

## President's Letter: The MHC's Upcoming Events are Many

It is my pleasure to introduce this Spring 2002 newsletter. We have so many new and exciting plans for this year. Our membership is actively involved in improving the quality of many lives through the development and implementation of creative programs and services for the people we serve.

As you read on in this edition, you will see MHC member agencies describe what they are doing and more than likely marvel at the innovation involved!

### Project FAME at Greystone

Greystone Programs, Inc., has been a pioneer in supporting the concepts of Person Centered Planning and Self-Determination. We believe that everyone who participates in any type of "Day Program" should have the opportunity to make choices, build relationships, and become valued members of their community in a way that is personally gratifying.

The Day Program Without Walls initiative is one that we utilize to its fullest potential to help us achieve our service mission. Currently, Greystone Programs serves 28 people at Greyco through Day Habilitation, Supported Employment, and VESID Job Placement.

Project FAME (Forming Association through Meaningful activities and Employment) utilizes the Day Program Without Walls concept to provide people with choices in their day activities. By answering the five questions below about community relations taught by Beth Mount, Ph.D., the program supports persons in creating a schedule that includes making choices and building true relationships in their community.

1. Does he/she share places in the

*(Continued on page 4)*

In addition to this, individual members under the direction of some very involved board members are planning for what promises to be an annual conference of a size and scope unprecedented in the history of the Coalition.

The Mid-Hudson Coalition and SUNY New Paltz have joined together to put on "Direct Care: Making a World of Difference," an International Conference on Practice and Professionalism.

There will be over 20 different countries represented and direct support professionals from around the world will be present to share experiences and practices that they have developed in their own countries and cultures. So please join us in this multinational celebration that will inspire participants to develop direct care as a respected and noble profession.

At the end of March, the MHC will host a CEO Forum at Abbott House in Westchester County. This meeting with Executive Directors who operate programs in the lower Mid-Hudson area, will provide an opportunity to

network and brainstorm ways to duplicate the work of the Coalition. By providing educational opportunities for direct care staff as well as addressing common concerns, we will work to meet the challenge all human service agencies face specific to their front line workforce.

Please look for your invitation in the mail or call to reserve your seat in the very exciting venture.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Public Information Committee for their continued diligence in "getting the word out" and producing this newsletter. This subcommittee of the board has done a fine job and continues to plan and organize Direct Care Forums that are action packed, informational and fun.

Look for the flyer for the next Forum, scheduled to take place at Saint Agatha home in Rockland County on March 22<sup>nd</sup> from 12:30 to 2:30 pm.

Hope to see you there!

Elizabeth Connolly, MHC President  
St. Agatha Home  
(845) 623-3461 x312



Dear Member Agencies,

The MHC's Public Relations/Membership Committee welcomes contributions to the newsletter. Press releases, upcoming events, new programs, or articles written by individuals providing or receiving services are all eligible for publication. We publish the newsletter quarterly, but you may submit at any time. Email your information (preferably in Word or text-only format) to: [mhcarticles@hotmail.com](mailto:mhcarticles@hotmail.com) or mail to: Ms. Lori Rose, Speech Department, Anderson School, 4885 Route 9, PO Box 367, Staatsburg, NY 12580. Thank you!

## Abbott House Creates Post-Adoption Resource Center

Abbott House, a multi-faceted child caring agency, recently received a \$221,330 grant from the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to implement the Hudson Valley Post Adoption Resource Center.

Thanks to this grant, the resource center provides services to eligible families who have adopted children in Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester Counties.

The program is designed to assist families with support groups, respite care, parent education, school advocacy, short-term family counseling, short-term individual counseling for both parents and children, and training for mental health and social service professionals working with adoptive families. Another important service is to provide linkages to services already available in the individual family's community such as schools, medical facilities, and therapy.

Adoption stories don't always have happy endings. According to studies conducted in the United States, approximately 10 to 25 percent of adoptions fail. Now for the first time ever, New York State has allocated

funding to provide the resources to help these newly forged families survive. The ultimate goal is to provide those post-adoption services that will improve the chances of making the adoption permanent. Many of the children adopted were children who are known as "special needs" children. Special needs is a broad term that may encompass many specific problems such as crack and cocaine addiction since birth, neurological issues, Attachment Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and many other difficulties that arise from abuse and/or neglect.

There isn't a cookie-cutter solution to fit each family's needs. Every situation is unique and requires an intervention specifically for the problem presented.

For example, a recent intervention took place in Orange County when a family requested assistance finding a school program for their autistic child. The center worker accompanied the family to the CSE hearing and provided the support the family required. Another situation involved a youngster just entering puberty who began to display

many problem behaviors, which were never an issue before. The center is providing parenting skills for the parents, and short-term family therapy to find appropriate solutions for the new behavior. The center is there to be a knowledgeable resource, and to help parents. Although the program is specifically designed for TANIF eligible families, a sliding scale fee for others is being considered.

The center hosted its first Adoptive Family Support Group meeting on October 25, 2001 in Rockland County. It has been well attended and ongoing monthly since then. We are in the process of starting a second support group in Orange County in January 2002. The first support group has bonded nicely, sharing their personal phone numbers, addresses and skills for the benefit of all its members.

Interested professionals and adoptive parents should contact Sydelle Gaines at (914) 591-7300 ext. 3019, Silvano Cerutti at ext. 3083 or Evelyn Santiago who is available in our Dutchess County Office at (845) 452-1805. We will be happy to supply any additional information on obtaining post-adoption information or services.

## Devereux Assists Individuals in Achieving Goals

What is a Devereux?

- ◆ A 60-acre facility in Red Hook, NY, for the care, treatment and preparation for life of mentally challenged and developmentally disabled children and young adults.
- ◆ An Autistic Children's Education and Day Care Center in Millwood, NY.

The Devereux New York facility is one of many Devereux Centers operating in 15 states. It was founded in 1915 by Helene Devereux, a 22-year-old school teacher, in Villanova, Pennsylvania, as a complete care and educational facility for mentally challenged children.

We believe that in a perfect world all children wake up happy. Parents tuck children in with dreams and teddy bears. Families celebrate milestones and their accomplishments match their dreams.

At Devereux we accept the imperfect and turn it into triumph. Our children come to us with mental and physical challenges. They are often damaged by neglect and misfortune.

Our overall purpose at Devereux is to help each child recognize his or her strengths and weaknesses; to help them become integrated into mainstream society; and to live with the greatest degree of self management as they can achieve.

Fortunately, the days of institutionalizing individuals with physical and mental challenges are over. It is the law of the land and the mission of Devereux to provide those we serve with a community life in a home-like environment where they become active, accepted participants in everyday life.

We try to prepare them to exercise their right to choice...employment...and the pursuit of personal goals to the best of their abilities. In reality, the cost of care for the people we serve far exceeds the financial allocations available from federal, state and municipal sources. To successfully complete the task, Devereux must reach out to the community to support the effort and love it takes to make these children part of the world we all enjoy everyday.

## REHAB Programs Launching Endowment Campaign

At REHAB Programs, Inc. we provide educational, vocational, clinical and residential services to over 1,700 individuals with disabilities.

Our mission has always been about providing assistance that empowers people to make informed decisions about the course of their life, care and career. Today, we pride ourselves on the network of community support and partnerships that help us make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors with disabilities. Our vision for the future is to continue adapting and expanding our services to provide growth opportunities for those we serve.



Programs.

Bricks are selling for \$100, \$500 or \$5,000, depending on the size of the brick. The bricks will be part of a walkway designed for the front of our administrative offices on Overocker Road in Poughkeepsie. This will help

In order to do this, we introduce the Pathway of Promise, an initiative that will provide financial security for tomorrow by building an endowment fund for REHAB

us meet our first-year goal of raising \$50,000 toward our endowment fund. If you are interested in purchasing a brick for our walkway and helping us secure our future, please contact Marybeth Cale, Director of Development at (845)485-9803 ext. 227.

We would also like to congratulate our Executive Director, William Carroll, on 25 years of service to REHAB Programs, Inc.!

Save These Dates:

March 23-24: Kids Expo

April 12: Annual Gala

June 24: REHAB Women's Cup Challenge and Golf Clinic

## Anderson School Provides Several New Programs

We appreciate the opportunity to discuss some of the important achievements and happenings at Anderson School during the past few months.

We have recently renovated all existing residential facilities. We are in the midst of a renovation project to convert an existing residence to an Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA).

We have updated our master plan and have constructed one new residence that is part of a construction project to build a total of eight new residential houses set in a village concept thereby improving the overall quality of life for our students.

This plan calls for the construction of these eight new residential houses and extensive renovation of older residences. We also have established a renovation plan for our IRAs over the next five years. We will continue aggressive fund raising strategies to facilitate funding for all such endeavors.

Our newly created after school program provides an array of enrichment activities designed to challenge our students to reach beyond the scope of classroom learning.

Students are offered the opportunity to choose from a variety of activities, clubs or classes each designed to teach



new skills, enhance current skills and interests, or foster the development of new hobbies or interests.

Staff or community volunteers who have a desire to share their own skills and interests with the children provide all activities. It is our hope that the program will expand to include children with and without disabilities from our local community.

The Anderson School provides many venues and opportunities for children to develop new interests, foster relationships and actively participate in recreational, leisure and cultural activities.

In addition, Anderson School had completed the first year of Transitional Services which include two state-of-the-art life skills rooms, focusing on positive group and individual work behavior through instruction in cooking, laundry, woodworking, horticulture and a business training center with computer tutorials and a copy center.

Students are also involved with a multitude of in-school and on-campus jobs that promote positive work skills, attitudes and behaviors. We are also looking forward to continuing to develop community opportunities that would include both volunteer and paid work experiences.

The goal of Transitional Services is that each student who leaves Anderson School is equipped with the necessary life skills so that they may achieve the highest level of independence they are capable of.

## Project FAME at Greystone Programs *(continued)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

- community with others?
2. Does he/she have meaningful relationships with people in those locations?
  3. Do others respect him/her for something that he/she brings to the relationship?
  4. Does he/she make meaningful choices when in the community?
  5. Does he/she make a personally meaningful contribution to the community?

Initially, there were five individuals participating in the Day Program Without Walls. Descriptions of a few people and a brief summary of what they are doing differently follows:

**J.M.:** J. moved to an IRA from an Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) one year ago. J. looked for, but had not successfully found, placement in a day program for over three years. This was due to the fact that J. has Autism and, at times, communicates through challenging behavior. Traditional Day Programs did not provide J. with some of the supports and choices he needed to succeed. J. has a high energy level, a need for consistent choices regarding his activities, and an enjoyment of the outdoors. This calls for a very specialized day situation to meet his wants and desires. Through the appropriate use of Day Habilitation funding and supports, J. would like a daily schedule that provides him with choices regarding where, when, how, and with whom. He requires consistent supports for behavior management and a consistent, appropriate communication outlet to help him to remain calm in any situation.

Therefore, J. excels with a small program that allows him to build one relationship at a time in any given place and, also provides him with physical activity as often as possible. J.'s individualized program involves some volunteer work in a local park, a job delivering mail for a non-profit organization, small group interactions at local diners and lots of exercise.

**L.V.:** L. worked in an affirmative business for six years. This was not truly something that he enjoyed or with which he had success, but all Greystone's attempts to find alternative day placement were ineffective. L. recently moved into an Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA) from an ICF and has become eligible for Day Habilitation funding. L. was showing his dislike for his job in many ways- through picture communications, through the exhibiting of physical frustration, and in his failure to perform work tasks. L. likes to meet people, participate in meaningful work or activities and, also, be less restricted in the type of duties he performs. Through the utilization of Day Habilitation funding, L. built an extremely varied weekly schedule -one that allows him to be involved with people, to be physically active, and with a small group of people. L.'s schedule includes playing basketball in the community, use of communication picture books, volunteering at the historical society, the YMCA and a local park beautifying the grounds. He is beginning to deliver meals to seniors in his community.

### Key Differences

These person-centered day programs are not located in any one building. Each person meets with their staff person and, at times, with their friends from program in a quiet community setting or at their home. Vehicles are available that allow for easy transport to and from each scheduled activity or job.

Service Coordinators are an integral part of the change team for this program. At this time, we have five-day habilitation staff in our small intimate program. There is one Program Coordinator whose job it is to work with each person and their team to create a personalized schedule. She is the person who makes initial contacts with possible volunteer opportunities and businesses regarding the unpaid dreams of the individual(s). She

regularly meets with people receiving services and supervises direct support staff in assuring that schedules and services are appropriate for the person.

The Direct Support staff has been changing their roles as well. They used to participate in much of the weekly scheduling and planning, sometimes excluding the individuals served. This has changed, and it is their role to determine what supports are required of them in providing scheduled services as determined by the person receiving those services. The Vocational Service Manager oversees all employment programs and their implementation. This role has become an integral one as we implement the new Project FAME model.

Through true teamwork and integration, the Vocational Service Manager coordinates work and volunteerism. Together with the Day Habilitation Specialist, he creates accommodations that will allow for people to be successful in the workplace in the volunteer role.

### Concluding Comments

Our program has grown in the past year, and we have experienced many challenges as we continue to develop. Many of these challenges have been resolved through teamwork and revisiting the person-centered philosophy of the program. We find that by decreasing our costs for building rent and utilities we are more able to afford smaller staffing ratios and used vehicles.

On some occasions, a schedule is created which the person determines isn't really what they expected or what they wanted. On these occasions the person-centered team revises the schedule. The coordinators find new activities or jobs for the person and works with the person, their direct support staff and people at the new site to coordinate methods for communication, ensure the person can be successful and provide appropriate personal supports.



## Horses Give Kids a Leg Up on Self-Esteem

*The following article written by Andrea Rubin appeared in the December 27, 2001 issue of The Journal News. It is reprinted in part below.*

A program designed to help boost the self-esteem of troubled youth and improve their relationship with police officers has a new participant.

Ice is the newest horse to be used in the COPS Barn Program which was started this summer on the Nanuet campus of St. Agatha of the New York Foundling Hospital. The COPS Barn, short for Children of Promise Stables, already had two horses.

St. Agatha's is home to 146 young adults referred to the facility by Family Court in New York City as well as 42 adults with developmental disabilities. The COPS program was designed to teach the young adults responsibility as well as improve their relationship with the Clarkstown Police Department. Police have

responded to St. Agatha's on stolen vehicle and house break-in reports.

"We were experiencing some problems with St. Agatha's. This is really what community policing is all about. St. Agatha's, the Nanuet community and Clarkstown Police all collaborated together to address a problem," said Clarkstown Detective Sgt. Tim O'Neill, who helped get the program started.

"We've seen an (improvement). Even when we have to go over there, it's been a whole different attitude on everybody's part."

The students working with the horses are given jobs at the stable that they must do. However, they've started spending time at the stable on their days off.

"It's teaching them to learn to control their patience, social skills and life

skills. They work in the barn in the morning and go to school. The teachers said how much they talk about the barn and love it," said Donna Rose, who runs the stables.

It took three years of fund raising and work to build the \$40,000 stables which include five stalls, a horse shower, office, tack room and riding area on about eight acres.

Rose and O'Neill said there are plans to expand the program to offer therapeutic riding services to some of St. Agatha's disabled residents.

O'Neill said he's happy with how the program is going and hopes to see it expand. "There's an understanding, a better understanding of everybody's problems. You're talking to a person that you know instead of talking to somebody you meet haphazardly. I'm just glad we did it," he said.

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**Mid-Hudson Coalition, Inc.**  
**24 DeLavergne Avenue**  
**Wappingers Falls, NY 12590**  
**845/297-8800 x101**

*Address Correction Requested*