



# SoundBites

Fall 2008



## Tom Gibbons Hired as New RHSC President

After a year full of change and new beginnings, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center's Board of Directors chose local business executive Thomas Gibbons as the agency's new president.

"We believe Tom will continue to provide the required leadership for RHSC in meeting the challenges of the foreseeable future," said Vic Montagione, Chair of RHSC's Board of Directors.

Tom has been on the job and working hard since succeeding Interim President Gregory D. Litz in August, who had been in office since January. He brings over 30

years of not-for-profit management experience to RHSC. He spent much of his career at Rochester Rehabilitation Center, a fellow Al Sigl Center member agency, where he had responsibility for vocational and educational services. He most recently served as Assistant Vice President for Employment at Continuing Development Services (CDS).

"RHSC has been serving the communication needs of children and adults in our community for over 85 years," says Tom. "I am excited to be joining the dedicated staff and volunteers committed to providing excellent speech and hearing services to our community."

Tom is a native Rochesterian, and he and his wife Linda reside in the Browncroft Neighborhood.

*Welcome aboard, Tom!*

## 2008 President's Reception Fun For All

On May 21, 2008, friends of RHSC gathered once again for the 3rd annual President's Reception. Over 70 people came together at the Century Club to celebrate another successful year in RHSC history, and to recognize the 2008 Community Volunteer Award winners.

D. Robert Frisina, Ph.D., Raymond T. Saucke, and Peter K. Hixson, Ph.D., were this year's recipients of the Community Volunteer Awards. The awards given were "Communication for Life," "Building a Sound Community," and the "James J. DeCaro Leadership Award," respectively.

RHSC's community awards recognize volunteers and friends of the agency who have consistently supported its mission with their leadership, creativity, networking, expertise, and dedication.

One highlight of the night was a testimonial given by Dennis Burke, father of RHSC speech client Madison Burke. Dennis' emotional speech about his daughter's progress inspired all who attended, reminding everyone of the great value RHSC's experienced and resourceful staff has to offer.



*Board members Jim DeCaro, Butch Beideck and Martha DeShong mingle before the program starts.*



*Community Volunteer Award winners (L to R) Bob Frisina, Lois Benedict on behalf of Peter Hixson, and Ray Saucke.*

# Speech Department



**Noreen Podyma, M.A., CCC/SLP**  
*Director of Speech Operations*

We have just finished another successful summer program, working in partnership with the city Head Start program and several surrounding child care centers. In a unique six-week program, speech language pathologists (SLPs) and special education teachers provided speech therapy and literacy training to over 200 children. Staff worked directly with preschool children and their classroom teachers to provide instruction and stimulation in critical foundational skills for literacy learning, attending behaviors and pre-academic schools needed for later school

success. With the generous support of several area foundations and corporations, in addition to literacy training, 70 children identified as at risk and having significant problems with speech/language skills continued to receive services to prevent regression and capitalize on a critical period in their development. RHSC also continued to provide our high quality early intervention programming for children aged birth to three. Families continued to enjoy the benefits of the TAALK program—a program which incorporates the parents by having them accompany their young child to a small classroom setting to participate in learning and using speech and language development techniques that can be used at home.

We have also seen expansion in staff. Since spring we have welcomed seven new speech-language pathologists and a new special educator! These new faces bring a wealth of experience and new ideas to our team. Several of our newest colleagues commented that they chose to work at RHSC because of our strong community reputation for excellence, commitment to continuing education opportunities and mission to help those with communication needs, regardless of ability to pay.

## Easy Steps to Making a Charitable Bequest

**Mary Lewis-Consler**

A charitable bequest is an easy way to remember Rochester Hearing and Speech Center and to support its mission—providing the highest quality speech-language and audiology services to all in the Greater Rochester Area—regardless of their ability to pay.

- If you already have a will you can simply ask your attorney to draft a codicil which is an amendment to your existing will.
- If you do not have a will or if it is in need of updating, now is the perfect time to organize your estate plans and include Rochester Hearing and Speech Center.
- A bequest may be a specific dollar amount or it may be a percentage of your estate. The decision is yours to make in accordance with your estate plan.

A bequest will enable your legacy to live on at Rochester Hearing and Speech Center. It might be used to help fund the Summer Speech Program in the inner city, providing speech-language services

# Audiology Department



**Larry Medwetsky, Ph.D.**  
*Vice President, Clinical Services*

Working in a non-profit agency such as Rochester Hearing and Speech Center (RHSC) brings many opportunities as well as many challenges. Although RHSC is a non-profit agency, and does depend on community support from organizations like United Way and generous donors, much of our fiscal resources come directly from the services we provide to our clients. In order to be a fiscally sound agency, we must function in many ways as a for-profit entity. Thus, we are very

mindful of the intertwined aspects of both our community mission and our fiscal responsibilities. Ultimately, it is our customer mission that guides how we serve our clients. Following the legacy of our late president, Dr. Peter Hixson, we are committed to providing innovative solutions that best address the individual needs of all those who seek our services. One of our strongest commitments is to provide our clinical staff with on-going continuing education that will allow them to keep abreast of the latest diagnostic/treatment approaches and emerging technologies. We have also developed state-of-the-art clinical protocols to ensure all our clients receive the highest quality care. We take the necessary time to determine the best solution that meets each individual's specific needs by examining many possible solutions, as one of or a combination of different approaches including communication strategies, hearing aids and/or assistive listening technologies. We feel it is these approaches that have allowed RHSC to serve the Greater Rochester area for over 85 years. And, with the trust of those individuals we serve and the support of the community, we look forward to serving the needs of individuals with hearing loss for many years to come.

to over 200 children each summer. It might be used to help individuals with central audiology processing disorders in need of thorough evaluations and treatment. It will be used for important projects and programs here at RHSC for many years to come.

Those who make bequests will become members of the Peter K. Hixson Legacy Society and join charter members who have generously shared their legacy for the future of RHSC.





**Tom Gibbons**  
*President*

## *Letter From The President*

I am excited and proud to assume the responsibilities for leading Rochester's premier hearing and speech organization. Although new to the organization, I am familiar with the prominent place Rochester Hearing and Speech Center holds both as a partner in the Al Sigl Center family of agencies and in the larger community of not-for-profit organizations with which our community is blessed.

I want to acknowledge with respect and appreciation the 17 years of dedicated leadership provided by Peter Hixson. Peter's commitment to service excellence, customer satisfaction, securing, developing and retaining dedicated professional staff and building services responsive to our community's needs were the hallmark of his career. Greg Litz, Interim President, has provided invaluable leadership during a time of challenge and transition. The organization has truly benefited from his knowledge, experience and steady hand on the rudder while continuing to move the Center forward. Thank you only begins to express the appreciation of the staff and board of directors for his immeasurable contributions.

Today, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center is benefiting from the adoption of a new strategic plan. We have significantly enhanced our visibility through the implementation of a proactive marketing and communication strategy. We have improved our accessibility by adding our new location in Webster and relocating our Greece satellite. We have secured the generous support of donors enabling us to address critical needs. We continue to employ highly skilled and talented staff committed to providing the very best speech and audiology services to the residents of our community.

Challenges ahead remain significant. While benefiting from our rich history spanning over 85 years we must continue to rise to meet the rigorous demands confronting most not-for-profit organizations in our community. We face competition in each of our lines of business, a changing reimbursement and regulatory environment and ever increasing competition for philanthropic support. I am confident that, together with our dedicated staff and volunteers, we will continue to address and overcome these challenges.



*RHSC staff enjoy the sunshine on the cruise.*



*Greece manager Paula Thomas smiles for the camera.*



*Greg Litz and Greece speech pathologist Rebecca King.*

## **RHSC Honors Staff**

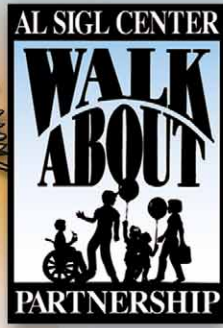
On June 20, the entire staff of Rochester Hearing and Speech Center gathered to celebrate another successful year of servicing the Greater Rochester community. Staff members took a ride on the Colonial Belle through the Erie Canal on what turned out to be a beautiful day full of sunshine.

During the boat ride, Interim President Greg Litz announced the 2008 President's Award recipients. Taking home top honors were speech-language pathologist Rebecca King; audiologist Kristen Nolan; the speech management team of Valorie Stotz, Beth McLellan, Tawn Feeney, Rachel Zour, and Tammi Hittepole; and the Webster team of managing audiologist Lee Hamilton and office manager Serena Michels.

This year's Quality Achievement Award went to Valorie Stotz. The Quality Achievement Award was established in 1997 by then-Senior VP for Product Development Lois Benedict. It recognizes outstanding staff achievement and individual initiative in improving operating systems and services to better support the agency's community service, customer and business missions.



*The speech management team poses with Greg Litz as winners of the 2008 President's Awards.*



## RHSC Gears Up for 2008 WalkAbout

At the 2007 Al Sigl Center Partnership WalkAbout, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center placed 2nd overall, moving up from number four the year before! Almost \$30,000 was raised to help over 17,000 adults and children in the Greater Rochester area in need of high quality, thorough audiology and speech-language services. The challenge this year—can RHSC maintain its number two position? Can RHSC garner additional walkers and support to become number one? We're sure going to try!

This year's Walk will take place at **Marketplace Mall** on **Sunday, October 26**, beginning with a pre-Walk reception at 8:30 a.m. There will be lots of fun and frivolity together with special prizes and awards for motivated teams and walkers!

RHSC has formed an internal staff committee to ensure the success of this year's Walk. Team members include audiologist Jen Popovich; speech-language pathologists Michelle Flagg, Christyn Hirschler, Jason Zuch, and Beth McLellan; support staff members Serena Michels and Denise Bailey; Rachel Henderson, marketing/development coordinator; and Mary Consler, director of development.

Last year RHSC had over 20 corporate supporters. Most have already rejoined the effort and new companies and firms have been added!

Come join the fun on Sunday, October 26 at Marketplace Mall! Bring your family and friends—the more the merrier as we walk together to raise money to help Rochester Hearing and Speech Center clients all year long!

### 2008 WalkAbout Corporate Gifts To Date

Alesco Advisors LLC  
The Auditorium Center  
The Bonadio Group LLP  
Buckingham Properties  
Canandaigua National Bank and Trust  
Clover Capital Management  
Desk Set  
Konar Family Foundation  
Mengel Metzger Barr LLP  
Merkel Donohue  
MGM Associates Insurance  
Monro Muffler/Brake  
Phillips Lytle LLP  
Preferred Care  
RG&E  
Smart Holdings Company, LLC  
Toshiba Business Solutions, NY  
Towers Airport Business Park  
Wegmans

### Board Members

Vic Montagione  
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Lisa Miller  
Kevin Mulvehill  
Ray Saucke  
Bernadette Skobjak  
Deborah Stendardi  
Carolyn Stern, M.D.  
Margaret Thomsen

### Committee Members

Micki Abbatiello  
Ken Diller  
Jody Hellman  
Kathy Johncox  
Clint Koenig  
Jane LeBlanc  
Doug MacKenzie  
Sandy McCormack  
David McLellan  
John Pennell  
Shirley Szekeres  
Tammie Tullio, M.D.  
Robert Zogas

## New Greece Office is Up and Running

On May 9, 2008, the Greece office of Rochester Hearing and Speech Center officially opened its doors to the public. Over 40 friends of RHSC attended the event.



Jody Perry, Erin Hanss, Joe Robach, Greg Litz, and Vic Montagione cut the ribbon to officially open the Greece office of RHSC.



The new Greece office offers a comfortable and home-like waiting room.



Special volunteer Vic Merkel congratulates Executive Vice President Bill Clifford at the new Greece location.



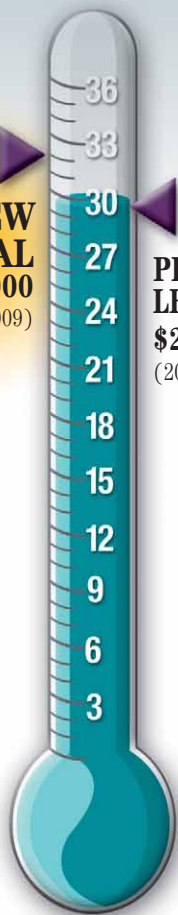
Dave McLellan and Lois Benedict greet each other.



Director of Development Mary Consler, Sen. Joe Robach and board member Bernadette Skobjak.

# Annual Friends Appeal Exceeds Goal

**NEW GOAL**  
\$32,000  
(2008-2009)



**PRESENT LEVEL**  
\$29,700  
(2007-2008)

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center's Annual Friends Appeal experienced an excellent year thanks to many generous donors—growing from just over \$25,000 to over \$29,700 and beating its \$28,000 goal! That's an 18% increase!

All of these funds are added to the RHSC Financial Assistance Program to help adults and children who cannot afford hearing evaluations, hearing aids, assistive devices, speech-language evaluations, therapy, and more. The Annual Friends Appeal is a very important component in support of the RHSC mission to help all individuals in our community.

RHSC has set an ambitious goal for the '08-'09 Annual Friends Appeal to meet increased financial needs during challenging economic times. The Development Committee has approved a goal of \$32,000—funds that are very much needed by the clients RHSC has served for over 86 years and continues to serve today. Won't you be a part of this year's Appeal?

The Society's giving levels are as follows:

- Bells of Distinction \$10,000
- Liberty Bell \$5,000
- Platinum Bell \$2,500
- Golden Bell \$1,000
- Silver Bell \$500
- Crystal Bell \$250
- Bronze Bell \$100
- Brass Bell \$1 to \$99

Rochester Hearing and Speech Center



**Yes**, I would like to support the RHSC 2008-2009 Appeal

Please accept my donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment:  Check enclosed  
(please make payable to: Rochester Hearing & Speech Center)

Credit Card:  Visa  MasterCard

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please cut out and mail back to:**

Annual Friends Appeal  
Rochester Hearing & Speech Center  
1000 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 400  
Rochester, NY 14620-3098

## RHSC Partners with Southside Medical Supply and Joe Robach



Jennifer Lewis, Mary Lewis-Consler, Joe Robach and Greg Litz

For the first time ever, Rochester Hearing and Speech Center joined in partnership with Southside Medical Supply and Senator Joseph Robach to host an event on June 27. Over 120 people visited at Southside throughout the day to learn more about their hearing health, as well as visit Southside's new showroom.

Senator Robach made a special appearance late in the morning to greet those attending. RHSC's mobile unit was parked outside and hearing screenings were given all day. The event turned out to be a great success, and plans are in the works for a similar event next year!



Paula Thomas, Jennifer Lewis, and Joe Robach

## Legacy Society Achieves Great Success

The new Peter K. Hixson Legacy Society was introduced at the President's Reception held last May at the Century Club. Seventeen generous individuals and couples stepped forward to join with RHSC to create current and future support for programs and projects in memory of Peter K. Hixson, RHSC's former president who passed away in December 2007. To date, over \$200,000 has been committed in deferred or current gifts! A special plaque in the lobby at the Elmwood Clinic now recognizes generous charter members. RHSC wishes to thank these generous charter members for their vision and foresight in helping to plan for the future—offering funds for future projects, programs and other special needs.



- Lois Benedict and Peter Hixson
- Sally Clapp
- Patricia and James DeCaro
- Rita C. Duffy
- Catherine and Elmar Frangenberg
- Robert Frisina
- Bobbie and Mark Hargrave
- Mary Lynne and Douglas Hixson
- Jane Hopfinger and Robert Zogas
- Germaine Knapp
- Gail and Phillip Langton
- Judee and Gregory Litz
- Monica and Thomas Mattioli
- Lisa and Kenper Miller
- Bernadette Skobjak and Fred Dowaliby
- Patricia and Michael Walker
- Margaret and Joseph Willard

## 2008 President's Reception Fun For All — Continued from front —

D. Robert Frisina, Ph.D., has been a friend of Rochester Hearing and Speech Center for many years. He facilitated a special grant that allowed RHSC to purchase equipment, and is a former board member. Dr. Frisina currently holds many professional positions. He is the Director of the International Center for Hearing and Speech Research (ICHSR), professor of communication sciences at RIT, and professor of surgery at University of Rochester. He is also the founding director of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) at RIT.

Raymond T. Saucke is the President and COO of Saucke Bros. Construction Co., Inc., a local site development company that has been in business for over 75 years. He came on to the Rochester Hearing and Speech Center board three years ago. Because of his proficiency in estimation, scheduling, financing and building commercial and industrial structures, he has chaired the facilities committee and spearheaded both the Webster construction and Greece relocation projects.

Peter K. Hixson, Ph.D., was the president of Rochester Hearing and Speech Center for over 17 years. Dr. Hixson passed away in December 2007 after a courageous battle with cancer, but the legacy he left behind has laid the path for RHSC for many years to come. Dr. Hixson's strategic thinking was for RHSC to set national standards of practice for clients, staff, volunteers, and for the services the agency offers. Under his leadership, the agency expanded and has taken its speech and hearing services to individuals and families in Greece and in Webster.



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info@rhsc.org

### Web

www.rhsc.org

Comments or suggestions may be submitted to:  
Rachel Henderson, *Editor*



A United Way Agency

## Another Great Year for our Summer Speech Program

Over 190 children were served during this year's summer speech program at Head Start and day care programs in the inner city. Funding for the sites was made possible through generous donations from Joan and Harold Feinbloom Supporting Foundation at Rochester Area Community Foundation, Ames-Amzalak Memorial Trust in memory of Henry Ames, Semon Amzalak and Dan Amzalak, Glover-Crask Charitable Trust, Fred and Floy Willmott Foundation, Wegmans, and Rochester's Child at Rochester Area Community Foundation.



*Nazareth graduate student Katie Rouse plays a game with her students.*

*Katie Herbele reads to her students at Wilson Commencement Park.*



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