

Connections

FALL 2006

The Shield Institute Educates and Supports New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities

Glittering Event at Marlborough Chelsea Gallery Raises Funds and Awareness

Pure Vision Arts at Marlborough Chelsea, a May 11 benefit art auction and exhibition, raised nearly \$150,000 through the sale of work by artists with developmental challenges. Close to 250 guests came to Marlborough Chelsea, one of New York's best-known galleries of contemporary art.

Auctioneer George McNeely of Christie's led the bidding on works by Pure Vision Arts artists William Britt, Susan Brown, Leon McCutcheon and Jessica Park, as well as leading artists Milton Glaser, Richard Haas and David Remfry. Glaser's original design *Opening Eyes*, created especially for this event, was auctioned for \$2,500. His work is now on permanent view at Pure Vision Arts, New York's premier art studio and exhibition space for people with developmental disabilities founded by The Shield in 2002.

In appreciation of their efforts to recognize people and issues that are overlooked within the mainstream culture, *Sopranos* actress Lorraine Bracco and Esther Cohen, author and executive director of the Bread and Roses Cultural Project, received Pure Visionary Awards. "Through their work, these women have contributed to making life better for many people," said Shield Executive Director Susan Provenzano. She presented the awards along with the event's chairperson Steven Green, whose energy and passion was essential to the evening's realization.



Photo by Patrick McMullan

Board member Steven Green and actress Lorraine Bracco at the May 11 art auction where she received a Pure Visionary Award from The Shield.

Many generous individuals and businesses contributed to the event's success.

Norman Lowe, who has served on The Shield's board for 25 years, was instrumental in securing support from several businesses, including Signature Bank, whose President Joseph DePaolo was on hand to greet guests at the gallery.

The evening's proceeds directly benefit the PVA artists and other Shield programs for children and adults. ♥

PVA Artist Leon McCutcheon Finds New Collectors

Leon McCutcheon is an up-and-coming self-taught artist whose work sold quickly at *Pure Vision Arts at Marlborough Chelsea*, the May 11 benefit art auction and exhibition.

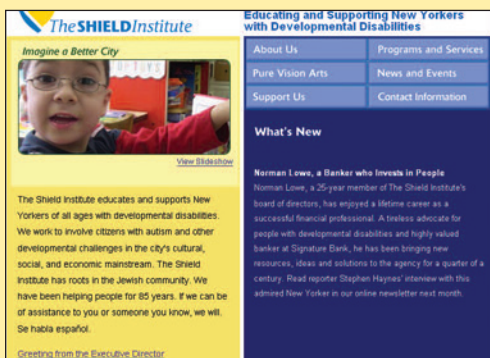
McCutcheon, who lives in Manhattan, regularly attends the Pure Vision Arts (PVA) studio. With his imaginative approach to folk art themes, McCutcheon is increasingly capturing the attention of collectors drawn to the high *continued on page 2*



Artist Leon McCutcheon at work at the PVA studio.

Courtesy of Pure Vision Arts

New Web Sites Make Reaching The Shield Easier



The Shield's home page, www.shield.org, features easily available information.

The Shield recently launched a redesigned Web site offering a more interactive online presence for its visitors, consumers and families. The new home page, www.shield.org, is user-friendly and features easily available information about the Institute. The Web page provides news and upcoming events, listings of various programs and services, an easy way to make charitable donations, and contact information for program directors at the agency's five locations in New York City.

The Shield also created a Web page

for Pure Vision Arts, its premiere art studio and exhibition space for artists with developmental disabilities. This site, located at www.purevisionarts.org, provides information about upcoming gallery events, a shop and an ever-expanding online art gallery. The virtual gallery currently features more than 40 works by PVA's self-taught artists.

The new Web pages were created in collaboration with Columbia University Digital Knowledge Ventures, a branch of the university which helps nonprofits develop Internet media. ♥

Forging New Connections

SUSAN PROVENZANO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we work to help people with developmental challenges enjoy the full, rich lives they deserve, it's sometimes hard to keep in touch. We hope this newsletter and our new Web sites help us stay better connected: parents, teachers, therapists and friends.

As you will read, new alliances are being made with New Yorkers in the business, arts, educational and other communities who share our vision of a city in which children and adults with developmental challenges live as a part of – not apart from – their families and neighbors.

Supportive allies in the community are essential to helping people with developmental disabilities develop the tools, skills and social relationships to live as independently as possible. Through these connections and the fuller relationships that grow from them, students and adult consumers are increasingly moving away from the fringes into the very heart of their neighborhoods. While we still have a long way to go, our family members

are making very real strides into the economic, social and cultural life of our city. Yet creative spring-board efforts like our Community Jobs Network and Pure Vision Arts studio simply cannot succeed without the close, sustained support of more concerned citizens.

That is why we must encourage, nurture and celebrate community connections. We are proud to be in the forefront of efforts to enable people to lead healthier, more complete lives. Let's continue forging new connections to link our children to new possibilities and lives of true choice.♥



Dr. Susan Provenzano

Photo by Amy Stein

Leon McCutcheon

continued from page 1

energy, directness and accomplished sense of color and movement he brings to his work.

Collector Frank Selvaggi purchased two canvasses at the May 11 art auction. "When I saw Leon's art I knew right away that it is just amazing so I didn't waste any time bidding on it," Selvaggi said. "I quickly bought everything I could because his work is something you can really feel – and feel strongly about."

McCutcheon, who is politically active, is interested in supporting human rights issues and giving a voice to minorities. A member of the Self-Advocacy Association (www.sanys.org), he said that self-advocacy is about taking responsibility for his independence and control of his life. "I tell people my story because stories are the best teachings," said McCutcheon. "If I can reach just one or two people, I have accomplished my job."

McCutcheon's newest paintings will be included in *Urban Visionaries*, an upcoming January 24 exhibition at the PVA studio.♥

Eileen Egan Joins Executive Staff

Eileen Egan, an experienced public health administrator devoted to the field of special education, became The Shield's new assistant executive director for programs and services in September. She replaces Dr. Carole



Eileen Egan

Courtesy of Eileen Egan

Gothelf who is pursuing a new opportunity at the New York City chapter of AHRC.

"We're fortunate to have a professional like Eileen who brings valuable experience through her years of service," said Executive Director Dr. Susan Provenzano.

Egan, who holds a master's degree in education from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a master's of public health from Yale University, has held several prominent positions over the past 10 years. She served as director of special projects at

the Nassau County AHRC, where she developed new programs, including an inclusive preschool and daycare center on the grounds of the State University of New York College at Old Westbury and a diagnostic and treatment center offering specialty dental services on the grounds of AHRC's main campus.

Egan, who lives on Long Island with her family, says, "My goal is to support everyone at The Shield, including consumers, employees and families to develop to their fullest potential and follow their dreams."♥



LET'S IMPROVE THE LIVES OF NEW YORKERS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Yes, I'd like to support The Shield's important educational and support services for children and adults.

- \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ Apt: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Contributions welcome by check, credit card or online at www.shield.org

- Check enclosed made payable to: The Shield Institute Charge my credit card: Visa Mastercard AmericanExpress
credit card # _____ exp. date _____ signature _____

Please choose The Shield Institute for your company's matching gift program.

Thank You

Please Mail Your Donation to:
The Shield Institute
114 West 17th Street
New York, NY 10011

Norman Lowe, a Banker Who Invests in People

Norman Lowe, a 25-year member of the board of directors, has enjoyed a lifetime career as a successful financial professional. A tireless advocate for people with developmental disabilities and a highly valued banker at Signature Bank in midtown Manhattan, he has long had an impact at The Shield by bringing new resources, ideas and solutions to the agency. Mr. Lowe is appreciated for his candor, honesty and determination to make the city a good place to work, live and engage in business. He likes to keep things simple and prefers not making a big deal about the years of service he has given to the agency. He agreed to be interviewed, if we promised to keep it short. Stephen Haynes, an aspiring sports writer majoring in English at Brooklyn College, interviewed him during a recent internship at The Shield.

You have had a lifetime career in banking and served on the board for 25 years. You must be very experienced at building and

maintaining relationships. What is the secret of good relationship building?

There's no secret. You just listen to people and do the best you can for them. No matter how big or small the situation, we give everyone the same courteous treatment.

The Shield isn't a big charity but well respected for its creative and individualized programs and services. Your bank also places a lot of emphasis on one-on-one attention. Why is this so important?

The Shield provides special one-on-one services to its clients. The same system prevails at Signature Bank where we stay in close contact with our clients. We build business and personal relationships by being available to provide immediate responses to any situation.

Can you tell me a little bit about your family?

I have four grandkids and two kids. They're successful and it's a happy family.

Is it true that you are a golf aficionado? How's your game?

I used to participate in sports - a lot of everything. I love golf but I'm not too good at it.

So you're not ready for the PGA tour?

[laughs] No. And I won't ever be.

What are some of your favorite or most vivid memories of working in New York City?

Wow, it's been a long time. Hard to believe it's almost 45 years. I've enjoyed working with people — doing business with a lot of different people. During a transit strike in 1966, I had to commute from The Bronx so I moved in with a relative in Manhattan temporarily. It's a hardship when you work in the city, but that's expected.

In terms of business and investment, how do you think the city is doing five years after 9-11?

Overall, I'd have to say that things aren't doing badly. We are living in a city in which people



Courtesy of Signature Bank

Norman Lowe is a 25-year veteran of the board of directors who works at Signature Bank.

are working hard to keep things running, clean and safe.

What advice would you have for someone new coming onto the board about the importance of the fund-raising process?

It's challenging because you have to get a hold of people and ask them for donations. That's hard but necessary. It's a face to face, contact thing. You must bring new people into the organization who have a lot of contacts and believe in the important work that is being done. ♥

New Board Members Bring Passion for The Shield's Mission

LAURA WEINKAM: Friend to a Man with a Developmental Disability

Laura Weinkam's friendship with Fred Lotti, a man in his 40s who attends The Shield's Bayside program, sparked her interest in the organization. "I was deeply impressed when I visited Bayside," said Laura. "It was amazing how warmly the consumers and staff welcomed my husband Jay and me when we toured the facility and learned first-hand about its rich activities." Laura says she and Jay, who is a vice president at Giuliani Partners, have gained a greater appreciation of what a well-lived life can be for a person with a developmental disability through their relationship with Fred, who enjoys sharing time with family and friends. Laura, a marketing



Laura Weinkam

and sales professional, has worked for companies such as L'Oréal and is now a residential real estate broker with The Corcoran Group. As a board member, she says she would like to broaden The Shield's network by introducing friends and potential supporters to its philanthropic mission.

BIJAN SAFAI: Medical Scientist, Physician, Parent Advocate

Dr. Bijan Safai, whose son Matthew attends The Shield, joined the board with a vision of helping the agency stay at the forefront of education, treatment and technology. A professor and chairman of the Dept. of Dermatology at the NY Medical College, Dr. Safai has made valuable contributions to the world of medicine. These include playing a leading role in initial research efforts to identify and treat the AIDS virus. Dr. Safai and his wife Vera are both dedicated volunteers; she serves as the president of The Society of Memorial Sloan-Kettering, a key philanthropic arm of the leading cancer care hospital. Their son's painting was recently shown at



Family Photo

Matthew, Bijan and Vera Safai

the Marlborough Chelsea gallery as an example of an important work by a person with a developmental disability. Guided by Shield staff, Matthew created his ambitious painting with his feet. "It was an extraordinary feeling to see Matthew's painting," said Dr. Safai. "Seeing him with his pants rolled up and paint on his feet was even more dramatic than the painting itself." ♥

Susan Provenzano, Executive Director
Karen Birnbaum, Associate Executive Director
Eileen Egan, Assistant Executive Director

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Queens Borough Hall Rejoices Over Students' Community Participation

On June 19, the Queens Borough President's offices were again opened up to host Partnership Recognition Day, The Shield's annual event celebrating and recognizing students' efforts and achievements in building vital community connections.

During the festive ceremony sponsored by Flushing Savings Bank, more than 50 students, teachers and employers were recognized and celebrated for a variety of efforts through which students developed work skills and expanded their experiences as community members. Citations and plaques were presented to both students and employers.

Partnership Recognition Day is an important event for students and staff. "This day demonstrates The Shield's philosophy of including people with developmental disabilities within the mainstream," said Josh Skolnick, director of Individualized Service Initiatives and Community Based Programs. "We believe that all people have a right and need to participate in their community."

Skolnick is actively developing work opportunities in stores like Modell's and Old Navy through The Shield's Community Jobs



Photo by Joseph Gordon

Student Kevin Chan is congratulated by Paris Sepulveda (at left) and Flushing School Principal Eileen Coben during Partnership Recognition Day in June.

Network. The Network helps young people make real community connections through the experience of work. New York businesses, educational and governmental organizations, including Océ Business Services and Queens Theatre in the Park, were represented at the event. Network partners include Helen Marshall, the Queens Borough president whose office provides part-time jobs to Shield students. "With the cooperation of a growing roster of community-minded employers," said Marshall, "we are redrawing the lines of opportunity so more young people can reap the rewards of gainful employment." ♥

Save the Date

You are invited to an opening reception at Pure Vision Arts, The Shield's studio for artists and others with developmental disabilities

JANUARY 24, 2007 • 6-8:30 PM

An exhibition of American and Dutch contemporary artists featuring work by self-taught artists from the studios Pure Vision Arts, Kunst & Vliegwerk and Atelier Herenplaats.

pure vision arts

114 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011

Go to www.purevisionarts.org for details