

CHOICES

A Newsletter about Self-Determination in Dane County written <u>by</u> individuals with developmental disabilities, <u>for</u> individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and supporters.

Vol. 15 No. 3, Fall 2013

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Kristin Rides at Three Gaits

By Jeffrey Johnson

I interviewed Kristin Kilmark about her riding experience at Three Gaits Therapeutic Horsemanship Center. Three Gaits is located on Hwy 138 between Oregon and Stoughton. Kristin has also ridden at Hoof Beat in Mazomanie. Kristin has been riding at Three Gaits since she was eight years old. She has been riding there for 21 years. Three Gaits offers lessons to anyone including adults, children, and people of all abilities.

Kristin knows how to ride both English style and Western style, but most people at Three Gaits ride English style. Kristin rides every Thursday evening, depending on the weather. It's a 30-minute class from 7:30 to 8:00. There are two other riders in her class. Two people help her get on the horse to make sure she gets on properly; otherwise, it could hurt the horse. Her instructor and a volunteer that helps her get on the horse. They also have ponies that the kids can ride.

Horseback riding can help people with disabilities with their balance and

posture. Therapeutic horseback riding has helped Kristin to escape from her stress. It helps her feel more confident, and helps with her legs and upper body strength. Kristin says that it's a good workout and lot of fun! Her cousin rode there when she was younger. Her Mom also got interested and suggested it.

Kristin will be competing in the horse show at the Alliant Energy Center on Sunday August 11th, 2013 in Madison. The judges will ask the riders to give commands to the horse and to demonstrate equitation. Kristin has never placed lower than 5th place in a competition and is very proud of her achievements.



(Stock Photo)



Bear in Mind \cdots



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

With summer winding down, the 2014 budget season is in full swing and some days I think I'd rather be canning tomatoes! In the year ahead people can anticipate that the amount of County tax dollars supporting the DD system will remain about the same but with the living wage increase and other state and federal funding changes the end result will be a continuation of the last decade's austerity. Service providers will have a difficult time maintaining their cur-

rent level of support. While the 2014 budget will not be final until late fall, people will have an opportunity to provide public testimony to the Dane County Board and Executive Joe Parisi on Tuesday, September 3 at the Alliant Center beginning at 5:30 pm. Limited resources force the County to prioritize how it spends its funds. Since 2004 people receiving services have experienced budget reductions, yet the County in partnership with public schools and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) has continued our long standing practice of "employment first". In the past five years 244 young adults have finished high school and entered the paid work force, receiving the on-going, Countyfunded, vocational support needed to maintain their jobs. Many get by with a little less support then they would prefer. While unemployment and under-employment remain real concerns, Dane County has the highest rate of employment for people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin and one of the highest rates in the Country.

We prioritize employment because it: Enables people to spend time productively in the community; Creates taxpayers who spend wages in their local community; Enables people to contribute to their family's household income; Generates income needed to pay rent and purchase service enhancements; Enables families to continue their employment and sustain their caregiving role; Continues the vocational training and job development investment made by the public schools and **DVR**

Prioritizing employment comes with trade-offs. It means the County has fewer funds to pay for supported living. Whether positive or negative, the reality is that people in Dane County and across the country are living at home with their families longer. In acknowledgment of this difficult reality, the County Executive provided \$237,000 to pilot new ways to increase community participation, reduce social isolation, and offer families relief from the quantity of unchosen support they provide. Sixty participants are currently involved in four capacity building projects. An additional 15 people formerly on the waiting list are also receiving support. The 2013 Capacity Building Demonstration Pilots include:

Hour Community Connections: A group of individuals and their families in Sun Prairie are interviewing and hiring a neighborhood coordinator through the Dane County TimeBank.

Community Dreams-Stoughton: A group of individuals interested in health, wellness and an active lifestyle have combined resources with the intent to hire a community connector in Stoughton.

Cross Plains/Mazomanie community builder: A group of individuals are pooling funds to hire a community connector who will be employed by the UCP respite program.

LOV-Dane Bridge Builder: A group of young adults and their families are coming together to hire a Bridge Builder who will support individual and group goals.

The next issue of Choices newsletter will include more information and stories about these projects.

Every era has its challenges and opportunities. The early years of my career saw more bountiful residential budgets but most people I worked with had lived for decades in large institutions, never attended neighborhood schools, had few friends, limited community participation and were cut-off from their family. Today residential funding is tighter but many have experienced full inclusion in schools, participated in community events their whole lives and are deeply connected to family and friends. Today young adults realistically plan to attend college, get a job and move out.

Residential services remain a critical support but may never return to their former funding levels. We must work together to preserve this safety net and invent our future. Prioritizing employment and piloting capacity building initiatives are two ways Dane County is moving forward. While the effort may feel both incomplete and clumsy, I am heartened by people's participation and enthusiasm. I remain optimistic about our continued efforts to forge ahead.

Trainings and Events

Taste of Dane County

A Practical Orientation to Services for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in Dane County

Friday, October 4, 2013: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

The Taste of Dane County explains the framework of the Dane County Adult Developmen-

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Community Outreach Wisconsin

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tal Disability System and is especially relevant for new agency staff and brokers. Information on the history and philosophy of services, communication, health, abuse and neglect, and a general overview of developmental disabilities is presented to promote sensitivity and insight into the lives of persons with developmental disabilities.

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COLUMNISTS

Cindy's Commentary By Cindy Wegner

Arc of Dane County Banquet

The Arc of Dane Co. held their annual banquet on Thursday, April 25th. It was a fundraiser. There was an award ceremony and a silent auction. They elected me, Cindy Wegner, to be on the board for the next two years.

Infoshare

Infoshare this year was about the senses. They had different kinds of workshops. One workshop was about gardening and Rebecca was there from Gar-

dening for Good. The people in this program have a community garden. We planted pansies. Some people were going to give them to their mothers for Mother's Day.



Gardening project at *InfoShare* (photo credit: Jon Pfeiffer)

GOD given talent (Hearing & sight) By Dale Buttke

GOD gave me a gift, And give me a handkerchief. For when the blaring sirens, Go by, I am almost tearing, And I have to close my ears That is the most I fear.

And I also have great sight, I cannot stand bright lights, And so I sit in dim lights.

And so I say,
To this very day,
GOD gave me two talents,
The talent of sight and hearing,
But I would not go on fearing,
Loud sounds and hearing.



Dora's Pet Corner By Dora Norland

A Day With A Tortoise

For this issue I had a chance to see an Aldabra tortoise. The Aldabra tortoise habitat is usually grasslands and swamps. Their diet includes plants, grasses and fruits.



They have a very long life, with their life span one fifty years or longer. The size of Aldabra tortoise is four feet long and weighs 300-550 pounds. They reproduce by laying eggs. Tortoises start out as hatchlings when born

Life of Turtles

For this issue I had a chance to see some desert tortoises. A desert tortoise is fourteen inches long. Their life span is fifty years. Their habitat is a dry sandy ground. They have a diet of plants.

There are different kinds of turtles such as green turtles, loggerhead sea turtle, hawksbill turtle, leatherback turtle. Turtles eat tiny hydroids, crustaceans, bryozoans, sponges, pelagic red crabs, and jelly-

NEW FACES



New Ventures and New Staff at Dane County By Jeffrey Johnson

Carrie Pomije has worked for the county for a total of 11 years. Carrie worked in Child Protective Services and in Delinquency Services for Dane County Human Services. Carrie now works for Dane County Developmental Disabilities Intake Unit. She started this job in January 2013. Carrie heard of the job opening from other people at the County.

Carrie is a very social person. She loves meeting new people, talking with people, helping people, and being active in the community. Carrie is also a mother of two boys. She has a son with autism who recently graduated from Madison East High School. Her passion for people, and having a son with developmental disabilities, inspired her to go back to school for a degree in social work.

Carrie has many intake responsibilities including meeting with individuals who have just qualified for waiver services, meeting with individuals who are waiting for services, and attending annual reviews

for individuals receiving facility based services.

There is a new program called the Capacity Building Initiative that Carrie will be involved with. Her involvement includes working with 15 people who are on the waiting list for services. These selected people will hire a broker to help enrich their lives. They will receive a small amount of county funding that could be used for hiring someone to do respite care, to get involved with the Dane County TimeBank, to participate in more activities, and get involved in the community. The money can be used wherever they think would be most useful in enriching their lives. They are hoping people can be creative with the funding. Carrie enjoys what she does for people with disabilities and is happy and excited to be in this new position.

Horse Therapy for People with Disabilities

By Jeffrey Johnson

Mia and Megan are two young horseback riders at Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center in Redmond, Washington. Little Bit gives riding lessons to 222 children and adults with disabilities. Mia has cerebral palsy. The riding center has helped her to strengthen her posture. Megan has Down syndrome and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. The riding center has helped her learn to stay calm and focus. She has started to interact with a riding instructor and give verbal commands to a horse.

Margaret Dunlap and riding instructor Debra Powell Adams founded Little Bit in 1976. They decided to start Little Bit when they observed that riding seemed to slow the progression of Dunlap's multiple sclerosis. Several riders have been going to Little Bit for adaptive riding for 30 years or more. With the help of an instructor, riders learn how to ride more independently.

Little Bit has received many donations. Mike and Phyllis Dunmire donated \$3 million to buy the Redmond, Washington property. The Seattle Police Department donated Blaze, a retired police horse, to the riding center. Retired Major League baseball player John Olerud and his wife Kelly helped with fundraising. The Oleruds decided to help because of the improvements they saw in their daughter Jordan, who has a chromosome abnormality, after she began taking lessons. Jordan started riding when she was 3 years old despite her father's concerns. Jordan's core strength has improved and at 12 years old, she is able to walk.

Summarized from "Riding High: Horses that help the disabled" by Keith Ervin of The Seattle Times, reprinted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, May 6, 2013.



Issue Spotlight: Employment

Employment First

By Jeffrey Johnson

I was invited to the Employment First Legislative Breakfast at the State Capitol in the North Hearing Room. The featured speaker was Madeleine Will, Vice-President of Public Policy at the National Down Syndrome Society. The Legislative Breakfast was sponsored by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities, The Down Syndrome Association of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Association of People Supporting Employment First, and People First Wisconsin.

I learned that Employment First is a national effort to help create more opportunities for people with disabilities to work in the community earning minimum wage or higher. The Employment First effort involves action at various levels, including grassroots, policy, and legislation. Most adults with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin want a real job with a living wage. Having a disability often equals poverty. By working, people with disabilities can increase their income and can hopefully move out of poverty, being taxpayers, and decrease their dependence on public benefits.

Employment First is about having community employment as an option. They want people with disabilities to have an opportunity to work in the community versus facility-based employment. They want people to earn at least minimum wage. Employment First also wants people to have enough information to decide where they want to work. I learned there are fewer people with disabilities working in the community today than there were twenty years ago. Currently there are less than 15% of working-age individuals with disabilities in Wisconsin's long-term care system that are in community employment. Wisconsin can and must do better to reach higher integrated employment rates.



Let's Get To Work Consortium

By Jeffrey Johnson

The Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) asked me to assist high school students from all over Wisconsin to prepare them to meet with their legislators. BPDD staff, advocates and students met on May 20 at the Concourse Hotel in Madison. Lynn Breedlove and Rick Petzke gave a presentation about how to ask for help from a legislator.

At 10:45 the students and self-advocates met together in a league group. Then they broke into smaller groups of five to seven students with an advocate in each group. There were six high schools with 40 students that attended. Beth Moss asked another self- advocate Jules and me to be in charge of assisting students from Luxembourg and Oconomowoc High Schools. We talked with the students about issues that are important to them.

Students from Stoughton High School were not able to attend so Beth asked me if I would represent Stoughton High School. They handed out issue cards to all of the students with ideas for what to talk to their legislators about. Everyone walked over to the Capitol and talked to their legislators about special education services, transportation, and employment. The state needs to put back the money it cut in the last budget to specialized transportation assistance so the students with disabilities can continue to use the bus to get to school, work, and activities in the community.

The first visit I had was with Senator Mark Miller from the 46th State Assembly District. I also met State Representative Gary Hebl from the 46th Assembly District. I talked to them about putting more money in the budget for transportation. I also talked with Gary Hebl and Mark Miller a little bit about increasing special education aid.

Businesses all over the state of Wisconsin are signing on to the Employment First initiative. This helps to train employment service providers and others on how to find meaningful jobs that pay at least minimum wage. The state will also make sure that all individuals with disabilities who want to work have the information about their rights and



Issue Spotlight: Employment

how they can get assistance to find work. When everyone returned to the Concourse Hotel Beth asked everyone to share how their visits went with their legislators. After that, everyone was able to go.

Living on SSI

By Jeffrey Johnson

Brad Crelia was at the international AIDS conference in Washington D.C. last summer interviewing people who are HIV positive for a series of articles. Brad has done political networking before. He worked as an organizer for Hillary Rodham Clinton and for President Obama. After the conference, Brad ran into problems getting back home. He could not make it back to New York because ran out of money. He had to plead for a ride from a stranger. Brad is one of more than 8.7 million disabled Americans who rely on cash assistance from the government. By 2035, the federal government will be spending about \$60.9 billion in payments to 9.9 million people. SSI is supposed to give security, but it can be the source of a problem. The SSI program limits how much money beneficiaries can earn. Many people with disabilities live just above the poverty line.

When Brad was a teenager, he was diagnosed with an incurable hereditary blood disorder. His symptoms included seizures, paralysis, blackouts, nausea and extreme pain. The disorder prevented him from finishing college. Brad would end up in the hospital days or weeks at a time. In 2009, he learned he had HIV as well. Because of both medical conditions, he was not able to work fulltime and be paid. Brad receives a monthly check from SSI program for \$506. He can earn an extra \$85. If he goes above that for work, his checks are reduced by one dollar for every two dollars he makes. If his income reaches \$ 1,097 a month he will no longer be eligible for SSI. He is also not allowed to have more than \$2000 in assets at any time. He and people like him would benefit from a more flexible safety net.

Today 70 percent of people with disabilities

live in poverty. The Affordable Care Act may eventually lessen the burden for some individuals who rely on SSI by eliminating restrictions based on pre-existing conditions and annual lifetime benefits caps. However, the impact on the disabled is not yet clear and experts are calling for additional targeted reforms.

When Brad is feeling his best, he clocks more than 40 hours a week, mostly unpaid writing. He wants to be able to contribute to society, have a family, and grow his business. Not as a volunteer. Brad wants to be paid like everyone else.

Summarized from "The Disability Trap" by Julie Turkewitz and Juliet Linderman, New York Times, October 20, 2012.

HOUSEMATE WANTED

Looking for a great housemate? My name is Sadler Bell and I am! I am 29 years old and seeking a male roommate to share my cozy 2 bedroom, 1 bath house on the Near East side of Madison. I live right by Woodman's East, the East Transfer Point and the bike path. There is a great back yard to grill out and chill out in! I love cooking, music, watching TV (especially sports) and working out at the YMCA. I don't have or need any paid supports--my family is close by and helps me out when I need it. Your rent and share of utilities will be about \$510/month. Call or email my sister if you are interested: Amanda Bell, Amanda@lovdane.org, 469-0963



RECENT EVENTS

Infoshare Beyond the Five Senses

By Jeffrey Johnson

Beyond the Five Senses: A Sense-atonal Infoshare was held on Friday, April 26 at the Alliant Energy Center. Monica Bear welcomed everyone to the Infoshare Conference. The keynote speaker was Nanette Negri. Nan talked about experiencing and exploring the gifts and bumps of sensory and movement differences. She talked about how we all experience the world through our senses. The keynote included simulation activities for people to experience and learn to appreciate different ways of noticing sensory and movement input. Some bring great gifts, while others bring great challenges.

Marcia Stickel, a Waisman WIN Nurse, presented the first breakout session I attended. Marcia talked about how people react differently to pain and different ways people can rate their pain. I sat down and talked with Angie Dickens from Channels to Employment and Rebecca Starke about Gardening for Good. I walked around a little and looked at all the exhibits that were in the atrium. Then I went to see Beth Hougen and Melissa Amati. They talked about sensory diets and sensory-based activities and how to integrate them into everyday life. I learned what a sensory diet is and we did some sensory exercises.

The afternoon breakouts that I could not attend included: Using Affirmations for Change, An Introduction Into Dance/Movement Therapy: Movers and Shakers, Creating Individualized Sensory Environments, Spectrum Yoga, and Creating the Good Life: A Team Pulling it all Together for Safety, Well-being, Well-living, and Fun. There was also a Community Mural being worked on that will be displayed at the Waisman Outreach office that was facilitated by Molly Linn-Miller, a gardening demonstration and chair massage were available throughout the day as well.



Disability Pride Festival

By Jeffrey Johnson

I interviewed Sara Karon and Karen Milstein. Sara and Karen are organizing the first Disability Pride Festival in Madison. The Disability Pride Festival started in Boston in 1990 and then took a few years off and the next Disability Pride Festival was Chicago in 2004 and has continued in Chicago every year since.

The Disability Pride kickoff event in Madison will be July 27, 2013 at Birmingham Park from noon to 5pm. The theme for this year is "Forward to possibility." It is geared for everyone—people with disabilities, allies and families. It is a family friendly event. Disability Pride is about celebration, hope, and showing the greater community that people with disabilities deserve to be valued parts of every community. Sara said that Disability Pride is about people with disabilities getting together. She feels that people get into a

rut and hang out with the same groups. It also brings in people without disabilities to see the positive in people with disabilities.

Karen has been involved in the DD System over 20 years. Sara has been involved 25 years in the DD system. Sara wanted to continue on the tradition. She spent a lot of time talking to people, fundraising, and working with the city to get the right permits and getting the message out. Jim Ferris, a poet, is coming. Ricardo Vasquez, a Marimba Player, will perform. Madison Arts Commission, MG&E foundation and Dane Arts are a few of the Sponsors and Supporters. They are glad to see so many people getting involved and that they are excited about it. They like to see how there is a sense of community with planning the event.

Art Workshop at InfoShare

MTM Takes Over for LogistiCare by Jeffrey Johnson



I attended a town hall meeting at the Courtyard tion needs are met. by Marriot, Madison West on June 24th at 1:00 pm. The meeting was about a company called MTM, Inc taking over non-emergency medical transportation services for Wisconsin. MTM staff talked about what services they will provide and answered questions. They had 86 people start training in the Madison office June 24th. MTM will be replacing LogistiCare completely on August 1st.

MTM is the new non-emergency transportation company. MTM will provide transportation services to and from medical appointments for Wisconsin Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus members. The people who were eligible to receive services through Logisticare will be eligible to receive services through MTM.

If the appointment is urgent, MTM will schedule the ride without any questions. To verify urgent appointments, MTM will contact the health provider to find out what kind of appointment he or she has. If the rider does not speak English, they will find someone to help them. MTM is reaching out to the rural communities to help make sure everyone's transporta-

MTM has been meeting around the state with people to find out who in the community could use them for transportation. Public transportation utilization may be too scary for some people. There are travel trainers available for folks to be able to use public transportation. Standing rides are set as rides for three or six months. MTM will connect with the person before the standing ride expiration. The person can call and update as well.

MTM will make sure everyone is picked up for their scheduled rides. If your driver is more than 15 minutes late the client should call MTM right away so they can send someone pick you up. Rides can be scheduled both online and by phone. They first will need to call MTM to get a login name and password. MTM hours are 7:00am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday and 8:00am to 5:00 pm on Saturday. Urgent ride calls can be made 24/7. MTM's website is www.mtm-inc.net/Wisconsin or call the reservation line at (866) 907-1493.

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ANNOUNCEMENT:



The Arc's Annual Halloween Costume Party – sponsored by The Arc-Dane County – will be held on Sunday, October 27, 2013 from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Pooley's, 5441 High Crossing Blvd, Madison (located 3/4)

mile from Eastgate Cinema). This site is wheelchair accessible with FREE parking available (Note 2 below).

Tickets must be **pre-purchased** from The Arc-Dane County for each person. (Sorry, no free tickets for staff, attendants, or family members). Be ready to enjoy Music, Dancing, Munchies, Parade of Costumes, & Door Prizes. The party is limited to 350 people on a first come – first serve basis.

COST: \$3.00 Arc-Dane County member \$5.00 Non-member

Ticket requests must be received by Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2013 for preparation & planning.

Upon receipt of the ticket request and payment, the tickets will be mailed. Each family or agency is responsible for distributing the tickets purchased. If you have ordered too many tickets or need more tickets, please network with other individuals, families and/or providers.

NOTE 1: All clients must carry <u>emergency contact information</u> at the party. All individuals attending must provide <u>own transportation</u> to and from the party.

NOTE 2 Parking- Buses and vans, after drop off of party goers, please park in the upper parking lot at ABRA parking lot.

SEND FORM & PAYMENT by October 15 payable to The Arc-Dane County to:

The Arc-Dane County Paul A. Yochum, Executive Director 6602 Grand Teton Plaza Madison, WI 53719

FAX #: 608-833-1307 E-MAIL: arcdane@chorus.net

TELEPHONE: 833-1199



Note: You must present a ticket at the door to enter. (Be sure to print first name & last name on back of ticket to be eligible for a door prize!) Thanks for your cooperation! J All ticket holders are eligible for door prize.

CHOICES Newsletter



The University of Wisconsin-Madison Waisman Center Room A 109 1500 Highland Avenue Madison WI 53705 Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Permit #658 Madison WI

...And the "Oh, Yeah's..."

CHOICES Newsletter

is published quarterly to provide information to consumers, families, guardians, and service providers about Self-Determination Services in Dane County.

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 Stefanie Primm: primm@waisman.wisc.edu

The Next Issue of CHOICES

will be out in November 2013. Contact the editor with ideas for articles before September 15 Articles due by October 4 or until the issue is full.

To Place a Connections Ad:

Submit Connections Ads to: Stefanie Primm, Editor 122 E Olin Avenue Suite 100 Madison WI 53713

263-5557, or primm@waisman.wisc.edu
We will run your ad for at least 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 is on the <u>COW</u> Website?!

Did you know that Choices newsletter has a fun color version that you can view online??

http://cow.waisman.wisc.edu/ publications.html

Web versions do not include Connections ads or Transitions information.



Contributors to this issue:

Cindy Wegner, Bill Worthy, Dora Norland, Dale Buttke, Monica Bear, Jeffrey Johnson and Rachel Weingarten

Please send your stories, comments and suggestions

Contributions, comments and suggestions are encouraged and may be directed to Stefanie Primm, Editor

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