State of Connecticut

DMR Employee News

Governor M. Jodi Rell **Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara**

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"Ask the Commissioner"

If you have a question for Commissioner O'Meara, you are invited to e-mail Joan Barnish at joan.barnish@po.state.ct.us

SEND US YOUR STORIES

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DMR SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Be Aware Be SAFE
Safety Expects the Unexpected

Focus on Home Safety

Whether you care for our consumers in a group home, family home or residential setting, home safety plays a major role in providing an environment free of danger.

Some ***Home Safety*** reminders include; know the proper storage of pharmaceuticals, over the counter medications, and toxic substances, such as household cleaning products, paints and stains. Combustibles and flammables should be properly stored and make sure stoves and gas grills are operating properly. Be aware of where items are stored and the type of accessibility to the storage area. Keep the outside environment free from clutter and debris. Check water temperatures and know water safety policies when bathing or swimming.

It's our responsibility to provide a safe environment for our consumers. We need to ***Be Aware to Be Safe*** and to ***Expect the Unexpected***.

BEST BUDDIES RIDES AGAIN

DMR Team CT readies for their 90-mile trek across Massachusetts. Pictured (left to right) Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara, Renee Ruoff, DMR Case Manager, Eileen McMurrer, Birth to Three Coordinator and Frederick Balicki, DMR Licensed Facilities Specialist Supervisor

The Department of Mental Retardation and Best Buddies CT have partnered together over the years to enrich Best Buddies programs throughout the state. In recent years, the Connecticut contingent for the *Volvo Best Buddies Challenge* bicycle race has grown from just a few riders to a 24-member team in 2006. Not only has the Team CT grown, but the $40,000 raised this year ranked them fifth in overall contributions.

Part of the 24-member team, DMR employees Fred Balicki, DMR Licensed Facilities Specialist Supervisor, Eileen McMurrer, Birth to Three Coordinator and Renee Ruoff, DMR Case Manager joined *continued on next page*

NEXT GENERATION LEARNS ABOUR DMR

South Region daughters and sons learn about what their parents do for a living.

On April 27th sixteen youth between the ages of 8 and 13 joined their parents for a day of fun and learning at the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) South Regional office in Wallingford as part of the national "Take Your Son and Daughter to Work" initiative. The event was expertly organized by Brigitta Rainey, Ann-Gela Holloway, and Jolie Crescimano-Goss.

After starting their day with breakfast and arts and crafts projects, the children heard an overview from Regional Director Mary McKay about the function of DMR and it's Mission Statement to support individuals and families. The youngsters toured the office, learning about the operations in each department along the way. They learned the crucial role of the Business Office, the function of case managers and quality monitors, how HR supports employees, and even how to apply for a job.

Judith Bernasconi, South Region HR Administrative Assistant hands out applications for employment to the next generation of DMR employees.

Additional guest speakers included a DMR Nurse and an SMRW, who both spoke about the rewards of heath care careers with the DMR population. Some of the young adults even accompanied their parents on home visits and helped to facilitate an Individual Plan. Parents then joined their youngster for a viewing of the CPTV video "The Challenge" after which a discussion ensued about the lives of people with disabilities and how we can all make a difference. Each child left with a copy of the poster "Some Words Do Hurt" and the task of hanging it up in their school, but not before rounding out the day with ice cream sundaes.

Everyone seemed to have a valuable and enjoyable experience, and some of the children wrote letters expressing their impressions. Young Andre Holloway wrote "I learned that we should not call people retarded because it makes them feel bad", while ten-year-old Matthew Greggis noted "I learned today at DMR that you should always treat people with disabilities like how you want to be treated…when kids you know laugh and imitate and call each other retarded, next time please decide what is the right thing to do".

Ten-year-old Julia Goss summed it all up when she found out that "working at DMR isn't easy…..you have to do a lot of stuff like deliver mail, type up minutes, organize a lot of stuff, and go to all the meetings…." The event was a success and the region plans to continue the effort to educate our young people in future years.

Best Buddies *continued from page one*

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara on the 90-mile race from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston to the Kennedy Compound in Hyannis Port. Together, our DMR employees raised almost $9,000 for Best Buddies. One-half of all the money raised by Team CT stays here in Connecticut to help establish one-to-one friendships and secure integrated jobs for people with intellectual disabilities.

The ***2006 Volvo Best Buddies Challenge*** will air Saturday, **July 29th, 4 p.m. on NBC Sports**. Check your local listings for the channel in your area.