



BFAIR Buzz

Volume 1: Summer 2003

Newsletter of Berkshire Family And Individual Resources

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BFAIR Redemption & Arcadia Transition Centers Open...

Arcadia Employment's commitment to building community partnerships is being demonstrated through recent developments which include a bottle-and-can Redemption Center and Transitional vocational program for individual's receiving support. This new opportunity, which is located on the Curran Highway in North Adams, in the same building that currently houses the BFAIR Day Habilitation Center, will include a business and vocational training endeavor for individuals who receive services through BFAIR. The Redemption Center will serve as an employment opportunity for individuals while also responding to the recycling needs of the Northern Berkshire community.

The Transitional Support Program is linked to both the BFAIR Day Habilitation Center and the Redemption Center and provides a unique opportunity for individuals to pass through a continuum of vocational services. The transitional center is designed for people who, for different reasons, would



Ribbon cutting ceremony at the Redemption Center Grand Opening on August 15th.

benefit most from splitting their day and/or week between part-time paid employment and in-house subcontracted work and/or volunteerism or educational activities. Arcadia Employment is excited about both of these endeavors and the new opportunities they will provide. Please stop down with your redeemable bottles and cans to check it out!!

For the fourth consecutive year Arcadia Employment will be operating the "Snack Attack" concession stand located at Windsor Lake. Snack Attack will serve a variety of food items that will add to your summertime fun including hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, candy, ice cream, and soda. Hours of operation are seven days a week from 11 am until 6 pm. We look for your continued patronage and support this

summer!

Job development is an ongoing agency wide practice. Please bring any job opportunities for the individuals we serve to the attention of Kristine Fierro 664-4911 x 21.

No job too small—Arcadia's Mobile Work Crew is available this summer to meet your lawn care needs, as well as any residential moving, delivery or errands and other odd jobs.



Joe at the new Arcadia Transition Center

Clarice Bourdon

- September 20, 1929 to June 25, 2003

Clarice was kind, soft spoken
and helpful - always seeing
the best in others...



BFAIR Hits Boston

Family Resources sponsored a bus trip to Boston to rally at the State House against the Governor's budget vetoes. Many staff, individuals and families representing BFAIR attended this event that was held on Tuesday July 1st.

During our visit, we took part in a demonstration on the front steps of the State House. During this time, Marilyn Lysobey, Program Director, was asked to speak about the budget cuts that have effected Family Supports of Western Mass. Marilyn rose to the occasion as did Freida Johnson, Michael O'Donnell, Bill Fuller and Laura Barnes, letting it be known that "We're not going to take it anymore!" After a forty-five minute rally on the steps of the State House, the group



was invited to meet with their State Representative to continue to advocate against proposed the budget cuts. We not only enjoyed great weather, we participated in a meaningful cause, and all in all it was a SUCCESS!

Family and Individual Support Program

The Family and Individual Support Program is based in BFAIR's Satellite Office located at 74 North Street/Suite 406, Pittsfield. The program offers a variety of community based supports and helps provide access for individuals to programs, activities and cultural events offered in the Berkshires. Individuals and staff are looking forward to the celebration of Lee Days this summer, the Barrington stage production of "Once Upon a Mattress" and concerts in the park.



Recently, numerous individuals and staff took part in Downtown Inc.'s Corporate Cleanup. Inspired by last year's success, the BFAIR group swept the sidewalks in front of 74 North Street and planted daisies, impatiens, and pansies in two of the large concrete planters on the block. Thanks to everyone's beautiful smiles and our handsome sage green BFAIR tee-shirts, the team won the "Best Dressed Team Award". On many occasions the Saturday Social Club was forced to amended their outdoor plans this spring due to inclement weather; however they enjoyed many indoor recreational



opportunities including engaging in their exercise regimes at BCC's field house.

Several individuals requested a trip to the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. Two staff stepped to the plate, borrowed a van for the excursion, collected Big Y silver coins, exchanged them for discounted admission tickets and headed East on the Mass Pike on a Friday afternoon. From all reports that day, the Hall of Fame is a fun place to visit, there are many hands-on exhibits to hold one's interest and visitors can have a great time even if they don't follow the sport of basketball.

The Self-Advocacy group, inspired by last year's trip to Buffalo, New York for a National Self-Advocacy Conference, continues to thrive. On June 24th the group hosted an end-of-the-year celebration picnic before taking a summer hiatus. The group invited other area self-advocacy groups to join them for a bit of fun and networking.

The excitement of the individuals, varied interests and willingness to try new things and go different places keeps things hopping and anything but boring. Looking forward, summer camping trips are back by popular demand. Stay tuned!

Building Community Connections

As announced in the North Adams Transcript on April 24, 2003 the staff and individuals at the Day Habilitation Center helped make Easter more festive for families temporarily living at the Louison House in Adams. Abundantly filled Easter baskets were assembled and delivered by individuals the Friday before Easter. The gifts were well received by the Louison House residents and the people who volunteered for this project were graciously invited to return for a picnic in the summer.



Other volunteer ventures carried out by individuals at the Day Habilitation Center include "Adopt a Site" clean up, shopping for people who are elderly through the Council on Aging and helping out at the United Cerebral Palsy office. New projects recently developed include baking bread and goodies for the weekly lunch at the First Congregational Church and a pen pal project. Additionally, on April 30 a small group of people made a beautiful fresh fruit salad and cookies for the weekly community lunch at the Arlo Guthrie Center in Great Barrington. All of the people who went to this community luncheon from the Day Habilitation Center were warmly welcomed and thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, which also included a harp performance. The Arlo Guthrie Center and Foundation were founded in 1991 as a means of bringing people together through service to the community and to facilitate cultural and educational exchange.

In keeping with the philosophy and mission of Berkshire Family and Individual Resources, a primary focus of the Day Habilitation Center is to actively promote community involvement and connections. We will continue to develop new and creative options for people to make contributions to their community and to gain recognition for their accomplishments.

Happenings at the Day Habilitation Center

The Day Habilitation Center has become the newest hot-spot for entertainment and presenters. The Center has many exciting things happening in the upcoming months. Planned activities include picnics, dancing, bowling, entertainers and hopefully karaoke! Over the past few months individuals attending the Center have welcomed many local performers and have shown their enthusiastic support for the entertainers by dancing and singing along.

For example, in July a danskinetics instructor engaged the group in a vibrant, free-form movement class. This instructor was part of a program at the Storefront Artist Studio Complex in Pittsfield where they recently held a program called "Homing In" to benefit the Berkshire Emergency Fund for Homeless Children. For entertainment this August, Center staff are diligently working to book an entertainer to provide karaoke for all individuals. This will provide a chance for everyone to get up, stretch their vocal chords and sing! Regularly occurring events during the summer months include picnics at local parks and dances at Brannings Restaurant.

Dates for exciting events at the Center will be posted and letters sent home to families to announce these up-and-coming functions. Staff and individuals are enthusiastically looking forward to expansion of these ventures. The Day Hab Center plans to expand the variety



of entertainers and activities by collaborating with other local agencies in an effort to provide fun and exciting days for all! If anyone is interested in any of the above activities please feel free to call (413) 664-6693.



South Mountain Grille Rocks!

On Thursday, June 19th, individuals, family members, staff and friends enjoyed an evening of merriment. For the past six years, the Family Advisory Council has hosted an annual dinner dance. Nearly seventy people attended this year's rendition hosted by the South Mountain Grille and relished the hors d'oeuvres, delicious buffet dinner and two hours of dancing with their favorite DJ, Barry St Peter.

After dinner and before the start of the music, guests participated in a "get acquainted game" and raffling of door prizes, consisting of dry floral arrangements in hand decorated urns, made in advance of the celebration by the Saturday Social Group.

Usually the event includes the presentation of awards to individuals in attendance; however staff later learned that at the suggestion of one clever individual, the tables were turned, and they found themselves on the receiving end! Instead of each individual receiving recognition, this year they presented each and every staff member with a certificate reflecting their particular talent.

This much anticipated, semi-formal party, has grown in numbers each and every year. Planning for each dinner dance starts early and program staff have already received some suggestions for next year's social event. Rumors are afloat that something special is planned for next year, we will just have to wait and see.

It's Camping Season Again!

It is summer once again and the warmer weather is finally upon us. The agency's pop-up camper will be conveniently located to help all interested individuals experience the great outdoors! The camper will be set-up at Historic Valley Campground, at Windsor Lake in North Adams from July 7 – September 7. The cost is \$5.00 per individual per night. The campground offers many activities for outdoor recreation while you visit including a lake beach with lifeguards, hiking trails, boating and fishing, row boat and canoe rentals, an arcade and scheduled special events. Anyone interested in spending a few days camping in the beautiful Berkshires please contact Jen Gelinis at 664-9382 ext. 23.

2003 Special Olympics Massachusetts Summer Games



On Friday, June 13, 2003 sixteen athletes, coaches, and chaperones from BFAIR boarded the bus to Boston for the annual Special Olympics Summer Games. Athletes included Doug, Joanne, Bill, David, Jeffery, Celia, Betsy, John, and Cathy. The three days surrounding the events were packed with fun, competition and medals, medals, medals! On Friday, upon arrival in Boston, the group participated in Opening Ceremonies which included a very interesting visual and musical performance provided by the Blue Man Group. After a good night's sleep in Boston University's dormitories, it was off to the Games held at Harvard University on Saturday. The athletes competed in the Softball Throw and for their efforts, garnered either gold, silver or bronze. After checking out Olympic Town



and purchasing souvenirs, it was back to BU to recuperate before taking a trip on the T into downtown Boston for supper. On Sunday the athletes competed in the 100 meter dash, 100 meter walk, and the 50 meter walk. The BFAIR-sponsored athletes

stood up well to the competition, placing either 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th in the track events. With a bit of energy in reserve, the group headed back downtown and were treated to a trolley ride around Beantown. The athletes observed famous places such as the site of the Boston Tea Party, the Freedom Trail, the Boston Aquarium, and the Capitol building. After a long day of competition and sight-seeing the weary group boarded the bus back home to North Adams. Congratulations to all the athletes participating in the Games and we look forward to you bringing home the gold next year too! Well done!



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Place
Postage
Here

May Day Rally

On Thursday May 1st, several self-advocates and a group of individuals and staff from the Day Habilitation Center joined other concerned citizens on the Square in Pittsfield. Their goal was to raise the awareness of passersby and draw attention to the issues they face as individuals who receive services. All of those who attended, including those who have personally experienced a loss or decrease in services due to budget cuts, held signs advocating against further decreases in funding. It was a compelling afternoon for all who attended.

One week later, another group representing individuals with disabilities and BFAIR attended a similar rally in Springfield. Staff members of the many state provider agencies and individuals receiving supports addressed the large crowd that gathered in support of putting an end to continued budget cuts. It was an emotional and compelling event for all.

In the future BFAIR will continue to support self-advocacy and agency representation at public events which impact legislative activity and those which promote community awareness of issues affecting the lives of people with disabilities.

