



the

BUZZ

Volume VIII Edition I

Newsletter of Berkshire Family And Individual Resources, Inc.

ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATES

FAMILIES, EMPLOYEES & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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Letter from the Executive Director

This April BFAIR's Annual Meeting was hosted by Christina Barrett, Board Chair and underwritten by Greylock Federal Credit Union. During the meeting Christina thanked Board Officers Rebecca Dravis, Vice Chair, Karen Boyer, Treasurer and Ed St. John, IV, Clerk and welcomed new Board members Suzan Cahill, Antoinette Cariddi, Lisa Loomis and Lucy Pavalock. Joe McGovern, Executive Director of the Northern Berkshire United Way served as Keynote Speaker. BFAIR staff members receiving special recognition at the meeting for their outstanding work over the past year included Eric Denette, Tina Suess, and Al Castro. The Employer of the Year award was presented to David Moresi owner of the Northern Berkshire Container and Redemption Center for his role providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities in partnership with BFAIR's vocational program, Arcadia Employment Services. The Self-Determination Award presented annually to an individual achieving significant personal growth or accomplishing a life goal was presented to Peter Bedard.

In the months following the meeting a significant agency initiative offering accessible residential options for people with developmental disabilities was realized through the opening of three new homes in North Adams. Each new home offers the residents accessible features and single story living designed to afford each a comfortable home in neighborhoods located throughout the City. As the residents settle into their new homes I would like to thank our community partners such as the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition and the Northern Berkshire United Way for their support as well as the countless citizens of North Adams who came forward to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same rights as you or I to live in the community.

The opening of each new residence required tremendous planning and effort on behalf of numerous staff working together under the direction of Ethel Altiery, Director of Program Operations and Debra Weeden, Director of Residential Services. Both are to be commended for their tireless efforts and vision as is all residential staff that has had a hand in making the transition for people into their new homes as seamless as possible.

Unfortunately we were also saddened recently by the passing of two people, Patty and Ralph who had been a part of the agency for many years. Residents of a BFAIR home located in Adams, Patty and Ralph are remembered for the unique personalities, strength of will and courage. Both were the recipients of the compassionate care of residential staff through end of life who gathered together sharing fond remembrances and describing the impact of both Patty and Ralph on their lives.

A major Board initiative will occur on September 10th, in the form of the third annual Miniature Golf Tournament and Community Event. This fundraiser will be held at The Range in North Adams from 10a.m.-3p.m., with the Mini-Golf tournament taking place at 1:00PM. I hope each of you will join us raising funds to support BFAIR's services for people with developmental disabilities, autism and acquired brain injury.

Rich Weisenflue
Executive Director



Miniature Golf And Community Day Fundraiser



Please come join our friends and families for a round of miniature golf and our Community Day events.

Your support helps provide services for people with developmental disabilities, autism and acquired brain injuries.

DATE

Saturday
September 10, 2011

TIME

Miniature Golf Tournament
Shotgun Start – 1:00 pm

Community events 10:00am –3:00pm

LOCATION

THE RANGE
Curran Hwy / RT 8
North Adams, MA

COST

Community Day Events
Adult \$10.00
Child (6–12) \$5.00 • Under 5–FREE

Community Day Events
and Tournament
\$20.00 per person

Sponsored by:



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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BFAIR's First Employee Wellness Fair

Over 100 BFAIR employees from each of the agency's service programs and administrative office attended the first BFAIR Wellness Fair on May 26th. The event was made available for each employee to receive screenings for blood glucose, cholesterol, body fat content, and blood pressure. Massages were offered for stress management, a nutritionist discussed better eating habits with healthy recipes to take home, and fitness information was made available. Employees were also able to sign up for an agency sponsored year round walking program and a smoking cessation program.

The Wellness Fair was a collaborative effort between the agency, True North Insurance and BFAIR's community partners, with booths and information on several health related topics. Vendors in attendance were, Health New England, REACH Foundation for Community Health (Northern Berkshire Healthcare), Planet Fitness, Mildred Elley, Living Well Chiropractic, Zen Tree Wellness, and Wild Oats.

"Our goal is to empower BFAIR employees to take charge of their own health by providing them with the tools they need to be successful," explains Beth Petropulos, BFAIR's Director of Human Resources, commenting on why the agency provided the Wellness Fair to BFAIR employees. It is known that Human Service professionals are so devoted to caring for others on a daily basis that they can lose sight of their own health needs. "We want to encourage our employees to take advantage of their preventative healthcare screenings, know their numbers for heart health, lead a more active lifestyle, and eat a healthier diet. We want our employees to feel good and to be able to do their best. A happy, healthy staff person will also be a great role model and caregiver to the people we support," continues Mrs. Petropulos.

Currently BFAIR provides over 200 jobs to people in Berkshire County. And as North Adams' third largest employer, the agency strives to continue to invest in programs that are beneficial and rewarding to our employees.



Retirement Party for Long Time Employee



For the past 15 years, Eugene Tatro has been a long time recipient of BFAIR's Arcadia Employment Services program and has successfully obtained employment with a few of BFAIR's community business partners. On June 10, Eugene worked his last day as production worker at Advanced Flexible Composites (AFC), a family owned, customer-focused, high performance composites company in Adams. Co-workers for the past four years at AFC threw Eugene a lavish retirement party filled with gifts, food and laughter. "We have enjoyed working with Eugene, he was always a hard worker and helpful to everyone. He put a smile on our faces each and every day. I wish Eugene good luck in his future endeavors and even though he is not working for AFC anymore, he will always be a part of the AFC family," announced Mike

Baker, Corporate Director of Marketing & General Manager at AFC.

Eugene's resume consists of long term employment in each field he worked, from a redemption center clerk, a cook, to a production worker. "Eugene was a part of Arcadia Employment for a very long time and though we are sad to lose him we wish him all the best and hope he enjoys his retirement. The good news is that we still get to see him!" says Sharon Boyd, BFAIR's Arcadia Employment Services Director.

Eugene will remain part of BFAIR even though he has happily retired, his future plans after retirement include attending BFAIR's Day Habilitation Center and enjoying his personal interests including visiting the library and collecting Elvis memorabilia.



BFAIR's 17th Annual Meeting



Early morning on Friday, April 29, the 17th annual meeting of Berkshire Family And Individual Resources, (BFAIR), took place at 7:30 a.m. at the Williams Inn in Williamstown, MA. An attendance high of over 150 local community business partners, families, and employees attended the meeting to hear keynote speaker, Joe McGovern, Executive Director from the Northern Berkshire United Way.

The meeting was generously sponsored by Greylock Federal Credit Union, and led by Christina Barrett, BFAIR's Board Chairperson, and Rich Weisenflue, BFAIR's Executive Director.

Joe McGovern spoke on reflections of BFAIR's contributions to the local economy and the thriving community partnerships that have been built and continued to be valued. Mr. McGovern's address also included a poem named, 'The Special Friend', in which he quoted "You have a friend forever, and a forever friend has no end." He also went on to say, "A special friend, that's what I think of BFAIR, and looking at how all of you make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities and how you have become a special friend to so many is, and should be, an inspiration to all of us in our community."

The NBUW Executive Director also presented a special Service Award to Jamie Williams, BFAIR's Campaign Workplace Coordinator, who has helped NBUW and BFAIR for the past 10 years. Ms. Williams spearheads each campaign with creativity which draws BFAIR staff to make a pledge to support local programs serving almost 11,500 Northern Berkshire residents.



The meeting also recognized BFAIR employees who exhibited extraordinary efforts to support the human rights of people with developmental disabilities, autism & acquired brain injury by exemplifying the 'BFAIR Way' and going above and beyond their everyday responsibilities. The 2010 Recognition Awards were presented to the following:

Employer of the Year - Northern Berkshire Container Redemption Center and the center's owner, David Moresi of Moresi and Associates.

George A. Crosby Memorial Award – Tina Suess, Residential Multi-Site Coordinator for BFAIR's Community Residential Program.

Armand Quintal Award - Al Castro, BFAIR's Day Habilitation Specialist and Human Rights Officer for the agency's Day Habilitation Center.

Leadership Award - Eric Denette, M.Ed., BFAIR's Senior Behavior Specialist.

Self Determination Award - Peter Bedard awarded annually to a person with a disability who has overcome a significant hurdle in life or fulfilled a personal goal.

Employment Service Awards were also distributed for the following long term BFAIR employees:

5 Years of Service: Hope Bourdon, Aimee Erskine, Jennifer Foley, Carol Fox, Debra Weeden

10 Years of Service: Ethel Altiery, Melissa Krok, Kathy Lepine, Teresa McBee

15 Years of Service: Lorie Martin, Peg Pysar, Julie Weatherby

20 Years of Service: Linda Cunningham, Jane Patenaude





New and Noteworthy

New ABI Room in Day Habilitation Center

Through fundraising sources, a new Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Room has been added to BFAIR's Day Habilitation Center for people with Acquired Brain Injury. The classroom will provide accessible space for participants to be able to enjoy a day filled with creative projects with fellow peers in an inviting, comfortable environment equipped with a kitchen and storage space. For more information on the ABI Room and our ABI program, please contact Theresa Biagini at tbiagini@bfair.org or 413-664-9382.



New Homes Open in Residential Services

Three new homes have been opened as part of BFAIR's Community Residential Services Program. The residences were acquired as part of BFAIR's strategic objective designed to address the changing needs of the people the agency supports. BFAIR management, in conjunction with support from the Board of Directors, proactively assessed current housing opportunities and while doing so, considered the Residential program's ability to meet the future needs of the people we serve. The new homes are all single family ranches located around North Adams. Each home has plans for renovations specifically designed to make handicap accessible living environments. For more information on our Community Residential Service Program, please contact Debra Weeden at dweenen@bfair.org or 413-664-9382.





BFAIR, INC.
771 South Church Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Board of Directors:

- Christina L. Barrett, *Chairperson*
- Rebecca Dravis, *Vice Chairperson*
- Karen Boyer, *Treasurer*
- Kate Merrigan, *Clerk*
- Edmund R. St. John, IV, *Director*
- Peter West, *Director*
- Patti Messina, *Director*
- Maureen E. Baran, *Director*
- Mike Goodwin, *Director*
- David R. Robbins, *Director*
- David Bond, *Director*
- Antoinette Cariddi, *Director*
- Suzan Cahill, *Director*
- Lucy Pavalock, *Director*

Rich Weisenflue, *Executive Director*



Agency Happenings



*Margret going to her
PHS prom & graduation*



Day Hab's Bird Feeder Contest



*Arcadia Work Crew Receiving Appreciation
Awards From NAHA Tenant Association*



*Dee Dee & Lisa's Graduation
From Adult Learning Center*