program is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The Lekotek of Northeastern Pennsylvania was the first one established in the commonwealth. The program officially began serving families in the summer of 1986 at its original location in the IBEW Building on Wyoming Avenue in Scranton.

The program was initially funded by a grant from Project Home-Town America, which was an effort of American Express. The initial grant was facilitated by the United Way of Lackawanna County. Because of the terms of the grant, the Lekotek was originally a collaborative effort between UCP and the ARC, but since ARC primarily served adults, UCP assumed responsibility for the program within a year.

The Lekotek concept was developed in Sweden in the 1960’s and brought to the United States in 1980 by Sally Curtin DeVincentis, a Scranton native who opened the first Lekotek in Evanston, Illinois, where the organization’s national headquarters is still located.

Susan Van Fleet, UCP’s first Lekotek Coordinator, trained and then worked at the national center for three years, returning to the Scranton area in the fall of 1985. Sally McCullon, who began at UCP as Assistant Coordinator of the program and is now the agency’s Lekotek Leader, also trained at the national center.

Lekotek is an invented Swedish word combining the terms for play (lek) and library (tek). The Lekotek does function somewhat as a library, allowing families to borrow toys on a monthly basis. The program, however, encompasses much more. Play is a natural way in which children learn and families interact. During each monthly session, the Lekotek Leader models play activities based on the child’s developmental needs, abilities and interests. The sessions involve parents and siblings to help the family grow closer and have fun together through play. After each session, the family can select a few toys to take home to continue the activity. The National Lekotek Center began the Compuplay program in 1984 and UCP began offering the service in 1996. Compuplay uses computer activities and games in much the same way Lekotek uses toys and play. The Lekotek Leader develops activities based on the child’s age and abilities – younger children are taught how to use the computer and any adaptive equipment they may need through games while older children and teens can engage in educational activities. Compuplay sessions also encourage the participation of other family members while Compuplay Camps include non-disabled children and teens as peer volunteers.

Funding for Lekotek is provided by Lackawanna/Susquehanna Mental Health-Mental Retardation Program, United Way of Lackawanna County and private donations.
An Overview of Assistive Technology Services
Available thru UCP

UCP of Northeastern Pennsylvania serves as an Assistive Technology Resource Center for PIAT, Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology.
Through PIAT, the ATRC at UCP of NEPA provides:

**ACCESS**
Device demonstrations – “hands on” opportunities for people with disabilities and their caregivers to explore specific devices to determine what might best suit their needs.

Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library - a free, statewide program thru which people can borrow devices to find what meets their needs.

**ACQUISITION**
Funding Assistance – individualized assistance to help people with disabilities and their families to navigate the maze of funding possibilities including health insurances, public sources and non-governmental programs like the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, which provides low and no-interest loans for the purchase of devices.

Equipment Recycling & Reuse – REEP, the Recycled and Exchanged Equipment Partnership is a statewide listing of items that people want to sell or donate.

**AND MORE**
Public Awareness – information and referral for consumers about their choices regarding devices and service providers as well as events to help educate the public about the benefits of assistive technology.

Technical Assistance & Training – for service providers to help them better serve persons who need and use assistive technology. In addition to the services funded by PIAT, UCP’s Assistive Technology Practitioner also provides evaluations for persons who need devices and individualized training to help those who use assistive technology and their caregivers to get the most out of their devices. For information and assistance on any of the above, contact Linda Mesavage at UCP.

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Annual Meeting & Staff Appreciation Dinner

UCP’s 53rd Annual Meeting was held on Tuesday, June 27th at The Melting Pot in Scranton. Officers elected for the 2006-2007 term are: Robert Schwartz, President; John Darcy, Vice-President; David Walline, Past President; Edward Karpovich, Treasurer; and Marilyn Vitali, Secretary. Robert Jones was named a Lifetime member of the Board while Linda Gable was elected to her first term.

The Staff Appreciation Dinner was held in concert with the annual meeting. Staff members honored for their years of service were: Cheryl Astolfi, Children’s Services Coordinator for 20 years; Ray Labutis, Tom Lord and Mike McAndrew, for 10 years; and Marion Goldstein-Beckhorn, Janet Burton, Theresa Butler, Jennifer Callejas, Executive Director Sarah Drob, Ken Keib, Anthony Rosario and Dolores Shermanski, all for five years.
**Special Events**

**Golf Tournament Benefits UCP**

Stone Hedge Country Club in Tunkhannock provided the setting – and Mother Nature provided a rarity for this summer, a rain-free day – for a Golf Tournament benefiting UCP on Friday, August 25th. Ninety six golfers took part in the captain & crew format tournament, enjoying the competition, a hot dog and beverage at the turn and topping off the day with a steak dinner.

UCP extends our thanks to all who participated as well as the sponsors and other donors listed below; special thanks to Moran’s Pub and owner Tammy Moran for their tremendous support.

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**Gold Member Sponsors**
- Durabilt Fence Company
- Mattress Man Sleep Centers
- Art McHale Heating & A.C.
- Service Master by Griffing
- Thomas J. Hughes Funeral Homes
- Price Chopper Super Markets

**Silver Member Sponsor**
- Scranton Dodge

**Bronze Member Sponsors**
- Kelly Smertz Tires
- Penn Security Bank
- Interim Home Healthcare
- G.R. Noto Electrical
- Lee Nurses Registry
- The McHugh Family
- Care Givers of America
- Moran’s Pub

**Gold Member Sponsors**
- Linda McHugh
- Glenn & Diane Dougherty
- The Marinchack Family
- Ed Thomas Roofing
- Patricia Cobb & Paul Granahan
- The Baum Family
- Tom & Bridget Wheeler
- Rotech Health Care
- J & J Amusements
- Paul’s Auto Repair
- Boots & Hanks Towing
- Buff-Away Cleaning
- Gertrude Hawk Chocolates
- Dibileo Insurance
- Hart Masonry
- Sheeley’s Drug Store
- Kelleher Tire
- Proficient Painting

**Prize Donors**
- Scarlet Oak Nurseries
- Brewers Outlet
- Next Step Systems
- Ron Zymblosky
- Banko North
- Faccia Luna Restaurant
- Verrastros Beer Distributor
- Villa Maria Restaurant
- Ragnacci’s Restaurant
- Cheryl’s Studio #II
- Tastykake
- The Cusick Family
- Baglewich
- Stone Hedge
- Kraft Foods
- Jim Coyne
- Ernie DeStefano
- Ross Jewelers

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**UCP’s Gift Wrap**

**UCP’s Gift Wrap**

will be at the Viewmont Mall beginning Friday, November 24th and continuing thru Christmas Eve.

If you would like to volunteer, alone or with your club or organization, a group of friends or a few family members, call us at 347-3357 or drop us an email at ucpnepa@epix.net.

If you don’t like to wrap, don’t forget to stop by our booth and have our volunteers take care of this holiday chore for you!!

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*Winners of UCP’s recent Golf Tournament enjoy a beverage from their commemorative mugs.*
No Animals Were Harmed……..

...at UCP’s annual Evening of Treasure - although many people had sore feet by the end of the evening! The event, featuring a canine theme in honor of the Year of the Dog on the Chinese calendar, was held on Sunday, June 4th at Boscov’s in the Mall at Steamtown.

After enjoying food and beverages donated by a variety of local restaurants and stores, guests began doggedly trying to solve their clues which hinted at one of eight famous pooches. The evening was topped off by desserts and coffee and of course, the grand prizes drawing.

UCP is grateful to Boscov’s for again hosting the event, all those who attended and the following businesses and individuals who made contributions.

PRIZES
Bill & Doris Lindsley
Boscov’s
Altier Jewelers
Caesars Pocono Resort
Courtyard by Marriott
Split Rock Resort
Woodloch Pines
Medieval Times
Comfort Suites
Ciccotti’s Jewel Case
HarperCollins Publishers
Nada & Co.
Elk Mountain
AAA of N.E. Pennsylvania
American Dojo Karate
Lakeland Golf Club
Dorney Park
Alora Dining Room
Candy Bouquet
Cooper’s Seafood House
Dick’s Sporting Goods
Gertrude Hawk Chocolates
La Cucina
Lackawanna Coal Mine Tour
Perkins Family Restaurants
Shell Oil Co.
South Side Floral Shop
Taylor Flower Shop
W-B/Scr. Penguins
Cinemark
Krispy Kreme Doughnut Co.
Nolan & Rogers
The Red Barons
Texas Roadhouse
Windsor Inn
John Balko
Nancy Frick
Rose Geueke
Louise Krafjack
Barbara Wagner

Food, Beverages, Etc.
Amici
Arcaro’s Pizza
Basillico’s
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John’s Italian Restaurant
Mamma Mia’s Pizza Inc.
The Melting Pot
Entenmann’s Bakery Inc.
Minooka Pastry Shop
A&A Beverage Warehouse
L.T. verrastro
Giant Markets
Price Chopper
Jim & Sarah Drob
Tim & Linda McHugh
John & Connie Sanko
Schultzville Deli
Dupli Craft Printing
PA Paper & Supply
### Donor Page

**Contributions received April 1 - September 30, 2006**

#### Memorials

- **In Memory of Ann M. Colleran**  
  Dr. Scott Naftulin  
  Janice M. Pettinato

- **In Memory of Paul Ryder**  
  The Ronald Krafjack Family

- **In Memory of Patricia Webb**  
  Frank, Francis, Nancy & Regina Savage

- **In Memory of Betty Luciani**  
  Frank, Francis, Nancy & Regina Savage

- **In Memory of Anne Davis**  
  Nancy Savage

- **In Memory of Gloria L. Sottile**  
  The Ronald Krafjack Family

#### Special Memorial Funds

- A Donation was made to the Susan D. Keller Memorial Fund  
  **In Memory of Eleanor D. Fitch**

- In Honor of the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Marilyn & Harvey Applegate by Frieda K. Robertson

- Donations to the Assistive Technology Resource Center  
  **In Memory of Phebe Jane Mesavage from:**  
  Cheryl Astolfi, Kathy Fountain  
  Sally McCullon, Barbara Gilsdorf Lynn  
  Ruth Stryker, Kathy Vanvestraut  
  Friends of the Mesavage Family

#### Honoraria

- In Honor of the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Ronald & Louise Krafjack  
  Rita L. Peak

- In Honor of Cheryl Astolfi’s 20 Years of Service to UCP  
  Marian Goldstein-Beckhorn

- In Honor of the 75th Birthday of Pauline Heckman  
  Bill & Doris Lindsley

#### General & Membership Donations

**Donor Levels**

- $2,500 – Benefactor  
- $1,000 - 2,499 – Partner  
- $500.00 - $999.00 – Associate  
- $250.00 - $499.00 – Friend  
- $100.00 - $249.00 – Patron  
- $50.00 - $99.00 – Donor  
- Up to $49.00 – Supporter

#### Donors

- Mrs. Margaret Gumble

#### Supporters

- Mr. Robert Walsh  
- Mr. Thomas T. Harding  
- Bridget Carter-Conlogue  
- Mary & Robert Jablonowski  
- Kenneth & Leah Rudolph  
- Mary & Lawrence Yeager

#### Special thanks to

- Trinity Lutheran Church for their generous contribution sponsoring the Lekotek program’s summer outing at Knoebels Amusement Park.

#### How to Contact UCP

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425 Wyoming Avenue  
Scranton, PA 18503-1227

Phone: (570) 347-3357  
TTY: (570) 347-3117  
Toll free: (877) UCP-TECH  
Fax: (570) 341-5308  
E-mail: ucpnepa@epix.net  
Web: www.ucpnepa.com
A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

As the new president of the Board of Directors for UCP of Northeastern Pennsylvania I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I joined the board in 2005 and served as vice president last year. I am proud to be a part of UCP and am blessed to be surrounded by a board whose sole motivation is the betterment of UCP and the people it serves.

Personally, I am married to Alycia and have 2 wonderful stepchildren (Daniel and Amanda Kucz). I am involved with several charitable organizations including the Rotary Club of Newfoundland, Challenger Little League of Lackawanna County, and I also serve on the board of the United Way of Lackawanna County.

Professionally I am a financial advisor at Smith Barney with offices in Honesdale and New York City.

As a board our focus is to improve the efficiency of UCP while trying to maximize the service we provide for our clients. One of my personal goals is to be receptive and responsive to the needs of both our consumers and the staff that serves them. In that regard, I welcome your comments and input.

I look forward to helping UCP be the best that it can be and thank you all for the support I know I will receive.

Robert M. Schwartz