

# Progress Notes



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

July 2009

## Friday Fest!

An energetic and creative group of DRCC staff have started offering new social and recreational opportunities for individuals served by DRCC. The group decided to name the sponsored events "Friday Fest". Since January, the committee has been actively providing events that enable consumers and staff from the Duluth area to get together and have a wild time. Money raised from the DRCC golf fundraiser insures that these events are affordable, and most of the time free of charge. One of the best things about these events is how involved consumers have been in the organization of the special nights. The Friday Fest events occurring in the cold winter months have taken place at First United Methodist Church (The Copper Top Church). The Friday Fest phenomenon shows no sign of slowing down.

The first event was a dance that occurred in late January. Close to 100 people showed up for the inaugural event and they were not disappointed. **Ryan Maki** of Winona commented, "Oh yeah, I had a good time. That was some fun dancing." Mary and Jerry the DJ provided music, and concessions were provided by the Friday Fest committee. You could hear balloons pop through the night after they rained down on dancers from a balloon drop.

Mary and Jerry and their wonderful audio system were an integral part of the February event, the Karaoke Lounge. There was some dancing, and better



yet, all present were encouraged to try out their singing skills at the Karaoke microphone.

BINGO night was the March event. **Laurie Seidelman** of *IHFS-Duluth*, who won three times, shared her bingo strategy, after the night was over of course. "You have to take your time, be patient. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose." In between bingo games players could grab a soda or popcorn, and they could also vote between three candidate movies for the next Friday Fest event, Movie Night.

And the winning selection for Movie Night was...*Grease*. A large projection system and screen was set

*continued on page 2...*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Self- Advocacy.....	2
The Old Homestead .....	2
2009 Legislative Session.....	3
Volunteer Recognition.....	3
Fitness Challenge .....	4
Employee Milestones .....	5
Golf with the Stars, Tribute.....	6
Teen Takes Care of Business.....	7

## Moving Self Advocacy Forward

The 2009 Minnesota Self-Advocacy Conference was held on April 17th and 18th in St Paul. DRCC was well represented at the conference with 15 people attending. The participants attended workshops, met new people, and enjoyed the wonderful amenities at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

According to **Amanda Bernu and Rori Johnson** the motel was beautiful, convenient very accommodating and friendly. The conference was very entertaining and organized. Some of their favorite

sessions included “Self Advocates Rock!”, “Elvis and His Blue Suede Shoes”; “Finding the Heart of Self-Advocacy”; “The Wizard of Oz!” and “Believing in your dreams and finding the courage to live them”. The “Freedom Tour” and “Who Has the Power? We Do!”, taught Amanda and Rori to speak for ourselves and to find togetherness in reaching goals. They also thought the blind magician was very entertaining and inspirational.

**Hope Kochendorfer** added that she learned that people shouldn’t look at people with disabilities as handicapped and that we have feelings, rights and abilities too. She discovered that she is a self-advocate for all people with disabilities and that she can speak up for myself in an assertive way to get my needs met.

**Laurie Seidelman, Sarah Klein and Heather Peterson** said, “The conference was fun. Standing up for me is a good thing, It is not okay to use the “R” word in the world today; it hurts a lot of people.”

Everyone was in agreement that they want to attend again.



Left to right: Amanda Benson, Laurie Seidelman, Sarah Klein, Nicole Krenner, Heather Peterson, Ann Deignan

## Friday Fest ...continued from cover

up, and a place for dancing was cleared. People were so excited to see this classic movie that most showed up in attire John Travolta and Olivia Newton John would be proud to don. The Friday Fest committee bought a wide-screen edition of Grease for the night, but **Steve Dulinski** from Riverside brought along the standard version which worked better for the projection screen. And later Steve won the raffle. The prize—the movie *Grease!*

Voting for the movie to watch is just one example of ways that consumers are encouraged to get involved in Friday Fest planning. There is a suggestion box present at each event and there have been some great ideas that emerge from the box. Everyone is welcome to bring a guest from outside of DRCC to the nights.

**Jeanette Curry** hopes to see more success for Friday Fest. “The Friday Fest committee is committed to continuing to find fun activities or repeat the successful ones we have already done”. With the weather turning nice, the festivities are moving to other places throughout Duluth. In May, there was a Rock ‘N Roll Pizza Train, and in July there will be a carnival at Chamber’s Grove. What is a fact is that Friday Fest is a great time for all involved, and hopefully will be around for a long time.



## The Old Homestead

Several weeks back, *DRCC-Hillside* had a surprise visitor from the past. When **Walter** answered the door, he was greeted by Mrs. Helen Baker. She said that her grandfather had built the house in 1905 and that she had grown up there. She had many great memories of the house and the neighborhood. She toured the house and had a nice visit.

After her visit she wrote a letter to *DRCC-Hillside* expressing how nice it was to stop by her old homestead and to visit with Walter. She thought the place looked very nice. She also expressed that she knows her grandparents would be happy to know that the house was in good hands.



## FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### 2009 Legislative Session

Going into the 2009 Legislative Session we knew things were going to be difficult. The nation's economy was in a serious recession and most states, including Minnesota, were facing unprecedented budget deficits. The federal government provided assistance to states as part of the "stimulus package" to help cushion the problem. Even with the federal assistance, the State of Minnesota faced a projected budget deficit of 4.6 billion for the next biennium (2009-2011).

The legislature's single most important responsibility for the legislative session was to develop a two-year balanced budget for the state. Unfortunately, after four-and-a-half months of debate and political posturing, the legislature and the governor could not reach an overall agreement on how to achieve a balanced budget. At the end of the session the two parties were still about 1 billion dollars apart. Governor Pawlenty has indicated that, after July 1st, he will make the cuts needed to balance the state's budget.

Below are a few items that were passed and signed by the Governor:

- Payment rates paid to all providers of disability services will be reduced by 2.58%. For DRCC, I believe we can make the necessary adjustments so that we will be able to accommodate the cut without having a negative impact on the services we provide.

- A two-year moratorium was put in place on the development of new homes for individuals with disabilities. For individuals who need a home or wish to move this may significantly impact the choices they have available to them about where they live and with whom.
- New limits/reductions were put in place for individuals using Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services.

While the reductions that were passed during the 2009 legislative session will not have a serious negative impact on the services we provide, I believe there is cause to be concerned about the future. Before the federal government provided the stimulus assistance to states, Governor Pawlenty had proposed the elimination or reduction of some very basic health care services for persons who receive medical assistance. For adults receiving medical assistance he proposed the elimination of coverage for dental services, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. The federal stimulus assistance is scheduled to end in 2011. If the state's economy has not improved by that time, these sorts of proposed cuts will likely resurface.

Clearly, in these difficult economic times, it is critical to use the available resources carefully and efficiently. However, it is not acceptable to cut basic health and dental services for individuals who are living in poverty or who have a disability. We need to make sure we speak up.

— *Michael Mills*

### NATIONAL VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The week of April 19th through April 25th was a time to acknowledge the important contributions made by volunteers. Many individuals who receive services from DRCC enjoy volunteering their time and talents to make someone else's day better. On the Range, a number of individuals go to Edgewood Vista to help entertain the elder clients there. They help serve drinks and snacks and join in sessions of song and dance. Others help out at the soup kitchen, or volunteer at the Apple Tree daycare and spend time with the toddlers playing games, or helping with lunch. Edgewood Vista acknowledged the individuals who have helped out there with a nice dinner and ceremony to thank all the volunteers for their efforts.



*Left to right: Rori Johnson right*



Left to right: Michael Johnson, Betsy Knutson, Robert Stromsness, James Paine, David Frankenfeld and Deniese Deutche.

## ARRM Annual Conference 2009

This year the ARRM (Association of Residential Resources in Minnesota) Annual Conference was once again held in Bloomington, MN at the Sheraton Bloomington Hotel. This annual event provides training, social networking and recognition for Direct Support Workers in Minnesota. Each year at the conference ARRM presents "ARRM Cares" awards to direct support staff who provide exemplary support to the individuals they serve.

DRCC was honored to have ten individuals nominated for ARRM Cares Awards. Those individuals were nominated by their Program Directors for their efforts towards assuring the people we serve are provided the best possible services.

DRCC's 2009 ARRM Cares Nominees were: **Amy Boman, Rose Davis, Deniese Deutsch, David Frankenfeld, Scott Hauswirth, Mike Johnson, Betsy Knutson, Jim Paine, Matt Seiple-Anderson and Robert Stromsness.** They were honored at a special luncheon on Wednesday, May 14th, at the ARRM Conference. DRCC would like to congratulate each nominee and thank them for their work!

## FITNESS CHALLENGE



DRCC-Jitney spearheaded the idea for **DRCC's First Annual Fitness Challenge.** The Fitness Challenge was loosely based on the reality television show, "*Biggest Loser.*" For 90 days, a total of 107 DRCC employees participated in the friendly competition to become leaner and more healthy. The competition began February 1st and concluded May 1st.

The competition was based on the percentage of weight lost. Anytime Fitness joined with DRCC in sponsoring the challenge. To join in on the fitness fun, participants formulated teams consisting of 2 to 4 team members or they could choose to just be part of the individual competition. All participants were part of the individual challenge. A total of 29 teams participated in the Fitness Challenge, with each team coming up with a fun team name. During the three-month challenge teams and individuals were also faced with side challenges. One challenge was to capture an image of themselves doing several fitness activities and

even dress like the greatest fitness expert of all time, Richard Simmons. By May 1st, the competitors had lost a total of 795 pounds! The final challenge was to gather 795 pounds of non-perishable food items and donate them to a local food self. Fun was had by all and the winners were:

### INDIVIDUAL FITNESS CHALLENGE RESULTS:

Pat Deignan ..... 22.2% .....1st Place:  
\$100.00 & a 6 month membership to Anytime Fitness  
Carrie Dzuck..... 18.7% .....2nd Place: \$50.00  
Kevin Flemming Jr..... 16.5% .....3rd Place: \$25.00

### TEAM RESULTS:

Los Gordos ..... 15.7% .....1st Place: \$400.00  
Crisco Kids ..... 9.2% .....2nd Place: \$200.00  
Holy Cows ..... 7.7% .....3rd Place: \$100.00

*Congratulations to the winners and all who participated in the Fitness Challenge.*



## Congratulations Rob!

For the past two years **Robert (Rob) Mauro** has been studying hard, attending classes four days a week at the Adult Learning Center. On May 28, 2009 Rob reached his goal. He graduated at age 52 from the Adult Learning Center and now has a high school diploma. Rob received an achievement award at commencement. "I worked hard, studying math, English, history and science.

Science was my favorite subject," said Rob. "I once laughed at people who got their high school diplomas, calling them fools. Now look who has a diploma – me. I am very proud of my accomplishment. I plan to go on to college in Vermont." Congratulations Rob! Rob has been involved in the *Soft Hands* program since 2003.

# 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, 2009 and June 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.*

## 30 YEARS

In May, **Sandy DeZeler** celebrated her 30th anniversary with DRCC. When Sandy started 30 years ago DRCC was operating six programs—four ICF/MR group homes and two apartment training programs. Now, 30 years later, DRCC has 41 different programs, serving more than 375 individuals. Sandy has been an integral part of DRCC’s development over these years. She currently serves as Business Manager, with responsibility for all of DRCC’s accounting functions and property management.

## 25 YEARS

**Rob Townsend** was initially hired as a houseparent at *Baldwin* in 1984. In 1986 he left *Baldwin* to direct a SILS program and to open DRCC’s first waived services program. The program later became the *Lakeside* program. Rob has worked as Program Director ever since, seeing the program through a move to a new home in 1996, when it was renamed *Rockridge*. Rob and his wife Chris have two children, Heather and Sam. Rob’s interests include fishing, bowling, Vikings football, music, beer making, and spending time with family and friends. Most recently Rob was the team leader of “*Townsend’s Tubbies*” losing 33 pounds during the DRCC Fitness Challenge!

## 20 YEARS

**Joanne Stager** began her employment at DRCC in 1989 at the former *West* program where she initially worked as a job coach. Six months later she started working at the *Oneota* program, where she has been a dedicated employee for the past 19 1/2 years. When she is not working she is busy playing tennis or spending time with her husband Bob. Joanne and Bob live in the country. Along with traveling, their interests included making maple syrup in the spring and enjoying their dog “*Trouble*.” On May 28,

2008 Joanne and Bob adopted “*Trouble*” from a local shelter. He keeps them very busy and has turned out to be a great little dog and a wonderful companion. Joanne advocates for others to adopt an animal if they are looking for a pet.

## 15 YEARS

*We have three employees who reached their 15-year anniversary during the first half of 2009.*

**Bill Flannagan** – *Mankato*

**Lori Ryan** – *Woodland*

**Darin Schuman** – *Hillside/Noumenon*

**Diane Childs** – *Northside*

**Mary Ann Hansen** – *Nurse*

**Scott Hauswirth** – *Mankato*

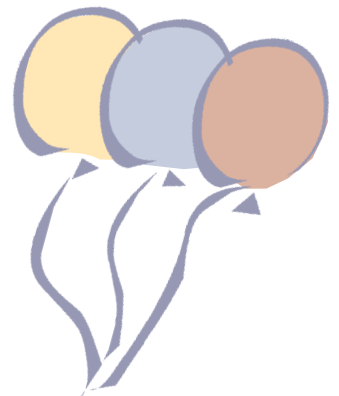
## 10 YEARS

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

**Randee Erjavec** – *South Grove*

**Andrea Koop** – *IHFS-Duluth*

**Jathan Barker** – *Mankato*



# Golf with the Stars

Every summer for the past nine years golfers have convened at Big Lake Golf Club to enjoy dinner, raffle, silent and live auctions and of course nine holes of night golf. **DRCC has raised more than \$67,000.00 since the inception of this annual event.**

The proceeds have helped DRCC meet a variety of unmet needs and also provided additional recreational opportunities. Here is a sample of how the proceeds have been used: Provide funding for "Friday Fest" a recreational program for DRCC clients, purchase canoes and kayaks for the cabin, assist clients with travel costs to visit family, purchase memberships to fit-

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Our **TENTH ANNUAL Golf with the Stars** will be held on **Friday, August 28, 2009**

ness clubs, provide funding for clients to attend the Self-Advocacy Conference and funding for the purchase of recreational equipment such as bikes, sleds, and Wii game systems.

This year's event will be held on Friday, August 21st. Please plan on attending this fun-filled evening and celebrate our tenth year.

**For more information contact Mike Mills at 722-8180, extension 100.**

## TRIBUTE: BETTY JANE PETERSEN

In February 2009 Betty Jane Petersen passed away. She had received services at *Manumit* and later lived at *Duplex/LaVerne* from 1997- 2007.

Betty enjoyed family, church, bowling, shopping, good food, and watching television. Her favorite show was *The Brady Bunch*.

She preferred to be addressed by people as "Mrs. Greg Brady". When it was nice out she loved to sit outside on the swing.

DRCC would like to thank Betty's family (Russell Petersen and Brenda McClarey) for requesting that bequests be sent to DRCC. The money will be used to purchase a swing for DRCC LaVerne in memory of Betty. Her housemates will certainly appreciate the donation and enjoy the many hours swinging outside.

We will miss Betty's laughter and her Betty Boop imitations.



## Thank You!

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

*George and Dadee Reilly*

*Dennis and Kari Ramberg*

*Greg Kamp – Coldwell Banker East/West Realty*

*Dave and Theresa Corbin – Coldwell Banker East/West Realty*

*Clyde and Marion Craven*

*Warren and Marjorie Spannaus*

*Nick and Joan Ostapenko*

*Michael and Marilyn Sullivan*

*Thomas and Julie Seidelmann*

## IN MEMORY OF BETTY PETERSEN:

*Steven and Glenita Geving*

*Claudine and Larry Hansen*

*Ms. Eileen Hanson*

*Ms. Delores Honer*

*Gail Paull*

*Wesley and Lois Rowe*

*Ronald and Eileen Sangster*

# Teen Takes Care of Business

**Michael Manning** uses a wheelchair because of cerebral palsy but has always led a very active life. Michael, now 16, has great enthusiasm for life. This is due in part by the people in his life, complimented by his outgoing and sometimes quirky personality. His busy parents, Cathy Manning, co-owner of Duluth Windows and Closets, and father, Paul, Executive Officer of Arrowhead Builders Association, keep him very active and involved with the community. Michael participates in more things than the average young person despite having gone through more than 50 surgeries.

One of Michael's most recent accomplishments has been working at the Arrowhead Home and Builders Show for the past two years. He is all smiles when you talk to him about his job and the paycheck he has earned. Mike Murphy, of Shamrock Production, is responsible for giving Michael this opportunity. Michael's job is checking vendors' passes as they enter the Home Shows' private exhibitor's lounge. This kind of opportunity fits right in with DRCC's mission "for people with disabilities to exert the greatest possible control over their lives and are encouraged to develop

relationships with others throughout the community".

Michael gets the chance to interact with people and perform a valued service as well as earn a paycheck. "He knows that other people have jobs, that they work, and I want him to have a sense of purpose", says Cathy. For Michael this is more than a job, it is a way for him to boost his self-esteem, feel like he is contributing to his community, and receive compensation for his willingness and a job well done.

When asking him what he plans to do with his paycheck he replied "Take Mary out for her birthday". Mary White is a personal friend who has been a caring and positive person in his life since he was born, 16 weeks premature. It is just like Michael to want to share his earnings with someone so dear to him.

The Duluth News Tribune did a wonderful article about him working at the home show. Michael looks forward to working at the Home Show next year, while eating up all of the positive attention he is receiving from this year's show.

## Thank You! continued...

### IN MEMORY OF RAY RANTALA:

*Christopher Bellefy*

*Edith Berg*

*Deann and David Bergeson*

*Paul and Lois Borg*

*Donald and Marie Boucher*

*Kathleen and Michael Cahin*

*Cedar Lodge*

*Ms. Nancy Conner*

*Susan and David Cullinan*

*Ann Dabl*

*David Deda*

*Evelyn Duckworth*

*Doug and Lana Fisber*

*Patrick and Kara Foat*

*Sally Gullekson*

*Nicole and Mike Gullingsrud*

*Nancy Hammer*

*Lillian Hand*

*Verlyn Hanson*

*Jon and Barbara Harkness*

*Gilbert Harries*

*Judy and Bruce Hoover*

*Mary Ann and Oliver Houx*

*Jennifer and Scott Hughes*

*David and Pamela Johnson*

*Kenneth and Phyllis Johnson*

*Lori Keblar*

*Carol Ann and Robert Kelly*

*Eli and Georgia Kokotovich*

*Judith Kordabl & James Fitzsimmons*

*Raymond and Patricia Kukowski*

*Jill and Ned Lenhart*

*Ms. Margaret Liebl*

*Jill and Paul Mattson*

*Helen and George Medich*

*Esther and Gerald Miettunen*

*William and Irene Moser*

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*Larry and Loretta Nelson*

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*Chris and Karen Odden*

*Martha and Thomas Omberg*

*Marian and Thomas Pare*

*Molly and Terry Phillips*

*Jean and Richard Schwengler*

*Rudy and Angie Senich*

*Joan and Lynn Seppala*

*Karen Sip*

*John and Pat Slaby*

*Barbara Thiede*

*Ann and Chad Thurman*

*Martha Tierney and Jonathan Kilburn*

*Carol and Patrick Tierney*

*Jerome and Rochelle Toutges*

*Wendy and Jon Vesledabl*

*Wells Fargo Bank*

*Mark and Elise Whitehill Nordeen*

*Diane Wirkus*

*Grace and George Wisdom*

*Jane and Doug Youngblood*

*Joe and Ann Zastera*



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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

Kent Oliver, President

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Kathy Hanson

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