



GREATER WALTHAM ARC NEWS

May 2009

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From the Chief Executive Officer, Roz Rubin



Dear Readers,

As we have forecast since January, GWARC and all human service providers are faced with significant cuts. Our main funding source, Department of Developmental Services, DDS, (formerly known as DMR), is reducing our revenue by 25%. This reduction is effective on July 1, 2009 and is based on the governor's proposed budget.

The need to reduce funding for persons with disabilities was totaled at \$45 million statewide. Half of that deficit was restored through the hard work of Arc of Massachusetts, the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers, many committed legislators, as well as the voices of family/guardians, consumers, and staff. But, with a \$22.5 million shortfall, the human service agencies were bound to be impacted. One effect of this cut, as stipulated by DDS, is that ALL Family Support Services are eliminated, not only the supplemental supports some families receive, but the GWARC Family Support Department – that is Anna Thorpe, our Family Support Manager.

Going forward, GWARC needs to determine the best way to continue to serve our consumers in day services. Thoughtful decisions need to be made because they will impact the structure of the agency and the services we provide to consumers and family/guardians.

One thing that is certain – GWARC will be here and will provide the highest quality of services in our skilled and compassionate manner. Changes in services we provide do not mean a compromise in the quality of our work.

Since our last newsletter, there have been many positive events at GWARC and, now more than ever, I am proud to let you know what has been happening....

- GWARC had DDS Survey and Certification in December and received a two-year Certification with Distinction for the eighth cycle in a row. Only nine agencies of the 185 providers surveyed have a similar track record of Certification with Distinction, and we are very proud. GWARC was presented with a Resolution from the City Council in February for our achievements.
- The Artists of GWARC, 2008 received the Massachusetts Cultural Council Gold Star Award – the art project brought an artist to our agency to produce paintings with consumers, a gallery showing at the Waltham Mill Building, and the 2009 desk calendar. We are now in year two of the project, The Artists of GWARC, 2009 is using clay for sculpture and will also use the batik dye method to produce two quilts. Watch for the date of our gallery show and look for the 2010 calendar available at The Harvest Breakfast this fall.
- Brandeis University joined GWARC in two new volunteer projects – Brandeis Buddies, a five week adult recreation program on campus and the Intercultural Council's program at GWARC.
- GWARC staff has had training in Safe Workplace, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, grief/loss issues, and other clinical information.

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From the Chief Executive Officer

(continued)

- “Using and Creating Visual Supports” – through the Crossroads Community Foundation, a grant provided parents of pre-school and elementary-aged children with sessions to learn to use computer generated pictures to assist children in the home and in the community. Created by Family Support Manager Anna Thorpe, the sessions had the expertise of Autism Alliance of Metrowest staff, as well.
- Visitors from As Styrktarfelag, a disabilities agency in Reykjavik, Iceland came to GWARC in April to tour our two sites and learn more about our services, which are similar to their own day and employment services. We shared our ideas for community outreach and programming with our new friends.
- Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel was presented with an Arc of Massachusetts Distinguished Citizen Award at the State House, Boston with thanks from GWARC for seven years of hosting The Harvest Breakfast and the June Car Wash. Congratulations to them and many thanks from us.

Additionally, and most importantly, GWARC has had a significant increase in inquiries about our programs and in referrals to our agency. Careful review of a new consumer’s history and needs as well as input from the consumer and their team members, including families, will bring several new consumers to our GWARC family.

Thanks to the volunteers. I can’t end this article without mentioning the large increase in persons who wish to become involved with GWARC. Volunteers bring the “outside in” for our consumers, forming positive relationships in both Day and Recreation services. Volunteers really enhance the programs. See page 3 for a report on our very successful Volunteer Thank You Breakfast, held on April 18.

Thanks for taking the time to get updated about GWARC....let’s go forward together facing the economic challenges of our state and country and doing the very best we can.

Roslynn Rubin, Ed.D



From the President of the Board

From the GWARC Board President, Bob Francis



As GWARC ends its fiscal year, we are faced with challenges in continuing to provide consistent quality services for consumers. The coming state budget reflects large reductions in revenue to GWARC and all human service agencies. In the meantime, the agency’s need continues for additional funds to serve aging consumers, welcome new referrals and maintain supports which recognize family outreach and leisure activities, all of which have been provided by GWARC over the years. Most importantly, the GWARC Board of Directors, CEO and CFO have recognized the need to maintain a competitive wage and benefit package to our most important resource, our staff.

Difficult decisions lie ahead. Your support and understanding will be appreciated. Additionally, we ask you to be in contact with our legislators, as the finalizing of the budget will occur in the next six weeks. This advocacy for GWARC consumers must come from everyone reading this newsletter, as we are all stakeholders in the ongoing efforts for GWARC to put forth the very best in programming in the Greater Waltham Community.

Bob Francis



Get to Know GWARC

Marketing and Development

By Sarah Benson, Intern, Bentley University

Typical marketing positions involve making the sale, designing flashy billboards or extravagant advertisements to make a profit. GWARC is a unique non-profit organization...in which case, what would the Marketing Department do? Marketing for a non-profit agency is a way of satisfying the agency's needs, providing a foundation for organizational support, creating community awareness and so much more. Working both internally with GWARC staff, as well as, externally with the public this "Department of One" has many responsibilities and plays a substantial role in the functioning of GWARC.

The foundation for a non-profit begins with the support of the community. There are so many generous people in the community who have helped support GWARC over the past 50 plus years with Annual Appeal, sponsorships, in-kind donations, grants, and volunteer help. The direct contacts and relationships with businesses and individuals involves substantial time and effort prior to and after the event including thanking donors and volunteers so that the relationship will stay strong for future support. For example, on Saturday April 18th GWARC held a Volunteer Thank You Breakfast to recognize this support.

In the past year alone, GWARC has served over 600 consumers, families/guardians in the Greater Waltham Community. GWARC's visibility and support in Waltham is seen every year at The Harvest Breakfast, our largest fundraising event for the past 38 years. On October 25th, the community will again gather for this signature event at the Doubletree. Preparing for events like this takes over six months of planning, extreme organization, communication, connections and creative efforts to make the events memorable and successful. Other events the Marketing Department plans include the fall Annual Meeting, Consumer Holiday Party, and other special events which may occur.

The Marketing Director at GWARC also maintains public relations by participating in professional memberships such as Rotary and Chambers of Commerce, and researching new civic and fraternal groups to network with. GWARC has publicity all over the place through an array of publications including GWARC Newsletter, Annual Report, agency brochures, mailings, our agency video, and our web page. The Marketing Director also reaches out by broadcasting on the local Cable TV station, and the Daily News Tribune.

Every job at GWARC has its niche and unique role in maintaining success. Here at GWARC, this position is busy, diverse and is critical to our agency's success.

"GWARC Thanks Our Wonderful Volunteers..."

The above words titled a banner at the podium of the Doubletree Hotel Ballroom as we gathered on April 18 to recognize the many volunteers who have supported GWARC over the years. Thirty-five persons attended and were greeted by CEO Roz Rubin, Recreation Manager/Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Barberio, and members of GWARC Board of Directors. With beautiful keyboard background music and guitar/vocals by EPT Consumer Marci Simons, a hearty breakfast was served. Each volunteer present was saluted with grateful and sometimes humorous commentary – many volunteers could not remember how many decades they have been with us while others claimed they "began volunteering at age 6" so as not to reveal their ages! The volunteer tasks included serving on GWARC standing committees, volunteering for Special Olympics practice and the June event weekend, direct service in Day Education and EPT Programs, assembling furniture, framing art, supporting recreation programs and much more. Roz Rubin noted to the guests that volunteers are particularly important to GWARC, as they bring new energy, talents and especially, ongoing relationships to the consumers. The morning concluded with a special gift to each volunteer and our thanks for being a part of GWARC.

In the last few months, there has been an increase in volunteerism at GWARC and we continue to be grateful for those who contact us and plan to spend some time with GWARC consumers and staff. For further information about volunteering at GWARC, contact Heidi Barberio at hbarberio@gwarc.org or at 781-899-1344, ext. 4145.



Day Education News

From the Director of Day Education, Eileen Nee

Day Education began 2009 with new additions and sad good-byes. Unfortunately, three members of the Day Education program passed away, John O'Brien, Margaret Shea and Maureen Fitzpatrick. Between the three, they had over 50 years of services at GWARC. They each will be deeply missed. Consumer, Anne Farrell also left the program to join a Day Habilitation closer to her new home in Revere. Although Anne was only with us a short amount of time, staff and consumers miss her smiling face. On a happier note, in early spring the program welcomed a new member, Kerri to the group. She has been in the Day Education Program since March and has been a wonderful addition. She is adjusting well, and enjoying all the benefits of the therapeutic program. Day Education has also received four more referrals to the program and hopes to continue increasing our census through the next few months.

Every season change, holiday, opening day and birthday celebration brings out the most creative and enthusiastic side of the Day Education Staff. They brainstorm and research creative activities so that each and every consumer is involved and having fun. The groups celebrated St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Passover, first day of spring and opening day for the Red Sox.

Following with annual events, the Day Education Program had its yearly display of art work and crafts in the Waltham Public Library for the month of March. The groups enjoy seeing their works of art displayed for the public to view. Day Education spring event included its Annual Mother's Day Sale, visit from UPS and volunteers from Gann Academy. The consumers and staff members are looking forward to the new addition of a GWARC van. This will enable our groups to increase community opportunities with a wide variety of new places to explore. Plans and ideas are already flowing!



Family Support

From the Family Support Manager, Anna Thorpe

The Family Support Department has been reaching out to families in the area in a variety of ways. The efforts are paying off as more and more people are hearing of the supports offered, asking for assistance and/or participating in various activities. Ongoing activities include the continued development of the Family Support Resource Library and Resource Manual as well as Parent Support Group Meetings, Family Events and Speaker Series Events.

The Family Support Department has also sought out grant funds to extend its ability to support families. Two grants have been awarded.

One grant from the Danny Foundation for Autism has allowed GWARC to support attendance at various recreation programs offered through GWARC and/or Waltham Recreation Department. This is a grant that families may directly apply for. Call 781-784-7022 to request a grant application. Applications are due in October, 2009.

Another grant from the Crossroads Community Foundation has allowed the Family Support Program to run 2 four-week support groups to assist parents in learning to use and create visual supports and to set up a work station within the Family Support Room for parents to make the visual supports they need for home and community use. Please confirm room availability with Anna Thorpe, Family Support Manager at 781-899-1344 x4120, if you want to use the computer and materials in our new visual support work station.

Additionally, many books about visual supports including books on social stories have been added to the Resource Center. *The New Social Story Book* by Carol Gray already has a list of parents waiting to borrow it. Look for the updated list of resources on the GWARC website. Better yet – stop in and browse for a while. We would be happy to see you.



Employment, Plus & Transitions

From the Director of Employment, PLUS & Transitions, Mary Anne O'Brien

EPT welcomes three new staff members to the PLUS Program - Barbara LaRoche, Case Manager and Roselle O'Brien, Plus Nurse. Sarah Bouche, a current volunteer, joins our team in the PLUS Program in mid May. We are excited to have them all on board.

As Spring rolls around quickly, so do the referrals from our funding sources. We are happy to announce that many families and potential new consumers have been touring our Woodland Road site as well as the Group Supported Employment Sites. Many of these individuals are turning 22 years old and entering into the adult programs. Depending on the day and time, some of the tours coming through have had the opportunity to observe the individuals in BIS Mail complete tasks of collating, folding, inserting, and labeling. If they are lucky enough, however, they may get to experience the magnificent sounds of music coming from the PLUS program. Individuals in the program share their vocals and show their dance moves on a weekly basis with the expressive music therapist.

The PLUS Program has also been busy enjoying the sounds of Mace Miller. He is a percussionist who performs with the help of his buckets, literally. He jams with the group twice a month. It is definitely an experience you do not want to miss.

After the music quiets down, the individuals have been working hard creating butterflies, flowers, pizza, and hot dogs, out of clay, (yes, clay), with the assistance of artist Kris Waldman, through the Waltham Cultural Council Grant for The Artists of GWARC, 2009. You have to see it to believe it.

EPT looks forwards to the warm weather and the months ahead. GSE employees will once again be returning to the Sovereign Bank in Waltham for the Semester Break Program while the college sites are closed for the summer. Being right in the heart of Waltham, near the Common, public transportation, the library and other sites, will allow them to plan activities and memorable trips in and around the city.

Frequently asked questions about BIS Mailing Services.....

What is BIS Mailing Service's goal?

We aim to be the "Number One" mailing agency for our community and to be known for our quality of work and excellent service. We insure that the mailing gets done efficiently and on time while protecting client privacy.

What is BIS Mailing Service's overall objective?

To obtain new accounts that schedule with BIS on a weekly and monthly basis. To increase light assembly, packaging jobs, bulk mailing, production and revenue.

What is its main focus?

To insure that the highest standards of BIS Mailing and GWARC are maintained.

What BIS Mailing jobs are being performed currently?

BIS workers are working diligently on card assembly and packaging jobs for private industry (55% of customers), non-profits (35%), and government (10%).

How is BIS Mail being marketed within the community?

Cherri Perez, BIS Mail Production/Marketing Coordinator seeks BIS work through "Sweeps Meet & Greet Day" and by visiting area businesses. BIS offers a piece rate discount and a coupon to new customers.

What other types of jobs are we looking to do?

On-going light assembly/packaging jobs which would provide consistent work weekly and/or monthly.

Where and what types of organizations have been targeted?

Churches for mass appeal letters; housing authorities and cemeteries, manufacturing companies for light assembly/packaging jobs and Print Houses for contract work that they are not able to perform in house.

What can I do to help BIS Mail?

Think about businesses you frequent and businesses that send you regular mailings, such as sale post-cards, solicitations, and reminders. Contact BIS Mail through Cherri at 781-899-2206 x225 at www.bismailing.com



Summer Tips

As the summer approaches people get a burst of energy to be outdoors and literally soak up the sun, which, has the essential Vitamin D the body craves and needs. Enjoy this time of year safely. Here are some tips to be sure your summer is safe and enjoyable:



To prevent **Dehydration**, which occurs when the amount of water leaving the body is greater than the amount being taken in, you can:

- Drink plenty of fluids (8-10 eight oz glasses of water daily) – avoid caffeine and carbonation.
- Wear light colored cotton clothes to reduce sweating.
- Stay in cool, shaded areas to avoid direct exposure to the sun.

To prevent a **Sunburn** or **Sun/Heat Stroke** (sudden and possibly life-threatening condition in which the body's heat-regulating system fails, due to prolonged exposure to high temperatures) you can remember your ABC's:

- **A = Away.** Stay away from the sun in the middle of the day (from 10 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon) and drink the minimum recommended 8-10 eight oz glasses of water a day.
- **B = Block.** Use a sunscreen with a [sun protection factor \(SPF\)](#) of 30 or higher. Apply 30 minutes prior to sun exposure and don't forget the nose, ears, neck, scalp, and lips.
- **C = Cover up.** Wear loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing, hat, and sunglasses.
- **S = Speak out.** Be sure to teach others to protect their skin from sun damage.
- Call your doctor immediately if signs and symptoms occur that may include:
 - Hot, dry skin, no sweating (usually)
 - Skin is first flushed, then pale or purple
 - Hyperventilation (rapid, shallow breathing)
 - Body temperature rises rapidly to 40°C or higher
 - Headache, muscle cramps, nausea and vomiting



To prevent **Insects (tics, mosquitoes, bees etc)**, you can:

- Avoid places and times especially when mosquitoes bite. Generally, that means dusk and dawn in shaded wooded areas or still waters.
- Be sure door and window screens are tight-fitting and in good repair.
- Wear appropriate light-colored clothing. Long-sleeved tops and long pants made of tightly woven materials and pants legs tucked in are also key.
- Bees are attracted to strong scents, such as, sweet food, overly fragrant perfumes and lotions, and sugary beverages. Keep drinks covered at all times to avoid a bee sting if it gets into the bottle. If a bee is near by, stand as still as possible- don't wave your arms or swat. If you are allergic to bee stings, please alert everyone you are with and be sure your Epi-pen is available and up to date.
- When outdoors, apply insect repellent as indicated on the repellent label. Use a product with 10-25% DEET

Have a happy, healthy summer.

Christa Bartkovich, B.S., RN
Health Services Coordinator
cbartkovich@gwarc.org



Photo Gallery

Using and Creating Visual Supports - Parents of Preschool Aged Children
Ellen Kotlenuk, Nasrin Massah and Maria Cappella



Many hands of artists at work at Woodland Road
Pat Corrigan and others work with clay



Filming the Artists of GWARC in action
EPT Consumer, Ed Kishlansky and GWARC volunteer Kemper Gotshall



Origami with the Brandeis Intercultural Council
Evan Taylor and a Brandeis student.



Volunteer Breakfast – EPT Consumer
Marci Simons entertains the crowd



Drumlin Farms Wild and Domestic Animal Program – April 4, 2009:
Margaret Seymourian, mother, and Amelia Doolittle, daughter

HELPFUL GWARC CONTACT INFORMATION

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MEMORIAL/HONOR GIVING PROGRAM

Your contribution to our Memorial/Honor Program will be used specifically for recreation and leisure programs for children, adolescents and adults. You may remember a person who is deceased or honor a friend's birthday, anniversary or other special occasion.

Please make check payable to:

GWARC, 56 Chestnut Street, Waltham, MA 02453

In our December newsletter, we asked that you contact GWARC if you wished to "convert" to an electronically transmitted newsletter. Our offer was sweetened by the generous support of AstraZeneca. This Waltham based business has generously made a \$2.00 donation to GWARC for every person who agreed to receive their newsletter electronically, saving GWARC hundreds of dollars in print and postage costs in the future. To date, we have over 175 persons on a list of readers who will receive the newsletter online.

Our goal is to convert 400 of the total newsletter readership (800 newsletters), so please be in touch with GWARC by email gwarc@gwarc.org or call 781-899-1344 x4101. If you are holding a newsletter in your hand right now, contact us and save paper, GWARC resources as well as print and postage costs.

Our gracious thanks to our friends at AstraZeneca for this wonderful partnership to save our planet resources and support GWARC.

AstraZeneca 

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