



B A R B E R

FALL 2024

SPIRIT

60TH ANNUAL

Barber Christmas Ball

A DIAMOND CHRISTMAS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

As the leaves fall, our gratitude grows for the absolute privilege we've been given to contribute to the lives of thousands of adults, children and families throughout Pennsylvania. Autumn is often associated with the harvest, a time of abundance. Each fallen leaf nourishes the earth, much like our gratitude enriches our lives and the lives of those around us.

In this issue of Barber Spirit, you'll meet Trummel Baker, single father and Barber National Institute job coach in Philadelphia. He shares his gratitude for the individuals that bring joy to his life.

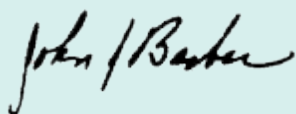
You'll also meet Desiree Davis who overcame years of mental health challenges and participates in the Barber Beast on the Bay 10-mile obstacle course in honor of her brother Tor who has Downs Syndrome. She shares her gratitude for her health and the inspiration that Tor provides daily.

Finally, and most inspiring of all, is 12-year-old Robby, an Elizabeth Lee Black School student who has made transformational progress. His mother Heather shares her gratitude for hearing him say, "I love you, mom." for the first time.

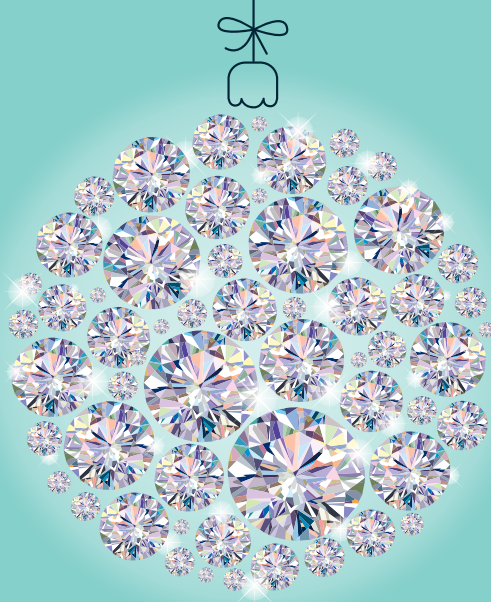
We are grateful for our founder Dr. Gertrude Barber who dedicated her life to service. This year's Barber Christmas Ball marks a significant milestone- the 60th anniversary of an event that stands out for its impact and legacy. Today, it remains a signature fundraising event for the Dr. Gertrude Barber Foundation funding vital programs and services throughout Pennsylvania.

Take time this season to reflect on life's changes and the blessings that remain or have grown stronger. I invite you to make space for gratitude for life's simple joys, which often go unnoticed until we take the time to pause and appreciate them.

With gratitude,



John J. Barber
President & Chief Executive Officer



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We "Make dreams come true." We provide children and adults with autism, intellectual disabilities and behavioral health challenges and their families the education, support and resources needed to be self-reliant, independent and valued members of their community. In addition, we provide the professionals who serve them with world-class education and training.



The warm fall temperatures were perfect for exploring local farms. We are grateful for friends.



We never outgrow the joy of carving a pumpkin!

ON THE COVER: Courtney & Patrick Barber, 2024 Chair Couple with students from the Elizabeth Lee Black School & Happy Hearts Childcare

BARBER NATIONAL INSTITUTE PODCAST

NOW STREAMING

Celebrate What's Different: Conversations with Barber National Institute

Barber National Institute joins TalkErie host Jeff Natalie the second Tuesday of each month for a 20-minute podcast. This podcast is broadcast live on 103.3, 105.9 FM and 1530 AM in Erie, simulcast on TalkErie's Facebook page and uploaded to the new Barber National Institute Spotify podcast account and made available to the public.



Experts will welcome guests on topics ranging from research, adaptive technology, employment, advocacy and more.

"As a trusted community resource, we view Barber National Institute's new podcast, Celebrate What's Different, as an opportunity to offer support, guidance and awareness," said Barber National Institute Senior Vice President Robert Barber.

Listeners are spending more time with podcasts than ever before with podcasts accounting for 11 percent of daily audio time and at least 10 hours listening each week.



"Celebrate What's Different" is a podcast from Barber National Institute. Listen and follow on K ERIE! Spotify.



JOIN US!
Listen, subscribe and share Celebrate What's Different episodes!



Trummel Baker (right) supports Wayne in his goal of working at WaWa Food Market in Philadelphia.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Trummel Baker

Trummel Baker has a heart for caring for others, and he's been caring for others for more than 25 years! Baker is a supported employment job coach at Barber National Institute's Philadelphia campus. In this role, Baker supports adults with intellectual disabilities and autism in their pursuit of integrated employment.

"I don't recall the moment when I knew working with special needs adults was my calling. I suppose it was the influence of my cousin with Down's Syndrome," said Baker, "I've always wanted to help people."

Baker's experience as a direct support professional has come in handy as a job coach. "Over the years, I've cared for adults with complex medical needs and supported those with more independence. Adults with

intellectual and physical disabilities want what we all want – to be included in our community. This takes grit and patience."

As a father of one adult and two teenage daughters, this 'girl dad' has learned patience. "Being a girl dad teaches you to listen more closely, understand diverse perspectives and show empathy. Parenting requires patience, and as a girl dad, navigating separate phases of your daughter's life teaches you to be adaptable," said Baker. "In the workplace, this patience helps me adjust when things don't go as planned."

In this season of gratitude, Baker says he has a good life. "The adults that I help bring joy to my life. I've been able to provide for my daughters. I'm working with adults to help them become independent. That's a good feeling."

Thank You **Erie Gives Donors!**

Our thanks to more than 280 donors who contributed over \$74,000 to Barber National Institute on Erie Gives! This is the third most contributed to Barber National Institute since the beginning of Erie Gives!

Your generosity is already making a difference through programs for more than 5,400 children and adults we are serving this year. Having your support is especially meaningful for our dedicated employees who know that you believe in the work they are doing to transform lives every day.

We couldn't do it without you!



Donate today
& KEEP MAKING A DIFFERENCE

 Barber National Institute
Making dreams come true.

Special appreciation to the following donors who made a gift during *Erie Gives*:

Alice & Dan Kelley
 Alice Jurewicz
 Altair Real Estate Services
 Andrea Krivak
 Andrew Tellers
 Angie Lupo
 Arthur & Ruth Oligeri
 Ashley & Michael Kuneman
 Attorney & Deborah Pagliari
 Atty. & Mrs. Al Lubiejewski
 Barb & Bill Barthelmes
 Barb & Kevin Mazon
 Barbara & Gary Shapira
 Barbara & Randy Bowers
 Barbara J. Carter
 Betty Lou Snyder-Barczyk
 Bob Becker
 Brian C. Maloney
 Brian O'Donoghue
 Bridget Allburn
 Building Systems Inc
 CAM
 Carl Williams
 Caroline Patterson
 Carolyn Kontis
 Carolyn Ruth
 Charles & Cindy Priester
 Charles R. Fischer
 Chinsky Family Fund
 Chris & Courtney Elliott
 Chris Peterson
 Chuck & Lisa Jenkins
 Chuck & Mollie Sweeny
 Chuck Perrotta & Diane Faber
 Chuck Reams
 Constance & Luther Manus
 Country Fair, Inc.
 Courtney & Patrick Barber
 Craig & Julie Myers
 Craig Noyes
 Crystal Morosky
 Custom Engineering Co.
 Dale & Barbara Diest Family Fund
 Dan & Julia Goodman
 Daniel & Mary Ann Tempestini
 David & Pam Davis
 David Curry
 David Delinski
 David Murphy
 Deb & Don Musolf
 Debbie Brumagin
 Denise Krainski
 Dennis McDougall
 Don & Becky Cousins
 Donald Green
 Donald Niebauer
 Donald Stolarski
 Doug & Nancy Brower
 Doug Rogers
 Dr. & Mrs. Joseph Deimel
 Dr. Sharon Coursey
 Edmund Abegg
 Eileen Cullen
 Elizabeth Ann Niebauer, SSJ
 Elizabeth Bucarelli
 Elizabeth Doleski
 Elizabeth Gaber
 Elizabeth Piotrowski
 Emily Hutchinson
 Erie Apparel
 Erie Beer Company
 Erie Insurance
 ErieBank
 Ernest & Elizabeth DiSantis
 Esther M. Gallagher
 Florence Sinnott
 Fr. Jason Feigh
 Frank & Kathy Nemeth
 Gale & Terry Brugh
 Garrett & Georgeann Antalek
 Gary Lillis
 GEEDC
 Geoffrey Crankshaw
 Gerald & Ann Kraus
 Gerald Blaszczyk
 Geraldine Taylor
 Gretchen Baumann
 Haley Coletta
 Heidi Sheehan
 Helena Power
 Hope Martinson
 Howard & Jane Levin
 Jacqueline Rhen
 James & Mary Rutkowski Jr.
 James Malue
 Jane Davis
 Jane McClimans
 Janice Suscheck
 Jason Porreco & Bianchi Honda
 Jean Gardiner
 Jean Nielsen
 Jean Shered
 Jean Stetson
 Jeanne Bender
 Jeffrey & Margaret Zibelman
 Jeffrey Nicolia
 Jennifer Smith
 Jim & Grace Dailey
 Jim Dammeyer
 Joann Kish
 Joe & Rhonda Schember
 John & Annette Widomski
 John & Bridget Barber
 John & Kari Nygaard
 John & Mary Gail Baldwin
 John & Susan Hennip
 John Carneval
 John Harkins
 John Skotnicki
 John, Barb & Jen Kersey
 Jonathan Thomas & Ashley Solo
 Joseph & Nancy Ruffa
 Joseph Fries
 Joseph Kelly
 Joshua Hopkins
 Judy & Arnie Alloway
 Julie Cella
 Julie Cohen
 Julie Greissinger
 Julie Wilson
 June Vroman
 June Ward
 Karen Ewings
 Karen Miller
 Katherine Hiles
 Kathleen Bastow
 Kathleen Ducey
 Kathleen Lewis
 Kathleen Spiegel
 Kathleen Stenger
 Kathy Holler
 Kay Harrington
 Kelly Dundule
 Kelly Richter
 Kenneth Sharrer
 Kevin & Eileen O'Hare
 Kevin & Mary Cuneo
 Kim & Brett Mascia
 Kimberly Faulkner
 Know Law
 Laura Domencic
 Lauren Unger
 Laurene Bucci
 LECOM
 Libby Hiles
 Lindsay Kopac
 Lisa Hopkins
 Logistics Plus
 Lois Borowy
 Loretta Clark
 Lydia Wethli
 Lyman Cohen
 Lynn Ackerman
 Lynnette Brumagin
 MacDonald Illig Attorneys
 Margaret Piotrowicz
 Maria & Chris Ehrman
 Marianne Bachmaier
 Marion Barnes
 Mark & Diane Lugin
 Mark & Valerie Rose
 Mark Becker
 Mark Golden
 Mark R. Lingenfelder
 Mark Zajac
 Marlene Mosco
 Marquette Savings Bank
 Martha Hilbert
 Martha Hunter
 Mary Ann Ebert
 Mary Anne Albaugh
 Mary Gerber
 Mary Horomanski
 Mary Lou McCall
 Mary Slusarz
 Maryanne Szewczyk
 Matthew & Catherine Ehrman
 Matthew Wethli
 Maureen Plunkett
 Maureen Wilson
 Melody Vogel
 Merrill
 Michael & Paula Reske
 Michael Edwards
 Michael Martin
 Michael Micsky
 Michael Priestes
 Michael Van Iderstine
 Mike & Sandy Fetzner
 Miranda Ochs
 Modern Industries Community Fund
 Monica Bloomstine
 Mr. & Mrs. Bill Hilbert
 Mr. & Mrs. Gary Johnson
 Ms. Karen Foust
 Nancy E. Dunegan
 Nancy Pace
 Natalie Washburn
 Nathan R. Barber
 Nathan Twichel
 National Fuel
 Nicole Kress
 Nik Zaphiris
 Pam & Bob Blakely
 Pat & Michelle Harkins
 Pat Cuneo
 Patricia & Gerald Rhone
 Patricia Bojarski
 Patricia Gloekler
 Patricia Lacy
 Patricia Schoening
 Peggy Laughlin
 Phyllis Tarasovich
 Presque Isle Downs & Casino
 Printing Concepts
 Randolph & Adrienne Levis
 Rebecca Flyte
 Rebecca Forster
 Rebecca Turner
 Rebekah Huppe
 Red Letter Hospitality
 Rena G. Wierbinski
 Renee Uht
 Richard & Stephanie Peterson
 Richard Hymes
 Rick Weaver Buick GMC
 Rita A. Orzel
 Rob & Keely Doyle
 Rob, Breanna & Clara Adams
 Robert & Bonita Schlaufman
 Robert Barber
 Robert Heinlein
 Robert Will
 Rosalie Tellers
 Rosemary Nicosia
 Ryan Horomanski
 Ryan Mumau
 Sam Nicolia
 Sandi Carangi
 Santosh & Harjit Kang
 Sarah Lunger
 Scott & Darlene Morgan
 Scott Barbato
 Sharon & Mike Dugan
 Sister Rita Lynch, MHS
 SKM
 Slovak National Club
 Steve & Kathy Danch
 Steve & Susan Drabant
 Steve Groshek
 Steven Davis
 Sue Kafferlin
 Susan Corbran
 TalkErie
 Tammy Roche
 Ted Allegretto
 Terese Wieszczyk
 Terry & Cheryl Moore
 Thad Jackman
 The Erie Community Foundation
 The Jeffrey's
 Theresa Rzepka
 Thomas & Linda Paterniti
 Thomas & Mary Blose
 Thomas Matson
 Thomas Wittmann
 Tim & Laurie Brugger
 Tim & Lisa Necastro
 Tina & Bob Bierre
 Tom & Carol Tupitza
 Tom & Kathy Acri
 Tom & Laurie Callaghan
 Tom & Pat Pianta
 Tony & Carol Gilmore
 UBS Financial Services, Inc.
 Virginia Boyer
 VNET
 Wabtec Corporation
 Wendy Bolding
 William & Janet Fowler
 William Bengel
 William Cox
 William Delehunt
 William King
 William Lenart



TRASH TO TREASURE: Transforming Recycled Plastic Bags into Sustainable Benches in Somerset

Barber National Institute's Somerset campus teamed up with NexTrex, a plastic film recycling company, for a volunteer project that will help protect the local environment for this generation and generations to come. Barber National Institute staff and individuals are working to collect 1,000 pounds of plastic bags to be recycled into a plastic bench, manufactured by NexTrex. The new bench will bear Barber National Institute's name and be placed in a public location for the community to enjoy.

Staff and individuals identified local businesses and worked with them to collect their plastic bags, pick them up and deliver them to the recycling center. Somerset's Sheetz, Tractor Supply, Jubilee Drink Station, and many other Somerset businesses were very receptive to this project and regularly collected bags. Somerset residents also dropped off their bags at Barber National Institute for recycling.

Direct Support Professionals Sabrina Higgins-Kelly and Anita Weimer suggested the idea to connect adults to the community. "We thought this would be a perfect opportunity for the community to meet our adults and work together on a meaningful project."

The collected bags are brought to the Somerset campus to be bundled and weighed. The staff and individuals deliver the recycled bags to the Westmoreland Recycle Center, in Greensburg.



Adults collected plastic bags in Somerset before taking them to the recycling center.

As of Sept. 30, 620 pounds of plastic bags have been collected and diverted from sitting in the local landfill. "Even if we are unable to collect 1,000 pounds in one year, we have taken action to help protect our environment and do our part in helping to keep our planet clean. The individuals and staff take great pride in this volunteering program," said Higgins-Kelly.



Recycled bags will be repurposed into a bench and placed in the Somerset community.

StationMD: On-Demand Access to Specialized Physicians



StationMD

An Emergency Room visit for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism (ID/A) can be frightening. Adults often experience a disruption of routine and trauma during travel, not to mention an increased exposure to infection.

According to a white paper published by Resources for Integrated Care, it is difficult to find an adequately trained provider knowledgeable in both medicine and intellectual or developmental disabilities. Research shows that organizations have increased their use of telehealth technologies to better serve individuals with ID/A.

Barber National Institute has formed a new partnership with StationMD, a telemedicine company founded by board-certified ER physicians who are specially trained to care for people with ID/A.

"StationMD is a Specialty Telehealth and Assessment Team (STAT) Waiver Service that can triage and evaluate medical conditions 24/7. If the adult requires a higher level of care after the physician assessment, there is a warm handoff to the ER or another provider," said Thad Jackman, Barber National Institute senior director of residential services. "StationMD is not a replacement for an individual's primary care physician or a 911-level emergency. Instead, it is a convenient and reliable service for diagnosing and treating common at-home ailments."

Patients are often diagnosed at home for such common ailments as rashes, pink eye, urinary tract infections, and the common cold. More than 90 percent of StationMD patients were successfully treated at home avoiding unnecessary transfers to the ER.

"At Barber National Institute, we strive to provide excellent and compassionate care and support to your loved one. We believe the partnership with StationMD will improve health outcomes and reduce anxiety and fear," said Jackman.

COOKING UP SOMETHING GOOD

A \$90,000 grant from the Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust was the final ingredient needed to begin the construction of a new fully accessible kitchen with practical adaptations for Barber National Institute's Elizabeth Lee Black School secondary students.

This modern kitchen will be equipped with wheelchair accessible countertops, a spacious floor plan, and a wealth of meal preparation equipment perfectly designed to help students gain hands-on experience preparing nutritious foods.

"Here, students are not just taught how to cook but are equipped with practical tools that serve as steppingstones towards self-sufficiency," said Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, Barber National Institute executive vice president. "The kitchen is a classroom without borders. It is where students will be able to benefit from social interaction, learn about the importance of safety and cleanliness in the kitchen and put into practice smart food selection as part of a healthy diet. These life skills, essential for personal development, will be incorporated into the fabric of each lesson."



As students explore the curriculum, teachers, occupational therapists, and paraprofessionals will work one-on-one with the students to assist them in gaining greater independence. The curriculum's framework provides an overview of the markers of success instructors will be looking for as students develop skills.

As they stir sauces and chop vegetables, they are also preparing for a future beyond the school's walls. The kitchen serves as a foundation to job opportunities, offering a taste of various hospitality and service-related roles.

The adaptive kitchen will be a place where students gather, collaborate, learn and share. "It's a place where friendships are forged over shared meals and where the act of cooking together teaches teamwork, communication and respect for diversity," said Barber-Carey. "Teaching cooking to students with intellectual disabilities goes beyond the kitchen. It enhances their overall quality of life and equips them with practical tools for independence."



Art Exhibit Engages Artists who Identify as Having a Mental Health Challenge

Barber National Institute Forensic Outpatient Therapist Catherine (Caity) Bilanich was invited to create an original artwork for public exhibition at the Erie Art Museum. Bilanich, who identifies as having a mental health challenge, says that "art connects us to our community – it allows for conversation, collaboration, and shared experience that reminds you that you are never alone. The white space in this piece is an open canvas for gallery visitors to add to so they may see themselves in their community and contribute to the conversation."

'Brushstrokes of Resilience' Navigating Mental Health Through Art, is an exhibit sponsored by Stairways Behavioral Health, the Mental Health Association of Northwestern Pennsylvania, the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Erie Art Museum. The exhibit remains open at the Erie Art Museum through January 5, 2025.

60 YEARS OF TRADITION



Dressed in their holiday best, these cuties helped us get in the Christmas spirit. Pictured left to right, Rowan Heidt, Novahleigh Perez-Fiolek, Lariya Troop, Khylif Shields and Emma Little.



Courtney and Patrick Barber, along with their dog Peanut Butter, snapped a family holiday picture for the 60th Annual Barber Christmas Ball: A Diamond Christmas.

The annual Barber Christmas Ball has been a cherished holiday tradition for generations, supporting Barber National Institute. Founded by Dr. Gertrude Barber and a dedicated volunteer committee, the event originally took place at Rainbow Gardens before relocating to the Bayfront Convention Center over a decade ago. Its continued growth in popularity reflects the deep-rooted connection families have with this celebration, many of whom follow in the footsteps of previous generations.

We are particularly honored to have Courtney and Patrick Barber serve as this year's Chair Couple for the 60th Annual Barber Christmas Ball. Patrick, Dr. Barber's great-nephew, currently holds the position of Senior Vice President of the organization.

"My Aunt Tootie, Dr. Gertrude Barber, exemplified a spirit of giving and community service," said Patrick. "Aunt Tootie's vision of respect and dignity for all individuals has been realized

through the love and dedication of parents, staff, volunteers, donors and community leaders. She believed that all things are possible if we set a goal and persevere."

With Dr. Barber's community spirit in mind, the Barber family invites you to join them for the 60th Annual Barber Christmas Ball: A Diamond Christmas on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024 at the Bayfront Convention Center in Erie. The following day, our individuals will enjoy the festive decorations, food and dancing.

"The Barber Ball is truly special, as it brings together generations of families in support of Barber National Institute's mission," Courtney shared. "We are excited to continue this tradition with our entire family and your presence and generosity will greatly enhance the vital programs and services that empower individuals and families within our community. We look forward to celebrating this milestone occasion with you!"

◆ THANK YOU 2024 SPONSORS ◆

The Barber Family
In Memory of Dr. Gertrude A. Barber

Matt & Karen Clark and
Family and the Humes
Family Dealerships

KeyBank



LAMAR



Congressman &
Mrs. Phil English



MACDONALD
ILLIG ATTORNEYS



GANNON
UNIVERSITY



MaherDuessel





60TH ANNUAL Barber Christmas Ball A DIAMOND CHRISTMAS

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2024

BAYFRONT CONVENTION CENTER, ONE SASSAFRAS PIER • DOORS OPEN AT 7 P.M.

Continuous music from Stiletto Fire, a dance and showband from Detroit, Michigan, and entertainment by DJ Tony B.

Guests will enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres, tasty desserts, soft drinks and two cocktails per person. Cash bar available. (The Convention Center is now cashless and will only accept a credit card.) Complimentary valet parking.

RESERVATIONS ARE \$95 PER PERSON.

All proceeds from this magical evening will go toward Barber National Institute's vital programs and services that provide hope and opportunity to children and adults throughout Pennsylvania.

Specialized overnight packages are available for Christmas Ball guests. Contact the Sheraton Erie Bayfront Hotel at (814) 454-2005 by Dec. 1 for reservations.



Reservations and Sponsorship opportunities (No need for a written invitation.)

BARBERINSTITUTE.ORG/BALL



Paraeducator Jeremy Napierkowski is an important member of Robby Eddy's team.

ROBBY'S TRANSFORMATIONAL PROGRESS

The Barber Ball remains a signature fundraising event for the Dr. Gertrude Barber Foundation funding vital programs and services like those at the Elizabeth Lee Black School.

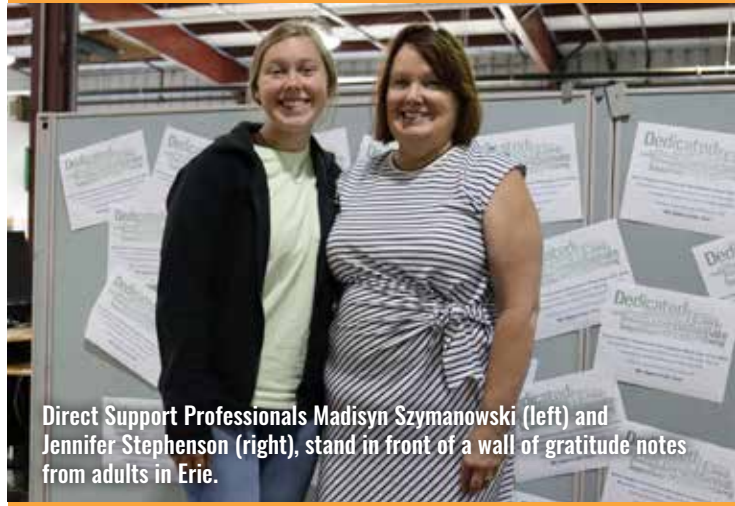
One inspiring story is about Robby, a student at the Elizabeth Lee Black School. When he enrolled in 2022, he expressed himself through challenging behavior, high activity levels, and limited vocabulary. Thanks to the dedication of his team, Robby has made incredible strides. Now at 12, he can express his needs with a growing vocabulary and a communication device. He's learning to control his behavior, follow directions safely, and is showing improvement daily. His mother Heather shares, **"His progress is amazing. He has found his voice. He can now tell me he loves me. We can safely go into the community. We are grateful for the team at the Elizabeth Lee Black School!"**

Barnhart Golf Outing

The 2024 Barnhart Gives Charity Golf Outing was a remarkable event that demonstrated unwavering support for both Barber National Institute and Shriners Children's Erie. Through the collective efforts of generous participants, sponsors, and volunteers, this event managed to raise an impressive \$62,046 providing vital assistance to the children and families these organizations serve. It's worth noting that Barnhart Transportation's enduring partnership with Barber National Institute exemplifies its commitment to making a lasting and positive impact on the community.



Patrick Barber is presented proceeds from Barnhart Transportation's annual golf outing.



Direct Support Professionals Madisyn Szymanowski (left) and Jennifer Stephenson (right), stand in front of a wall of gratitude notes from adults in Erie.

Honoring Direct Support Professional's During "DSP Week"

Direct Support Professionals are the foundation of Barber National Institute. Celebrations were held Sept. 8-14 throughout Pennsylvania. The week is a fantastic opportunity to highlight the dedicated and innovative direct support workforce that is the heart and soul of support for people with disabilities.

POWERING PEACE OF MIND: Grant Generates Reliability



A grant from Erie Insurance will purchase emergency generators for our community homes. Thank you, Erie Insurance!

Residential community homes in Erie and Pittsburgh will receive upgrades to electrical services and portable generators thanks to a \$97,000 grant from Erie Insurance. "The electrical upgrades will improve the overall safety of older homes with the installation of code compliant exterior and interior electrical components," said Thad Jackman, Barber National Institute senior director of residential services. "And the portable generators give us the flexibility to place them at a home with a power outage enabling the home to shelter in place rather than relocate to a hotel."

The reliability of generators ensures that critical medical equipment, communication devices and safety systems remain operational during outages. "These electrical upgrades allow staff to focus on care without worrying about power-related disruptions, provide peace of mind and maintain a sense of normalcy," said Jackman.



Megan DeMarco ran past Barber National Institute's main campus this summer. Adults, children and staff lined East Ave. with music, bubbles and signs.

ONE STREET AT A TIME:

Every Single Street Erie Project Wraps-Up

Every Single Street Erie project began in September 2023, when Erie realtor and fitness enthusiast Megan DeMarco decided to take on the ambitious goal of running every street in Erie.

Inspired by ultramarathon runner Rickey Gates' similar project in San Francisco, DeMarco set out to explore her hometown in a new and meaningful way. Along the way, she not only discovered hidden gems and met incredible people but also used the challenge as an opportunity to give back to the community. Despite a severe injury that sidelined her for five months, DeMarco resumed the project in April 2024. Local companies sponsored DeMarco's project, donating \$250 each to Barber National Institute.

In total, DeMarco's Every Single Street Erie raised over \$4500 for Barber National Institute.

"This was such an interesting way for Megan to combine

her love of running and her philanthropic spirit. Megan's been a longtime friend of Barber National Institute," said Robert Barber, Barber National Institute senior vice president. "Earlier in her career, she worked in the External Affairs Department at Barber National Institute and on the organizing team for Barber Beast on the Bay. She carried her passion on for our mission and today participates in Barber Beast on the Bay and as a celebrity bartender for Beast & Brews."

DeMarco, accompanied by an additional 100 runners, completed her final run down Erie's iconic State Street on Sunday, Oct. 13 wrapping up 500 miles of city streets. Participants celebrated at Five Iron Golf.



Congratulations to our recent retirees, who combined, served Barber National Institute more than 120 years! Pictured (L-R) are Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, Sharon Johnson, John Barber, Carrie Kontis and Joe Lish.

Celebrations of Service

Barber National Institute honored decades of service by employees Sharon Johnson, Carrie Kontis and Joe Lish. Their contributions to Barber National Institute will be missed. Congratulations!

BARBER BEAST ON THE BAY: NEVER GIVE UP HOPE

Some say it takes fortitude to participate in Barber Beast on the Bay - a strength of mind, a will, synonymous with bravery and endurance. Desiree Davis, 58, has been hospitalized 26 times for depression and hospitalized three times for attempted suicide. In recovery for 11 years, Davis found hope and purpose in facilitating a Christian support group that addresses hurts, habits and hang-ups.

"I tell people, there is hope, as long as you have air in your lungs, there's hope," said Davis. It's hope that motivated Davis to complete the Barber Beast on the Bay six times as an elite wave competitor and a top fundraiser. "I have hope for the future and a world that recognizes differences are what make us special."

Davis competed in the 2024 Barber Beast on the Bay four years after receiving a partial knee replacement. She also had to overcome respiratory issues and arthritis in her joints. And, while this year's event was extra challenging physically, it also held a special place in her heart.

"I competed this year in honor of my brother Torsten Carlson who has Downs Syndrome. Tor has been employed by Barber National Institute and, at various times in his life, received services," Davis wrote on her Barber Beast on the Bay fundraising page. "Tor



Desiree Davis and brother Tor proudly wear their Beast on the Bay shirts and medals from this year's event.

has had a very rough year with a back fracture and bilateral femur fractures, requiring multiple surgeries. He is an inspiration and my hero."

Recognized at this year's Barber Beast on the Bay as a top fundraiser, Davis generated \$1,900 in two weeks. "Tor is my why. I thought of what happened to him and instead of feeling sorry for myself and my own infirmities, I decided, enough is enough! I was more determined than ever to raise money for Barber National Institute- an organization that has given so much to Tor and to others throughout Pennsylvania."

Davis has raised nearly \$10,000 for Barber National Institute. "In doing Barber Beast on the Bay, I am reminded to be grateful to God who has given me health and Tor. He is my inspiration to never give up."



PAUL T. NELSON SERVICE AWARD

Barber National Institute annually awards an employee the Paul T. Nelson Service Award in recognition of their volunteer spirit. This year, the award was presented to Jonathon "Jon" Finke, who joined the

Barber team in 1999. Jon is known around Barber for his "get the job done" attitude and his easy-going disposition.

Teamwork is a pillar of Barber National Institute's culture, and a philosophy instilled by its founder Dr. Gertrude Barber. Jon is not fond of public recognition and is known for working behind the scenes.

"He's the volunteer you can count on for early morning shifts and to do whatever is asked of him," said Robert Barber, Barber National Institute senior vice president. "Perhaps he's most known for his leadership of the Shillelagh Golf Tournament. For more than a decade, Jon coordinated the tournament volunteers, on-course games, prizes, and raffles and event set-up."

Over the years, Jon has been involved in events with fond memories such as Dr. Barber's Garden Party & Luncheon and the famous Spaghetti Dinner and Raffle nights.

THANK YOU JON!

The Beast is better with friends! Team Beware the Beast was one of the 122 teams that tackled the course together.

11TH ANNUAL BARBER BEAST ON THE BAY: ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS

A little rain couldn't keep these Beasts at bay! Over 1,200 people from 23 states and Canada stormed Presque Isle State Park, in Erie, for the 11th annual Barber Beast on the Bay obstacle course race on Sept. 7.

Participants not only had to contend with 10 miles of sand, swamp, and trails in the rain, but they also took on 30 natural and manmade obstacles spread over the peninsula. As always, athletes were awarded a medal and cold beer after crossing the finish line at Waldameer Park.

"I LOOK FORWARD TO COMING EVERY YEAR AND ALWAYS HAVING A GREAT TIME. THE SET UP THIS YEAR WAS GREAT," ONE PARTICIPANT SAID IN THE EVENT SURVEY.

"THIS WAS MY FIRST YEAR DOING IT AND IT WAS TONS OF FUN. I CANNOT WAIT TO START TRAINING FOR NEXT YEAR," SAID ANOTHER.

Inside Waldameer, over 100 adults and children aged 12 and over with physical and intellectual disabilities took on 17 obstacles in the adapted course. The one-mile course had participants pull, push, and navigate challenges before joining up with 10-mile participants to triumphantly cross the finish line together.



More than 400 participants have already signed up to Beat the Beast on Sept. 6, 2025.

**REGISTRATION IS \$100 THROUGH DEC. 31.
SIGN UP NOW AT BARBERBEAST.ORG**



 **BARBER BEAST** ON THE **BAY**



AROUND BARBER NATIONAL INSTITUTE



New School Year Excitement

Elizabeth Lee Black School and Happy Hearts Childcare students have been busy harvesting their summer garden plantings, exploring books, making lots of art and soaking up plenty of new knowledge and skills.



Thank You Senator Dan Laughlin

Students from Barber National Institute's Elizabeth Lee Black School gathered in song to thank Pennsylvania Senator Dan Laughlin who was instrumental in securing an additional \$750,000 in funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for Barber National Institute's Elizabeth Lee Black School as part of the 2024-2025 Pennsylvania state budget.

"We serve children facing the greatest challenges, whether behavioral, medical, educational or a combination of all three. Their school districts and parents turn to us for help. Funding secured by Senator Laughlin will help offset the rising costs of providing high-quality education. This funding also will help us remain somewhat competitive by allowing us to increase salaries for special education teachers and paraeducators ensuring we can meet our students' needs," said Barber National Institute Executive Vice President Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey.



Happy 95th Birthday, Joan!

Barber National Institute celebrated Joan Harvey's 95th birthday this October. Joan moved to Barber National Institute in May 1975 and is the Institute's oldest living resident. Joan loves going to the library, listening to audio books, and going to restaurants with her three housemates and staff. Joan is a powerful advocate for herself, she loves making her own decisions, speaking her mind, and being as independent as possible.



Happy Birthday, Dr. Barber!

Barber National Institute marked the birthday of its founder Dr. Gertrude Barber with celebrations, sweet treats, and dancing.



Erie Regional Chamber Connect 4 Coffee

Business leaders met for coffee at Barber National Institute's main campus this fall to learn about opportunities to employ adults with intellectual disabilities.



United Fund of Warren County Nickle Challenge

Barber National Institute's Bollinger campus participated in the United Fund of Warren County's 3rd Annual Nickel Challenge on Saturday, Sept. 28, 2024. Nickels and coins were donated to form lines and designs across the bridge to help United Fund raise the first 2024 contributions.



Smiles & Rainbows

Adults from Corry took a trip this summer to Niagara Falls. The Maid of the Mist excursion was a blast!



Barber Behavioral Health Professionals Community Resource

Barber Behavioral Health professionals are featured weekly in a news segment on Erie News Now – 4 Your Mental Health. Experts tackle difficult topics, provide guidance, and reduce the stigma associated with mental health.



CHECK OUT OUR VIDEO LIBRARY!

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 355
Erie, PA

BARBER SPIRIT

Barber Spirit is a quarterly publication for friends of the
Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc.
100 Barber Place • Erie, PA 16507-1863
814-453-7661 • FAX: 814-455-1132
BNlerie@BarberInstitute.org
BarberInstitute.org

John J. Barber
President/Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey
Executive Vice President

William Gloekler
Chairman, Board of Directors

Bridget Power Barber
Vice President, External Affairs & Strategic Initiatives

Laura Schaaf
Director of Giving

Andrea Krivak
Event Coordinator

Lauren Harrington
Marketing Specialist

Tammy Roche
Director, Strategic Communications

Anthony Esposito
Communication/Social Media Coordinator

Aubrey Smith
Web & Graphic Designer

**LEARN MORE &
SAVE-THE-DATES!**



**BARBERINSTITUTE.ORG/
EVENTS**

Many sponsorship levels are available
to support these fundraisers and the
mission of the Barber National Institute.
For more information, contact:

LAURA R. SCHAAF
Director of Giving
Barber National Institute
814-528-4898
lschaaf@barberni.org

Upcoming Events

BARBER CHRISTMAS BALL

Saturday, December 14, 2024 • Bayfront Convention Center

ADULT SERVICES CHRISTMAS DANCE

(funded in part by donors to the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Foundation)
Sunday, December 15, 2024 • Bayfront Convention Center

JAY & MONA KANG ART SHOW & SALE

Call for entries • March 13-15, 2025
In-Person & Virtual Art Show • April 24-28, 2025
North Complex & On-Line

SHILLELAGH GOLF TOURNAMENT

June 12, 2025 • Whispering Woods Golf Course

ERIE GIVES DAY

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

BARBER BEAST ON THE BAY

Saturday, September 6, 2025 • Presque Isle State Park

LADIES ONLY LUNCHEON

Saturday, November 22, 2025 • Kahkwa Club