



C.O.R.S.E. Newsletter

Co-Chair's Message

The Scituate C.O.R.S.E. Foundation is quickly approaching the two year mark since it was created by a group of dedicated parents, educators and community members in February of 2006. As Co-Chairs, we have had the privilege to witness and guide the evolution of the Foundation over the past 20 months. The potential opportunities and resources to be explored and acted upon to benefit students with special needs can at times be overwhelming. One might think of this in terms of driving down a highway looking through the wind shield of a car. The landscape is vast, so much to take in, the potential to take a road that leads to an amazing destination or experience is always a possibility. As initiatives supported by the Foundation are being implemented, the vision to enrich the lives of those children with the greatest needs only expands and evolves, and our landscape becomes bigger. As we assess

what will be next steps for the Foundation, we stay committed to our guiding philosophies:

Strive for a successful and innovative collaboration with SPS administration, School Committee, Scituate Recreation, PAC, SEA, PTO'S and other groups that interface with our special education students and community.

Insure that programs are run by highly qualified staff that employ "best practice" instruction. Courses are developed so that students with special needs can access them, with low student to staff ratios for optimum instruction.

Resources and programs funded by CORSE benefit all students that attend SPS. Programs funded by CORSE are available to all students, and resources for SPS ultimately benefit the greater student population.

Feedback and assessments are completed on a regular basis from staff, parents and students on program implementation and instruction. Parent and faculty surveys have also been completed to provide direction to prioritize and direct funding.

While it is our charge to focus on the road in front of us, we would like to take a moment to look in the "rear view" mirror and share with you some of the accomplishments over the past 20 months. We are mindful and profoundly grateful to all those who have dedicated their time, resources and expertise to the successes that we are proud to share with you in this newsletter.

Please continue to help the C.O.R.S.E. Foundation serve its mission. We depend on your support to help us prosper.

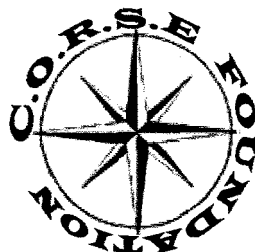
Tracy & Marynell

2007-2008 Board Membership

The following is a current list of CORSE Foundation Board Members:

Tracy Johnston - Co-Chair
 Marynell Henry - Co-Chair
 Jennifer O'Neill - Secretary
 Kristin Erickson - Treasurer

Elaine Bleckley	Noreen Hebert
Sheila Chaisson	Judy Norton
Cindy Crimmins	Erin Partridge
Lorraine Devin	Jennifer Roche
Suzanne Erwin	



*Scituate Community
 Of Resources for
 Special Education*

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Did You Know the CORSE Foundation...

- Has a current Membership list of 200+ participants that include parents of children with and without special needs, educators and community members.
- Funded \$25,000 in supplemental resources for Scituate public schools including equipment, materials and professional development that benefit all students who attend SPS.
- As a non-profit, public charity organization, the CORSE Foundation has been able to access grant funds that would not otherwise be available to Scituate public schools. To date, CORSE has received \$19,000 in philanthropic and grant awards.
- Collaborated with Scituate Recreation in creating and funding the “All Stars” recreation program. Recreational experiences are offered in 6 week cycles in fall, winter and spring with a week long, full day camp experience in

August.

- Supports academic and social skills programming for all students. In the past 8 months, CORSE has provided \$25,000 to fund these programs with 150+ students enrolling. Ongoing programs include:

Social Skills Courses:

Kid’s Exchange (Pre-school-K)

Seaside Explorers (Grade 1-3)

Art Club (Grade 9-12)

Academic Courses:

Reading Tutoring (Grade 3-5)

Math Tutoring (Grade 2-5)

Study Skills (Grade 7-8)

“Hit the Course” for C.O.R.S.E. Golf Tournament

On September 28th 2007, the Foundation held its first annual “Hit the Course” for CORSE Golf Tournament at the award winning Widows Walk Golf Course in Scituate, Massachusetts. Over 100 golfers, both skilled and amateur, had a great time under blue skies in the scramble style tournament with a shot gun start. Following the tournament, golfers and friends were invited to a dinner and auction at the River Club. Guests enjoyed a buffet dinner, a silent and live auction, raffles, and the tournament winners were announced.

A special thanks to all those that planned and supported this successful event: co-chairs Jen Roche and Kristin Erickson, the golf tournament committee, our sponsors, and all the individuals and businesses that donated to the tournament.



External Funding Sources

In 2006, the CORSE Foundation Board of Directors appointed a Philanthropic Program Initiative (PPI) sub-committee. The committee’s responsibilities are numerous, however, in 2007 the focus was to investigate and coordinate the external grant submission process to philanthropic organizations. In a very short period, we have expanded our funding sources to include foundation grants, requests for proposals, corporate giving, and philanthropic donations. Through the PPI sub-committee, the CORSE Foundation has accessed funds that would not otherwise be available to Scituate Public Schools. Over the past 18 months, CORSE has received over \$19,000 in philanthropic and grant awards.

The CORSE PPI sub-committee applied for and received funding awards from Building 19, Comcast, CVS, Dependable Cleaners, Genesis Foundation, Harvard Pilgrim Health Care and South Coastal Bank. These funds offset initiatives and programming costs to all Scituate Public School families who participate in our numerous programs. We are extremely grateful to these companies and organizations that have supported the CORSE Foundation mission to enhance and provide the highest quality educational experience so that students with special needs can reach their full potential.

In addition, the foundation is the proud recipient and benefactor of numerous memorial funds and private donations. Our heartfelt thanks to the Anacleto, Considine, Kuzmick, Macksamie, Parker, Versekcs, and Wahl families as well as North Community Church and Enterprise Equipment Company for their generous support of the children of Scituate. Ideas and suggestions for external funds are welcome and can be submitted to the CORSE Foundation at corsefoundation@comcast.net.

Lorraine Devin

Summer All Stars Camp Is A Winner!

*One of these mornings
You're gonna rise up singing
Then you'll spread your wings
And you'll take to the sky*

The refrain from Gershwin's melody "Summertime" (*and the livin' is easy*) is generally not the soundtrack for most families with children who have special needs. For these families the months of June, July and August can loom large. I'm one of those people who longs for summer; the warmth and the light, the colors, a day at the beach, some "down time". But for many children with special needs open ended leisure time is anxiety-producing and potentially regressive. The creativity and imagination that is born on a lazy afternoon might just elude them. Sensory sensitivities can detract from a relaxing day at the beach. Language and social challenges impact and limit opportunities for just hanging out with a friend. So what are such families to do? This year, thanks to a successful collaboration between the Scituate C.O.R.S.E. Foundation and the Scituate Recreation Department, families had a new option, and summer got a whole lot better.

Jennifer Vitelli, the Director of the Recreation Department, and C.O.R.S.E. Foundation co-chairs Marynell Henry and Tracy Johnston rolled up their shirtsleeves earlier in the year and mapped out an unprecedented summer camp experience for children with special needs and their peers. For one week in August a camp was offered for children to participate in noncompetitive recreational activities, craft projects and special events involving music, reptiles and a field trip to a pirate ship! A

premiere staff was hired: Special Educator and Football Coach Mike Connor, Early Childhood Center Inclusion Specialist Jennifer Spinale, Jenkins teacher Jane Cox and ECC Extended Day Integrated Kindergarten teacher Patty Fowler. These pros joined together with dedicated assistant and junior coaches to step up to the plate in what one staff member, Jane Cox, described as "a very challenging...yet most rewarding" experience.

At first I thought I was dreaming. As my daughter and I walked toward the place where I thought camp would be commencing, a kind face greeted us and reassured me that we were heading in the right direction. There wasn't one split second of doubt or confusion on my part. This is a good start I thought. Once inside the door we were efficiently greeted by another friendly individual who signed my daughter in. Around the large room there were "guideposts": a place to hang up backpacks and windbreakers, Mayor Johnson picture icons posted for children who benefit from visual cues, and 3 large mats defining the spaces where each of three groups of children would gather according to age/level of need with their respective coaches. There were familiar faces, familiar symbols and familiar words being spoken, all of which aided in creating a safe and inviting environment.

The next day, when it happened again, that feeling that I must be dreaming, I told myself to bring my camera to see if I could capture it on film. The dream kept being good, and was even getting better. It was liking watching a ballet where you know there was lots of hard work and muscle behind the scenes, and yet an appearance of calm effortlessness, well-orchestrated programming, star-quality staff (sunglasses and all!) and a balance of

being organized without being rigid, and relaxed without being chaotic. I wasn't sure that I *could* capture this on film.

On Thursday, Coach Mike Connor invited the parents to come for a softball game. We could watch the game from the bleachers and gather for a hotdog lunch afterward. When, despite my best efforts, I realized I was not going to make it in time for the game, I dissolved into tears. A silly reason to cry you might think, but it was not until the All Stars Programs with Coach Mike that I have had the occasion to sit on the sidelines and cheer my child on as she runs from base to base, belly laughing and filled with joy. She is 9 years old. It had been a long time to wait for something so basic to so many families. I didn't want to miss another minute.

After five days I was sure that I wasn't dreaming after all. But the Summer All Stars Camp was a dream come true: a warm and welcoming place for kids to gather, regardless of inhibitions or limitations, to be among peers, right in our very own community. I never did remember to bring my camera. But I do have this enduring image in my mind: the sun shining, swings going back and forth, a playground filled with joyful children, each one with a sense of purpose: to relax and have fun; and each one with a sense of belonging.

Cindy Crimmins

CORSE Board Member & Parent

"She is 9 years old. It had been a long time to wait for something so basic to so many families."

Double Your Donation With a Matching Gift!

Our fundraising committee is grateful for the financial contributions you have made to support the CORSE Foundation throughout the year. Did you know that matching gifts could double, or even triple, your gift or donation to the CORSE Foundation? Simply complete and submit your employer's matching gift form before the end of the year. Often, employers will also match gifts from retirees and spouses as well. Please check your company's matching gifts information to learn about your company's benefit. If you have questions regarding matching gifts, please contact Lorraine Devin at 781-545-1115 or email devin1115@aol.com.



*Scituate Community
Of Resources for
Special Education*

**SCITUATE COMMUNITY OF RESOURCES
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The Scituate C.O.R.S.E. Foundation (Community of Resources for Special Education), a non-profit organization, was established in February 2006 by a group of dedicated parents and educators to raise funds to enhance and provide the highest quality educational experience so that students with special needs can reach their full potential. Through a variety of fundraising events and activities, the Foundation is able to allocate grants for a wide range of supplemental resources that will benefit students, parents and

CORSE Foundation Grants at Work:

In the Primary Learning Center at Hatherly

I would like to take this opportunity to thank CORSE for their generous grant and report on its positive impact for all of my students in the Primary Learning Center. Last year, CORSE purchased Boardmaker software, Velcro and laminating sheets, as well as a VERY efficient color printer which has enabled me to develop materials which enhance the augmentative communication system (basically the use of picture icons to help children communicate both expressively and receptively.) I have been able to develop social stories that help children self-regulate their behaviors, both for home and school, as well as develop picture schedules which have fostered independence.

Two of my students have extensive communication books which have pictures of families, social stories for different activities as well as a cover which helps them navigate through their day with pictures of staff and a "first-then" strip which clearly states when activities are happening. One very exciting development from these communication books is the high interest of peers. Last year, many children started drawing and designing their own communication boards at recess. One classmate actually developed a picture schedule for a playdate he had with one of the students in the PLC. Thank you so much and I hope to be able to create more materials and hone my skills to help my students reach their full potential in communication!

Abby Tichnor- Special Education Teacher/ Primary Learning Center



In the Computer Lab at Jenkins

The CORSE Foundation sponsored an after school computer club in the Spring of 2007 and is sponsoring the club again in the Fall of 2007. The club provides the opportunity for special needs and regular education students to develop academic and social skills in a small group, multi-sensory setting. Students learn new computer skills and gain a deeper knowledge of computer programs and web sites. The club also seeks to increase students' ability to share and present information learned. The club increases computer knowledge in a fun, exciting, and hands-on environment. The students learn to navigate web sites, such as grossology.com and even perform a heart transplant online. They also learn to use Power Point, Inspiration, and other software. Club members even took apart a computer to examine the inside.

Quotes from a few of the Spring students:

"I absolutely loved it. You get to do all sorts of activities that are fun and help better your understanding of computers. You won't regret it."

"Last year's computer class was really fun! You can learn about new web sites and tons of other fun things. We saw the inside of the computer, too! I enjoyed it very much!"

"The computer club is really fun. I learned a lot. I liked it so much."

Parent Quotes:

"My child benefited by gaining self confidence with some key software programs necessary for future school work and experienced a friendly and comfortable classroom atmosphere. She enjoyed the class very much and was happy to go each week."

"My child came home each week with a big smile on his face—thank you! I am grateful for your effort!"

Rick English, 5th grade teacher

Sharon Taylor, Special Ed teacher

Jenkins Elementary School