

## Good Deeds for a Good Cause: ResearchILD's Annual 'Pathways to Success' Benefit

On November 12<sup>th</sup>, ResearchILD, a Lexington-based educational nonprofit organization, made a splash with its Annual 'Pathways to Success Benefit' at the Westin Hotel in Waltham. Mary Jean Keany, chair of the Benefit, helped make the event a major success. The guest speaker was Dr. Ned Hallowell, a well-known expert on ADHD. Dr. Hallowell spoke passionately about his belief that it is time to dispense with clinical talk of ADD as a 'disability' and redefine it as the gift of innovative minds. ResearchILD Board Member Dave Carruso, CEO of Coastal Capital Group and host of the WBZ Radio show *Before the Bell*, was the evening's charismatic auctioneer. The benefit was a joyful celebration of success, a call for support, and an opportunity for people to connect around an important cause.

Gwenn Snider was honored for her generous ongoing support for ResearchILD and for her leadership in supporting children with learning and attention difficulties. The Drive to Thrive Award, sponsored by the Jack and Theilma Segal Fund, was awarded to high school junior, Leo Villari and seventh-grade SMARTS mentee, Alexa Thomas. SMARTS mentor Kira Repejci, a senior at Lesley University, received the Pathways to Success Award. These awardees were selected by ResearchILD staff for their persistence, effort, and resilience over the years.

A major highlight of the event was the focus on the SMARTS Leadership & Mentoring Program. ResearchILD's innovative program that runs both in suburban communities and in the Boston Public Schools. The Oak Foundation, a private, international foundation headquartered in Switzerland, has recently awarded ResearchILD a 3-year grant to make SMARTS a sustainable model that can be implemented nationwide.

SMARTS mentor, Chace Nolan (above, left), impressed the crowd with his eloquent, passionate, and humorous account of his experience with ADD. He spoke with confidence and passion about the SMARTS program and his strong relationships

with his fourth grade mentee Zach Palmer (above, right) and his ninth grade junior mentor Tyler D'Angelo-Lombardi. Chace is currently a senior at the Cambridge School of Weston and is looking forward to attending college next year.

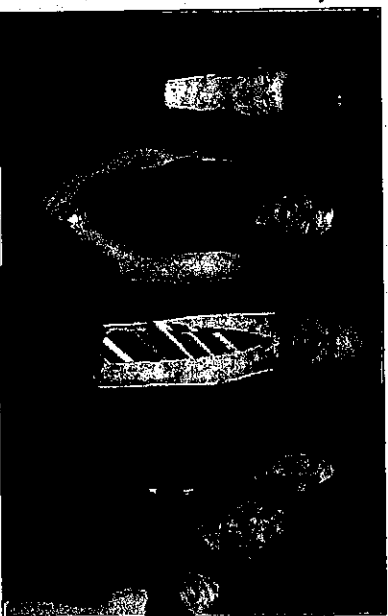
In his speech at the Benefit, Chace said of his mentoring: "When my tutor approached me in 11th grade about becoming a mentor to a younger student, I was intrigued and wanted to become involved. The program is called SMARTS (Success, Motivation, Awareness, Resilience, Talents, Strategies), and it pairs older students who have worked with and overcome their difficulties with younger kids who still struggle. I am paired with Zach, a fourth grader."

Chace has grown from "catching" ADD in fourth grade, unable to "even look at the page," to believing in himself and appreciating the way his mind works. He reported, "What my brain does when unasked, the things it digs up when I let out the leash on my thinking, are amazing."

Chace told the audience, "I look at Zach, and how well he's doing. He doesn't have to struggle like I did... and I think maybe... maybe I had a little something to do with it... It's nice to be able to give back when I have been given so much."

ResearchILD extends its thanks to all who made this year's Benefit a memorable experience. Thanks also go to the SMARTS Leadership Council Co-Chairs: Kayla Masternan and Billy Warren, and to SMARTS mentors Lily Gorman-Penzel and Kira Repejci for their participation in the benefit and their ongoing leadership in the SMARTS Leadership and Mentoring Program.

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*Dr. Lynn Meltzer, ResearchILD Co-Director, Mary Jean Keany, ResearchILD Benefit chair, Dr. Ned Hallowell, Founder, Hallowell Center, Gwenn Snider, ResearchILD honoree, Dr. Bethany Roditi, ResearchILD Co-Director*

The Research Institute for Learning and Development (ResearchILD) is an internationally renowned organization transforming the lives of students. ResearchILD is directed by Dr. Lynn Meltzer, President and Director of Research, and Dr. Bethany Roditi, Vice-President and Director of Education. Its dedicated team of experts conducts ground-breaking research on learning and attention difficulties, with specific emphasis on executive function and learning strategies. These strategies are taught through programs such as SMARTS, and through teacher-training workshops, seminars, and on-site conferences. ResearchILD also produces books, such as the book *Executive Function in Education* (The Guilford Press, 2007). ResearchILD's mission is to help children, adolescents, and adults with learning and attention difficulties develop the persistence and resilience needed to attain success in school and in life.