



ALUMNI, FAMILY, & FRIENDS

DFRC NEWSLETTER • 2019 EDITION

HAND-IN-HAND...TOGETHER WE STAND!

Tony Glenn & Martha McDonough



Forty-five years ago, DFRC took an enormous step that forged the path to the incredible level of ABILITY, equality, acceptance and inclusion we celebrate today. The DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program, initiated in 1974, has led thousands of people to a profound understanding about the ABILITIES of each life, guided our mission, and laid the foundation for the very heart of everything we do. The Hand-in-Hand Program is the element of the Blue-Gold experience that matches high school participants with buddies who are intellectually challenged to provide opportunities to get to know each other and nurture relationships that sometimes last far beyond the final moments of the big game.

As DFRC grew from 1956 and those early years, visionaries in the DFRC family believed there were many lessons to be learned to keep the mission of DFRC thriving. Committee members believed there was great value in giving participants an opportunity to spend time with people with intellectual disABILITIES and, by matching them with specific people, the experience would have added depth. From that belief, the Hand-in-Hand

Program was born and from a picture of the now legendary player and buddy logo came the program's name, Hand-in-Hand.



Two pioneers of the Hand-in-Hand Program devoted their entire lives to people who are intellectually challenged. The life careers of Barbara and the late

Winnie Spence were devoted to teaching children with disABILITIES and they were the very first Co-Chairpersons of DFRC's Hand-in-Hand Committee. To describe Barbara, we would talk about sweet, loving, compassionate, smart, wise, energetic, caring...the list goes on and on. For each of the 45 years of our Hand-in-Hand Program, Barbara has fostered impeccable matches, encouraged meaningful relationships,

and mastered the element of DFRC that IS the reason we do what we do. We are blessed beyond measure to have Barbara continuing to lead the way, not only for participants, buddies, and their families, but also for DFRC family members and thousands of others, as she lovingly guides and oversees the program that is the heart and soul of DFRC. Barbara gives her all to continue the legacy of the Hand-in-Hand Program that was started when she and Winnie worked it together with love.

The magnitude of the Hand-in-Hand Program is sometimes realized immediately. Other times, the significance of the experience finds us months or years later when something in our lives incites an emotion that takes us back to our buddies. Often, we come into the program expecting to help our buddies, when, in fact, we find our buddies showing us the truly important things in life...a desire to be respected, have fun and friends, and be involved in the community. No matter when or how it happens, our buddies teach us genuine, unconditional love! Through our buddies, the Hand-in-Hand Program fuels a burning desire to make the world a better place for everyone!



HELPING ONE ANOTHER FOR A LIFETIME.



I would like to thank DFRC's Executive Director, Dr. Tony Glenn, for the opportunity to serve as the Game Chairperson for the 64th DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game. Without all the hard work of Tony, the DFRC staff, and all the committee members, this great event would not be possible. Not only do these people work very hard on Game Day, they truly give it

their all throughout the entire year. DFRC always does whatever we can to raise awareness and funding to enrich the lives of citizens with intellectual disABILITIES. A major change this year is moving the Game from the storied Saturday event to FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS!! We're all very excited!

I have been involved with DFRC since 1995 when my son Michael participated as a football player from St. Elizabeth High School. During the years since, I've been involved in many parts of the DFRC Program and it is truly an honor to serve as this year's Game Chairperson. The tagline for this year's game is Helping One Another for a Lifetime. As we celebrate 45 years of our Hand-in-Hand Program, I have seen many children grow up to be amazing young adults. They have taught me an awful lot about life, for which I'm very grateful. We hope to see you at the Game on Friday night, June 21, 2019.

- Gary Mensinger



**2019 DFRC Blue-Gold
All★Star Football Game Leadership**
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FRIDAY NIGHT

For the first time in 64 years, the DFRC Blue-Gold
FRIDAY NIGHT, JUNE 21ST, UNDER THE

One of the greatest rewards for the DFRC family is when participants, present and past, realize the value of their experience and make those lessons part of their everyday lives. Rachel Nowocin is one of those people who never could have guessed how drastically her Hand-in-Hand experience would change her life. She tells us that words cannot describe the impact the program has made on her. When she was chosen to participate as a cheerleader in 2015, Rachel was introduced to a person who became one of her best friends, Becca. Rachel and Becca immediately had a powerful connection and they remain great friends today.



There were many experiences Rachel and Becca shared through the Hand-in-Hand Program that enriched their lives tremendously. One of Rachel's favorites was Buddy Bowling. While participating in a relatively common sport, Rachel noticed Becca's gigantic smile and her glistening eyes. On another occasion, Rachel was excited to take Becca to her 5th grade dance. The two friends danced the night away and had the best time ever.

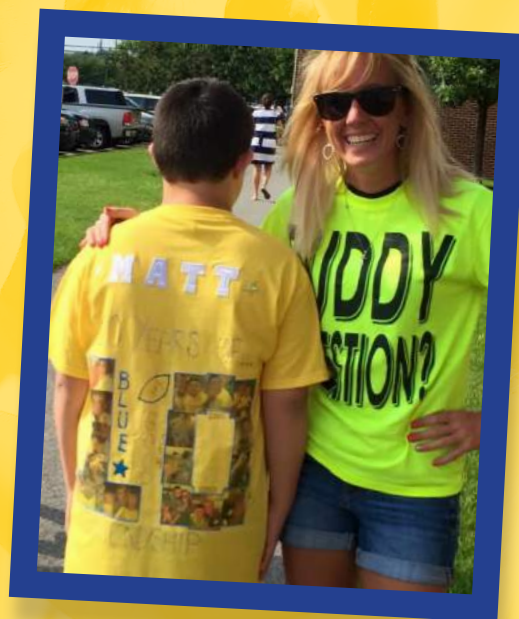
During these and the many other times Rachel and Becca have spent together, Rachel has realized that spending time with Becca makes her a better person and her honesty touches her heart. No doubt, Becca would tell us how much she loves Rachel and the time they spend together is very special. The fun they have helps Rachel understand that no matter what Becca does, she lives in the moment and lives her life to the fullest. Small things make her the happiest person in the world and she is never afraid to show her true self or true emotions. Becca inspired Rachel to realize the beauty of who she is and what she has, encouraging her to be true to herself. Rachel learned to surround herself with the people and things that make her genuinely happy, realize who was going to cheer her on instead of tear her down, love her life, and BE HAPPY!

After graduating from high school and the DFRC Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand Program, Rachel fully understood the positive impact the program had on her life. She started college as a nursing major, but as her friendship with Becca grew, her heart opened to other avenues. Rachel's aspirations redirected her career choice and she changed her major to Special Education. Rachel will graduate this year and she looks forward to taking the experience and knowledge she learned from Becca to the students in her classroom. Even though Rachel has been very busy with college, she made DFRC a priority in her life. Along with her mother and sister, Rachel joined the DFRC Blue-Gold Committee in 2015 and she has been an Assistant Cheerleading Coach every year since.

She tells us she absolutely loves watching the DFRC family grow more and more

each year and is grateful for all DFRC and Becca mean to her.

Another life-changing story comes from 2006 Ambassador, Melanie Blanco Tokash, granddaughter of our own Barbara and Winnie Spence. As a high school senior, Melanie was paired with 4-year-old Matthew. From their very first meeting, Melanie and Matthew included each other in most everything, from DFRC events, fundraisers for school, and school assemblies, to senior project, prom, senior awards, graduation and graduation parties. Melanie was proud to introduce Matthew to everyone as her friend and her buddy.



Growing up with her parents and grandparents so engrained in the DFRC family, Melanie had looked forward to being a part of the Hand-in-Hand Program for many years.



Gold All★Star Football Game will be played on THE LIGHTS AT DELAWARE STADIUM.

2018 DFRC BENEFICIARIES

DFRC provided 16 Delaware agencies and organizations with grants totaling \$30,000.

Annual DFRC fundraising events include: DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game, DFRC Blue-Gold Bash, DFRC Blue-Gold Sussex County Auction, DFRC Blue-Gold Golf Classics, DFRC Hockey for a Cause, and the DFRC Blue-Gold 5k Run/1Mile Walk

The Arc of Delaware
Statewide

Art Therapy Express
New Castle County

Best Buddies Delaware
Statewide

**The CENTER for Therapeutic
& Educational Riding, Inc.**
New Castle, Kent County

Delaware Care Plan
Statewide

**Delaware Developmental
Disabilities Council**
Statewide

**Delaware Theatre Company
- Totally Awesome Players**
New Castle, Kent County

**Down Syndrome
Association of Delaware**
New Castle, Kent County

Grand Opera House
Statewide

**Hearts, Hands, and Horses
4H Club**
New Castle, Kent County

Independent Resources
Statewide

**Junior Achievement
of Delaware**
New Castle, Kent County

Kent-Sussex Industries
Statewide

Mosaic
New Castle, Kent County

**Southern Delaware
Therapeutic & Recreational
Horseback Riding, Inc**
Kent, Sussex County

VSA Delaware
New Castle, Kent County



The mission of DFRC is to enrich the lives of Delawareans with intellectual disABILITIES



Savannah Ernst, left, is the 2019 DFRC Blue All★Star Buddy. Sean Burke, center, is the 2019 DFRC Gold All★Star Buddy. Gary Mensinger, right, is the 2019 DFRC Blue-Gold Game Chair.

THANK YOU!

The 2019 Edition of the DFRC Newsletter is brought to you through the kindness and generosity of

THE
MOGLIA FAMILY
FOUNDATION

The DFRC family is deeply grateful for their continued support!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

SATURDAY, JUNE 8 - 8:00 A.M.

DFRC Blue-Gold 5K Run/1 Mile Walk
Irish Eyes Restaurant, Lewes, DE

MONDAY, JUNE 10 - 8:30 A.M.

DFRC Blue-Gold New Castle County
Golf Classic
White Clay Creek Country Club,
Wilmington, DE

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19 - 5:00 P.M.

DFRC Blue-Gold Football Scrimmages
Blue Team - Tower Hill School, Wilmington, DE
Gold Team - Milford High School, Milford, DE

FRIDAY, JUNE 21 - GAMEDAY!

DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game
University of Delaware Stadium, Newark, DE
Opening Ceremonies - 6:00 p.m.
Kickoff - 7:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, JULY 12 - 11:00 A.M.

DFRC Blue-Gold Kent County Golf Classic
Maple Dale Country Club, Dover, DE

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9

DFRC Holidazzle: Blue-Gold Bash
Hockessin Athletic Club, Hockessin, DE

**TO PURCHASE TICKETS
& OTHER DFRC GOODIES
GO TO:**

www.dfrc.org/merchandise.html



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DFRC THANKS ITS 2019 DFRC BLUE-GOLD ALL★STAR FOOTBALL GAME SPONSORS

Displayed in Alphabetical order.





So many times, she had experienced the magic of that special moment when buddies charge onto the football field just before kickoff to meet their participants. She was especially excited that her time was approaching. A rainy game night spoiled that dream for Melanie, but as Matthew and Melanie and their families sat in the stadium in their rain-soaked ponchos, she realized that she and Matthew had celebrated many experiences through the Blue-Gold Hand-in-Hand season, and the rain could never wash them away.

Heartwarming emotions filled Melanie's thoughts as Matthew drifted off to sleep on her shoulder, keenly aware that their friendship would remain strong far beyond that night...and it certainly did.

After high school, Melanie's longtime dream of a nursing career took her to Towson University. She finished her freshman year, but somehow, all she had learned from her friendship with Matthew and his family were tugging at her heartstrings. During her time in the Hand-in-Hand Program, she had learned tremendous lessons about inclusion, ABILITIES, and the impact one person can make on another. Melanie realized her true calling was to Special Education, so she changed her major, reached back on the experiences she had with Matthew, and completed her degree.

Matthew continues to have a profound impact on Melanie's life. When he was in middle school, Matthew helped in Melanie's classroom as he read to the children, helped with snacks, and played with her students. He ran track and she trained with him and encouraged him. Matthew showed Melanie his unbelievably strong determination, never allowing his struggles to become barriers. He depends upon his innate desire to be successful in all he does and certainly proves the truth about **ABILITIES**.

When Melanie met her husband, Charlie immediately discovered how significant Matthew was to her life and how very special the journey from their Hand-in-Hand experience had been. Matthew was a groomsman and reader in Melanie and Charlie's wedding, honored to be included as their friend on this special day. Fourteen years since that first DFRC Hand-in-Hand experience, Melanie is proud of Matthew and all he means to her, Charlie, and their two children, to whom he is "Uncle Matt." Because Melanie and Matthew had the opportunity to learn about ABILITIES, share their interests, relate to each other, and most of all, become true friends, their journeys were impacted in tremendous ways. Friends for life, they will be!



Beginning his senior year in 2017 at St. Elizabeth High School, Casey Rock was full of excitement and promise. Ready to give his best to an outstanding football season, he trained hard and went into the first game with total commitment. During the third game of the season, Casey knew something wasn't right with his knee. He tried his best to stay in the game but soon succumbed to the torn ACL he tried to ignore. This injury changed quite a lot for Casey, but he kept his focus positive, determined to move forward.

Casey had aspired to have the opportunity to play in the DFRC Blue-Gold All*Star Game for many years, just as his uncles had done before him. With this injury, that possibility looked rather grim. Joe Papili, President of St. Elizabeth School and DFRC Blue-Gold alumnus, called Tony Glenn, DFRC's Executive Director, telling him what an extraordinary person Casey was. There was no doubt Casey was the person of outstanding character we want to be a part of the DFRC family, and if he wasn't able to play, they decided a manager's position was a way we could keep him in

the program. When Casey received this news, he was full of gratitude for being "considered worthy" of such an honor. Casey was thrilled the first time he met his Hand-in-Hand buddy. Matthew's smile literally lit the room as he ran to Casey with a mighty bear hug, instantly melting Casey's heart. Casey and Matthew had awesome fun when they attended the DFRC events and at every opportunity they spent together. Casey felt good about their relationship and admired the way Matthew was always happy, never letting his disability stop him from doing anything at all. Matthew helped Casey realize that football was great, but having his buddy was so much more than football. Casey opened his heart to everything he could learn.

While Casey was having such a great time in the Hand-in-Hand Program with Matthew, he was also healing from ACL surgery. Casey's life-long friend played in the 2017 Game and he was a source of encouragement for Casey to work hard. Casey also found inspiration in what he discovered from Matthew. If Matthew could overcome the daily obstacles he experienced, Casey was determined to give that same commitment to his own journey. Casey was working hard and feeling grateful that he had the opportunity to be a manager for the Blue team. Head Coach Dan Ritter recommended that they get a jersey for Casey and at least let him run down the sideline. As training camp approached, the news spread quickly that Casey had been cleared to play! Everyone was thrilled for him and proud of his dedication. Casey was never expected to heal in time to play in the Blue-Gold Game and he believes that the prayers and encouragement of his family and friends helped the process. On Game Day, when Matthew ran to meet Casey on the field just before kickoff, the trials of the year appeared and his heart was full of love and gratitude. From his Hand-in-Hand experience, Casey learned that life is not about what we can't do, but what we can do. It was all part of God's plan, for which Casey is extremely happy and grateful.

The DFRC family takes great pride in these stories and the thousands of others that have brought us to this year's 45th anniversary celebration of the Hand-in-Hand Program. When we focus on ABILITIES, we find the greatness in others, which helps us understand the greatness in ourselves. We're proud of all the buddies who have taught us about life and love. We're grateful to the participants who have joined the magical crusade. The DFRC family celebrates true bonds of friendship as we move forward, anxiously awaiting our 46th year of goodness and growth.

Join us in supporting the hundreds of high school students, volunteers, and community members who make this game happen every year.



One small touch that lasts a lifetime... your gift makes this possible.

DFRC has touched hearts and enriched the lives of Delawareans since 1956. Key to our success has been the DFRC Blue-Gold All★Star Football Game Hand-in-Hand program, which is celebrating its 44th anniversary in 2018.

Your gift of support to DFRC helps create opportunities like the Hand-in-Hand program, as well as other programs and community services that maximize the potential, independence and enjoyment of life for Delawareans with intellectual dis**ABILITIES**.

Visit the DFRC website - www.dfrc.org - and click on the DONATE button to make your gift today.