UMass Dartmouth Teams Up with SHARE to Launch Auction Fundraiser for Rehab Engineering Center

In partnership with UMass Dartmouth, the SHARE Foundation and the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering will launch an exciting new fundraiser—a silent auction to be held during the University’s Sixth Annual Gala Dinner Dance on Saturday, May 24.

UMass Dartmouth’s most prestigious celebration, the Commencement Gala unites faculty, staff, alumni and friends of the University to cap the academic year with festive flair. With strong endorsement from university Chancellor Jean MacCormack, SHARE and the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering have been chosen as the campus organizations which will benefit from the event’s proceeds. In an effort to generate greater support for the Center, the University also has graciously welcomed the addition of a silent auction to the evening’s highlights this year.

“We’re ecstatic that the University has given us this wonderful venue to conduct our auction fundraiser,” says Les Cory, Center director. “We are also thrilled at the high quality of the items we have available for auction.”

Thanks to a dedicated team of SHARE supporters, the list of auction items is an impressive one. From a growing catalog of goods, gift certificates and recreational packages, bidders can vie for these once-in-a-lifetime experiences:

- June 10th tickets to the Boston Pops, a backstage meeting with conductor Keith Lockhart, an autographed baton from the performance, and overnight accommodations at Boston’s Elliot Hotel
- Tickets to Emeril Lagasse’s “Emeril Live” program, an opportunity to meet Emeril backstage, dinner, and two nights’ accommodations at the Marriott Marquis in New York
- A private tour for four of the “Martha Stewart Living” studio located at Stewart’s Westport Connecticut home, and an opportunity to meet Martha (depending on tour date)

We encourage anyone interested in bidding to do so in advance by going to our web site at www.thesharefoundation.com/silentauction to post bids. Advance bidding will ensure that this silent auction will prove to be a resounding success!

2002: Weathering a Challenging Year

Throughout the past year, SHARE and the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering faced unprecedented challenges in providing quality service for the people we serve.

Dramatic cuts in state funding, together with post-9/11 decline in charitable giving that has affected virtually every nonprofit group, left us with no alternative but to decrease staffing and to be very selective in the services we were able to provide.

Although our productivity was not equal to our record output of 2001, we are still pleased to report that in 2002 we were able to answer more than 700 requests for service, including 130 new systems in support of nearly 300 clients.

Our heartfelt appreciation is extended to you, our generous supporters, who make our work possible. Together, we continue to make a difference.
Board Member Jeanne Carrier: Fundraising Powerhouse for SHARE

For Jeanne Carrier, supporting SHARE and the work of the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering is an endeavor that reaches far beyond her role on the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

In recent years, she has devoted her considerable talents and countless hours to numerous fundraising projects on behalf of the Center. Whether grantwriting or recruiting donors and gift items for special events, Jeanne has waged an inspired, personal campaign to ensure that the Center receives the support it needs to flourish.

“Jeanne has been extremely generous of her time and absolutely tireless in her efforts on behalf of SHARE and the Rehab Engineering Center,” says Les Cory, Center director. “Her behind-the-scenes determination has helped make wonderful things happen.”

Jeanne is currently busy drumming up support for SHARE’s premier spring fundraiser—a silent auction to be held during UMass Dartmouth’s Commencement Gala festivities in May. Donations of auction items are welcome and may be made by calling SHARE.

Volunteers Needed
SHARE and the UMass Dartmouth Center for Rehabilitation Engineering welcome your time and talents to keep our work going strong. Volunteers are needed in the following areas:

- Office help
- Technical help
- Training for clients (training orientation will be provided)
- Pick-up and delivery of systems and equipment
- Fundraising activities

Turn your spare morning or afternoon into something special—call SHARE at 508-999-8482 and volunteer today!

Building Construction UPDATE
Nearly half of the funding has been secured for construction of a new UMass Dartmouth building to house the Center for Rehabilitation Engineering, and fundraising efforts continue to move the Capital Campaign ever closer to its goal. Since the plan’s inception, SHARE and the UMass Dartmouth Foundation have been working in partnership to raise the estimated $2.2 million needed for the construction project.

Engineers are proceeding with site survey work in order to more clearly define the construction specifications needed for soliciting bids.
UMass Dartmouth Alumni Gerry McCarthy SHARES His Volunteering Spirit

Gerry McCarthy left UMass Dartmouth with a degree in Electrical Engineering and Pre-Med in 1979. When he returned a few years ago to volunteer for SHARE, he brought with him the wisdom and skills gained from an eclectic work and volunteering history, as well as the simple desire to help.

Gerry has long managed to juggle volunteer stints along with the demands of his professional life. His career has taken him from oceanography work at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution to biomedical engineering at UMass Medical Center to video streaming and web hosting for several Internet start-ups. He is now a consultant whose diverse assignments include network design and set-up, data center system management, and desktop and application integration. All the while, he has made time to volunteer for service organizations across the state—the Massachusetts Association for the Blind, a Cambridge homeless shelter, Special Olympics and, of course, the SHARE Foundation.

“I had been doing the SHARE Walk over the years and then decided to get more involved when I started consulting and ended up with time between gigs,” says McCarthy. “In the grand scheme of things, I’ve been pretty lucky and decided years ago it would be a good thing to give something back.”

Most recently, Gerry has teamed up with SHARE client Michael Francis to help him regain a level of independence he lost when he became a quadriplegic after being injured in a car accident in 1997. Since that time, Mike had been receiving medical care and rehabilitative therapies in a series of hospitals and rehab facilities. During Mike’s stay at Bay Tower Nursing Home in Providence, Gerry began training him to use the Dragon voice recognition program to control a PC, with the goal of keeping Mike “connected to the world,” Gerry says, through computer access.

“He’s a blast to work with—a really nice guy with a good sense of humor,” says Gerry. “There’s so much he wants to learn about the PC.”

After the successful completion of an intensive inpatient physical therapy program in March, Mike returned home to Bristol, Rhode Island, and began living on his own for the first time since his accident. Gerry’s first task upon Mike’s arrival home has been to ensure that Mike can access and use the Internet.

“I’ve continued to help him learn the system and get set up on the Internet at home so he can use e-mail and web browsing,” says Gerry. “He’s been getting a real kick out of sending e-mail to his family and friends, and is starting to find some web sites that amuse him.”

Through Gerry’s dedicated efforts, Les Cory sees a brighter future quietly taking shape. “Gerry has taken the initiative to work with this gentleman and provide him with the skills he needs to live more independently,” says Cory. “With Gerry’s help, Mike is learning the computer skills that will bring him that much closer to his long-term goal of finding employment.”

Imagine the possibilities. Gerry McCarthy does, and he volunteers to do his personal best to make them happen.

**UPDATE FROM THE UMASS DARTMOUTH CENTER FOR REHABILITATION ENGINEERING**

In recent months, rehabilitation engineer Mark Whittaker has been busy developing a number of innovative devices that are bringing improved independence to SHARE clients.

Thanks to Mark’s efforts, one client is currently testing a prototype of a voice-activated, computer-assisted television controller. The device will enable the user to control a television, cable TV and VCR by issuing vocal commands through a computer.

“It results in a much less costly means of controlling a TV or VCR, and provides the user the versatility to use the computer and control the TV at the same time,” says Les Cory, Center director.

Mark also has been active in the design and fabrication of a sound-activated control switch, which will allow nonvocal users to control assistive devices more easily and independently. The device is tuned to a specific utterance that a nonvocal person is able to make. This sound is recorded, then analyzed in the Center’s lab to determine its identifying properties. A switch filter is then fabricated to respond when the correct “sound print” is vocalized by the user.
THANK YOU

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the many supporters who have donated to SHARE over the past few months. Your generous gifts are making it possible for us to provide the opportunity for independent communication to more children and adults with disabilities.

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