



# THE SARATOGA PALIO

Melanie Merola O'Donnell Memorial Race

DATE  
9.16.09

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For Immediate Release

**THE MELANIE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES  
SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT:  
*Andrea N. Falzone***

**SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY, September 16, 2009**—The Melanie Foundation has announced that Andrea N. Falzone, of Southern New Jersey, is this year's recipient of the foundation's annual scholarship.

Falzone is a PsyD candidate in a combined-integrated program in clinical/school psychology at James Madison University. The scholarship is awarded annually to the applicant who best demonstrates the commitment to assist communities in a manner consistent with Melanie Merola O'Donnell's values of compassion, generosity, respect, and honesty. Applicants are required to be enrolled in graduate-level studies in the mental health field.

Falzone holds a master's degree in psychological services from the University of Pennsylvania and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Boston University. Falzone has dedicated her career to working with individuals with severe emotional and mental health issues, where suicide prevention, crisis intervention, and direct service to those exposed to family and community violence are integral. She has experience working with children and adolescents of various social-emotional, behavioral, and developmental concerns and their families in a variety of settings, including a mobile crisis response unit, an inner city elementary school, a residential treatment facility for boys, and a partial hospitalization program for children.

For her doctoral work, Falzone gained her experience working with numerous organizations, including the Central Shenandoah Valley Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative, Mary D. Ainsworth Child-Parent Attachment Clinic, and Counseling and Psychological Services. Within the University's Department of Psychology, Falzone has held many roles including graduate teaching assistant, supervisor, instructor, and teaching assistant. Falzone has presented at regional conferences. Currently, she is a doctoral intern at the Milton Hershey School and also works on a per diem basis as a children's intervention specialist at Steininger Behavioral Care Services Children's Mobile Response and Stabilization program.



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"The board of The Melanie Foundation is thrilled to award a scholarship to Andrea Falzone," said George O'Donnell, president of the foundation. "Through her commitment and work experiences, she demonstrates a tremendous passion for helping people. We're convinced that she is going to make a real impact on the lives of the people she touches and we're thrilled to be able to support her in doing so."

In addition to awarding a scholarship, The Melanie Foundation plans to share its success with other community charities, starting this year with Saratoga Bridges, a nonprofit foundation that provides support services for individuals with disabilities and their families.

For more information on the scholarship or to register for The Saratoga Palio: Melanie Merola O'Donnell Memorial Race on September 20 in Saratoga Springs, NY, visit [www.thesaratogapalio.com](http://www.thesaratogapalio.com).

*The Saratogian* is this year's key media sponsor.

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## **About Melanie Merola O'Donnell**

Melanie Merola O'Donnell lived an inspirational life, and though it was cut short, it was extremely full. Throughout her life, Melanie worked to help people in need. She volunteered with, and later became a staff member of, the National Organization for Victim Assistance, and she was a board member of the Capital Area Crisis Response Team for 8 years. She trained crisis responders for both organizations until 2004. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, Melanie coordinated and managed 28 crisis response teams in New York City and 8 teams in Washington. She also aided crisis responders in Somerset County, PA, following the attacks. She spent several weeks in New York City, helping grieving families who were visiting the site of the attacks and coping with the aftermath. She provided care to individuals affected by natural disasters, plane crashes, school violence, the civil war in Sierra Leone, workplace violence, and homicide. In June 2004, she was honored by CACRT as the first recipient of the Melanie Merola O'Donnell Award for Excellence. At the time of her death, she was enrolled in a doctoral program in clinical psychology at Antioch University New England, in Keene, NH. Amidst Melanie's professional responsibilities and accomplishments, her devotion to her husband, son, mother, father, sister, family, and friends was never compromised.

## **About the Melanie Merola O'Donnell Memorial Scholarship Fund**

The fund was created with the principal purpose of extending Melanie Merola O'Donnell's legacy of helping others through caring and compassionate mental healthcare, with a particular focus on enhancing a sense of community. O'Donnell's family and friends have joined together to celebrate her life with this cause, hoping to identify others who share O'Donnell's commitment to helping those in need, and providing those individuals financial assistance for the pursuit of graduate degrees in a mental health field.