

SEPTEMBER 2015

CLIFTON PARK

AN EXCLUSIVE MONTHLY PUBLICATION
FOR RESIDENTS

Neighbors



Dr. Howard Kushner
**Helping Families Through
Vision Therapy**



Best Version Media

Cover photo by Niki Rossi Photography



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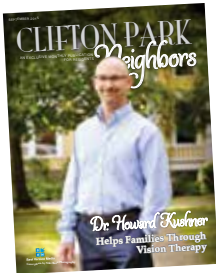
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Have feedback? New ideas? We would be happy to hear from you! Please contact Jenna Caputo at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com for information on how to submit ideas, articles, updates, reminders, events, high-resolution photos and more. We will do our best to include as much community information as we can within our space limitations.

MAGAZINE DEADLINES

Please submit your content by the 10th of each month. Clifton Park Living will usually arrive in your mailbox within the first week of every month. Dates may vary depending on the post office.

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ON THE COVER

Dr. Howard Kushner

CORRECTION: The August 2015 issue listed our feature story as Clifton Park EMT. This should have read Clifton Park & Halfmoon EMS. EMS stands for Emergency Medical Service, whereas EMT stands for Emergency Medical Technician. CPHM staff is mostly made up of paramedics, but also has many EMT on staff as well. We apologize for the error!

Dear CLIFTON PARK RESIDENTS

For many families, September is a time of change. A new school year routine begins as the kids adapt to a new teacher, new class, new bus, new friends, new expectations, even new notebooks. Life gets a bit hectic as everyone in the household settles into the new routine.

While change can naturally sometimes be unsettling, change is also good. It offers a chance for never before thought of opportunities and the ability to spread our wings in a new way.

You may have noticed a change on the cover of our magazine this month. *Clifton Park Living* will now be called *Clifton Park Neighbors*. We found that our publication was getting confused with some other magazines in the Capital District, so we have changed the name to try to avoid future confusion. But don't worry – the magazine will still contain all of your favorite features and will continue to highlight our Clifton Park residents as always. Speaking of which, we want to hear your stories and receive your submissions for resident features, local non-profits, original artwork and photography, information about your own publications and projects, original recipes, and star students.

Change is good. New name, same great community magazine!

Happy September!

Jenna Caputo

CONTENT COORDINATOR



STAR STUDENTS

Skaters Skating for Memory

By Agnas Gault

Monica Gault, Junior MIF and Novice Freestyle Figure Skater with the Hudson Mohawk Figure Skating Club, organizes and participates in Skate for Memory for local memory care center. Monica is also a level 5 NYSSMA cellist. She began playing cello for her friends at the Beacon Pointe Memory Care Center about three and a half years ago through St. Georges' church community service program in Clifton Park – an activity she continues to participate in every other Sunday. It is through this event that the idea of Skating for Memory was born. In three years, Justin Morrow and Elektra have been a

consistent addition to the program with phenomenal skating every time.

Isabella Gould and Chelsey Wertans joined this year's event, adding to the merriment. As always, the main goal is to ensure that for an hour in the morning, on a weekday, friends from Beacon Pointe will enjoy a quality time with their local skaters. A small snack and cello music follows in the lobby after the event. We are looking forward to another fun event next year! Special thanks to Scott, the proprietor of the Clifton Park Ice Arena for donating the ice two years in a row! ■

IMPORTANT TOWN PHONE NUMBERS

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If the person you wish to reach is not on the list above, please call 371-6651 to speak to a receptionist who will direct your call to the appropriate individual or department. The Town's office buildings are open from Monday through Friday, 9am to 5pm, excluding holidays. The Town Clerk's Office is open until 7pm every Thursday. The Building and Parks and Recreation Departments are open at 8am Monday through Friday.

Dear Old School Days

By John L. Scherer, Clifton Park Historian

There were once sixteen one-room schoolhouses in Clifton Park, teaching kindergarten through eighth grade. Many were still in use until 1953 when the new centralized Shenendehowa School opened.

The typical one-room schoolhouse had an entrance that led first to a coatroom. There were four rows of double desks and benches facing the front of the room where the teacher's desk stood on a raised platform. The desks were graduated in size with the smaller desks in front. The two outside rows were longer, since the inside rows had to stop short to accommodate a large nickel-plated potbellied stove in the center of the room. There was a blackboard in back of the teacher's desk and a high stool next to her desk for any mischievous student. A bench used for lesson recitation, with room for at least 12 students, was also up front near the teacher's desk. Benches along the walls were used for visitors during graduation and special events. The walls were decorated with maps.

The rest rooms were "out back" near the woodshed, and a bucket of water was obtained from a neighbor every morning. A single dipper was used for thirsty students. Some schoolhouses were not electrified until 1938. School

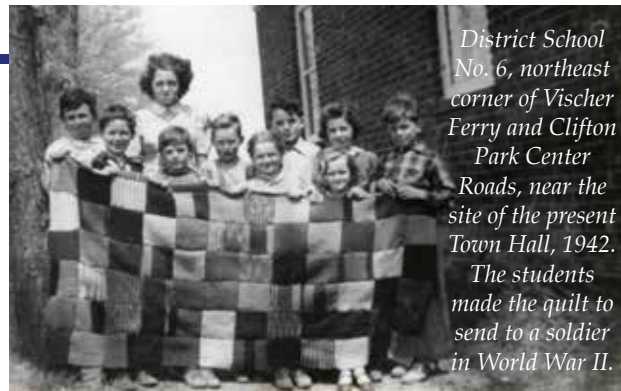
was held from 9-4, with an hour for

lunch and a 15-minute recess in the morning and afternoon.

The number of students at one time ranged from 25 to 30. However, School No. 3 in Vischer Ferry had 68 students in 1848 and 104 students in 1852. There could be as few as two or three students per grade to as many as six or eight.

In the early 1900s, schoolteachers earned \$400-\$500 a year. By 1940, the teacher's annual pay was up to \$1200. They would board with a local family. One of the most famous of Clifton Park teachers was a young Chester A. Arthur who taught at the Ashdown School while attending Union College in Schenectady in 1847. According to the record book, Arthur was paid \$16.00 for teaching eight weeks. Arthur later became the twenty-first president of the United States.

Today, with the exception of Moe Road School No. 5 that serves as a nursery school, the surviving one-room schools in Clifton Park have been sold by the school district and converted to private homes. ■



District School No. 6, northeast corner of Vischer Ferry and Clifton Park Center Roads, near the site of the present Town Hall, 1942. The students made the quilt to send to a soldier in World War II.


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Kindness Matters

By Rebecca Carmen, Shenendehowa Central Schools

On Friday, May 8th, Acadia Team 6-2 had a team day to celebrate and pass on kindness. The day began in the Gowana Auditorium with a recap of last year's district wide initiative, "Kindness Matters. Pass It On." Students watched a video of students from all over Shen last year doing acts of kindness. Acadia students then got up and shared kind acts that they had done last year and we brainstormed random acts that we could do this summer. Then, students participated in various activities throughout the day – decorating the sidewalks outside of the middle schools with inspiring quotes in chalk, creating a butterfly craft to put on random cars throughout the community that weekend, researching quotes on kindness and attaching it to a lollipop to give to a peer outside our team, and waving to cars passing by the Shen campus to encourage them to have a great day. Students were truly inspired and motivated to share and spread kindness. We know Kindness Matters, So PASS IT ON! ■



Shenendehowa Central School students participate in the "Kindness Matters: Pass It On" program.



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Dr. K helps Emily with a vision therapy exercise.

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Dr. Howard B. Kushner

Helping Families Through Vision Therapy

While back-to-school can be an exciting time for parents, it can also raise anxiety for your child's well being. What if my child struggles in school? What if my child struggles with sports? What if my athletic child gets a concussion?

There has been a lot of media coverage about concussions and student athletes lately, and the concern is well warranted. However, did you know that at least 50% of people with concussions have visual deficits? "In reality, it's probably more than that," says Dr. Howard Kushner,

a Behavioral/Developmental Optometrist specializing in Vision Therapy. "Many people, including doctors, don't have vision problems on their radar screen. In addition to all of the commonly recognized symptoms of concussion, there are visual consequences most people are completely unaware of and are missed, for example, being overwhelmed in a visually busy environment such as a supermarket or mall. Unless vision issues are addressed, the concussed person will not be able to be fully functional."

Dr. Kushner emphasizes that when it comes to sports concussions, it's not just about how to help someone who has already sustained an injury, but how to prevent it in the first place. His advice for parents of athletes is to have a vision evaluation on their child before playing in order to create a baseline of measurements and to see if there are any skill deficits. An evaluation is not simply a standard vision test. A person can have 20/20 vision and still have vision deficits. And these deficits can be a risk factor for concussions.

Dr. Kushner grew up in the town of Greenlawn on Long Island before he found his way to the Capital District. He loved music and taught himself to play guitar. But as a child, he was identified as having Convergence Insufficiency – a problem of using both eyes together as a team. Although the problem was identified, none of the doctors knew how to treat it, and he had to work extremely hard in school to try to overcome the problem to gain academic success.

This experience sparked an interest in Vision Therapy – a program of activities that are used to build visual skills such as focusing, tracking, teaming and processing skills. While children are often monitored for possible learning disorders in school, many of these visual skills are not monitored. "Many children get eye exams that only evaluate the ability to see 20/20 and the structural health of the eye. While these areas are important to evaluate, the visual system and visual process is far more complex," explains Dr. Kushner. Research shows that somewhere between 80-94% of children that struggle academically also have visual skill deficits. Which means that if your child is struggling, vision likely is at least part of the problem.

Not sure if a visual deficit could be affecting your child? Observe your child in everyday situations. Do you notice if he/she has eyestrain or headaches when reading? Poor reading comprehension, poor handwriting and poor overall coordination can also be signs of a problem as well. Dr. Kushner advises to "be involved and work to establish



Dr. K exams Emily's eyes.

good communication with your child's teacher(s). If there are concerns, you can address them quickly." Back-to-school is a great time to have your child's whole visual system evaluated.

But that doesn't mean that vision therapy is just for children. "Everyone can benefit. I work with athletes who simply want to perform better at their sport. I work with adults who are having a hard time working at the computer. I work with a lot of patients who have concussions. Not only can we rehabilitate their visual skill deficits, we work to improve their visual skills to prevent another concussion."

A visit to Dr. Kushner's office is a little different than the usual clinical offices of other doctors. Sensitive to their patient's needs, they have a warm, inviting space that isn't over stimulating. They purposely schedule plenty of time to meet with each patient on time, so there will be no rush and they can fully understand the patient's needs. They also will be offering some new services in addition to their standard vision therapy – play groups to build vision skills for pre-k kids, yoga classes for children or adults with head injuries, as well as tutoring services geared towards teaching students full learning skills, not just going over homework.

While school-aged students tend to be highlighted for vision deficits, vision problems can affect any age and will make an impact on all aspects

of life – whether if it is working on the computer, driving, even being able to read facial expressions and body language for everyday social skills.

"Most people underestimate the role vision plays in our lives. For many reasons, it's important to have comprehensive vision evaluations that go beyond checking to see if you have 20/20 eyesight and that your eyes are physically healthy. The visual system is far more complex than that. Part of living well is to connect to the world in a healthy way. Vision plays a big role in this."

Even preschool age should have evaluations to ensure their visual skills are developing properly. Developmental stages can have a huge impact on the visual skills. For example, crawling is a critical stage. If a child does not have enough belly time, or even if they have multiple ear infections, these are both things that can impact their vision development. Dr. Kushner suggests that infants have their first evaluation at around 6 months old, then annually after that.

He says that his favorite part about the job is seeing the effect vision therapy can have. "Children come to my office struggling in school. They have a poor self esteem as a result. When they finish vision therapy, they are different people. They are self-assured, doing much better academically and proud of their accomplishments. I also see many

people who have had brain injuries. Their lives are turned upside down. When they finish vision therapy, they are a lot closer to having their lives back. I love the fact that I help people in a very tangible way. It's incredibly rewarding!"

Since many people are not familiar with these other vision deficits, Dr. Kushner is working to increase knowledge in the community and schools. Every year, he partners with local schools and parent groups to



Michael, Emily and Zachary doing visual therapy home exercises.

present information to both parents and teachers to create more awareness and understanding of Learning Related Vision Disorders.

However, it isn't all about the eyes for Dr. Kushner. In his off-time, he enjoys spending time with his children and still actively pursues his music by listening, writing and playing music, as well as performing in the rock band, *Lila and the Obsessions*. He also goes to the gym, meditates and catches a baseball or hockey game when he can. And if he wants to get out in the Capital District, his favorite spots to go are the Saratoga State Park or Thatcher Park in the Heldeberg Mountains.

If you would like to contact Dr. Kushner about speaking at your school or group, or would like to set up an appointment for an evaluation, you can contact him at integrativevisiontherapy.com or at 383-2270. ■

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

Back Pain Can Result In Lifestyle Changes

By Ellis Medicine

Larry Clow's back pain started at his weekly chorus rehearsal when more chairs were needed. "Some young guy picked up three or four chairs, so I picked up two, thinking nothing of it," the Glenville resident said. "That's what did me in."

The sciatic pain down his leg became a real problem for Clow. "You can't sit down, you can't stand, you can't lay down. It makes you cry. There is just no relief," he said.

Following surgery in Ellis Medicine's Neuroscience Center, Clow said, "The pain was absolutely gone the day after surgery. I feel great and am getting back to doing the things I like to do. It feels wonderful to be back."



TREATING BACK PAIN

The back is an intricate structure of vertebrae, disks and muscles. Its complexity and weight-bearing responsibility are reasons why back pain is one of the most common medical problems in the United States, according the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Acute or short-term low back pain generally lasts from a few days to a few weeks. Most acute back pain is the result of trauma to the lower back or a disorder such as arthritis. Symptoms can range from muscle ache to shooting or stabbing pain, limited flexibility and range of motion, or an inability to stand straight. Chronic back pain is pain that persists for more than three months. It is often progressive and the cause can be difficult to determine.

Back pain can be caused by underlying physical problems; it may also result from lifestyle habits. Causes of back pain include:


- Prolapsed or ruptured disk
- Muscle strain
- Aging
- Poor posture
- Weak muscles
- Excess weight
- Scoliosis
- Osteoarthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Rheumatic diseases

EVALUATION & TREATMENT

Many back problems will eventually go away after a period of rest and recovery. However, when back pain persists, as it did with Clow, it is imperative that patients seek further evaluation. Neurosurgeons can see any and all lower back pain cases for proper evaluation and treatment. Too often, people think of orthopedics as being the key to treatment, but neurosurgeons specialize in the treatment of back pain.

The team at Ellis' Neuroscience Center is among the most experienced teams of neurosurgeons in the region, providing the full gamut of care. The team takes a conservative approach, with surgery being the last resort, and works closely with a pain management specialist and physical therapists to treat back pain. Many times a combination of physical therapy, epidural steroid injections and/or chiropractic and acupuncture treatment help considerably.

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VISION & LEARNING



Studies show that between **80-90%** of children that struggle academically have visual skill deficits that go beyond the ability to see 20/20.

If skills such as eye movement control, eye teaming, focusing ability and visual perceptual abilities are inefficient; they will interfere with learning.

If your child is struggling in school, please give us a call to schedule an evaluation.

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Nick's Fight to be Healed Foundation: *The First Line of Comfort for Children with Cancer*

By Janine Cammarata, President & Co-founder, Nick's Fight to be Healed Foundation



A mother and father rush their 11-year-old son to the hospital because he passed out in the tub and is unresponsive. He is diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. The only thing his mom brought with her is her purse and her bible. A 15-year-old girl has had pain in her knee for quite a while and just as she enters her junior year in high school finds out she has lymphoma. A 3-year-old boy is diagnosed with cancer and his parents are overwhelmed and don't know what to do.

Nick's Run 5k 2015

September 27th

Clifton Commons

Register online at
fighttobehealed.org,
or more info, contact
Liz Fox at 631-645-4081



Nick, just before his diagnosis in 2008

Disorders at Albany Medical Center, which covers 25 counties.

NFTBHF is completely run by volunteers without administrative fees, because we know how important it is to be supported and cared for when your child is battling cancer. To find out about how you can donate and get involved, visit www.fighttobehealed.org.

Do you know of a great local non-profit? Tell us so we can spotlight them here! Email non-profit suggestions/info to jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

After the diagnosis and meeting their pediatric oncologist, these families receive a Nick's Fight to be Healed Foundation (NFTBHF) Family Hope Bag from either their social worker or child life specialist. The Family Hope Bag is filled with items needed for a long hospital stay including gift cards, travel essentials and notes of

comfort. As one parent said, "Honestly you knew what we needed when our closest family members and friends didn't even know where to start."

We know because my husband and I walked the cancer road eight years ago when our son, Nick, was diagnosed with leukemia at age 12. An athletic swimmer, Nick developed a rash after being diagnosed with an ear infection and given antibiotics. It took

three months to get him into remission and sadly he passed away four months into his diagnosis just after he turned 13.

NFTBHF was started to help children battling cancer at The Melodies Center for Childhood Cancer and Blood

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All Things Andy Warhol: A Summer of Special Events Kicks off at The Hyde

By Tara Morgan, Behan Communications

To celebrate The Hyde Collection's major summer exhibit, *The Late Drawings of Andy Warhol: 1973-1987*, the Museum has announced a series of Warhol-centric special events.

The Late Drawings of Andy Warhol: 1973-1987, which opened on June 21 in the Charles R. Wood Gallery, features 50 drawings, some of which are on view to the public for the very first time. The exhibition has been organized by the Andy Warhol Museum, one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh.

Warhol is best known for iconic pop art, but throughout his life he pursued a diverse range of interests

including music, fashion and animals.

For more information about upcoming events, visit www.hydecollection.org or contact Michael Coughlin, museum educator at 518-792-1761, ext. 340.

The Late Drawings of Andy Warhol: 1973-1987 is made possible, in part, through the sponsorships of Fenimore Asset Management, Fingerpaint, Glens Falls National Bank & Trust Company and Alan & Dorie Redeker. All exhibitions at The Hyde Collection are made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York Legislature. ■



All Things Andy Warhol

Andy Warhol, (American, 1928-1987) **Jean Cocteau**, 1983, graphite and colored graphite art paper collage on HMP paper, 31 1/2 x 23 1/2 inches, The Andy Warhol Museum Pittsburgh; Founding Collection, Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc. 1998.1.2248. © 2015 ADAGP, Paris, / Avec l'aimable autorisation de M. Pierre Bergé, président du Comité Jean Cocteau

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Cost: FREE

Sunday, September 13

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Saturday, September 19 through Sunday, September 20

Saturday, September 26 through Sunday, September 27

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Time: 11am-5pm

Saturday, September 26

ST. JUDE WALK/RUN

@Thatcher State Park

Please help support the lifesaving mission of St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital on this exciting family friendly walk through the beautiful Thatcher Park!

Time: 9am-12pm

Sunday, October 4

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@Saratoga Spa State Park

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Time: 9am


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Tax Planning

By JP Komorny, M.E.

It seems so many taxpayers are hit with large income tax bills at the end of the tax year. Often times this can be avoided with proper tax planning by a Certified Public Accountant and/or IRS Enrolled Agent. Tax planning is not something that happens at the end of the year, rather it is a year round process that can help to mitigate your tax liability with the IRS and State taxing authorities.

Tax planning can help reduce your tax burden by implementing tax strategies such as:

- Budgeting your tax bills
- Putting off (defer) some income to a later year
- Scheduling your expenses in a beneficial way for you (have them deducted sooner than normal)
- Timing your purchases in an advantageous matter
- Calculating the tax effect of your purchases
- Considering how your sales fluctuations will affect your overall tax picture
- Contributing to an IRA or other retirement account
- Contributing to a Health Saving Account
- Opening a 105(b) plan for your employees

- Considering alternative strategies such as a Cost Segregation Study on your commercial and rental properties

It is paramount that your Enrolled Agent or Certified Public Accountant take the time to sit down with you and discuss specific tax strategies with you. Characteristics of a good tax planning program include a tax professional who takes into consideration your current income, expenses and financial position for personal and business. The tax professional should take the time to get to know what your personal and business financial goals and objectives are, and how you hope to achieve these goals.

CETS & COMPANY (CETS) is comprised both of CPA's and Enrolled agents maintaining the highest level of professionalism for 50 years. We pride ourselves in taking a personal interest in each of our client's businesses and financial wellbeing. As a national tax firm corporately located in Saratoga, NY, we specialize in individual, business, real estate and corporate taxation. Learn more by calling CETS – Core Engineering Tax Services in Saratoga Springs at 518-886-9338. ■



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Sitting on the Sidelines

By Gerald Magoolaghan, Real Estate Salesperson, Select Sotheby's Realty



Gerald Magoolaghan
Real Estate Salesperson
Select Sotheby's Realty
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sothebysrealty.com

Are you still sitting on the sidelines “thinking” about listing your home when the market recovers? If so, it’s time to stop thinking and start acting.

While the market hasn’t fully swung back to pre-crash prices, with the exception of some rare locations such as Saratoga lakefront and downtown Saratoga Springs, it is pretty close to recovered.

Prominent towns with lower taxes and good school districts are in the spotlight. And Clifton Park happens to be a prime example of such a town. Those facts, combined with its proximity to both Albany to the south and Saratoga Springs, Lake George and the Adirondacks to the north, all add up to demand from buyers.

I recently sold a home in Clifton Park for \$1.8 million dollars, the highest price in over nine years. While your home may not be in that price range, the point is that prices across the board have risen and demand has increased throughout the last two years. If you are lying dormant, you are missing a great opportunity to sell your home.

As a Realtor with Select Sotheby's International Realty, I'd like to offer you a free consultation and market analysis of your home. We can discuss your goals and how I can help you achieve them by taking advantage of the market turn-around.

So again, stop thinking and start acting, and call me today. ■

Recently Closed

- 48 Spruce St, Clifton Park - Sold for \$335,000
- 63 Sheldon Dr, Halfmoon - Sold for \$349,900
- 13 Heavenly Way, Clifton Park - Sold for \$475,000
- 22 Leonardo, Clifton Park - Sold for \$567,500
- 152 Cary Rd, Halfmoon - Sold for \$740,000
- 19 Tipperary, Clifton Park - Sold for \$845,000
- 192 Moe Rd, Clifton Park - Sold for \$900,000
- 7 Taymor Tr, Clifton Park - Sold for \$1,825,000

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