



Exceptional Children's Foundation

# Developments

Improving the lives of people with special needs since 1946

## ECF's first Online Auction!

October 31–November 15

Get ready to bid on...

- A golf lesson from Hall of Famer Amy Alcott on a championship course
- Private fitness sessions with a celebrity trainer
- Exquisite jewelry from one of Beverly Hills most exclusive jewelers
- A haute cuisine dinner party prepared in your home by one of L.A.'s finest chefs
- Willard Wigan microsculpture (see pg 3)
- Two nights in a two bedroom bungalow at Terranea Resort with unlimited golf
- And much more!!!

Be the winner of one or more of these very special items and more when ECF launches its first Online Auction. **From October 31 to November 15**, anyone can bid to win one-of-a-kind items and support the infants, children and adults with disabilities that ECF serves.

**Be the first to get auction news!** More details on our website [www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net) in October.

## WHAT IS THIS? (see page 4)



## Inside this issue...

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- ECF Program Spotlight: *Art Services*

## KEC kids win a day at GRAMMY Camp



GRAMMY Camp staff greets KEC students

Likely or not, it happened **this July when 18 Kayne Eras Center students** attended a day of GRAMMY Camp at the University of Southern California.

Each year, the GRAMMY Foundation sponsors a 9-day GRAMMY Camp, where talented students, selected through a rigorous audition process, study with music-industry professionals in one of six career tracks.

KEC staff chose 18 students in grades 8 through 12 based on their prior interest and involvement in areas covered by the camp, which included songwriting, singing, audio engineering and stage design. KEC staff who attended were overwhelmed by the professionalism, talent and courtesy displayed by the 88 students attending the camp from around the country. "They were a well-spoken, marvelous group who seem destined for stardom," said Cliff Newmann, KEC technology teaching assistant. "They made our students feel welcome. Our students were allowed to join

in and lead arrangements and showcase their own gifts among these highly trained artists in the camp."

Marcus was one of the KEC students who took advantage of that opportunity. "I was shocked," said the Kayne Eras graduate. "When I walked in, the other kids asked me what instruments I played, and I told them piano and drums. They told me to play the piano, so I started playing freestyle. They followed and we wrote a song. Then Cheyanne played the piano, I sang, and Demetrious played drums. I feel good and want to go back again. It was great!"

GRAMMY Camp gave KEC students the rare chance to spend meaningful time with highly-motivated peers. "Our students don't have many opportunities to interact and collaborate with 'typical' peers," said Francziska Steagall, Assistant Principal of Elementary and Enrichment. "It's clear that our students rise to the occasion and reach higher when they see their same-age peers accomplishing so much, being focused and serious about their craft."

The experience will hopefully inspire the budding musical talents so carefully cultivated in KEC's Enrichment program, said Barbi Radd, KEC's music instructor. "Our students got to see the commitment, concentration, talent and knowledge necessary to be a pro. I believe this trip will inspire some of our students to take our music classes more seriously and take ownership of their talent."

(Visit our website, [www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net), to see the GRAMMY camp in action.)

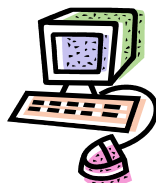


Music to their ears: Charles, Jamari and Samuel watch Larry play drums at GRAMMY Camp

## SEE WHAT WE'VE DONE TO OUR WEBSITE!

Watch new videos, send free e-cards, join our mailing list!

Go to [www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net) to send us your email address with one easy click.



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# Message from the President



It would be hard to contest the fact that today's world offers numerous threats, real and perceived, that have the potential to significantly alter our course and test our resolve. The state of the economy has changed the way we conduct our lives and businesses, demands for adequate health care is greater than ever, and we're no longer insulated from the unrest and instability in other parts of the world. Indeed, even the most optimistic among us could find it difficult to locate our "rose-colored" lenses.

Although the "rules" by which we live may have changed as a result of external forces beyond our immediate control, the strength and resolve of the people who comprise the ECF family to meet the needs of some of LA County's most vulnerable citizens remains intact. ECF, like so many others, has made many tough but necessary decisions in response to program funding cuts and the rising cost of doing business in California. While our highly efficient staffing structure has become even leaner, *ECF has not reduced or eliminated services to our program participants—nor does it plan to.*

Challenge offers the potential for growth and development that isn't as obvious or available in times of harmony and ease. When our muscles are exercised, they grow. Vines that endure drought often produce the finest fruit. Famous and ordinary people alike have achieved unprecedented levels of success following their darkest periods.

This year has indeed presented to ECF our share of challenges, yet the members of this extraordinary team continue to see and actualize the potential in those we serve, while discovering new levels of strength within themselves. From the extraordinary acts of courage displayed by our clients, the hard work and personal investments made by our staff, the generosity of our donors, the time offered by our volunteers, and the sacrifices made by all, this newsletter features glimpses of the many ways potential is actualized, and illuminates the strength manifested every day in corners throughout ECF.

After reviewing this issue of *Developments*, I invite you to visit our web site ([www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net)) to learn more about the ways we're keeping our focus and why our "rose-colored" vision remains crystal clear.

Thank you for the unwavering love and support you share with us.

Dr. Scott Bowling  
President & Chief Executive Officer

## Special thanks to special friends, old and new

Thank you, **SHARE** and others (see back page) for your continuing program support, especially in this current economic downturn. Funding for capital repairs, however, is even more difficult, even if the need is critical. For funding our capital repair needs, ECF is very grateful to **California Community Foundation** for a grant of \$90,000 to help in core operations.

**HOWEVER**, the roof on ECF's headquarters building (built in 1953) at 8740 Washington Boulevard is in desperate condition and cannot continue to provide adequate shelter without repairs. The 45,000 square foot building houses 235 special needs clients, 60 employees and 10 computer servers that unite ECF's 16 sites. Structural erosion, holes in the roof, water damage, significant dry-rot and termite infestations have critically weakened the roof and some of the building's aging cooling units no longer function. The resulting safety issues include hazardous slippery floors during rains, water damage to files and equipment in client and corporate areas, sanitation and health issues from termite droppings and lack of cooling in the large client workshop.

Finding capital supporters has not been easy, but we're pleased to announce that **The Annenberg Foundation** and **The Ahmanson Foundation** have both stepped forward, and we hope to receive positive responses from Weingart Foundation and Pacific Life Foundation in November.

**But ECF still needs to raise approximately \$20,000 for this project, to help us keep the roof over our heads.**

Our thanks go out to all of ECF's faithful funders who have already made a donation this fiscal year. We are especially pleased to welcome new donors **Chartwell Charitable Foundation** and the **Audrey & Sydney Irmis Charitable Trust** (2008/09), and hope we can count on their support for many years to come. Any foundation leads or new contacts will be gratefully received at **310-845-8060**.

## Save the date for ECF's 2nd Annual Art Sale Fundraiser!

Paintings, prints, batiks, handmade cards, and sculptural and functional ceramics by ECF's amazing artists will be on display and for sale at **ECF's 2nd Annual Art Sale Fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 17.**

The sale will be held from 5 to 9 PM at our Downtown Art Center Gallery at 828 S. Main Street in Los Angeles. As always, 60% of every sale goes directly to the artist, while the remaining 40% supports the Art Center program. It's a perfect opportunity to purchase one-of-a-kind holiday gifts for family and friends while supporting artists with disabilities.

Validated parking will be available nearby at the 810 S. Main Street lot. For more information, please call 213-627-7374.



## ECF support is a family affair - for four generations



The Abell Family's long-term involvement with ECF is unmatched in any other ECF-affiliated family.

**Lauren Abell Windom is now a fourth-generation member of the Abell family to raise funds and/or provide leadership support for ECF**, in one way or another, spanning one of the longest numbers of years of support by one family during ECF's 63-year history.

Lauren's paternal great-grandparents, Abe and Reva Abell (founders of A.N. Abell Auction Co.), were indirectly involved when her grandparents, Bob and Maxine Abell, joined ECF in 1957. Their daughter, Patty, was enrolled in one of ECF's pre-school classes located in the Pacific Palisades area and later at their home. For several years, with help from their extended family, friends and business associates, Bob and Maxine raised funds for ECF

through a group they founded, the "Workers for Retarded Children".

After Patty passed away, members of the extended Abell family focused their fund-raising activities on providing support for the establishment, stocking and maintenance of ECF's "Patty Abell Library", a reference source for ECF parents, professional staff, and visiting USC and UCLA students engaged in an internship program ECF provided for masters-degree candidates in child development, speech therapy, psychology and social work.

In the early 1980's, at the request of Robert Shushan, ECF's Executive Director for more than 40 years, Lauren's father, Les, began providing legal services to ECF. He was elected to the Board in 1984. Les became an active member and officer of ECF's Board of Trustees and then a member of ECF's Board of Directors, serving as President from 1992 to 1995 and Chair from 2002 to 2004. Since then, the contributions that Les and his wife, Nancy, have made to ECF are incalculable in their value. **"My father and mother taught my brother Barry and me to always give back to the community," said Les. "My wife Nancy and I have passed this wonderful and fulfilling advice on to our daughters Allison and Lauren. Being able to be part of the ECF family and seeing what ECF provides to its consumers, staff and surrounding community is the ultimate reward. We never need to ask for anything else in return."**

In 2007, Lauren, an eighth-grade English teacher and admissions officer at the Brentwood School, created and still serves as chairperson of the Young Leaders Board, the first opportunity many young adults have had to participate in a charitable organization on their own. The Young Leader's Board holds an annual fund raising event for ECF, raising more than \$10,000 each year and attended by some of Los Angeles' premier young professionals.

In 2008, Lauren joined ECF's Board of Directors. **"It's an honor to serve an organization that has not only given so much to my family, but also to the community,"** said Lauren. "I look forward to helping ECF share its message and services with another generation of supporters."

All of us at ECF congratulate and honor Lauren and her husband, Robert, on the occasion of their recent marriage, and are confident that they will continue, for many years to come, the family's remarkable 50+ years' tradition of active involvement and support of ECF.

## California's First Lady lauds DAC

In late March, the clients of ECF's Developmental Activity Center (DAC) began creating necklaces using glass, metal beads and paper. They turned out so beautifully that Helen Lewis, DAC program manager, sent two of them to the daughters of **Maria Shriver** and Michelle Obama. (You can buy these necklaces, along with other great gifts created by ECF clients, in the Boutique at our headquarters at 8740 Washington Blvd. in Culver City.)

We have not heard back from Mrs. Obama yet, but...

## Saying goodbye to a champion - Eunice Kennedy Shriver

The Exceptional Children's Foundation was saddened to learn of the passing of one of our heroes - **Eunice Kennedy Shriver**. Her faith in the potential of people with disabilities informs the work that we do every day with infants, children and adults with developmental disabilities.

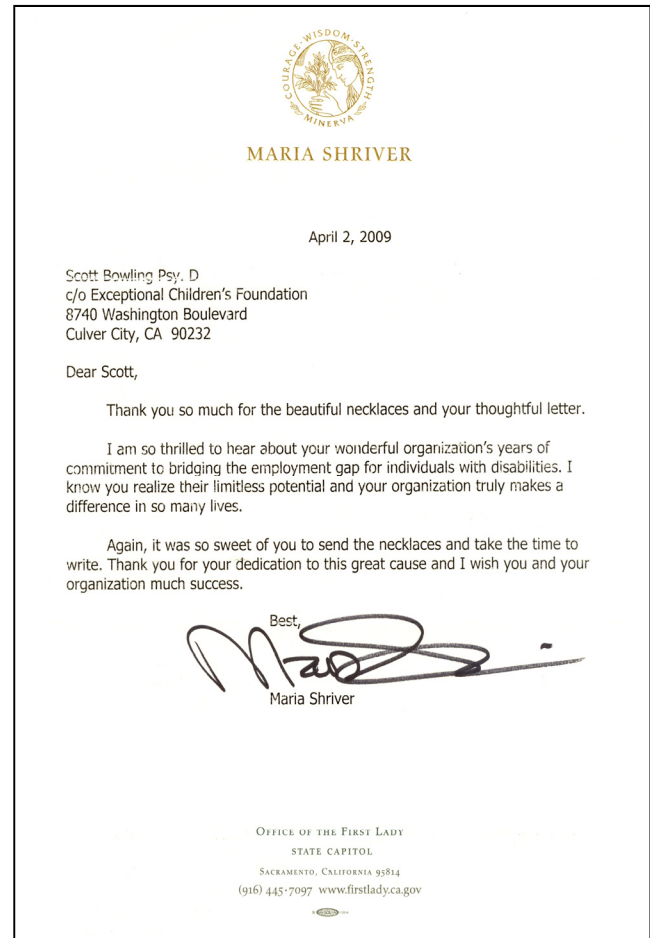
Mrs. Shriver played a key role in helping transform society's attitude toward people with disabilities from exclusion to acceptance. By working to promote her belief that people with disabilities should be given the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential and be participating members of our society, she profoundly influenced the way that people with disabilities are treated today. ECF is proud to carry forth her philosophy in our service to nearly 2,300 people with disabilities in Los Angeles each year.

In an interview with the Christian Science Monitor, Mrs. Shriver said of children with disabilities: "I'm very, very full of admiration for them, and of amazement and wonder at the human spirit, what it accomplishes... I think the courage they have, all the spirit, the human spirit, is forever eternal."

So, too, is the legacy left by Mrs. Shriver.

## Farewell to an ECF friend - Army Archerd

The world knew him as one of the foremost entertainment columnists of our time, but those of us at ECF regarded him as a special friend. **Army Archerd**, who died on September 8, was personally connected to ECF through his stepson, who lives in one of ECF's residences for adults with special needs. Mr. Archerd and his wife, Selma, have been longtime supporters of ECF's work.



## Willard Wigan: Micro Miracle Maker



As a child struggling with dyslexia and learning disabilities in the 1960s, British artist Willard Wigan found solace in creating art of minute proportions. As his career progressed, his sculptures became smaller – too small to be seen with the naked eye.

The world's smallest artworks made their **US debut at ECF's Downtown Art Gallery** in July. The sculptures, exhibited in special cases fitted with viewing lenses, included iconic figures such as the Statue of Liberty, President Obama and his family, and the Wizard of Oz characters. **His works sell for \$80,000 to \$200,000, and he has created micros sculptures for Mike Tyson, Simon Cowell and many more.**

Wigan has generously agreed to donate one of his sculptures on consignment for the 2009 ECF Online Auction. **He will also donate 50% of the proceeds of any work commissioned on behalf of ECF.**

London-based Wigan sculpts with unique tools, such as a shard of diamond drilled into the head of a pin, and **he paints them with a single eyelash or a hair from a fly.** The sculptures typically sit in the eye of a needle or on the head of a pin.

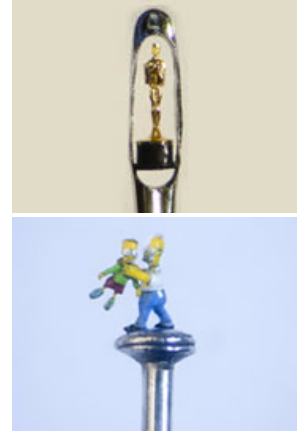
To create such miniscule pieces, Wigan enters a meditative state to slow his heartbeat, allowing him to reduce hand tremors and sculpt between pulse beats. Because the reverberation of traffic can affect his work, Wigan often retreats to the English countryside or works during the night.

Recently, Wigan was commissioned to create the Lloyd's of London building - his most challenging project to date, requiring him to sculpt dust particles to create some of the building's architectural intricacies. The finished piece is the size of a grain of sugar.

"At times, when I'm working on a piece, I might come to believe that I myself am microscopic," Wigan said.

If you would like to commission a microsculpture of a family member, pet or any other subject, ECF will receive a portion of the sale price. Please contact Guy Shulman, Vice President of Development and External Relations, at **310-845-8050 for more details.**

For more details on Wigan and his work, visit [www.willard-wigan.com](http://www.willard-wigan.com).



### Latest program news!

#### Keyne Eras Center passes with flying colors

After a year of evaluation, ECF's Kayne Eras Center has earned accreditation by the **Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)**, which certifies the integrity of school programs.

**"WASC accreditation distinguishes us from other nonpublic schools,"** said Dr. Mishelle Ross Owens, VP of Educational and Therapeutic Services. "It is a symbol of a quality education. With this accreditation, KEC is able to grant its own diplomas; our credits will be accepted toward graduation by any other school, public or private."

Among other criteria, KEC was evaluated on its stated purpose, its school-wide student goals and the degree to which it achieves those goals. Parents, teachers, administrators and students participated in the process.

Dwight Counsel, Director of School Programs, is pleased but not surprised by the accreditation. It was part of his original five-year strategy plan for KEC. **"Our WASC reviewer said that we far exceeded their standards for non-public schools,"** he said. "They were very impressed with our philosophy – that all students can and will learn. **They said that our love for our students and concern for their well-being permeates throughout the school.**"

KEC will be evaluated again in 2012, when it will be eligible for a six-year accreditation.

#### CARF renews ECF's accreditation

The Council for Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) has renewed their accreditation of ECF's PAR East, PAR West and Supported Employment programs for another three years.

To earn accreditation, which indicates an established pattern of practice excellence, CARF reviewed ECF in the categories of case management, leadership, operations, risk management and health and safety. "This accreditation from an international body is a **much-valued**

**acknowledgment of the outstanding quality of ECF's work programs,"** said Emily Lloyd, Vice President of Program Operations. "The CARF survey recognizes the outstanding quality of our staff, the solid leadership of our board and the excellent results of our teamwork approach."

#### Nethercutt Community Participation Program has new home

The Nethercutt Community Participation Program, formerly based at the Kayne Eras Center, after renovation has moved to ECF's main headquarters in Culver City. Moving the program, which serves adults, made perfect sense, says Helen Lewis, ADP/DAC Program Manager. "At the KEC campus, CPP participants didn't have the chance to be with peers in their age group," she said. "Now, they have more opportunities for social interaction and work. We also have an LAUSD instructor to provide an enhanced curriculum."

**ECF is grateful to longtime supporter, Helen Nethercutt,** whose son participates in the program, for assisting ECF with the move. "She was instrumental in making this transition happen," said Helen. "Her gift allowed us to convert three small offices into one large classroom."

The new space will serve both as the CPP homeroom as well as a staff training space.

#### ECF residence converts to intermediate care facility

ECF is converting ERAS House I, soon to be known as the Fairbanks House, from community care to ICF/DDH (Intermediate Care Facility/Developmentally Disabled, Habilitative) to better serve the needs of our aging client population.

ECF is grateful to board members **Steve Rose** and **Tevis Barnes**, who helped get our new residential facility approved for a housing grant from the City of Culver City to improve the house.

Currently, ECF is gathering bids for some of the construction work that will be taking place, including but not limited to installing solar panels, replacing the flooring, replacing the driveway and painting the interior.

## ECF Success Story: KEC graduate makes his way to Morehouse

It is a long distance – both geographical and intellectual – between a nonpublic school in Culver City and Morehouse College in Atlanta.



For one current Morehouse student, this journey was made possible with the help of the staff at ECF's Kayne Eras Center.

Barrington, a 2007 KEC graduate, came to the school in ninth grade with a history of

learning problems – especially when it came to reading and spelling. When considering nonpublic school options, his parents chose KEC.

Once enrolled at KEC, Barrington's academic life started to change. His grades began to improve with the help of educational therapy and counseling. A talented singer, actor, dancer and musician who performed at his church and appeared in commercials, Barrington's grades and behavior qualified him to perform in school productions in the KEC Enrichment program,

which also gave him an opportunity to play basketball and football in the AMASE League, a sports league for nonpublic schools. For his junior and senior years, Barrington was dual-enrolled at KEC and Crenshaw High School.

After graduation, Barrington moved to Atlanta to attend Morehouse College, the noted all-male, historically black college whose graduates include civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and filmmaker Spike Lee. "My brother went to Morehouse, and when I went there for his graduation, I walked around the campus," said Barrington. "When I saw what the school meant, and what it stood for, I knew deep in my heart that this is where I wanted to be."

Today, Barrington is a sophomore with a double major of psychology and sociology. He plays tennis and runs track. He also participates in Atlanta's Jumpstart program, in which college students mentor and tutor preschool children in low-income communities for a year.

On remembering KEC, Barrington says, "The teachers were always in my corner. They never fail you, and they always have your best interests at heart."

## Can you help with these urgent needs?

While ECF requires ongoing operating support for all of its programs, we often need additional funding for more urgent needs that arise. Some of these are:

- Vehicle (sedan or van) that carries 5 to 8 passengers for transportation to and from ECF programs
- Diapers, food pantry items for needy Early Start families; or, a \$50 donation to help us feed a family for a month
- Breakfast for Kayne Eras Center students who come to school hungry; \$50 will provide breakfast for one student for a month
- Holiday toys for infants through age 3 for our Early Start program
- Art supplies for our Art Center participants; \$150 will supply one artist for a month

Visit our website, [www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net), to learn more about these programs

## ECF Star: Francziska Steagall

When Francziska Steagall came to the Kayne Eras Center in 1986, the ERAS Center, as it was called then, consisted of about 60 students in a rented Beverly Hills storefront. "It seemed like a fabulous opportunity for personal growth and for helping others," said Francziska (pronounced fran-CHES-ka) of her twice-weekly art teaching position.



**Twenty-three years later**, Francziska is the Assistant Principal of KEC's Elementary School and oversees the expansive KEC Enrichment program, which provides art, music/drama, physical education and computer lab instruction. Additionally, Francziska helps coordinate the school's participation in the AMASE League, a team sports league for 16 nonpublic schools that play basketball, football, soccer and track and field. She plans the annual sports awards banquet, coordinates KEC's many thematic student festivals and show productions, and oversees the school's

participation in the Milken Festival For Youth program, which gives students a chance to volunteer in the community through service to others.

Francziska has watched KEC grow from its rented storefront to a modern facility providing educational and therapeutic services for more than 500 children and families each year. "KEC's longevity and growth have allowed us to serve and reach so many more kids than we ever thought possible," she said. "It's incredible to have the ability to make a lasting, positive impact on so many lives."

Former KEC students often return years later to visit, something that Francziska finds continually inspiring. "I also continue to be motivated by the vision and dream instilled in me by [founder] Barbara Cull, whose philosophy is that every child can learn if we understand his or her unique learning styles and strengths," she said. "It is equally important to recognize and celebrate those unique strengths publicly."

The possibilities for KEC's Enrichment programming are endless, says Francziska. "I'd love to have a real television studio showcasing all of our sporting activities, shows, festivals, community service and special events. I'd like to see KEC have greater partnerships with community businesses to help our kids get jobs. If I could have anything, I'd have aquatics and a therapeutic pool, and an equine program... there's still so much work to do!"

## Sustainable philanthropy at work: ECF Art Services

For quality art supplies and services, look no further than ECF's newly created **Art Services Department**.

This year, ECF's PAR Services proudly began offering products and services geared toward the fine arts community. Clients working under close supervision with experienced instructor Jason Miracle learn wood working and shop safety while creating ultra-premium, stretched artist's canvas and cradled hardboard artist's panels. They also learn to work neatly and precisely through ECF's archiving services, which include matting and dry mounting artwork.

"The program develops real-world skills for our clients and exposes them to diverse tools and techniques," says Jason. "It allows them to be involved in the creation of a product from start to finish."



This new program, which began as a collaboration between PAR Services and ECF's thriving Art Centers, now offers its products and services to the general public. It provides our clients with the opportunity to learn valuable skills and work as part of a team of craftsman creating high quality products. "I enjoy learning special skills, working with different woods and using drills and glue and hammers," says client Mike Coldstock.

ECF's **Art Services** motto is simple – "quality products built by quality people."

Go to our website, [www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net), to see the video of our Art Services program in action.

In 1946, several concerned parents, driven by a vision and love for their children born with developmental disabilities, forged the creation of the Exceptional Children's Foundation (ECF). Since then, ECF has helped tens of thousands of children and adults with developmental, learning and emotional disabilities live with dignity, self-respect and happiness, empowering them to reach their greatest potential. Go to our website ([www.ecf.net](http://www.ecf.net)) to see the history video .

ECF provides a life span continuum of programs and services from 16 sites throughout L.A. County to over 2,300 individuals and their families each year. People served include individuals with learning & emotional disabilities, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism spectrum disorders and other related challenges. ECF's programs include Early Start, Developmental Activity, Fine Arts Training, Work-Activity, Supported Employment, and Residential Services. ECF provides comprehensive K-12 special education and therapeutic services to children, adolescents and their families via our school program: The Kayne Eras Center.

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**Foundation & Corporate Grants from 7/1/08 - 06/30/09**

**ECF's foundation and corporate donors**  
 Because of the generous support of foundations and corporations, infants with global delays receive necessary therapies; learning-delayed children begin to read; adults with developmental disabilities create fine art and find jobs that sustain them; and much, much more.  
 Thank you!