



ABILITY BEYOND DISABILITY

A Resource For Changing Lives



2008
Annual Report

Mission

To enable individuals whose independent living skills are impaired by disability, illness or injury, to achieve and maintain self-reliance, fulfillment and comfort at home, at work and in the community, by providing the best comprehensive home, health and rehabilitation services.

History

Founded in 1953 by a small group of parents who envisioned a brighter future for their children with disabilities, **Ability Beyond Disability** has grown into a leading provider of home, health, employment and rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities living in Connecticut and New York. **Ability Beyond Disability** has become a leading resource for changing lives; helping to make the hopes and dreams of thousands of people with physical and mental disabilities a reality by providing services that ensure lives full of independence, respect and dignity.

Vision

Ability Beyond Disability will provide the highest possible quality of services to people with disabilities so that they can pursue their dreams and lead lives enriched with endless opportunities.

ABILITY BEYOND DISABILITY, INC.
The Leir Pavilion
4 Berkshire Boulevard
Bethel, Connecticut 06801
(203) 775-4700

120 Kisco Avenue
Mt. Kisco, New York 10549
(914) 242-8720
Toll Free: (888) 832-8247
www.abilitybeyonddisability.org

Table of *Table of Contents*

Mission, History, Vision	Inside Front Cover
Table of Contents.....	1
President’s Message.....	2
Consumer Need and Choice	
Community Living and Individual Home Support	3
Aging	4
Employment Resources.....	4
School to Community Transitional Services	5
Social and Community Integration	6
Clinical Services	7
Quality of Services	
Measuring Satisfaction.....	9
Ability Beyond Disability Presents at National Conferences.....	9
Employer of Choice	
Recruitment & Retention	10
Recognizing the Stars of our Workforce.....	11
Professional Development	11
Financials	
Financials	12
Philanthropy	
Philanthropy.....	13

Message *President's Message*

As Gandhi once said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." This is the belief that led to the creation of **Ability Beyond Disability** in 1953 when a group of parents decided to make a change that would help their children belong; a change where they would be treated with dignity and respect; a change that would allow them to be a part of their communities. Fifty-five years later this belief is still alive, and is the driving force behind the launch of our five year strategic plan, Vision 2013.

Within Vision 2013 is a bold, aggressive commitment to pursue what we know is true - that people with disabilities belong and that we must continue to be that change we wish to see in the world. We must be flexible, creative and responsive in order to take the lead in developing the services that are needed today and will be needed tomorrow.

There is no denying that the needs of people with disabilities are very different today than they were yesterday - the average lifespan of a person with an intellectual disability has gone from 18 years in 1930 to nearly 70 in the year 2000. One in 150 children born in this Country today has an autism spectrum disorder and every 21 seconds, someone sustains a brain injury. These are people from our communities, our neighborhoods. These are the people we must be available for 10, 20 and 50 years from now.

We are prepared to double the number of people we serve by growing existing services and pursuing much-needed specialty services. Included in the plan is the development of facilities designed to meet the special needs of aging adults with disabilities, the substantial expansion of employment and supported living services and the growth of service sites for young adults and youth with disabilities.

In addition to growth in services areas, Vision 2013 will focus on strengthening and expanding our workforce, implementing new technologies to enhance the efficiency of service delivery and financing our future.

The development of Vision 2013 comes after months of research and preparation engaging members of the community, the organization's management and its Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. Together with the community we will continue to help people with disabilities belong.

Thomas H. Fanning
President & CEO

Community Living and Individual Home Support

Having a place to call home is the first step in creating a life of one's own. This is no different for people with disabilities. In fiscal year 2008 **Ability Beyond Disability** provided a place to call home to approximately 350 individuals.

But we have done so much more than just help people have a place to live. During fiscal year 2008 **Ability Beyond Disability** devoted a great deal of time and energy to the "Reconfiguration Initiative," an initiative that focused on evaluating each of our homes to ensure that they currently - and will continue to - serve as the best possible environments to meet the needs of the people who live there. This project took flight in fiscal year 2008 as we began to apply the principles of Universal Design; working to adapt and renovate a number of our residences so they will allow the people we serve to achieve accessibility, function and pride in their homes.

In addition to addressing the needs of those we currently serve, a great deal of attention was also spent on identifying ways we can serve new populations. A newly formed relationship with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) offered us the opportunity develop two new programs for six individuals each, utilizing the same clinically supportive environment as our existing transitional living programs, to serve children and young adults aged 6-21 years with trauma or mental health concerns. Plans are underway and the two homes are scheduled to open in early 2009 in Southington and Wolcott, CT.

We also saw significant expansion in our Supported Independent Living Program (SIL) beginning with the opening of two new apartments in NY serving four individuals, the welcoming of five new individuals in CT, and the addition of a transitional living program in Bristol, CT that serves as a continuation to our existing young adult program and focuses on strengthening daily living skills and fostering independence for the eight young adults living there.

In addition, 40 families in New York have chosen **Ability Beyond Disability** to develop residential programs and serve as the provider of choice for their children. We have also been selected by the parents of four young women with significant physical and cognitive disabilities and the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD) to assume operation of a home in Yorktown. We were unanimously selected by the families as the provider of choice following a comprehensive screening process. These future residential developments are bringing us closer to reaching our growth goals of Vision 2013.



Consumer Need and Choice

Aging

A major component of **Vision 2013** addresses the aging population. In the 1930s, the life expectancy of child with mental retardation was less than 20 years. As medicine and health care advanced, the average life span continued to rise, and today, it is at nearly 70 years. For the first time in history, thousands of individuals with intellectual disabilities are outliving their elderly parents. This demographic phenomenon is creating a tremendous vacuum in care and service delivery, when the need is becoming most critical. In the 41 states that maintain waiting lists, there are nearly 85,000 individuals currently waiting for residential placement. This number will mushroom as individuals with disabilities continue to outlive their elderly caregivers and require higher levels of care.

After five years of dedicated planning, **Ability Beyond Disability** presented a model for developing a specialized state-of-the-art environment for individuals with moderately severe to late stage Alzheimer's disease or other medically challenging conditions to funders in both Connecticut and New York. The need for this type of facility is gaining a greater sense of urgency as it becomes more apparent that there is a lack of specialized programs that care for individuals who are aging and medically fragile. We have completed the program design and staffing plans, and are now simultaneously pursuing budget approval, architect selection and potential sites.

Also in support of generating attention to this aging crisis, we hosted our first symposium titled "Aging in Persons with Disabilities... Options not Crisis". The symposium attracted professionals, family members, caregivers and advocates; bringing together experts in the field to discuss issues and alternatives for people aging with intellectual disabilities. Conferences were held in both New York and Connecticut and drew attention from both states with the Executive Commissioner of OMRDD present in NY and the Commissioner of DDS present in CT. Plans are already underway for a similar event in fiscal year 2009.

Employment Resources

Having a job isn't just about the paycheck – it's about independence, pride and the chance to pursue ones dreams. In fiscal year 2008 approximately 600 individuals received employment services from **Ability Beyond Disability**. We anticipate that this number will continue to grow as we expand our employment services through Vision 2013.



Neil

Neil came to Ability Beyond Disability in 1980 for day and work services and soon after began living in one of our residences. For years, he was able to successfully live with minimal support, work in the community and enjoy his independence. Recently though, Neil's medical needs began to increase and caring for him

became a challenge for us. The setting he was living in didn't offer the medical support he needed and there were no available beds in our homes that could accommodate his needs. So at 48 years old, Neil bounced back and forth between the hospital, his home with us, and ultimately a nursing home—where he became increasingly depressed. Fortunately, a spot opened up in one of our homes and we were able to bring Neil back home to us—but we can't do this for everyone.

One of our major initiatives in our Vision 2013 is to create a best of class specialized aging facility in both New York and Connecticut for individuals with disabilities and medical complications due to aging. Allowing us to continue to help people like Neil who are aging and requiring medical attention.

Consumer Need and Choice

Ability Beyond Disability continues to trump national statistics in the employment of people with disabilities. In fiscal year 2008 the employment rate for Career Development and Day and Work services was 47% and 57% respectively, while the national average employment rate for people with disabilities remains at a dismal 35%.

As in CT, our job placement activities continue to grow in NY with 55 consumers receiving services compared to 15 in fiscal year 2007.

Our expertise in Community Integration continued to be sought after offering us the opportunity to present nationally on the topic of closing sheltered workshops and successfully integrating people with disabilities into the community. Additionally, we have become increasingly recognized as a resource to corporations in employing people with disabilities and have partnered with Pepsi Co. on their “EnAble” initiative which focuses on the disability population. We continue to work with community partners to promote diversity and serve as a resource in building their workforce.

School to Community Transitional Services

Fiscal year 2008 brought with it a focus on helping students with disabilities transition out of the public school system and into the adult world of work. In early winter a group of students from the Academy of Western Connecticut, a post-high school graduate program for young adults with disabilities, came to **Ability Beyond Disability** to practice their interviewing skills. Each student met with an employment specialist from the Career Development Department for a “mock interview”; covering everything from proper attire to preparing questions about the position they are pursuing ahead of time. The employment specialists then gathered their feedback and met with the group to discuss what they did well and how they could improve.

The mock interviews are just one example of the outreach and support **Ability Beyond Disability** provides to students to help them acquire the knowledge necessary to find a rewarding career, manage their lives and fully participate in society. During fiscal year 2008 we worked with sixteen school systems in the surrounding communities; helping students, parents and educators understand the opportunities available to them in preparing for the next stage of services. We provided support to assist with the early transition of three high school students into our Day Programs. We were also able to continue to provide full day programming for one high school student through our Group Supported Employment and we continue to provide transitional assessments or day programming on a regular basis to upwards of ten students at any given time prior to them aging out of the school system.



Consumer Need and Choice

In the spring of fiscal year 2008 we held an informational breakfast for schools focused on transitional services. The meeting covered everything from funding sources to the services **Ability Beyond Disability** can provide to students while they are still in school and then once they've graduated. Emphasis was placed on early intervention and being prepared for when students with disabilities age out of the school system; giving them as many opportunities as possible to pursue their futures.

We will continue to focus attention on helping students prepare for their future in fiscal year 2009 with participation in **National Disability Mentoring Day** and the further development of relationships within the surrounding school systems.

Social and Community Integration

At **Ability Beyond Disability** we recognize that not every person can work each and every day, and for those that can, they want to do more than just work. Because of that we focus a great deal of attention on building relationships that offer opportunities for our consumers to participate in social and recreational activities within their communities.

This past fiscal year consumers and staff of **Ability Beyond Disability** visited museums and libraries; cheered for their favorite teams at baseball games and played in games of their own through Miracle League; participated in sporting events through Special Olympics; took trips to the beach, the zoo and hit the streets of New York City; danced, sang and performed on stage; some lucky individuals even got to throw a football around with Joe Namath...and the list goes on.



In fiscal year 2008 many consumers also gave back to their communities; volunteering over 9,600 hours of community services at local soup kitchens, shelters, youth organizations and other social service organizations.

Consumer Need and Choice

Clinical Services

Through our clinical services we deliver individually tailored medical, psychological and rehabilitation programs to the people we serve making it possible for them to learn the life skills that make them a viable part of the community. During the past fiscal year we focused attention on enhancing our expertise, building our professional staff's credentials and exploring best practice models of care for new populations consistent with Vision 2013.

An Autism Work Group of interdisciplinary staff was developed to explore best practices in serving individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and to guide **Ability Beyond Disability's** efforts to enhance its current service offerings to meet the needs of this population. This group has been instrumental in helping implement innovative new practices in our existing programs to meet the changing needs of the people we currently serve and the emerging needs of those we plan to serve in the near future.

A number of our Primary Care Nurses were successfully certified by the Developmental Disabilities Nursing Association (DDNA) as Certified Developmental Disability Nurses, demonstrating their competence and level of achievement in the field. We are also fortunate enough to have a member of our nursing staff, a Residential LPN, become among the first LPN in Connecticut to be Developmental Disabilities Certified.

Through our clinical supports we continue to promote maximum health and self-reliance by ensuring full community-based access to needed medical and rehabilitative care for people who have historically been at very high risk and significantly under-served.

Bethany

When Bethany came to Ability Beyond Disability she was in high school and was looking for help transitioning to the adult world of work. She had a job, but she wasn't happy there; she wasn't making any progress, she was lost. We helped Bethany explore her interests and try out different jobs. We landed her a position at a local fabric store, and it was a perfect fit. The environment was exactly what Bethany had been looking for;

a smaller store that allowed her to work more closely with co-workers and shoppers. She honed her skills and made such great strides that she even took on a second job at a restaurant in town. There she was able to build friendships, gain more independence and earn a second paycheck. Ability Beyond Disability helped prepare Bethany for her life after high school; the work experience she gained and the skills she learned will help her be successful well



into the future. And best of all, Bethany now has two jobs that she absolutely loves! In addition, Bethany and her family have joined a group of six other families who, after vetting other providers, unanimously chose Ability Beyond Disability to provide residential supports for their children. These seven families have given letters of commitment because they believe their children will receive the highest quality of service from Ability Beyond Disability.

Quality of Services

Our commitment to delivering services of the highest quality to the people we serve is what makes **Ability Beyond Disability** stand out from other human service organizations. In fiscal year 2008 we received a record low number of Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) citations with nine cite-free inspections and two locations being cite-free two years in a row. Our exceptional performance also included a cite-free licensure inspection from the Department of Developmental Services.

In the Fall, the Federal Government Accountability Office (GAO) visited our Young Adult Program as a request by Congress to review transitional young adult services across the country and cited the program as “State of the Art, one of the most cutting edge programs in the country”

Additionally, we focused on monitoring performance and quality of services through multiple benchmarking measures allowing us to track regulation compliance, healthcare, risk areas and consumer need and satisfaction. Through the use of benchmarking we are able to rate ourselves among other providers across the nation and identify areas of exceptional performance or those that need improvement.



Measuring Satisfaction

In order to ensure that we are providing quality services, we determined that it was important to assess the satisfaction of those we provide them to. In fiscal year 2007 the Department of Quality Services decided upon a tool that would accurately assess the “satisfaction” of the people we serve, and our very first consumer satisfaction survey was successfully rolled out in fiscal year 2008. A web based survey provided by “The ArcLink”, used by agencies across the country, was distributed to individuals that we serve in residential, employment and day and work services. Participation was voluntary and confidential, and 247 surveys were completed. Satisfaction data was analyzed at an individual survey group level, as well as across all survey groups. Agency data was also compared against aggregate data compiled by The ArcLink from all agencies that have participated in the customer satisfaction survey process nationwide.

Ability Beyond Disability’s overall satisfaction rating for the customer survey was higher than the national average- 63% as compared to the ArcLink aggregate satisfaction rating of 58%. Overall our participants showed a high level of satisfaction in where they live and work, happiness with the staff that work with them and knowing that they can get help if they need it.

Ability Beyond Disability Presents at National Conferences

NYSACRA 35th Annual Conference – April 2008

“How long can you afford to be down”
The importance of backing up your critical data.

“Creative methods for working with young adults
with developmental disabilities and mental health
challenges, using technology to aid behavioral
programming and clinical decision making.”

“Thank You – Two Very Powerful Words:
Accelerating Your Employee Recognition
Program”

The 18th Annual APSE Conference: The Network on Employment – July 2007

“Closing a Sheltered Workshop”

NYSACRA Region Mid-Hudson Direct Care Conference – October 2007

“Team: The Good Kind of Four-letter Word”

ANCOR’s 2008 Management Practices Conference – April 2008

“From Workshop to Community; Lessons from one provider”

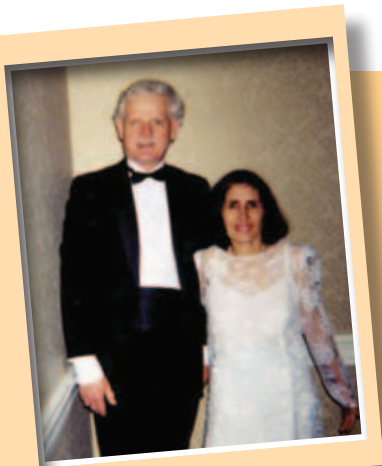
Recruitment & Retention

Recruiting and retaining a qualified direct care workforce continues to be one of our biggest challenges as the demand for services grows with a decrease in individuals entering the field.

Applicants are looking for organizations that are willing to invest in their individual growth and provide them with the opportunity to advance; they want more than just a job, they want a career. Current employees are looking for a chance to advance within the organization; to be recognized as a key component in our workforce. In response to this, a focus group of individuals from across the organization came together in fiscal year 2008 to develop plans for what has become the “Pathways to Excellence Program”. This exciting career path program for our direct care workforce combines national best practices with **Ability Beyond Disability’s** Vision 2013 goals. The Pathways to Excellence Program illustrates to new applicants and our existing workforce that **Ability Beyond Disability** is eager to support its employee’s development and provide them with not only the opportunity to grow, but to specialize in their areas of choice. A group of seventeen participants kicked off the pilot program in May of 2008.

Our Leadership Ability program included many workshops in both CT and NY for our management team; focusing on how to retain and motivate our workforce. The workshops were attended by supervisors, assistant supervisors, managers and directors from across the organization.

In fiscal year 2008 **Ability Beyond Disability** committed to more effectively communicating its educational benefits to potential and current employees. We added an education component to our Annual Benefits Fair to promote our Tuition Reimbursement program. As a result we saw a 15% increase in the use of the tuition reimbursement benefit. 2008 also saw six employees take advantage of our unique LPN Incentive Program. The program is not only attractive to potential and current employees looking to earn their LPN, but it has allowed us to promote from within in order to fulfill LPN staffing needs.



Roger and Esther

Roger and Esther met in the late 1970’s, they were both living in our residential program. Some would say it was a classic story of love at first sight. Roger and Esther immediately hit it off; they had similar interests, watched the same television shows, listened

to the same music and enjoyed each others company. Over time their relationship blossomed, their love grew and they dreamed of walking down the aisle. Roger and Esther were able to fulfill their dream and were married in June of 1985, with the help of staff. Over the years, Roger and Esther have grown in many ways – together in their relationship, and separately as individuals. Ability Beyond

Disability has seen Roger and Esther through every step of the way, living on their own, working, and enjoying the simple pleasures of life. Roger and Esther have been married for 23 years.

Recognizing the Stars of our Workforce

A monthly supplement to our organizational newsletter Connections was unveiled in FY08. Workforce Connections focuses on our workforce and features interviews of employees from across the organization, employee anniversaries, benefits communications, employee recognition, career path opportunities and much more.

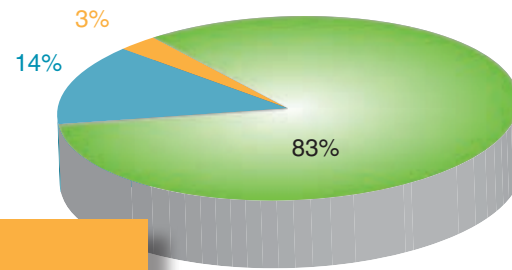
For the second year in a row our national trade association ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources) presented Direct Support Professional Awards to employees of **Ability Beyond Disability**. Our own Kim Brown was honored as Direct Support Professional of the year for 2008 for all of Connecticut. Ana Bonavita and Sarah McElhinney from New York and Darlene Farmer, Jessica Forgione and Cassandra Fowler in Connecticut were named as finalists for their respective states. This culminated with an award ceremony in their honor at the Leir Pavilion on July 23 with Board members, family members, individuals we serve, co-workers, State Representative David Cappiello and Brookfield First Selectman Robert Silvaggi.

We also continued with our on the Spot Recognition program, and added a new element to our traditional Superior Practice and Years of Service awards program. A new "Superior Team Award" was added, and the team from Ritch Drive in Ridgefield, CT were the deserving recipients.

Professional Development

In order for our employees to provide the highest quality of services to those we serve, it is essential that they continue to learn and develop professionally while working at **Ability Beyond Disability**. In fiscal year 2008 we continued to promote a culture of lifelong learning. Three of our New York employees took advantage of an opportunity to go back to school tuition free through NYSACRA's "Disability Certificate Program". **Ability Beyond Disability** partnered with the program to support the individuals who enrolled, offering a completion bonus and reimbursement for books and registration fees. To date, four more NY employees have begun the program.

An example of **Ability Beyond Disability's** commitment to being both the provider and the employer of choice is reflected in a safety initiative that we pursued in fiscal year 2008. The Central Health and Safety Committee at **Ability Beyond Disability** identified one of the top three causes of staff injuries as being behavior-related. A team was developed to come up with measurable actions and innovative methods to identify and address behavior events with the people we serve. A survey was given to direct staff to assess their knowledge base, the reporting of work related injuries was restructured, mandatory debriefing questions were asked after an incident, and our behavior analyst staff became involved in the review process. These changes have already brought positive outcomes including a reduced number of behavior related injuries, and at the second round of testing, a great improvement in the knowledge base of employees. This innovative process drew attention from other organizations and we were asked to present the history and process of the initiative at a Health Care provider forum in April of this year. As a result, our Psychologist was also invited to partner with Liberty Mutual in publishing an article for a national trade publication.



Where the dollars come from in 2008

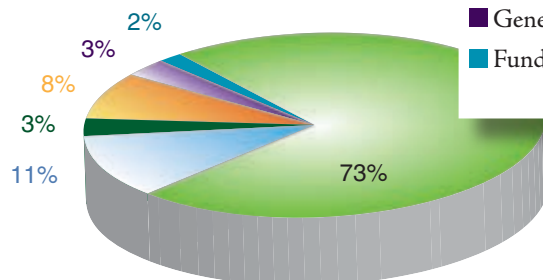
Residential Supports	39,006,099
Day and Work Services	6,409,962
Philanthropic Fundraising	1,287,117
Endowment Earnings	(157,321)
	<hr/>
	46,545,857

In order to financially position the organization to provide specialized services and implement Vision 2013, we set budget goals to minimize our losses from operations and to increase our fundraising revenue and reduce debt in 2008. These goals were accomplished and losses from operations were reduced from \$700,000 two years ago to \$220,000. Although our fundraising efforts fell short of our goal, net proceeds from fundraising were improved by nearly \$200,000.

Endowment earnings were also less than expected but due to diversification of the fund we did not fare as badly as many investors. Our loss from the Endowment was nearly \$160,000 through June 30th. In 2008 we were able to reduce our overall debt by \$1.5 million dollars consistent with our plan.

Where the dollars go

Staff Compensation and Benefits	33,832,677
Homes & Program Space Needs	5,347,682
Transportation Services	1,408,140
Client & Program Support	3,758,261
General	1,341,830
Fundraising	751,378
	<hr/>
	46,439,968



A **Ability Beyond Disability** could not be a resource for changing the lives of people with disabilities without the support that we've received from individuals and groups in the community for the past 55 years. Fiscal year 2008 reflected a commitment to **Ability Beyond Disability** and its mission by many different people in many different communities throughout Connecticut and New York.

The first event of the year was the 2007 Greater Westchester Golf Challenge, held at Waccabuc Country Club in New York. The tournament was co-chaired by Amy and Jon Harwood and brought individuals and corporations together for a great day on the course, raising funds for **Ability Beyond Disability**. The people we serve were there to greet the golfers and hand out refreshments, showing their appreciation for everyone's participation.

In October, **Ability Beyond Disability** held its very first third party fundraising initiative, October Fund Fest! October Fund Fest was created to support employment opportunities for people with disabilities, as the month of October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Many community groups along with friends, family members, and employees of **Ability Beyond Disability** got their creative juices flowing and came up with great ways to raise money for us. In total, the community helped to raise over \$21,700 for **Ability Beyond Disability**!

The Annual Meeting, also held in October, was an opportunity to thank and acknowledge all those who helped us throughout the year. Attendees were inspired by consumer stories, outstanding employers in the community and employees who go above and beyond the call of duty each and every day. The highlight of the evening was the Philanthropist of the Year Awards; given to Peter Davis of the Board of Trustees and family member Evelyn Johnston for exemplifying the spirit of giving and being an inspiration to others.

Our Annual Gala, held in April, recognized another philanthropist. **Anthony Rizzo Sr. received the Robert S. Young Humanitarian Award at the 'Rainbow Gala'**. With nearly 500 people in attendance and over \$470,000 raised, the evening stayed true to its theme as "A Prism of Possibilities". Consumer artist Jay DeVeau donated two of his paintings to the live auction and a bidding war began, eventually making a total of \$20,000 for the organization; and a sea of bidding numbers was all that was visible above the tables as people raised their hands to contribute during the "Lend-a-Hand, Fund-a-Home" portion of the evening.

In conjunction with the special events, fundraising activities for **Ability Beyond Disability** occur year-round. During fiscal year 2008 many of our supporters made outright contributions to The Annual Fund totaling in approximately \$511,000. Volunteers donated over 2,200 hours of service and the generosity of our employees continued as they gave close to \$18,000 to our Money Club; making it possible for our consumers to become socially active, expand friendships and gain a sense of belonging in their communities.





ABILITY BEYOND DISABILITY

A Resource For Changing Lives

ABILITY BEYOND DISABILITY, INC.
The Leir Pavilion
4 Berkshire Boulevard
Bethel, Connecticut 06801
(203) 775-4700

120 Kisco Avenue
Mt. Kisco, New York 10549
(914) 242-8720
Toll Free: (888) 832-8247
www.abilitybeyonddisability.org