Inspired Giving
Benedictine Foundation

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR
Lorraine Slama

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The National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services recently named Benedictine School teacher Lorraine Slama the 2018 Educator of the Year. This award recognizes excellence and innovation in meeting the needs of children with special needs. Slama was honored at the annual NAPSEC Leadership Conference held in San Antonio.

Slama, who teaches students ranging from 16 to 21 years old, is certified as a recreation therapist with skills in sensory knowledge and functional academics. She has worked as a special educator at Benedictine for nearly 30 years, honing her skills through a lifelong learning approach.

She is best known for sharing her varied talents and enthusiasm with students and staff. Those talents range from juggling to photography and preforming arts, which she has developed into recreational programs at the School. She continues to develop new programs including relaxation classes such as Tai Chi, the use of natural oils and individualized sensory programs.

In her classroom, Slama is able to practice leisure skills and began a juggling program.

“I have kids juggling during their free time,” said Slama. “There is research that shows when you juggle you scan back and forth, and it actually improves reading scores.”

“She brings her knowledge from each of these areas into our School program,” said Benedictine School Education Director Julie Hickey. “She readily shares these skills with everyone — even those outside of her classroom.”

In her years as a teacher, she has volunteered her time in the community by sharing her knowledge at local colleges and with other professional groups. She maintains contact with students post-graduation and offers guidance and mentorship on her own time.

“Lorraine’s passion is to benefit students and adults with special needs, and she works tirelessly to do it,” said Hickey.
Slama attended Salisbury University before beginning her career at the Holly Center in Salisbury, a state-operated, 24-hour residential training facility for individuals with developmental disabilities.

From there, Slama received a job offer from the Benedictine School and joined the faculty. Her background in leisure studies made her an appealing teacher.

“I’m honored and grateful to the school for recommending me for this award,” Slama said. “There have been a lot of neat successes and it’s nice to know I’ve touched someone’s life in a positive way.”

The Benedictine School supports each of Slama’s teaching endeavors including her creation of the Healthy Way Café – a training kitchen that offers lunch and snack options prepared by students for purchase. The academic and vocational program was started through a small grant as a summer activity.

“The café provides an opportunity for students to work on food preparation and service while addressing academic skills such as math and reading, along with meeting vocational goals and objectives including following directions and remaining on task,” Hickey said. “That summer it was so successful in building on student skills in both areas that it has continued for over 15 years.”

Another area of innovation in programming is her creation of a Photography Club, giving students with significant disabilities an appropriate creative outlet. The program involves an annual art show at a local art gallery leading to one student taking photography classes at a community college.

Slama said she receives joy watching her students succeed, and regularly stays in touch with them once they graduate.

“I like being able to teach kids something new,” she said. “When you see that little light bulb go off, that is a great feeling. I really enjoy working at the Benedictine School — it is a family atmosphere. There is a lot of caring and it is warm and welcoming.”

In July, the Healthy Way Café program will celebrate 20 years.
Meet the Board

Thomas J. Collamore
President, Board of Directors

Tom Collamore is the Executive Vice President and Counselor to the President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Prior to the chamber, Tom spent 15 years leading public affairs at a global consumer goods company and a dozen years in senior positions in the executive branch of the federal government.

Tom has served on the board for over 10 years. He started as a member of the board of trustees and served as president of the trustees for four years. During that time, Tom also served in a leadership position for Benedictine’s successful $10 million campaign.

Margaret Madden
Vice President, Board of Directors

Margaret “Maggi” Madden is Pfizer’s Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary. Maggi works closely with the CEO and Chairman of the Board, General Counsel and other senior leadership on SEC and NYSE matters, emerging trends and practices in corporate governance, board-related issues, global corporate financings/capital raising, M&A, pension fund and general corporate matters.

Maggi serves on the Board of Directors for The Benedictine School for Exceptional Children. Her family’s relationship with Benedictine began more than 30 years ago with her parents, Ed and Mary Madden and sister, Mary S. Madden. Mary has been a member of Benedictine’s Adult Services since that time. Maggi has been a Benedictine board member for over 10 years.

Gregory Hviding
Client Representative

Gregory “Greg” Hviding joined Benedictine’s School program at age 10 and currently receives residential and employment services in the Adult Services Program. Over the years, Greg has participated in several sport programs and is an accomplished swimmer, soccer player and bowler. He also enjoys working in the Garden Center, drawing and dancing.

Greg has a brother and sister and is “Uncle Greg” to his five nieces. He works as a facilities assistant at Arcadia Assisted Living in Chester, Md. and is adored by both his colleagues and friends. Known for his caring nature, he goes out of his way to greet everyone from customers, to acquaintances, or friends. He has a glass half-full personality which spills over to those around him.
With the tip of a cowboy hat and the click of a few silver spurs, family, friends and generous supporters of Benedictine Programs and Services helped to raise over $217,500 at the 2018 Spring Benefit: A Night in the Wild West, hosted at the Tidewater Inn in Easton, Md., April 27-28.

"When I think of the Wild West, I think about people who were explorers; people who weren't afraid to follow a different path," said Benedictine Executive Director, Scott Evans. "This path came with little certainty, but they charged forward with the hope of new opportunities and experiences. Similarly, the Sister's decided to follow a new path in 1959. They developed a mission that guided them on their journey and continues to guide us today."

Benefit Co-chairs, Cindy Doukas and Mia Marinucci, along with event volunteers, delivered an authentic Western theme for guests complete with a hitched horse on Dover Street, a lively piano playing saloon tunes and a traveling snake oil salesmen and his medicine show stagecoach.

The evening of hospitality and philanthropy included a chuckwagon supper and a live auction. Guests raised their paddles to bid on items from a 100 percent donated auction list contributing $50,000 to the total raised for the event.
Each year the Board of Directors honors a staff member during Spring Benefit weekend by presenting the Sister Jeanette Award at Friday’s Welcome Reception. The award, established in 2012 in honor of Sister Jeannette Murray who served at Benedictine for over 30 years, represents the values and vision of the Benedictine community.

This year, Caren Parry received the Sister Jeannette Award.

In June, 1993, Caren began her Benedictine career as a 1:1 aide in Total Communications. In just two short years, she became the first assistant in the Speech Department, which involved programming communication devices, developing augmentative communication books, and teaching sign language to students and staff.

In the summer of 1998, Caren took on the role of graphic designer, which was initially a temporary position, but became permanent in the fall. She attended Chesapeake College and Delaware Tech to acquire the needed skills for her new position, although Caren was already very artistically talented.

Caren was promoted to her current role as Manager of the Graphics Department in 2002.

Caren has been responsible for the growth and success of the Graphics Department over the past 12 years, as their customer base continues to expand in both the screen printing and embroidery areas. She has an excellent rapport with customers, many of whom continue to return time and time again to have their work completed by Benedictine Graphics.

Caren is dependable, conscientious, responsible, efficient, and resourceful. She goes above and beyond, working tirelessly for the benefit of Benedictine, both on campus and in the community at various festivals and events. She is sensitive to the needs of the students and individuals who work in the Graphics Department, always willing to accommodate where necessary in order to ensure their success. She brings her creativity and quality of workmanship to the standard of excellence in her department.
Grey skies gave way to sunshine at the Country Club at Woodmore in Mitchellville, Md. as over 50 golfers participated in the 2nd DC/ Baltimore Charity Golf Tournament to benefit Benedictine on June 4th.

The event raised $47,600 in support of the mission of Benedictine to help children and adults with developmental disabilities achieve their greatest potential. Funds raised directly support programs and services that provide community-based learning opportunities for over 150 adults as well as on campus functional academics for the School’s 60 students.

Benedictine parent, trustee and lead sponsor Thad Fletcher, along with his wife, Donna Rochelle, hosted the annual fundraising event.

“We are grateful for the programs at Benedictine,” said Fletcher. “Our daughter Gabby has been a part of the Adult Services program now for three years. The compassionate care that the staff shows Gabby, and the rest of the young adults, is proof of the quality of the organization and its programs.”

Many participants from as far away as Texas joined the Fletchers for a fun day of golf before the start of the Mid-Atlantic Plan Sponsors Annual Trustee Education Conference held in Baltimore.

The tournament introduces players to the mission of Benedictine and the generosity and commitment of the Fletcher family.

The day on the greens ended with a reception at the venue’s Glass Grill that included a 19th hole shoot-out and entertainment by Fletcher’s sister and D.C. jazz vocalist Changamire. The winning foursome was Gerry Esparza, Tyler Grossman, Dan Owens and Christine Turner.
In early May, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, based near Baltimore, granted Benedictine Programs and Services $150,000 to support the organization’s Adult Services.

The adult program serves more than 100 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through services ranging from in-home support and care, to employment, volunteer, community and meaningful day activities.

Additionally, Benedictine’s Community Services and Training Center in Easton, Md., serves adults and students through a partnership with the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and provides training classes that focus on life and vocational skills.

Funds from the Weinberg Foundation will help Benedictine staff assist adults in reaching their personal and career goals through a variety of career exploration and customized employment focused programming. From job coaching to home visits, and many services in-between, Benedictine helps participants on their journey into the community.

Last November, Benedictine received $8,756 from the Frances Stevens Fund which is administered by the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. Funds were used to purchase state-of-the-art equipment for the School’s Multi-Sensory Environment Center including new therapeutic items such as interactive fiber optics, an illuminated marble panel, an interactive power cube, a Star Gazer and aroma diffuser.

The Multi-Sensory Environment Center serves students who experience Sensory Processing Disorders. SPD occurs when sensory signals are not detected or are not organized into appropriate responses by the brain. A person with SPD has
difficulty processing and acting on information received through the senses, which presents challenges in performing everyday tasks and communicating with others.

Buck Duncan, MSCF president, said he was delighted to see the funds being put to good use.

“I am happy to support Benedictine’s mission on behalf of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation,” Duncan said. “At MSCF, we know what a great service Benedictine provides to Maryland’s Mid-Shore. The care they offer to people with developmental disabilities is top notch, and has been for a long time.”

This past April, the Grayce B. Kerr Fund added to the support of Benedictine’s mission as well, awarding $30,000 toward the purchase of a utility van.

For years, two of Benedictine’s businesses, the Bubble Bee Car Wash and B-Blossoms Garden Center, have thrived on campus. As Benedictine continues to build on their community-based model, the purchase of a new utility van through the Kerr Fund gift provides an essential part of that transition.

In 2017, Benedictine also received grant funds through legislation from the State of Maryland. A portion of that funding was recently used to re-finish the gym floor at the School. The new gym floor was unveiled and dedicated in early May. According to Brett Rhodes, adapted physical education instructor at Benedictine, roughly 20 years have passed since the gym floor was last re-finished.

“These grant funds directly impact the lives of those we serve,” said Barry Smale, director of the Benedictine Foundation. “From giving students the space to self-regulate in a new sensory center, to developing motor skills during a basketball game in the gym, or having the support to apply for their very first job – the value of that is priceless.”
For ten years Sysco in Pocomoke City, Md., and Herr’s in Seaford, De., have come together to make Benedictine’s annual swim meet a fun-filled event for all through the generous donation of food items.

Donations from Sysco and Herr’s provided meals to 400 students, staff and family members attending this year’s swim meet.

Dominic Marinucci was presented the Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) Achievement Award on May 23rd at a ceremony in Baltimore. The MACS Achievement Awards is an annual event that highlights the personal achievements of people in the disabilities community.
Benedictine School staff participated in a fully interactive time of professional development including seminars on sensory diets, the multi-sensory center and the Structured Teaching Approach for Readiness Skills, or STARS program. The training gave staff the opportunity to experience four sensory-motor rotations led by the Occupational and Physical therapy team.

Five Benedictine students were represented at the “Celebrating through Art: The First Lady’s Mental Health Awareness Youth Art Display” held at the Lowe House Office Building in Annapolis. Artists were recognized by Maryland's First Lady, Mrs. Yumi Hogan, Secretary of The Maryland Department of Disabilities Carol Beatty, and Assistant State Superintendent for MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services Marcella E. Franczkowski.

Students created art pieces in their “Girl’s Group” led by Benedictine Social Worker Amanda Leal. Congratulations Stella, Cassidy, Tikira, Brittany, and Jules!
Benedictine Foundation
14299 Benedictine Lane
Ridgely, MD 21660

Sunday, July 29, 2018
Event hours 10am – 2pm
$35 per person includes T-shirt and lunch
Paved parking Trailer parking Trophies Rockin’ Entertainment
Ride from various registration/ rally starting points to The
Benedictine School, Ridgely, MD

Special guests Candy Clark & Cindy Williams
from the classic
American Graffiti