On Friday, July 20th, 2018 the LFA was honored to be part of a special recognition for our member school, The Child School Legacy High School. For 45 years, The Child School has been leading the charge in the field of Special Education as a New York State approved non-public day school for students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 who are faced with learning challenges. What started as one woman's quest to broaden educational opportunities for kids with Special Needs by teaching them to their individualized goals right out of her living room, has since grown to become a three-building campus located on Roosevelt Island where the students flourish, and many of whom achieve the prestigious New York State Regents Diploma at graduation from Twelfth Grade.

Schneps Communications and the Lay Faculty Association Local 1261 had partnered in June to honor one of the teachers at The Child School with an award at the annual New York Power Women in Business Gala, which was held as Terrace on the Park in Flushing. As part of the new relationship between the Union and Schneps, some of the proceeds of the gala's high-end raffle were earmarked to benefit the Art Program at The Child School and Queens Centers for Progress, which works to provide "person-centered services and supports to children and adults who have developmental disabilities. The goal of these services and supports is to promote independence, community involvement, and quality of life." Vicky Schneps, founder of the communications group with its headquarters in Bayside, is herself a staunch advocate for the Special Needs Community. Having followed a path similar to that of the founding of The Child School, Ms. Schneps was faced with the reality of having to provide educational and social experiences for her own daughter, left with extensive brain damage during complications at childbirth, and who had been one of 5,400 students at Willowbrook State School in Staten Island, the subject of Geraldo Rivera's famous exposé in 1972.

The picture below are from the recent check presentation from Schneps Communication to The Child School. Melissa O'Brien (left), Admissions Director for the elementary school at The Child School was there to accept the honor. Prior to the photo op, Ms. O'Brien spoke to everyone in attendance about how valuable these funds will be to the school: Art Therapy for Special Needs students is a crucial part of their development, and many students who struggle with traditional academic subjects are able to pursue classes related to the arts where they may excel as a way of bolstering their confidence in their educational abilities as a whole. Also pictured are Megan Gallo (center), a representative from Schneps, and Ciro A. Quattrocchi, President and Business Manager of the LFA.

On behalf of the Lay Faculty Association, we would like to thank Vicky Schneps for her decades of commitment to being a voice for so many differently-abled youth, her representative Toni Cimino with whom we worked very closely to make all of these accolades a reality, and Ms. Vishu Grover, Director of The Child School for continuing to ensure that Special Needs kids in the New York Area have ongoing access to the arts.