



CHOICES

A Newsletter about Self-Determination in Dane County written by
Individuals with developmental disabilities, for
individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and supporters.
Vol. 14 No. 2 Summer 2012

The next issue of CHOICES will be out in August, 2012. Contact the editor, Stefanie Primm, with ideas for articles before June 15.

Articles are due by July 6 or until the issue is full.

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Darwin and Christa's Wedding

Darwin and Christa's Big Wedding By Dan Remick

My roommate, Darwin Ness, got married on March 3, 2012 to Christa Decker. The wedding was at Bethel Lutheran Church. I had a front row seat, because I was a groomsman. The bride looked very beautiful in her dress coming down the aisle. There were about 125 people at the wedding ceremony. It was a real nice wedding. The weather was very pleasant for people to enjoy the wedding much more. They also had a wedding reception that went



The happy couple. Photo by: Portrait Independence Photography

See "Wedding" on Page 3...

"It's a long life" My College Story By Aliza Claire Bible

I started daydreaming about post-secondary education when I was in middle school. I can't pin point an exact age perhaps when I was twelve, or thirteen. I would discuss it at length with my cat Domino while we listened to music, and studied together.

I was always very conscious of my schoolwork. I was teased viciously in middle school, and took those feelings of not being accepted by my peers and channeled them towards my schoolwork. By the time I entered high school homework was recreational for me, it was something I enjoyed coming home to at the end of the day. I loved staying up with a lamp blazing, listening to CDs, my cat Domino curled up on my bed, or occasionally walking across my keyboard as I typed into the night.

I joined clubs, stopped caring what others thought of me, had a good group of friends that I studied and laughed with during lunch times and study halls and just enjoyed school. When I was 17 I took the ACTs, got decent but okay scores and began applying

to colleges. I visited and liked many schools and applied to at least three or four of them, and waited anxiously for the letters to come. I got two letters from the same college, actually I got two rejection letters from the same college. Though I was sad, I got over it and began to think instead of what my life would be like at 18 since college might not be a possibility after all. My senior year in high school my mom and I heard about Threshold, a program for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Boston, Massachusetts. I applied, got an interview and got accepted. It blew me away. I was going to college! I moved to Boston when I was 18, and started with the Threshold program. I viewed Boston as my Oz, and the gabled sidewalks as my yellow brick road. A year and a half later I was frustrated. While I loved my classes, I wasn't challenged at all. I began to spend more time on campus, went to every cause event, play, musician, comedian, that came to play the campus stage, stayed up nights at the student center working on my novels and kept up with my classes. It was around Christmas of my second year in Boston that I heard about the Cutting

Continued on page 5...

Bear in Mind...



Monica Bear is Dane County's
Community Services Manager for
Developmental Disabilities

Early spring has me cutting bouquets of lilacs, spreading mulch and getting excited about the fifty-six young adults preparing to finish their high school careers and enter the paid work force. Never has Dane County experienced such a warm spring or large graduating class. This year, more than ever people embraced self-direction, creating new paths to find and maintain employment.

Collectively, last year's high school grads earned approximately \$165,879. As some 2012 grads are still looking for or finalizing the details of their new jobs we do not yet have wage data or income projections. However we know that The Weary Traveler, Nutzy Mutz and Crazy Catz, Sephora, Barriques, Zuzu Cafe, Super Target, Imagination Trends, Comfort Inn, Sea Food Center, Pedro's East, Taco Bell, Miller's Market, The Vintage, Piggly Wiggly, Ameri-

clnn, Stoughton Garden Center; Hoff Mall - Mt. Horeb, Naviant, Promega, Nevada Bob's, Steve's Liquor, Deerfield and Monona Grove school districts have all hired a grad. One grad landed a job at his favorite radio station, Q106. Another will return to the Mallards to work at a summer job he loves.

In recent issues CHOICES has profiled a series of small pilot programs designed to improve employment outcomes for young adults. These have included Project Search, Partners with Business (Page 5 this issue) and Supported Self-Employment. In coming months you will hear more about family led job development. The 2012 grads, families and their teams utilized all of these tools.

Twelve 2012 grads completed the Project Search training program and subsequently found jobs at UW Hospital, VA Hospital, Mendota Mental Health Institute, Union South, MMSD Administration, the Board for People with Developmental Disabilities and Capitol Kids.

Seven grads will exit school receiving ongoing support from their employer, using the Partners With Business model. Job settings range from restaurants to office environments. Two grads are opting to forgo a traditional supported employment agency, instead directly hiring and training their own staff. Five grads will exit as business owners. Their micro-enterprises include two aluminum recycling businesses, two arts related businesses, and one business specializing in rain garden horticulture.

In Dane County, schools and supported

employment agencies do the majority of job development and job coaching. However this year at least one parent/business owner created employment for her daughter and others with developmental disabilities.

Multi-year budget cuts have forced difficult policy decisions. Dane County has chosen to prioritize employment services. Each year all DD providers have voluntarily agreed to slightly larger across the board cuts in order to ensure vocational funding for grads. In Dane County about 74% of adults with developmental disabilities have some form of community-based employment. The trade-off for this funding decision is that we have fewer dollars to allocate towards supported living. Often people end up living in their parental home longer than they desire.

While Dane County has plenty of room to improve access to and quality of services, I find continual pleasure in all that goes on in our community. I appreciate the advocacy involved in eliminating the words "mental retardation" from state statutes. I thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality shown by Stoughton People First and the entire Stoughton community (including the mayor) when Presidential Commissioner for Developmental Disabilities, Sharon Lewis visited. I am eagerly awaiting the Fashion Show for All Abilities on June 1st. I'll end with a hearty "Congratulations" to Christa and Darwin as they bask in their post-wedding glow. Their photos remind us all that there is indeed life after high school.

Upcoming Events and Trainings

Sixth Annual Fashion Show for All Abilities: June 1, 2012, 6:30-8:30pm at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. Tickets are \$5, available at the door.

Simply Diabetes: Teaching Consumers How to Handle the Reality of Diabetes Wednesday May 23, 3:30-5:30pm at 122 E. Olin Ave. Instructors are the WIN nurses, Bonnie, Michael and Marcia.

Sign up for this class and others on the COW: <http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu/traincon.html>

Recently updated: The Source - A Guide to Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Dane County, Wisconsin

Find it here: http://pdf.countyofdane.com/humanservices/dd/source_directory/the_source.pdf

Fun, fun and more fun!

"Wedding" from Page 1

from 5:30- 9:00 p.m. The wedding reception had over 200 people who attended. They had a lot of music. People were dancing all night. They had all kinds of food at the reception like chicken, roast beef, and mixed vegetables. They had apple pie, and ice cream for dessert. I had a great time at the wedding. It was a wedding that Darwin and Christa will always remember.

Upcoming People First of Dane County Meetings

Tuesday, May 15, 6-7:15
Guest Speaker: **Monica Bear**
June meeting will be canceled
Tuesday, July 17, 6-7:15
Tuesday, August 21, 6-7:17

All meetings are at 1110 N. Sherman Ave.

WENT ON VACATION By Dale Buttke

I went to the state of COLORADO,
When I retire, I like to live there,
in a condo
I went up PIKES PEAK here,
But I was in a great fear.
Looking down the canyon,
Up there, the wind was freezing
But it was a great sight,
Even though I was in great fright,
Stayed in some hotels,
We drank from water bottles,
It was very greatly hot,
We drank some water a lot
On the way back, it got very cold,
But I was not the bold
I had to put on my sweatshirt,
The women had on jeans, not skirts
And that's when I went on vacation.

Dora's Pet Corner By Dora Norland Hanging With The Goats

For this issue I had a chance to see a Nubian goat. Nubians come in many colors and are most energetic and active of the dairy breeds. A mature doe weighs 135 pounds or more. A mature buck weighs 170 pounds or more. There are several types of goats; dairy goats, meat goats, miniature goats and fiber goats. The normal life span of a goat is ten to twelve

years but some goats live as long as thirty years. A dwarf yields about three hundred quarts or six hundred pounds of milk per year, which is one third the amount you would get from a regular sized goat.



Photo by: Dora Norland

New from MSCR!

City Club, a weekly social club for adults with cognitive disabilities. The club will meet each Saturday from 1-4, June 9-August 18 at MSCR-Hoyt. Activities may include karaoke, cooking and bowling. Cost is \$20, but some activities may have an additional fee. In order to participate, you must sign up at www.mschr.org or by calling 608-204-3000.

The Eraser By Barbara Ronzani

Where did that eraser go,
It was just here a minute ago.
Did someone use it and nothing's left?
Did someone put it to its test?!



2012 Camp dates:
June 24-29
June 17-22
July 15-20
July 29-Aug 3

Wisconsin United Methodist Camps offer several Adult Special Needs Programs for adults. We offer a mixture of fun activities and opportunities for spiritual and personal growth. Our programs have been developed to best meet the needs and interests of each camper. Community games, crafts, campfire, singing, Bible study, swimming, boating, fishing, nature walks, and a talent show are all a part of the camp experience at Pine Lake Camp. Complete information on our programs and registration information can be found on our website at www.WIUMCamps.org/specialneedsamps.html

Congratulations to Jim McKinley on celebrating his 25th Anniversary working at Fire-house #1.

Advocacy News

A very special visitor: Sharon Lewis By Dan Remick

People First of Wisconsin and in Dane County had a meeting in Stoughton on January 19. We had a guest speaker from Washington D.C. Her name is Sharon Lewis. She is Commissioner of the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. She would like to meet with all of us. People First of Wisconsin would like to work with her too. Sharon Lewis works on issues regarding healthcare and developmental disabilities in our country. Sharon Lewis talked about how to stay healthy. People First of Stoughton gave her a presentation about the work they have been doing in Stoughton.



Sharon Lewis and event attendees Photo by: Tom Veek

Cindy's Commentary By Cindy Wegner

Arc of Dane County had a fundraiser. They sold grapefruits and oranges. In total they sold 541 boxes of fruit. On March 1 we sorted the fruit, and on March 3 people picked up their boxes. After all that sorting, we had dinner.



On March 9 **Infoshare** took place at the Sheraton Hotel. Communication Works (for those who work at it!) was the Infoshare topic. There were a lot of breakout sessions. I went to the one all about iPads. The lunch was sandwiches, pasta salad, lettuce salad, cookies and a brownie. GHC again helped sponsor Infoshare. There were lots of vendors and exhibitors.

The **Spring Ball** was on March 18th. There were meatballs, egg rolls, chicken wings and soda too. They played music and people danced to the music.

The **Arc Award Banquet** is on April 26th. There is an award presented for a self-advocate. I am surprised to be the recipient of this year's Arc Self-Advocate Award. I gave two pieces of pottery, one bowl and one vase, for the silent auction. I will be on the board of Arc-Dane County until 2014.

Thinking Creatively About Work By Jeffrey Johnson

I interviewed Doug Hunt on Tuesday Jan 10, 2012 about Partners with Business. Partners with Business is a different way to provide support to people with disabilities in the work place. Rather than having a job coach come to the business to provide the support, the individual's co-workers provide the support. Some businesses would rather do this than having an outside job coach, especially when they can provide the same support that job coaches provide.

They started Partners with Business in Madison in the spring of 2009; they have been working with some consumers for about three years now. 3-5 consumers join each year.

Partners with Business is a way for businesses and consumers to save money. They also want to offer more choices for consumers and the businesses they work for.

If you're supported through Partners with Business you still have a vocational agency. Your agency will be on call in case of emergencies. Their main goal is to make consumers feel more independent.

If you would like more information about Partners With Business, contact your broker or Doug Hunt.

People First Law By Jeffrey Johnson

Members from People First and other self-advocacy groups went to a hearing on the People First Law at the Capitol in Madison on Wednesday January 25. The People First Law will remove the words "mental retardation" from Wisconsin State Statutes. Some members from People First and other self-advocacy groups went to give testimony on the R Word Law. All advocates are asking legislators to take the words mental retardation out of Wisconsin State Laws.

Ten others and I shared our stories with the Assembly Committee.

Advocates came out from around the state to present their stories about people with disabilities being called mentally retarded. Some people think it is funny and a joke but they do not know how much it hurts until someone does it to them. The reason that it is bad word is that people use it in the wrong way. When people with disabilities are called this, it takes away their self-esteem. People with disabilities prefer the term intellectual disability or people with special needs. The reason we are advocates is to speak up about what is right.

**Looking for
“Connections” or
“Saying Goodbye”
sections? Contact
Stefanie Primm at
primm@waisman.wisc.edu
to get a copy of the
newsletter that in-
cludes those sections.**

2011 Dane County Transition Summary

Number of Transition Grads with DD	33
Number who exited with community jobs	29
Percent who exited with community jobs	88%
Median hourly wage	\$7.25
Hourly wage (weighted average)	\$7.41
Average hours worked/week	15
Average earnings per month	\$476.66
Total earnings (all grads) per year	\$165,879
Average annual supported employment cost for 2011 grad	\$21,429

Continued from page 1...

Edge program here in Madison. Interested, I came home for the holiday and took a meeting.

When I returned to Boston I had a plan that my friends and teachers were shocked by. I was going to go back to school. I had found my door with the talking doorknob straight out of Alice In Wonderland and committed. Despite comments, and raised eyebrows that I wouldn't do well, or be able to do the work on that level, I graduated the Threshold program with a certificate of completion and a concentration in early childhood studies and moved home. I started in Cutting Edge the fall of 2008.

The Cutting Edge program within Edgewood campus takes students with intellectual, and developmental disabilities and says yes these students can instead of no they can't and puts them in the college classroom. It had been two years since I had truly studied and with the comments from my last months of Threshold still ringing in my head I was nervous. I wondered could I do this, could I go back to school after all this time? But I found education akin to reconnecting with a long lost friend. Not only could I do this, I could do it well. Whenever I wasn't in class, I was studying. I was finally taking amazingly challenging mind blowing classes and I couldn't get enough of them. Aside from study-

ing I worked on my books and poetry, lived in the dorms, spent time with my friends and family and even worked a job. I can't ever say enough about Courtney Moffatt, and Deidra Heffner, they are Fairy godmothers hidden within the woodwork of education.

The differences between the Threshold program, and Cutting Edge took a while to dawn on me. It was at an alumni function in Boston that I realized things could be different, around this time I began my work as an advocate. I had presented at my first conference and I realized other than being in love with the arts, I was in love with making a difference. As the years rolled by my advocacy strengthened I began to write articles and present at more conferences.

I graduated Cutting Edge spring of 2010 with a certificate of completion, and began to prepare for my first fall out of school and began my strange fall down a rabbit hole that I wasn't sure where it would tumble me. At the end of the rabbit hole was another little door that when unlocked tumbled me into MCH-Lend, a graduate program at the University of Madison, with the Waisman center.

I had grown up knowing about the program; in fact I was one of the families. I had an MCH-Lend trainee placed in my home starting when I was a little girl until I was a teenager. I applied,

interviewed and got into the program. I was and am back in school.

This past year has been amazing. I have learned and experienced so much with my work within community, research and clinical, seminars, and leadership, the four areas Lend focuses on. This past January I became an AmeriCorps member. My placement is as a legislative liaison intern between People First Wisconsin, and the BPDD here in Madison. At the end of my service I will get the Segal award so I'll have the chance to go back to school. Even though the horizon recedes the closer we get to it. We keep fixing it in our line of sight and swim out to it only to realize it's suddenly not there, once we find it again fix it into our line of sight we continue our swim. Not fully realizing that it's the journey of us swimming towards that ever-receding horizon that is the most important. Education is a horizon. The closer we get to that horizon it recedes there is always more to learn, more to be, and more to do. As true and beautiful as the above statement is I am convinced that not only is education a horizon but that it's also circular its own circle of life it never begins or ends it just keeps going.

My education is a receding horizon, a circle of life that never truly ends all I can do is just keep swimming and enjoy the swim.

CHOICES Newsletter



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...And the “Oh, Yeah’s...”

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Contributions, comments and
suggestions are encouraged
and may be directed to
Stefanie Primm, Editor (see
contact information in the box
to the right).

**CHOICES is
available on-line:**
<http://cow.waismanwisc.edu>
Web versions do not include
Connections ads or
Transitions information.

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Choices is on the COW Website?!

Did you know that Choices
newsletter has a fun color
version that you can view
online??
[http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu/
publications.html](http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu/publications.html)



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
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