

SPOTLIGHT ON SEGUIN

Winter 2011



Seguin Receives Major Bequest FROM EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN

In September, Seguin was the recipient of an unanticipated \$50,000 bequest from the late Dolores Nowicki. This gift will assist Seguin greatly in the construction of a new group home to serve people with developmental disabilities. As her dear friend Dolores Kaczmarek explains, she was a wonderful woman who lived every day with joy and generosity in her heart. To honor Dolores Nowicki's memory, Seguin has given Dolores Kaczmarek the chance to tell the heart-rending story of her very charitable friend, and "friend of Seguin" as well.

Guest Story – The Dolores I Knew & Loved
By Dolores Kaczmarek

My friend Dolores Nowicki died Christmas Eve 2010. She was a wonderful friend and a wonderful person. I wish you and many others had known her.

I met Dolores when my family moved from Wisconsin, during my junior year of high school at St. Stanislaus Kostka School in Chicago. Dolores was an only child so she surrounded herself with many friends. I felt fortunate she befriended me and we remained lifelong friends.

Dolores was a person full of life with a hearty laugh. She was always ready to go dancing, to church events, sporting events or places her friends suggested—she was always game. There was never a dull moment with Dolores and she was the main attraction with her charming, joyful personality. Although Dolores was popular, and had steady beaux, she never married. She would have loved to have married, but just didn't find the RIGHT ONE. The one fellow whom she might have married was killed during the Korean War and she never got over him, speaking of him so often.

Nevertheless, Dolores led a very Christian Life, while always being happy and full of laughter. She was frugal with money and never thought of herself. She was always concerned about other people. She did not believe in material things and proved it by not having the conveniences that you and I enjoy every day. Her mind was occupied with helping other people. She lived without an air conditioner, cable TV, or a telephone with call waiting or an answering service. In fact, she finally gave up her television altogether. She had the money to buy a car, but she always said they were too expensive. So she took public transportation or paid people to take her places that she couldn't reach by bus. She was concerned about people with disabilities, among others, and their needs especially seemed to break her heart. She would always talk about the places she visited where people with disabilities worked. So she always donated money to such causes that were so dear to her heart.

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3100 south central avenue
cicero, illinois
60804-3987
tel 708-863-3803
fax 708-863-3863
tty 708-863-7653
www.seguin.org

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HELP SEGUIN BUILD BRIDGES TO FUTURE By Donating To Holiday Appeal

Georgia Hunter is an extraordinary young woman. While born with Down syndrome, she also is very much typical of her generation. She sends texts, emails and posts on Facebook. She listens to music, and is an active and enthusiastic athlete. She loves to bowl as well as play basketball and golf. Most recently she won the State of Illinois Special Olympics State Championship in golf in down-state Bloomington. Georgia holds two jobs working 20 to 25 hours per week while she lives at home in Oak Park with her parents Karen and Glenn. She strives to excel in all areas of her life. She is a real joy and inspiration to those who know her.



Georgia Hunter (center, front), one of many individuals benefitting from Seguin's Building Bridges to the Future project; with mom Karen, sisters Cate & Emma (2nd row) and dad Glenn (in back)

In the past year Georgia took the major life's step of transitioning from Oak Park and River Forest High School. As she made this crucial move, she and her family secured assistance from Seguin's Building Bridges to the Future project. This innovative initiative offers hands-on support to students with developmental disabilities who are about to leave high school. Like so many others, Georgia's family wondered how to navigate the many complex steps to secure adult services in Illinois, from obtaining funding to cover adult services costs to applying for and receiving basic public benefits.

As children grow, public education is mandated to provide services to individuals like Georgia, but no such mandate exists for adult services. As a result many individuals with developmental disabilities languish without services and supports once they cross the threshold to adulthood. This puts additional stresses on them and their families. Georgia and her family, however, were able to avoid these pitfalls through Seguin's Building Bridges to the Future project. Today, she enjoys the assistance of Seguin's community employment services. She is a proud, productive worker with an infectious positive spirit. In fact, Georgia has taken on ever-increasing responsibilities and now is in charge of the non-alcoholic beverage department at Trader Joe's with limited

guidance, aided by Seguin's support and commitment. Simply put, Georgia is amazing—a real "peach"!

Georgia is just one person of many whose needs have been met through this vital initiative. Today you can help us sustain and expand this project to build bridges for more area high school students with developmental disabilities and their families. Through the generosity of an anonymous area foundation, all donations by new donors or increased donations by current donors will be matched dollar-for-dollar by the foundation, up to \$10,000. That means your contribution to Seguin is doubled! Will you help us to meet this challenge?

Now, with the help of Seguin and her own indomitable spirit, Georgia's life promises to shine brightly into the future. At this holiday season, we would be thankful if you would support Seguin in fulfilling its essential mission by donating generously. All contributions are tax deductible.

Please make a donation today by sending a check in the enclosed envelope, by visiting

www.Seguin.org,
OR BY CALLING DAWNEEN SURIANO AT
708-222-4251.



SEGUIN RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT FROM THE VEOLIA ENVIRONNEMENT FOUNDATION

To Support Community Employment & Training Classroom for People with Disabilities



Seguin Services is the proud recipient of a \$28,650 grant from the Veolia Environnement Foundation. The Foundation's generous funding will cover the costs of constructing a state of the art classroom dedicated to providing job skills and other vocational job skills training to persons with developmental disabilities served by Seguin. The Veolia Foundation supports non-profit, community-oriented projects contributing to sustainable development, with special focus on outreach, workforce development and environmental conservation. It is unique in that every project that it supports is accompanied by a sponsor, who is a Company employee. Patricia Podczerwinski of Veolia ES Technical Solutions, L.L.C., sponsored the grant request to the Veolia Environnement Foundation on behalf of Seguin Services for this much needed funding. Based in Chicago, and with several offices in the Chicago Metropolitan area, Veolia Environmental Services North America is the leading provider of fully integrated waste, environmental and industrial cleaning solutions to residential, municipal, commercial and industrial customers across the US, Canada and the Caribbean.

Over the past several years Seguin has secured financial backing from a variety of public and private sources in their ongoing efforts to renovate the Carr Center, their main employment and training center based in Cicero, Illinois. With the support from the Veolia Foundation and other sources, Seguin is in process of constructing nine state-of-the-art classrooms where they will train many of the 335 adults with developmental disabilities served through their Community Employment Alternatives and Community Vocational Training programs.

Seguin has been quite successful in securing jobs with community employers for the people they serve. In addition Seguin operates two businesses, Seguin Gardens & Gifts and Seguin Auto Center, where they employ many people with disabilities. The Veolia Foundation's grant will enhance these employment and training efforts. As John Voit, Seguin's President and CEO, states, "Seguin is thrilled to secure this major funding from such a stalwart corporate presence. Veolia is truly focused on giving back to the communities that it serves, and providing people with disabilities the chance to gain skills and secure productive, meaningful work."

Ms. Podczerwinski became aware of Seguin's work and discusses it frequently within her family. She has observed that Seguin "lives its mission" to integrate, enrich and empower people with disabilities and other special needs, so they can be productive, valued members of society. Pat is "awed by Seguin's achievements in support of their mission," and she is especially "proud that Veolia will act as a benefactor for Seguin and the people they serve."



THE ARC U.S. PROMOTES USE OF **autism NOW** RESOURCE CENTER

Seguin Services is a member of The Arc of the United States, a national advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc is promoting the Autism NOW Resource Center website as a place where high quality resources and information are available for families of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disabilities.

➔ **To learn more, go to
WWW.AUTISMNOW.ORG**

AWARD WINNERS TAKE STEPS UP LADDER OF SUCCESS

The rain didn't dampen the festivities, as Seguin held another successful Celebration Gala, "Taking Steps Up The Ladder Of Success", at The Pavilions at Brookfield Zoo on June 9, 2011. Master of Ceremonies Evelyn Holmes of ABC7 presented the Marjorie A Feeney Volunteers of the Year Award to Sean McCarthy and Nicor Gas, Shining Star Awards to Seguin participants Markita Harris and Lexianna T., and the President's Award to David Brennan and the Chicago Board of Trade Foundation. Over 330 guests bid on 70 silent auction items and raffle baskets while mingling and dining at the buffet stations. At the end of the night nearly \$90,000 was raised to help Seguin meet its mission: supporting individuals with disabilities and other special needs, enabling them to be productive, valued members of society.



Seguin Celebration Gala award winners & attendees enjoy the festivities. Pictured are the following: **BOTTOM LEFT:** Sean McCarthy of Nicor (center) accepts Marjorie A Feeney Volunteers of the Year Award from John Voit and Evelyn Holmes of ABC7; **RIGHT SIDE OF PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Maria Vanik and Seguin nurse Betsy Rogers sell raffle tickets to Seguin nurse Lawanda Wheat; Board member Jim Napolitan & John Voit enjoy a moment of levity; Emcee Evelyn Holmes of ABC7 addresses the rapt Gala audience; Holly Miezio, Board member Tony Miezio & Anna Igoe share in the evening's fun; Board member Don Bartecki, Taylor & Tom Gleitsman and Nancy Kenny swap stories of Seguin success.

SEGUIN HONORS THREE WONDERFUL FAMILIES

with Dedication of Two Homes



Jim Haptonstahl, Steve Kirby, Pat Parker, and John Voit (left to right)



Robert Jr. and Nancy Knuepfer

Seguin Services dedicated two of its group homes this September, honoring two sets of families especially dedicated to the Seguin cause: the Kirby-Parker Families and the Knuepfer Family. Naming of a home is one of the highest honors Seguin bestows upon an individual or family. Such a naming will acknowledge the significant contribution individuals have made to Seguin Services and to persons with disabilities, including donations in excess of \$50,000.

The Kirby-Parker House, located at 22 Park in River Forest, was dedicated September 8. Residence to six women with developmental disabilities, this home was named in honor of Steve and Jeanne Kirby of Elmhurst, as well as Steve's sister Patricia Parker and her late husband Jerry of the Oak Park-River Forest communities. These families have shown a longstanding and generous commitment to supporting the people with developmental disabilities served by Seguin. Inspired by his nephew Dan Parker, Steve Kirby served on Seguin's Board of Directors for 11 years. Among his many accomplishments, Steve raised nearly \$5,000 when he ran in the Washington DC Marathon. With Jeanne and his sister Pat Parker Steve has organized and conducted the Jerry Parker Memorial Sox Outing, which has netted more than \$20,000 the past three years for Seguin. He and Jeanne have made continuous and generous donations to Seguin of both their own time and treasure.

Jerry and Pat Parker's son Dan has been served by Seguin residential and day services since 1997. Jerry and Pat have worked tirelessly to bring a better quality of life to their son, to his housemates, and to all Seguin participants.

Prior to his passing, Jerry served as a stalwart agency volunteer, coaching Special Olympics and assisting in other Seguin support activities. Pat has served faithfully as Seguin's Children Foster Care program Educational & Transitional Services Coordinator. They have contributed or raised tens of thousands of dollars for Seguin, as well as orchestrating help to Seguin through their community of family and friends.

The Knuepfer House, located at 375 S. West Avenue in Elmhurst, was dedicated on September 15 to two outstanding community leaders, the late Robert & Suzanne Knuepfer, while honoring their son Robert "Robb" Knuepfer Jr. Through Robb's leadership, the Knuepfer House was originally designed as a respite home for senior citizens. Seguin Services now owns the home, and re-organized it to implement the SeguinCares initiative. This new and innovative program serves individuals with Alzheimer's, dementia and other age-related concerns in addition to developmental disabilities. The Knuepfer House provides a warm and supportive environment to six women.

The Knuepfer Family has shown Elmhurst the true meaning of community service and leadership, first through Robert and Suzanne Knuepfer and, now, through Robert Knuepfer Jr. Robert and Suzanne were involved with organizations as varied as Elmhurst National Bank and its successors, Elmhurst Memorial Hospital, Elmhurst YMCA, Boy Scouts of America, the Elmhurst school district, PTA, Girl Scouts. Robb has continued in his parents' tradition through his leadership with the Rotary Club, Adler Planetarium, Metropolitan Family Services, and Hinsdale Community House.

John Voit, Seguin's President and CEO, expresses what the entire Seguin community feels about both families:

"These families are shining examples of service to their communities, and a beacon to all families desiring to emulate them. On behalf of everyone at Seguin, I cannot say enough about their generosity and support of the Seguin cause."

COMING ATTRACTIONS

- **REELABILITIES:** Oak Park Film Festival, April 2012 - look for more information in early 2012 on this exciting disability awareness arts festival conducted by Seguin and three other local agencies, including Community Support Services, Oak-Leyden Developmental Services, and Aspire.
- **SEGUIN SERVICES CELEBRATION GALA,** June 2012 - expect "save the date" notices in early 2012.

Seguin Golf Classic

WEATHERS STORMS TO RAISE FUNDS...& SPIRITS

Despite the storms, many friends of Seguin gathered at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club on Tuesday, August 23rd ready to support children and adults with special needs. A few golfers braved the rain and got in a few holes after lunch. Three foursomes even snuck in a full 18! The golfers from Bob Spran's R.A. James Construction earned the lowest team score of the day, David Kinishi came up with the lowest individual score, and Jim Haptonstahl was victorious in the Putting Contest. It takes more than a little rain to dampen Seguin's spirits, as nearly \$55,000 was raised from our generous friends and donors.



Attendees and volunteers alike enjoyed the 19th Annual Seguin Golf Classic, including: BOTTOM LEFT: Seguin participants Andrea Straney and Larry Mikrut flank Seguin staff Dick Biggins at the putting contest; RIGHT SIDE OF PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: Friends of Seguin Jim Frank, Joe Zefran & John Greven brave the weather and strike a pose; Bob Spran, Larry Mikrut, Byron "Scooter" Andreas & John Voit share a moment of camaraderie; Jim Deddo, Bill Matevich, & Mike Brassil wait out the storms at Ruffled Feathers.

Seguin Family Members Host

"RACE FOR THE CAUSE" FUNDRAISER



"Sister Power" came to the fore this past July, when Mary Lou Miller, parent of Seguin participant Mallory Miller, and her sister Patti Paul held their "Race for the Cause" event on behalf of Seguin at Maywood Park Race Track. The event included a dinner, auction, raffle baskets, and night of entertainment. Through their joint efforts Mary Lou and Patti raised approximately \$7,500 this event, held in honor of Mallory Miller's 21st Birthday. The two have received so much positive feedback from their family and friends that they are considering making this an annual event.

Mallory Miller, Seguin Participant (second from right), celebrates her 21st Birthday with her family, brother Matt Miller, mother Mary Lou Miller and sister Amanda Miller at the Race for the Cause event to benefit Seguin Services.

The proceeds of this fundraiser have been allocated to the Seguin group home at 22 Park Avenue in River Forest, where six women with developmental disabilities—including Mallory—reside. This home was also recently dedicated as the Kirby-Parker House in honor of two wonderful and supportive families.

This event was conducted as part of Seguin's "Make Friends with Seguin" campaign. Through this initiative, Seguin is enlisting families of persons served, Board members, and other members of the Seguin community to

hold fundraising events and other donor cultivation or "friend-raising" activities. Mary Lou and Patti enthusiastically responded to the call for help by conducting their own event. Thanks once again go to these powerful and generous sisters for bringing in much needed additional funds to support the Seguin cause!

If you are interested in hosting your own event on behalf of Seguin, please contact Dawneen Suriano at 708-222-4251 or dsuriano@seguin.org.

Cover story continued

Dolores took care of both of her parents when they became ill in their home. Although it was extremely difficult, she refused all the offers for others to help her. She wanted to do things for everyone, but didn't want anyone to do anything for her. When both her parents were gone, she volunteered at Thrift Stores or Senior Clubs, and by babysitting for parents who were working and by sitting with elderly people who could not be left alone while their children worked. If anyone in her neighborhood needed someone to take care of an elderly or sick parent, or if someone needed medication and couldn't afford it, she immediately stepped in to meet these needs. Dolores traveled on buses to visit sick people she knew who were in the hospital and nursing homes. Even in Chicago, the weather was never a problem for Dolores. She would dress up warmly and venture out to help someone in need. I always admired her for the way she sacrificed so many conveniences only to use her resources to help someone who may have needed help in someway or another.



Rendering of the Seguin group home to be built using the gift from Dolores Nowicki.

During the last seven years of her life, she met a fellow named Ernie and spent a great deal of time with him. He was widowed with two children and had a giant flower garden in his back yard that he shared with her. She became very fond of him and his two daughters and their families. She decided to spend all her Holidays with Ernie and his family. Ernie provided her with love and that special family atmosphere that she so badly craved since her parents were gone and she

was alone. This was a real blessing when she became ill and he allowed her to stay at his home in November of 2010. She felt comfortable for the first time in her lifetime to have someone take care of her. Ernie came into her life and he made her last seven years very happy ones.

Since Dolores always considered herself so very healthy, it was such a shock when she became ill. She was my dear lifelong friend. Since we had spent holidays and vacations together over the years, my children were very close to her as well. We thought of one another as family. She will be remembered in our family and my home. Her pictures in our house keep her memory alive.

Thanks for letting me tell you about Dolores. Honestly, she was a good person in every sense of the word, and she showed that by honoring Seguin with a large bequest. Today, we have Dolores in our hearts and GOD HAS DOLORES IN HIS KEEPING.

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