

# CHOICES

Vol 9 No. 1 - Winter 08 - WEB VERSION

A Quarterly Newsletter about Self-Determination in Dane County

## Teaming Up For A Better Community

by Amanda Bell and Jeffrey Johnson

**D**o you consider your self a self advocate? Do you have problems that you want to make better? Do you believe that you can create a better world? Do you want to meet new people and take action together? Whether you're worried about jobs, where you live, shrinking budgets, or wanting a better social life, joining together with other advocates can make a difference in your life!

Stefanie Gilomen is just the person you need to meet. Stefanie is Dane County's new Self-Advocate coordinator and she has some great ideas. Stefanie will be an advisor to People First and will coordinate the *Choices* newsletter. She will also be working to find more voices for advocacy in Dane County and supporting groups of advocates to take action. She wants to get to know your stories and help you connect to other advocates who have similar interests and issues. She can support you and others to make changes in your community.

When Jeffrey Johnson interviewed Stefanie about her new position, here is what he learned:

**Q: Why do you want to work with people with disabilities?**

A: My brother has a disability so I have always been interested. It has also given me over 20 years of experience in the field!

**Q: What other jobs have you had before becoming the Self Advocate Coordinator?**

A: I have been a personal care worker, autism specialist, community organizer and of course, spent a lot of time as a student. Most recently, I am finishing up my Masters degree in Social Work.

**Q: What is your vision for Self-Advocacy in Dane County?**

A: I believe that advocacy is an individual as well as a group task—I believe that people should advocate for their own personal interests so the vision really is created by self advocates. My role is to bring together groups of people with shared interests and facilitate a process so we can work together. I can be an advocate also, but my words do not mean as much as the words of folks who have had the personal experience of having a disability.

**S**tefanie will be starting January 7<sup>th</sup> and will be based at the Waisman Outreach Office at 122 E. Olin Ave. She

will be working closely with Amanda Bell, coordinator of the Assets project, since both positions strive to connect individuals with disabilities and their families with others as a way to improve lives and solve common problems. If you are a family member looking to connect to other families or a self advocate looking to connect to other advocates, contact Amanda Bell 890-0776 or Stefanie Gilomen at 263-5557. More information on both of the projects will appear in the next Choices newsletter.



Stefanie Hiking at Parfrey's Glen

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by Dan Rossiter, Manager  
Developmental  
Disabilities Services,  
Dane County

## Dan Sez...

Hey. If you remember back a few months, many of you had a chance to complete a survey that was put together by your provider agencies, County staff and Melissa Mulliken, an expert on doing surveys, among other things. The idea to do a survey came out of questions people had about where people with developmental disabilities wanted to work and live. Today, most people live with one or two other people with disabilities and work at individual jobs in the community.

But some people thought that a bunch of folks might want to live together and some thought the people might want to live alone. Some thought people want to work together in groups and others thought people want individual jobs. So someone said, "let's ask the people and their guardians!"

Melissa sent out surveys to everyone who receives services and everyone who is waiting for services (over 1300 surveys). And she also sent out surveys to all guardians (about 800). She got a whole bunch back. About 500 came from people with disabilities and 400 came from guardians. So, what did you all tell us? Well, most of you seem pretty darn happy both with where you live and where you work. Except for people on the waiting list who weren't as happy. I don't blame them, do you?

Then some really hard questions were asked about what you might be willing to give up. Most people didn't want to give up anything, but if they had to, over half said they would be ok with another roommate. Less than 25% of the people receiving services said they could be happy with three or more roommates. Guardians were more willing to have more roommates (not for themselves; for their ward).

When it came to work, it was about equal between people and guardians. Around 42% felt that they could accept less coaching or more group work.

This is only some of the information that we can get out of the surveys. As we look at them further, we hope that we can learn more about what you want and what you can accept.

We really thank all of you who did take the time to complete the survey. It is truly appreciated. And in the mean time...

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**

# MARC Expands Community Job Opportunities

by Randy Klein, Executive Director, MARC-West

Since November of 2005 an exciting opportunity has been available to people with disabilities in Dane County, Wisconsin. A program has been established by Congress that allows Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) to pursue Federal contracts. MARC has since become a CRP. So what does this mean for people with disabilities? It means if you have a qualifying disability you will be able to become employed in contracts that are established at federal wage pay levels.

MARC has been actively working on making this process available since 2004. On November 5, 2005 eight people with disabilities began their jobs at a local airbase, thus sprouting the first group of federal pay level jobs. In addition to the excellent wage of \$8.97-\$10.67 per hour, employees also receive an additional \$3.16 per hour for health and welfare. MARC has also got contracts for jobs at the USDA Cereal Crops Research Unit and the Kastenmeier Federal Courthouse. More than 20 people with disabilities have enjoyed the benefits of these positions.

Federal Contracts that have an approaching renewal date are monitored by MARC. If MARC believes that a group of candidates can be assembled to fulfill the contract, then MARC will request the opportunity and initiate project development. The most attractive part of these contracts is that once the contract is given to a CRP, the CRP keeps the contract as long as the service is needed by the government and the CRP can perform the requirements of the contract. This leads to very stable and dependable employment.

With unemployment and underemployment for people with disabilities around the 70% range (nationally), this opportunity presents exciting potential for the Dane County region. Job coaches/supervisors are available on site during the time periods that services are performed. An important component to all of this is that these jobs are well integrated and received.

**So what does the future hold for additional opportunities?** MARC has identified potential projects that could present opportunities in the future. With identifying the needs of a contract the process takes about nine months before employees are hired.

MARC currently has the ability to begin start up of 1-2 contracts per year. As a CRP we will have the ability to work with people that have a wide range of disabilities. MARC would also be able to employ veterans that have served in the military and meet the requirements of enrolling in the program.

**Who are the contacts at MARC?** MARC West Director Randy Klein and MARC Mt Horeb Director Bob Halford have managed a team approach for securing federal contracts. By having a team approach

**continued on p. 4**



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Dane County Dept. of  
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Community Services Division  
1202 Northport Drive  
Madison WI 53704



# Safety Tips for Bus Riders

from Mobility Training and Independent Living, Inc.



1. Carry a Rider Information Card (with bus route information) written on an index card for reference during bus travel.
2. If you have questions about your bus route, **ASK A BUS DRIVER FOR HELP** — not other people.
3. When walking in the community, try to cross streets at lighted intersections whenever possible.
4. Always wait for your bus at the bus stop area and in the shelter if one is available.
5. At **TRANSFER POINTS**: Watch for incoming bus traffic and wait in the central area away from the curbs. Do not run in the transfer point when approaching a bus. Pay attention to approaching buses.
6. **DO NOT** wander away from the bus stop for any reason.
7. Try not to talk too much with other people while waiting for your bus to arrive. It is important to pay attention to approaching buses, especially at Transfer Points.
8. Keep your bus pass, tickets or money put away until you get on the bus.
9. **DO NOT** show your bus pass, tickets, transfers or money to anyone; they could easily be stolen.
10. Sit toward the front of the bus if possible, so you can more easily see where you are going and also ask the driver questions if needed.
11. **DO NOT** give your full name, address, or phone number to other people while you are riding a bus or in the community. In an **EMERGENCY** this information can be given to the bus driver.
12. **BRING A CELL PHONE with you if you have one.** Important contact numbers should be programmed into the phone so you can easily call if you need help.
13. **DO NOT EVER** go anywhere with/or accept a ride from anyone who is not a family member or staff person you know well.
14. A **“SAFE LIST”** of people could be carried, if it is a list that can be easily read or recognized. This could be written on a 3x5 card that is laminated. This card may also include contact numbers.
15. **DO NOT EVER** accept money or gifts from strangers or anyone you do not know well while in the community.
16. If you have a question about your safety while traveling, please call someone on your “Safe List” of contacts, or ask a bus driver for help.





Jennifer enjoying her job at the Kastenmeier US Courthouse

towards monitoring contracts we can ensure that all line items of the contracts are addressed. The team approach also affords opportunities to multiple MARC locations. For individuals that have questions about this opportunity, Randy can be reached at 608-273-3630 and Bob can be reached at 608-437-5998.

**Planning?** MARC will continue its best efforts to bring job opportunities to the Madison region. As new contract opportunities are developed MARC will stay apprised of offerings. We are taking an approach of viewing services that the government purchases as well as products that we may be able to manufacture. Also in consideration are partnerships with existing businesses that currently have technologies to assist with the process of providing services or being part of the manufacturing.

The outlook for jobs in the Madison region appears good. With persistence and collaboration of agencies and funding sources the potential of expanding opportunities could continue to grow.

###

## NEWS TO USE

### Recent DD Provider Agency Moves:

**Arc-Dane County** is now located at:  
6602 Grand Teton Plaza  
Madison WI 53719  
Phone: 833-1199 Fax: 833-1307

**ARC-Wisconsin Disability Association** moved to  
2800 Royal Avenue, Suite 209 Madison WI 53713  
Phone: 222-8907 Fax: 222-8908

**Dungarvin-Wisconsin Inc.** is now located at:  
2802 Coho Street, Suite 100,  
Madison WI 53713  
Phone: 316-7680 Fax: 316-7685

**United Cerebral Palsy  
of Greater Dane County** has moved to:  
2801 Coho Street, Suite 300  
Madison WI 53713  
Phone: 273-4434 Fax: 273-3426

# Sound Response Celebrates 5 Years

by Chris Patterson

On July 9<sup>th</sup>, participants and staff of Sound Response gathered at Vilas Park for what's beginning to be an annual celebration. A good time was had by all who attended, as old and new friends visited on a hot summer day to enjoy some food and, of course, some good company. The picnic earmarked the 5<sup>th</sup> year of service that Sound Response provided to people in Dane County. For you history buffs, the first night of actual service was July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002. That night we supported 3 homes. Five years later, I will admit that the staff at SR was probably more nervous that night than those we supported. Like every agency, we have had our ups and downs, but 5 years later Sound Response is proudly supporting over 160 people. Over 100 people attended the event and everyone went home with door prizes donated by Madison area merchants. A few even went home with brand new televisions donated by one generous individual.

Sound Response has always strived to help people become more independent, and we hope we have met that goal for those on the program. On behalf of all of us at Sound Response, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have received support from Sound Response. Without your courage and willingness to try a new way of support, our success would not be possible. Thanks for the great turn out and a wonderful 5 years.

## First Annual KIDshare

*KIDshare is a learning day for providers  
and parents of children with disabilities  
in Dane County*

**KIDshare** is a new annual event to bring together people who work with children with disabilities. It's a time to be informed, challenged, and excited by new ideas for supporting kids. This is an opportunity to talk with others who do the same work you do.

The goal of this first Dane County KIDshare is to share innovative ideas and projects that enhance the full participation of youth with disabilities in meaningful school, work and community activities by creating opportunities for natural supports

KIDshare will be held on **Friday, February 1, 2008** from **9am-12 noon (check-in at 8:30 am)**

**Participants must pre-register by calling James at 265-9440 x 440 before February 1.** The event will be held at the Lussier Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Rd, Madison.

# Cool Crew Club (3C's) & Breakfast Club Receive CHOICES Grants

by Matt Novinska

The 3C's (Cool Crew Club) and the Breakfast Club are monthly activities that individuals with developmental disabilities can tap into to build social connections! The main objective of these groups is to promote community inclusion. Both of these groups have become very successful and participants have made strong, long lasting connections.

The 3C's is intended for more active individuals, participating in a variety of activities such as: bowling, dances, mini-golf, karaoke night, etc. The Breakfast Club was set up to meet some of the social needs of older adults and also to give them a chance to spend direct time with their Support Broker.

Last year, we received a Choices grant, which paid for two dances for the 3C's group and breakfast for the Breakfast Club! The wonderful thing about both of these groups is they do not rely on a budget in order to function. The Choices grant helped us keep these events open to anyone, no matter what their financial limitations were.

To find out more about these two exciting groups, contact Matt Novinska at 661-4159.



## *Forgotten Books & Treasures, LLC*

It has been an exciting year for Mark Dybevik and Jennifer Lasky, who are co-owners of the new business **Forgotten Books and Treasures, LLC (FB&T)**. Mark and Jenny started FB&T with the help of their support teams, including self-employment coordinator Shannon Munn, REM-CORE, DVR, their support brokers and considerable help from their families. The business was officially established in March 2007, selling used books on Amazon.com. Over the subsequent months, FB&T expanded their business services to include order fulfillment for other booksellers and merchants selling on-line. In future months, the owner's will explore the possibility of further developing the business to offer eBay listing and auction services.

As business partners, Mark and Jenny bring complimentary strengths and skills to the business. Mark (working a part-time job as well) is decidedly driven and has a strong work ethic. He is determined to make the business successful, keeps a close eye on the profits and even puts in extra hours on the weekends to get the job done. Jenny is excellent at listing books on the computer. She is highly focused and positively speedy in her work, which helps the business to be efficient. While in high school, Mark and Jenny gained prior work experience through the Madison Recycling Project, which rescues used books from local libraries. In their new business, Mark and Jenny have purchased a large lot of books off of Craig's List and received generous book donations from friends and family.

Mark, Jenny and their support teams have learned a lot through the process of planning a business; including the amount of work it takes to get it up and running. One of the biggest challenges has been finding adequate storage for the books and supplies—at one point, Mark's parents had most of their garage full of various books and packaging supplies. No one said that starting your own business doesn't come without sacrifices! Fortunately, the efforts that Mark and Jenny have put into their business are starting to pay off (literally!).

For more information about the used books that Mark and Jenny are selling, check out their Amazon Storefront website: <http://www.amazon.com/gp/shops/index.html/002-7160232-3590404?ie=UTF8&sellerID=AH75SM17PIWHT>

If you are interested in learning more about Forgotten books and Treasures or donating used books to the new business please e-mail them at [forgottenbooks@yahoo.com](mailto:forgottenbooks@yahoo.com)

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# INFOSHARE September 2007 Presents Diversity Fest

By Jeffrey Johnson and Yara Bell

The Waisman Center hosted its first Diversity Fest on Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007. It was held at the Jennie and Kyle Preserve on Post Rd. Rachel Weingarten put together cookbooks with recipes from people all over Dane County and they were given out during registration. Some students from Tibia Massage School came to offer free massages to everyone that wanted one.



A group of People First members were selling hot dogs and popcorn during the festival. There was also soda and water for sale at a different booth. It was a very hot and windy day. Encore put on play about diversity called Free Diversity.



Paul White and Dan Rossiter gave introductions of the day's events. My friend Cindy Bentley did a talk on diversity. Lasisi talked about his life in Africa. He played some music after he spoke. At the end of the Fest a band called The Figureheads played.

There were a lot of people selling books and their own artwork. They had face painting too. The day seemed like a lot of fun for everyone. At the end of the fest, there was a dragonhead dance.

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More photos from Infoshare can be seen at:  
[www.waismanoutreach.shutterfly.com](http://www.waismanoutreach.shutterfly.com)





# PEOPLE FIRST OF DANE COUNTY

People First meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Meetings are held at 122 E Olin Avenue Suite 100.

Future meeting dates: January 15, February 19, and March 18

## College of Direct Support

### New Web-based Training for Direct Care Staff

by Amber Jensen



On November 1, 2007 the Waisman Center began an exciting new pilot program called the College of Direct Support (CDS). CDS is a web-based training system for direct care staff designed to improve their skills in caring for people with a variety of disabilities and to bring greater professionalism to the important work of direct care. The Waisman Center is working together with Community Living Connections (CLC), Work Opportunities in Rural Communities (WORC), and Creative Community Living Services (CCLS) on the pilot with the goal to increase consumer satisfaction and to increase retention of direct support professionals.

## WORC Partners With Innovative Local Food Business

by Janet Estervig

WORC, Inc. has embarked on a partnership with Porchlight Products, an innovative business venture that connects Dane County farms and Madison restaurants. Porchlight Products has access to the harvests of local farms, which they then process with the help of WORC consumers and sell to Madison restaurants. Their products include jams, crackers and pasta. It has been exciting for WORC to be on the ground floor of this new business venture and participate in this partnership. When restaurants get their food locally, it helps the environment by cutting down on the transportation and fuel use in food delivery. As Nancy Christy put it, "How we treat the resources that we have ... human and environmental... ultimately affects all of us. It's our world, our community."

## ARTworking WORKS

WORC's ARTworking program is going strong! We have been helping artists to develop their skills, expand their creative range and polish the presentation of their art and art-product since July. We have also coordinated the participation of small groups of artists in sales events such as the Williamson St Fair. In December we hosted a Holiday Gift Fair and Cookie Walk in order to give artists a chance to sell products before the holiday and also to raise money to buy supplies for ARTworking artists. To read about ARTworking, see images of artist's work and see pictures from sponsored events, visit [www.artworking.org](http://www.artworking.org). You can also contact the artworking coordinator, Lance Owens, at [info@artworking.org](mailto:info@artworking.org) or by calling (608) 442-5294 ext. #221.



# Three Days in the Dells

## Statewide Conference on Family Care and SDS

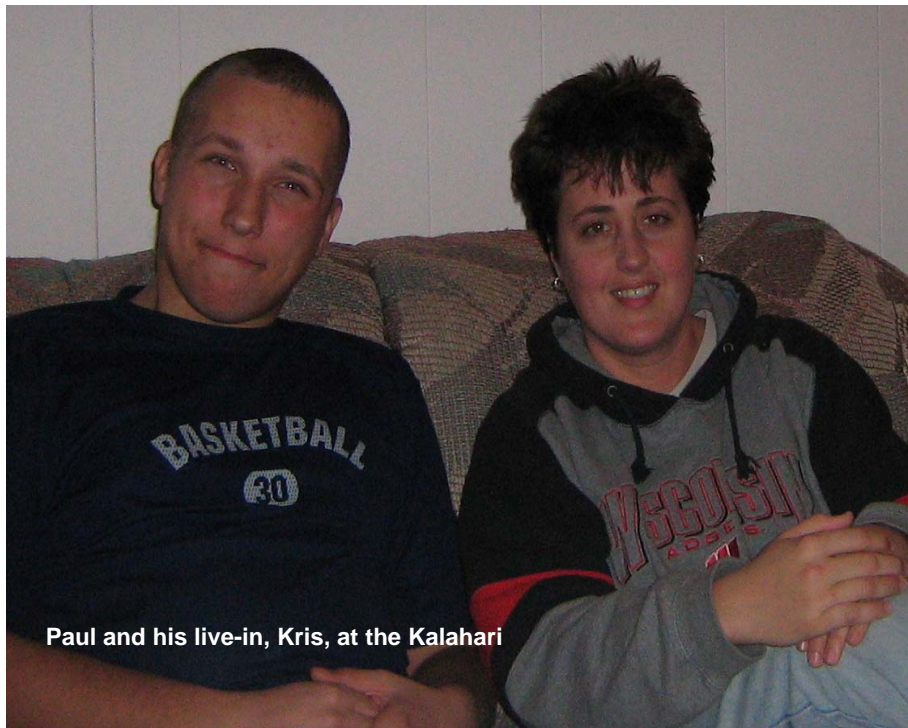
By Paul Valinskas and Kris Gildseth

As we started to pick up speed and whipped around yet another sharp corner, Paul started laughing louder as I held on tight and exclaimed "maybe this wasn't such a good idea!?" I'm not talking about the car ride to the Self Determination Conference but the monster waterslide that Paul talked me into trying out with him at the Kalahari water park after a structure ridden day of conference sessions. Workshops, water park rides, and lots of new, friendly faces and conversations filled up our 3 days there.

A little background: In August of 2007 Paul made a significant change in his life. He moved out of his family home in Sun Prairie and into his own home here in Madison. I am Paul's live-in, caretaker, and friend. Paul and I were fortunate enough to be able to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual WCDD Self Determination Conference thanks to the generous Elsie Shaw foundation scholarships we applied for and received. Paul was interested in the conference partly because it was held at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells. It was also an opportunity to learn more about the rights of people with disabilities to make choices about their own lives, to have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else, and to speak and advocate for themselves. He was extremely excited about going.

Paul's favorite parts of the conference were using the private Jacuzzi in his room, getting to talk to lots of people about his life, raising his hand to share input during many sessions, meeting new people over meals together, the fitness center workouts, and of course, the water park. While in one of the water park hot tubs Paul looked at me smiling and said "Now THIS is what I call a vacation!" He only wished there had been more time to enjoy it all.

Paul had a meaningful learning experience thanks to the conference. When Paul first moved into his new house, he had no interest in my suggestion of getting a



Paul and his live-in, Kris, at the Kalahari

membership at the YMCA. I picked up an application anyway and tucked it away in his files just in case he changed his mind. Periodically, I brought it up to Paul but his response was the same...no, not interested. One of the sessions he chose to attend during the conference was playing "bingo." It was a version of bingo where we discussed each square that showed a picture of various categories (health & fitness, transportation, living situation, etc.) and then decided whether it was a category we wanted more improvement in. If our goals/dreams were not being met we placed a game piece on that square. Paul's bingo card filled up quickly and one of the squares he was interested in having help with was the "health & fitness" category. He then brought up to me the fact that he was now interested in getting a "Y" membership and the next day even spent some time in the Kalahari fitness center on his own. Upon our arrival home from the conference Paul and I filled out the needed forms and he is now awaiting his final scholarship letter from the "Y" so that we can go and get him his card.

###



# ON THE STREET INTERVIEWS

with Eric Miller

The question for this issue was...

*What's your favorite wintertime activity?*



Jen K: "The Winter Ball Dance and watching men's and women's Badger basketball games."



Steve B: "Downhill skiing at Devil's Head."



Jerel T: "Joining bowling leagues."



Brandon S: "Snowball fights and sledding."



Bryan S: "Ice fishing with my dad and swimming".



# the Oh, Yah's...

## To place a Connections Ad

Submit Connections Ads to:  
Stefanie Gilomen, Editor  
122 E Olin Ave STE 100  
Madison WI 53713  
263-5557 [smgilomen@wisc.edu](mailto:smgilomen@wisc.edu)  
We will run your ad for 3 issues unless you tell us otherwise.

## Announce a Transition

Tell us about a new job, an engagement, a marriage, a new place to live, or say goodbye to someone who has passed away.

## CHOICES by e-mail

Prefer to reduce paper coming in the mail? CHOICES newsletter is now available electronically via e-mail. If you would prefer to receive a pdf or link, please e-mail Eric Miller: [miller.eric@co.dane.wi.us](mailto:miller.eric@co.dane.wi.us)

## Please Send Your Stories, Comments & Suggestions

Contributions, comments and suggestions are encouraged and may be directed to:

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**Fax: (608) 263-4681**  
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CHOICES newsletters are available on-line at <http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu>  
Web versions do not include Connections ads or Transitions information.

**The next issue of CHOICES will be out in April, '08. Deadline for articles is Mar 14, 08. Please contact the Editor \* before sending an article**

CHOICES Newsletter is published quarterly to provide information to consumers, families, guardians, and service providers about Self-Determination Services in Dane County. Contributions, comments and suggestions regarding CHOICES are encouraged and may be directed to:

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## CHOICES Newsletter



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