

Making **A DIFFERENCE**

Summer 2002

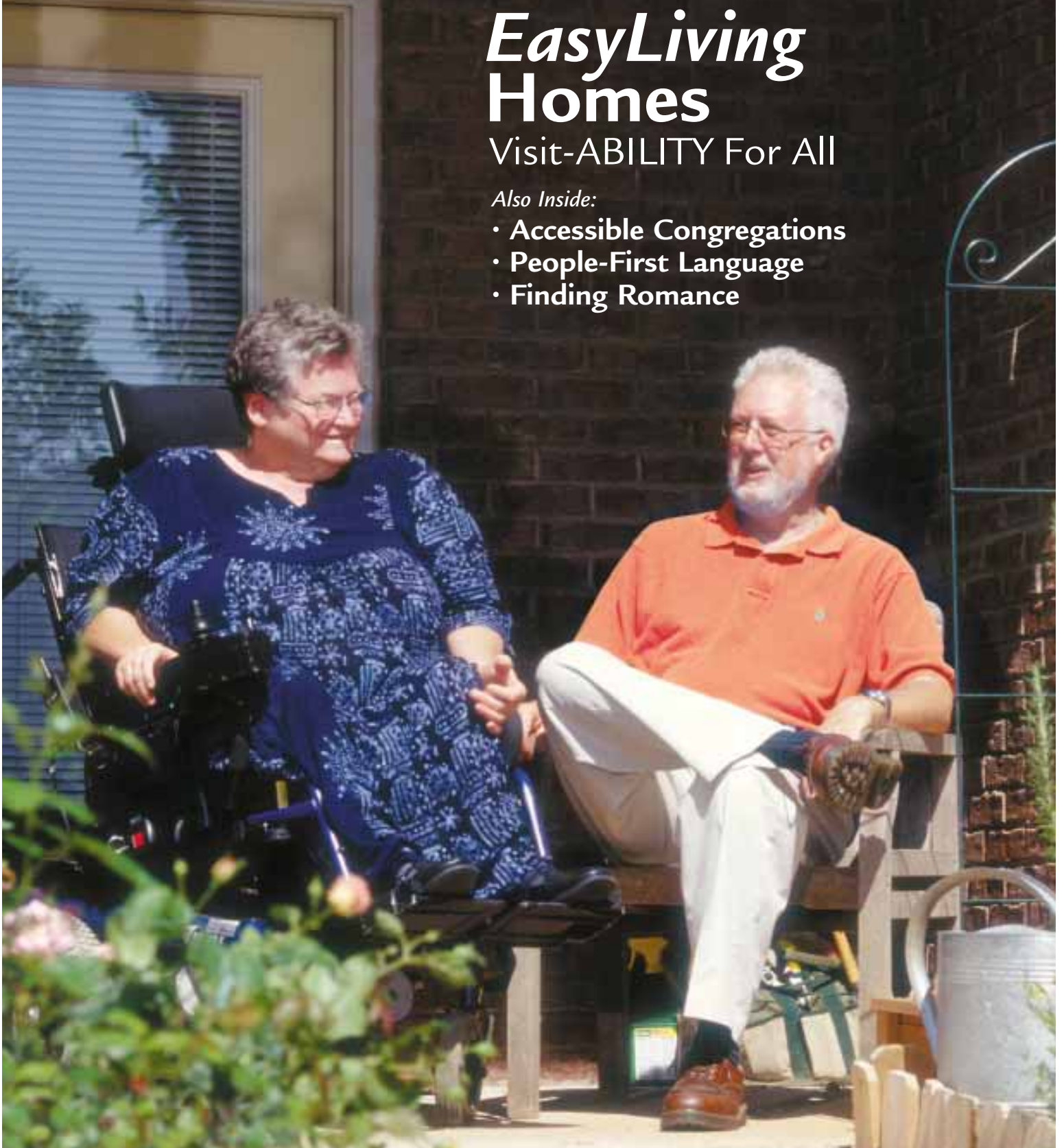
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- Accessible Congregations
- People-First Language
- Finding Romance



A Quarterly magazine that focuses on issues for Georgia's Developmental Disability Community

A quarterly
magazine of the

GOVERNOR'S
COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities collaborates with Georgia's citizens, public and private advocacy organizations and policymakers to positively influence public policies that enhance the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families. The Council provides this through education and advocacy activities, program implementation and funding, and public policy analysis and research.

2 Peachtree Street, N.W., Suite 8-210
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142
Voice (404) 657-2126 · Fax (404) 657-2132
Toll free: (888) 275-4233
TDD: (404) 657-2133
www.gcdd.org

Lynnette Bragg, Chairperson
lynnettebragg@aol.com

Eric E. Jacobson, Executive Director
eejacobson@dhr.state.ga.us

Yao Seidu, Editor in Chief
yaseidu@dhr.state.ga.us

Janice Nodvin, Executive Editor
May South, Inc.

Jody Steinberg, Managing Editor
Stone Mountain Public Relations

Eden Landow, Assistant Editor

Andy Suggs, Design Director
Digital Technologies

Pattie Churchfield, Designer
Digital Technologies

Rikka Wallin, Cover Photographer

MAKING A DIFFERENCE ADVISORY BOARD

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Georgia Department of Education
Division for Exceptional Students

It is the policy of Making A Difference to publish readers' letters and editorial cartoons. Content does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the GCDD, the editors or state government. Send your opinions to jody@stonemountainpr.com or fax to Janice Nodvin at (770) 956-8907.

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Let's applaud our advancement

People with disabilities are seen and heard more today in a variety of places; in the streets as advocates, in new and remodeled homes as homeowners and places of worship as everyday citizens, taking advantage of everyday opportunities. They, their families and advocates are pushing for inclusive housing, jobs and recreation within their own communities and are succeeding.

As the quality of life, health care and life expectancy increase for all of us, the potential is greater for people with disabilities to enjoy life and fulfill dreams like never before.

It takes more than dreams — families and support teams help bring dreams to reality. Actions are taken after long consideration, skill development and with ongoing support. The general population has much to learn from such a plan of action.

This edition of *Making A Difference* profiles success stories resulting not from impulsive or responsive actions, but because dreams and hard work combined with support and shared vision create new opportunities.

You will read about people with disabilities who have been allowed to dream, have long-term goals and accomplish lifetime objectives. They are marrying, living in improved housing, worshipping in chosen religions and enjoying the advances of improved health care.

We applaud the many successes that are profiled here, and hope this will continue for Georgians with disabilities — that with support, encouragement and acceptance, many more dreams will be realized.

With the election process under way, we urge our readers and the disability community to delve into the issues and continue effecting positive change.

In Memory of Justin Dart

Popularly recognized as pioneer and Godfather of the Disability Rights Movement, renowned human rights activist Justin Dart Jr. died June 22 from congestive heart problems and post-polio syndrome. He was 71.

Dart is best known for his work to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. An heir to the Walgreen fortune and himself a successful entrepreneur, Dart, who used a wheelchair, dedicated his life and resources to improving human and civil rights for all disenfranchised Americans, including people with disabilities.

Dart directed the Rehabilitation Services Administration in 1986. He earned countless honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. He was on the podium when President George H. Bush signed the ADA into law July 26, 1990.

Until his death, Dart pushed to advance the rights of people with disabilities and was a strong advocate for a national universal health plan. An internet guestbook in his honor can be found at:

www.icanonline.net/guestbookjd.cfm

A community that excludes even one of its members is no community at all.*



*Smithsonian National Museum of American History Disability Rights Exhibition

Truths about education evident in media coverage

Children with disabilities in special education classes have been the focus of several recent media reports.

The public interest in these stories highlights the moral truth we all know: "All children deserve to have an equal opportunity to learn, to succeed and to be included."

Many problems continue to plague our state and its education community: Meanwhile:

- Special education enrollment is at an all-time high;
- More parents than ever before are fighting for an appropriate education for their children; and
- Inclusive classrooms, in which children of all abilities benefit from learning together, are gaining wider acceptance.

For children to succeed in school, parents, teachers and administrators must all work together. Hundreds of parents throughout Georgia are working to assure that students with disabilities are provided the same opportunities as others in the classroom. We all must be voices in this movement.

Nationwide, inclusive education for students with disabilities in regular classrooms is at an all-time high — 47.4 percent in 1998-99. Additionally, more students with disabilities are graduating — 57.4 percent in 1998-1999 — from high schools than ever before.

Project WINS (www.projectwins.org), which facilitates inclusive education by forming a powerful collaboration between students, parents, teachers and administrators, has been a special project of the GCDD for many years. It proves that keeping students with disabilities in the regular classroom, with additional supports for teachers and administrators, is a winning formula.

Eric E. Jacobson, Executive Director
Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
eejacobson@dhr.state.ga.us



New GCDD members sworn in by Gov. Barnes



A number of key appointments were recently made by Gov. Roy Barnes to the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD).

New appointees sworn in by the governor in the North Wing of the state Capitol include: **Gail Bottoms, Griffin; Heidi Fernandez, Woodstock; Chris Hunnicut, Decatur; Reggie Heinrich, Fortson; Tom Seegmueller, Albany; and Dr. Lee Tian, Evans.**

Council Chairperson **Lynnette Bragg** of Springfield was appointed for another term. Also reappointed were **Vallorie Butler, Acworth; Roy Brown, Rossville;**

Joyce Ringer, Tucker; Cheryl Laurendeau, Atlanta; and Ruth Lee Langevin, Greensboro.

The GCDD is a 30-member policy-making body proven to be a powerful advocate for issues, programs and services affecting Georgians with disabilities and their families.

GCDD since 1971 has worked through public policy initiatives to create opportunities for Georgians in the disability community to live, learn, work, play and worship in places and manners of their own choosing.

www.gcdd.org

House Bill 498 passes: New name for MHMRSA

On July 1, new legislation known as HB 498 took effect in Georgia. The Dept. of Human Resources, Div. of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD), formerly the Div. of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse, began operating under its new name.

Other changes include: newly defined responsibilities for the regional boards; redrawn regions; fiscal decision-making and accountability reverting to DHR; DHR authorization to develop state-operated community services where currently unavailable; and new business powers and greater flexibility for Community Service Boards and service providers.

Margaret Bradford, regional executive director for Region 3, has been named to manage the implementation as it occurs during the next several months.

Quality of life issues call for election involvement

Saturday, Sept. 28 – see you there!

Plan to attend the Quality of Life Forum at Macon State College Saturday, Sept. 28 from 1-3 p.m.



The Quality of Life Coalition is urging all Georgians to vote in the current election cycle. The grassroots group of agencies and advocates representing people with disabilities as well as citizens who are aging, poor and otherwise disenfranchised is hosting a candidates’ forum in Macon on September 28.

With seven candidates running for governor and lieutenant governor, Georgians need to weigh in on the issues and vote TWICE – in the statewide primary on August 20 and in the general election on November 5.

Because of the recently completed redistricting process, many state and federal districts have changed. Newly-drawn districts are opening doors to new candidates, and shifting lines are making political rivals in some party delegations.

It’s important to find out who is running for office in your district and their positions on the issues affecting the disability community.

Georgians should know how to question their candidates on disability and social justice issues, say coalition officials, who are seeking to increase involvement in the electoral process.

Mini-grants and technical assistance are available to communities organizing local candidate forums.

The coalition urges advocacy groups, nonprofits and service agencies to register people to vote and help them get to the polls. You can do this by:

- Organizing a local candidate’s forum;
- Encouraging friends and neighbors, especially those with disabilities, to register and vote;
- Volunteering to take people to the polls;
- Contacting candidates to discuss the issues that impact you; and
- Attending the Quality of Life Candidates Forum in Macon.

Contact: **Dawn Randolph**
at 678-471-3804 or
drandolph@aol.com

Film spotlights inclusion: 'Going to School'

The new documentary film "Going to School" ("Ir a la Escuela") addresses inclusion, special education and empowering children with disabilities and their parents. The issues of respect, civil rights and education for all children are conveyed through the inspiring profiles of parents, students and educators.

"It beautifully shows how students with disabilities value their disabled peers, both as friends and mentors as they plan for their futures as integrated members of their society," according to the producer. Available in closed-caption English or Spanish.

For more information, go to www.richardcohenfilms.com.

Task force pushing for Medicaid coverage

People with disabilities who live in nursing homes cannot qualify for Medicaid reimbursement for assistive technology equipment, which can increase independence and improve the quality of living.

A task force is forming to change this policy. For information, contact Naomi Walker at 404-885-1234.

Seniors needed for Down syndrome research

Persons with Down syndrome develop Alzheimer's disease at a higher rate than the typical aging population. Researchers are studying whether Vitamin E can help slow the rate of cognitive and functional decline in people with Down syndrome as they age. Participants will be asked to take vitamins or a placebo (false pill).

For information, contact April Bezilla at May South Inc. at 770-956-8511, Ext. 204.

Legislators seek teaching tips

Parents, teachers and students: Ideas are needed to improve education for children with disabilities. Rep. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) and other members of the House



Advocates honored for creating new programs

Parent advocate Robyn Berger of Atlanta received this year's Sam P. Alterman Family Foundation Etz Chaim Award for her outstanding contribution in further opening Jewish school programs to children with disabilities. Berger, a board member of the Amit Community School Program and long-time community leader, has carried the message of inclusion of people with disabilities throughout the Jewish community.

Amit chair Linda Bressler received the Jerry and Dulcy Rosenberg Shorashim award for her leadership and commitment to the program. A veteran supporter of children's rights, Bressler advocates for adoptive and foster children.



Robyn Berger (l), Assistant director of the DeKalb County Developmental Disabilities Council, and Linda Bressler (r), Amit Community School Program, received honors for their volunteerism and leadership.

Committee on Education and the Work Force are asking Americans to submit ideas through a special Web site: <http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/107th/education/idea/idea-comments/index.htm> or e-mail to IDEA@mail.house.gov or call 202-225-4527.

Miracle League Field of Dreams is built

The Rotary clubs of Rockdale County and the city of Conyers raised \$700,000 to develop the "McMiracle League Field" and in April opened the first baseball complex designed exclusively for children with disabilities.

The Miracle League, formed in 1998 as a youth baseball league for children with disabilities, adapts game rules to make sure every player gets to hit and cross home plate. Each player is paired with a "buddy" to help with play and protect against injury. A Miracle League soccer team is also forming.

For information or to donate, contact Dean Alford at 770-860-9416 or www.miracleleague.com

Family Action Committee forming: Seeks citizen input

A Family Initiative was launched May 1 by the Family Action Committee to push for responsibility, accountability and a commitment to people with disabilities from the governor, Dept. of Human Resources and the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disa-

bility and Addictive Substances (formerly the Division of Mental Health Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse). The group will also push for release and approval of the Olmstead Implementation Plan and other Blue Ribbon Task Force recommendations.

A Unified Action Plan and list of "expectations," based on statewide input from concerned citizens is being developed. Organizations and service providers should encourage families and consumers to contact Beth Tumlin at 770-992-2132 or 678-427-9370; fax: 770-640-1287; or e-mail btumlin@juno.com.

DHR Board to fill vacancies

Georgia's Dept. of Human Resources Board has four vacancies. Members of the disability community are encouraged to apply. Anyone interested in becoming a voice in the disability community is urged to contact Beth Tumlin at 770-992-2132 or btumlin@juno.com.

Pat Puckett honored

Pat Puckett, executive director of the Georgia Statewide Independent Living Council, received the 2002 Regional Representative award from the National Council on Independent Living at its annual conference in Washington, D.C. Puckett, a long-time activist, was cited for extraordinary advocacy work for Georgians with disabilities.



Growth Problems

Due to feeding difficulties

By Janet Isaacs, RD, PhD



For many parents, children's eating habits and growth patterns are often used as a gauge for good health and nutrition.

Feeding disorders and growth problems, which are frequently amplified in children with developmental disabilities and high-risk infants, may cause considerable stress and anxiety for families.

Many premature and high-risk infants do "catch up," especially if feeding issues are identified and treated early. Parents should be reassured knowing that infants are more flexible and responsive to improving feeding behaviors than adults.

Parents may feel defensive, frustrated or less competent when their child is not growing well. Meals can become an emotional battlefield, further complicating problems.

Parents should be reassured knowing that infants are more flexible and responsive to improving feeding behaviors than adults.

Gastroenterologists, psychologists, developmental pediatricians, nutritionists, as well as speech and occupational therapists all specialize in feeding problems relating to young children. When problems surface, these professionals should be consulted. As with many infant health concerns, early intervention is key to improved outcomes.

Several "red flags" such as gastrointestinal and oral issues can prompt parents to seek professional help. If you suspect a problem, keep an eating log to share with your pediatrician, who will decide if a referral to a specialist is warranted.

Some feeding difficulties include:

Gastro-Esophageal Reflux (GER)

Infants with GER may frequently spit up with discomfort and like to be propped up after a meal. Children with GER fill up quickly, eating or drinking only a few ounces per meal. A noticeable plateau or decrease in weight and height-for-age proportion is another marker.

Oral-Motor Weakness

High-risk infants sometimes have oral-motor weakness or swallowing coordination problems. Often the child nine months or older will resist certain textures, refuse foods that require chewing or prefer thickened liquids or mushy foods.

Choking and coughing at meals and frequent bronchitis, pneumonia or other infections may result from aspiration of food. The baby might refuse to self-feed or adapt slowly, inhibiting weight gain and delaying sitting and walking.

Problems in Infancy

In early infancy, a weak suck can make it difficult for the baby to get sufficient nourishment, especially if formula runs out the sides of the mouth. Longer feeding sessions can tire the infant.

The older baby may lack adequate head control for spoon-feeding or

resist it longer, refusing to wean from the bottle or breast or to eat baby food. This child might resist new food textures and not show an appetite.

Some babies shun all oral contact and avoid objects and fingers near their mouth, even tooth brushing.

A stubborn preference for a monotonous diet or feeding pattern also is common in children with eating disorders.

Nutrition plays an important role in overall health, but it is not the only variable. With professional support, mealtime stress can be minimized and nutrition problems improved.

Difficult feeding behaviors are not a reflection on the quality of parenting.

The family and medical team should consider several factors when treating a child with feeding issues:

- Nutritional needs of the child
- Developmental age and ability
- Neurological difficulty
- Behavioral factors
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Bowel function
- Growth pattern
- Parental ability and commitment

Better outcomes through nutritional management benefit child and family. A wealth of information and expertise is available in Georgia.

Janet Isaacs recently lectured at the Regional Nutrition Conference for Children with Developmental Disabilities, held in May in Atlanta. She is on faculty at Children's National Medical Center, Washington, DC, where she practices Metabolic Nutrition in Genetics and Metabolism. Article edited by Jennifer Hamel of May South Inc.

References can be found on page 20.

People-first language

Manner of speaking shows you care

By Don Pollard with Aileen Harris Miller

Don Pollard wants people to begin to think before they speak. He has joined the movement to change the way people talk about people with disabilities.

“Citizenship in this great country protects our right to communicate, but it is a privilege we often misuse, albeit unwittingly,” says Pollard, a disability advocate and Partners in Policy-making graduate. “Words can become labels; they form images, which create stereotypes, which cause prejudice and often disenfranchise entire groups of people.”

People-first language is a way of

communicating that places importance first on the person.

The disability is only one of many characteristics that describe the person, according to Suzanne Harvey, a Partners graduate and parent of a child with a disability.

“This awareness makes people stop

People-first language ... makes people stop and think before saying something hurtful or denigrating.

and think before saying something hurtful or denigrating about a person,” says Harvey.

How people refer to individuals with disabilities is very important, agrees Susan Berch, a self-advocate and a Partners graduate.

“I don’t like it when people refer to us as handicapped, crippled or retarded,” she says. “Those are negative words, and people think less of us, like

we’re stupid, and we’re not. We are people and want to be treated as individuals.”

Pollard says he believes words like crippled, disabled, handicapped and retarded have persecuted people with disabilities and enabled society to pity and disregard them. A new era is dawning with people with disabilities demanding equal rights and respect, he adds.

“Like the civil rights movement, which awakened the world to the fact that we are all created equally, the disability movement is telling the world that we are people first!” he maintains. “Our disabilities are just characteristics that we have, like the color of our hair, the music we like or the values we hold. We all want the same chances that everyone else has to find work, love and a place in this great big world. We just want to be treated as equal, and that begins with words.”



Don Pollard, **Making A Difference** Advisory Board member, contributed to this article. The Conyers native attends classes at Georgia Perimeter College and plans to be a successful entrepreneur and run for public office.

People-First Language

Put the person before the disability. Use words that reflect awareness, dignity and a positive attitude about people with disabilities and create awareness that the focus is the person.

- A **disability** is a condition caused by an accident, trauma, genetics or disease, which may limit a person’s mobility, hearing, vision, speech or mental function.
- A **handicap** is a physical or attitudinal constraint which is imposed upon a person, regardless of whether that person has a disability. (Ex.: Stairs, narrow doorways and curbs)

Source: *Disability Handbook*, City of San Antonio, Texas.

Preferred Expressions

SAY ...

Child with a disability

Person who has ...

Developmental delay

Emotional disorder/mental illness

Deaf or has a hearing impairment

Uses a wheelchair

Person with cognitive deficit

Person with epilepsy

Person with Down syndrome

Has a learning disability

Has a physical disability

DON'T SAY ...

Disabled, invalid or handicapped child

Afflicted, suffers from, victim, is XXX'ed

Slow

Crazy or insane

Deaf and dumb

Confined to a wheelchair

Retarded

Epileptic

Mongoloid

Is learning-disabled

Is physically disabled/crippled

Source: *The Pacesetter newsletter*, 1989, Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis



Finding Romance

Couples find their own happily ever after



By Jody Steinberg

Successful marriages may be made in heaven, but for people with disabilities, it takes long-term goals, team effort and hard work.

Mature romantic relationships are a relatively new frontier for people with disabilities. With acceptance comes a willingness to plan, train, and provide ongoing support. With these in place, individuals of all abilities are finding their “happily ever after.”

For many families, it’s an unanticipated next step in a long string of supported accomplishments. For people who are already well into adulthood, romance is a product of the movement out of institutions and into community living.

“The preparation of marriage is the most important step for success,” advises Webb Spraetz, director of Disabilities Network, Jewish Family Career Services, Atlanta.

Robyn Berger, assistant director of the Developmental Disability Council of DeKalb County, who advocates for programs to serve aging people with disabilities, recalls less lofty planning

when her daughter with Down syndrome was an infant.

“As Lori reached each milestone, we set new goals,” recalls Berger. Lori, 31, met her fiancé on a Very Special People trip three years ago. “Lori has been willing to work more aggressively to achieve her dreams. She’s known since she met David that they’d be together, and getting married is the natural progression.”

Janice Nodvin, Director of Special Projects at May South, didn’t know what obstacles to expect for her new-



Emily & Richard Wallace

Choosing their future

Love, choice and independence. Three basic needs most of us consider essential for a fulfilling life.

For years, Albany couple Richard and Emily Wallace experienced little choice, but they dared to dream their way out of lives of dependency.

Emily, now 52, lived in an institution and then a state group home, where she acted out the frustration that came from having her life dictated without her consent.

Richard, now 49, who had been moved across the state to an apartment near his brother following the death of his parents, ran away, angry that no one asked him who he wanted for roommates.

Somehow, each found their way to Albany ARC, which helped them choose how to live and achieve their goals close to the home they knew. And, as an added bonus, they met each other, which led to their wedding in 1991, fulfilling a lifelong dream each had secretly harbored.



David Bryan & Lori Berger

born son. “When Evan was born, we thought nothing was possible,” she recalls. “Now, guided by Evan’s dreams, anything is not only possible but probable.”

Today, Evan, 23, shares an apartment with a roommate, works, has a learner’s permit to drive, rides public transportation, votes and advocates for disability issues. He spends time with girlfriend Megan and both are building their own future dreams.

Nodvin sees marriage as a potential step for many adults like Evan who are willing to work on relationship building and who have families and support systems in place.



Megan Sydney & Evan Nodvin

"I am a very lucky man," boasts Richard, as he cuddles his wife affectionately.

"I love my Richard. He's my baby," responds Emily.

"They're a very affectionate couple," says Ernestine Greenlee, the case manager who visits Richard and Emily a few times a week to help them manage household duties, medical concerns and bills. "They still act like newlyweds."

Richard says he recalls the details of his wedding day like it was yesterday. For their 10th anniversary, Emily baked her beloved a special cake.

When Emily was hospitalized for an asthma attack, Richard took care of

the woman of my life!" Steven boasts.

Steven surprised Michelle and asked for her hand in marriage at a formal dinner with both sets of parents.

"I have found someone who really fills my heart with love," beamed Michelle at their engagement party.

"The most wonderful thing is just knowing that he'll be there for me," Michelle says. "This man is really responsible and has a good head on his shoulders. Steven respects me in more ways than one."

Lately, in addition to their regular schedule and working together at Kroger, they are also busy planning the wedding and honeymoon, picking out furniture, increasing time togeth-



Tammy & Billy Bob Taylor

With adequate family support and on-going counseling, couples with disabilities can successfully conquer one more frontier — marriage.

her, doing the laundry and extra dusting to make the home safer for Emily.

Their daily routine is typical, sharing coffee and breakfast before heading off to work — Richard at Easter Seals, Emily at Primus Industries. They take turns cooking and enjoy having guests, singing and going to the movies. Richard is an award-winning bowler, and Emily cheers him on.

The couple lives in their own home, purchased with support from Albany ARC. They laugh at how they think alike and understand each other.

It was a long journey for Richard and Emily from lonely dependence to the lives they share today. But each harbored a dream. With help and hard work, their journey to independence paved their path to love.

Give and take

Michelle Horowitz, 33, and Steven Friedlander, 30, who will be married in Atlanta this fall, have known each other since grade school but didn't fall in love until much later.

They began dating after Steven's 25th birthday party — something Steven had wanted to do for a long time.

"It is so incredible! This was my goal and I have conquered it! I love Michelle — she makes me totally happy. She is

er and attending marriage counseling.

To prepare for life together, Michelle and Steven, who each live with roommates, are working with parents and support staff on a variety of issues, including budgeting, personal hygiene, room-sharing and negotiating daily chores.

They are also seeing a licensed couple's therapist to help them create an intimate relationship in which they can be open with each other.



Michelle Horowitz & Steven Friedlander

Michelle's parents, Pearlann Horowitz, a former member of the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, and husband Jerry established the Zimmerman-Horowitz Independent Living Program of Jewish Family and Career Services.

Their goal was to provide a support system that would envelop all aspects of life for Michelle and other adults with developmental disabilities.

"We want Michelle to have the opportunity to love someone, to have someone to come home to and share life with," Pearlann Horowitz said. "There are no guarantees that any marriage will be successful, so why shouldn't Michelle and Steven have their chance at love and success?"

Professionals believe that with adequate marriage counseling, family support and on-going independent living counseling, couples with disabilities can successfully conquer one more frontier previously denied them — marriage.

"No one lives without support," explains Berger. "But people with disabilities need more constant support, or they're being set up for failure."

But failure isn't an option for Emily, who places her hand confidently in her husband's. "I think of my future as a happy couple."



Accessible Congregations

Network helps everyone practice keeping the faith

By Mark Crenshaw

People with disabilities often encounter a mountain of obstacles relegating them to the sidelines in their church, mosque or synagogue.

“Oakhurst Baptist Church has always said that we welcome all people,” said Chris Copeland, associate pastor at the Decatur congregation. “Once you make that statement you can’t say, ‘Wait a minute. Maybe we didn’t mean *all* people.’”

Oakhurst is part of a consortium of Atlanta area congregations working to ensure that people with disabilities can wholly participate in the worship, decision-making and ministry of their faith communities.

Begun two years ago by the Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disa-

Plemon El-Amin of the Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam in the East Lake neighborhood. “The greater challenge is to make sure that community members are open to those who have disabilities in decision-making and programming, and to make sure those with disabilities contribute to the life of the community.”

A survey conducted by the National Organization on Disability and The Harris Poll in 2000 found that 84 percent of people with disabilities regard religious faith as important, yet only 46 percent (compared to 65 percent of the general population) attend a religious service once per month.

Congregation Beth Shalom, Al-Islam, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta and Oakhurst spearhead IDN’s Inclusive

Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam

“Human life is more soul than it is body, so we cannot ignore somebody because their body is different,” explains El-Amin.

Traditionally, no shoes are worn on the level ground of Atlanta Masjid’s prayer area, a holy space meant to equalize all worshippers. Members are taught to understand that accommodating people with disabilities means exempting the wheels of a chair from this rule.

The Koran teaches that each soul is created by Allah, with the goal of becoming at peace with the original source of being. Allah accepts all human souls, no matter the body they occupy, says Rosina Abdulshakir, an Atlanta Masjid member who has a physical disability.

“We don’t expect to have these bodies in the next life, but we do expect to have these souls,” adds El-Amin.

Congregation Beth Shalom

“The Torah teaches us that we are not to put a stumbling block in front of our brother, and we take that very seriously,” explains Van Lane, administrator at Congregation Beth Shalom in Dunwoody. For members of this conservative synagogue, the centrality of teachings about justice and hospitality in the Torah is an important tenet for including people with disabilities.

In 1988, Beth Shalom designed their new building for full physical accessibility, incorporating an eleva-

Including all people means more than modifying physical space, which each congregation has done. It means fostering attitudinal shifts among members.

bilities, the Interfaith Disabilities Network (IDN) includes 60 Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Unitarian congregations. The Network advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities by inviting congregations to participate in a profound act of *tikkun olam*, a Jewish philosophy that seeks to “repair the world” through action.

Including all people means more than modifying physical space, which each congregation has done. It means fostering attitudinal shifts among members.

“We’ve made all the physical accommodations that we can — curb cuts, wider doors, etc.,” said Imam

Congregations Project (ICP) a collaborative effort to create “best practices” in all areas of accessibility.

With funding from the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Faith in Action Program, ICP helps communities assess facility and program accessibility and develop inclusive methods. Their goal: for each congregation to become a model of accessibility and offer congregationally-based respite programs.

ICP congregations are using the teachings of their faith to embrace these goals.



PRACTICING WHAT YOU PREACH

“Oakhurst Baptist Church has always said that we welcome all people. Once you make that statement, you can’t say, ‘Wait a minute, maybe we didn’t mean all people,’” says Chris Copeland, associate pastor at the Decatur church, where modifications include a ramp to the pulpit.

tor, ramp to the pulpit, extra-wide aisles so people who use chairs and walkers can sit among the congregation (instead of at the perimeter) and large-print prayer books. An audio-assist system soon will be in place.

The volunteer committee will train teens to help at the respite center run by the Jewish community.

“In building a mental attitude of acceptance, physicality is only a piece of the equation,” said Lane. “It’s better to include everyone. [The ability to participate fully] makes a big difference in how welcome someone feels.”

Oakhurst Baptist Church

Copeland was excited about his church participating in the ICP, as working toward full accessibility for people with disabilities seemed to be the next logical step in the church’s growth.

A recent renovation, prompted by accessibility concerns, includes an elevator, ramp to the pulpit area, larger, accessible bathrooms and a new, accessible education building. An electronic door is on the drawing board.

When new members join the diverse fold at Oakhurst, they make a covenant affirming that all people are

part of the body of Christ and rejecting categorical divisions between people. In 1997, Oakhurst revised its covenant to specifically include physical and mental ability.

Oakhurst founded and continues to partner with the Hess Drive Home, a residence for people with developmental disabilities and mental retardation overseen by the Georgia Baptist Developmental Disabilities Ministries.

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta

The Unitarian Universalist Association’s Faith In Action diversity and justice program provided the template for the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta in DeKalb County to remove barriers to worship.

A UUCA task force on accessibility used a UUA audit of communication, attitudinal, environmental and architectural barriers to develop an action plan to “change all the ‘no’s’ to ‘yes’s,’” explained Director of Religious Education Pat Kahn.

To assure that accessibility issues are addressed in a major renovation, a member of the task force is on the design committee. To make Sunday school more inclusive, Kahn started a

“special friends” program for children with special needs.

A long-term plan calls for additional volunteer training, more educational programs and physical adaptations such as large print materials and assistive-hearing devices.

The inherent worth and dignity of the individual and justice, equality and compassion in human relations means that welcoming people with disabilities is an important extension of faith for UUCA.

Together and independently, ICP members strive to exemplify “best practices” in congregational accessibility, become better communities and use their human relationships and physical resources to help repair metro Atlanta and the world.

For more information on Faith In Action, visit www.uua.org/faithinaction/jtwacc/access1.html

Mark Crenshaw is director of the Interfaith Disabilities Network, a project of the Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities. He can be reached at 404-881-9777 or mark@aadd.org.

The Missing Flock

A 2000 survey conducted by the National Organization on Disability and Harris found that 84 percent of people with disabilities and their family members regard religious faith as an important part of their lives; yet only 46 percent (compared to 65 percent of the general population) said they have opportunities to attend a religious service one time per month. The reasons for this discrepancy are many and difficult to determine. These statistics point to the reality that significant barriers exist for people with disabilities who wish to participate in communities of faith.



Visitable Housing

EasyLiving Homes build foundation in Georgia

By Jody Steinberg

Coalition building to bring the home-building community around to her way of thinking was only one tool Eleanor Smith used to get Concrete Change and its program of universally accessible housing off the ground. Determination, legislative advocacy and statewide support have been in her tool bag, too.

"I started Concrete Change so that new houses would have basic access whether or not the occupant had a disability," explains Smith, who uses a wheelchair.

"I would drive around and see that I could enter every new business, so why couldn't I get into the new homes being built? Back then the concept of visitability, or basic access to any home, was really far out, but today, it is making more sense to more people."

Smith founded Concrete Change in 1986 to change public policy so that all newly-built homes would be easy to enter and visit. Over 15 years and numerous small victories later, Smith and her coalition have officially certified it first occupied *EasyLiving Home* (ELH).

Persuasion, conflict and adversity defined the early years of Concrete Change. Most recently, the Coalition

shifted to consensus building as advocates promoted accessible and visitable housing.

In 1999, advocates pushed for a voluntary builder's seal of approval. Within 12 months, the Home Builders Association of Georgia (HBAG) joined the campaign, with Executive Vice President Ed Phillips leading the call for builder participation.

"We wanted to come to the table with advocates so that everyone could win," explains HBAG's Phillips.

"With the aging of the baby boomers, the market has changed. Homebuilders want freedom of choice in the market but also see a marketable advantage of incorporating accessibility to new homes in order to distinguish them," Phillips says.

Phillips predicts as more prospective homeowners request accessible features, more homebuilders will participate in the voluntary program.

"This is not about building houses for people with disabilities," says Smith, who is waiting anxiously for more builders to sign on with the program. "Visitable homes have increased value for every type of homeowner."

Smith dismisses builders' misgivings, citing insignificant costs on a new home.

EasyLiving features cost builder Roy Wendt less than \$350 per home. By comparison, retrofitting a home with a ramp can cost \$500-



On hand at the ELH dedication were Ed Phillips (HBAG), Archie Hill (Fannie Mae), Pat Pucket (Ga. SILC), Roy Wendt (Wendt Builders) and Bill Gandy (HBAG president).

\$3,000. Internal changes such as wider doorways and bathroom modifications can range from \$500 into the thousands of dollars.

Before the ELH seal program, a few individual visitable homes and neighborhoods were developed in Georgia.

Smith, who lives in Atlanta's East Lake Commons, a cooperative community where 100 percent of the homes are visitable, attributes her community's accessibility to advocacy and changing times.

Continued on page 20



A zero-step entrance blends easily into the landscape in Woodbury subdivision in Snellville, built by Wendt Builders, Inc.

A Builder's Guide

Homebuilder Roy Wendt never thought about accessibility until a potential homebuyer in a wheelchair came to visit his model home and couldn't enter. Now he thinks about it all the time.

"When they told me about the zero-step entrance, I said, 'I'm sold,'" he recalls. "I saw that as people age, they need these features. Not just for disability, but in general I see this as a great fit. Customers are very positive about these added features, which project we care."

The ELH features are so subtle that most buyers say they didn't even notice the changes until he pointed them out reports Wendt.

"This isn't niche marketing. It's a broad enhancement builders can offer their buyer. No one doesn't want it," he says.

Interest in accessible housing is increasing among homebuyers and homebuilders across the country, though many builders will not yet consider adapting their building plans.

"Builders don't like change," Wendt says. He began with ELH design in one of his home models. His success, evidenced by quick sales and enthusiastic homeowners, has spurred him to have all of his architectural plans redrawn to incorporate ELH features

Now Wendt has become an advocate and disciple for universal design and the ELH seal, encouraging his colleagues to "just build one home with these added features," to see how beneficial it will be to their business. Universal Design is a home design philosophy of creating accessible, functional spaces and features for all people.

The positive interest is good for Wendt's business. Currently, he says he is building about 50 houses per year and selling them without any advertising.

"I am more enthusiastic about building today than I was 30 years ago," he says, "EasyLiving Homes are becoming more necessary as baby boomers age. They will want to live in their same home for many years, and it's so simple to make that happen today, rather than tomorrow."



Since her whole community has zero-step entrances and wide doorways, Eleanor Smith, pictured here with a young friend and Ed Smith, can visit any of her neighbors at any time.



Disability LINK director Rebecca Tuttle enjoys the ease of visiting a home with wider doorways.

"We want to make homes more user friendly for all ages and populations," Rep. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.), chair of the EasyLiving Homes Coalition, realtor and member of HBAC, told visitors recently. Advocates, builders and homeowners gathered to celebrate Georgia's first ELH homes in the Woodbury subdivision in Snellville.



Accessible Housing

Independent days begin at home

By Lucy Cusick



We moved into our first home as newlyweds in 1982, choosing the brick ranch because it was convenient to our jobs and in a prime school district. Twenty years and two children later, we're still here in north DeKalb County and it's time to make some necessary renovations.

Joshua was born prematurely and with many complications in 1985 and was soon diagnosed with cerebral palsy. We struggled with this new life, taking one day at a time and learning as we went. Now Joshua, a determined and positive 16-year-old, will graduate from his regular high school in two years and anticipates going to college.

Joshua primarily uses a power wheelchair and a reverse walker to get around the house, but it's his dependence on others for toileting and bathing that are the weakest links to his independence.

In our quest to continue to assist him with his activities of daily living and help him to acclimate into an independent lifestyle, we realized a decision had to be made.

We had to determine whether to purchase another home that had two master suites on opposite sides, or renovate the old one. Although our one-level dwelling has served us well — we've widened a few doors and made do with very little furniture — the bathroom would need to be modified for a growing Josh.

I spent six months attending every open house within five miles before we decided to stay put and renovate. This

way Josh could continue to share our living space, but we all would be able to enjoy some privacy.

We began the remodeling process by visiting modified homes, reading and researching specifications and thinking about Josh and how he functions. We sketched numerous designs and finally decided to add a bedroom suite behind the kitchen because it allowed us to have two master suites with the living space in between.

We did not hire an architect, although in hindsight I would recom-

We began the remodeling process by visiting modified homes, reading and researching specifications and thinking about Josh and how he functions.

mend it to anyone beginning such a project. We met with three recommended contractors and chose the one whose lower bid also included the most extras, including a brick exterior instead of vinyl siding. Our contractor had no experience with accessible design, so we did the research ourselves and provided the modification specifications and guidelines. An article on the Americans with Disabilities Act specifications and examples of attractive ADA-compliant bathrooms was extremely useful.

It took more than a year to finalize the plan and another six months to complete the remodeling, but the wait would be worth it.

Our goal was independence! We felt that with enough well-planned space, Josh could develop the skills to be independent. Our existing home had several design problems, making it difficult for Josh to maintain his pri-

vacy. For instance, Josh dresses and undresses lying on his bed. We designed his new room so that his bed is out of view of the bedroom door and his bathroom is only a short distance away. He now can undress and go straight to the bathroom while maintaining his privacy.

His bathroom features a recessed, roll-under sink. The mirror above it tilts out from the top about three inches from the wall, allowing him to see better. The roll-in shower is 6 x 4 feet, large enough for a bath chair and an assistant, and the adjustable nozzle slides up and down a bar and features instant hot water. Grab

bars also serve as towel bars allowing for ready support and easy accessibility.

A computer center, lots of windows for natural light and a closet with all shelves positioned for easy access to clothing were all designed to make the room more comfortable for Josh.

All lights can be turned on and off from his bed, and we used pocket doors everywhere because they slide into the walls and don't require swing room. A wireless doorbell lets Josh call us at night if he really needs something; however, he's been warned not to use it too frequently!

As an adult, Josh will enjoy his own space and independence, yet we can be close for emergencies or extra help.

In less than one week in his new surroundings, Josh began learning to bathe himself and shampoo his hair with minimal assistance, laughing over slippery soap and suffering through soapy eyes.



Josh enjoys the privacy of his bedroom and can control lights and fans from above his bed.

We discovered that the equipment inside the bathroom is as important as the bathroom itself; therefore, we hope to buy Joshua a shower wheelchair that has wheels he can push and brake on his own. The chair will make him virtually independent in the bathroom.

Remodeling is expensive. You pay for everything: demolition, rebuilding and even the design. How would we afford it? How could we not? Luckily, interest rates were low when we refinanced.

We'll forfeit vacations we didn't take anyway and enjoy our home that has given Josh confidence and pride.

Josh has decorated his new room in stars and stripes, to celebrate his very own Independence Day.

Lucy Cusick is executive director of Families and Children Under Stress (FOCUS), a support group for parents and siblings of children with disabilities. She is a member of the Making A Difference Advisory Board.



Josh's new suite can be entered straight from the garage, giving Josh another level of privacy as he matures.



Since 16-year-old Josh moved into his new room and bathroom, his mother Lucy seldom has to help him with showering and toileting anymore.



With a new roll-in shower, Josh is learning to bathe himself, which he hopes to master if he can get a special shower wheelchair.

Modifying Your Home

I need help modifying my home. Where do I start?

Growing children, declining ability, sudden disability or the arrival of a family member can all prompt home modification. For effective design, follow guidelines by the Americans with Disabilities Act or Universal Design.

"The vision is the key," explains GiGi Taylor, parent of two children with disabilities and past member of *Making A Difference* Advisory Board. The Taylors redesigned their home for the changing needs of their children.

"There are books, specs, specialists and other resources available, but it begins with outlining the goals and the outcomes."

Taylor strongly recommends visiting homes that have been modified. Ask questions and consider all the possibilities.

Where will I get the money? Are there funds to help me?

There is no single source to fund home modifications. Some waivers will pay for certain modifications with prior approval. Contact your local Center for Independent Living (CIL) for advice, assistance and referrals.

Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC), popular for their wheelchair building and maintenance program, also builds ramps. Coordinator Danny Overstreet, who uses a wheelchair, will enter a home and provide suggestions for making the rest of the home accessible after a ramp is installed.

To contact the CILs, FODAC and remodeling experts, see *Resources* pp. 21-22.



A new beginning

TAPPs Sing Praises of Post-Correctional Initiative

By Heather Madsen

On her last ride on the correctional roller coaster, Bonnie, 53, was released from prison in July 2001. This was her second round in prison — she served three weeks for threatening her roommate — and she was determined to make it her last.

Robyn Bethea, Bonnie’s May South case manager from the Treatment and Aftercare for Probationers and Parolees program (TAPP) was there to provide support and help reinforce the framework for Bonnie’s successful transition into the community.

It was not surprising that Bonnie, who has bipolar disorder (“manic depression”) and associated addictive disease (AD) issues, returned to prison after serving her first conviction for AD and assaulting an officer.

Many individuals with mental illness end up in prison for low-level offenses, property crimes, drug possession and other drug-related offenses. They do not set out to commit crimes, but their untreated illness often leads to substance abuse (referred to as “self-medicating”), compounding legal issues and further destabilizing their mental health.

This is a growing concern for the

belong in prison.

“My case manager was devoted.” **

For offenders with mental illness, relapse is imminent without the consistent use of medication and cultivated support system of family, friends and community providers.

Balancing everyday post-incarceration

to succeed.

“She was really motivated and wanted success this time,” explains Bethea. For Bonnie, that meant keeping in contact with her case manager, following her care plan and maintaining her mental health needs. Her history of skipping medication had undermined her previous efforts.

Bonnie called Bethea daily to talk, admitting her fear of living a drug-free life of sobriety and accountability. Bethea listened reassuringly and encouraged Bonnie to persevere.

“When you see things in your life are not going the way they should, you have to go back to doing what worked and put everything in proper perspective,” says Bonnie.

“All the assistance was helpful.”**

Begun in 1998 as a pilot project of the DOC and of Pardons and Paroles in the Albany area, TAPP was implemented statewide in July 2000 by the Georgia Department of Human Resources.

TAPP case managers bridge the gap from incarceration to productive citizenship as offenders with mental illness re-enter the community. They help foster the transition by:

- Acting as a support network and advocate;
- Arranging post-discharge treatment appointments at mental health centers;
- Developing Individual Care Plans, assessing clients’ needs, goals and progress;
- Linking clients with appropriate



Bonnie (L) and TAPPs case manager Robyn Bethea (R).

tion stresses and juggling housing concerns, mental health appointments, employment and medical, financial and legal issues can be overwhelming.

TAPP case managers help clients access resources to make life less complicated and are the “shoulder to lean

on” desperately needed by individuals with no other supports. Bonnie had support from her parents and Bethea and one other key ingredient: a desire

For offenders with mental illness, relapse is imminent without support and the consistent use of medication.

Georgia Department of Corrections (DOC), which spends over \$24 million per year in mental health services treating prisoners that many feel don’t

community treatment and habilitation options; and

- Maintaining client communication with probation, parole and law enforcement.

“My case manager helped me with everything I needed.” **

TAPP case managers take a holistic approach to ensure that successful re-entry efforts circumvent potential pitfalls. Case managers help participants:

- Locate employment and transportation;
- Acquire entitlements such as Social Security, disability insurance or other funds;
- Locate housing such as independent living options, personal care homes or group homes;
- Locate mental, physical or dental health care assistance;
- Obtain food and clothing; and
- Identify educational opportunities.

Bonnie’s care plan started with very basic daily goals, such as taking a shower, brushing her teeth, getting dressed and going outside. Today, Bonnie follows weekly and monthly goals, attends support and therapy sessions and pays her rent and bills.

Lately, her goals are long-term, and her phone calls to Bethea are only

monthly check-ins. Bonnie wants to help women with mental illness and substance abuse issues as a counselor for a women’s detention center or crisis hotline.

“When I feel more mentally able,” she said, “I would like to give back to the community. That is the only way to receive.”

“She is doing the best she ever has in her whole life,” said her son, now 22.

“This Mother’s Day was wonderful,” Bonnie boasts, as her children, who were 2 and 5, symbolically chose the day to renew their severed relationship. My kids are real proud of me.”

“TAPPs has truly been a blessing to me.” **

Bonnie successfully completed the TAPP program, demonstrating how it helps participants begin new lives with confidence, support and community connections. Or, as Bonnie says, “All anyone needs is a little hope.”

Heather Madsen, MS, CRC is the TAPP program director for May South Inc. and the quality assurance coordinator for both Georgia and Florida programs.

*****Comments from successful TAPP participants.***

Mental Illness in Georgia Prisons*

Total inmate population in Georgia: 46,568:

- 43,946 Male

- 2,987 Female

Estimated population with mental illness: 6,000

- Cost for mental health care:

- \$24 million or \$3,300/prisoner

- 12.3% of male inmates have mental illness, with 69% having schizophrenia or depression as a primary diagnosis

- 33.2% of female inmates have mental illness, with 71% having schizophrenia or depression as a primary diagnosis

- Primary diagnosis schizophrenia or depression in 70% of prisoners with mental illness

*2001 Statistics

MENTAL ILLNESSES DEFINED

Bipolar Disorder (manic-depression): Extreme, often disruptive moods that swing from being overly elated or irritable to sad and hopeless.

Schizophrenia: Neurological brain disorder interferes with a person’s ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others.

Symptoms are associated with marked social or occupational dysfunction.

Major Depressive Disorder: A change in mood to depressed or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities, which negatively impairs social, occupational educational or other important functioning.

Source: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, by the American Psychiatric Association.

Resources: Georgia Department of Corrections: www.dcor.state.us
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill: www.nami.org

Graduate Takes Long-Awaited Walk

Masha Malikina received her high school diploma in front of 2,000 supporters at Philips Arena in downtown Atlanta in mid-June. Masha, paralyzed from an accident in 1999, became an unexpected icon for disability rights in Atlanta.

Her school principal, concerned after watching her struggle to walk at graduation rehearsal, barred Malikina from using her leg braces and walker to accept her diploma at her Berkmar High School commencement ceremony — a goal toward which she had been working for longer than two years.

The resulting controversy led to a celebrity ceremony for Masha and a backlash call for Gwinnett County Schools to re-examine civil rights protections for all students with disabilities.





Community team-building:

Sports and recreation are winning ways to get healthy and socialize

By Kevin Enright

Stan Swann, 47, joined his local bowling league and recreation programs and found the key to belonging in his community.

Recreation and leisure activities, which are essential to physical, mental and emotional health, are also a great way to make friends. Individuals for whom making friends is difficult find the structure and interaction of teamwork and shared interests makes it easier.

“People with disabilities can lead a somewhat isolated life,” says Ann Swann, whose son is an avid bowler and a baseball booster in Augusta. “Stan has been invited by neighbors to participate in many activities, and that wouldn’t have happened if he hadn’t taken an interest in sports.”

Stan, who has severe speech limitations as a result of his cerebral palsy, and bowling teammate Bill Degroat, are both outgoing “people magnets.”

“I like meeting others,” says Degroat, also an avid bowler and Special Olympics athlete.

The community building among



Unified Sports bowling team, Augusta

this circle of friends began at the local bowling center, where athletes and local residents got to know each other during weekly practices.

Over time, the league bowlers

befriended the athletes, even arriving early to work on skills together. Community league bowlers enthusiastically joined the Unified Sports teams, an offshoot of Special Olympics of Georgia, which sponsors the athletes.

Friendships and commitment to the team have deepened, and some league players have become volunteers and mentors in the disability community.

Community members travel with the team to statewide competitions, and team camaraderie has given the athletes confidence to meet and mingle with other athletes wherever they go. In fact, the travel is a favorite part of competing.

“I love going places. It’s fun,” Degroat says. “And I like doing my best.” His bowling average in the 170s rivals fellow Special Olympian Swann, but is higher than some of the league teammates’ scores.

“Community sports has been absolutely great for Stan and his friends,” adds Swann. “It’s healthy, and it has opened the doors to meet people in the community as well as other [persons with disabilities] and get them involved in community life.”

Becoming part of a community requires effort and finding an enjoyable activity. Whether you prefer dancing, swimming, softball, theater or singing, community-based recreation makes connections.

Stan is also a member of the booster club for his local baseball team, which led to his being asked to join a dart club and participate in numerous other events.

“The [athletic] success helps build self-esteem. It’s amazing to see people with disabilities and community mem-



Bill Degroat at Centennial Olympic Park.

bers get together and what a great buddy system they have,” says Swann. “They love, support and cheer one another. Sports have contributed tremendously to that.”

Kevin Enright, father of an adult son with autism and cerebral palsy, works with children and adults with developmental disabilities and psychiatric disorders. He is a certified therapeutic recreation specialist in Augusta.

Special Olympics Georgia offers year-round sports training and athletic competition in 23 Olympic-type sports for people with cognitive disabilities. In 1987, the Unified Sports program began teaming up Special Olympics athletes and athletes without disabilities to train and compete against other unified teams in 17 sports, including aquatics, bocce, bowling, and softball.

www.specialolympicsga.org
770-414-9390

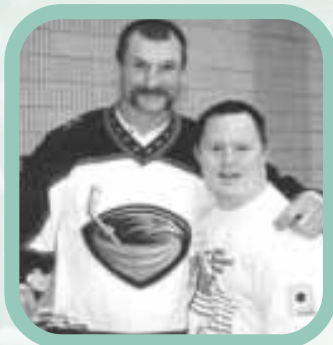
GEORGIA ROUND-UP



GCDD members visited with residents of Central State Hospital. Pictured: Board member Chris Hunnicut greets a resident.



Special Olympics swimmer gets a congratulatory hug from his coach at the Special Olympics Georgia 2002 Summer Games.



Grand Marshall Jeff Odgers (Atlanta Thrashers) and athlete Paul Burch at Special Olympics Georgia Summer 2002 games.



DD Council members, in Milledgeville for their quarterly conference, toured historic Central State Hospital, once considered the largest insane asylum in the world. More than 25,000 former patients were interred at the hospital graveyard. An angel statue represents the thousands of grave markers discarded to facilitate landscaping. In the 1950s, the hospital served nearly 20,000 resident and out-patient Georgians with disabilities.



Challenger League baseball player Brittany Curry went door-to-door to raise money for the Fayette Field of Hope.



Sean Corbett, 6, and counselor Elizabeth Brown at FOCUS Family Camp create chalk art.

EasyLiving specifications

EasyLiving Home certification is the product of years of conflict and compromise between a coalition of advocates working for better housing and the Homebuilders Association of Georgia to encourage members to build homes that are not only liveable but also visitable by all people. Required features include:

- **Easy Entrance:** a zero-step entrance to allow easy access from outside into the central living area;
- **Easy Passage:** access through a bedroom, kitchen entertainment area and bathroom on the main floor and 32-inch clear openings for doorways and hallways; and
- **Easy Use:** A bathroom that can be entered and maneuvered by a person using a wheelchair.

<http://concretechange.home.mindspring.com/index.htm>



Continued from page 12

Real change, as they say, starts at city hall.

In 1982, Concrete Change, an Atlanta-based advocacy group addressing housing issues for people with disabilities, petitioned the City of Atlanta and Councilwoman Myrtle Davis to pass an ordinance requiring that any private home built with government assistance, whether tax incentives or donated land, must include a zero-step entrance.

With that first legislative success, the advocates petitioned the state Capitol for a similar state law.

But like David and Goliath, their efforts were repeatedly defeated by the powerful lobby of homebuilders.

Smith's goal is to see the EasyLiving Homes features become the standard in all building plans.

Lobbyists successfully argued that without market demand, building homes with basic access wasn't cost-effective.

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, which had prioritized accessible housing for Georgians, became involved with the effort.

"The DD Council has been a significant partner in this whole push," Smith says. "They really assisted our efforts."

Atlanta Habitat for Humanity, the nonprofit organization that builds houses for low-income working families, today builds all of its homes with basic access — over 300 to date.

What began as a concessionary pilot project led to a successful design

change when Atlanta Habitat builders discovered that making houses accessible required only minor adjustments to building plans.

The movement for visitable homes is gaining momentum across the country. Many local governments are passing ordinances mandating that new homes be built with basic access.

Georgia homebuilders proactively created a voluntary pilot program to promote accessibility and visitability features in residential building. Plans are under way to make the ELH seal of approval a national program.

Members of the Georgia-based *EasyLiving* Homes coalition include: AARP, Atlanta Regional Commission, Concrete Change, Easter Seals

Southern Georgia, Dept. of Community Affairs, Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, HBAG, Shepherd Center, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the American Society of Interior Designers and The Home Depot.

Currently, only five builders in Georgia — Bob Adams Homes, Countryside Cottages, Gandy Construction, GPS Builders and Wendt Builders have joined the ELH program, but more have expressed plans to certify future projects.

Visitable homes have been built in Georgia, but only two homes, in a Snellville subdivision built by Wendt

Builders, had the ELH certification by July 1, 2002. Over 135 more ELH homes are under construction or planned for groundbreaking this year.

The six builders of Landbank Development, which will break ground in August on a 1,300-unit development, have committed to certify a percentage of the new units ELH.

Smith and Philips agree that the program will only succeed with increased public demand and builder awareness for homes that meet the ELH requirements.

Smith's goal is to see *EasyLiving* Homes features become the standard in all building plans.

Jody Steinberg is the managing editor of Making a Difference magazine. For information about EasyLiving Homes, call 770-270-1611; e-mail bgbonham@mindspring.com.



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AbilityHub

802-775-1993 or info@abilityhub.com
www.abilityhub.com

ABLEDATA

800-227-0216 or abledata@macroint.com
www.abledata.com

The Access Board

800-872-2253 (v) or 800-993-2822 (TTY)

Center for Accessible Technology

510-841-3224 (v) 510-841-5621 (TTY)
www.cforat.org

Crunchy Technologies

www.crunchy.com
877-379-9185

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

202-785-3388 or info@c-c-d.org
www.c-c-d.org

gTRADE

Georgia AT Equipment Exchange Program
<http://gtradeonline.org>

Lekotek of Georgia

404-633-3430
www.lekotekga.org

Microsoft Accessibility

www.microsoft.com/enable/default.htm

**The National Center on Physical
Activity and Disability**

800-900-8086 (V and TTY)
www.ncpad.org

Tools for Life

Assistive technology information/referral
800-497-8665
www.gatfl.org

ACCESSIBILITY AND HOME MODIFICATIONS

A+ Medical Inc.

Augusta
800.241.4636 or info@apmedical.com
www.apmedical.com

Accessible Homes Inc.

Powder Springs
www.mindspring.com/~accesshm/index.htm
accessible.homes@mindspring.com

B&W Handicapped Equipment

Fayetteville
770-460-1909 or 800-214-4726

Donald Medical Repair

Dublin
donaldcofield@starband.net
<http://members.aol.com/donaldcofield/index.htm>
888-256-7203 or 478-272-7203

EasyLiving Homes

770-270-1611
bgbonham@mindspring.com

Friends of Disabled Adults and Children

Stone Mountain
770-491-9014
www.fodac.org

Handicapped Driver Services Inc.

Atlanta
770-422-9674 or 877-HDS-VANS

Make a Way Corp.

Athens
www.makeaway.com
800-424-7797 or 706-353-1099

**Remodeling Homes for Accessibility
Concrete Change**

Decatur
<http://concretechange.home.mindspring.com>

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

State Independent Living Council

Decatur
770-270-6860
silcga@mindspring.com
www.georgiasilc.org

Access Center for Independent Living

Gainesville
770-534-6656
www.accesshall.org

Bainbridge Advocacy Individual Network

Bainbridge
229-246-0150

Bridges to Independence

Flintstone
423-227-5213

Disability Connections

Macon
478-741-1425 or 800-743-2117

DisABILITY LINK

Decatur
404-687-8890 or 800-239-2507
www.disabilitylink.org

Living Independence for Everyone

Savannah
912-920-2414 or 800-948-4824

Walton Options for Independent Living

Augusta
706-724-6262 or 877-821-8400
www.waltonoptions.org

**Zimmerman-Horowitz Independent
Living Program of JF&CS**

Atlanta
770-677-9344
www.jfcs-atlanta.org

RECREATION AND SOCIALIZATION

Access to Recreation

800-634-4351
www.accessstr.com

Allegrow Music Camps

770-789-3493

Challenger Little League

Metro Atlanta
Margie Grigereit 770-973-2635
League locator 570-326-1921
jferguson@litttleleague.org

Miracle League

Athletics for children with disabilities
Gary Garner, Director 770-785-7677
www.miracleleague.com

Interfaith Disabilities Network, AADD

404-881-9777
www.aadd.org

Boy Scouts of America

www.scouting.org

Girls Scouts of the USA

800-478-7248
www.girlscouts.org



RESOURCES

Children, Kids, Teens in Motion

Special Olympics after-school recreation
Marcus Jewish Community Center Atlanta
Sammy Rosenberg 770-395-2602
www.atlantajcc.org

Clayton County Parks & Recreation

Therapeutic Division
Recreational activities for kids and adults
770-996-4156

Cobb County Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs

Therapeutic Recreation Services
Special Olympics, Social Clubs & Events
770-819-3215

Creative Community Services

Social programs for adults with disabilities
Robby Richardson 770-469-6226

First Baptist Snellville Special Needs

Ministry for children and adults
Social interaction and Christian education
Sharyn Berg 770-978-5705

Frontier Travel Camp Inc.

Tours for individuals with special needs
305-532-6205 or 866-750-CAMP
www.frontiertravelcamp.com

The Guided Tour

Vacations and tours
215-782-1370
www.guidetour.com

HAPY Club of YMCA

Decatur/DeKalb, Ashford-Dunwoody
and Gwinnett
404-377-0241 x 190 or 204

Just People

Norcross
770-441-1188

Special Olympics of Georgia

770-414-9390
www.specialolympicsga.org

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND INTERVENTION

Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities

404-881-9777
www.aadd.org

Briggs and Associates (employment)

770-993-4559

Children with Special Needs

Babies Can't Wait &
Children's Medical Services
gdphinfo@dhr.state.ga.us
404-657-2726

Community Friendship

404-875-0381

Creative Communities

404-814-1775

Easter Seals of Georgia

West Georgia 706-660-1144
Southern Georgia 229-439-7061

Families of Children Under Stress

770-234-9111
www.focus-ga.org

The Frazer Center

404-377-3836

Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

404-657-2126 or 888-275-4233
www.gcdd.org

Georgia Advocacy Office

404-885-1234 or 800-537-2329
www.thegao.org

Independent Living Research Utilization Program

Texas
713-520-0232
www.bcm.tmc.edu/ilru

Jewish Family & Career Services

Atlanta
770-677-9300

May South, Inc.

770-956-8511
www.maysouth.org

Parent to Parent of Georgia

800-229-2038
www.parenttoparentofga.org

Resources & Residential Alternatives

770-664-4347

United Cerebral Palsy of Georgia

770-676-2000

www.ucp.org

NUTRITION AND PEDIATRIC SPECIALISTS

American Academy of Pediatrics - Ga.

Susan Burns WIC/nutrition coordinator
404-881-5093

Department of Education

School and Community Nutrition
Paulette Williams
404-656-2470

Children's Center for Digestive Health Care

Stan Cohen, MD, pediatric gastroenterology
404-257-0799

Feeding Disorders Center, Marcus Behavior Center

Cathleen Piazza, PhD, director
Amy Pakula, MD, developmental pediatrician
404-727-9450

Hughes Spalding Children's Hospital

Lakita Garrett, pediatric rehab. manager
Leslie Rubin, MD, developmental pediatrician
404-616-5764

*Don't Forget
to Vote!
Aug. 20 -
Primary Election
Nov. 5 -
General Election*



July 26

**celebrates the 12th anniversary
of the Americans with
Disabilities Act**



JULY, 2002

July 5-7

National Down Syndrome Society Conf.
Nashville, Tenn.
Sponsor: National Down Syndrome Society
800-221-4602

July 11-12

GCDD Quarterly Meeting
Atlanta
404-657-2126

July 17-21

Nat'l Conf. on Autism Spectrum Disorders
Indianapolis, Ind.
Sponsor: Autism Society of America
888-233-2864; jemde@imimtg.com

July 26

ADA Anniversary Celebration & Justin Dart Memorial
Georgia State Capitol
Mark Johnson 404-350-7493

July 26-29

Nat'l. Leadership Conf. for Youth with Disabilities
Washington, D.C.
Alison Turner 800-410-7069
turneali@ohsu.edu

July 28

Country Clash Celebrity Softball for Fayette Field of Hope
Peachtree City
Nick Harris 678-364-8588
www.wkxh.com

AUGUST 2002

August 5

FORE FOCUS: Golf Classic
Families of Children Under Stress (FOCUS)
Country Club of Roswell
770-234-9111

August 20

VOTE — Primary Election Day

August 19 -21

Vocational Rehabilitation:
Disability & Employment 2002
Washington, D.C.
jenn.rigger@ed.gov

August 23-25

Nat'l Down Syndrome Congress
29th Annual Convention
Denver, Colo.
Sponsor: National Down Syndrome Congress
800-233-1234

August 29

Georgia Alliance Staffing Solutions Forum:
Atlanta
404-688-4845
www.gcd.org

SEPTEMBER 2002

September 7

10th Annual Lekotek Run
Lekotek of Georgia 404-633-3430
www.lekotekga.org/run.htm

September 12-14

34th Annual Epilepsy Foundation Conf.
New Orleans, La.
www.efa.org/aboutus/conference.html

September 17-19

CDC: Birth Defects, Developmental Disabilities, Disability & Health Conf.
Atlanta 770-488-7150
www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/default.htm

September 18-22

Strengthening Networks
Atlanta
Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network
800-297-6146

September 28

Quality of Life Forum
Macon
Dawn Randolph 678-471-3804

September 30

Golf Tournament — Swing for the Children
Country Club of the South
Down Syndrome Assn. of Atlanta
404-320-3233
www.down-syndrome-atlanta.org

OCTOBER 2002

October 3-5

World Congress and Exposition on Disabilities
Orange County Convention Ctr.
Orlando, Fla. 877-923-3976
www.wcdexpo.com

October 9-10

GCDD Quarterly Meeting
Tifton
404-657-2126

October 10-13

Nat'l Organization of Rare Disorders Conf.
Crystal City, Va. 203-746-6518
dbolton@rarediseases.org

October 12

Buddy Walk
Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta
404-320-3233
www.down-syndrome-atlanta.org

October 15 -17

Tools for Life/Touch the Future Expo
Georgia Department of Labor
Augusta 800-497-8665
www.gatfl.org

October 16

Nat'l Disability Mentoring Day
American Assn. of People with Disabilities
Jonathan Young ndmd@aapd-dc.org
www.aapd.com

October 17-19

Children & Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder Int'l Conf. on ADHD
Miami Beach, Fla.
800-233-4050
www.chadd.org

October 19-21

People First Conference
Jekyll Island

October 23

Heart of Gold Banquet
Decatur
Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities
404-881-9777 x 221

October 31 - November 2

Building Potential: Conference on Down Syndrome and Developmental Disabilities
Atlanta
Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta
Sue Joe 404-320-3233
www.down-syndrome-atlanta.org

October 31-November 4

Tourettes Syndrome Assn. Celebrity Conf. 2002
Alexandria, Va.
718-224-2999
www.tsa-usa.org

NOVEMBER 2002

November 5

VOTE — General Election Day

November 13-16

Int'l Dyslexia Association Annual Conf.
Atlanta
Sponsor: International Dyslexia Assn.
800-222-3123
www.interdys.org

ON-GOING ACTIVITIES:

Mason Mill Center for Special Populations
404-679-5917

Creative Community Services
Robby Richardson 770-469-6226

HAPY Clubs at YMCA
Social & recreational activities
404-377-0241 x 190

Just People
Metro Atlanta social recreation for adults
770-441-1188

Rockdale Miracle League
Gary Garner 770-785-7677
www.miracleleague.org

The Smart Place
Stone Mountain
Day habilitation & camp for kids 12+ & adults
Teresa Punzi 770-469-4418

GOVERNOR'S
COUNCIL ON
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

2 Peachtree Street, N.W., Ste 8-210
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142
www.godd.org

Making A DIFFERENCE

Place
Stamp
Here



Get your special edition of the ***Making A Difference Voters Guide***.

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