

Alumni, Family & Friends

DFRC NEWSLETTER - 2008 EDITION

May 2008

It's a Family Affair

Two parents share their reflections on the Blue-Gold experience

The McInnis Family — a Participant's View

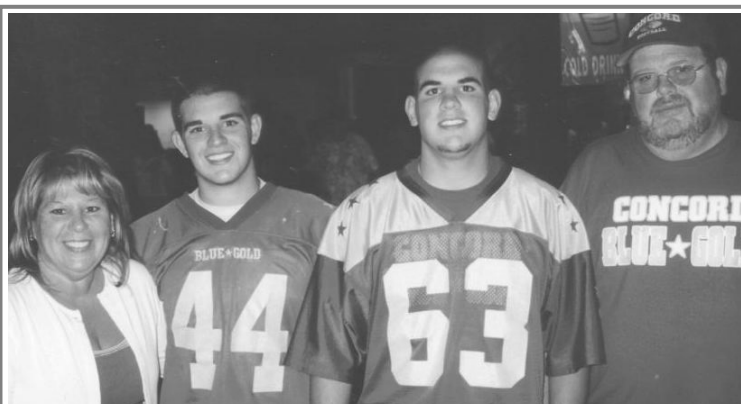
By Lisa McInnis

It was considered an honor in our house.

Those chosen to play were revered and spoken of with eyes wide and focused. Those not chosen could not hide their disappointment,

but extended their congratulations and good wishes as though a prize had been won. But whatever the case, being picked to play in the Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game meant that you were absolutely doing something right. And, we were fortunate enough to be doing something right....twice.

Our oldest son, Ben, got his first experience at Blue-Gold his junior year, serving as a manager for the 2004 Blue Team. Ben was on Concord's football team and was recruited to assist George Kosanovich and Greg Mitchell who were chosen to coach the Blue Team. Ben was very excited to be picked



Dave and Ben McInnis (above center) with their family at the 2007 Blue-Gold All★StarFootball Game

as a manager and told us stories of being able to actually meet those players whom he admired all year. He was especially excited about all the food at camp! He gained weight that week and lamented about the fact that, as manager, he wasn't working out like the players, but eating every bit as much as they were. He did come home with one desire - to be picked to play in the game his senior year.

Ben's senior year proved to be very exciting. Not only did Concord win its second state championship, but Ben was also selected to play in the 50th Anniversary Blue-Gold game in June of 2005.

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The Sklar Family — a Buddy's View

By Lynne Sklar

Nothing in life really prepares you for parenthood, let alone prepares you to be the parent of a child with a disability. Whether you get that news at birth or discover it later on, it causes tremors in your world. Our third child, Alex, was born in 1987. He was diagnosed with heart problems at birth, and we were told a year later that he had Williams Syndrome and would also have intellectual disabilities.

My husband Terry and I immediately began our search for resources that could help us on the unpredictable journey ahead. We listened to advice, made phone calls, sent for information, signed Alex up for therapies, joined support groups, read articles - did whatever we could to provide our son with opportunities that would continually enhance his life.

And then, thankfully, we discovered Blue-Gold and DFRC! When Alex was four, one of his pre-school teachers suggested to me that he might enjoy being a part of the Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program. We signed him up and he was assigned two cheerleaders from Archmere Academy as his first Buddies. They were lovely young girls, but to this day I can still remember the feeling of panic I had as I stood at my door watching these

Continued on p. 3



... It's more than a game!

See pages 6 -7 for info on sponsoring a Buddy or Participant and more.

Save the Date

Monday, June 9th

New Castle County Golf Classic
Delaware National Country Club
Wilmington

Kent County Golf Classic
Maple Dale Country Club, Dover
www.dfrcfoundation.org/golf

Saturday, June 14th

Blue-Gold All★Star
5K Run/1 Mile Walk, 7:30 am
Irish Eyes Restaurant
Anglers Road, Lewes
www.dfrcfoundation.org/run

Wednesday, June 18th

Gold Scrimmage, 5:30 pm
Milford H.S., Milford

Blue Scrimmage, 5:30 pm
Salesianum School, Wilmington
Scrimmages are free and open to the public.

Thursday, June 19th

Sussex County Golf Classic
Baywood Greens Country Club
Long Neck
www.dfrcfoundation.org/golf

Saturday, June 21st

53rd Annual DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game
University of Delaware Stadium
Parking Opens - 3:00 pm
Kids Games - 4:00 pm
Stadium Gates Open - 5:00 pm
Opening Ceremonies - 6:00 pm
Game Kick-off - 7:00 pm
Fireworks - After the game

LOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE
UPCOMING DFRC EVENTS!

Fall 2008

Holidazzle 2008
www.dfrcfoundation.org/holidazzle

March 2009

DFRC Sussex County Auction
www.dfrcfoundation.org/SussexAuction/SussexAuction2008.html

McInnis Family - continued from p.1

David, our younger son, always knew he had big shoes to fill. His brother set a high bar with all his football accomplishments, and Dave's goal was not only to meet, but exceed them. It was sibling rivalry at its best! While Dave successfully achieved several personal goals, his defining moment was the day he

"When you become involved with Blue-Gold, you soon find out that the game is secondary to the real message of the event."

received the call to play in the 52nd Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game. My husband and I breathed a collective sigh of relief because we knew just how important it was to him.

Dave heard the stories of how interesting it was to actually meet and talk with the players from other teams that they had tackled, blocked and competed against all year. Through the program, Dave became very good friends with a young man he had played against in several state championship games. Like so many other players, through Blue-Gold they were able to express their mutual respect for one another. Although they were on opposing teams during some of the most extremely hard-fought games during the season, they finished their high school careers walking off the field the best of friends.

While the football game is the focal point for most, I believe my sons were deeply touched by their experiences with the Hand-in-Hand program, which focuses on the acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities. On media day in 2007, Ben (who is in the Navy, but on special assignment with the Army in Iraq), was home and able to join our family for the event. In the midst of all the participants being interviewed and pictures being taken, we heard a voice call his name. We looked over and there was Ben's buddy, Caitlin, standing with her arms stretched out to him. He gave her a huge hug and it was clear to see by the look on her face that he had never been forgotten. I honestly can't remember a time when we were so deeply touched.

The Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game is not just a game against Delaware's northern and southern teams. It's not an exhibition game of the best players in the state. When you become involved with Blue-Gold, you soon find out that the game is secondary to the real message of the event. This message is clear and unmistakable. Anyone who has been honored to play in the game, or who had a family member involved, knows the mission of the event.

It's all about acceptance.

The McInnis family has been honored to be a part of the Blue-Gold experience, not once, but twice. In each instance, we saw the positive impact it had on our family and community. We look forward to being a part of this fantastic organization for many years to come.



**Blue-Gold All★Star
5K Run/1 Mile Walk
SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 2008
7:30 AM**

The 5th Annual DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Run/Walk event will again be hosted by Irish Eyes on the Lewes Waterfront and sponsored by Southern Delaware Physical Therapy. The 5K Run is part of the 2008 Seashore Striders Championship Series, and the 1 Mile Walk is a family-friendly event open to athletes of all abilities.

Visit www.dfrcfoundation.org/run for online registration and other information.

Sklar Family - continued from p. 1

"strangers" drive my precious toddler down the road for an ice cream cone! Yes, they all returned safely and Alex continued to be a Buddy in the Hand-in Hand program, having a total of 22 buddies over sixteen years. Each year he waited with great anticipation to meet those buddies, to go to the parties and picnics, to get together for visits, and to run out onto the field before the big football game. Each of those young men and women had an impact on Alex's life and I know he had an impact on theirs!

That is what the Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand program is all about - teaching everyone involved that we are all special and that we all have unique qualities to offer the world. But the biggest surprise for me was that this program would have such an important presence in the lives of all the members of our family. We were a part of Blue-Gold and Blue-Gold became a part of us.

After seeing how happy Alex was through his participation, Terry and I could not help but embrace this organization. I joined the Blue-Gold Committee, and was honored to be the Game Chair in 2005 for the 50th Anniversary celebration. I now serve as the Blue-Gold liason on the DFRC Board of Trustees. Terry became a member of the Beneficiaries Committee, the group that oversees the grant requests and allocation of monies that DFRC distributes to organizations supporting programs for people with intellectual disabilities. However, I am most proud of the fact that Alex's older sister and brother also wanted to be involved. After years of attending Blue-Gold



Alex Sklar (left) with siblings, Jamie and Scott

events and going to the game every year through their childhood, both Jamie and Scott represented Brandywine High School as Ambassadors their senior year. As a result of this experience, they each have a wonderful compassion and feeling of acceptance for those with cognitive differences that will last throughout their lifetime. What a gift! How could we all not give back to an organization that has given our family so much?

We'd love for you to join the Blue-Gold Family also...there are so many ways to become involved. Come discover that Blue-Gold really is more than just a game — and I promise that you, too, will get back so much more than you could ever give!



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Q&A

One on One with 2008 Game Chair Bruce DiNardo

For twenty years, Bruce DiNardo has been hard at work turning his passion and commitment to Blue-Gold into more than just a game. Our newsletter staff sat down with our 2008 Game Chair to get his perspectives on this year's program.

Q. Everyone has his/her own reasons for getting involved with DFRC, care to share yours?

A. You are absolutely right that everyone has a different reason for being involved. When I look at today's committee, I see past participants, family and friends of past participants, parents of buddies, and people who just want to make a difference. Everyone comes with the same goal in mind — creating awareness for people with intellectual disabilities.

My own experience with Blue-Gold started when I was a high school senior. A bunch of us got together and held an outdoor rock concert to help Archmere Academy's representatives raise money. We weren't very good, but the crowd was generous, helping raise over \$500. Even one of our football coaches got up and sang Elvis Presley songs! A couple of years later, one of my brothers, Mark, was a Game Chair and asked me to get involved. I've always loved football and loved helping others. I quickly saw the Blue-Gold Game as a way to do both. I started on the Tickets Committee, working with the legendary Albert "Buddy" Clark, and from there moved on to Game Day. The rest, let's say, is history. Hard to believe this is my 20th year with the game.

Q. During your time with the committee, is there anything that stands out?

A. My favorite story was my first year on the Stadium Operations Committee. One of my duties was to organize setting up chairs in the box seats. When we were about halfway done, one of the University staff asked why we were using the old wooden chairs and not the nice new plastic ones needless to say I wasn't very popular that day.

But the thing that really stands out is the strong sense of family throughout the committee. Once you join, you are immediately accepted into the community and you quickly realize that everyone depends on each other. If someone needs help with something, there are always more than enough people willing to lend a hand. Like every close-knit family, everyone shares in each other's success, and rallies together when something doesn't quite go as planned. And don't even try leaving the committee — today we have 10 previous Game Chairs still actively involved, and many general committee members that have more than 10 years experience.

Q. Seems like most years, the game has a slogan — is there one this year?

A. Yes, we are using "It's more than a game..." which we rolled out at our participant's meeting in January. As you know, we try to impress upon everyone that DFRC Blue-Gold is really an awareness program, which just so happens to culminate with a great football game. The job of the committee is to create opportunities for participants to interact with each other and their buddies by hosting a dance party, bowling party, and a couple of picnics. Hopefully they take it beyond just the monthly events and really embrace the experience during the program, and especially after.

I constantly tell people, if you ever speak to a past participant about Blue-Gold, more times than not they talk about their buddies, their interactions with other participants, the pre-game Meet & Greet with their buddies and the band playing "You'll Never Walk Alone" ... and eventually they might get around to talking about the actual football game. So you see, it really is more than just a game.



BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT

THE ARC OF DELAWARE

The Arc of Delaware was founded in 1953 as a grassroots organization of parents and concerned individuals who worked to change public perception and policy toward people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. At that time, affected children and adults were routinely denied access to day care, education and employment. Over the years some gains have been made, but The Arc continues working to ensure inclusion and parity for all. Through many of those intervening years, The Arc and DFRC worked together, sharing not only the same values, but also the same office space. Through the generosity of DFRC, The Arc of Delaware was able to start new initiatives. Today, DFRC provides much of the support that enables us to continue our employment, case management and empowerment services.

Meaningful and Sustained Employment

The unemployment rate in the U.S. for people with intellectual disabilities is around 75%. This can lead to a truly compromised life style at some of the lowest poverty rates in the country. An important goal of The Arc is to help individuals with intellectual disabilities find competitive, well-paying employment, and then provide the support they need to retain their jobs. Currently, we support 260 people, whose average length of employment is 7 years. These individuals are working at Bank of America, the New Castle County Courthouse, the Division of Revenue, Acme Supermarkets, and other community businesses.

Personalized, Real World Help

Red tape is hard for all of us, but individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families often have no idea where to begin when it comes to accessing services. The Arc of Delaware case managers have guided many through this difficult process by identifying the services for which they qualify and helping them get access. Moreover, in line with their goal of enhancing each person's dignity and independence, the case managers often take extra steps to advocate for needed services that are not readily available.



Empowered Self-Advocacy

Established in 1987, Delaware People First is a self-advocacy group for people with cognitive disabilities. These people advocate on their own behalf on issues such as housing, employment and transportation. People First meets monthly and

plans social events and educational programs with guest speakers. They hold a statewide conference annually. The goal of People First is to empower self-advocates to increase the public's awareness that individuals with intellectual disabilities have talents and feelings like any other person in society.

Affordable Community Living

The Arc of Delaware also empowers and supports people as they transition from institutions to neighborhood group homes or group homes to apartments, or even to purchasing their own homes. For the past 21 years, we have partnered with the state to provide safe, affordable housing. Today, 314 individuals are living in the 82 supervised, group homes owned by The Arc of Delaware. In 2007, The Arc celebrated its 13th graduate of our Home of Your Own program. With some help from The Arc, this new homebuyer qualified



for a mortgage, made an offer, and closed on a house he can now call his own. Living in the community requires a new set of skills. The Arc has helped 32 adults benefit from financial education classes such as Basic Banking; Making Good Money Decisions (budgeting); Taking Care of Me (including information on predatory lending and identity theft); Credit; Making Important Decisions (purchasing a home or car, marriage, contracts).

Powerful Advocacy

Advocacy is the core function of our mission and has been since The Arc's inception. On behalf of a constituency that is often unheard or ignored, we speak out at the federal, state and local level on issues that affect their rights. We monitor services for quality, testify at public hearings, interview with the press and speak with community groups to break down barriers and encourage "good neighbor" attitudes. In collaboration with other agencies, we sponsor conferences and training to promote "best practices" in education, housing and employment.

Advocacy by The Arc of Delaware has resulted in choices for people with disabilities. No longer automatically placed in institutions, they can choose to live with their families, in a group home or even purchase a home of their own. Children with disabilities can attend neighborhood schools of choice with their friends and adults can take pride in meaningful and satisfying work of their own choosing.

Want to find out more?

You can visit www.thearcofdelaware.org
or call 302-996-9400 (Wilmington),
302-736-6140 (Dover) or 302-856-6133 (Georgetown)

2008

*... It's more
than a game!*

CAMPAIGN



This year, we are celebrating 53 years of the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game. Here are 3 different ways in which you can get involved by showing your support.

1

Sponsor a Buddy or Participant.

Each year there are more than 300 high school participants and more than 100 Hand-in-Hand Buddies that participate in the DFRC All★Star Football Program. There is never a charge or a fee to participate in this program. DFRC welcomes gifts from family, friends, and business partners to help offset the costs of uniforms and equipment for all of our participants.

2

Be a Blue-Gold Patron.

Since the first game in 1956, thousands of individuals, businesses, and other organizations have assisted in our fundraising by becoming Blue-Gold Patrons. Patron Gifts are welcomed at any time, however, only those received by May 19th will be listed in the 2008 Yearbook.

3

Come to the Blue-Gold All★Star Game on June 21st.

Alumni, family and friends (including businesses, civic groups, etc.) are welcome to celebrate with us on June 21st at the University of Delaware football stadium. There are several Group Discount packages available and there is plenty of space in the parking areas around the stadium to tailgate before the game. Children's games begin at 4pm, pre-game introductions begin at 6pm, kick-off at 7pm, and fireworks will immediately follow the game. For reserved seats, please call the DFRC office at 302-454-2730.

THANK YOU to the following
Donors for their generous
sponsorship of our
2007 Buddies & Participants.

Alesi Family, '07
Barbara Andrisani, '64
Gary Beste, '72
Wilson Cooper, '57
Brooke Darmstadter, 96
Thomas G. Estilow, '76
Geraldyn Flora
Lillian Frey
Michael & Susan Gamel-
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Gail Keller
Charles & Sally Moller
John Murphy
Robert Powell, '71
Ellen Rigrodsky
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Lisa M. Sendi, '93
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blue-gold all★star football game



Come out and join us!
JUNE 21, 2008 ☆

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE STADIUM
SATURDAY, 7PM

Schedule: Parking Opens - 3:00 pm
Kids Games - 4:00 pm
Stadium Gates Open - 5:00 pm ☆ ☆
Opening Ceremonies - 6:00 pm ☆
Game Kick-off - 7:00 pm
Fireworks - following the game

DFRC thanks our
2008 Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game Sponsors:



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game live on*

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