**End Of School Year 2019-2020 LEBA Report**

At the end of every school year, I submit to you, our LEBA therapists, and to the ESCNJ administration, the end of the school year report. I look back at all the milestones our therapists have achieved, the victories we have accomplished with our students, and the endeavors for which LEBA continues to strive. Without fail or surprise, I am always able to say that we’ve fulfilled our contractual obligations to provide therapists for all our sites in order to meet the mandated needs for Occupational and Physical Therapy services of students. I’ve also consistently reported recruitment and staffing as a major focus of our administrative activities and success as a result of our LEBA therapists’ willingness to not only work above and beyond in their own schools, but share their time with other sites as well. Each year, we provide future OT’s and PT’s with opportunities to observe our departments and complete their Level 1 or Level II clinical affiliations at our sites. These students do well in providing school-wide in-services and executing valuable projects that benefit students, classroom staff, and OT’s and PT’s alike. Reported feedback is always excellent, and, thanks to those who serve as Clinical Instructors, our terrific reputation allows for our contracts with universities to increase. Of course, we are aware of the extra time and effort required of a Clinical Instructor; this professional dedication is greatly lauded.

The end-of-school-year report always reflects news about individual therapists. This year, I must mention Gila Milodownik, who has moved on in her professional career to join the ranks of National Seating and Mobility. Gila served as the Manager of BBLC with grace, care, and exceptional organizational and communication skills that were highly respected by everyone. Adina Pruzinsky has proved to fill Gila’s position with those same excellent administrative skills, though I’m sure she would not take any credit for the fabulous work she has been completing. As I have officially resigned from ALC as the manager and a practicing therapist of the PT department, Kim Fake has graciously assumed my Manager post, and Robin Machurov will be the new full time PT at ALC. There isn’t a doubt in my mind that both will be successful in their respective roles and that the ALC OT/PT department will continue to thrive. Congratulations are in order for new mom, Cassandra Amicucci, as well as Michelle Strenger and Jennifer Bridgeman as they prepare to welcome their blessings into the world. I also want to extend a huge “thank you” to Kate Raskys for serving as the interim Manager of CLL during Cassandra’s maternity leave! This school year, LEBA welcomed Danielle Kreda, Ashley Jacobi, Joshua Muchnick, Alison Perrione, Amanda Forgus, Jenna Saunders, and Batsheva Stern to our family, and welcomed back Rose Peng, Deena Clavin, Gegory Schwalje, and Heather Lawrence when we needed them.

This end-of-school-year report is not, however, characteristic of those that I typically put forth. Though September 2019 through March 13th 2020 may have run as would a standard year, I fear that March 16th through ESY 2020 will forever define this past school year. Together, we faced a global pandemic that presented all of us with personal and professional challenges we’ve never before had to address. In response, we stood united as a LEBA family and confronted each test with thoughtful procedures to assure the success of our students to the best of our collective and individual abilities. We held each other up to allay our personal fears and prove our value as providers of teletherapy to parents, students, districts, and to ESCNJ. Since March 16th, we have worked diligently, on an almost daily basis, to advocate for all LEBA therapists and for our students; our concerns have always reflected the need to assure equity in practice and reimbursement and pledge safety procedures in practice. We will continue to represent LEBA during the upcoming months as new challenges are presented to us and will always advocate for the safety and security of us all.

On behalf of Harold, Roseanna, and myself, I want to take this opportunity to thank our Site Managers for their professional, clinical, and personal devotion to our LEBA team. This year, Marlene, Breindy, Adina, Cassandra, and Kim have earned accolades for persistently operating behind the scenes with us, going way above the call of duty. Their input has been invaluable.

We want to thank you, the LEBA therapists, for your patience, understanding, flexibility, clinical expertise, and professionalism during this pandemic. As we wish for your safety and enduring good health, we remain proud of each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Debbie Eisenberg, Harold Granek, and Roseanna Perez