

DECEMBER 2008

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## Vera French School-Based Mental Health Services: Building Healthy Lives in Our Community

Your support changes the lives of children. *How do we know?* When we see children dance.

When Joey started the fourth grade at Bridgeview Elementary School, he struggled with autism and learning disorders. Overwhelmed by a new school and a physical education course that required dressing in a locker room with other boys, Joey retreated behind a wall of silence. "He was terrified," recalls Principal Tony Hiatt. "He wouldn't talk to anybody."

But with patient, caring therapy provided through school-based services, Joey bloomed. At a year-end pizza party, he dazzled a crowd of hundreds with his center-stage dance performance. "Without school-based services," Hiatt says, "I'm very confident he'd be struggling." Instead, Joey's dancing. At Vera French, that's a very real measure of success.

Countless lives have been improved through Vera French School-Based Mental Health Services – but that work is far from finished: That was the message at a recent annual meeting of the Vera French Foundation and School-Based services program.

### *School-based Therapists*



The meeting, the first of its kind, brought together members of all three Vera French boards, therapists and school administrators. Organizers hoped for a heightened understanding of the program, and a blend of presentations and informal conversations achieved just that.

"I got a better understanding of the 'big picture' for Vera French," Hiatt says. "It helped me understand the mission and goals of Vera French; not only how they can help us but how we can help them. And it was nice to meet SBS therapists who work at other schools and share information in casual conversations. Those kinds of exchanges are rare but very useful."



Jeff Johannsen, Principal,  
Hoover Elementary, Bettendorf  
sharing stories of success

In his district, the Vera French School-Based program has strengthened the relationship between schools and families, improved the building and community culture, and resulted in improved student performance, Hiatt adds. "Students are better able to be students," he notes. The program also gives the school the

opportunity to interact with families in a meaningful way. "We're saying *How can we help?* rather than *You need help,*" he says. "That really opens doors; it's a real bridge in building stronger relationships."

Presentations by therapists and school administrators underscored the program's importance, says Bill Wallace, past president of the Vera French Foundation board of directors. "What we've done in the past four years is maintain and expand the School-Based program," he says. "We've shown outcomes to the community and created an awareness in the community. But more expansion is needed."

The meeting and luncheon had enormous value for all participants, says Debrah Kirby, member of the Vera French Community Mental Health Center board. "It was very informative, and really helped us gain a full understanding of the positive ways the program and the therapists impact families and children," she says. "So many people don't understand the complexity of these families' problems, and

that's compounded by today's economy. This is such a vital program, especially now: There's such a strong need."

Vera French School-Based Mental Health Services are already making a difference in local lives, and that work has a tremendous impact in today's world. "To ensure a strong community, we must help these children and families lead healthy, productive lives," Wallace says. "They're really our future." **Your support has measurable impact: Thank you for helping the children. ■**

# Thinking of Making a Gift to Vera French Foundation? IRA Rollover Gifts Offer Attractive Option



In today's world, sound investments are vitally important. That's why Dr. Richard and Judy Kreiter are sold on the IRA rollover gifts they've made to the Vera French Foundation. "IRA rollover gifts couldn't be easier," Judy says. "And this is an opportunity to give significantly more than what you would in after-tax dollars."

IRA rollover gifts to public charities – such as the Vera French Foundation – can have significant impact on your tax obligation. Extension of a federal law to Dec. 31, 2009 allows persons

age 70 1/2 and over to make direct transfers of up to \$100,000 from their IRAs to public charities. Although no charitable deduction is allowed, the amount of the transfer is excluded from the donor's ordinary taxable income.

If you don't itemize deductions, or if you have an income level that causes exemption phase-outs or deduction limitations, this IRA rollover might be right for you. Looking for a way to make additional cash contributions above your current 50 percent or Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limit? Worried that an increased AGI will cause more of your Social Security income to be taxable? Check in to this new IRA rollover. It may be the answer you've been looking for.

IRA rollover gifts are also a sound investment in community mental health programs. "We are very fortunate to have quality mental health care in this community," Judy says. "I have seen the good that can result from quality, accessible and comprehensive mental health care."

The converse is also true. When community mental health funding is reduced, cost savings exist only on paper. "In the long run," Richard notes, "there'll be more problems if these services are interrupted." Vera French programs are a cost-efficient way to meet complex needs. Now more than ever, we need your support. If an IRA rollover gift seems a good fit for your investment strategy, contact your financial advisor. For more information, please call us at (563) 888-6257. ■

## Evening in the Hamptons Leaves Lasting Impact

Brisk north winds leave no doubt that winter is here. But warm memories of the 2008 Vera French Foundation Gala – "An Evening in the Hamptons" – brighten these gray days. During a glittering evening at Crow Valley, friends and supporters generated nearly \$95,000 to underwrite a variety of community mental health services in the year to come.

A particular highlight of the event was the Fund-A-Need for unfunded services for children and families served through the School-Based Mental Health Services program. Thanks to your Hamptons gifts of more than \$16,000, we are able to continue our work to restore and rebuild the lives of children and families.

When we provide services to people unable to pay for that care, we make a profound difference in the mental health of this community.

Our hearts are full of gratitude to the 2008 Gala Committee and to the many volunteers for all of their hard work. Many thanks, too, for the ongoing support of our Gala Sponsors: Sears Mfg. Co., Merrill Lynch and Connie and Phillip Kassewitz, Molyneaux Insurance, Budweiser Vanguard Distributing Corp., VON MAUR, Wells Fargo, Group O Companies, Quad City Bank & Trust, Roederer Transfer & Storage Co., Ruhl & Ruhl Realtors, Russell Construction, XPAC, Ruhl & Ruhl Inc., and Packaging Tech. ■

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