

Safety corner

- submitted by the Central Health and Safety Committee

September 23rd is the First Day of Fall. This beautiful season brings wet leaves everywhere. Leaves wet or dry are a slipping hazard. Take some preventive measures so you don't get hurt! Keep walkways clear of leaves and put a heavy welcome mat at the door for leaves and water. If you do track in water, clean it up so that you aren't causing a slipping hazard for others, keeping our consumers in mind. When wet leaves are on the ground be careful when you walk over them because they can't grip the sidewalk. This could cause you, or our consumers, to slip and fall. Remember to provide sufficient physical assistance to consumers that may need. This concept also applies to the tires on agency vehicles and your car. Provide extra braking distance because wet leaves on the road could lead you to lose control of your vehicle.

One way to prevent a slip and fall is to wear appropriate footwear. Ladies flats and heels provide almost no traction. When wearing sneakers it's important to make sure they have sufficient treads on them. Worn down sneakers have almost zero traction. For your own safety, employees are expected to wear footwear appropriate for the duties of their work. It's best to slow down, as well. If you are walking too fast or aren't alert to your surroundings you're putting yourself at risk of falling. It's up to you to stay alert and pay attention. Have a safe season!

BRAVO!

Some noteworthy happenings at Ability Beyond Disability

The Connecticut **Supported Independent Living (SIL)** program recently went under a Quality Service Review by the Department of Developmental Services. Audits were conducted on several individuals under Jen Baskay's caseload. Overall, the scores were 100% in all areas reviewed and the case manager had positive feedback about the organization of consumer records. Congratulations to **Tanya Medve, Jen Baskay** and her entire team for this incredible accomplishment!



The Informer

-by Chad Sinanian, Consumer Advocate

News from the advocacy world

As the Consumer Advocate for Ability Beyond Disability, I will be going with other consumers and People First of CT advisors Leslie Simoes and Laura Hastillo to the National Self Advocates Becoming Empowered Conference in Kansas City, Missouri from September 23rd thru the 26th. I am running for another term as Region 8 Representative.

Community event

I'm a member of Overeaters Anonymous which is a group of individuals who meet several times a week to deal with our compulsive eating and food addiction. I was thinking that if there are any compulsive overeaters amongst our staff and consumers, that they might think about attending these meetings to get support in controlling themselves. The meetings are ANONYMOUS - no one knows each other's last name and attendance is voluntary. The meetings are held from 10 am to 11 am at the Madison St. Church on Mondays and Fridays in Danbury and from 10:30am to 12pm on Saturdays at the El Dorado on 152 West St. in Danbury.

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Upcoming Events!

9/21/2010

Mercedes-Benz Dealer
Championship Golf Tournament

*Ridgewood Country Club
Danbury, CT*

10/20 - 10/22/2010

Disability Mentoring Day
Celebration

10/21/2010

Hoops for Hope

Danbury High School

Please visit
www.abilitybeyonddisability.org
for more information

Helping a family

by *Beth A. Molinaro, Information and Referral Supervisor*

It's been six months since I attended my first pre-admission meeting for a young woman named Jessica. The meeting took place in the kitchen conference room at the Mt. Kisco, NY office. Crowded around the oval table were a slew of agency staff members including a nurse, a behavioral analyst, the residential coordinator, information and referral representatives, an outside service coordinator, a representative from Jessica's school and Rose, Jessica's mother.

Once pleasantries were exchanged and introductions made, the questions began with rapid fire. Rose rummaged through a number-ten frayed white business envelope for her daughter's Medicaid card as the questions gained speed.

"What do your other children think about Jessica moving?" I asked.

Rose shared her younger son's greatest concern. "How will we know they'll feed her?" he had innocently asked. Bittersweet smiles blanketed the conference room.

With the answer to every question, the scrunching of Rose's envelope grew louder. Like popcorn in a microwave, the room's energy was bursting. After four years of hoping and waiting, Rose and her family were preparing for Jessica's BIG move out of her parent's home and into our Carmel IRA in NY. While all parties present were in high spirits anticipating Jessica's arrival, one loving mother nervously prepared for her daughter's going away.

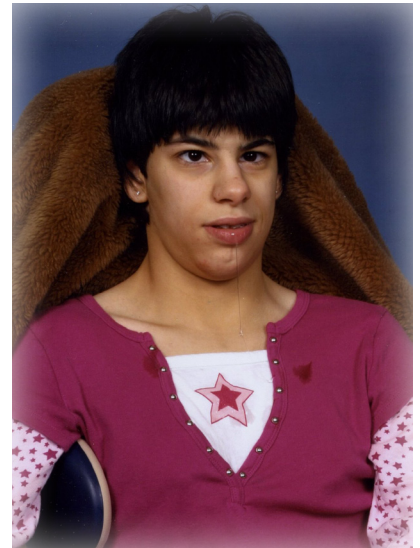
Jessica is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy, Spastic Quadriplegia and profound mental retardation. While she is non-verbal, Jessica makes her needs and desires known both facially and gesturally. Taking care of Jessie has always been this family's top priority. A lift was installed in Rose's van and ramps and walk ways were constructed in front of their home, enabling their daughter a safer and more comfortable ride and easier wheelchair access in and out of the house. But Jessica still required 24 hour care.

Four years ago Rose was diagnosed with cancer. It was then that she and her husband knew it was time to find long term care for Jessica.

Rose's health has improved and today, this family has a new life. When recently asked how their lives have changed Rose said, "Jessie's in such a good place, that I'm in a good place!" She added, "The staff is the most loving and caring people I've ever met! From day one, they knew how to feed Jessie! They've created a sensory room in the house for her to relax in, her wheelchair is repaired as needed and everyone looks out for her."

Rose went on to tell me what a wonderful summer she and her other children have had. For the first time ever they've been able to go swimming, run afternoon errands, go out to dinner, and attend Nick's lacrosse games...together; things Jessica didn't enjoy doing. "Jessie never wanted to leave the house", her mother said, "She would moan all the time."

The whole family is now in a good place. Rose told me she no longer knocks on the house door when she visits her daughter, because Ability Beyond Disability is her extended family. Rose laughed, "Now when I show up, I walk in and yell IT'S ME, I'M HERE!"



Look Who's Joined Our Team

We would like to welcome new additions to our team for August:

Coatsworth, Jessica M., LSI

Diaz, Gabriela C., LSI

Dobson, Latisha R., LSI

Droz, Lucia G., LSI

Elander, James B., LSI

Gatling, Robert Eugene, LSI

Goldman, Emily C., LSI

Graham, Austin N., LSI

Gray-Merrill, Heather, Emp Spec

Jackson, Chakaria L., LSI

Klugein, Nicole M., LSI

McIntyre, Angela M., LSI

Morris, Sharon M., LSI

Owen, Joshua E., LSI

Quayson, Eunice, LSI

Santos, Jennifer C., LSI

Voorhees, Katharine E., LSI

Walton, Katie M., LSI

Weiss, Kenneth L., LSI

With diverse backgrounds (including many in the human services field), all of our new hires will be great additions to our organization!

Our Vision For The Future...

Ensuring a successful future for our consumers, families and employees

We are applying for a \$250,000 Pepsi Refresh Grant and we need your help!

Pepsi is giving away millions of dollars in grants to "refresh" individuals and their communities. Each month Pepsi accepts applications for projects that can help change the world. They select the first 1,000 applications they receive and give applicants the change to sell their project to the world.

So here's where you can help. We are submitting an application for \$250,000 for Roses for Autism. If we are selected as one of the 1,000 projects we will need your help spreading the word and asking everyone you know to visit the refresh website and vote for Roses for Autism. Together we hope to change the future for people with Autism!

Stay tuned for more information! We will know by September 15th if we are accepted.



Direct Support Professional of the Year for Connecticut -Susan Hancock

Susan Hancock has been named the 2010 Direct Support Professional (DSP) of the year for Connecticut. This honor was awarded by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). Each year

ANCOR honors one outstanding DSP in every state and one national winner as part of its national advocacy campaign, "You Need to Know Me". The mission of the campaign is to enhance the lives of people with disabilities by obtaining the resources to recruit, train and retain a highly qualified and sustainable direct support workforce. ANCOR works towards accomplishing this by promoting the incredible work that DSP's do each and every day.

The U.S. Senate has designated the week of September 12-18, 2010 as National Direct Support Professional Week, to honor the direct support workforce and the tremendous difference they make in the lives of millions of Americans with disabilities. During that week Susan will join all of the other state and national winners on a trip to Washington D.C. There they will participate in workshops that reflect best practices from around the country and even advocate on behalf of the direct support workforce at Capitol Hill.

Two other Ability Beyond Disability employees were named as finalists for the DSP award in the state of CT: Gigi Decarvalho and Nikeisha Wright.

Congratulations to our winner and our finalists...and thank you to our entire direct support workforce! To learn more about ANCOR's advocacy campaign visit www.youneedtoknowme.org

connections

“Oh My” Employee of the Month -Craig Lynch

Craig is a Life Skills Instructor and he has been with Ability Beyond Disability for 12 years. Craig has worked in both residential and SIL but he currently works in vocational services.

Before coming to Ability Beyond Disability Craig had a very successful career in computers. He was a manager for the help desk at a national Internet company and knew a lot about the field. He moved out to California, but as he progressed in his career, he realized that wasn't what he wanted to do...so he returned home.

His brother was a 1:1 for Ability Beyond Disability (Dathar at the time), and had brought the consumer that he worked with to their apartment on occasion. From his help desk experience Craig knew that he was very skilled at diffusing difficult situations and calming people, which he thought could translate that to working with other people with disabilities...and he began working for us.

Craig says that he loved his years of residential work and direct care; taking clients to appointments, helping brush their teeth and making meals, “I loved the fact that I played such an important role in these people’s lives,” he said. “You go home at night and really feel like you’ve made a difference, even if it was the same difference every day. There is an intimacy in residential work that while it was so demanding, it was also so rewarding because you share a life with these people.”

Craig loves his current position and how his role in each person’s day has changed. “I pick my clients up, take them out and do our job that we all love to do, and at the end of the day, we are all in a good mood,” he said. “Our job is a break from their residential life and it’s fun for them, and because it’s fun for them, it’s fun for me too.”

If you don't know Craig very well, you might not know that at one point he decided to sell his car and rode his bike to work for two years! He rode in the rain, the snow and whatever other weather came his way. He thought he would only do it for one summer, but he was determined to save money and kept on going for two straight years.

Thank you Craig for your dedication and commitment to Ability Beyond Disability... even in the rain and the snow!



Anniversaries

Susan Ackell	26
Elizabeth Baumgarten	23
Debra Schiavo	18
Sue Doiron	18
Fred Randall	16
Frances Ferrusi	14
Tania Jimenez	13
Radames Velez Jr.	12
Monica Masesa	12
Peter Lane	11
Mary Ellen Lydem	11
Cynthia Vogel	11
Joann Robinson	9
Jennifer Smith	9
Thomas Mboya	8
Kathleen Travis	8
Cari Lee	7
Vincent Smeragulio	7
Wandalynn Short	6
Husam Odeh	6
Alanna Licursi	6
Aaron Mirochine	6
Robin Westby	5
Vincent Carmignani	5
Krystle Gaudiosi	5
Tania Drummond	5
Shaileen Brighton-Ortiz	5
Lorna Samuelson	4
Jacqueline Reina	4
Barbara McBride	4
Claire Van Valen	4
LySandra Fernandez	3
Jessica McCavanagh	3
Edwin Cruz	3
Raymund Bautista	3
Ronald Consigli	2
Cheryl Therrien	2
Christopher Norlander	2
Quineshia Brown	2
Jennifer Santiago	2
Lauren Schultz	1
Shannon LeRoy	1
Tracy Ashe	1
Jeffrey Thomas	1
Jaime Sivo	1
JeMara Atwood	1
Anne Gesualdi	1
LaNina Fulton	1
Mohammed Imoro	1
Kathy Hofler-Davis	1

September “Oh My” Award Nominees



- Kathy Grosse - Employment Specialist I
- Robert Layok - Employment Specialist I
- Imran Mohamed - Life Skills Instructor
- Heather Adams - Employment Specialist I
- Katinah Allen - Employment Specialist I
- Kenneth King - Employment Specialist I