



# *The Telescope*

Monthly News Letter for the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club

January 2017

## MINUTES:

Probus Meeting of Wednesday, November 16, 2016 at The American School For The Deaf: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by **President David Hoff**.

**Syd Elkin** gave a short history of Probus, begun in the 1950's, for the benefit of our guests who were joining us this evening. One of our guests was **Marty Pollack**, a guest of David's, who is a semi-retired psychologist who has worked with multiple-handicapped and developmentally disabled individuals.

Another guest was our guest speaker for the evening **Greg Grant**. He is the Chief Operating Officer at **HARC**, Incorporated. Greg opened a window into to the world of HARC for all of us. They are celebrating their 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary and were founded by 8 families to provide a meaningful environment for individuals with intellectual disabilities in Greater Hartford. Their collateral material states that their founding parents created HARC long before programs and services for this population were available. DMR and DDS were not in existence yet. They help these individuals and their families by advocating for their human and civil rights and by providing community based services throughout their lives. Greg mentioned that HARC interacts with approximately 500 special needs citizens. They have 327 people participating in their Day Program, and 68 in their residential homes. If you combine both participants and families served annually the number soars to 2,254! HARC provides activities and makes a profound impact through their birth to life enrichment program. In particular, HARC's menu of programs and services include: early intervention, family support, residential services, employment opportunities, respite care, recreation, summer camp, adult day services, behavioral health clinic and elderly enrichment. HARC has 400 employees who all buy in to the mission that those with intellectual disabilities deserve to live a life with quality, inclusion and dignity. Furthermore, HARC provides respite programs and HARC employees will attend sporting events with HARC families to allow siblings of intellectually disabled citizens to also receive mom and dad's attention as well. Greg told a heartwarming story about one of their HARC clients who was placed at a job working for the Hartford law firm of Robinson & Cole. Upon his retirement from this position, he mentioned that wanted to learn how to read and HARC helped to secure him a teacher to coach him. He was so proud of himself and was able to read the book "The Long Dog". Channel 30 WVIT-NBC covered this momentous occasion. He had held a competitive job for so many years, but his dream was to learn how to read! Greg concluded his presentation by inviting any Probus member who would like to receive a tour of HARC's 900 Asylum Avenue, Hartford, CT facility to stop in.

A Q & A session followed and Greg fielded questions from our chapter.

**Mark Goldberg** asked if HARC has reached out to the Hartford Public School System. Greg said that they offered to set up a satellite in some of the schools, but this has not really come to fruition yet. HARC has sent some of their employees to our Probus sporting events and our

annual picnic. Regarding fundraising efforts, Greg said that the HARC Auction took place last weekend. He then cautioned that the business model in human services is tricky and a lot of aspects in this regard are set by the State of Connecticut. HARC partakes in Camp Bulova in which they have collaborated with Camp Courant and received money via the Hartford Foundation For Public Giving to underwrite activities. HARC uses Camp Courant's facilities and the 2 staffs are mixed/integrated. This sharing of expenses and pooling resources is an efficient model that they subscribe to. Greg concluded his talk by letting us know that 90% of HARC's budget is made up of State Aid. He added that they have clearly been hurt by recent State budget cuts ! Greg then handed out some HARC marketing materials and some colorful bookmarks which were designed by HARC clients.

**Treasurer Meyer Frankel** presented Greg with a \$100 check as a contribution to HARC, as well as a small gift as a token of appreciation for his informative talk to our group.

**Treasurer's Report** Meyer Frankel gave some highlights of the Treasurer's Report of 9/1/16 – 11/16/16. The three-page Treasurer's report was approved by the attending membership.

### **Secretary's Report**

**Charlie Dobrow** gave a synopsis of our recent discussion about Probus Committee Teams and Mentors. He read a few paragraphs from the Minutes as they appeared in our last Telescope newsletter which summarized this endeavor. We had a belated ceremony to honor our "**Probian of the Year**" who is **David Maslin!** A brief plaque presentation occurred and David said a few heartfelt words to those in attendance. Thank you David for your leadership and dedication to our ideals! David has worked tirelessly on the Special Needs Grant Program from its inception to its current growth mode. Additionally, he has championed the Member Engagement Initiative and the aforementioned team approach and mentor/shadowing concept to transfer knowledge of Probus events coordination to a second in command.

David also commented that he is encouraged by everyone who has already signed up on the Member Engagement Initiative signup sheet for events like the Raffle, Camperships and Membership Committee. But he said we still need more team members to step forward! It was acknowledged that there is a definite burden on the Team Leaders to generate sufficient energy and momentum to run an event properly. Teams may need to consider gathering outside of our regular monthly Probus chapter meetings in order to get things accomplished.

**Bob Goldberg** reported that we had a nice strong showing at our recent Probus Wolfpack hockey game at the XL Center on November 4th! However, we unfortunately had some unused tickets due to some unforeseen group home issues that night. A good time was had by all. Before the game, some nice photos were taken with some group home clients out in the atrium, with a backdrop of some Whalers/Wolfpack posters. Bob also announced that our next client sporting event will occur on Sunday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at The University of Hartford Hawks Women's basketball game vs. Sacred Heart University Pioneers at 2:00 p.m. Volunteers to greet the clients as they arrive at the field house are needed. Approximately 60 group home residents and caretakers may be attending! Also, mark your calendars for a December 7 XL Center event "Disney Live" a skating celebration which our clients will enjoy. More details forthcoming.

**Ed Peltier** spoke about our Probus Special Needs Grant program and distributed a Fall 2016 Grants flowchart to all of us. He praised the collaborative efforts of their dynamic group, the SSNE Grants Board. He reported that when they meet on a regular basis at Panera Bread they all come armed with good questions and ideas, and this is allowing the program to pick up steam ! **Bob Dobrow** said that he could not penetrate the Bloomfield schools to get to the appropriate decision maker(s) so he handed this assignment off to Mark Goldberg who has since made some inroads with this school district. To date, approximately 1 dozen grants have been awarded. The next phase will be to approach foundations and corporations. David Maslin says “by then we will have a story to tell” and a little track record built up. So Bloomfield and Hartford school systems are high priority targets for us at this point. We may dovetail into pursuing South Windsor after that, even though it is technically not part of our original mandate of a contiguous town. **David Hoff** capped off our meeting by saying that what was a glimmer in David Maslin’s eye just a few years ago, is now a bright star! Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Next Chapter Meeting is: January 18, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Charlie Dobrow, Secretary**

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**Probus Client Activity:**

On December 4 the Probus Club were given tickets to the University of Hartford Women's basketball game where there was about 60 group home clients along with 8 Probians. A great time was had by all.

In addition the Probus Club coordinated the donation of tickets for 2 Disney shows, December and the other on January 12. For each show there were 14 clients in attendance.

As a separate note, the Security and Customer relations department at the XL Center treated the clients like Rock Stars. We ran into some concerns in that we had more wheel chairs clients than wheel chair seating. The head of security quickly got all of us situated in the empty room that is used as the bar for hockey games. (No the bar was closed).

With some advance communications for the 1/12/17 Disney on Ice show, they reserved and opened the same room exclusively for our Probus Group. We would like to give a shout out to the wonderful team of Security and Customer Relations staff at the XL Center for making our visits so very special. I told them going forward, we should rename the room as the Probus room. In the upcoming months, we are trying to get tickets to other events and activities.

**Bob Goldberg**

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**Thank You, The Probus Club of Greater Hartford:**

-**University of Saint Joseph** for your support for the purchase of a “Bounce Back Chair”,  
Michelle Lestrud, Director

-**Harc, Inc.** for your generous gift of \$100, Andres Barton Reeves, President/ CEO

-**The IEA (Intensive Education Academy)** Happy Holidays to our friends at the Probus Club,  
Jill O’Donnell, Tracy Barbour & The IEA School Family

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# Thank You, The Probus Club of Greater Hartford:



Harc, Inc.  
*Serving People with  
Intellectual and  
Related Disability*

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Fax. 860.541.1770  
www.harc.org

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President Emerita  
Stephen Becker, Ed. D.

November 18, 2016

Mr. Meyer Frankel  
Probus Club of Greater Hartford  
11 Craydon Drive  
West Hartford, CT 06117-1512

Dear Mr. Frankel,

On behalf of all of us at Harc, please accept our sincere appreciation for your generous gift of \$100.00, received on November 18, 2016.

Your contribution will go a long way in helping us provide the life-long services to our participants, and supporting their families as they face the joys and unique challenges of caring for a child or loved one with intellectual disability. As funding sources decrease each year, contributions like yours play a growing role in helping Harc ensure that these services remain available to every family who needs them. It is heartening to know we can count on community members like you to support Harc's mission.

Thank you for giving your support to over 2,200 participants who, along with their families and caregivers, are leading lives of dignity, quality and inclusion.

With deep appreciation,

Andrea Barton Reeves  
President/CEO

*Thank you for the opportunity to speak at the Probus club and share our message.*

In accordance with IRS regulations, we can tell you that this gift to Harc is tax deductible, based on Harc's 501 (c)(3) public charity under Federal ID #06-0710289. We are also able to disclose to you that Harc has not provided you with any goods or services as a result of your donation.





UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH  
CONNECTICUT

December 22, 2016

Mr. Meyer Frankel  
Probus Club of Greater Hartford  
11 Croydon Drive  
West Hartford, CT 06117

Dear Mr. Frankel:

Thank you for the recent grant from the Probus Club of Greater Hartford to the University of Saint Joseph to support the purchase of a Bounce Back Chair for the Gengras Center School.

The Bounce Back Chair will be of great benefit to our students with special needs, especially those on the autism spectrum. Not only will children be able to strengthen and tone their muscles while using the chair, but the activity will also have a calming effect, making it easier for them to learn and increase the time they can stay on task.

Thank you again for your support of the Gengras Center School and the work we do for children with special needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Lestrud".

Michelle Lestrud, Director

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THE GENGRAS CENTER

1578 Asylum Avenue, West Hartford, Connecticut 06117  
860.232.5616 / FAX 860.231.6795 / WWW.GENGRASCENTER.ORG

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy

**Reminder: Next Probus Meeting:**

**Date: Wednesday January 18, 2017**

**Time: 6:00 PM**

**Location: American School for the Deaf  
139 N Main St, West Hartford, CT 06107**

**Speaker: Kim McNeill: U of H Women's basketball Coach**

**An Easy Fund Raiser**

**Occasion Cards**

As you know, the Probus Club is 100% committed to helping those that, for no fault of their own, cannot help themselves. One of our fundraising events that we sponsor is the ability for us to be able to accept contributions to honor, praise, memorialize or make a special acknowledgement to someone who is either in our presence or in our memory.

By you making a contribution to the Probus Club, our very own Bruce Stanger will process your contribution; inform the donee that a contribution was made to Probus to recognize him or her and for the event that is being recognized. Also, an acknowledgement will be sent to you, the donor, to thank you for your charitable contribution to the Probus Club. As always, 100% of donations to the Probus Club are used exclusively for charitable purposes.

Consider the Probus Club when honoring or remembering someone special.

Bruce Stanger can be reached at:  
Attorney Bruce Stanger  
433 South Main Street  
Suite 112  
West Hartford, CT 06110

The check should be made payable to The Probus Club and forwarded to Bruce along with the information necessary for a proper acknowledgement. Thank you for supporting The Probus Club.

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Meyer Frankel, Editor

The "Telescope" is the monthly newsletter of the Probus Club of Greater Hartford.