

# A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDERS ...

We've always loved the phrase, "It's great when a plan comes together."

In 2023 much of what was envisioned has taken shape. The employees continue to grow and demonstrate to all who enter the cafe what they are capable of. The training program is in full swing and is placing graduates in meaningful jobs. Our recent addition, the food truck, just arrived and will become an integral part of the mission. (see article) The groundwork was laid several years ago, and it is gratifying to see the pieces come together. All of this is possible because of our supporters, friends and employees.

When we opened the cafe in 2020, we wanted to start the training program that October. Covid prevented that, but now the Suzanne Hatfield Training Program is going strong. With funding from various community groups, including Impact 100 Jersey Coast and the Monmouth Park Charity Fund, trainees learn skills necessary to work in the food service industry. They also learn important life skills, such as self-advocacy and time management. The program's leaders have worked tirelessly to maximize the skills and potential of each individual. Our existing employees are mentoring the trainees, to everyone's benefit! We are seeing great results. Every time a trainee gets a job it helps change the 80% unemployment rate for adults with intellectual disabilities.

As Mark says, "We are in the cafe as often as possible. Kind words from patrons mean a lot to us. While it is nice to hear, 'What you've done here is amazing,' it is the employees who make it happen. Anyone can have an idea...but only good people can make that idea work, and that is exactly what the employees at NLC have done. Whether you come in for lunch or a private event, or we have catered for your office or event, the food is great and the service is impeccable. We hope you love to come in as much as our staff loves to serve you!"

In 2017, we decided to take this journey, knowing that there would be ups and downs. It was our hope that the community would embrace the cafe and the mission, and help us through the tough times. The support that we have received, and continue to receive has been amazing. We are humbled, blessed and grateful to everyone who is with us on this journey.

Much of the plan is coming together, but there is still more work to do. We thank you for your friendship and support and can't wait to see what the future holds. **With gratitude - Mark and Stephanie Cartier**



Stephanie & Mark Cartier

## Newsletter

2023 Vol. 1



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: *Dianne Meserlin*



**"Volunteering is a great way to bring positive change to people, communities, and society in general."** That is EXACTLY what Dianne Meserlin does. Dianne has volunteered in the kitchen at No Limits Cafe since we opened right thru the pandemic! She was integral in helping our employees with our Help for Hunger program in which they make up to 300 sandwiches per week for our local community members that are dealing with food insecurity all before we open our doors at 11! But it is no surprise to us that Dianne comes every single Monday as she and her husband Bob are 25 year Holiday Express volunteers - they are doers! Dianne remarks that she has been blessed in her life and that God has given her a gift.

Her motto is: **"Show me where to go!"** We are grateful that Dianne has found her way to the NLC family.

Dianne is also the grandmother to 12 grandchildren. In fact, Dianne has even brought one of her college aged grandchildren to volunteer alongside her, as well as her husband Bob. When Dianne's family asks if she is **"going to her happy place?"** Dianne's response is **"indeed I am!"**

**"There's a connection with each employee. I find their interests and that helps them**

**open up. Volunteering here side by side with the employees, you only see ABILITIES...not disabilities."** What more could you ask for in a volunteer?

Challenges at NLC: **"I'll admit, I'm tired after being on my feet all day - but it's worth it. Bob cooks Monday night dinners! LOL!"**

Favorite menu item: **"Tough question...today it's the Caprese Grilled Cheese!"**

**Thank you Dianne, you are an inspiration!**

## OUR MISSION

**To EMPOWER adults with intellectual disabilities by providing jobs and job training to help them lead fulfilling lives within our community and to increase awareness of their potential.**



On July 2nd Rawda and Tarek exchanged marriage vows! Our NLC family wishes them years of happiness and good wishes. **Rawda, we will miss you at NLC!**

Our employee Katie Cartier is a proud George Mason University Graduate. Congratulations!!!

NLC received the Certificate of Recognition for our efforts in advocating for inclusivity from the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners.

**Blake Ferrell passing the Special Olympic torch!**

Blake and the Middletown Police Dept. running with the Special Olympics Torch in the NJ Law Enforcement Special Olympics Torch Run. We're so proud!



**CAN YOU HELP US?** NLC is in need of a passenger van to transport our employees in order to work on the food truck at events. If you are able to donate (tax deduction!) or sell at a discount, please reach out to: [MarkCartier@NoLimitsCafe.org](mailto:MarkCartier@NoLimitsCafe.org)



## ART WITH NO LIMITS '23

No Limits Cafe had its inaugural "art with no limits auction." The event was graciously hosted by the Two River Theater on March 9th, with over 100 guests in attendance and over 100 original art donations. We proudly displayed original works by eight of our very own talented NLC employees. In addition to our talented employees, we had various art mediums from both professional and amateur community artists. Our guests enjoyed delectable menu bites prepared and served by NLC staff. To enhance the experience further, Danny's Steakhouse, Triumph Brewery, and The Melting Pot donated delicious appetizers and desserts. Wine was donated by Faustini Wines. Thank you to all the amazing artists and community members that made this fundraiser a huge success.

*"The exhibit was fun - I donated 3 pieces Dumbo, Butterfly & a Sunset! People were so nice, I would do it again!"*

Hayley Lawrence

*"I enjoyed the art event. It was nice to see all the people and getting so many compliments on my art."*

Kevin Molokie



## Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendars

**Saturday, September 30th**  
**Run/Walk with No Limits**  
3rd Annual NLC 5K & Half Marathon  
at Thompson Park.  
To register go to ... [raceforum.com/nolimits](http://raceforum.com/nolimits)

**Sunday, November 5th**  
**NYC Marathon**

**Tuesday, November 28th**  
**GIVING TUESDAY**

**Monday, January 1, 2024**  
**SONS OF IRELAND**  
**POLAR BEAR PLUNGE**

**DONATE TODAY!**



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - *Victoria Gries*



How important is meaningful employment? Just ask our employee Victoria Gries. Victoria has been working at NLC for 2 years...and she commutes from Brick...via Uber each way! That is because she wants to work, earn a living wage, wants the connection to fellow co workers...as well as a myriad of other things...including paying for her own manicures (and her nails are GORGEOUS!). "Vick," as we call her, has one of those contagious laughs - you can't help but to feel joyful when you are around her. Not to mention that she has a great sense of humor!

Victoria enjoys working with volunteer Dianne Meserlin and Assistant Chef Monika Lee. "I like everyone here and I like working the line" says Vick. Victoria worked in prep and has recently moved up to the line. If you order a turkey club or a BLT w/a twist there is a good chance it was made by Victoria. She also prepares the hummus trays given to each table.

Victoria loves the NLC dance parties! And she is a "Swiftie"...yep, Taylor Swift is her favorite musical artist!

What is your favorite thing about NLC: **"I like it here. Everyone is nice and I like getting my paycheck!"**

Favorite food at NLC: **"I love ham, so it's the Ameri-Ken Hero sandwich!"**

## SOME EXCITING NEWS ...

**Victoria has accepted a position in the cafeteria at her alma mater!**

# AstraZeneca THE POWER OF US *Christine Slattery*



Meet Christine Bruno Slattery, AstraZeneca's Power of Us Award recipient 2022: Christine is an Executive Pharmaceutical Sales RN specialist in the pediatric sector.

Christine is also one of the pioneer members of **THINK USA**, a group to start a global conversation embracing Neurodiversity!

In her 10 years at AstraZeneca she has dedicated many hours as a volunteer including her valuable volunteer hours at No Limits Cafe.

Christine is a longtime Middletown resident where she and her husband Sean of 35 years raised their three children Samantha, Jennie and Steven. As a new resident in Middletown her husband introduced them to the Cartiers and they soon became fast friends. Christine vividly recalls the night Stephanie Cartier went into labor in her backyard! As the story has been told soon after, the Cartiers were quick to see what can be done in the world of the intellectually disabled as Katie was born with down syndrome. Christine was a fierce supporter from day one. In the years to follow, talk about a cafe to train and hire adults with intellectual disabilities became a reality and Christine was there to lend her expertise in the area of design and moral support. She recalls that things always fell into place as they wondered how they would get all that was needed to complete the No Limits Cafe project. It certainly did fall into place in an amazing way.

Truly the decor at No Limits Cafe is warm and inviting and it all came together with folks seemingly appearing with their time and talent when they needed it most.

Unknowingly, Christine was nominated by her team at AstraZeneca for **The Power of Us** award. She was one of five who were selected for this prestigious national award. The Power of Us is AstraZeneca's employee giving and volunteerism program, which encourages US-based employees to donate their time and resources to the causes that matter most to them.

When asked what is the best part of coming into NLC? **"I walk in the door and I'm showered with hellos and huge smiles from the employees. You can't have a bad day when you're here"**

A must ask: What is your favorite menu item at NLC? **"That's easy, a grilled goat cheese sandwich, with caramelized onions, fig jam, arugula on sourdough bread! That's my creation."**

Currently Christine serves on the Board of Trustees at NLC!

## Special Thanks!

Big thank you to IMPACT 100 Jersey Coast for selecting NLC as one of their 2023 grant recipients funding the NLC Suzanne Hatfield Training Program!



Count Basie Center for the Arts & Bank of America:

**THE GIVING YEAR INITIATIVE** donating \$1 from every ticket sold for the month of May!



We had so much fun being a food vendor on Sandy Hook. 650 guests got to see what our employees can do! Yes we met **Kelsey Grammer!**



Thank You



for your generous contribution

**Suzanne Hatfield ...**

although you're no longer with us your spirit lives on at No Limits Cafe

**Frances Romeo ...**

for your generosity in memory of your brother Felix

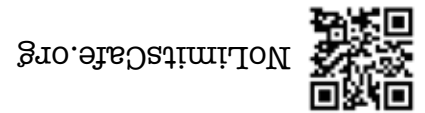
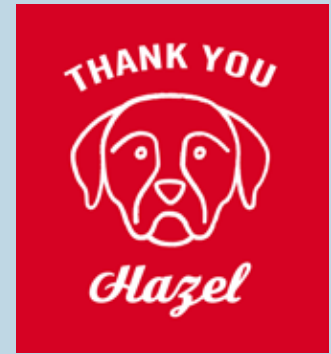


# LET'S TAKE THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD!

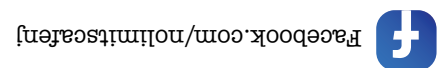
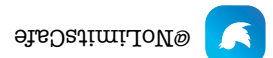
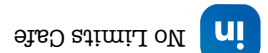
In late June we took delivery of our food truck, just in time to show it off at the golf outing. So why did No Limits get a food truck? Our mission is to create jobs and awareness of the abilities of our employees. The truck has the capacity to replicate any item from the cafe, plus more. This means more jobs, and increased visibility for the team. It allows us to serve more people in more places than we could have ever imagined.

We are grateful beyond words to the estates of Suzanne Hatfield and Frances Romeo for making this possible. Suzanne wanted to make a difference at the cafe, and she certainly did. Her support launched our training program, and now the food truck. She is pictured here with Hazel, who is named on the truck, and she is with us everywhere we go! Frances' wish was to honor her brother Felix. We are so fortunate to have Felix and Hazel in the No Limits family!

You will see us at private parties and local fairs. The menu for parties can be customized. We want your event to be as special as possible. Our staff is ready to take this show on the road. For more information, please contact us at 732-268-7471, or email [nolimitscafeevents@gmail.com](mailto:nolimitscafeevents@gmail.com)



[NOLimitsCafe.org](http://NOLimitsCafe.org)



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# GOLF OUTING and DINNER '23

**FORE!!!** NLC's 5th Annual Golf outing is in the books and it was a huge success. Mother nature cooperated and saved thunderstorms for another day. Over 130 golfers were in attendance at Rumson Country Club. Our inspiring guest speaker Brandon Jones - Owner/Operator of Hazlet Chick-fil-A (CFA) proudly spotlighted hires Katie Cartier and Hayley Lawrence, seasoned employees from NLC. He emphasized that CFA "will be a cornerstone of the community embracing inclusivity." A capacity dinner crowd at the Riverhouse was energized by NLC employees with our traditional dance party kick off. The community was in full support with over 50 auction items including Silent & Live Auction items, designer handbags, 50/50 raffles, and a getaway package to name a few. These donations generated much excitement and funds to sustain ongoing programs.

Drumroll please - the coveted **RED JACKET** winners were: John McGraner Sr., John McGraner Jr., Keith Freibott & Nick Scerbo. **Congratulations!**

Thank you to our employees, guests, sponsors, volunteers and the Rumson Country Club staff who made this a successful event!!! See you next year... "NLC is a little cafe with **BIG IMPACT**" Joyce Wright



# SONS OF IRELAND POLAR BEAR PLUNGE '23

2023 started with a huge splash. The Sons of Ireland annual Polar Bear Plunge was a spectacular event. No Limits Cafe and Shore House were the two non-profit recipients for this year's plunge. Weather conditions were a perfect balmy 52 degrees with sunny skies as 1000 plungers geared up to make that annual dip. The shoreline had an additional 1000 spectators to cheer them on. Ocean Place Hotel and Spa in Long Branch was the staging spot for this event. If plunging wasn't enough to jump start the New Year, Brian Kirk and the Jerks heated things up on the dance floor. What a way to usher in 2023!



The Sons of Ireland have been recognizing local nonprofits for 21 years and they get it done right. Registration fees, sale of shirts and sweatshirts all go toward the final numbers presented to the nonprofits. It was an amazing event, led by an amazing team. Mark your calendars because NLC will be the 2024 Polar Bear Plunge recipient again! Gather your friends and family and make this your new annual tradition. Thank you to the NLC Board members and the rocking Sons of Ireland team!

# UNITED AIRLINES NYC HALF MARATHON

On March 19th, six amazing runners ran with No Limits in New York City! Heart rates, funds and spirits were raised for NLC. Thank you to: Julie Cohen, Roland and Eileen Eckstein, NLC's own Chef Kali, Meredith Kine & Tyrone Morgan



# SHAMROCK & ROLL!

*We definitely rocked it out with our 2nd Annual VFW concert.*

With well over 400 attendees, community support was overwhelming. Organizer and lead musician Steve DeVito outdid himself gathering over 30 auction items and 50/50 raffles. The Daly Irish Dancers were back entertaining our guests and getting us in the ShamRock & Roll spirit. What's a party without an NLC dance party?



Delicious menu items prepared by our NLC staff were a hot item.

Huge thanks to Middletown VFW Post 2179, MC Jaimee DeNaro of 90.5 WBBJ-FM The Night radio station and all our volunteers and guests who came to party and support NLC. Thank you to Steve's bandmates: Steve Reilly, Christopher Russo & James Dalton!

**Steve, an amazing event - Thank you!**

