



THIRTEENTH ANNUAL THERESA AWARDS

A Night with "Lil' Tee"... A Time to Remember

by: Susan S. Russo

This year we will be celebrating Theresa's 21st birthday! Her birthday party will be held at the Bridgeview Yacht Club in Island Park. Everyone is invited to join us for fine Italian food (remember: food is love) and amazing entertainment by Long Island's "These Three Tenors". Such beautiful music is meant to be shared!

Theresa loved music... all types of music. I would play Motown and classical music for her, and her dad would always bounce her around to his favorite Rock and Roll songs. You know that song... "Shake It Up Baby - Twist and Shout."

Music is a gift, a blessing. It is a part of every culture and is meant to be shared. One of my favorite proverbs comes from Zimbabwe:

"If you can walk, you can dance.
If you can talk, you can sing."

And for Theresa, music was a very big part of her life. Theresa made beautiful music with her giggles and smiles.

The Foundation has supported music therapy programs in schools and special

settings for over thirteen years. The very idea of music as a healing modality dates back to the beginnings of history. Some of the earliest mentions are found in the writings of the Greek philosophers.

Live music was used in hospitals after both of the World Wars as part of the recuperation process for the injured soldiers. In an educational or therapeutic setting, the music therapist often complements and supports the work of the speech/language therapist, the teacher, the physical therapist and the like.

Music therapy is based on the belief that everyone can respond to music, no matter how ill or disabled. Music therapy can enhance communication, and enable

children to live more creatively and resourcefully.

The Foundation continues to support music therapists and their amazing work.

*We hope you will join us
as we celebrate, with song,
Lil' Tee's 21st Birthday!*





Emily S. Starr, Esq.

From the onset of an interview, one knows immediately that Emily S. Starr is a busy, driven, professional woman with an endless day. She is committed to hard work and determined to get the job done. Present your problem and she will help you find the solution. She is known to family, friends and colleagues as a woman who is goal-oriented, assertive, competitive, who shies away from the "spotlight" and is too involved in helping other people to be autobiographical.

Once the conversation begins, however, an interviewer can feel the intensity of love that flows very naturally and genuinely for her family, her work and people with special needs, lending great substance to her personal and professional life. Growing up in the sixties contributed greatly to the goals she set for herself. She is as committed now as she was in her college days to making a difference by reaching out to children, seniors and people of all ages who are challenged and in need of special care.

Born and raised in Brookline, Massachusetts, Emily volunteered at a psychiatric hospital and worked as a teacher's aid in a Head Start project during the initial stages of the program. While at Vassar College, she took advantage of an opportunity offered her of volunteering in a school for mentally retarded children in Bristol, England. Moving on in her career and eventually graduating from the Boston University School of Law, she worked the legal aid clinic for two years which served her well later on in her work at North Western Pennsylvania Legal Services and South Middlesex Legal Services in Framingham, MA. Ultimately this experience would lead her to Central Massachusetts Legal Services where she helped hundreds of clients who were not aware of government benefits and entitlement problems. Her interest in having an active role in social action was positively affecting the lives of many people. Emily, who is high on getting the case work done successfully and low on the bureaucratic office politics, was finding great satisfaction in reaching out to those who are disadvantaged.

Her professional life was affected in the 1980's when the budget for legal services was reduced by the Federal Government, thus requiring her program to consolidate its offices. Rather than presiding over a reduced staff, she took the opportunity to leave her job and to continue her legal services work in her own law firm. She joined two other attorney-colleagues in forming what is now the law firm of Ciotta, Starr & Vander Linden of Fitchburg and Worcester, MA, where she and her partners continued the legal services cases under contract with her former program. During this transition, Emily remained focused on working with the disadvantaged.

Unknown to her, a new chapter in her life was about to begin when she received a call from an attorney whose clients needed her help regarding a client whose husband was in a nursing home. Emily's curiosity led her to explore the Medicaid regulations to develop a new level of understanding of how Medicaid and related government benefits could be used to protect the healthy spouse of a nursing home patient. Her research led her to collaborate with her attorney/friend Susan Levin to publish an article on Medicaid financing of Long Term Care that appeared as a series in the Massachusetts Law Weekly. This brought an unexpected public response that inundated her office with calls from attorneys whose clients needed her help. The fledgling law firm of Ciotta, Starr & Vander Linden did not initially have the staff or the resources to handle the volume. She had to come up with a plan to help her process all the requests for help. Relying on her work in legal, financial and social services and her limited experience in setting up special needs trusts, even before she knew the impact of such documents, Emily was off in a whole new professional direction.

She was asked to speak at the first annual meeting of the Massachusetts Alzheimer's Association and to co-chair the first continuing legal education program on Elder Law in Massachusetts with attorney Donald Freedman, a program that she and Don have continued to co-chair for the past twenty years.

Emily is proud of husband John's achievements in the world of insurance, architecture and idiosyncratic construction. Of her daughter, Emily proudly says: "Molly is the sweetest person I have ever known. She was declared 'Class Angel' by her high school peers, who also voted her 'Starr Eyes'." Her grandchild, Sage Elizabeth Kidder, is the latest addition to her growing family.

This story is but an outline of a busy, driven family and professional woman from Boylston, MA who begins each day with high energy and enthusiasm, ready to serve a waiting clientele of people who are reaching out for answers, people who know they are safe in the caring services of Attorney Starr.

In recognition of her endless dedication to people with special needs, the Theresa Foundation proudly presents Emily S. Starr with the 2007 Theresa Award in Community Service.

Joseph M. Valenzano, Jr.

The March issue of *Exceptional Parent*, the magazine that made him a founding new publisher, not only promises to put a new "countenance" on helping children with special needs and their families, but it also reflects the passion of Joseph M. Valenzano, a man who does not take life for granted. He credits his late parents, Joseph and Mary, as well as his grandparents for introducing him and his brother Don to the importance of caring, sensitivity, respect, discipline, honesty and integrity. Joe is also quick to add: "The Sisters of Charity and the priests of Blessed Sacrament Church in Manhattan are also at the top of my list as great teachers in the lessons of life. Everything they taught me is instilled forever."



Long before it was a fashionable term, Joe learned what "self-esteem" really means. It is that quality that motivates him every day of his life as a devoted publisher. He advocates that we become better people and a stronger nation when we have full appreciation of people with special needs. Joe believes that our responsibility to our children is to inspire them with a sense of respect for all life and the worth of every individual.

When his family moved to New Jersey, Joe's love for football and baseball took priority at Bergenfield High. With a full athletic scholarship to Upsala College in East Orange, New Jersey, Joe went on to quarterback Upsala to its last ever MAC football championship and, later on, played two seasons of professional baseball before embarking on a career in business. With a Masters in Business Administration from Farleigh-Dickenson and graduate work beyond the Masters at New York University's Stern School of Management, Joe was on his way to a very successful career in Finance. All that took a sharp turn in 1992, which led him to *Exceptional Parent*, a fledgling publishing company in Boston which was facing bankruptcy. "I call this point in my career, 'my epiphany,'" he gratefully recalls. "I immediately saw the potential of a multi-media communications company in East Paterson and a mission to help those who are unable to help themselves, a lesson I learned many years ago."

He looks back lovingly on his early days in New Jersey where stickball, bicycles, arguing about sports under a corner lamppost and developing "friendships for a lifetime" were part of growing up. Of that time in his life, Joe speaks very candidly when he says, "I grew up among a lot of 'street-wise guys,' but I knew enough to create my own safe, social environment with my friends." He learned early in life to appreciate the simple and healthy things around him that provided deep satisfaction, values he and his wife, Pat, of 36 years, herself a dedicated teacher in the Paterson, New Jersey School System, instilled in their sons, Matt, Andy, Joseph, Michael and Peter, all of whom are now successful college graduates and professional men.

His father, who died suddenly while Joe was a senior in college, left him with the legacy that "love is indestructible and, therefore, the most powerful human force." Reflecting on that lesson, Joe says, "Every day, I see that lesson unfold as I watch parents of children with profound disabilities and special health care issues. They are 'my heroes' because their very lives define 'l-o-v-e' which is the very foundation, the force behind our work at *Exceptional Parent*. My heroes are out there every day doing what they do best, loving others and caring for them. They are my role models - they set the pace at the company I am privileged to lead."

His grandmother, Anna, was an amputee and severe diabetic who shared her wisdom with Joe beyond any disability. His education in special needs began in his very own family with "hands-on" experience.

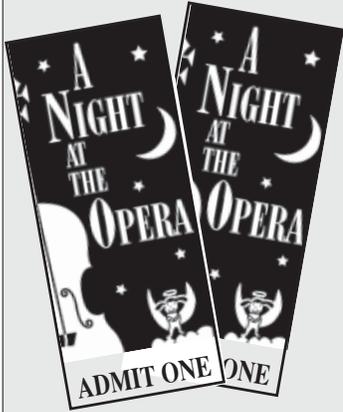
Writer and philosopher, Leo Rosten, made a deep impression on Joe a long time ago when he read these words in one of his writings: "I believe the purpose of life is to matter, to count, to stand for something, to be of some useful purpose, to make some positive difference that you have lived at all..." On "making a difference in life," Joe also echoes the words of his father and grandfather originally expressed in Italian and translated:

"Life is a shadow of a passing dream,
The story is short and finite,
The only immortal truth is love."

Joe begins every day in gratitude for all his teachers who have generously taken the time to care and for all the life principles he has learned through their wisdom. They have each left indelible marks on his heart and life. They have helped him to establish a unique mission for himself. He has chosen to spread the "good news" about life and love, and to be a resource for others who need caring, directional assistance and counsel, many of whom are unable to help themselves.

It is in the spirit of love and service to family, friends and children with special needs that the Theresa Foundation proudly presents Joseph M. Valenzano with the 2007 Theresa Award.

Save these Dates!



Thirteenth Annual Theresa Awards

*featuring a Special Performance by
Long Island's "These Three Tenors"*

Friday Evening, May 18th, 2007

7:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception 8:30 p.m. Dinner and Dancing

Bridgeview Yacht Club
Island Park, New York

"Swingin' Fore Theresa"



**GOLF
OUTING**

THERESA FOUNDATION

Monday, June 25, 2007

Woodcrest Country Club

Brunch 10:00 a.m.

Shot Gun Tournament at Noon

Cocktails, Dinner & Prizes at 5:00 p.m.

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THIRTEENTH ANNUAL THERESA AWARDS

Friday, May 18, 2007

Bridgeview Yacht Club, Island Park, New York

Honoring

Joseph M. Valenzano, Jr. Emily S. Starr, Esq.

I would like to place the following ad in The Theresa Awards Journal:

- | | | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Outside Back Cover* | \$2,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Silver Page | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inside Front Cover* | \$2,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Full Page Black & White | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inside Back Cover* | \$1,750 | <input type="checkbox"/> Half Page | \$150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold Page (Patron) ** | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarter Page | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold Page | \$ 800 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend Listing | \$ 75 |
- * Includes Six Tickets to the Dinner ** Includes Two Tickets to the Dinner

Print ad requirements:

Trim Size: 5 1/2" x 8 1/2 " Ad Sizes: Full Page 4 1/2" wide x 6 3/4" deep.

Printed offset. Please provide camera-ready material.

If you require copy only, please print below or use separate sheet.

(Please do NOT use staples. Paper clips only.)

Deadline For All Material: April 8, 2007

Tickets \$140 Tickets (children under 12) \$ 50

✂

Please return this form, together with your camera-ready material or email to angel@theresafoundation.org. Please send check payable to The Theresa Foundation no later than April 8, 2007 to:

The Theresa Foundation
250 Lido Blvd., Lido Beach, New York 11561-5015
www.theresafoundation.org

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For further information, please call (516) 683-1717 or fax to: (516) 683-1742.

(Over for Grand Prize Raffle)

THIRTEENTH ANNUAL THERESA AWARDS

Friday, May 18, 2007

Bridgeview Yacht Club, Island Park, New York

Honoring

Joseph M. Valenzano, Jr. Emily S. Starr, Esq.

GRAND PRIZE RAFFLES

1st Prize: *32" Diagonal LCD-HD TV*

2nd Prize: *Night on Broadway*

3rd Prize: *Apple I-Pod with Docking Station*

Raffle Tickets \$25 each
Book of Five for \$100



Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for _____ raffles.

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www.theresafoundation.org

We will send you your raffle tickets. You do not need to be present to win.

(Over for Journal Ads)