



# CHARITIES Committee

Tom Meade, Chairman



The RISAA Charities Committee exists to lend a helping hand to others in need, and is a way of giving back to our community.

## THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTION

# James L. Maher Center



Report by  
**CHARLES  
DORE**



I personally know of the Maher Center because I grew up next door to a wonderful, developmentally disabled woman named Maria who benefited from their services every day. The principal mission of the Maher Center Commercial Services is to provide employment opportunities to individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Maher Center Day Program gives participants the chance to "go to work," like so many of their neighbors and family members. Having a job helps to raise participants' self-esteem and provides them some spending money so that they feel more financially independent.

Every morning Maria would board a bus to go there and every afternoon she would return brimming with pride and satisfaction from a day spent productively surrounded by people who loved her. I was so happy for her as the alternatives would be a lonely day at home or in some other setting in which she would not have the opportunity to enjoy life to such an extent.

Maria passed away a few years ago and I thought it would be a fitting testament to her positive and joyous life to visit with the Maher Center and learn more about what they do and what they hope to do going forward.

I met with the Development Coordinator, Susan Kosegarten, and quickly realized I knew of only a small portion of what the Maher Center does. The Maher Center annually serves approximately 300 families throughout Newport and Bristol counties, operates 11 group homes and a community day

program.

The Maher Center Transportation Services supplies more than 2,000 rides a week for Maher Center participants and other members of the community and amasses more than 1 million miles a year providing rides to individuals with disabilities. The program is an essential component in accomplishing one of the Center's fundamental missions, to provide employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities.

The 30-plus members of the Transportation Services staff move most of the individuals in the Maher Center employment program—many of whom do not work a standard nine to five work day—to and from their jobs each day in the Day Workshop Program, the Garden Center, Northeast Linen and Laundry Service and other locations where Integrated Employment programs operate.

I also spent some time learning about how the Maher Center is incorporating technology such as laptop computers and iPads to bring music therapy to their clients.

There is so much more that they do as well, but too much to list here. I highly suggest you visit their web page and learn more about this amazing organization. Just go to [www.mahercenter.org](http://www.mahercenter.org).

If you want to help you could make a donation or visit the Maher Garden Center at 906 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI, and make a purchase of a Christmas tree or wreath that will help fund their programs.



Susan Kosegarten, Development Coordinator, accepts RISAA check from Chuck Dore

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