



# Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation

Enriching the lives of children with special needs and their families

## Spring 2014

*Nuts About the Nutcracker* raised over \$41,000!!!

For full story...click [here](#).

## A Fence for Christopher

Christopher Lamoureux is an adorable 5 year old boy who was born with Down Syndrome, a congenital heart defect, speech apraxia (a motor speech disorder) and a sensory processing disorder. He is a very active and curious young boy who likes to explore his environment but, unfortunately, often runs off without warning. If he hears a loud noise (like a lawn mower or weed whacker) he will cover his ears and run in the opposite direction with no awareness of his surroundings, just to get away from the loud noise.



Christopher's family contacted us about buying a fence for their yard so that Christopher could play outside in a safe and enclosed area. According to his physical therapist, a fence "will allow Christopher to utilize his outdoor space. It would serve as a good physical barrier and decrease the amount of visual stimuli which will help to decrease his arousal level and provide a safe and comfortable space for him to enjoy. It is important to his overall development and his

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## Calendar

### **April**

Easter Basket Delivery by Junior Board,  
*Ridgefield*

### **May 9**

Mother's Day Luncheon  
*North Salem Golf Club*

### **May 11**

Run Like a Mother!  
*Ridgefield*

## Teen Forms New Club at John Jay HS!

**Sarah Teich**

My interest with the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation started at a young age. As a fourth grader in the Enchanted Garden's annual show *Nuts About the Nutcracker*, I immediately created a

sensory needs."



We completely agree! We recently approved the purchase of a fence for Christopher!

His mom, LeeAnn says, "I just want to thank you for your kindness and allowing Christopher the freedom to enjoy his back yard! Sending many hugs to you."

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### *Notes from our Junior Board...*

## **More Than I Imagined**

**By Dante Cobelli**

Following in the footsteps of your brothers is either a challenge or a natural process. I have watched my two older brothers participate at many of the Molly Ann Tango Memorial



Foundation events and they were both members of the Foundation's Junior board, which is made up of a group of high school students.

The purpose of the Junior Board is not to help raise money for the

Foundation, but to provide a much-needed service at the fundraising events and to occasionally meet with the "kids" that the Foundation has helped. Defining the purpose and describing the rewards of being on the board are two entirely different things. You see, following in my brothers' footsteps has been very natural for me and for others who have had their siblings do the same. Another bonus for me has been getting my friends involved!

connection with the Foundation.

As the Foundation continued to be a prevalent part of my dance studio, I wanted to understand more about it. Who did the Foundation help? In what ways were they able to help children with disabilities? And how could I become more involved in assisting the Foundation



with its mission? At the age of twelve, I began selling necklaces to raise money for the

Foundation. I felt good knowing that the money was going towards an important cause and I was inspired to take personal initiative to raise money. I also appreciated the fact that the Foundation was based out of the town of Ridgefield, where so much of my life was focused.

Living just across the border in South Salem, New York, when I entered John Jay High School I was surprised that students didn't know about the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation. It seemed like so many people in the nearby town of Ridgefield were aware of and supported the Foundation. The kids at my school didn't know about the hundreds of lives the Foundation has touched, and they sure weren't able to feel the same way I did.

With a large special needs program at my school, I thought the best way to raise awareness and money for the Foundation would be to start a club. This year the Molly Ann Tango Club at John

Two of the main charitable events hosted by the Foundation are the *Nuts About the Nutcracker* held every December and the Mother's Day Luncheon held every May. Since my activities are mainly sports related, being a part of a dance production or a luncheon event seems a bit crazy! But when you are told that what happens behind the scenes helps a Foundation to raise money for children with special needs you are reminded how fortunate you are to play sports and be with friends and to not have the worries that families experience with a special needs child.

The Junior Board also spreads awareness about the Foundation and we get to do fun events by being at the Halloween Walk in town, give flowers to the special moms for Valentine's Day (snow prevented this this year but I think we will do something for them soon) and one of the best activities is making Easter Baskets.

Having the opportunity to be in a position where you don't have your number on your back has been much more than I imagined. It's not just about moving scenery at a Nutcracker or handing out Frisbees at a Halloween walk, it's about doing what comes natural. I can't wait to deliver the Easter baskets; I wonder whose basket I will get to deliver!

***Dante is a member of our Junior Board and a sophomore at Ridgefield High School.***

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## ***Robby's Aqua-Therapy Room***

Jay was officially started. The club quickly grew in size and brought together a group of members who began to feel that same passion that I felt in helping children with disabilities. We focus the club not only around fundraising, but also around understanding disabilities and helping to raise awareness about special needs and the Foundation in our community.

So far this year we have fundraised over \$800 for the Foundation by selling homemade bracelets, and we have many unique fundraising ideas for the future. We have 35 dedicated members in the club, and it has been truly an eye-opening experience to see each of them start to develop the same connection I have developed.

I am proud to have spread the importance of the Molly Ann Tango Foundation and its mission to my community, and I look forward to what the club will achieve in the future for this great cause.

***Sarah Teich is a junior at John Jay High School.***

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## **How We Can Help You or Someone You Know**



If you have a child with special needs who needs something that insurance doesn't cover (or only partially covers) please complete the application below. Or, if you know a family with a child with special needs, you can apply on their behalf.



**Robby K., for whom we purchased an aqua therapy room last year, continues to make progress and works with his family at home to strengthen his muscles.**

**10th Anniversary  
Nutcracker Raised Over  
\$41,000!**

Click [here](#) for the application.

Over the past 10 years, we have purchased items such as:

- Wheelchairs and medical equipment
- Adaptive bicycles and tricycles
- Wheelchair ramps
- Bathroom modifications
- Handicapped accessible home renovations
- Subsidies for purchase of handicapped accessible vans
- Tuition for special-needs summer camps
- Adaptive lift systems
- Safety Equipment

This is only a partial list. We consider all requests.

*Thank you.*

## Mother's Day Celebration!

Our annual Mother's Day Celebration Luncheon will be Friday, May 9th at Salem Golf Club. Invitations will be sent by mail and email shortly. We hope to see you there! Last year we sold out. You don't want to miss this very special event so be sure



**Rylie Cherico as the Nutcracker and Chelsea Schwartz as Clara in last December's Nutcracker.**

This past holiday season 170 dancers and countless volunteers staged a benefit performance, *Nuts About the Nutcracker*, that raised over \$41,000 for the Foundation!

This year marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary for our Foundation and every year we are so thankful for all of the dancers and volunteers who make the show a success and a very special event!

Directed, produced and choreographed by Jean Cobelli, the show delighted two packed audiences at Ridgefield High School.

*Thanks to all who attended and supported this event!*

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## **St. Patrick's Jog Helps Many**

to RSVP early!

If you have an item you would like to donate for our silent auction, please email Lisa Eckstrom at [leckstrom@mollytango.org](mailto:leckstrom@mollytango.org) or Valerie Fleming at [vfleming@mollytango.org](mailto:vfleming@mollytango.org).

*Thank you!*

## **Thanks Again RLAM!**

The 2014 "Run like a Mother" (RLAM) annual Mother's Day race chose the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation as its charitable partner again this year!



**RUN LIKE A MOTHER®**

Race participants have a number of unique

opportunities to support the Foundation. Athletes can make donations to the Foundation at the time of race registration or choose a special charity registration which included a ticket to the Foundation's annual Mother's Day Luncheon.

The race is Sunday, May 11 and the 5k starts at 8:30am at 90 Prospect Street in Ridgefield. To register for the race, click here: <https://endurancecui.active.com/event-reg/select-race?e=6489102>.

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

Johnny's Jog for Charity hosted its third annual 5K on March 22th in West Hartford Center. The event benefited three local organizations, including our Foundation.



Founded by Dan and Laura Moran and Dan and Kelly Clark, Johnny's Jog Charity is

inspired by Johnny, the Moran's 7-year-old son, who has battled an unknown neuromuscular condition since birth.

The vision of "the jog is to bring the community together with a grand St. Patrick's Day themed event."

"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.

Besides the Foundation, this year's Jog raised money for The Miracle League of Connecticut and Covenant Preparatory School of Hartford.

thrilled that they chose our charity again this year," Val Fleming, Molly board member and mother-runner said.

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## Special Thanks!

We'd like to thank the following organizations for recently providing grants to our Foundation:

**Gloria Gray Foundation  
The Lewis Fund  
Newman's Own  
and  
Fairfield County Gives**



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## ***Memories of Molly***

by Rick Tango

One of the nicest memories I have of Molly was a time when I attended a family gathering and while sitting next to her I reached over to hold her hand. She responded by grabbing my finger and held on to it. As I sat there hand and finger with Molly I remember calling her name and each time I did she would look in my direction and



give me a big smile.

Even though our communication consisted only of me calling out her name, it was like we were having an enjoyable and meaningful conversation. However my best memory of that moment and many other times I spent with Molly was her pretty smile. It was always such a genuine and beautiful smile.

Molly and her amazing smile has touched so many lives. She continues to live on in her family and friends and in the many children we have helped over the years through the Foundation that was inspired by her. When I see the beautiful smiles on the faces of the children we have helped I can't help but think of those nice memories I have of spending time with Molly.

*Rick Tango was Molly's uncle and is the treasurer and a board member of the Foundation.*

### Our 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.



*Many thanks for  
your support!*

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