



*Published by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Services
Governor M. Jodi Rell | Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara | Deputy Commissioner Kathryn du Pree*

Summer 2008 Leisure Resource Guide

Throughout the summer, Connecticut families will be spending time together at the beach, in the mountains or in their own backyards. Connecticut has a lot to offer and you don't have to travel far to enjoy our own recreational resources. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has compiled a **Summer 2008 Leisure Resources Guide** to help you plan everything from camps to day trips. You'll find information available for Camp Harkness, Best Buddies CT and Special Olympics as well as museums, aquariums and amusement parks. Please turn to pages eight and nine so you don't miss this opportunity to plan your summer fun in Connecticut.



Camp Harkness is a 102 acre recreational facility, completely wheelchair accessible, located on Long Island Sound in Waterford, Connecticut.

New DDS Dental Services



(left to right) DDS Employees David Goldner, South Region Respite Coordinator, Maria Loiewski, South Region IFS Resource Manager, Mayri Caple, South Region, IFS Assistant Regional Director. Izabella Pulvermacher, Dental Coordinator recently participated at the Department of Public Health's Oral Health Awareness Day in Hartford.

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) recently established **Dental Services** to focus on the oral health needs of individuals served by the department. With the support of the **Council on Developmental Services**, the department hired a Dental Coordinator to help address this critical issue and to enhance dental services to our consumers.

As part of the DDS health and clinical support services goal to improve access and capacity of oral services, the Dental

Coordinator is establishing working relationships with state dental hygiene schools, such as the **Fones Dental Hygiene School in Bridgeport** and **Tunxis Community College** in Bristol. These programs are able to see DDS consumers for comprehensive oral exams, dental x-rays and dental prophylaxis (cleanings). These clinics are ideal for certain individuals who need preventative oral care.

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Waterbury, CT 06702
203.805.7400

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Dental Services

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DDS has been collaborating with other agencies to establish The Task Force on Oral Health of Older Adults. Their report, called Just the F.A.C.T.S., was published in February and is available on the Department of Public Health (DPH) website at: www.ctoralhealth.org.

PREVENTION is the key to Oral Health and DDS is committed to in-servicing staff, consumers and families on proper oral hygiene. In addition, a new quarterly publication, DDS Dental News, will provide

important dental initiatives taken by the department, as well as dental tips, articles about oral health, and the dental coordinators efforts to improve access to dental services. The DDS Dental News is available on the DDS website at: www.ct.gov/dds.

FOR MORE INFORMATION about the state school programs, please contact Dental Services Coordinator Izabella Pulvermacher at 860-418-6099 or e-mail: izabella.pulvermacher@ct.gov

A Message From Commissioner O'Meara



Commissioner
Peter H. O'Meara

This is an exciting time for individuals served by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Over the past several years, Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut Legislature have continued to fund our budget which has enabled us to provide supports to more people. Last year over 200 of our high school graduates were supported in a job or provided a day program. Young adults who have aged out of the Department of Children and Families and transitioned to our system were provided residential services and supported employment. We have been able to add 74 younger children to the Voluntary Services Program, which is a new department initiative for children.

Equally important to families is Connecticut's five-year commitment to serve people who are living at home and are on the Waiting List. In 2004, the Governor sponsored a five-year initiative to provide funding for 750 individuals on the Waiting List and another 500 people who live with their families and who need enhanced family support. Each year the department has supported more people than the settlement agreement

requires and has also used vacancies in group homes and other settings to remove individuals from the Waiting List and into services.

Since the beginning of the Waiting List Initiative over 1,000 people have been served and as of March 31, 2008, another 225 individuals received services during this fiscal year. For the first time, we have seen a significant drop in the Waiting List, even though new families request residential services each year. This initiative is funded through June 30, 2009 and by then everyone who was on the initial Waiting List will have been offered residential services in addition to some who have been placed on the list more recently.

Over the past several years, Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut Legislature have continued to fund our budget, which has enabled us to provide supports to more people.

Each region uses the same approach to decide who is in the most urgent need out of all the individuals on the list. Anyone who is an emergency, which means they will not have a caregiver in the near future, is our first priority and gets residential services as quickly as possible. Statewide, there are 80 – 90 emergencies each year. After that, the regions determine the urgency of the other families' situations to decide how to allocate our resources. The age and health of the person's caregiver are very important considerations in deciding who will be served each year. When this initiative started, over 200 people on the Waiting List had a caregiver who was 65 years of age or older. This may mean that younger parents wait longer to become a priority for Waiting List funds. During this waiting period, employment or day support, family support and respite are important services to assist a family with its care giving responsibilities.

The Waiting List Initiative has been a critical endeavor for DDS; and I thank all the staff and providers who have made it successful for so many consumers and their families. Although the formal initiative is funded for only one more year, we will continue to advocate for resources to meet the needs of the individuals who we serve who live at home.

From the Desk of **Deputy Commissioner Kathryn du Pree**

Each year school graduates receive funding for employment or day support programs as they transition to adult services. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will support over 245 students who graduate this June. A similar number received supports during the current fiscal year. More students want to work and need employment supports from job developers and job coaches. During Fiscal Year 2008 sixty percent of school graduates engaged in some type of work.

There are many providers in Connecticut who contract with DDS and offer supported employment, and our transition coordinators work with families, students, school teachers and providers. They help plan the shift to adult services and find employment that will match the interest skills of our consumers.

In addition, DDS is offering a number of training opportunities for providers this year to enhance staff skills and further our employment initiative.

Individual and Family Support Teams in each region now include direct support workers who can provide family support services. Staff work on helping people learn to care for themselves, cook, budget, use public transportation and get to doctor's appointments. They carry out behavioral plans and provide parents respite. This year we have provided this service to over 500 families. It is intended for families who do not have waiver services.

If either of these services could benefit your child and family, please contact your case manager to find out more information and how to apply.

Focus on Aging Services

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) recently announced the formation of **Aging Services** and the appointment of a new **Aging Services Coordinator**.

There are over 2,500 individuals served by the DDS who are over the age of 55. Over the years, the **Aging Focus Team** had advised the department on the priorities and the future needs of aging individuals, including the development of new service alternatives and integration of aging persons into generic elderly programs. With support from the **Council on Developmental Services**, the department announced its commitment to the new services.

The role of Aging Services is to work with individuals, families and support providers to ensure individuals served by the department have access to the supports and services they need as they age. Aging Services collaborates with all our stakeholders to ensure a full range of community service options are available. The unit develops policies and procedures that promote what our consumers need and want, relevant data is collected and disseminated, and educational information is shared with individuals, families, DDS employees and support providers.

In February 2008, **Siobhan Morgan** was appointed as **Aging Services Coordinator**. A long time DDS employee, she will manage statewide coordination of supports and services for aging consumers as well as oversee the **Aging Focus Team**.

On March 27, 2008 the Legislative Programmatic Review and Investigations Committee voted to study the Needs of Aging Individuals with Developmental Disabilities. The committee has assigned two of their Principal Analysts, Michelle Castillo and Maryellen Duffy, to conduct the study. The study should be completed within nine months, by December 2008.

"The study will evaluate DDS efforts to address and plan for the current and future service needs of the aging population with developmental disabilities in Connecticut. The study will focus on the methods used by the department to measure the types and costs of services needed now and in the future for elderly individuals already in DDS residential placements, those still living at home with a caretaker relative who is also elderly, and those who will be over 55 years old within the next 10 years."

"The Aging Coordinator is very important because the DDS population is getting older and their needs are increasing," said Robert Wood, former member of the Governor's Council on Developmental Services. "We need someone who can work fulltime on improving the care individuals receive and to plan for their future needs."

FOR MORE INFORMATION on Aging Services, please visit DDS website: www.ct.gov/dds or contact Ms. Morgan at: siobhan.morgan@ct.gov or 860-418-8723.

Medicaid for the Employed Disabled

THE GOOD NEWS: A new program in the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is eliminating a “Catch-22” situation that has forced people with disabilities to choose between going to work and keeping their health insurance. DDS’s newly available “Medicaid for the Employed Disabled” program (MED), administered by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), allows most people with physical and mental disabilities to get and keep jobs without risking the loss of health coverage through Medicaid or DDS Waiver Supports. MED is now available as part of both of DDS’s Home and Community Based Waiver programs.

WHAT’S CHANGED: Prior to this program being available in DDS, people with disabilities often worried about making too much money because an increase in income could result in a “Catch 22” where the person had more earnings, but risked losing his or her Medicaid health coverage unless appropriate “spend down” deductibles were identified. For many individuals, staying at home or working fewer hours and having a smaller income was more acceptable than the risk of losing their health insurance and medical benefits.

The result of the “Medicaid for the Employed Disabled” program means that:

Income Limit Goes Up To \$75,000: The income limit for Medicaid eligibility under this program has

been raised up to \$75,000 annually for people with a disabling condition (as defined by the Social Security Act) who work despite their condition.

Medicaid Free or on Sliding Scale, Depending on Income: Medical health coverage is free for individuals with income less than \$16,704 per year (federal poverty level). Those with income over this figure will pay a monthly premium equal to 10% of their excess income. For example, a person earning \$30,000 annually would pay \$110 each month for Medicaid. If the person pays for other health insurance at the same time or has big out-of-pocket work related expenses, the Medicaid premiums are lowered.

Personal Assets Allowance Also Expanded: In addition to the higher income limit, Medicaid personal assets of \$10,000 have been increased for MED to allow individuals to save for retirement or for other approved disability-related items. Asset allowances have to be approved by the Department of Social Services.

TO GET INFORMATION and an application for the new Medicaid for the Employed Disabled Program, call a local CT DSS office. You can call 211 to find a local DSS office, or look in the blue government pages of your phonebook. Your DDS case manager can also help you to find more information about this important new program.

Self Determination Unveils Newsletter

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) **Self Determination Directors** are pleased to announce the introduction of a new newsletter on self determination. The newsletter will be published quarterly and will feature the following types of articles; self determination success stories, self advocacy articles, community connection articles, self-direction updates, opinion editorials and a self determination events calendar.



Our first **DDS Self Determination Newsletter** was published in March 2008. The issue highlighted the differences between self determination and self direction. Our next issue, scheduled for June 2008 will discuss self determination and employment.

YOU CAN FIND issues of the **DDS Self Determination Newsletter** on the **DDS website**, under **Self Determination/Publications**. Please feel free to send your ideas for future issues of the **DDS Self Determination Newsletter** to **Robin Wood** at robin.wood@ct.gov or at 203-806-8770.

North Region Update

Passing the Torch of Self Advocacy

On March 6, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) North Region lost a beloved **Self Advocate Coordinator, Chavis Chappell**. In his three year career as a Self Advocate, he not only touched hearts but impacted the lives of many. Those who had the opportunity of hearing him speak about his personal experience growing up a person with a disability, will not forget his words. He advocated that we not *“Judge a book by it’s cover,”* that we forgive those who do not understand and attempt to enlighten them. He brought a depth of sincere caring for others to his role.

Chavis served on the **Council on Developmental Services**, formally the Council on Mental Retardation and on the **North Region’s Advisory Council**. He spoke to groups at schools, at the Department of Public Works and anywhere he was invited. He served on the **North Region’s Human Rights Committee** and co-taught classes on Human Rights. He became certified in CPR to add to his accomplishments and to be prepared to help others in an emergency. He started a self advocacy group in the East Hartford area and was elected its president. These are a few of his accomplishments, but the one that he was most proud of was being part of changing the agency’s name to the Department of Developmental Services.

Chavis accomplished a great deal with us and on behalf of the individuals served by the department. He had a wisdom beyond his years and was gracious enough to share this with all who would listen. He

will remain in our hearts. His smile and good humor will remain in our thoughts. Although we will never replace him, the person he was and his leadership status as one of the **First Self Advocates** for the department, he would want us to fill this important role with another capable and passionate self advocate to carry on the work he so loved. To this end, DDS case managers and the private agencies that provide supports to individuals will be reviewing an announcement in the near future to share with individuals who would like to apply to become a Self Advocate Coordinator in the North Region.



Tribute to Chavis *Anonymous*

His life was a testimony to the beauty of the human spirit, kindness, compassion (which he had so much of), forgiveness, his patience, and understanding for his fellow man and now he leaves a legacy of the great potential for beauty, within the human spirit. For those of us who were blessed to know him, his spirit will be within us always, as will his words of wisdom, presented to us as he lived the true human spirit, of faith, hope, respect, reverence, even in the face of adversity. One of his favorite expressions, as he spoke from the heart was “Why don’t you read the book, rather than just look at the cover, always get to know a person.” These lasting impressions from him will continue to support and guide us, as we miss him dearly.

IFS in North Region is Psyched

The North Region is pleased to announce the appointment of **Delia Lebron-Rodriguez, Ph.D.** and **Jonathan Michaelis, Ph.D.** to the **Individual and Family Support (IFS) Division**.

Dr. Lebron-Rodriguez and Dr. Michaelis are licensed psychologists with extensive experience working both with families and persons with cognitive limitations. Their primary responsibility will be to support families who have their children living at home.

The IFS psychologists are intended to be a support to you. They are consultants to you, and not

someone who will be able to see either you or your family for long-term counseling. However you can expect that they will assist you with in-home strategies and skills, explore community resources with you and be available to your case manager as a member of your Family Support Team.

Dr. Lebron-Rodriguez and Dr. Michaelis have begun to familiarize themselves with our region and have started to have family consultations. They look forward to working with you and your family. Please discuss your needs with your case manager so that we can be the support you need.

North Region Update

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) North Region recently announced the appointments of **Steve Robson** as Assistant Regional Director for the Public Programs Division, **Scott F. Wolfe** as Developmental Services Director of Quality Assurance in the Quality Assurance Division and **Sarah Curtis Cook** as Human Resources Manager in the Human Resources Division.

Mr. Robson, the newly appointed Assistant Regional Director for Public Programs

has worked for the DDS for the past 32 years. Before joining the department he worked at the Aetna Life & Casualty in Hartford and started volunteering for the then Department of Mental Retardation one day a week. He enjoyed it so much that he began volunteering every day of the week and decided to change careers. Mr. Robson's decision has been a great benefit to the department and has had a wonderful impact on both consumers and staff. He began his career as a Direct Care Worker and quickly advanced through the years working in various positions including; Program Monitor, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Gareth Thorne and since 1986, Program Manager.

Mr. Robson received his Bachelor's Degree at New Hampshire College. As the new Assistant Regional Director, Public Programs, he will be responsible for the oversight of Public Day Program, Public Residential Program including Community Living Arrangement (CLA), Independent Living Program, Clinical Services and Facility

Management. His duties include providing residential and day supports, related case management, clinical services and facilities management for over 500 individuals. He is responsible for over sixty-five campus, CLA and individual support residential programs in locations throughout the North Region. **Mr. Robson can be reached at (860) 263-2570 or e-mail: steven.robson@ct.gov.**

Mr. Wolfe was appointed Director of Quality Assurance

on April 25, 2008 and comes to DDS from the South Region where he was a Regional Residential Program Manager. Mr. Wolfe joined state service in 1979 as a Behavior Modification Specialist at Seaside Regional Center. He has spent his career with the state in an extensive variety of supervisory and management roles. Mr. Wolfe has served as a Residential Program Supervisor, Director of Staff Development, Director of Planning, acting Assistant Regional Director for Public Programs and most recently was Regional Residential Program Manager in the South Region. Mr. Wolfe holds a B.A. in Psychology and an M.A. in Special Education from the University of Connecticut.

Mr. Wolfe will be responsible for directing a comprehensive program of quality assurance and monitoring regulatory compliance activities and program enhancement in public and private residential day programs. He will provide direction and supervision to the region's Quality Improvement Division. This includes

responsibility for quality improvement, planning and resource coordination, coordination of abuse and neglect investigations, coordination of clinical / psychological services including tracking and analysis of incident reports, and regional health services oversight.

Mr. Wolfe can be contacted at (860) 263-2460 or e-mail: scott.wolfe@ct.gov.

Ms. Cook joined DDS in May 2008 as the North Region's Human Resource Manager.

She comes to DDS from the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) where she was a Principal Human Resources Specialist in addition to functioning as the Assistant Director of Labor Relations. Ms. Cook began her career in state service with DMHAS in July 1998 before completing her Bachelor's Degree at Central Connecticut State University in 2000. In addition to her extensive experience in labor relations, Ms. Cook has experience in recruitment / selection and all areas of general human resources administration.

In her new role, Ms. Cook will oversee the full range of HR operations and staff for DDS North Region including recruitment, selection, classification, performance management, payroll administration (including DDS Central Office), FMLA administration, workers' compensation administration, labor relations and staff development. **Ms. Cook can be reached at (860) 263-2557 or e-mail: sarah.cook@ct.gov.**

Leisure Resources in Connecticut Camps & Activity Guide Information

CT SUMMER YOUTH CAMP DIRECTORY

A comprehensive listing of youth camps in CT focusing on individuals with special needs. To request a brochure or download from the web.

Website: www.ctcamps.org

Phone: 860-632-1485

(SERC—State Education Resource Center)

CT RECREATION & PARKS ASSOC., INC.

Complete listing of towns and their nearby Parks & Recreation Department contact information. Check the blue pages of your phone book for your town phone number listing. Most departments have seasonal brochures about their town's offerings or the information can be taken directly off of the town's website.

Website: www.crpa.com

Phone: 860-721-0384

YOUTH SUMMER ACTIVITIES IN STATE OF CT

Through a partnership between the State of Connecticut and the CT United Way – see the large number of programs that are available.

Website: www.211ct.org/focus/youth

Phone: 860-571-7525

BEST BUDDIES CONNECTICUT

"Best Buddies is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one to one friendships and integrated employment." Programs have expanded over the years and Best Buddies now offers middle and high school programs, colleges, citizens, international, e-buddies and jobs. All of them strive to offer opportunities for increased socialization and inclusion in community life. Currently in Connecticut there are 34 High School Chapters, 10 Middle School Chapters and 15 College Chapters. For information on the program:

Website: www.bestbuddies.org

Phone: 203-773-9233

The following people can be accessed at this number for CT Best Buddies information:

Middle and High School Chapters: Bianca Smith or Ryan Sweeney

College Chapters:

Sara Morocco

Citizens:

Meghan Sweeney

CONNECTICUT ACTIVITY GUIDE

Connecticut Cultural Guide

Information on community and maritime festivals, sporting events, street fairs, arts and crafts shows, antique shows, one-time special event and lectures or discussions.

Connecticut Vacation Guide

List of entertainment and travel venues that include: museums, galleries, historic sites, theaters, accommodations, and large scale major events open to the general public.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

CT Commission on Culture & Tourism

1 Constitution Plaza 2nd Floor Hartford, CT

Website:

ctcommissiononculture&tourism.org

Phone: 860-256-2811

CT Fairs Guide

Numerous State and county fairs in Connecticut from July to September. Request a free copy.

Website: www.ctfairs.org

CAMP HARKNESS

301 Great Neck Road
Waterford, CT 06385

A State Park for people with disabilities. Year round camping, beach, picnic, showering facilities and an accessible playground.

FREE Passes for those with disabilities.

Call: 860-443-7818

Camp Director:
Vicki Severin

ADDITIONAL LEISURE INFORMATION

For individuals with special needs in your area, contact your DDS Regional Rehabilitation Therapy Supervisor:

NORTH: Elisa Marcoux
860-331-2039

WEST: Linda Aquavia
860-496-3013

SOUTH: Vicki Severin
860-443-7818

STS: Karen Kalenauskas
203-586-2977

Day Trip Opportunities

TOWN	ACTIVITY	WEBSITE	PHONE
BRIDGEPORT	Discover Museum	Discoverymuseum.org	203-372-3521
BRIDGEPORT	Captain's Cover Seaport Museum	captainscoveseaport.com	203-335-1433
BRIDGEPORT	Beardsley Zoo	BeardsleyZoo.org	203-394-6565
BRISTOL	Lake Compounce Amusement Park	lakecompounce.com	860-583-3300
BRISTOL	American Clock & Watch Museum	clockmuseum.org	860-583-6070
BRISTOL	New England Carousel Museum	thecarouselmuseum.org	860-585-5411
CHESHIRE	Barker Character, Comic & Cartoon Museum	barkermuseum.com	203-699-3822
DANBURY	Military Museum of Southern New England	usmilitarymuseum.org	203-790-0420
DANBURY	Danbury Railway Museum	danbury.org/drm	203-778-8337
EAST GRANBY	Old New Gate Prison	OldNewgatePrison@yahoo.com	860-844-0262
EAST HADDAM	William Gillette Castle State Park	ctrivervalley.com	860-526-2336
EAST HAVEN	Shore Line Trolley Museum	bera.org	203-467-6927
EAST WINDSOR	Connecticut Trolley Museum	cttrolley.org	860-527-5540
EAST WINDSOR	Connecticut Fire Museum	office@ccraweb.com	860-627-6540
ESSEX	Connecticut River Museum	ctrivermuseum.org	860-767-8269
ESSEX	Valley Railroad	essexsteamtrain.com	800-377-3987
FARMINGTON	Hill-Stead Museum	hillstead.org	860-677-4787
GOSHEN	Action Wildlife (Zoo)	actionwildlife.org	860-482-4465
GREENWICH	National Audubon Society	greenwich.audubon.org	203-869-5272
GROTON	US Navy Submarine Force Museum	usnautilus.org	860-694-3174
HARTFORD	Mark Twain House Museum	marktwainhouse.org	860-247-0998
HARTFORD	Wadsworth Atheneum	wadsworthatheneum.org	860-278-2670
IVORYTON	Company of Fife & Drummers Museum	companyoffifeanddrum.org	860-767-2237
KENSINGTON	New Britain Youth Museum(Hungerford)	newbritainyouthmuseum.org	860-225-3020
MANCHESTER	Lutz Children's Museum	lutzmuseum.org	860-643-0949
MASHANTUCKET	Mashantucket Pequot Museum	pequotmuseum.org	860-441-9670
MIDDLEBURY	Quassy Amusement Park	quassy.com	800-367-7275
MYSTIC	Olde Mystic Village	oldmysticvillage.org	860-536-4941
MYSTIC	Mystic Aquarium	mysticaquarium.org	860-572-5955
MYSTIC	Mystic Seaport	mysticseaport.org	860-572-5313
NEW BRITAIN	RockCats Baseball	rockcats.com	860-224-8383
NIANTIC	Children's Museum of Southeastern CT	childrensmuseumsect.org	860-691-1111
NORWICH	CT Defender's Baseball	ctdefenders.com	860-887-7962
NORWICH	Maritime Aquarium	maritimeaquarium.com	203-852-0700
NORWICH	Stepping Stones Museum	Steppingstonemuseum.com	203-899-0606
THOMASTON	Railroad Museum of New England, Inc.	rmne.org	860-283-4245
TORRINGTON	Warner Theater	warnertheatre.org	860-489-7180
WATERBURY	Palace Theater	palacetheaterct.org	203-755-4700

Connecticut Special Olympics

REGIONAL DIRECTORS CONTACT INFORMATION

Eastern Region – Norwich Office

Director: Marc Mercadante
 Phone: 860-887-1555 Toll Free: 877-660-6667
 Email: MarcM@soct.org

Northwest Region – Southbury Office

Director: Steve DeWitte
 Phone: 203-267-6566
 Email: SteveD@soct.org

Southwest Region – Stratford Office

Director: Lisa Vane
 Phone: 203-380-0990
 Email: LisaV@soct.org

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SCHEDULE CT STATE COMPETITIONS

SUMMER GAMES – THROUGH JUNE

Sports Offered: aquatics, athletics, cycling, gymnastics, soccer

FALL SPORTS FESTIVAL – JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER

Sports Offered: bocce, golf, sailing, softball

HOLIDAY SPORTS CLASSIC – SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER

Sports Offered: basketball, bowling, powerlifting, volleyball

WINTER GAMES – NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH

Sports Offered: alpine skiing, cross country skiing, figure skating, floor hockey, snowboarding, snowshoeing, speed skating

REGIONAL COMPETITIONS AND FUNDRAISERS

DDS NORTH REGION

Regional Games – UH, Watkinson School, Weaver HS, Bristol Eastern HS and Dennis-Malone Aquatics Center, Bristol – MAY

Cop on Top Fundraiser – JULY & AUGUST

Corporate 5K – Downtown Hartford – AUGUST

Softball Invitational – AUGUST

Unified and Traditional Bowling Qualifier – East Hartford and Southington – NOVEMBER

Hartford Wolfpack Bowl-o-thon – NOVEMBER

DDS SOUTH REGION

July Picnic – Polish American Club – West Haven

Softball Invitational – Groton – AUGUST

Southwest Region Golf Classic – Yale – SEPTEMBER

Bowling Invitational – Hamden – OCTOBER

Unified & Traditional Bowling Qualifiers – Groton – NOVEMBER

Bowling Qualifier – Milford – NOVEMBER

DDS WEST REGION

Softball Invitational – Danbury – AUGUST

Bowling Invitational – Norwalk – OCTOBER

Unified & Traditional Bowling Qualifiers – Danbury – NOVEMBER

West Region Update

West Region Family Respite Centers

Summer is here and that means its vacation time at our respite centers. A total of six weeks each fiscal year is set aside for school-aged children, ages 4-21. This means the Respite Centers will remain open the entire week to provide support. **IF YOU ARE INTERESTED in registering for a summer week,** please contact your case manager to request a "referral for stay."

In addition, we would like to inform you that our **Ella Grasso Respite Center** has moved to a new location on White Plains Road in Trumbull, Connecticut.

The Respite Center staff does not provide transportation so we ask that you arrange with the Respite supervisors a time when you will drop off and pick up your family member. The good news is all of this support is provided to your family member at no cost except for the fees to participate in the fun community activities that require a payment. The Respite Supervisor will share the amount that will meet this need.

WEST REGION RESPITE CENTER 2008 SUMMER HOURS

Lower Fairfield Family Respite Center:

- July 3rd through July 22nd
- August 7th through August 19th

Spruce Brook Family Respite Center:

- July 1st through July 4th
- July 14th through July 18th
- July 28th through August 1st
- August 11th through August 15th
- August 18th through August 22nd

Torrington Family Respite Center:

- July 7th through July 11th
- July 21st through July 25th
- August 4th through August 8th
- August 18th through August 22nd
- August 25th through August 29th

White Plains Family Respite Center:

- June 23rd to July 2nd
- August 18th to September 2nd

Resource Fair

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) West Region is hosting a **Provider Resource Fair** on August 21, 2008 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. The fair will be held at the **Norwalk Community College**, 188 Richards Avenue, Norwalk, CT.

This event is open to consumers, families, and anyone interested in learning about available services. Qualified vendors, community agencies, as well as DDS staff will be on-hand to provide information in the following areas:

- Employment Supports
- Respite
- In-Home Supports
- Advocacy
- Families Helping Families
- Home & Community Based Waiver
- Supported Living
- Community Training Homes
- Fiscal Intermediary Services
- Home Health Services
- Self Determination
- Transportation

ADMISSION IS FREE AND NO REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, please contact Joan Fortin at 203-805-7420 or joan.fortin@ct.gov.

West Region Update

Taking the Step to Greater Independence

Are you thinking about taking control of your own supports? Do you think you want to be “the boss” and hire and manage your own support staff? Finding, choosing, and keeping great support staff is not always easy but it is very possible if you want to take that first step. **Jossie Torres, Ivan Villa, and Jamie Louchen**, the **West Region Self Advocate Coordinators** have been trained to assist individuals and families in hiring and managing their own supports. The Self Advocate Coordinators have been offering training in **“Portability: Hiring and Managing Your Own Supports”** and **“Self Advocacy: Speak Up, Speak Out”**.

People are learning about portability and are making changes in their lives that are more supportive of their choices in life. If you are interested in taking the step towards more independence, the Self Advocate Coordinators are available to help you in this process.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED in learning more about self directing your supports, please contact your case manager and they will assist you in setting up an appointment with one of the West Region Self Advocates.

Gate House Café Concerts

This summer will be the 9th year of the **Gate House Café** concert series. The concerts will again be held on Tuesdays from 6:30 – 8:30 pm on the **Great Lawn of the Southbury Training School (STS)**. They are open to the public and are free. The series begins June 17th with **Eight to the Bar**, East Coast’s most popular Swing Band. The last concert of the season is August 12th. Other performers will include **The Brubeck Brothers Quartet** (original jazz), **Amy Gallatin** (country), **Respect Due** (reggae), **Timmy Maia** (Connecticut’s sensational, hot Rhythm & Blues Band), **Rhythm Room** (A high-energy Percussion Ensemble that incorporates music & rhythm). Come join the fun on Tuesday evenings!

For more information and complete schedule call the Music Therapy Department at 203-586-2144 or visit the DDS website at: www.ct.gov/DDS.

Speaking up Makes a Difference in Jamie’s Life

by Jossie Torres

West Region Self Advocate Coordinator

Jamie Louchen is the newest **Self Advocate Coordinator (SAC)** for Department of Developmental Services (DDS). He currently resides in Torrington, Connecticut where he was born and raised. Jamie is the youngest of seven children, he has four brothers and two sisters. Jamie attended Wetmore Elementary School and graduated in 1991 from Torrington High School. Jamie is very active with the Special Olympics. He is involved in cross country skiing, bowling, swimming, and golf – all of which he enjoys very much.

Jamie is a great example of what it is to be a productive self advocate. Back in 2005, Jamie became concerned with his weight and health issues. So he went to his family doctor and his support staff with his concerns of wanting to do something to make a change in his life. He went on a 1800 calorie per day diet, began eating healthier foods, and began regular exercise. He also joined a group called TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly). To this date Jamie has lost 80 pounds and has kept it off. He advocated to make a change in his life to be healthier.

Jamie has also been a great self advocate in making a difference in his work life. Over the years, he has worked for Stop & Shop, Hutzler Factory, Bronson, and Center Congregational Church. But according to Jamie, his dream job was to be a self advocate. Jamie had applied for the SAC position on a previous occasion but did not get the job. He was persistent and applied again when the position became available. Jamie says that when he received the call saying he had the position he began to cry with happiness. Jamie made his dream happen.

The West Region is pleased to welcome Jamie as our Self Advocate Coordinator working out of the Torrington office.

YOU CAN REACH HIM at 860-496-3067 or email: jamie.louchin@ct.gov.

South Region Update

Fire Victims Supported by Region and Community

Two major fires in the South Region during the first few months of 2008 resulted in an astonishing loss of personal property but no loss of life. Over the course of both events, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) and private provider staff, parents and families, and the community at large all demonstrated extraordinary support for the DDS consumers affected by the fires.

The first fire occurred in January at the **Seaview-Hempstead Apartments** in New London, a DDS-owned building that is home to nearly twenty adults in individual apartments. As a result of a faulty lamp switch, two apartment units became completely engulfed in flames within minutes and the building had to be completely evacuated. Fire responders from New London noted how quickly and efficiently the staff and residents responded to the alarms and carried out the essential steps learned through years of practice drills. After the fire was completely doused, the building remained vacant for one week while thorough smoke cleaning and maintenance work was performed. The two burned units required complete rebuilding. Despite the speed and magnitude of this fire, there were no injuries. The loss of personal property by the residents of the two affected units was mitigated by immediate support from staff, DDS, the Red Cross, and families, who all assisted in replacing furnishings and cherished items.

In April 2008, DDS was again impacted by a major fire when the **Peachtree Apartments** in Norwich burned to the ground in a fire that was called one of

the worst in eastern Connecticut. Of the more than 150 people displaced by the six-alarm blaze, twenty-five were individuals served by DDS and our private agency partners. Some lived alone and others with roommates or family, and miraculously all were rescued or escaped unharmed. When the fire broke out at about 1:20AM there were two private agency staff on 3rd shift duty for some of the apartments, and other staff from both DDS and private agencies arrived within minutes. All those who helped were heroic in their efforts to ensure the safety of DDS consumers as well as other residents of the buildings. For example, a private agency staff person alerted 911 before carrying out a disabled individual, another private agency staffer came to the site with her young son to assist DDS consumers to evacuate while her firefighter husband fought the fire, and a DDS support staff was on site in her role as a volunteer firefighter. Together with other emergency responders and the building maintenance person, these heroes ensured that all DDS consumers were accounted for and brought to safety. In the days and weeks that followed, countless DDS and private agency staff helped these individuals to find new homes and replace their furnishings and possessions. Extensive support was also provided by the local Red Cross and Norwich Human Services.

While these substantial property losses affected many people financially and emotionally, the entire DDS community is grateful that no physical injuries or loss of life was incurred. These fires serve as important reminders to all of us to keep fire safety guidelines at the forefront and to practice evacuation regularly. Although both fires took place in apartment complexes where people live more independent lives without a constant staff presence, their quick and efficient evacuation is an example to all of us. Many DDS individuals left the Peachtree fire barefoot and wearing only pajamas, leaving behind treasured items and even pets, yet they followed the evacuation steps they had been taught over the years. DDS and private agency staff in all settings check fire safety features and conduct practice drills regularly. Families should assure that they have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors throughout their home and that family members know what to do in the event of an alarm. Local fire marshals are a good resource for individuals and families who need assistance in checking their home and developing an evacuation plan.

For the latest information on:

- ▶ ELIGIBILITY SERVICES
- ▶ SUPPORTS & SERVICES
- ▶ RESPITE SERVICES
- ▶ WAVIER INFORMATION
- ▶ FAMILY SUPPORT GROUPS
- ▶ SELF ADVOCACY
- ▶ SELF DETERMINATION
- ▶ LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS 2008

Please visit us on the web:
www.ct.gov/dds

DDS Welcomes Newly Eligible Individuals and Families

Each year the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) accepts approximately 250 new individuals through our eligibility determination process. These individuals span every age group and live in all parts of our state. One thing they have in common is that they are new to DDS and generally unfamiliar with our services, supports, and staff. After being assigned to one of the three regions, they meet with a case manager who orients them to our service system. In an effort to strengthen our outreach and ease this transition, DDS is pleased to announce a series of workshops in the fall of 2008 entitled **"Welcome to DDS."** These workshops will be held in different parts of the state and will be targeted for those individuals and families who are new to DDS over the past year. Others who are not new, but could benefit from the introductory information that will be shared, are welcome to attend. Topics covered will include case management; how to request services and supports; and overviews of services that are available to individuals not enrolled in the waiver such as the family respite centers. All sessions will be held from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. **CONTACT your case manager for more information.**

The schedule for "Welcome to DDS" sessions is:

- **Wednesday, September 17th**
Silas Bronson Library
267 Grand Street, Waterbury
- **Thursday October 2nd**
DDS office, 401 W. Thames St., Norwich
- **Tuesday October 7th**
DDS office, 370 James St, New Haven
- **Thursday, October 16th**
DDS Training Room at the
Ella Grasso Center, 300 Armory Road, Stratford
- **Wednesday, October 22nd**
DDS office, 90 South Park Street, Willimantic
- **Wednesday, October 29th**
DDS office, 255 Pitkin St, East Hartford

Latino Family Forums a Success

The **Statewide Latino Family Forums Committee** (SLFFC), a bilingual group of regional case managers with the support of DDS Central Office staff, have been sponsoring **Family Forums in Spanish** for the Latino community in some of the state's major cities. The mission of the SLFFC is to help Spanish-speaking families learn to navigate the department's services by offering informational sessions with presentations and handouts in Spanish. The bilingual case managers in the North Region began these forums several years ago naming them "Noche Latina" or "Latino Night." In time, the popularity of the events grew and spread to the other DDS regions. Since then, the number and location of forums has grown and feedback from families and consumers attending has been very positive. Forums have been held in the cities of New Haven, Norwich, East Hartford, Norwalk and Waterbury, including consumers and families from Willimantic and Meriden as well as the host cities. Most recently, the South Region hosted forums in New Haven and Meriden, with over 25 individuals

and families in attendance. Bi-lingual case managers and family support workers provided translation and other supports to help make these events a success. Topics covered at the Forums have been related to the DDS waivers, new developments in service provision, and the supports that DDS offers to families. Cross-cultural differences are identified and addressed by these forums and most importantly, family members are meeting others and expanding their network. They are utilizing each other as support and realizing they are not alone. Throughout all of the forums, families have shown a great deal of interest and have requested more forums with a variety of topics. The SLFFC has demonstrated the department's commitment to our Spanish-speaking consumers and families with these forums. Families in turn have shown that they are eager to learn about DDS services and to use their new knowledge to enhance the life of their family member.

Individual & Family Support Grants Audits

As a result of recommendations made by the **Auditors of Public Accounts**, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has developed a new procedure for annual audits of expenditures made by **Individual and Family Support (IFS)** grant recipients. IFS grants up to \$5,000 a year are made available to individuals who live on their own or to families who have a child or adult living in the family home, to assist in supporting those individuals who do not have ongoing residential supports to live successfully in the community. Grant recipients use the funds to obtain goods and services that directly benefit their family member who has a disability. Grant recipients sign an agreement when the funds are awarded. The agreement includes information regarding the need to maintain documentation of items purchased with the money received from DDS.

Each year at the close of the fiscal year in June, grant recipients are required to complete and submit an Expenditure Report identifying the items and services purchased with the funds. When they sign this report, they are indicating that purchases were made for the intended purposes. As funds are spent, families who receive the grants are required to maintain documentation of the purchase,s which may be in the form of receipts or cancelled checks. Families must maintain this paperwork for three full years after they receive an IFS grant. In order to make sure that the grants are spent appropriately, each

Region will perform audits of the grants that were made during that year. Families will be notified by the region when they have been selected for an audit.

If you are one of the families/individuals to be audited, you will need to provide specific documentation to the region on how the IFS grant money you received from DDS was spent. The documentation is in addition to the Expenditure Report. Remember, in order to be prepared, you must keep records of all goods and services purchased during the year including copies of cancelled checks and paid receipts. If you are audited and are unable to provide accurate documentation as to how the money was spent, there is the possibility that you may be ineligible for future IFS Grants.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS or concerns about this procedure, please contact your case manager for assistance. We look forward to continuing to support Connecticut families with DDS Individual & Family Support Grants and will work with you to make the audit process as smooth as possible.

DDS Interpretation Services

The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is committed to providing services in a fair and culturally competent manner to enhance community involvement and participation of the individuals and families we serve. DDS has contracted with **Language Line Services** to provide interpretation for our consumers and their families to bridge the communication gap.

As the leader in over-the-phone interpretation, Language Line supplies its customers with over 170 languages and dialects from Arabic to Vietnamese. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. In over-the-phone interpretation,

Language Line interpreters listen to limited English speaking customers and their families, analyze the message, and accurately convey its original meaning to staff and vice versa.

Consumers and families with limited or non-English speaking abilities may call DDS to connect with a staff member, and quickly be connected to a two-way conversation with an interpreter.

PLEASE CONTACT the DDS staff member you work with to learn more about this service or visit the DDS website at: www.ct.gov/dds.

One Mother's Journey

For Ms. Hallux-Ensminger, **Birth to Three's new autism-specific early intervention programs** have made a difference in her life.

"I called for a referral to the Birth to Three Program because my 2-year-old son, Marky, was delayed in his speech. As the process unraveled, I opened my eyes to the harsh reality of his other symptoms. This later led to a diagnosis of autism in November 2007," continued Ms. Hallux-Ensminger. "My son's progress has been amazing. Our service coordinator and speech therapist's energy and charm put a smile on Marky's face every visit."

Ms. Hallux-Ensminger's son is being served by one of the six new autism-specific programs that currently cover 80% of the state's population.

"Our Early Intervention Associate worked so hard with my son. The first week she chased him all around our back yard, trying to establish eye contact, sneak in a hand-over-hand exercise and gain a general rapport with him. I watched and thought . . . this lady is crazy . . . how is she going to keep up with him? . . . this is never going to work," said Ms. Hallux-Ensminger. "But sure enough, each week she pulled more and more out of him. Before I knew it, he was sitting at a table, doing a puzzle, and smiling at her. Our Applied Behavior Analyst is an incredible person. She had a wonderful way of using humor and insight to give the professionals, daycare person, and myself beneficial feedback. The reputation she has with her colleagues is outstanding. She thinks out of the box and is a great cheerleader for families and professionals who deal with kids on the spectrum."

"I am so grateful for the work and dedication of these women. Marky is doing very well in Pre-Kindergarten, which is due in great part to the preparation and transition work from the Birth to Three program. I know that I have a tough road ahead of me with Marky but I feel confident now that I can handle it with the advice, tools, and strategies Birth to Three has given me."

FOR MORE INFORMATION about Birth to Three programs, please visit their website at: www.birth23.org

West Region Family Support Program Update

Continued from pg. 11

The **West Region Family Support Program** has been providing support to families since January 2007. The Region has 12 Family Support Workers, based in Cheshire, Danbury, Norwalk, Stratford, Torrington and Waterbury. They have assisted over 200 individuals and their families, ranging in age from 4 years to 69 years old.

Supports provided include skill building at home and in the community, such as:

- **homework skills**
- **recreational/play skills**
- **hygiene**
- **budgeting**
- **grocery shopping**
- **cooking**
- **making new friendships**
- **strengthening relationships with families and friends**
- **transportation and assistance to help individuals access community resources**
- **transportation to medical and dental appointments**
- **support as well as translation services to families**

Family Support Workers have been instrumental in assisting and promoting individuals to connect with DDS Self Advocacy groups in the West Region.

Family Support Workers work closely with other DDS staff such as case managers, behaviorists, education liaisons, recreation therapists and other agencies and community organizations.

Feedback from families has been overwhelmingly positive for this program. The one common theme that families have expressed is the need for more family support workers and increasing the amount of time the family support workers can devote to the individual.

Referrals for Family Support services are made through your DDS Case Manager.

Direct to Families

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We Walk Together *Over the Span of a Lifetime ...*

A Mother's Journey

"Learning my son was on the autism spectrum was the best and worse thing to happen to me. As a single working mother, I don't think I could have managed without the support of my family, friends and the Birth to Three program," said Kristen Hallux-Entsminger of Torrington, mother of three-year old Marcus.

See story on page 15



(left to right) Kristen Hallux-Entsminger and her son Marky.