



BFAIR Buzz

Fall 2004
Volume II: Edition III

Newsletter of Berkshire Family And Individual Resources, Inc.

Letter from the Director

Pg 2

Remembering Richard

Pg 3

Mayor's Celebration

Pg 3

Family Supports

Pg 4

Employee Appreciation

Pg 6

Shared Living & Residential Life

Pg 7

Fall Foliage Parade

Pg 8

BFAIR Launches New Children and Adolescent Services

After much preparation and anticipation BFAIR is now offering clinical, consultative services for children and adolescents in Northern and Central Berkshire County and Southern Vermont.

In early 2004, agency representatives attended a meeting facilitated by the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition focusing on residential services for children in crisis. State agencies as well as private organizations were present. It was made clear throughout the meeting that there is a critical service need for children with cognitive and/or emotional disabilities. It was identified that a high number of children have been placed out of their



Children enjoying the BFAIR activities at the Northern Berkshire United Way Children's Fair

home communities into specialized, residential treatment facilities due to insufficient local services and expertise - and the cost of out-placement is exorbitant. The need for preventative, cost-effective efforts - including clinical supports delivered in the classroom and in the home - was plainly evident.

As a result BFAIR began a more in-depth market analysis which, among other efforts, included a needs survey conducted in August, 2004. The sur-

vey was designed to solicit from local schools (teachers and administrators) and pediatricians unmet needs in the area of clinical sup-

ports for children with disabilities. The response to the survey, in addition to interviews and best-practice information gathering initiatives, confirmed all edu-



One participant enjoys a face painting

cated assumptions - the need for additional services for children is profound and pervasive.

Armed with this information, in late summer 2004 BFAIR launched the Children and Adolescent Services Program. This program is designed to serve



The BFAIR table launching Children and Adolescent Services

See "Children and Adolescent Services" on Page 5

A Message from the Executive Director

As we strive as an agency to become fully participating members of the communities in which we offer services, I am continually impressed by the number of community-based activities which we engage in during any given period.

While not an exhaustive list, over the past few months the agency has participated in or joined in hosting the following events:

- A Latino Festival co-sponsored with Ad-Lib celebrating the cultural diversity of Berkshire County.
- The North Adams Mayor's Downtown Celebration.
- The Northern Berkshire United Way's annual Children's Fair.
- The annual North Adams Fall Foliage Parade – BFAIR's Board of Directors and staff volunteered to plan and host a concession stand on parade day.
- The annual Special Olympics Fundraiser held at Eastover – A team of ten or more BFAIR employees joined together to raise over \$1000.00 for Special Olympics and in the process went captured a Bronze medal in this friendly competition.
- Chamber Of Commerce nights held at various local businesses.



Participation in these and similar events is always enjoyable and provide an opportunity for the agency to take part in and give back to the community. Each event requires considerable planning, and without fail, a commitment of considerable time and energy on behalf of our staff and in the case of our most recent endeavor, our Board of Directors.

These special events often take place after hours, or on weekends and without fail there are always employees willing to help make each a success. The agency is fortunate to have opportunities participate in the community, but perhaps even more so, to have employees committed to our mission of "building community partners."

Our 2nd Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic was held on a beautiful summer day at Windsor Lake. A barbecue lunch was prepared and served quite capably by our Senior Management Team. This well-attended event offered Senior Staff and members of BFAIR's Board of Directors an opportunity to thank employees for their contributions to the on-going success of the agency.

Fortunately members of our Legislature also recognize the efforts of human service workers like those honored at our picnic. Earlier this year, members of the House and Senate overrode Governor Romney's veto of the salary reserve and in doing so assured that 20 million dollars will find its way into the wages of Direct Care Workers. Please take a moment and thank your representatives for passing the first cost of living adjustment in three years.

Finally, time is quickly approaching to renew our commitment to support the Northern Berkshire United Way's Annual Campaign. Over the past two years, employee contributions have helped the BFAIR achieve Bronze status. It is my hope this year we will improve upon that status by supporting the campaign and the NBUW's famous Chicken Dinner. Information on BFAIR's campaign and how to participate will be announced shortly.

Sincerely

Rich Weisenflue, Executive Director

Dedication

Richard “Richie” Furber

October 15, 1947 - October 5, 2004

Richard was a fun-loving, very affectionate man. You knew he liked you if he put your hand on his head for you to rub. One of Richard’s favorite things was having his hair stroked. He would often reward you with one of his wonderful hugs.

Richard had good humor. His smiles and laughter were contagious. He also enjoyed country music and would often clap his hands and try to sing along. He enjoyed watching movies, especially westerns or animated comedies.

Richard enjoyed life. He made the most of it even with all the pain he had to endure. But most of all, he enjoyed the people he



*Richard with his brother and sister in law
when they were reunited last Summer*

loved. He will be greatly missed by his family, friends at the Day Habilitation Center, his extended family at Elm Street and many other BFAIR employees.

BFAIR Participates in Annual Mayor’s Celebration

As part of the annual Mayor’s Celebration held in downtown North Adams, BFAIR hosted an information and activity table on Wednesday, August 25th.

Baked goods were provided compliments of the Day Habilitation Center and BFAIR T-shirts, mugs, and tote bags were available for sale to the public. Information on BFAIR services was available to interested parties throughout the evening, while many children enjoyed participating in numerous activities including donning washable BFAIR “tattoos.”

A beautiful piece of stained glass artwork donated to the agency by Tara McKay, Administrative Assistant, was raffled off to one lucky member of the community. Volunteer Diana Weatherby, daughter of Julie Weatherby, Administrative Assistant, received recognition at the conclusion of the evening for her outstanding efforts manning the BFAIR table. Proceeds from the raffle and sale items will be used to support agency services.



Family Supports

BFAIR's multifaceted Family Resource Program operates out of the agency's satellite office at 74 North Street in Pittsfield. The program offers a variety of supports to individuals living in the community and to those residing with their families. People served range in age from six to eighty.

Outreach employees provide many opportunities for individuals and their families, including bilingual services through the Spanish Outreach Program. Additional opportunities include social groups which meet several times throughout the week and two after-school homework assistance groups.

Outreach employees also assist people in the development, refinement and maintenance of life skills such as cooking, laundry, budgeting, and reading. Community gatherings are always a favorite activity and take place in a variety of forms including parties and dances. The Family Resources Program is very active in planning day long excursions with destinations including but not limited to Howe Caverns, Foxwoods, Mohegan Sun, Sturbridge Village, Lake George, Boston Harbor, and Hildene to tour the home and gardens of Robert Todd Lincoln in Manchester Vermont.



Smiles all around!

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A very active Family Advisory Council offers numerous trainings throughout the years. Topics have included guardianship, future's planning, housing and the Home of Your Own Program, Life Transitions, and recently, a presentation on the Individualized Service Organization (ISO) model, which offers an alternate service delivery option for families and individuals.

The BFAIR Self Advocates have participated in national and international conferences and trainings. They are self-governing and operate with minimal support from their BFAIR advisor.

Over the years, they have met with state representatives; have rallied in Boston for issues that are important to them. They also have faithfully attended the state wide annual Human Rights conference.

The Family Resource Program is the host agency in the Berkshires for Uniting Families for Change (UFC), a statewide organization whose efforts are to provide families with the tools to ensure quality of care for their family member(s) with disabilities. UFC and host agencies, such as BFAIR, work collaboratively to effect change in attitude and legislation thereby promoting a better quality of life for people living with disabilities.

Additionally, the BFAIR Family Resources Program has partnered with other local agencies, including but not limited to BCARC, UCP, American Red Cross and Specialized Home Care, to sponsor community events and offer trainings for families and employees. A recent example of this collaboration was held on September 8th when BFAIR and Ad-Lib hosted a successful Latino Informational Night showcasing the rich culture of the Latino population within the local community.

For more information about the Family Resources Program, please contact Pamela Betz, Individual Supports Coordinator at 413-443-6007 x21.

Children and Adolescent Services

children and adolescents with Autism, Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral and/or Emotional clinical support needs. The vision is to provide targeted, individualized clinical and consultative services - effectively serving children in school and at home and diminishing the need for more intrusive programming and/or costly, segregating alternative placements. Services include but are not limited to in-home and in-school intensive clinical supports, training and support for families, training and support for school personnel, overall staff training and the development and implementation of therapeutic treatment plans.

The philosophy of the program is to tailor the treatment approach to meet the needs of the individual child and his/her family. The program is committed to offering as many of the current methodologies, and/or a combination of those methodologies, as possible (e.g. Social Stories, TEACCH, ABA Therapies). To this end, BFAIR has partnered with a number of highly respected, credentialed consultants who provide expertise in the application of the more specialized treatment approaches. If the expertise does not exist internally, or there is need for specialized consultation, BFAIR will work with the appropriate specialist to craft an individualized treatment approach.

In line with BFAIR's commitment to building community partnerships, efforts to link with and partner with other organizations serving children and adolescents are well underway.

For more information regarding this program please contact Rossie Feldman, Director at 413-664-9382 x31.



Employee Appreciation

BFAIR held its Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic on Friday, August 27th at Windsor Lake in North Adams. The festivities began at 10:30 a.m. with coffee and pastries for the early arrivals and continued at noon with a barbeque prepared and served by the Senior Management Team. Other activities included baseball, frisbee and some actively competitive matches of Bocci.



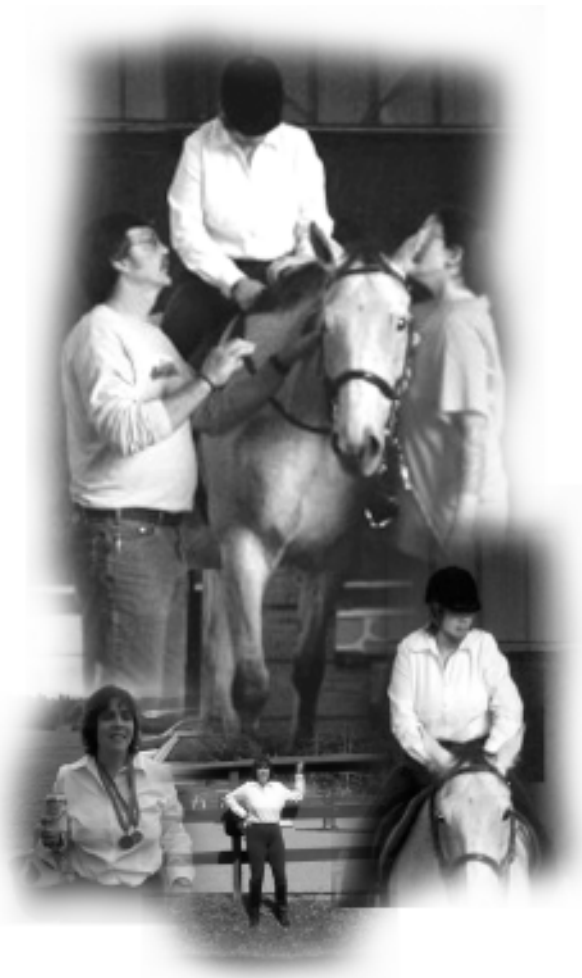
The Board of Directors offered a tangible expression of their appreciation to BFAIR employees and awarded the following door prizes:

- 1-Year Membership at the Holiday In Fitness Center – Sue Darling
- \$50.00 Big Y gift certificate – Gayle LaPine
- \$50.00 Big Y gift certificate – Pam Betz
- \$15.00 DeLITEful Foods gift certificate – Becky Aulisio
- \$50.00 Berkshire Mall gift certificate – Rickky Martin
- \$15.00 BrewHaHa gift certificate – Liz Figueroa



Shared Living

Jena Sarocco loves animals, and the bigger the better. Jena recently attended the Special Olympics Equestrian qualifiers at Undermountain Farm in Lenox. She takes riding lessons each week there, and with the skills she learned she earned a Silver and a Bronze medal. She loves horses and her favorite is Grigio. Besides horseback riding, she has two dogs and a fish named Fred. She is looking forward to having more pets live with her. Two legs, four legs, or fins.....she loves them all!



Residential Life

Since May of 2002, Bill Cleveland has been working as a volunteer for the North Adams Auxiliary Police. He works every Thursday and Friday and enjoys his role very much.

According to Pat Sullivan, Chief Commander, the entire unit of Auxiliary Officers worked a total of 3,205 hours last year to benefit the city of North Adams. "Bill does a great job, and he sure looks sharp in his uniform," states Mr. Sullivan. "Bill always does what he's asked and does it with efficiency."

Bill has many different responsibilities. He works with others to patrol the city for a minimum of two nights each week, from 7 p.m. until about 10 p.m. Helping with crowd and traffic control at Heritage Park, the Downtown Celebration, the Fall Foliage Parade, races, marathons, structural fires and accidents are examples of how Bill's responsibilities benefit the community.





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BFAIR at the Fall Foliage Parade



Kate Merrigan, BFAIR Board Clerk, enjoys her role passing out free BFAIR balloons at the North Adams Fall Foliage Parade. Ms. Merrigan and other members of BFAIR's Board of Directors and staff came together on this beautiful fall day to serve popcorn, cotton candy and snow cones at the agency's concession stand. Proceeds will be used to support BFAIR's programs and services



*For comments, suggestions, articles or other information please contact
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