



## THE GRODEN NETWORK

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### **GRODEN NETWORK BANQUET HIGHLIGHTS STAFF & CLIENT ACHIEVEMENTS, COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS**

**Providence, RI** – On Friday, March 23, the Groden Network held its 31<sup>st</sup> annual awards dinner and auction to honor and celebrate its staff and community supporters.

Claudia Swiader, Groden Center parent and award recipient, most poignantly verbalized the emotions of the evening when she spoke about her sons, Adam and Matthew. After giving a moving history of her sons' conditions and treatments, she called upon guests to continue advocating on behalf of those with autism: "Tonight, as we celebrate the wonderful people and programs that *are* the Groden Center, we have one favor to ask of all of you. For Adam, Mattie and all of the other young adults and children you help each and every day to live and cope with Autism, be their advocate. They cannot pick up a pen and write a letter or send an email, but you can! They cannot pick up the phone and make a phone call, but you can! Our sons may be part of the silent population, but through our advocacy, the powers that be will learn that the 'silent population' is not so silent!"

Mrs. Swiader's sentiments were heard by all in the room, including fellow honorees, Governor and Mrs. Donald Carcieri, and Congressman Patrick Kennedy. With the proposed DCYF budget cuts weighing heavily on the minds of clients, their families and staff, reassurances from Governor Carcieri and Congressman Kennedy that clients would not be left without services were received with enthusiastic applause.

Other honorees included Barbara Morse Silva and R.J. Heim of WJAR NBC 10; Felice J. Freyer of the Providence Journal; Sovereign Bank; Dr. Ellen Nelson; and the team who worked on opening a new residential home in East Providence, comprised of Jean DeSimone, Charles Dyer, Donald Cordner and Victoria Sailer.

Silva and Freyer were commended for bringing autism awareness to the community through their media positions. Heim was applauded for his special dedication to the Groden Network, serving for the past 14 years as the host of the annual awards dinner, and then the annual In Step for Autism 5K Walk. Dr. Nelson was commended for her work establishing Kingston Hill Academy with the Groden Network. Sovereign Bank, the event Gold Sponsor, was given the business award for their consistent support of Groden Network programs and events.

Little Medeiros Kinder Bulman & Whitney PC was the event Bronze Sponsor. Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Little were the event chairpersons.

The night also focused on the accomplishments of clients, highlighting the photography and art programs recently developed at the Network. These programs provide a new opportunity for clients to express themselves through the arts. The results have measurably affected client self-esteem, and provided new insights for staff and the community into the world of persons with autism.

To learn more about Groden Network's research, treatment, educational and residential programs for children and adults with autism and other related developmental disabilities, visit the Groden Center website at [www.grodencenter.org](http://www.grodencenter.org) or call 401-274-6310.

*The Groden Network is the leading non-profit organization in Rhode Island providing evaluative, therapeutic and educational programs for children and adults with autism and related developmental disabilities. Comprised of the Groden Center, the Cove Center, the Halcyon Center and Kingston Hill Academy, the Network provides services to over 800 clients. The Groden Center provides day, residential and vocational programs for children and adolescents with autism and related developmental disabilities. The Cove Center provides day, residential and vocational programs for adults with developmental disabilities. The Halcyon Center provides residential and vocational support programs for adults in Southeastern Massachusetts. Kingston Hill Academy, a public charter school, is dedicated to the Groden Network's mission of individualized learning plans for all students.*

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