

# Progress Notes



Providing residential and support services to persons with disabilities since 1971. December 2011

## On the Ropes

Her hands trembled. Tears streamed down her face. She looked ahead at the first of several ropes hanging just out of reach. She looked down at the tight, thin wire suspended more than 35 feet above the ground. The wind tossed her hair wildly and shook the platform where she sat, summoning the courage to move. She looked forward again, past the rope and to her friends, eagerly urging her forward. Jaw clenched, eyes set forward in determination, she stepped off the ledge.

Early in October, the *IHFS-Duluth* co-ed social skills group and some invited guests climbed up the UW-Superior High Ropes Course to test their confidence and challenge their fears and personal expectations. After a short team-building exercise and safety training, each member donned a helmet and harness and ascended a rope cargo net to the first platform. Working in teams, the group navigated a series of challenges that required balance, patience, problem-solving skills and overwhelming confidence. After finishing at least two challenges, participants arrived at the final platform where they faced the zip line, the only way off the course. As each person sat with their legs swinging from the edge of the platform, they received a chorus of encouragement from their friends and teammates. The support helped but the zip line required each person to find his or her own courage to leap from the edge.

Safely on the ground, the course instructors pulled the group together for a final meeting. First they complimented the group's teamwork and encouragement. The instructors identified this group as the most supportive they had ever seen on the course. Asked to describe their experiences, some group members described feeling panicked, terrified and breathless. Everyone said they enjoyed themselves and could not wait to do it again.



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# Golf with the Stars 2011

This year's event was held on August 20th at Big Lake Golf Club in Cloquet, Minnesota.

## **\$8,700 was raised this year.**

Proceeds from this annual event are used to support a variety of recreational and social opportunities for the individuals served by DRCC. This includes the purchase of recreational

equipment, sponsoring social activities such as dances and game nights, and providing passes for community activities. Additionally, a portion of the funds are used for special circumstances such as purchasing clothing and other basic necessities for individuals or to purchase adaptive equipment for individuals

with physical disabilities.

We are so grateful for all of you who contribute each year to make this event so successful! We would like to extend a special thank you to our committee members: **Tony Mancuso, Kent Oliver, Dennis Ramberg, Julie Seidelmann and staff members Mike Mills, Sandy DeZeler and Michelle Hooey.**

**Please plan on joining us next year.  
The date for next year's event is  
August 17, 2012.  
Mark your calendars!**

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## **A Match Made in Heaven**

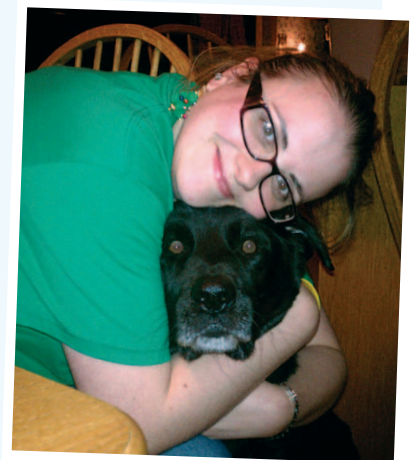
About a year ago **Kat Driscoll**, who shares our Merritt house with two other young women, requested permission to adopt a dog from one of the local shelters. Part of the process involved fostering several dogs to make sure that Kat and her housemates actually liked having a dog. Several came for visits before Toby, a beautiful black lab mix, came for a visit.

Kat and the other two women were in love with Toby right from the beginning. Kat purchased Toby from the animal shelter, made a vet appointment for him and purchased all the supplies Toby would need at his new home.

What a welcome addition Toby has been to their home. Each work day when he hears the UDAC bus he runs to the front sunroom to wait for the ladies. He greets them at the door with a wagging tail as he is so glad that they are home. Plenty of walks are a daily occurrence as well as lots of attention and, of course, a treat or two. Kat and Toby have attended training classes and Toby has done very well.

He seems to know when one of the ladies is having a bad day. He will go to them and put his head in their lap. Once they start petting and talking to him their mood changes. They speak to him like a mother speaks to her small child. You can hear the love in their voices. As much as the ladies have been a blessing to Toby, he, in turn, has made such a positive difference in their lives.

It is truly a match made in heaven.



*Kat and Toby.*

# Friday Fest Broadens Horizons

**Friday Fest** wrapped up a wonderful 2011, keeping favorite events and trying a couple new ones.

In **July**, everyone met at Chambers Grove for a Barbeque. Sports were played, shirts were tie-dyed, unfortunate Program Directors were submerged in a frigid dunk tank and tasty food was enjoyed by all. In **August**, attendees were split into four teams to compete in "Castaway Island" at the DRCC cabin. Each participant solved puzzles, had a dance-off, and played in games of chance to win coins for their team. In the end, the green Pirate Team narrowly defeated the red Polynesian Team. The Friday Fest committee celebrated their 30th event in **September**, when the group went out to the A-1 Ranch for a hayride. While people waited for their turn on the hayride, they could relax by the fire, visit with the barn animals, do an art project or have some dinner. The event was a thrilling success. In **October** the movie Twilight was featured with a cake walk at the Copper Top Church. A barn dance with a new emcee, DJ Dave, was the **November** experience. It has been an impressive year for everyone involved in Friday Fest.

## ✓ 2012 EVENT CALENDAR (Subject to Change)

**January:** Bingo

**February:** Valentine Arts and Crafts,  
Ice Cream Social

**March:** Dance

**April:** Zoo Scavenger Hunt

**May:** Humanity Event, Beach Party

**June:** Semiformal Dance

**July:** Huskies Game

**August:** Cabin Event

**September:** A-1 Ranch Hayride

**October:** Spirit Mountain Activities

**November:** Dance

*In 2012, adventure will be at a premium on the event calendar. In an attempt to stay lively, many new events will be attempted.*



## HALLOWEEN *at the* CORN MAZE



Each year our *Bishop Woods* program hosts a Halloween party for the friends and families of the young ladies that live at this home.

This year the party was held at Engwalls Floral located in Hermantown. Each fall Engwalls creates a corn maze. This year the staff invited the special education classes from Hermantown and East High School to our party as well as family and other friends. Lunch was served. **Carrie Nelson**, Program Director at *Bishop Woods*, entertained the group with several Halloween songs! A good time was had by all.



## 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, 2011 and December 31, 2011. 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.*

### 25 YEARS

**Glen Billmeyer** has been a reliable presence in DRCC's maintenance department since August 1986. All told, DRCC's maintenance department is responsible for 34 properties in the Duluth and Two Harbors area and the Range Cities - Glen shares that responsibility with three other men. Glen is a quiet, low-key person and prefers to keep it that way. He lives in Superior.

### 20 YEARS

**Carrie Dzuck** started working for DRCC September 13, 1991. She was hired to work at *Galere* as a Program Assistant and also had hours at Piedmont and Riverside. In 1998 Carrie became a Program Coordinator for *IHFS-Carlton*. In 2000 she came full circle by becoming the Program Director at *Galere*. In her spare time Carrie enjoys being with her son Dane and husband David. She also enjoys biking, running, and is an amateur gardener. When asked for her thoughts on twenty years at DRCC Carrie said, "I can't believe how fast time has gone by, I feel like I grew up here."

### 20 YEARS

**Coleen (Connie) Smith** started at DRCC South Grove as a Program Coordinator on August 1, 1991. She became the Program Director at DRCC Northside in December of 1997. She welcomed the individuals into the new Northside program in February 1998. In early 2000, Connie served as the Program Director of IHFS also, until that program expanded and required its own full-time Program Director. She enjoys traveling to The Cities, playing cards, and spending time with Logan her grandson.

**Sandra Lilli** started at South Grove the year it opened in 1991 and has been employed at the facility for the entire 20 years. The ladies at South Grove appreciate her guidance, support and of course her cooking. When she starts making pies we usually get one of each flavor: apple, pumpkin, pecan, blueberry and sometimes rhubarb, which are certainly appreciated by all. During Sandy's spare time she enjoys cross stitching, beading and agate picking. She enjoys her job at South Grove as well as the ladies' laughter and smiles on a daily basis.

**Mary Hatch** plays an important role in the success at *Thalassic*. She has worked full-time overnights for many years. She will also spend her free time finding or doing something that will additionally benefit the home. This generosity is also shared by her family and friends.

### 15 YEARS

*We have one employee who reached her 15-year anniversary during the second half of 2011.*

**Janice Rollins** - IHFS/Range

### 10 YEARS

*We also have several employees who reached their 10-year anniversary during the second half of 2011.*

**Rolan Albers** - Wheeler

**Margaret Larson** - Northside

**Carol Nelson** - Fairview

**Wendy LeDoux** - Triplex

**Rose Mattson** - IHFS/Duluth

**Carrie Nelson** - Bishop Woods

**Carol Armstrong** - Aurora

**MaryLou Sando** - IHFS/Lake

**Sharon Waterman** - Soft Hands

## Employee Promotions

*DRCC is very appreciative of our staff and would like to recognize the following employee promotions over the second half of 2011.*

*The following employees have been promoted to Program Director:*

**Ann Deignan** - Laverne

*The following employees have been promoted to Program Coordinator:*

**Jeannie Peters** - Wheeler

**Jill Wallin** - IHFS/Duluth

**Dale Olson** - Triggs

**Aimee Granlund** - Merritt

## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Legislative Outlook

We were all dreading the state's December budget forecast, expecting to hear about another large deficit that would need to be resolved by the 2012 legislature. When the forecast was announced on December 1st, the news was shockingly positive. The state is now projecting a surplus of 876 million for the remainder of the biennium.

While this is extremely good news, it does not mean that there will be new money available or that last session's cuts to human services will be restored. What it does do though, is take the pressure off of legislators to make further reductions to the state's health and human services budget. Had there been another large deficit, we were likely facing further cuts.

The 2011 legislature made some fairly significant cuts to our services. All of our rates were reduced by 1.5%, all of our licensing fees were increased, and a group of individuals who were defined by the state as "low needs" had their rates reduced by 10%. These reductions came on the heels of the reductions already imposed by the previous legislature. We are in the midst of a difficult period where we are being asked to provide quality services with fewer resources.

Out of all these challenging times have come some ideas about how we might do things differently. Much of the discussion has focused on the potential role that new technologies might play in fostering independence while still being mindful of the individual's health and safety. Technology has advanced so dramatically in the past few years and the costs have come down so much, that we can now look for ways to utilize it to help support individuals. In some instances there may be the potential for financial savings.

Some of the concepts being considered are already being utilized with individuals who are elderly or disabled but who want to continue living on their own. There are a variety of call systems and/or sensors that can be used to help monitor health and safety. Some of the "smart" phones/technology have applications that can be utilized by many more individuals with disabilities. When used wisely, the individual benefits by having the independence they want and the "service system" benefits with reduced cost. This is certainly not for everyone, but for some it may afford new opportunities.

— *Michael Mills*

## Cooking at Carlton

Recently the Carlton Program was approved a request from the Grant Committee for some money to start a cooking program. The cooking class happens every other Wednesday at 3:00pm. All staff and consumers at the program were invited to participate in the cooking session, and the group of participants mainly stays the same, give or take a few people. Before each class, a different pair is given the privilege of shopping for ingredients. **Caroline LaFrenier**, Carlton's Program Director, compiled a list of meal suggestions from the group's first class, and the group



hopes to get to each recipe. So far the group has made spaghetti and meatballs, chicken stir fry, beef and chicken tacos, baked chicken breasts, and several vegetable sides to go along with their delicious entrees. Part of the cooking instruction is a focus on healthy foods. While the dish is in the oven, apples, carrots, popcorn and pretzels are snacked upon, games are played,

and crafts are created.

Not surprisingly, cleanup is the least popular task during the class, but everyone takes their turn. What's next for the Cooking Program at Carlton? "We have not concentrated on desserts, that will come", promises Caroline.



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## MISSION STATEMENT

*DRCC is a non-profit agency  
committed to providing quality services  
to individuals and families across the  
age and disability spectrum.*



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*The Duluth Regional Care Center is  
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Services are paid with a combination  
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