

Family Update



Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Region III Family Support Council



Amber Parshley (far left) was this year's winner of the Diane Carignan Award. Self advocates Chrystal Johnson, Laura Main, and Caleb Sweedler, were also nominated for the award.

Amber Parshley receives 2014 Diane Carignan Award

By Karen McDowell, Family to Family Coordinator

Congratulations to Amber Parshley, who was named this year's recipient of the second annual Diane Carignan Award. Amber received the award at the Advocacy: Learn It, Live It, Love It Conference on June 28, at the Grappone Center in Concord.

The award recognizes an individual who is an active voice for the disability rights movement and exemplifies kindness, leadership, and dedication. Diane Carignan passed away in late 2011. She was a founding member of People First of NH in 1991 and helped lay the foundation for the disability rights movement.

Amber was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the Disability Rights Center, serves on

the Quality Council, and is a past president of People First NH. She has been an active self-advocate for 28 years.

"I am proud that I have been able to voice my opinion about certain things I've thought were not OK for people with disabilities and what is OK. I want to make sure everyone's voice is heard," said Parshley.

Three other self advocates from Region III – Laura Main, Chrystal Johnson and Caleb Sweedler – were nominated for the award.

People First of NH, the first statewide self-advocacy non-profit organization, was established in 1992. There are 14 self-advocacy chapters throughout the state, including the Lakes Region Self-Advocacy Group. Each chapter elects two representatives to serve on the board of directors of People First. For more information, visit www.peoplefirstnh.org.

The Lakes Region Self-Advocacy Group meets at the LRCS Main Office on the first Wednesday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. The group is open to adults receiving services from Lakes Region Community Services. New members are always welcome. For more information, contact Wendy Robb at 581-1530. ■

"The easiest thing to be in the world is you. The most difficult thing to be is what other people want you to be. Don't let them put you in that position."

– Leo Buscaglia



Local athletes Alicia Chapman (seated, on left) and Andrea Stoia (standing, second from left) joined Team New Hampshire to participate in the Special Olympics National Games.

Stars of the Week

By Susan Michaelis Gunther
Family Support Council Chairperson

“Experience of a lifetime.” “Wouldn't change a thing.” “I loved it all.” These are just a few comments from Alicia Chapman and Andrea Stoia, who were chosen to represent New Hampshire at the Special Olympics National Games. In June, they packed their bags and, along with about 40 other athletes, traveled to the College of New Jersey and Princeton University for a week. Twelve coaches -- and I'm sure lots of family members -- went as well.

During the regular athletic season, Alicia is part of the Winnepesaukee Warriors, and Andrea is part of the Winnepesaukee Comets. They didn't know each other before June 14 but returned to New Hampshire friends. And they made many acquaintances and formed several friendships while away. Both loved meeting people from across the United States, even people from Alaska and Hawaii.

As anyone familiar with the Olympic format knows, all athletes participate in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies then break away to compete in specific events, such as swimming, bowling, basketball, bocce ball, and powerlifting. Track and field was Alicia's and Andrea's sport, and they were roommates for the week. Athletic events usually started around 7:30 a.m. and ended around 2:30 p.m., followed by a variety of social activities. Added to the mix was Bob Stoia, Andrea's dad, who was one of their track and field coaches.

According to Andrea, he, too, loved everything about their week at the National Games and would coach again.

This was **Andrea's** first-ever trip to New Jersey. She has participated in Special Olympics in New Hampshire since age eight, but found the National Games “very exciting because I had different teammates and became close with two of my new teammates.” Beyond competing, Andrea was always on the go: participating in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies with Team New Hampshire, watching teammates from the stands, and joining in the nighttime entertainment. “Everyone was very busy, but that was okay. At first, the Nationals were overwhelming because of the number of people competing and not knowing my whole team well. But I would definitely go again. I can't pick one thing I liked best. I loved it all!”

While at the National Games, Andrea competed in the mini javelin (earning a fifth-place ribbon), the 800-meter walk (fourth-place ribbon), the 400-meter walk (bronze medal) and shot put (bronze medal). (When at the New Hampshire Special Olympics, Andrea participates in these same events.)

For **Alicia**, her experience was similar. She “wouldn't change [her time at the National Games] for the world. I loved it and cried when I came home. I would do it again because I loved meeting new people. Everyone was so nice.” When asked what she liked best, memories of the dinner cruise, hanging out with new people, and living in the dorms were foremost.

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Alicia Chapman proudly displays the medals she won at the Special Olympics National Games.

Alicia's events were the running long jump (gold medal), turbo javelin (gold medal), 100-meter dash (silver medal), and four-person relay (sixth-place ribbon). Her favorite event was the relay with Megan, Nathan, and Tim. The Winnepesaukee Warriors don't have relay teams, but Alicia plans to talk to the coaches about adding that event next season. Alicia feels running a relay would make the New Hampshire games better.

Coach Bob Stoia recollects the trip to the Nationals was "a wonderful, memorable experience." To see athletes, not only from Team New Hampshire but athletes from around the country, "give their best effort even when conditions were not ideal – temperatures in the 90s, rain, exhaustion, a couple of nights with only three to four hours of sleep – was inspiring. It was an honor to be a Team New Hampshire athletic coach." Bob looks forward to many more years of inspiration coaching the Winnepesaukee Comets.

Irene Chapman, Alicia's mom, couldn't praise track and field coaches Jannie Pratt and Bob Stoia enough, saying, "Jannie and Bob went well beyond what they needed to do. At all times they were great to all the athletes. And it was obvious the athletes loved them. They are super people who made sure the athletes had such a good time."

Congratulations to Andrea and Alicia. When I spoke with them in July, their voices still bubbled with enthusiasm. It was unmistakable the Special Olympics National Games was "a trip of a lifetime." ■

Region III Towns Served

Alexandria/Alton/Ashland/Barnstead/Belmont
Bridgewater/Bristol/Campton/Center Harbor
Ellsworth/Gilford/Gilmanton/Groton/Hebron
Holderness/Laconia/Meredith/New Hampton
Plymouth/Rumney/Sanbornton
Thornton/Tilton/Wentworth

Family Support Council

Susan Gunther, Chair - 293-7371
Joel Fisher, Vice-Chair and State Delegate
Valerie Lemay, Secretary
Denise Colby, State Delegate
Irene Chapman ■ Angela Currier
Elliot "Spike" Davis ■ Ginger Donaldson
Lynn Hilbrunner ■ Cheryl Larose
Debra Nugent ■ Linda Wallace ■ Nancy Ward



Everyone's favorite - tacos! The cooking club prepares a different and delicious meal each month.

Time for fun - we have a place reserved for YOU!

By Jen Reera, Social Activities Coordinator

Things have really been heating up this summer on the social scene. We ventured off and had a great hike up Rattlesnake Mountain in Holderness. There were beautiful views from the top and we all had a great time out on the trails, enjoying the fresh air.

The Summer Movie Series kicked off in July with great success. A group of us enjoyed the action-packed thriller *Fast and Furious 6* while munching on popcorn and being with friends. This series will run monthly through September and possibly beyond.

Our monthly cooking club continues to be a huge success, as seen on our Mexican Night in July. We enjoyed a delicious taco bar along with homemade guacamole and chips. Of course, we couldn't forget the amazing dessert of campfire s'mores bars, all of which were created by our amazing new chefs.

If any of these activities sound interesting, contact me by phone at 387-0261 or email at jreera@yahoo.com to sign up for one – or check them all out! Fun times and laughter are had by all, not to mention a delicious homemade meal when attending the cooking club! Feel free to call just to suggest something new as we are always looking for new and fun ideas! ■



As Director of the Family Resource Center, Shannon Robinson-Beland continues to build on programs to empower and support families.

A New Role for Shannon Robinson-Beland

In 2009, Shannon Robinson-Beland joined the Family Resource Center of Central New Hampshire (FRC) as the Community Support Coordinator. She had just completed her Master's Degree in Social Work while raising a family. At the time, the FRC was setting up downtown at 635 Main Street in Laconia and was redefining itself as a multifaceted support center for families. Shannon actively developed the role of the FRC in Laconia and the surrounding area through community outreach to make and build connections. She said, "We began to establish ourselves as a 'go-to' place within the community for parenting education and family connections. We began to be recognized as a community partner."

Last November, Shannon moved into the position of Director of the Family Resource Center after Karen Welford retired. Based on her previous experience, knowledge, and involvement in the organization, Lakes Region Community Services (LRCS), the FRC, and the community found the perfect match in Shannon.

The Family Resource Center offers an array of supports, services, and resources utilizing family support principles. Families benefit from programs including: the Giggles and Grins playgroup; parent education and support; early childhood initiatives such as Born Learning, Watch Me Grow, and school readiness; Early Supports and Services; the Autism Center; Step Ahead (a home visiting program) information and referral services to community supports; and childcare resource and referral services.

"The FRC prides itself in providing parent education programs to over 200 adults who logged in over 2,000 hours of classroom time over the past year," Shannon stated. "Classes have increased from one to two series during each quarterly session to a full schedule of more than 150 different sessions annually. Topics include parenting skills, budgeting, and cooking classes, to name a few. Some classes are in partnership with other agencies and organizations that allow for expanded impact and expertise without requiring additional resources. We are a hub of activity around parenting in the community."

The FRC assists families with making connections with other families and community resources. Families benefit from one another when they come to the FRC, sharing the challenges of living similar lives while raising children in similar times.

Shannon works hard not only to bridge the FRC with the community, but also to make stronger connections within the larger LRCS agency. Many families who receive support through the FRC also receive services from LRCS. "It benefits all of us when we work together to support families," said Shannon. "Another advantage in working together within the larger agency is the ability to share resources. For example, we wanted to shine the light on fatherhood and will begin offering Nurturing Fathers this fall to further engage fathers. Dads play an important role in the lives of their children, and we want to recognize and celebrate that. We felt it was important to have at least one male facilitator for the Dad's group and, currently, we don't have a male staff member at the FRC. When we reached out to the larger organization, two Directors – Dave Emond and Steve Colombo – stepped up to co-facilitate. (See page 5 for more information on Nurturing Dads.)

Looking towards the near future, Shannon said, "We plan to continue to explore all the ways we can build on our programs that foster adult capabilities to improve children's outcomes. We are always looking at the best practices to empower parents so they have the skills and support needed to ensure all children in our community are growing and thriving."

For more information about the Family Resource Center, to request a copy of the Family Resource Guide, or to view the current schedule of classes and events, please visit www.lrcs.org or call 524-8811. ■

Nurturing Fathers - The Next Step in Supporting Fathers

By Shannon Robinson-Beland,
Director of the Family Resource Center
Family Resource Center of Central New Hampshire

Fathers have always been welcomed and supported through all of the offerings at LRCS's Family Resource Center, but the reality is, it hasn't always been easy to connect with them. Knowing that fathers have such an important role to play in raising happy, healthy children, we have made a real effort over the past two years to consciously reach out to them and engage them in different ways. In June of this year and last, we offered Fishing with Father-Figures, a day for children and the special men in their lives to get together and have fun on NH's free fishing day. We have also held one-time workshops for fathers and professionals, highlighting all of the wonderful ways that fathers contribute to the success of their children. Most recently, we have held classes for incarcerated dads and provided opportunities for them to have face-to-face visits with their children at the end of each successfully completed module.

The Family Resource Center is now ready to take the next step in supporting fathers and in September will begin to offer Nurturing Fathers, a free 13-week series for men striving to be the best dads they can be. A second class is tentatively planned for the spring, and the expectation is that it will be a consistent offering for years to come. Dads will always be welcome in all of the classes offered at the Family Resource Center, but Nurturing Fathers will provide a space for men to connect with other men who are parenting in similar times and circumstances. It is sure to be a powerful experience for all the men that choose to participate.

Nurturing Fathers will be facilitated by two experienced fathers and LRCS Directors, David Emond and Steve Colombo. Both were trained in the curriculum this spring through a grant from the New Hampshire Children's Speedway and are looking forward to getting started this fall. The

Father Engagement Action Team (FEAT) at the Division of Children, Youth and Families has been a strong partner of the Family Resource Center in bringing this series to fruition.

The first Nurturing Fathers series will meet on Thursday evenings from 5:30-8:00 pm from September 11, 2014-December 11, 2014. Topics will include dealing with feelings, discipline without violence, communication and problem solving, play, teamwork with spouse or partner, and more. Dinner will be included and limited assistance with childcare and transportation is available. For more information on Nurturing Fathers and other classes offered through the Family Resource Center of Central New Hampshire, please visit our website at www.lrcs.org, or contact Tricia Tousignant at 528-0391 or triciat@lrcs.org. ■

Facilitator Profiles

Steve Columbo has been an RN since 1984 and has been the Director of Nursing at LRCS since 2000. He is also the owner of a nursing consultation service involved in programs throughout the state. Previously, he was the health director at a human services agency in Concord and was a special education teacher in Nashua. He has two adult children who he raised as a single parent from an early age.

When he is not working, he is fishing, kayaking or playing guitar.

David Emond has been employed as the Director of Operations at Lakes Region Community Services in Laconia for 12 years. David lives in Gilford with his wife of 27 years and has two children – a 21-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter. David and his family are members of the Congregational Church of Laconia where David volunteered as youth camp counselor for seven (summer) seasons. David also comes from a large family of nine siblings, that include six sisters and three brothers. ■



The Family Resource Center hosted a Knit-In on Saturday, July 12th. Volunteers knitted and crocheted purple baby caps for infant abuse prevention awareness. This was one of several events held all over the state by the NH Children's Trust. Visit www.clickforbabies.org for more information on this public education campaign.

LRCS families have access to new application designed to help families organize and privately share medical information

Lakes Region Community Services is excited to announce a new partnership with New Hampshire-based Yabidu, Inc.

Yabidu is a software application designed to help families capture, organize, and privately share medical information. With Yabidu, all of your critical information is available anywhere, anytime, on any device. Yabidu has the potential to make a positive impact on the lives of families dealing with complex medical care situations.

Yabidu's growing group of pilot partners includes Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston Children's Hospital, Joslin Diabetes Center and KentuckyOne Health. Beginning in the fall, Yabidu will be partnering with LRCS on a special preview release of the application. Watch www.lrcs.org, the agency Facebook page, and email for more information.

To learn more about Yabidu visit www.yabidu.com.

To inquire about joining the preview release, contact Karen McDowell at karenmc@lrcs.org. ■

Take advantage of free benefits counseling and assistance from Granite State Independent Living

A certified Work Incentive Counselor from Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) is available to meet with families, individuals, and staff on the second Thursday of each month in Laconia. This service is available thanks to financial assistance from the Region III Family Support Council.

Why should I meet with a counselor?

Individuals who experience disabilities and their families are often afraid that being employed and earning a paycheck automatically means that they will lose their benefits. This is not true! The counselor will help you to better understand your benefits so that you can increase your financial independence while managing your benefits, such as:

- Preparing for when your child reaches age 18 - 21
- Preparing for when a parent is planning retirement
- Employment, if desired

This is an opportunity to get specific feedback on questions regarding your benefits, work incentives, Medicaid for Employed Adults with Disabilities (MEAD), and general questions you may need support with for SSI or SSDI.

When is this help available?

A counselor from GSIL will be available at the LRCS Main Office in Laconia on the second Thursday of the month, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., throughout 2014 (9/11, 10/9, 11/13 & 12/11).

Who should I contact to sign up for a 30-minute appointment?

Let your Resource Coordinator know that you would like to meet with a Work Incentive Counselor. Your Resource Coordinator will check the schedule, make the appointment for you, and attend with you, if you wish. ■

Freese Brothers Big Band October 18th in Meredith Concert to benefit LRCS

Our friends at Temple B'nai Israel hosted a wonderful concert by Gathering Time and Mara Levine at the historic Belknap Mill in Laconia on Saturday, June 7th to benefit Lakes Region Community Services. More than 160 people attended and a wonderful time was had by all!

On Saturday, October 18th, Temple B'nai Israel will present another concert to benefit LRCS -- The Freese Brothers Big Band at the Winnepesaukee Playhouse in Meredith. This 20-piece band will perform music from the big band era as well as music from today's contemporary sounds. Listen... Dance ... Enjoy!

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.tbinh.org.



Audience members were treated to the harmonious sounds of Gathering Time and Mara Levine on June 7th. LRCS was appreciative to be the recipient of profits made at this event.

*Above all, be the heroine of
your life, not the victim."*

- Nora Ephron



To follow us on Facebook, find the Lakes Region Community Services Facebook page, look for our logo, and click "like."

Feeling creative?

Kil'n Time Art Studio is now open for business. Located at 89 Main Street in downtown Plymouth, Kil'n Time is Lakes Region Community Services' newest agency-operated business. Kil'n Time offers paint-it-yourself ceramics and BYOB wine and canvas painting classes.

Like other businesses operated by LRCS, Kil'n Time meets multiple needs in the community. We're providing a fun, creative outlet in the heart Plymouth and creating job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Kil'n Time hasn't been open for that long, but there's already lots of positive buzz about Plymouth's newest art studio. Here are some of the comments left on Kil'n Time's Facebook page:

"Welcoming people, comfortable setting ... perfect place to let your creativity flow."

"Thanks so much for a fantastic time!"

"Had an amazing time!"

Kil'n Time's regular operating hours are Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., but the hours are expanding. Two part-time studio assistants have been hired and more painting classes will be scheduled soon. Please Like and Share Kil'n Time's Facebook page and visit often for updates on future classes. Kil'n Time also books private paint parties. For more information, call 238-9147. ■

Lakes Region Community Services operates several businesses that meet community needs and provide employment to individuals with disabilities. Please visit these locations and tell your friends about them, too!

Dawgs2Go: Hot dog cart located at 385 Union Avenue, Laconia (in the parking lot of the Happy Cow ice cream stand)

ClothesLine Children's Resale Boutique:

1327 Union Avenue, Laconia and
42 Main Street, Plymouth

The Readery: 67 Main Street, Plymouth



Family Support Services
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Join us for Uncorked 2014 on November 1 Laconia Country Club

Tickets for this second annual fundraiser for LRCS are \$50 in advance and \$60 at the door, space permitting. To be on the list to receive notification when tickets go on sale, please send an email to: uncorked@lrsc.org and include "ticket sales" in the subject line.

4th Annual Miles for Smiles 5K, Tuesday, September 9th Downtown Plymouth

Proceeds from the race help to fund dental care for adults with developmental disabilities. Dental services are not covered by Medicaid. Interested in running or volunteering? Watch the agency's Facebook page and www.lrsc.org for more information.

To register, visit

<https://g2racereg.webconnex.com/smiles5k2014>

Legislative "Meet & Greet" October 22nd at 5:30 pm in Laconia

Come meet and talk to candidates for state office from communities in our region.

This "meet & greet" event gives families an opportunity to meet and share their experiences with current legislators and candidates for office. For more information, contact Karen McDowell, karenmc@lrsc.org or 581-1544.