



“Who Could Have Known”

By Katherine Pfeiffer

It's hard for me to have known
 How I would have grown
 If I hadn't shown Mike how to ride
 Showing off my girlish pride
 Hopping onto my horses' back
 Not hearing the rules to follow
 My head must have been hollow
 I tried to follow my dream
 Not knowing-
 Didn't mean
 I'd broken the seam
 If only I could have known
 The seeds I'd sown
 For the new life I'd rade
 It had been one I'd bade
 It was one I'd wanted
 But it's one that kept me haunted
 And my family daunted
 With the cure I'd needed
 It's like I'd impeded
 A life that's low
 It has made so slow
 It's like I tried to dig my own grave
 I'm trying to be brave

Katherine is currently writing a book about her experience with a traumatic brain injury. Katherine's book will discuss how she has overcome this and the dreams she has made come true such as moving into her own apartment, which she says she never thought would be possible! Katherine has even expressed an interest in riding a horse again! Katherine is a greeter at Leir and is admired by staff, visitors, and consumers for her friendliness, positive attitude, and hard work.

Safety Corner

- Submitted by the Central Health and Safety Committee

Summer Weather Safety

The summer months are upon us and can bring many safety issues due to fast moving storms and heat emergencies. The following are practices that could save lives:

1. **Never**, ever go near downed or burning power lines. Always assume that power lines are “live” (energized). Stay away from them!
2. If downed power lines come in contact with your vehicle, stay inside the vehicle. **DO NOT** attempt to exit the vehicle. Tell others not to touch it. The ground under your vehicle may be highly energized with electricity.
3. Be sure that your emergency supplies such as flashlights, portable radios and cell phones have fresh batteries and are ready to use immediately.
4. If you hear thunder, expect dangerous lightning to follow immediately. **DO NOT** stand near trees or other objects that are capable of attracting electricity. Seek safe shelter immediately.
5. **Never** leave a consumer unattended in a running van thinking they will stay cool. Consumers may get curious and engage the transmission and move the vehicle.
6. If we are experiencing a heat wave: drink plenty of water, slow down and do not perform strenuous activities. Stay in a cool environment.
7. Be sure to use the proper sunscreen when you are going out in the sun.
8. In the event of a true emergency, call 911.
9. Be sure to refer to the “What Should I do in an Emergency” document found on our computer network under Public/Health and Safety/Central Health and Safety.

August Anniversaries

Gean Ann Murphy, 25	Tricia Gillotti, 4
Donna Sario, 24	Tanya Warner, 4
Amy Desmarais, 17	Amber Jandro, 4
Daren Copeland, 16	Alejandra Luna, 4
Wilbert Perkins, 15	Timothy Plyler, 4
Suzanne Benz, 15	Jajaira Espinal, 3
Carol Bonner, 14	Lynette Fulton, 3
Marlene Mumford, 13	David Smith, 3
Steven Vance, 13	Christopher Mellers, 3
Jennifer Baskay, 12	Tracey Vater, 3
Shannon McClary, 11	Saroeun E, 3
Murban Kurlish, 10	Mary Ann Cukierski, 3
Elba Ervin, 9	Octavia Burrus, 3
Falilat Bilewu, 8	Norine Otieno, 3
Kaysiann Reynolds, 8	Tywan Marion, 3
Marcus Waters, 8	Robert Solla, 3
Jeannie Lewis, 7	Emmanuel Ebnoti, 3
Margaret Connolly, 7	Andre Gray, 3
Michelle Medeiros, 6	Dwayne Williams, 3
Margarita Soto, 6	Yetta Hyman, 2
Ana Zdonczyk, 6	Michele Hankamp, 2
Clint Zicari, 6	Kevin Chiarella, 2
Vernon Blash, 6	Robert Caiazza, 2
Yolanda Parham, 6	Pamela Szen, 2
Melba Rivera, 6	Madelyn Disla, 2
Darrien Smith, 6	Ronald Urban, 2
Kellie Lubinski, 6	Jason Schultz, 1
Chantel Malloy, 6	Sasha Brush, 1
Aimee Barnett, 5	Sara Pollock, 1
Debra Nardello, 5	Mark Swisher, 1
Seerojnie Persaud, 5	Shauntee Fountain, 1
Denise Gomez, 5	Kerzell Barnes, 1
Shayna Perkins-West, 5	Ashli-Choi Simpson, 1
Paul Wasserman, 5	Shauntia Jones, 1
Michele Pironti, 5	Stephanie Schultz, 1
Vida Aurelien, 4	Nicole Sousa, 1
Dawn Jackson, 4	Diana Dorcemus, 1



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Upcoming Events!

9/26/2011

Ability Beyond Disability Mercedes-Benz Dealer Championship Golf Tournament

Ridgewood Country Club
Danbury, CT

10/09/2011

Two For The Road

Irvington Town Hall Theatre
Irvington, NY

Please visit
www.abilitybeyonddisability.org
for more information

Elaine Proves that Age is Just A Number! *Happy Birthday Elaine!*



Elaine Smith may be the oldest consumer receiving residential services at Ability Beyond Disability but is undoubtedly one of the most active, hardworking, independent, and high-spirited. Elaine turned 85 on June 30th and on July 9th had a luau-themed birthday party at her home, Dorset!

Elaine is a sweet, good-humored person who is loved and admired by all who know her. Elaine has resided with Ability Beyond Disability since 1996 and until 2001 lived in a SIL location. Elaine is described by staff at Dorset as always having a

smile on her face and a positive attitude. Elaine still works 20 hours a week and has no plans of retiring.

For the past 15 years Elaine has worked in a vocational program through the Danbury Regional Center. Elaine's job site was formally known as "The Spice Project" where she would measure and assemble spices for a spice company. Now, the job entails collating envelopes that contain information for colleges. Elaine's job coach, Beverly Hunter, who has worked with Elaine for the past 15 years, says Elaine is a hard worker who will go above and beyond to work hard at whatever you ask her to do.

According to Hunter, Elaine will often say, "Am I doing this right? I need to make lots of money, you know." Hunter says that Elaine works very independently and diligently, and that the staff members think the world of her. **"Elaine is the epitome of anyone with a disability and how they can excel,"** she says. Elaine has many friends at work and Hunter notes that her friends and staff at the Danbury Regional Center have become her family.

On the days that Elaine does not work she attends full days at the Almost Home Day Program. Elaine is still very independent and takes the SweetHart bus to work and Almost Home.

Elaine enjoys clothes shopping and doing crossword puzzles and word searches. Staff at Dorset say that Elaine is always active and that even after having eye surgery she didn't want to lie down!

Many of Elaine's close friends and previous staff members attended her Birthday luau! Elaine had a wonderful time. She continues to live a happy, content, and successful life.



Look Who's Joined Our Team

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

Ivelisse M. Arias, LSI
Kristen L. Benzinger, LSI
DeAnna M. Butera, LSI
Christina Lynne Coelho, LSI
Melo Thomas Colon, LSI
Shonte Rynee Crowell, LSI
Laura M. DeToia, LSI
Lauren E. Fitting, LSI
Chenel Frederic, LSI
Cassandra Ann Goodfield, LSI
Ronnie T. Kee, LSI
Richard Mark Kokinchak, LSI
Verona M. McFarlane, LSI
David D. McKirdy, LSI
Kelly M. O'Connor, LSI
Renzo G. Ortega, LSI
Mirthala Rodriguez, LSI
Danielle Leslie-Russell, LSI
Matthew E. Ryan, LSI
Wendy S. Santos, LSI
Silvio Soares Jr., LSI
Sarah L. Sullivan, LSI
Jane Swiatek, LSI
Jamie E. Tarr, LSI
Erica V. Valentine, LSI
Sarah E. Wilson, 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

Fiscal Year 2011 is officially over, and we are moving full steam ahead into 2012. As we look back as an organization, 2011 proved to be a very successful year. We made great strides towards our vision and the momentum we've created is unstoppable.

A few highlights:

- We now serve 1,700 individuals, which means we exceeded our growth goals by 83 persons served!
- Our project groups delivered quality plans on time that are being incorporated into future planning.
- The HRIS (Human Resources Information System) and ECR (Electronic Consumer Record) will go live in October and the ECR (Electronic Consumer Record) implementation team has begun its work.
- We launched MyAbility – our very own intranet!
- We continued to graduate DSP's through Pathways to Excellence and launched a Mentoring & Supervision specialty program.

The 2012 budget has been set and everyone should be hearing more information about the goals of our vision and impacts of the budget via team meetings within each department. If you have any specific questions, please ask your supervisor.

Thank you for an amazing year and for your commitment to our vision and all of the people you serve each and every day!

Brian Horberg is known as "The Piano Player" Throughout Danbury

Every Monday morning an eclectic variety of music can be heard on piano throughout the lobby of Danbury Hospital's Praxair Center for Cancer. Jazz, Classical, Modern, and Gospel are among the genres being played. This music is performed by Brian Horberg, a young man who receives employment services from Ability Beyond Disability.



Brian is blind and partially deaf; he can only hear out of his left ear. This doesn't stop Brian from performing for an audience about three times a week and learning music completely by ear.

Brian has been playing piano since he was seven years old. He currently plays every Monday at The Danbury Hospital Praxair Center for Cancer and Thursdays at Bethel Health Care. Every third Thursday of the month, Brian plays at the New Fairfield Senior Center. In between, Brian also plays at Candlewood Valley Nursing Home in New Milford, Hancock Nursing Home in Danbury and The Village at Brookfield Commons. Often these venues invite Brian to perform at special events and he was recently asked to perform at the DMHAS Holiday party in December. Brian often performs at our events such as the 2011

Annual Gala and Disability Mentoring Day.

Brian is pursuing a career as a musician and says there is nothing else he would rather do than play music. Brian says that since high school he has known that he wants to be a musician and describes playing piano as his calling and passion in life. On many occasions Brian has been asked to play paid performances at Brookfield Lions Club events and at Danbury Portuguese-American Club functions. Most recently, Candlewood Valley Nursing Home invited Brian to play at both their Mother's and Father's Day Breakfast.

Brian's talents have mostly been promoted via word of mouth. Brian has business cards that he gives out when he performs at Danbury Hospital and Bethel Health Care and many people take them and spread the word to other organizations. Brian says that people have called him and asked him to perform at Birthday parties and that he is hoping to expand his performance outlets.

Brian learns new songs each week. Often, when he performs at Danbury Hospital people will ask him to play certain songs or genres. When it is a song that he doesn't already know, he will download the song, listen to it, and teach himself how to play it. Around St. Patrick's Day Brian played all Irish music and throughout holidays like Memorial Day and Fourth of July, he learns various patriotic songs.

People in the community have begun to recognize Brian for his performances. Brian says that there are many times that he has been at the bank or out to eat and someone will say, "Hey you're the piano player at the hospital!" Brian says that what he likes most about playing music for an audience is the response that people have to his music.

Brian's long term goal is to play at Carnegie Hall. Currently, he is active in getting his name out in the Danbury area, recording his music, and discovering new performance opportunities.

Visit www.youtube.com/abeyonddisability to hear Brian's performance!

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Since Ability Beyond Disability has so many great employees, there were many nominations for the “Oh My Award” this month. The Employee Appreciation Committee decided to highlight two employees for going above and beyond!

“Oh My” Employee of the Month -Lori Cadmus



Lori Cadmus, a Primary Care Nurse, received her Bachelor’s of Science degree in nursing from New York State University at Binghamton after growing up in Kingston, NY.

She and her husband, Jay, live in New Fairfield and have been married for twenty-six years.

They have three children—a

daughter who is a recent college graduate; a son who is a senior at Penn State and an eleven-year-old son in middle school. They also have a mini dachshund named Willie. Lori was a pediatric home-health nurse but felt it was time for a change, and applied to Ability Beyond Disability.

Lori said her first six months of transition felt overwhelming, but she was encouraged and buoyed by the support of her fellow nurses. She says, “I have never worked with better nurses!” In addition to her supportive peers, she loves working with the consumers and especially admires the staff at the houses and their dedication.

Many of the Professional Support staff have commented on how extremely caring Lori is; that she possesses all of the qualities of concern and commitment needed to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those she cares for.

Lori advocated for a consumer with limited insurance funding to receive testing and to be seen by a specialist for medical review. As a result of her commitment, this consumer is now being treated with the standard of care that any of us would expect for ourselves or a family member, and looks forward to a better quality of life than he might otherwise have had. Congratulations Lori! Thanks for all that you do!

BRAVO!

Some noteworthy happenings at Ability Beyond Disability

Congratulations to both **Pound Sweet** and **Beckerle**, group homes in CT for a great DDS Licensure!

“Oh My” Outstanding Service Manager -Tanya Medve



Tanya is energetic, creative, dedicated and compassionate in all aspects of her role at Ability Beyond Disability. She is always willing to help the organization and the individuals we serve. She participates on many committees within the agency such as Employee Recognition and Incident Review Committee just to name a few.

Tanya continues to teach New Hire In-services and has recently begun instructing Abuse & Neglect/Rights & Confidentiality.

She also represents Ability Beyond Disability in a professional manner by sitting on a rate study committee through DDS and her continuous involvement in the Danbury Housing Partnership. This past year Tanya was a Co-Lead for the In-Home Project team; she led the team in creating a well-written business plan.

Recently, Tanya led a team in the development of a CRS, a new DDS 24-Hour Supported Living program for two young adults starting their lives in a new apartment in Ridgefield.

Tanya’s support is endless to the individuals she serves, her colleagues and everyone at Ability Beyond Disability. Thank you Tanya for all you do everyday!



August

“Oh My” Award Nominees

Alisha Mullaney- Life Skills Instructor, Ritch Drive

Tyrone Edmond- Life Skills Instructor, Carmel

Cheryl Therrien- Life Skills Instructor, Woodland

Elesia Patten- Life Skills Instructor, Woodland

Karen Hofer- Residential Coordinator, Saw Mill & Old Hawleyville

Pascual Infante- Residential Coordinator, Cheryl Lane