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## The Arc Hosts Successful Angel Gala Celebrating New Partnership with The Achievement Center at Raritan Valley Community College

### Photos



Photo 1: Lauren Panarella, Dr. Michael Schuman, Tim McKeown, Photo 2: Lauren Panarella, Daniel Schantz, Kaelyn Patel, Julia Lombardo, and Tim McKeown. Credits: Laura Sondej

By THE ARC OF SOMERSET COUNTY

November 20, 2015 at 1:23 PM

WARREN, NJ - The Arc of Somerset County celebrated their annual gala at The Somerset Hills Hotel in Warren Township on Friday, November 13, "A Celebration of New Partnerships" as they honored the President of Raritan Valley Community College, Dr. Michael McDonough for his partnership with The Arc of Somerset County for their recent collaboration and pilot program of "The Achievement Center at Raritan Valley Community College".

"The Achievement Center", which piloted in September of 2015 is a transitional post-secondary program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities which provides young students with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to participate fully in a college experience at Raritan Valley Community College while receiving additional support from The Arc, allowing them to have a fully integrated college experience.

Since September, The Achievement center has rolled out the Pilot program with students from both Hunterdon and Somerset Counties.

The event was emceed for the eighth year by Assemblyman Jack



Photo1:Lauren Panarella, Dr. Michael McDonough,Tim McKeown, Photo 2: Lauren Panarella, Daniel Schantz, Kaelyn Patel, Julia Lombardo, and Tim McKeown Credits: Laura Sondej

Ciattarelli and over 180 guest were there to celebrate this new partnership.

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Each year, The Arc of Somerset County also honors high school students from the county who dedicate their high school experience volunteering for other students with special needs.

This year, 3 students were selected to receive The Arc Angels Among Us Award from Rutgers Preparatory School. Kaelyn Patel, Daniel Schantz and Julia Lombardo were honored for their role in

“Tend to A Friend” club, a non-profit organization created by former Rutgers Prep Students, Dylan and Austin Ritter which support the inclusion of children with special needs in activities within the community. The chosen recipients from Rutgers Prep were selected for their role in leading “Kid’s Night Out”, a monthly evening event that offers respite to parents in Somerset County who are raising young children with disabilities.

Two other students, Barbara Kania of Somerville High School and Jillian Haggard of Ridge High School were also honored for their role as a mentor and life skills builder for students with special needs.

“It is both an honor and a privilege to have the partnership and support of so many dedicated community members” stated Lauren Panarella, Executive Director. “The Arc of Somerset County is truly grateful to our partners and all that they bring to our communities”

For more information about The Arc of Somerset County and The Arc Foundation of Somerset County, please visit [www.thearcofsomerset.org](http://www.thearcofsomerset.org) or call 908-658-3805. To view the event digital program, [click here](#) and for information about spring enrollment opportunities at “The Achievement Center” at Raritan Valley Community College, please call 908-725-8544 x 615.

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