



Summer 2004
Volume II: Edition II

BFAIR Buzz

Newsletter of Berkshire Family And Individual Resources, Inc.

*Letter from the
Director*

Pg 2

*Remembering
Richard*

Pg 3

*CARF
Accreditation*

Pg 3

*Annual Meeting
Continued*

Pg 4,5

Residential Life

Pg 6

Residential Life

Pg 7

*Camping & The
Great Spring
Tune-Up*

Pg 8



State Representative Daniel Bosley (D), Attorney C.J. Gagne and DMR's BAO Director Rick Huntington were among the many welcomed guests.

BFAIR held its first Annual Meeting on April 23rd at the Bounti-Fair Restaurant in Adams, Ma. Approximately 85 people attended the breakfast meeting. Those in attendance included Representative Daniel P. Bosley (D-North Adams), Teresa O'Hare, Regional Director of the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR), Rick Huntington, Berkshire Area Director and other staff members of DMR, members of the community, individuals receiving services, and BFAIR staff mem-

bers. The event was hosted by BFAIR's Board of Directors and sponsored in part by brewhaha!, Atef Fine Jewelers, and Berkshire Bank.

C.J. Gange, Esq., Assistant General Counselor, DMR Central/West Region gave the keynote address "Health Care Proxies Trumping Rogers Orders?"; speaking on the new and developing trend to use Health Care Proxies to facilitate treatment on behalf of the developmentally disabled, instead of relying on Court intervention with guardians.

Neil Giroux, a North Adams attorney and BFAIR Board Chair, introduced the 10 Board Members, and Rich Weisenflue, BFAIR Executive Director, presented more than 30 awards and recognition to staff and individuals. Awards given include the George C. Crosby Award, the Armand Quintal Award, the Self-Determination Award, Employer of the Year Award and years of service recognitions.

Larry Stalvey, Outreach Worker II, was awarded the Armand Quintal Award. This award is presented annually in memory of Armand Quintal, a former BFAIR staff member who went above and beyond in the area of Human Rights. In turn the award is given to a staff member who is recognized for advocating for, and protecting the rights of persons served while assisting the individuals supported in exercising their rights. Mr. Stalvey was recognized for his continued efforts with BFAIR's self-advocacy group in assisting individuals to be effective self-advocates and self-governed.



Shawn Murray receiving the Self-Determination Award from Board President Attorney Neil Giroux

John Silvano, Homelife Support Counselor, was recognized as the 2003 recipient of the George C. Crosby Award. George C. Crosby, a long-

*See Annual Meeting
on page 4...*

A Message from the Executive Director



BFAIR's Annual Meeting was hosted by our Board of Director's during the early morning hours on April 23rd. Staff recognition awards highlighted the event as over 30 staff received awards for their years of service. Several special awards were presented including the Armand Quintal Award, a Business Partner Award and the very special Self-Determination Award. An interesting question and answer period followed a terrific keynote address provided by Cynthia J. Gagne, Esquire a staff member of the Department of Mental Retardation.

Congratulations are extended to the staff of our Day Habilitation program for their efforts which helped the program and organization receive a three-year national accreditation from CARF, the nation's premier agency evaluating and accrediting rehabilitative facilities. A three year certification was awarded by CARF for Community Services: Personal and Social Services. The level of certification clearly demonstrates that our Day Habilitation program shows substantial fulfillment of the CARF standards and its services are designed

and implemented for the benefit of people served.

Over the past few months Arcadia Employment Services new leadership team have seen the dividends of their efforts realized. Individuals receiving vocational services have been presented with additional employment options with local employers such as Side by Side and the Pittsfield YMCA. Individuals working at the Transition Center have been busy of late performing small assembly tasks and last but not least, individuals and staff working at BFAIR's Redemption Center deserve considerable praise for their efforts processing over one million cans and bottles over the past year!

All of the above notwithstanding, there is additional excitement in the air at BFAIR as the agency prepares for the launching of a new service designed to meet the needs of children and adolescents diagnosed with autism, developmental disabilities and emotional/behavioral needs. We have seen the number of diagnosed cases of Autism and related pervasive developmental disorders significantly increase over the past ten years and according to area educators and parents of children with autism and developmental disabilities there is a critical lack of specialized programs delivering much needed in-school and in-home specialized clinical supports. Beginning this fall, BFAIR's new Children and Family Services Division will offer intensive one-to-one clinical supports designed to further the student's academic and development progress.

On a particularly sad note, this edition of the BFAIR Buzz is dedicated to the memory of Richard Collenburg. A resident of Elm Street, Richard will be fondly remembered for many things, not the least of which being his devout support of the Boston Red Sox. In special tribute to Richard and two former residents, staff have arranged for three plantings on the grounds of 37-39 Elm Street. Thank you once again to the Elm Street staff who merit recognition for the care they provided to Richard during his illness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Weisenflue". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rich Weisenflue, Executive Director

Dedication

Richard Collenburg

October 15, 1949 – May 15, 2004



Richard was a man with many talents. He could crack a joke, make you laugh or just say “Hi Buddy” with a smile that would melt your heart. Richard was very thoughtful and caring of others. He would be the first to help out or ask if he could do something. Richard enjoyed sports, especially the hometown teams such as the Boston Red Sox, New England Patriots and Boston Bruins. He liked to shoot hoops in the backyard. He was also a fan of wrestling and would many times imitate his favorite wrestler, Macho Man, with the line “Oh Yeah!” If others laughed or showed appreciation, he would do it all the more! Richard also loved country music and would sing and dance with others. Richard loved to bake cookies and cakes. The most memorable thing about Richard was his love for life, family and friends. He enjoyed everything he did and everyone he met.

The staff at Elm Street, who consider themselves as Richard’s second family, all miss his smile, the jokes and the dancing! Richard is sadly missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew him.

CARF Accreditation

On April 19th and 20th, the BFAIR Day Habilitation Center underwent a 2-day accreditation process with CARF (The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). During this two-day period, two surveyors representing two other human service agencies spent time at both the Day Habilitation Center and main office at 85 Main St. to evaluate services based on current CARF standards. Areas looked at included business practices, leadership, accessibility, rights, health and safety and individual centered service delivery.

On May 25th, after great anticipation, BFAIR was awarded a three year accreditation in the area of Community Services: Personal and Social Services. The survey report commended BFAIR in several areas including leadership, fiscal management, rights, safety practices, satisfaction with services (e.g. families, individuals supported and funders), and clinical services. In particular, the Day Habilitation Center staff were recognized as creative and dedicated and the report acknowledged the presence of active treatment and community integration.



Annual Meeting



Terry O'Hare, DMR Regional Director

most recent accomplishment, skydiving, has caused many around him to consider their own personal goals and to set their sites high.

North Adams Big Y Supermarket was presented with the Employer of the Year award. This award is given in recognition of a local employer who partners with BFAIR's vocational division, Arcadia Employment, in employing individuals with disabilities. North Adams Big Y has many years of partnership with Arcadia Employment Services.

time BFAIR staff member, is remembered for his deep commitment to community service and advocacy for people with developmental disabilities. The award is presented annually to a staff member who exemplifies these values. Mr. Silvano was given the award in recognition of his continued efforts to assist an individual in fulfilling adventurous dreams. This award was originally presented at BFAIR's annual holiday party, however it will from here forward become part of the Annual Meeting.

The Self-Determination Award was presented to Shawn Murray. This award is presented to an individual receiving support who demonstrates self-determination and advocacy. The individual receiving this award has reached or fulfilled a dream or has overcome a significant hurdle in their life. Mr. Murray received this award for his demonstrated growth over the last year, setting goals for himself and then working very hard to achieve them. His



Big Y staff with Robert Satori, Neil Giroux and Rich Weisenflue



Attorney C.J. Gagne - Keynote Speaker, Attorney Neil Giroux - BFAIR Board President and Dr. Carlos Carrera of the Brien Center



Larry Stalvey - Armand Quintal Award Recipient with BFAIR Board President Neil Giroux and BFAIR Executive Director Rich Weisenflue

Annual Meeting

Years of Service Recognition Awards were given to staff in honor of 15 years, 10 years and 5 years of service to BFAIR.

15-Year Service Awards were given to John Arasimowicz, Michelle Crockwell, Tom Gwinell and Gail Labonte. 10-Year Service Awards were awarded to Steve Casuscelli, Steve Conlon, Jen Hoag, Shirley Martin, Gloria Piner and Donna Rinaldi. Recipients of the 5-Year Service Awards were Richard Bostwick, Theresa Biagini, Terry Cardinal, William Clermont, Sue Darling, Liz Figueroa, Jen Gelinas, Pat Goodell, George Gyan, Maren Jacobs, Dawn Kelton, Gayle LaPine, Jen Lesnick, Laurie Mundy, Marilyn Lysobey, Kris Neep, Kathy Phillips, Jackie Thomas and Nancy Torres.



15 Years of Service Recipients



10 Years of Service Recipients



*BFAIR Board President Attorney Neil Giroux with State Representative Daniel Bosley (D)
Background: BFAIR Board Treasurer Thomas Pelkey*



5 Years of Service Recipients

Family Supports

Downtown Pittsfield Clean-up



On a very windy Friday in May a dozen individuals and staff from the Pittsfield BFAIR office participated in the annual Downtown Corporate Cleanup of North Street. Decked out in our sage green BFAIR shirts, crazy headgear, neckties and shiny green leis BFAIR was one of many colorful teams.

The BFAIR team made posters for the occasion that read “BFAIR ROCKS” and “It’s a Clean Sweep with BFAIR”. Each member of the team had matching balloon and ribbon bedecked brooms. Although the BFAIR team did not win a prize this year, they had a good time and we were instrumental in helping Pittsfield gear up for its Sheeptacular Summer.

Birthday Bash



Each year BFAIR’s Individual and Family Support Program celebrates participant’s birthdays at one big birthday party. Saturday, May 17th, was the date of this year’s bash and over fifty people joined in the celebration. Celebrants were entertained

by a clown and the magic of John Nesbit. During John’s performance the audience held their breath while Oliver was sawed in half and Liz was levitated. Pam Betz, Coordinator, led the group in several exercises using a colorful parachute as well.

A beautifully decorated and delicious cake was enjoyed by all bringing the celebration to a close.



Open House

The Family Advisory Committee hosted two Open Houses; one at the North Adams office in April, and one at the Pittsfield office in June. The meetings were designed to educate family members on the role of BFAIR's Family Advisory Committee and to encourage new membership. It was also hoped that the Family Advisory Board would become more diverse and representative of families of individuals served by the agency.

A special thank you to all who gave up an evening to attend and to those who helped to make them successful. The evenings sparked interest and several new members joined the advisory committee.

The meetings were skillfully chaired by Maren Jacobs, a long time active participant and parent of an adult daughter who receives supports from BFAIR's Family Support Program. A brief video made for parents and by parents was viewed and a discussion followed regarding the Family Advisory Committee's accomplishments. Over refreshments, committee members and prospective families focused on what training areas are still needed and discussed that an Advisory Board can be of help to the agency by providing input into programs, while also offering a mechanism for meaningful dialogue between the agency and families.

Residential Life.....



As the late morning clouds cleared away, family and friends began to arrive at Elm Street to help Gladys Connors and Donald King celebrate their 60th and 75th (respectively) birthdays. Approximately 40

people came throughout the afternoon to partake in the festivities of food, and more food, laughter, friendly conversation, the opening of presents and sharing of birthday cake. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon of fun and sun, and Gladys and Donald appreciated the festivities held in their honor! Many thanks to Teresa McBee and all the Elm Street staff who planned and hosted the party!



BFAIR, INC.
85 Main Street - Suite 200
North Adams, MA 01247

Place
Postage
Here

Newsletter Committee:

Susan L. Brown

Rich Weisenflue

Mary Valachovic

Marilyn Lysobey

Theresa Biagini

Kristine Fiero

Kristen Bercury

Becky Aulisio

Other Contributors:

Teresa McBee

Deb DiDonna

Camping Season Is Here Again

Camping season has begun and the BFAIR camper is once again set up at Windsor Lake in North Adams for use by individuals accompanied by staff. The cost is \$10.00 an evening per individual, staff are free. At present, most days are open. The camper comes with a stove and electric hookups. Anyone using the camper must bring their own pillows, blankets, flashlights, chairs, food, etc.

To find out more and to schedule use of the camper, call Julie Weatherby at 413.664.9382 ex. 11.

Great Spring Tune-Up

A BFAIR team of 40 staff, family and individuals participated in the Great Spring Tune-Up. This event was sponsored by the REACH Community Health Foundation of Northern Berkshire Health Systems. Each participant received a free pedometer, t-shirt and information on healthy eating. On a daily basis, participants log their number of steps walked and the servings of fruits and vegetables eaten. BFAIR participants names were entered into a weekly drawing to win prizes in support of their efforts.

*For comments, suggestions, articles or other information please contact
Susan L. Brown at 413.664.9382 x24 or sbrown@bfair.org*