



Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation

Enriching the lives of children with special needs and their families

Fall 2013

Mother's Day Celebration Luncheon
raised over \$48,000!!!

The Foundation wishes to thank...[click here](#) to find out.

A Bedroom (and Lots of Love) for Kyle

On June 14 of this year the Foundation held a fundraiser with a silent auction to raise money to support the project of renovating a Farmington, CT family's home to convert a garage into a first floor bedroom with bathroom for their child with special needs. Through the help of the family's friends and neighbors, we were able to raise over \$50,000 towards the construction of the bedroom and bathroom!



Kyle Tripputi, a sweet, happy 8 year old boy, was born to his joyful family, older sister Michaela, and parents, Kim and Michael via an uncomplicated delivery. At eight months his parents felt he was not developing normally and after suffering his first tonic clonic seizure was diagnosed with Triplicate 15, a rare chromosome disorder. He began to suffer daily seizures, some lasting 10 minutes long.

Kyle's parents tried desperately for years to find some treatment to decrease the daily trauma but there was little they could find.

Finally, at age five, Kyle was diagnosed with Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy. Children diagnosed can experience frequent seizures and have some degree of cognitive impairment and behavioral disturbances as well as decreased mobility. Kyle's care is a 24 hour job and his parents are his sole care providers.

As Kyle has gotten older and bigger, carrying him to his bedroom and bathroom on the 2nd floor of the home is challenging. When Kyle's family began inquiring about renovating their existing one car garage into a handicapped accessible bedroom and bathroom for Kyle, they realized the cost proved to be more than they could afford.

Last winter, Mike and Kim contacted the Foundation to see if we

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Calendar

October

Junior Board will participate in Ridgefield's Halloween Walk

November

Rehearsals continue for Nuts About the Nutcracker

December

21st: Nuts About the Nutcracker at Ridgefield High School. Tickets go on sale in November on our website (www.mollytango.org).

Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation Junior Board



The Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation

could help. "Holding a fundraiser in their own town was the perfect way to help the Tripputis," Laura Schwartz, Foundation Board Member stated. "This money will go a long way in paying for the construction of the bedroom. We are so thankful for the donations of money and auction items, and to all who attended the fundraiser." A rainbow appeared in the sky just as the event was getting underway. "It was a very special evening filled with love for Kyle and his family."



The project is well underway and should be completed by October.

A Wheelchair for Eduardo
by Deb Haughney



This past summer the Foundation was pleased to purchase a wheelchair for Eduardo, a six year old Ridgefield boy who was born with SMA Type 2.

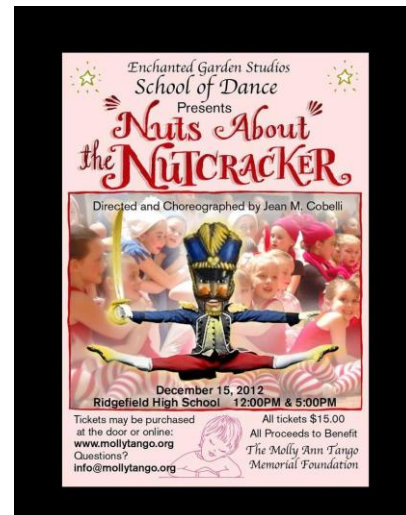
Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) is characterized by progressive muscle weakness from degeneration and loss of the lower motor neurons in the spinal cord and the brain stem nuclei. Poor weight gain, sleep difficulties, respiratory complications, joint contractures and paralysis are common complications. There is no cure.

Despite his diagnosis, Eduardo is just like his first grade peers. He loves Legos, museums and art. He plays baseball with the Holland League, rides horses at Pegasus and swims. He has a beautiful spirit and zest for life. But unlike most of his peers he has to rely on a wheelchair for mobility. His current mode of transportation is a large, heavy power wheelchair. The size and

Junior Board consisting of high school students and under the direction of Board member Jean Cobelli began planning the coming year with its largest group to date.

The Junior Board's sole purpose is community awareness and recipient outreach. Throughout the year they:

- *Deliver Valentine Flowers for our special local Moms
- *Make Easter Baskets for our local recipients
- *Assist at our annual Mother's Day Luncheon
- *Go on play dates with our recipients,
- * Help with the Holland Division Baseball League
- *Participate in the Halloween Walk in Ridgefield
- * *Nuts about the Nutcracker* backstage help



Save the date! The 10th Annual
Nuts About the Nutcracker
December 21
at Ridgefield High School

Letters of Thanks
So far this year we have spent over

weight of the chair make it impossible to get to the main living area of their ranch style home or to use in the bedrooms and baths.

Eduardo's parents work closely with his therapists and they suggested he have a manual Zippie wheelchair. The chair weighs 30 lbs. and can be adapted to fit a child's size up to age 10. After the \$2,700 chair was denied by their insurance, Eduardo's school physical therapist referred the family to the Foundation and their request was granted. The family was simply amazed by the quick response and ultimate approval for the chair.

"We are so grateful that such a group exists for families like us," said Karen Urdaneta. Now Eduardo can move about his home independently. And, he can take it on play dates, just like every other six year old boy!

DramaRamas Perform!

In June, the Summer Theatre of New Canaan (STONC) offered its unique musical theatre program for children with special needs as part of its 2013 Summer Theater Festival at Waveny Park in New Canaan, CT. The DramaRamas performed Disney's "The Little Mermaid" on June 27, 2013 to a full house.



The Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation was proud to be one of the sponsors of this year's program. According to Kathy Hardin, Foundation Board Member who also helps with the DramaRamas show, "This annual production is truly magical and transformative for everyone involved. The perfect match for our Foundation."

Children ages 8 - 17 rehearsed and put on a musical with the professional actors currently performing in the festival show. They mentored each child to help them to interpret and perform the roles in a special presentation performance.

The students and actor mentors met for ten one-hour rehearsals in June to learn the music, rehearse and then performed the musical "abridged" on stage at the Summer Theatre of New Canaan tent theatre in Waveny Park New Canaan for friends, family and those wishing to support this program.

\$80,000 by helping more than 60 families.

Here's what some of these families had to say:

"We continue to feel so grateful that the Foundation makes the application process so easy. You are so kind and welcoming and this makes that initial step of asking for help-- which can be embarrassing and emotional--as painless as possible."

* * * * *

"Providing for and raising a child like our daughter requires a lot of attention, energy, and resources. It is definitely a team effort between us and all of her doctors, specialists, therapists and other professionals that have helped her along the way. And the generous gift from the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation will be a tremendous help in assisting us to provide her with a much more convenient and safe means of transportation. I want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for helping to make a difference in the life of a very special little girl with a big heart."

We Wish to Thank Mother's Day Celebration Business Sponsors...

The Foundation wishes to thank our business sponsors of this year's fundraising luncheon.

Over \$48,000 was raised to enable the Foundation to continue to enrich the lives of children with special needs and their families.

Thank you to the following underwriters:

Fairfield County Bank, Dr. Katherine Lambert, Jean Cobelli Dance, Seven D Wholesale, The Granito Family Foundation and the Stockel Family.

In addition, over 50 local businesses donated silent auction items. The success of our luncheon is a community wide effort and we cannot thank you enough!

Thanks Partner!

The 2013 "Run like a Mother" (RLAM) annual Mother's Day race chose the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation as its charitable partner.

Race Founder Megan Searfoss saw the

Johnny's Jog Helps Many

Johnny's Jog for Charity, Inc. hosted its second annual St. Patrick's Day-themed 5K on March 24th in West Hartford Center. The event benefited three local non-profit children's organizations. The Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation was



the recipient of \$7,500!

Founded by West Hartford residents Dan and Laura Moran and Dan and Kelly Clark, Johnny's Jog Charity, Inc. is

inspired by Johnny, the Moran's 6-year-old son, who has battled an unknown neuromuscular condition since birth.

"Being at Johnny's Jog was an exhilarating experience! It was a sea of green and white, and the brisk, windy air was filled with music, laughter, and snowflakes. It was inspiring to see over 500 people of all ages come out to support the worthy children's charities that Johnny's Jog benefited this year," said Kathy Reiff, Foundation Board member who has known Johnny and his family for years.

With the unending love and support from many individuals and organizations, Johnny continues to persevere through life's seemingly unbearable challenges.

The vision of "Johnny's Jog for Charity" is to bring the community together with a grand St. Patrick's Day themed event benefiting various local non-profit organizations so that other families can experience the same generous support.

"Johnny has been a gift to our family. He has opened our eyes to a world of humanity that has blown us away. We have benefited greatly from so many individuals and organizations that we feel compelled to pay it forward," says Laura Moran.

Besides the Foundation, the Jog raised money for The Miracle

partnership as a "natural" fit for the race that celebrates motherhood and a foundation that enriches the lives of children with special needs and their families.



Val Fleming and Deb Haughney, Board Members and runners!

From the beginning, Megan and Deb Povinelli (Ridgefield Race Director), worked with the Foundation to foster a relationship that would increase

awareness in the community and raise funds for the organization.

Race participants had a number of unique opportunities to support the Foundation. Athletes made donations to the Foundation at the time of race registration or chose a special charity registration which included a ticket to the Foundation's annual Mother's Day Luncheon.

Val Fleming, a Foundation Board Member, was thrilled with the partnership. "Two local organizations which support women and children is a perfect match and to do this on Mother's Day weekend was very special."

RLAM raised \$5,000 for the Foundation. "We couldn't be more appreciative to RLAM and all of the runners who supported us" Val added.

League of Connecticut, a baseball league for children with physical and cognitive difficulties, and Covenant Preparatory School of Hartford, a non-profit organization providing tuition-free middle school to boys of under-served families in the city of Hartford.

Luncheon Raises \$48,000 Thanks to Community Support!

This year marks the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation's 10th anniversary enriching the lives of children with special needs and their families. There has been incredible growth, especially in the last year and at this year's annual Mother's Day Luncheon we are proud to announce we raised \$48,000 to continue our mission.

When this luncheon started in 2005 there were 67 attendees. This year the Salem Golf Club was filled to capacity with 250 supporters! "You could feel the love and support of everyone in that room," Cathy Tango-Dykes, Molly's mom and co-founder of the Foundation said afterwards.

At this year's luncheon guests were treated to an inspiring story from one of the Foundation's recipient families, Andrea Zak. In 2008 the Foundation had made it possible for her then 5 year old daughter, who has Retts Syndrome, to play safely in their backyard by installing a fence. "To say we were excited would be quite an understatement. I remember I spent various nights crying tears of sadness, frustration and worry, but now they were tears of joy because our daughter would be able to play outside safely in our backyard. After working with the amazing members of the Foundation our dream and need to keep our daughter safe became a reality. What parent doesn't want the best for their child and to let a child with special needs have everything a typical child does," Andrea stated.

There was also a live performance by local singer/songwriter George Brennan who wrote and performed his original song, "Dear Molly Ann." He captured the true spirit of who Molly was and why there are angels on earth honoring her name through this Foundation.

Another special guest, Megan Searfoss, founder of "Run like A Mother" spoke about choosing the Foundation as its charity partner for this year's race. She spoke of the "natural fit" for both organizations and many of the attendees were also part of the race 2 days later.



Deb Haughney speaking to a sold out luncheon crowd!



One of many beautiful auction items which helped raise money for the Foundation.

Each year the luncheon chooses a "special project" for the luncheon. This year's project was to raise \$16,000 for a 4 year old Connecticut boy who was tragically injured last November during clean-up after Hurricane Sandy. Robby was playing outside his father's home in Redding and was pinned under a tree stump after the tree trunk was cut. The weight of the stump compressed Robby's lungs and his heart stopped for almost thirty minutes while the West Redding Fire Department quickly tried to rescue him. His family approached the Foundation for assistance in providing a room with a hot tub for aquatic therapy so that his muscles can stay loose which would be helpful in keeping his body moving and preventing painful contractures. All the monies were raised for this project which will enable the Foundation to pay for the materials to build the room that will house the hot tub, and also for the hot tub itself. A contractor is donating his time to build the room.

"We are astonished at the amount of money that was raised for our project. We cannot thank the Foundation enough as we continue to learn how best to care for Robby," the family stated.

This year's event could not have been possible without the dedication of the Foundation Board, the Junior Board and Donna Gale, Elizabeth Gale, and Collette Pavain. Their determination and vision made it a beautiful event.

All the funds raised at this event will enable the Foundation to continue the work Molly's parents started in her name. The Foundation's mission and work thus far has shown many families the Foundation has helped that Molly's spirit is alive and well.

Memories of Molly
by Caitlin Tango, Molly's sister

The speech below was given by Caitlin Tango (Molly's sister) at the 2013 Princess Ball. The Princess Ball donated \$8,000 to the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation this year. We are extremely grateful for their continued support and generosity.

We all know that princesses are beautiful and wear pretty dresses and have shiny hair. But they are also kind, and generous, and spend a great deal of time helping others. The fact that you girls are here tonight truly does make you all princesses because you are helping give back to the many charities tonight's ball supports.

Once upon a time I knew a princess who had a beautiful smile and helped those around her in countless ways. Her name was Molly and she was my little sister. Like a true princess, Molly's greatest gift was providing her family and friends happiness and a fresh understanding of the world.



Having Molly as a sister was a great blessing and helped me to see the world from a more open and accepting perspective. But I also know how hard it was on my parents knowing that they could not always afford to provide the types of things that a special child like Molly needed.

When my sister passed away my mother and father decided to start the Foundation to help other families like ours that were raising special needs children like Molly. Since then, we have helped so many families by fulfilling requests for things like wheelchair accessible ramps, lifts, medical equipment, assistive technology devices, camp scholarships, safety fences, generators and assistance in funding handicapped accessible vans.

We have a volunteer board of 13 members with very little overhead costs so most of our donations go directly to the families we serve. Your presence here tonight will enable us to continue our mission of enriching the lives of children with special needs and their families.

And you girls are not just princesses tonight, but every single day, as long as you are strong, kind, gracious and compassionate to every person you meet.

Thank you!
Caitlin

The mission of The Princess Ball is to celebrate the next generation of philanthropic girls as they dance the night away with the most important man in their life. The Princess Ball evening treats young ladies in first through eighth grades and their fathers to an elegant evening of dinner and dance, while raising awareness for local children's charities. www.princessball.org

The Foundation's Mission

The Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation is dedicated to enriching the lives of children with special needs and their families. The Foundation helps finance the purchase of much-needed medical equipment and services when insurance is exhausted and other social programs are not available. In addition to financial support, the Foundation helps families navigate the medical and social communities to find the products and services that will specifically meet their needs.

If you would like to apply for assistance, or know someone who does, please complete our [application](#). Thank you.