

Progress Notes



Providing residential and support services to persons with disabilities since 1971. December 2009

One person trying to make a difference

Amanda Bernu lives at *DRCC-Fairview* in Virginia, MN. She is an active member of Self- Advocates of Minnesota (SAM). After walking around Bailey's Lake in Virginia, MN and seeing all the garbage that people have thrown everywhere, Amanda felt that something needed to be done. With the help of her staff and her chapter of SAM, "Understand Us", she drafted a letter to the Mesabi Daily News. Her article outlined the problems Amanda found around the lake and encouraged the public to get out and cleanup the lake. She and others are looking to raise money for garbage cans to be placed around the lake by making tie blankets this winter and selling them. Amanda and others will be coordinating a cleanup of the lake next spring and they are hoping to get the community involved. Great Job Amanda!

Garbage, litter are all around lakes in Virginia

Hi, I am Amanda Bernu. I think that somehow people could do something about the garbage around the lakes, Baileys and Silver Lake. The garbage is around the lakes and it is very disgusting for people to see and it is not safe for the animals that live in the lake.

I like walking around the lake. I think that the city could do something by sponsoring a clean-up weekend. There isn't enough garbage cans around the lakes for people to throw their garbage in.

One of my ideas is to have a fund-raiser to make money to buy more trash cans. I am involved in SAM, Self Advocates of Minnesota. I am willing to get our program involved to help clean up the lakes. I feel that the citizens of Virginia can help too. It is very upsetting to see pop cans, beer bottles, chip bags, plastic pop can rings, styrofoam cups, cigarette butts and

beer bottles just to name a few. I think Virginia is a nice place to live. People enjoy walking around the lake, children play and others fish.

I do not think it's a nice thing that people are littering. I would like to do something about this and I hope others feel the same way. I have taken pictures of the damage that some people are doing to the fish, ducks and the loons will not stay healthy. The people of the city of Virginia need to keep our lakes clean for the wildlife. Could you please put my letter and pictures in your editorial column so others could read about the damage that is being done to your lakes and wildlife. I will do my part if others will help too. Thank you.

Amanda Bernu
Virginia



Football

The Triggs Tigers were once again defeated by the Riverside River Rats. A poor coaching staff led by Corey Jeanetta was certainly cause for concern on the part of Tiger's fans. When asked his reasoning behind the loss Jeanetta stated "well, we didn't have the excellent officiating that we had last year." All who participated celebrated the Riverside win with a barbecue. *(more inside... see "Different Year, Same Results at the Third Annual DRCC Football Game," page 4)*

Linda's friend Zeke

Most people appreciate the unconditional love and affection an animal can give to us and **Linda Mulford**, from *Triplex*, knows just what that kind of bond feels like. Linda is fortunate to have such a relationship with Zeke, a 20-year-old Arabian horse. How? Zeke's owner Pam Hagenah has been sharing her love of horses with a number of clients for years. She goes the extra mile to make sure her clients like Linda get to enjoy her horses even if it means a visit on her time off. *continued on page 2...*



Linda Mulford and Zeke

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Linda and Zeke ...continued from cover

The friendship between Linda and Zeke is like no other. "They instantly bonded. When she goes to the barn and calls out for him he comes running with his tail up and ears forward", illustrates Pam. Pam has been taking Linda to see Zeke for 11 years and has been with DRCC for 20 plus years. Linda and Zeke both look forward to their every other weekend visit. Linda brushes Zeke, feeds him and gives him treats. He shows his appreciation by nuzzling her and giving her kisses. This opportunity really enhances Linda's life as most animals do for the people who love them. The unique friendship they share is really something to see and it has been there from the start. Linda keeps photos of her and Zeke in her room and has a sweatshirt with a picture of them on it. She was very excited to get to talk about him and the time they spend together. When asked if she had ever been around a horse before Zeke she said "No," then when asked, "Were you afraid?" she replied "No." It's debatable who benefits more from this relationship, Linda, Zeke or DRCC?



Friday Fest Continues to Draw a Crowd

Friday Fest is a congregation of people from DRCC homes that get together once a month at different places around Duluth. The events have been happening since the beginning of 2009 and will continue into the future. Attendance at the events usually reaches close to 100 people. In May everyone hopped on the Rock and Roll Pizza Train. Next, all dressed up formally for a Gala at the Copper Top Church. There, DRCC Managers and even the Executive Director put on bowties and did their best chef, waiter and dishwasher impressions before a night of dancing. Chamber's Grove was the venue for the Carnival in July and the Fishing Competition in August. **Derek Baker** from *IHFS-D* had a clean sweep in the fishing contest categories, catching the smallest fish, the heaviest fish and the longest fish. The new cabin was a great place to have a Tiki Party in September. Ghouls, leprechauns and gorillas all attended the scary movie night in October, enjoying a brownie walk and the film, "Nightmare Before Christmas." We all are looking forward to DRCC Friday Fest Events in 2010, repeating successful happenings and trying out new ones as well.



TRIBUTES

DRCC says good-bye to an old friend. **Robert (Cowboy Bob) Wisniewski** died on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at the age of 57. Robert had been with DRCC for 22 years. Robert was a person that lived his life to the fullest. He made you laugh and laughed with you. As an agency we can only hope to have been instrumental at providing him skills to have a fulfilling life. The truth is that DRCC was privileged to have known Bob. He taught us what a truly sweet, wonderful soul looks like. Bob will be missed by many.

Clark Puglisi, age 63, passed away on August 14, 2009. Clark lived at *DRCC-Noumenon* for almost 20 years. He was a fun guy who liked to go out to eat and go on van rides. Clark was known for his drawings (mostly of airplanes). Clark loved music and would often crank up the music and "rock out". He loved going to music in the park and it didn't matter to him which band was playing or how wet the weather got, he still wanted to go. Clark worked at Pinewood-Duluth for many years and his favorite job there was shredding. He also liked participating in Pinewood's outings, especially the annual picnic at Pattison Park. Even though Clark's Parkinson's disease had slowed him down over the years, he still

loved life and wanted to try new things. He will be deeply missed by his housemates and staff.

Paul Tyson, age 28, died on Tuesday, October 13, 2009. Paul's grandmother, Mary Tyson, provided services to Paul through our In-Home Family Support Program. Paul was a wonderful young man who was blessed with a family that provided such excellent care to him throughout his life. Paul will be missed by those who loved him so very much.

Whitney Lien Durbin, a member of the *IHFS-Range* program for the past five years, passed away at her home on November 15, 2009. Whitney was born on June 7, 1986. She graduated from Virginia High School in 2007. She was very involved in community activities and spent time doing the things that she really enjoyed such as shopping, hanging out at the coffee shop (Caribou Please), listening to music, getting her hair done, spending time with her friends, and visiting with others. Whitney had an open, accepting way about her that made it very easy to be around her. Her buzzing sounds, clapping, giggling, and smile will be greatly missed by those whose lives she touched.

Our Tenth Anniversary...

The 10th annual **Golf with the Stars** event was once again a success! Rain did not dampen the spirits of our golfers who came to support DRCC. The event included a putting contest, won by Steve DeZeler, a silent and live auction, raffle, dinner and of course golf. This year's winning team was Team Giuliani.

Over \$9000.00 was raised this year. These funds are part of DRCC's grant fund that assists in meeting some of the unmet needs clients have. We wish to thank all who participated, especially our golf committee members: Deb and Kent Oliver, Dennis Ramberg, Alex Giuliani, Wes Mattsfield and Laura Weintraub who are so generous with their donations to our event.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

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 Curry Concrete
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 Johnson Brothers
 Furniture Company
 Johnson Killen & Seiler, PA
 Oneida Realty Company
 PreferredOne
 Princess Bride



Auctioneer Kent Oliver assisted by his daughter, Susan Oliver.



Steve DeZeler (above) won the putting contest.



Employee Milestones



The work of DRCC is carried out by its many dedicated staff. We are again recognizing employees who have reached a milestone anniversary between July 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009. Without exception, the following employees have shown a commitment to the people they work with - staff and clients, loyalty to DRCC, and a desire to make lives better.

20 YEARS

Carolyn Marino has been employed with DRCC, and has worked at the Manumit program for the past 20 years and still enjoys coming to work each day! Carolyn and her husband, Jeff, enjoy living in the country. When she's not at work, you can find her reading, gardening, canning her garden produce, baking homemade bread, and snowshoeing in the winter or hiking up the North Shore. Carolyn hopes to travel abroad in 2010 to visit relatives in Finland. She is looking forward to retirement in a few years when she can travel more.

Sherry Olson is DRCC's Payroll Coordinator. Sherry is a life-long area resident, is married, and has two grown children. Sherry enjoys movies, traveling, and spending time with her three grandchildren.

Karen Meagher is a full-time Program Director splitting her time between the DRCC-Valley, DRCC-West and DRCC-Gateway programs. Karen has three sons and enjoys reading, biking and camping.

Denise (Dee Dee) Burke is the Program Director at Oneota and has been working for DRCC since July of 1989. Dee Dee is a member of the Staff Training Committee and has been providing training to new employees since 1995.

15 YEARS

We have two employees who reached their 15-year anniversary during the second half of 2009.

Rochelle Nelson – Daniels
Jill Korpela-Bontems – Northside

10 YEARS

We also have several employees who reached their 10-year anniversary during the second half of 2009.

Jonelle Saranpaa – IHFS Range
Joanne Kilpela – South Grove
Kim Mattson – Hillside
Sherry Vanderport – Triplex
Steve Moilan – IHFS-Range

Employee Promotions

DRCC is very appreciative of our staff and would like to recognize the following employee promotions over the second half of 2009.

The following employees have been promoted to Program Director:

Lindsey Johnson – Merritt
Jennifer Danielson – Meridian
Jonelle Saranpaa – IHFS Range

The following employee has been promoted to Program Coordinator:

Rose Davis – IHFS Range

Different Year, Same Results

at the Third Annual DRCC Football Game



Consumers and employees from DRCC Riverside and DRCC Galere teamed up to defeat the Triggs Tigers on October 24th. Filling out both squads were free agents from DRCC In-Home Family Support-Duluth. **Adam Berg** set a new DRCC Football Championship record, throwing six touchdowns, five to his favorite target, **James Clark**. Cheering on both sides were a group of wonderful spectators, shaking pom-poms to keep warm. Going into the coin flip to see who would get the ball first in sudden death overtime, **Corey Jeanetta**, Tigers captain felt confident. "Our team showed resiliency towards the end of regulation, and I really was sure that we were going to win the game. Then our first pass was intercepted and I thought to myself that we were going to lose again!" Shortly after the interception, **Paul LaGrande** threw a bullet pass to a diving player who landed with the tip of the football in the end zone, and history repeated itself for the third straight year. Both players and spectators enjoyed a grill out, cake and most importantly—each others' company at Galere after the game.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Over the past year

our country has faced significant economic stress and uncertainty. This has touched nearly everyone, at least to some degree. Most of us know people who have lost their jobs or who are struggling to meet their day-to-day obligations. We may be limited in what we can do to help directly, but we can take this time as an opportunity to refocus our priorities. Are we living our lives in accordance with the values that we believe are truly important? Are we appreciative of the things we have and the people in our lives?

These sorts of questions are also important for us as an organization to consider. During these challenging times we must not lose our focus on our values and our mission. We have been asked (by the legislature) to complete our work with fewer resources. While we would prefer not to have had our funding cut, we are keeping our focus on providing quality services. Our staff have been great in being creative and resourceful in carrying out their responsibilities.

The information we are getting related to the state of Minnesota's budget projections for the next few years is grim. The state's budget forecasters are predicting another multi-billion dollar deficit for the state's next biennium. It is important that we are aware of this information and thoughtful about how we might adapt if we need to. However, we need to make sure our primary focus remains on what we can do today. The resources we have are still plentiful and we are able to continue serving individuals in their homes and the community. That is our mission.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

— *Michael Mills*

Dream comes true



Robin (right) and her friend enjoy a day sightseeing in Las Vegas.

We can all remember our first time on an airplane and perhaps the mixed feelings we were having. Trying something new is always scary but well worth it if we want to broaden our horizons, so to speak.

Robin Nelsen, from the *Carlton* program, made her dream of an air plane trip come true. She did this by saving money she earned working at Walmart, to pay for her trip to Las Vegas and requesting DRCC staff to accompany her.

Her adventure began with the airplane ride from Minneapolis International Airport to Las Vegas McCaron Airport. Seated by the window Robin championed her fears and became quite comfortable on the jet airplane as she watched the clouds and cities below, then finally she viewed the lights of Las Vegas.

Once in Vegas Robin was a bit surprised at the price of pop. Robin enjoyed finding bargains while shopping, then later dining at Circus Circus, Vegas's largest buffet and arguably, most delicious due to the free pop. One of the many sights she saw was the M & M factory. The hotel pool had a bit too much chlorine in it for her liking, but she fully enjoyed the 90 degree weather, while the rest of us had snow back here in Minnesota.

On her plane ride home she was able to see the beautiful Southwest as well as the Grand Canyon. Robin already has her next adventure in mind, she wants to go to Florida to see dolphins swim.

October Happenings

October was certainly a busy month for some of our homes given it is the month of Halloween. Parties abounded at DRCC as staff and our clients celebrated Halloween.

Costumes, games, food and hanging out with friends was the theme that ran through our Halloween parties. From the photos it appears that everyone had a "howling time."





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MISSION STATEMENT

DRCC provides direct and supporting services to people with disabilities.

Individuals have opportunities to exert the greatest possible control over their lives and are encouraged to develop relationships with others throughout the community.



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The Duluth Regional Care Center is a private, non-profit organization. Services are paid with a combination of funds from St. Louis, Carlton, Cook, and Lake County Social Services, the State of Minnesota and the Federal Medicaid Program.