

Annual Report
2003

March 8, 2004

Dear BFAIR Community:

Our agency experienced both restored stability and solid growth in 2003.

While state funding for the care of our individuals remained static for a 15th straight year, we continued to adapt, respond, and find new and innovative courses of treatment and care.

Through careful use of funds, we were able to not only significantly reduce our debt, but also reward our employees with timely bonuses.

Rich Weisenflue, our Executive Director, and his skilled and personable staff, operated an agency which should serve as a model for human service agencies to follow into the future.

Our appreciation and gratitude to all of those staff members who toiled selflessly and long and hard to develop and articulate a new Strategic Plan.

And the Board of Directors grew to ten members from across our community, and started a course of activities to bring us to greater responsive proficiency during 2004.

During this year the Board of Directors adopted a three-year Strategic Plan for the whole agency, planned an Annual Meeting for the BFAIR Corporation, and developed a program to dovetail board members with senior staff in order to help both understand and appreciate the role of the other.

As a major goal, we hope to be able to recruit and integrate an agency individual as a member of the Board during the coming year.

Our congratulations to all who made 2003 a banner year for BFAIR.



Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil C. Giroux". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Neil C. Giroux, Chair
BFAIR Board of Directors

BFAIR Board of Directors:

Attorney Neil Giroux, President
Cathy Brechner, Vice President
Thomas Pelkey, Treasurer
Melissa Adams, Clerk
Renee Tassone
Antoinette Hawke
Stephen Greenberg, MD
Eugene Messenger, DMD
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Based out of our satellite office located in Pittsfield, the Individual and Family Support Program continued to provide a wide variety of supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Services were offered to people living independently in the Pittsfield community and to families with a family member with a disability living at home. Individual support services included case management, skill development, planned and emergency respite, transportation, social/recreational opportunities, outreach and self-advocacy. In 2003 two men transitioned successfully from their family home to living semi-independently, in their own apartment, with the support of staff.

Two middle school aged children received supports through the Intensive Flexible Family Support (IFFF's) program component which enabled children up to the age of 18, at risk for out of home placement, to receive additional support services. Identified by the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) as having more pronounced needs, these children were provided an array of services including financial support to the family, increased outreach services, intensive case management and educational advocacy. By way of example, a group of young participants met weekly with staff throughout 2003 to receive assistance with homework assignments and to unwind after school.

BFAIR's relationship group met bi-weekly throughout the year. Group participants engaged in lively discussions and experienced community based activities designed to enhance their social skills. Many of the skills they acquired had a positive carry over effect in their personal lives as evidenced by improved listening skills and increased confidence and ability to maintain relationships. A DMR Carousel grant was approved enabling seven people to take advantage of gym memberships at Berkshire Community College. All seven worked out at least twice weekly and as hoped, several people continue to exercise regularly.

Through increased visibility and contacts, the number of families supported through BFAIR's Hispanic Outreach program doubled in 2003. On multiple occasions the program's bi-lingual staff provided translation services for families receiving medical services and during educational planning meetings at local public schools.

In 2003 the Parent Advisory Council, under the leadership of BFAIR's Family Advocate, provided strong support and direction to the program and to the agency as a whole. Three Council members played an integral part in the development of the agency's 2004-2006 Strategic Plan. In the spring of 2003, the Council, through its' relationship with Uniting Families for Change (UFC), co-hosted a mini-leadership series for 18 family members. The Individual and Family Support program also participated in the planning and presentation of a Family Conference which featured a keynote address by Attorney Theresa Varnet.

Examples of social and recreational opportunities which people experienced throughout the year included overnight and daytime camping trips to Windsor Lake in North Adams and bus excursions including lunch and a show at the Log Cabin Restaurant in Holyoke. Another group of children and young adults enjoyed exploring the sights at Howe Caverns in New York State. Social groups participated in community activities including the

Berkshire Museum's Festival of Trees, picnics at local parks, volunteering at the Holy Family Church, numerous dances, dining out, pool parties, game days, movies and shopping.



BFAIR's Self Advocates continued to expand their horizons. The entire group attended the MASS Annual Conference, "Leadership: Actions Speak Louder Than Words: Take a Stand, Get the Job Done", and subsequently they participated in two important rallies at the State House in Boston. Two members of

the group were selected to represent other local self-advocates at a monthly regional meeting. BFAIR's Self Advocates continue to govern themselves and make decisions with increased independence.

BFAIR's Individual and Family Support program remains committed to providing individuals with meaningful, self-directed activities. Program staff are challenged to be creative and cost effective while helping people and families reach their goals to become as independent and self determined as possible.

During 2003, Community Residential Services continued to improve the quality of supports provided to individuals in their homes. The Residential Department offered a variety of services to fifty-seven individuals, an increase of two over the prior year. Overall forty-one individuals received supports in thirteen group residences, fifteen people were supported in shared living arrangements, and two people received less than twenty hours of staff support in their apartments. On a sad note, two individuals who received residential services from BFAIR passed away in 2003 - they will be missed.



During 2003, the Residential Department continued to work closely with Elder Services and, through this collaboration, supplemental supports were offered to five people receiving shared living services. There were significant, mutually beneficial aspects to this association, especially in terms of added support for the shared living provider. The Residential Department looks forward to the continuation of this effective collaboration with Elder Services as well as other local agencies and organizations including but not limited to Hospice Services of the Berkshires, the American Red Cross and the North Adams and Adams Housing Authorities.

Many of the BFAIR's thirteen residences underwent structural and cosmetic renovations during the year including new carpeting, replacement windows, complete kitchen refurbishment, and upgraded hot water heaters and furnaces. A new handicap accessible van was purchased for the people living in Adams and the agency's maintenance person was also outfitted with a new vehicle.

As in prior years, building community connections, community membership and meaningful relationships for people receiving support was a primary focus for BFAIR's Residential Department. Examples of community involvement in 2003 include a skydiving adventure, numerous vacations, church memberships, increased family involvement, participation in regularly scheduled community events, participation in Adult Education classes at MCLA and volunteering for the local Hospice organization. A number of individually inspired vacation opportunities occurred in 2003 and examples include a week-long hike, trips to Florida, weekend getaways and trips to the Big E and Howe Caverns with overnight stays.

On a positive note recruitment and retention of direct care staff improved in 2003, adding significantly to the consistency and quality of supports. Recruitment and retention of relief staff, however, remained a challenge and as such, plans are underway to improve this aspect of staffing through the development of a Relief Coordinator position. Recruitment efforts included newspaper advertisements, attendance at local job fairs and hosting in-house job fairs. Although challenging, recruitment efforts were bolstered by offering potential employees a sign-on bonus and current employees a referral stipend. With respect to retention, increased energy was directed toward offering trainings above and beyond the core competencies - trainings designed to provide staff with additional tools to better perform their job - resulting in retention of more confident and competent direct care staff. Required training sessions were held monthly for all residential staff. In addition to the core competencies, training was provided on topics such as Team Integrity, Communication Strategies, Sensory Integration, Sexuality and Relationships, and Alzheimer's Disease. Residential staff also took advantage of numerous external training opportunities.

Looking forward, recruitment and retention of staff - in particular relief staff - will be a top priority in 2004. Emphasis will be placed on facilitating shared living arrangements for people interested in receiving residential supports via this service model. Additionally, BFAIR's Residential Department will work closely with DMR to continue to provide day supports to an increasing number of individuals for whom attending a traditional day program is not indicated due to age, advancing Alzheimer's, and/or challenging health issues. Continuing to improve the quality of services offered by the Residential Department will undoubtedly remain a constant in 2004. Challenges will include providing staff training to meet the support needs of people with Alzheimer's and related dementias, finding new and creative ways to manage increasing costs associated with supporting people as they age, managing costs associated with transportation and enhancing community membership opportunities for individuals.

In 2003 Arcadia Employment Services, BFAIR's vocational program, offered employment, training and placement services for people with disabilities in Northern and Central Berkshire County. Services included job development and placement, vocational evaluation, work adjustment training, on the job training and on-site consultation services for employers. Arcadia staff successfully supported over sixty individual's unique employment needs through a variety of models including individual placements, work enclaves, and BFAIR operated work sites. In addition, consultative services were provided to employers, supervisors, school systems, co-workers and the employee. Arcadia's commitment to promote valued community roles for individuals with disabilities through gainful employment remained the driving force of service design.

The primary referral and funding sources for Arcadia were the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and on-going partnerships with the public schools. MRC contracted with Arcadia to assess individuals utilizing vocational evaluations and work adjustment training programs designed to determine an individual's suitability for community-based employment.

In 2003, Arcadia Employment Services experienced several transitions, both programmatically and organizationally, that proved challenging and exciting. Perhaps the most significant development was the opening of the BFAIR Bottle & Can Redemption Center and Vocational Transition Center, which offered new employment and training options for people utilizing a continuum of community-based employment options and vocational training. These new endeavors are not only compatible with, but have enhanced the agency's mission and philosophy of promoting valued roles for people with disabilities and creating community partnerships.

In addition to the newly opened BFAIR Redemption Center, Arcadia continued its operation of St. Joseph's Court Restaurant as well as the Mobile Work Crew where individuals were provided opportunities to be gainfully employed while



receiving individualized structure and support. Working at St. Joe's or with the Mobile Work Crew assisted people in acquiring new vocational skills, to build self-esteem and confidence, while providing transitional work opportunities.

Throughout the year, Arcadia partnered with 10 local employers among 15 employment and training sites. Businesses working in partnership

with Arcadia to provide employment opportunities included Jiminy Peak, the Golden Eagle Restaurant, North Adams Housing Authority, Pittsfield Veterinary Hospital/Pet Resort, Brannings Restaurant, Skyline County

Club, TJ Maxx, Stop & Shop, the Big Y, Melbourne Place and Mass MOCA. A total of thirteen new employment situations encompassing three new sites were developed in the year 2003.

To ensure the delivery of quality vocational services, Arcadia Employment Services established several priorities for 2004. Departmental objectives include the continued development of a structured Vocational Transition program, marketing and business development for the Redemption Center, staff development through training at staff meetings and attendance at relevant workshops and conferences. Additional priorities for Arcadia staff will include extensive job development efforts based on individual needs and career plans and enhanced communication with families through regular contact and informational meetings. Arcadia staff look forward to offering individualized, flexible and responsive employment services for people with disabilities.

During 2003, BFAIR's Day Habilitation Center provided multi-faceted day services to 23 participants while undergoing a number of exciting changes. The planning, development and implementation of a new program model involving educational modules designed to enhance social and life skills in a traditional, rotating classroom style, proved very effective and was a welcome change for individuals and staff as well. Skill development areas/modules include culinary arts, gross and fine motor activities, expressive therapy and life skills. Staff investment in the success of the model was high due in large part to their assigned responsibilities in specific specialty areas and input into everything from classroom design to area specific research and curriculum development. Aesthetically, the program's skill rooms, kitchen and hallways were painted in soothing colors and new furniture for the kitchen was obtained resulting in a more relaxed ambiance. Additionally, an open house featuring each individual's craftwork was held in 2003, and because it was well received by the many attendees, it is now an annual event.

Over the course of the year the Center's Director, in conjunction with the Occupational Therapist, enhanced the new sensory integration and processing program component. Six individuals were offered new "sensory diets" designed to facilitate their interaction with sensory input. A sensory diet assists the person to be more relaxed in their environment thereby allowing them greater ability to focus. The Center's new sensory room offers a quiet atmosphere with relaxing music and is the optimal place for people to practice relaxation skills, receive a foot massage or to look at the black light objects positioned about the room. The sensory room has been a remarkably proactive, therapeutic addition to the Day Habilitation program.

Throughout 2003, community volunteers as well as artisans presented a variety of activities at the program including tap and jazz dancing, folk music, danskenetics, and line dancing and all proved very beneficial - not only for the people served at the program but for the volunteers as well. All of the activities were participatory and many offered a therapeutic benefit through movement and gross motor activity.

Volunteerism expanded significantly in 2003 adding to existing projects such as Adopt-a-Site, cleaning the UCP (United Cerebral Palsy) office, grocery shopping for the elderly through the Adams Council on Aging and making craft items for the Downtown Days celebration. A total of nine new volunteer initiatives were introduced including baking bread and desserts weekly for the community luncheon at the First Congregational Church, assembling Easter baskets and candy for residents of the Louison House, volunteering at the Arlo Guthrie Center, a pen pal project, making and delivering craft items for local nursing home residents, helping to make Christmas wreaths at North Adams Regional Hospital, toner and ink recycling and making floral arrangements for local nursing homes.

Community based activities also grew in number and variety during the year. People enjoyed trips to the Adams Senior Center, Bennington Deer Park, the Freight Yard Museum, North Adams Public Library, Catskill Game Farm, the Butterfly Sanctuary, Yankee Candle Factory, Willow Park, Berkshire Museum Festival of Trees, a local llama farm, Greylock Glen, Mount Greylock, Whitney's Farm Stand, Natural Bridge State Park, and West Mountain Farm to name a few.

Over the course of the past year the Day Habilitation Center was fortunate to have been able to recruit several promising new employees. All staff were offered in excess of forty-five training opportunities including values and sensitivity, communication, van safety, dining assistance, medically related topics, lifting and transfer techniques and emergency procedures. Additionally, a number of external workshops and professional development opportunities were taken advantage of by staff and they included Situational Advocacy, Sensitivity Training, Applied Non-Violence, Fire Safety, Community Integration Strategies and Alzheimer's disease.



In 2004 the Day Habilitation Center staff look forward to offering people a wider variety of community volunteer opportunities, an expanded sensory integration program/sensory stimulation room and an enhanced, person-centered, curriculum.

Several Administrative initiatives undertaken in 2002 continued in 2003 and a few more were begun. The Data Review Process - a quality assurance process specific to people's Individual Support Plans (ISP) goals - was honed considerably resulting in a more user-friendly system and an effective mechanism to ensure follow-up and

consistency. Preliminary results of this peer review process have been very promising and include more individualized, person driven and measurable goals for people receiving services.

The Incident Review Committee continued to review all reported incidents considered critical in nature (e.g. hospitalizations; significant incidents which occurred in the community; etc). Efforts were underway in 2003 to further analyze the data being captured in an effort to produce more pertinent, hence more valuable, reports that will further enable administrators to identify trends, human rights concerns, safety concerns and regulatory compliance.

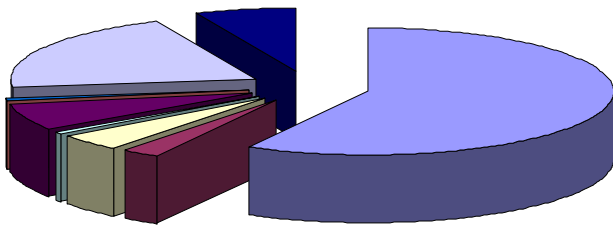
BFAIR's Human Rights Committee continued work in 2003 meeting regularly with a full compliment of DMR mandated, discipline specific members. This past year the committee visited all BFAIR locations and reviewed all Level II behavior programs, complaints and investigations, restraint reports, restrictive interventions and psychotropic medication treatment plans. Human Rights Officers participated in the internal Human Rights Officer quarterly networking meeting. The hard work and dedication of the Human Rights Committee members and the Human Rights Officers is critical to providing quality services and protecting people's human and civil rights. Their dedication to this critical area is very much appreciated.

In addition to the above, BFAIR placed concerted effort into staff training and professional development. The Training Committee was formed in 2003 and began work on defining a multifaceted, structured, organizational approach to professional development requirements. Work in this area included the identification of all trainings and professional development opportunities available both internally and externally and what employees - given their role within the organization - will be expected to complete at different benchmarks during their tenure. Looking forward, completion of a schedule of required trainings will ultimately be tied to opportunities for internal promotion. Additionally, the committee developed and operationalized a process which captures written feedback from all employees who attend external workshops and conferences. Written feedback, as well as any literature gathered at the training, is now housed in one place as resource for all staff. Feedback is also shared verbally with management, every month, in the Management Forum.

The formation of the Relationships and Sexuality Committee allowed the agency to explore the development of policies and procedures that will better enable staff to support people in the area of relationships and sexuality. Many middle and senior level management staff attended a three-day conference focusing on a myriad of topics from how to be a good friend, to assessing someone's ability to give consent. Although this subject area can be a difficult topic to tackle organizationally, it is important and exciting work which ultimately will benefit the people receiving services, their families, friends and BFAIR staff.

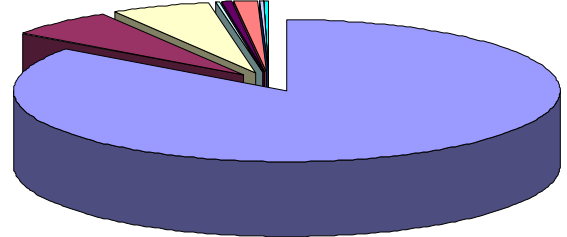
Lastly, on March 7, 2003, BFAIR underwent its fifth Survey & Certification with the Department of Mental Retardation. The review resulted in the agency receiving a Two Year level of Certification effective through March 7, 2005. DMR Surveyor's reported that the agency demonstrated significant progress over the past year, noted improvements in service delivery and most importantly, positive outcomes for the individuals supported by BFAIR.

2003 Expenses



- 58.12% Employee Payroll
- 2.41% Individual's Served Payroll
- 4.48% Payroll Taxes
- 0.47% Unemployment
- 6.62% Employee Health Insurance
- 0.04% Long Term Disability Insurance
- 1.01% Workers' Compensation Insurance
- 20.14% Program Support
- 6.71% Facilities

2003 Revenue



- 84.88% Department of Mental Retardation
- 6.61% Division of Medical Assistance
- 5.81% Residential Charges For Care
- 0.19% Mass Rehabilitation Commission
- 0.47% Department of Education
- 1.58% Outside Sales & Services
- 0.01% Donations
- 0.11% Other Misc Revenue
- 0.08% Rental Income
- 0.10% Interest Income
- 0.01% Fundraising Income
- 0.15% Bottle & Can Redemption Center



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