

DEAR FRIENDS,

When we decided to start our own private family foundation in 1999, we never anticipated that it would grow into such an important part of our lives, nor have such a significant impact on the organizations we support.

Thanks to the generosity of supporters, friends and loved ones, the Charles Lafitte Foundation has awarded more than \$3.25 million in grants to programs that focus on Education, Children's Advocacy, Medical Research and Issues, and the Arts. While donating makes us feel good, we do it because of the people and organizations who benefit. The programs supported by the Charles Lafitte Foundation help people across the state of New Jersey as well as in other parts of the country help themselves and others around them lead healthy, satisfying and enriched lives.



In this premiere issue of the Charles Lafitte Foundation newsletter, we invite you to learn more about the Foundation, the organizations it benefits and of course, remind you to dust off your clubs and practice your swing for the annual Golf Classic in June!

Before you turn the page to check out the rest of this newsletter, we want to take this moment to thank you. **Thank you** for your support of the Charles Lafitte Foundation and its mission to make a difference. **Thank you** for caring about helping others as much as we do. **Thank you** for joining us each summer on the golf course for our annual fundraiser. And last but not least, **thank you** for making the Charles Lafitte Foundation YOUR charity over the last eight years and enabling us to significantly impact over 100 different organizations that inspire us with the ways they make the lives of children and adults better each and every day.

We look forward to many more to come and continuing to make a difference.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Suzanne & Jeffrey Citron



PAR FOR THE CAUSE

American radio broadcaster Paul Harvey once said, "Golf is a game in which you yell 'fore,' shoot six and write down five." Despite what the participants in the annual Charles Lafitte Foundation Golf Classic write on their score cards, the end result is the same — a deserving non-profit wins funding.

Steve McDermott has blazed the fairways with the Charles Lafitte Foundation since its first Golf Classic in 2003. Always up for a day on the links in the spirit of philanthropy, Steve and his business colleagues are looking forward to testing their skills on Plainfield Country Club's golf course at this year's outing, even if his drive to raise money is stronger than his drive to make par.

"Last year, my entire foursome hit the ball deep into the woods on the same hole. It took us right out of contention!" he exclaimed. "This year, our goal is simply to stay on the green, but even if we end up in the woods again, it's sure to be a great time and a lot of laughs all for a good cause."

For Tony Domiano, who played in his first classic in 2004, his sights are set on continuing an unusual tradition at this year's charitable golf outing: "I won the award for having the worst score and then did it again the next year! Even though I've been practicing my swing all winter, I'll likely win that honor again this year."

Win or lose, it's the spirit of the game that has turned golfers into donors.

"Suzanne and Jeffrey's passion and desire to help others is truly inspiring," Tony said. "Through the Charles Lafitte Foundation, they have done great things for great organizations. Seeing them strive to accomplish something important through their charity work — and the fun we have with them on the links — encourages us to keep coming back each year."

Over the last four years, the Golf Classic has raised more than \$1.67 million dollars to touch the lives of countless individuals — and with your continued support, the Charles Lafitte Foundation will raise more to help more people in the years to come.

“Suzanne and Jeffrey's passion and desire to help others is truly inspiring.”





MAKING MERRY HEARTS AT CAMP MERRY HEART

Each year, the Charles Lafitte Foundation chooses one beneficiary of its annual Golf Classic. This year, the Foundation is making many hearts merry, including Jason McLean's.

Like many of us, Jason loves the summer. His summers are particularly special because he gets to spend them at Camp Merry Heart, a New Jersey Easter Seals camp that gives children and adults with disabilities a week of sun and fun. Jason, a 23-year-old college student who has lived with cerebral palsy all his life, started at Camp Merry Heart as a camper at age 13, and ten years later, he's still there, now as a counselor helping others with disabilities.

In August, Jason told *The Star-Ledger* how the Easter Seals camp makes a difference in his life: "Sometimes it can be rough in Newark," he said in the article. "But here is very peaceful. It makes you feel safe being here, like nothing bad's gonna happen to you."

Jason's story mirrors those of so many other campers that have been affected by the endless opportunities the camp offers, which is why Suzanne and Jeffrey Citron are delighted to have Camp Merry Heart as the beneficiary of the 2007 Charles Lafitte Foundation Golf Classic.

"When I first learned of Camp Merry Heart, I was touched by the work it does to help both adults and children with mild to severe disabilities lead a fulfilling and active life. But it was my first visit to the camp that made a lasting impression on me," said Suzanne. "It is important to help people with disabilities and special needs, as well as their caregivers and family live, work and play. Camp Merry Heart fulfills that need we all have to play and enjoy life to its fullest, thanks to the camp's directors and counselors that provide each camper with individual attention and assistance they need. The smiles at Camp Merry Heart are infectious — I smile every day at the thought of the great things the camp can do with support from the Charles Lafitte Foundation."

Since 1967, Camp Merry Heart, nestled in the cool hills of Hackettstown, N.J., has been providing a recreational getaway for people with disabilities and their

caregivers, inner city youth and foster children who have been separated from their siblings. The camp offers year-round programs and activities—such as mountain biking, climbing and kayaking—that are adapted to accommodate any disability, so that no one is ever left out. Camp Merry Heart has helped build confidence and provide hope to more than 30,000 campers with severe disabilities.

"Camp Merry Heart has a long proud history of helping campers with disabilities of all magnitudes accomplish their goals, and that history will continue thanks to the Charles Lafitte Foundation. Each time a camper conquers his or her fears and reaches for their goals without assistance is a shining moment, and we have many shining moments every day. The look of accomplishment in their faces when they reach the top of the challenge course or swim in our pool for the first time tells the entire story—"Yes I can!" exclaimed Alex Humanick, director of camping and recreation at Camp Merry Heart.

Last year, Camp Merry Heart was considered as a recipient and although they were not chosen as the beneficiary, they did receive a \$5,000 donation from the Charles Lafitte Foundation that enabled the camp to buy much needed supplies, such as basketball nets, art materials and physical therapy balls. When a beneficiary for the 2007 Golf Classic was under consideration, Suzanne set her sights again on Camp Merry Heart.

"What really stood out for me was that even though Camp Merry Heart wasn't chosen as a beneficiary last year, they were so grateful for the money they did receive and put it to good work. I am so proud to have them as this year's beneficiary, and to make a bigger impact on the future of the camp and its campers."

A significant portion of the estimated \$500,000 donation from this year's golf outing will be put toward replacing the camp's worn septic system so that the camp can remain open. The remainder of the funds will be used to pay for additional equipment and maintenance, including new furniture, bunks for the campers and their counselors, two new camp vans and computers.

And the timing could not have been better.

"The Charles Lafitte Foundation is a true miracle," commented Alex. "Without its generous donation, it would have been increasingly difficult to keep Camp Merry Heart in operation and meet the unique needs of our campers. We are forever grateful to Suzanne and Jeffrey for enabling us to continue making campers' hearts merry."



DID YOU KNOW?

Suzanne Citron... a true "Woman of Distinction"

Suzanne's unwavering efforts to make a difference in the community as co-founder of the Charles Lafitte Foundation has always been personally rewarding, but now, thanks to recognition by the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts, she has an actual award she can display with pride.

Suzanne was one of six women honored at the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts 2007 Women of Distinction award ceremony, held on March 15. She was recognized for her philanthropic endeavors and for being a role model to today's youth, including the young girls of Monmouth County's Girl Scout troops.

"Being a Woman of Distinction is more than an honor — it's recognition that I'm making a positive difference through the grants awarded by the Charles Lafitte Foundation. The grant given to the Monmouth Council of Girl Scouts as a beneficiary of the 2006 Golf Classic was especially important to me because it is providing young girls with an opportunity that will help make them leaders of tomorrow," said Suzanne. "Camp Sacajawea is a special part of the Girl Scout program in Monmouth County, and our grant set up an endowment to ensure that even the girls who cannot afford camp receive the necessary financial aid to attend.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 2007						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
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5th Annual
Charles Lafitte Foundation
Golf Classic
Plainfield Country Club
Tee time — 9:00 am

CLF AWARDS GRANTS TO FURTHER AUTISM RESEARCH, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

When Peter, the young son of Suzanne and Jeffrey's close friends Tom and Jennifer Vertetis, was first diagnosed with autism, the friends focused their efforts on learning about the developmental disability and ways to help Peter and others living with the diagnosis. Their research uncovered volumes of valuable information, including staggering statistics about the prevalence of autism in the United States and in particular, New Jersey — home to the Charles Lafitte Foundation.

Autism is a complex neurological disability that affects normal development of social interaction and communication skills. Since it is considered a spectrum disorder, people living with autism can have varied symptoms and levels of functioning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that autism affects one in 150 births nationwide, and approximately 1.5 million Americans have now been identified as having the disorder. In New Jersey alone, some 14,000 children and adults between ages three and 21 have autism.

"It's daunting to realize that the autism community is growing every day as more and more families are diagnosed, but there is comfort in knowing that the information and resources available to help these families is also growing," said Jennifer, president of the Charles Lafitte Foundation. "Through my role within the Charles Lafitte Foundation, I am determined to help other children and their families navigate the disability and find ways to improve the quality of their lives."

While researching information about autism and treatments, a number of promising programs dedicated to the unique needs of children and adults with autism were identified in New Jersey, as well as specialized services for children at the University of Washington in Seattle.

"Autism diagnoses have increased tenfold in the last decade. Fortunately, a significant number of programs are available to assist those who are living with the disorder, such as camps, educational programs and therapies," said Suzanne. "We have given more than \$200,000 in grants in recent years to help advance treatments in the fight against autism in New Jersey and at the University of Washington. The programs available for people with autism are promising, and I trust that by supporting some of them, we are helping children and adults with varying levels of functionality progress."

In honor of Autism Awareness Month in April, the Charles Lafitte Foundation would like to recognize five organizations (see below) that received grants and continue making strides each day to help autistic children and their families.



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UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON — CLF awarded a total of \$100,000 to the University's Experimental Education Unit (EEU) program, a comprehensive early childhood center that encourages the development of children's cognitive, motor, communications and social interactive skills. An additional \$60,000 was earmarked for the University's Autism Center and will help provide services to families that cannot afford them.

CAMP MERRY HEART — A New Jersey Easter Seals co-ed residential and day camp for people with developmental, learning, and physical disabilities, including autism, and their families. CLF provided one grant for \$5,000 and as the beneficiary of the 2007 Golf Classic, the camp will receive an estimated \$500,000 donation.

THE SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN — This New Jersey organization was awarded \$10,000 to support educational programs for young students with multiple disabilities and autism, as well as services to graduates to help them secure opportunities for work, friendship and connection.

THE EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP FOR INSTRUCTING CHILDREN — A New Jersey non-profit school that received a \$2,500 grant to continue its mission of using applied behavior methodologies to work with children with autism and Pervasive Developmental Disorder so that they can reach their full potential in a nurturing learning environment.

EDEN INSTITUTE — New Jersey-based Eden Institute meets the lifespan needs of individuals with autism by providing expanded educational opportunities for children and adults alike. CLF's \$5,000 grant allows the Eden Institute to offer community outings for its participants to develop, practice and reinforce crucial communication skills.

MEET CHARLES LAFITTE



Photo courtesy of *The Coast Star*, Manasquan, N.J.

If you ask Suzanne Citron and Jennifer Vertetis, president of the Charles Lafitte Foundation, the one question that they most often receive, they simultaneously agree that it is “Who is Charles Lafitte?”

“A response of ‘a nine-year-old black Labrador Retriever’ is rarely what people expect to hear,” laughs Jennifer, “but it’s the truth! Grant recipients always want to shake Charles Lafitte’s hand to thank him for the support, but when we tell them that he is a dog, they opt to send a bone as a sign of gratitude. And of course Charles Lafitte loves that!”

When choosing a name for their family foundation nine years ago, in true philanthropic spirit, the Citron’s wanted a name that was not associated with their own to ensure that the foundation would live beyond their lives. It didn’t take Suzanne and Jeffrey long to realize that the playful and rambunctious puppy running around the house was destined to be their foundation’s namesake.

“From the moment Charles Lafitte was born, he looked like he needed a foundation,” commented Suzanne. “He is a strong, loveable and sweet dog with a commanding presence. If he could talk, we know he’d tell us that he wants to help others, which is what the foundation is doing every day.”

The inspiration for Charles Lafitte’s unique name started with the Citron’s love of the name “Charlie” and a favorite wine of Suzanne and Jeffrey’s — Lafitte Rothschild. However, as Charlie Lafitte’s personality began to show, Suzanne and Jeffrey realized that their puppy’s stately demeanor required a more proper name. Hence, Charles Lafitte!

Although Charles Lafitte likes to stick close to the Citron family, his four-legged family is nearby, too. Charles Lafitte’s mother, Bailey, and his sister, Maggie, still reside with the Citron family, while his brother Sinbad lives with Suzanne’s parents.

“A loving family, an endless supply of dog bones and a charitable foundation — what more could a dog want?” joked Suzanne.

SHOWCASE:

WWW.CHARLESLAFITTE.ORG

For more information on the Charles Lafitte Foundation or to submit a grant proposal for future consideration, please visit www.charleslafitte.org or email Jennifer Vertetis at jennifer@charleslafitte.org.



ONE GOOD SWING DESERVES ANOTHER... AND ANOTHER

A day on the links can do much more than just improve your golf swing. For the last four years, the Charles Lafitte Foundation Golf Classic has been raising money to fund vital community programs that help people lead healthy, satisfying and enriched lives.

2006

The Monmouth (New Jersey) Council of Girl Scouts runs Camp Sacajawea, a 140-acre day camp that empowers girls by building confidence, self-reliance, caring, sharing and other positive values. Camp Sac, as it is commonly called, received more than \$520,000 from CLF’s 2006 Golf Classic, which was used to create an endowment that enables Girl Scouts to attend the camp, despite their families’ financial constraints. In 2006 alone, more than \$60,000 worth of financial aid requests were fulfilled for Girl Scouts who otherwise could not afford to attend Camp Sac.



2005

The Deirdre O’Brien Child Advocacy Center, or Deirdre’s House, is the only place child victims of abuse and/or neglect in Morris County, N.J., can receive medical and counseling services and meet with law enforcement officials under one roof. This landmark center helps lessen the effects of children’s traumatizing experiences and speed treatment for a more complete recovery. The \$450,000 donation from CLF’s 2005 Golf Classic “literally changed lives,” according to Deirdre’s House executive director, by increasing its ability to provide these desperately needed services.

2004

Happiness is Camping provides cost-free, year-round opportunities for young cancer patients to enjoy moments of laughter, joy and happiness. Annually, the organization provides approximately 400 children with cancer an overnight camping experience that nurtures their spirits, while staff from Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center supports their medical needs. CLF’s 2004 Golf Classic raised \$400,000 to ensure that as many children as possible could say, “That was the best week of my life!” thanks to Happiness is Camping programs.

2003

The Deborah Foundation, the inaugural beneficiary of CLF’s Annual Golf Classic, received more than \$300,000 on behalf of the Deborah Heart and Lung Center in New Jersey. The foundation’s sole purpose is to generate funds to support this nationally recognized cardiovascular, pulmonary and vascular care hospital in its mission of never rendering a bill to a patient or their family. CLF’s donation went directly toward providing critical care services and life-saving surgeries to nearly 38,000 patients, many of whom were without health care coverage.