

Progress Notes



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

July 2008

Day at the Capitol

The Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota (ARRM) once again sponsored Day at the Capitol. ARRM is the statewide association of private, community-based providers that support people with developmental disabilities, brain injuries and mental illness.

This is an opportunity to meet with legislators and discuss the services agencies like DRCC provide. It is always seen as a very important event as it provides a way for us to let our legislators know what is important to the people we serve and their families.

On March 5th several DRCC staff and clients from our *Soft Hands* program traveled to the Capitol to attend a rally in the Rotunda of the State Capitol.

Always a learning experience, attendees listened to legislative speakers and the Executive Director of ARRM discuss important issues facing all Minnesotans with disabilities.



Senator Yvonne Prettner-Solon listens as the group thanks her for her support.



The group shares concerns with Representative Tom Huntley.

We were also fortunate to meet with Senator Yvonne Prettner-Solon and Rep. Tom Huntley. Both are strong advocates for the services provided to people with disabilities. Several clients shared their concerns about co-pays for medicine and medical visits. Others spoke about their need to assure they had the support they needed to live successfully and safely within their community.

It is vital that our clients learn to speak up for those things that are important to them. This experience is an excellent opportunity for people to fine-tune their self-advocacy skills.

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Taking the Highway to a Better Place

It all started a few years ago when *DRCC-Triplex* Program Director, **Karen Lehto**, was driving down Becks Road and she noticed that there was a spot along the road available for the *Adopt a Highway* program.



The Triplex Highway Crew.

Since then, Karen and several others from *DRCC-Triplex* have been doing their part for the community and environment by picking up litter along the two-mile stretch.

Plevna Hall, Barb Tuttle, Kathy Carlsness, and Faye Francis are current members of this year's crew. *Adopt a Highway* asks for members to commit to cleaning up their adopted area three times a year, yet Karen says that they get out to their part of the highway about eight times each year.

Karen reports that the crew members enjoy getting out into the fresh air and getting involved in helping improve the environment. They pick up as much litter as they can, but throughout the summer season always find new additions to the landscape. Some items that the crew have found in the past few years include televisions, computer monitors, fast-food packages, demolition debris and, to their surprise, a live snake.

Walking on Snow... Snowshoes Make the Difference

While a winter storm with deep snow makes others want to stay in their homes, the guys at Melrose are making plans for their next snowshoe trip. Whether they're trekking up a mountain on the north shore of Lake Superior, exploring the trails at Hartley Nature Center in Duluth, wandering around the snow covered Park Point Trail, or even taking laps around the house, both **Randy** and **Terry** have seemed to thoroughly enjoy their new snowshoes. Terry said he likes snowshoeing because "I can walk on top of the snow and I like walking through the trails". Randy, a man of many words, commented "It's fun". The snowshoes, which have proven to be an exciting, healthy, and unique winter activity for the guys at *Melrose*, were made possible by a grant from the DRCC Grant



Randy and Terry on a winter trek.

Committee. *DRCC-Melrose* was able to purchase 4 pairs of aluminum snowshoes and has made the snowshoes available to all DRCC homes.

Wii (whee) We're Having a Great Time!



Using a portion of the proceeds from DRCC's "Golf with the Stars" the *Noumenon* home was able to purchase a Wii. The four men who live at *Noumenon* have varying degrees of mobility challenges and the Wii makes it possible to bowl, golf, and play baseball at home in their own living room! By playing the Wii, they are able to complete

their physical therapy exercises while socializing with each other and having a lot of fun! If you come by *Noumenon*, you will often hear a lot of laughing and cheering as you come through the door. The four men who are living at *Noumenon* are very grateful to have the new Wii! Thanks for supporting the golf fund-raiser!

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Looking Back

In June I celebrated my 15th anniversary with DRCC. I don't typically mark these sorts of milestones with much hoopla, but 15 years did cause me to pause a bit – perhaps this comes with age or even maturity. When I stop to think about my time with DRCC I tend to think of the things that we have accomplished; the new homes we have developed, the many new clients and families we are serving, the staff we have hired, the technology we have adopted, the financial stability we have achieved, and the many other positive things we have done. These are certainly all true and worthy of note. But in so many important ways, DRCC is doing today exactly what DRCC's founders set out to accomplish 42 years ago. Our focus today, as it was then, is to provide support services for persons with disabilities in their community.

The "42 years ago" helps me put my 15 years in perspective. It means that I have become part of DRCC's long tradition of providing quality services. I am extremely proud to be part of this. DRCC is comprised of many talented and committed individuals who help to carry out DRCC's mission every day. Our combined efforts are what make our services great!

– *Michael Mills*

2008 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

This year's legislature again had to grapple with trying to figure out how to resolve a \$935 million dollar budget deficit – without raising taxes. This meant that legislators were forced to make cuts and limit the amount of money available for any new spending.

Our services have survived the process fairly well, though not unscathed. On the positive side, they delayed, but did not take away, the 2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) that was passed during the last legislative session. This money is very important for our services because the majority goes directly to our staff for wage increases. On the negative side, the legislature imposed caps on the number of new individuals who will be able to receive services during the upcoming year. This will cause waiting lists for services to increase. Additionally, the legislature authorized counties to charge providers an additional fee of up to \$500 for licensing each foster care home (DRCC has 23 homes).

While the 2008 legislative actions will not have any dramatic impact on DRCC's services, we are facing a time of funding constraints. The worsening economy is having an impact on our organization and we anticipate that this will continue for the next couple of years. While the legislature fixed the state's projected deficit through July of 2009, they are expecting an even larger deficit for the following budget period. Given this, it will be extremely difficult for legislators to approve much, if any, cost of living adjustments during the next legislative session.

Pasties for Self-Advocacy

DRCC's *IHFS-Duluth* program started two life skills groups five years ago – one for men and the other for women. These groups provide a supportive environment where group members can learn skills such as how to build social networks or how to be a self-advocate. The groups meet monthly to develop their skills and to have an opportunity to socialize and connect with others.

This year the women's group decided that they wanted to attend the 2009 Self-Advocacy Conference in Minneapolis next May. In a show of self-motivation, they embarked on a plan to raise money for the conference. They decided to sell pasties from My Mom's Specialty Foods. With their first sales, they managed to raise half the money they need. In order to reach their ultimate goal, they are planning to do it again this fall. **Good luck ladies!**

Ann Flannagan Retires

Ann Flannagan has retired after twenty-four years at DRCC and over forty years of service to people with disabilities.

Ann graduated from the College of St. Benedict on a Saturday in 1966 and went to work the following Monday at the Mankato Rehabilitation Center. At the time, vocational rehabilitation was the ONLY service for people with disabilities. Her job was to greet and interview newly referred people and help them make the adjustment to services in Mankato. In 1968, she was attracted by an ad for a social work job at the Faribault State Hospital. It was her job to teach men the basics about survival in the community and get them out of the hospital as fast as possible – part of the early “deinstitutionalization” movement.

Ann worked many other places before moving to Duluth with her husband Tom. In 1984 she started working for DRCC providing day activities for clients and assisting them in getting back into the work force. She then became a Program Director at *Hillside*, then Oneota before becoming a Program Manager in 1990. Ann expressed her gratitude for having been a cog in the wheel of progress, particularly to have been involved with the great organization that DRCC has become. People with disabilities are now able to hobnob in the community, find jobs, and have funds to live in very nice homes.

Ann now lives in Tower, MN and looks forward to having more time to pursue other interests and to spend more time with her five children, five grandchildren and friends. Among other things, she is involved with a great bunch of people in the community of Tower who are interested in renovating a train.

Some thoughts from Ann: “I’d like to say that the Program Directors are the pulse of DRCC. We have so many dedicated, fun-loving Program Directors who stay focused on our clients’ needs and interests, on quality of life, and who are here for the long haul. It has been a treat to be part of this great organization. Thanks to all of you for what you do and for letting me be a part of it! The best to all of you.” Ann Flannagan

Thank you, Ann for all you have done for the people you have served over the years. You always saw possibilities and sought out ways to accomplish the things that were important to the individuals you served. Your dedication, enthusiasm, and commitment are an inspiration!

New Program Manager

DRCC is pleased to announce that **Jeanette Curry** has been promoted to Program Manager. Jeanette will be filling the position that became available with Ann Flannagan’s retirement. Jeanette has worked for DRCC for nearly 10 years, as a Program Assistant at both *Aurora* and *Rockridge*, and as Program Director for the *Lambert* program since it started in 2001. Please join us in wishing Jeanette all the best in her new position!

DRCC Annual Board Meeting

At DRCC’s annual board meeting held on June 12, 2008 the following individuals were elected as board officers:

Laura Weintraub, president; Nancy Lane, vice-president; and **Kent Oliver, secretary/treasurer.**

The Board bid a fond farewell to **Dennis Ramberg**, past president and board member for the past 13 years.

The Board welcomed new members **Wes Mattsfield, Kathy Hanson,** and **Alex Giuliani.**



*Dennis Ramberg,
past president*



*New Board members Wes Mattsfield,
Kathy Hanson, and Alex Giuliani*

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 January 1, 2008 to June 31, 2008. 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

Rick Nelson started working for DRCC in 1983 as a part-time Program Implementor at the Duplex and quickly worked his way to becoming the Program Director there. Over the years, Rick has directed several of DRCC's programs (*Valley, Galere, Kedge, Baldwin, Jitney*). He started the *Piedmont* program in 1991, where he remains the Program Director today.

20 YEARS

Bert Clark has been the Program Director of *Baldwin House* and its various incarnations: *Jefferson*, now, *Glendale*. Bert's other interests are in graphics and video, reading, gardening, hunting, fishing, boat motor restoration, and travel. Bert is married and has a 13-year-old son and 8-year-old daughter.

Lenore Ross has worked at *DRCC Hillside* since 1988, first as a Program Implementor, and then in 1989 as the Coordinator, and finally, as Program Director since 2001. In her spare time, Lenore enjoys reading, gardening, and cooking. She lives in Superior and has a married daughter living in Duluth.

John Hynes began his employment as a Program Implementor at the *Baldwin House* in 1988. Over the next several years he worked part-time at several DRCC programs, including *Lakeside, Noumenon, Riverside, and Jitney*. John became Program Coordinator at *Jitney* in 1992, and was promoted to Program Director in 1996. During his time as Program Director, he supported the men of *Jitney* through their move to their new home in 2004. In 2005 John stepped down as Program Director in order to spend time with his growing family. He continues to work part-time with the men at *Jitney* as a Program Assistant.

15 YEARS

We have three employees who reached their 15-year anniversary during the first half of 2008.

Michael Mills - Executive Director
Chris Anderson - Thalassic
Sharon Shimmin - Soft Hands

10 YEARS

We also have several employees who reached their 10-year anniversary during the first half of 2008.

Todd Reed
Soft Hands

Adam Dargatz
LaVerne

Jeri Rathbone
Noumenon

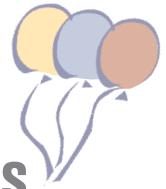
Stephanie Finnila
Oneota

Lisa Bents
IHFS-Duluth

Pete Ferrando
Woodland

Jeanette Curry
Administration

Employee Promotions



DRCC is very appreciative of our staff and would like to recognize the following employee promotions over the first half of 2008.

*The following employee has been promoted to **Program Manager**:*

Jeanette Curry

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

Debbie Zupancich - Lambert

Jane Lilya - Fairview

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

Matt Anderson - Fourteenth

Vanessa Lindquist - Riverside

Kelly Alfini - IHFS-Duluth

James Paine - IHFS-Duluth

Virginia Engman - Lambert

Denise Deutsch - Fairview

Golf with the Stars

Mark your calendars! **Friday, August 22, 2008** will be DRCC's Ninth Annual Golf with the Stars event. Big Lake Golf Club in Cloquet will once again be the location of this annual event.

Proceeds are used to help our clients with special purchases that otherwise would not be possible. **Last year's event raised over \$10,000.00.**

Please plan on joining us for an evening of fun including: putting contest, live and silent auction, ladder golf, dinner and of course night golf. For more information contact Sandy DeZeler or Michelle Hooey at 722-8180.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our Ninth Annual Golf with the Stars will be held on Friday, August 22, 2008.

We wish to acknowledge the following individuals for volunteering their time to serve on the Golf Committee:

Dennis Ramberg	Angela Dougherty
Kent Oliver	Wes Mattsfield
Tony Mancuso	Kathy Hanson
Deb Oliver	Laura Weintraub



Thank You!

A special thanks to the following individuals and businesses who have contributed to DRCC.

Ray and Martha Moeller

George and Dadee Reilly

Dennis and Kari Ramberg

Amos and Sue Deinard

Clyde and Marion Craven

Nick and Joan Ostapenko

Dave and Theresa Corbin – Coldwell Banker East/West Realty

Greg Kamp – Coldwell Banker East/West Realty

Letourneau Refrigeration and Heating

Marlyis and Lyle Carpenter

Michael and Marilyn Sullivan

Janice Osbakken

Warren and Marjorie Spannaus

F. Joseph and Cindy Johns-Giesen

Brien and Nellie Mathews

Diane and Terry Hiebert

IN MEMORY OF SCOTT MURPHY:

Mary Pat Grupe Timothy Rich

Neil and Anita Falbo Beth Anderson



The Islands of Aloha

In early February, **Mandy Shaw, Hope Kochendorfer,** and **Tina Roskoski** from *Lambert* enjoyed a tropical vacation to the beaches of Maui, Hawaii. The ladies accompanied a group from Off the Beaten Path, a Minnesota-based organization offering affordable trips since 1985. Their oversea journey provided memorable experiences. The three of them fought against sea-sickness for a breathtaking glimpse of breaching Humpbacks. They went on to enjoy a tour of a pineapple plantation. The group also got to enjoy some of that fresh fruit at a Luau on the beach. Mandy recounts that wonderful night, "There was pork with fruit and hula dancers and men and women twirling fire!" What lucky *Lambert* ladies!

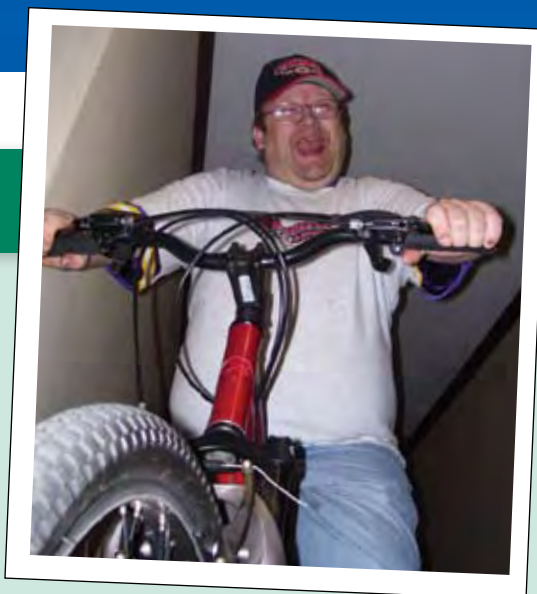
TRIBUTE: SCOTT MURPHY

Scott died at the age of 47. He lived in Two Harbors as a young boy and then spent a number of years in Brainerd. He returned to Two Harbors at the age of 29 and began a new chapter of his life living at *DRCC-Thalassic*. This was a difficult challenge for Scott. However, he ultimately met the challenge with great success. He developed in every possible way – personally, emotionally, physically, and socially. He enjoyed his new appreciation for life.

Everyone who had the pleasure of seeing his successes and being his friend loved him. And, he loved us back. We miss him very much.

Mike Peterson

Mike Peterson owns one prize possession. His bicycle. Purchased at Stewart's Bikes and Sports, the bike is fitted with a bell, mirrors on the right and left, a rear light, an odometer, and a headlight with a built-in radio. Mike goes to Stewart's to visit (joke around with) and help out the staff several times a week during the spring, summer, and fall months. On a typical day, Mike saunters into the bike shop armed with a big smile and a diet coke. He makes his way to each employee to say hi and to make sure they are working and not just loafing around. Once Mike catches up with everyone, he finds out if there is any work he can do. He helps wheel the bikes that were on display outside back into the store, helps clean up at the end of the day, and occasionally offers his expert advice to customers. In return, Stewart's gives Mike free t-shirts, water bottles, hats, and invites him to staff parties and outings. The employees liken Mike to a bear because he seems to hibernate in the winter and is scarcely seen around the bike shop during the frosty months of the year. In fact, they have a wager to see who could guess the day that Mike would return this year and said that his return indicated the true coming of Spring.



Stewart's recently showed their appreciation to Mike by helping him out in a big way. On Tuesday, April 1, Mike's bike was stolen outside of Stewart's Bikes and Sports, while

Mike was inside. The staff helped Mike call the police to report his stolen bike, and when the police did not find anything, Stewart's gave Mike a brand new bike! Less than a week later, Mike was gliding down the Lakewalk with a new set of tires under him.

This heart warming story really highlights the value and the success of integrating vulnerable adults into the community. The friendship between Mike and the folks at Stewart's is very genuine, definitely could not be replicated in an institutional environment, and is undoubtedly as beneficial for the folks at Stewart's as it is for Mike.

Extreme Makeover -Duluth

Jessica Robertson is an eighteen-year-old who always aspired to decorate her bedroom. With little resources of her own Jessica asked the DRCC Grant Committee for assistance. Like the TV show, only on a much smaller scale, Jessica and her staff, **Kandiss**, have been busy redesigning her room. Jessica was so excited to pick out paint, bedding and decorations for her room. While the room is not complete as of yet, Jessica and Kandiss are well on their way to creating a space that is colorful and cheery.



Ready, set...makeover!



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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.



DRCC Board of Directors

Laura Weintraub, President
Nancy Lane, Vice President
Kent Oliver, Secretary/Treasurer
Laurie Mathews
Katie Bridges
Kathy Hanson
Wes Mattsfield
Alex Giuliani

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.