

Partnership



## 2006 INCLUSION WORKS! ARTS CONTEST BRIMS WITH CREATIVITY

The 2nd annual Inclusion Works! Arts Contest Awards Ceremony was held on May 19th at the Philadelphia School District's new administration building in a beautiful atrium. The atrium was brimming with art works created by many students, and on that day exhibited the winning entries in the categories of art, music, and literature created for Inclusion Works! 2006 by Philadelphia public school students from kindergarten through grade eight.

The ceremony was a fun and festive event as nearly 300 people enjoyed the festivities, including busloads of students and their teachers—most coming to support those who created the winning entries. The Masterman High School Jazz Ensemble, directed by Kim Kelter New, entertained the crowd with spirited musical selections.

The Contest, a collaborative effort of the Mental Retardation Services (MRS) Public Awareness Committee and the School District of Philadelphia, encourages students to express themselves through the arts about how inclusion of someone with a

disability has been a positive experience in their lives. These projects raise the awareness of the abilities of people with disabilities in our communities and the contributions they make as friends, family members, classmates, teammates, and

neighbors. The School District's Office of Creative and Performing Arts, under the direction of Dr. Dennis Creedon, Administrator, and Tessie Varthas, Lead Academic Coach for Art Education, received more than 100 entries, and a panel of judges selected the prize winners.



**Award winner Cee'arra Williams holds up the full-page spread about Inclusion Works! in The Daily News.**

Amy Freeze, Meteorologist from NBC-10 TV, was the gracious Mistress of Ceremonies. She did a great job

sharing her thoughts about inclusion, posing for pictures with the winners, and keeping the program on track!

Kathy Sykes, Director of MRS, welcomed everyone and thanked the teachers and children for participating in the Contest. She also thanked the judges and the members of the Inclusion Works! Committee for their fine efforts. The Committee

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## Community Saddened by Death of Octavia Green

Octavia Green will be remembered for her quiet strength and strong resolve for independence, self determination and excellence along with her life’s work as a person who was a true Self Advocate and long time member of Speaking for Ourselves. In her honor, Vision for Equality’s Board of Directors voted unanimously to establish the Octavia Green Memorial Self Advocate Scholarship Fund. This fund will support Self Advocates to attend conferences and meetings and will be an ongoing tribute to Octavia and her memory.

If you wish to make a contribution in Octavia’s memory, please send your donation to Vision for Equality, Inc., 718 Arch Street, 6N, Philadelphia, PA 19106, attention: Rosette Proodian. Please make checks payable to: Vision for Equality, Inc. - Octavia Green Memorial Self Advocate Scholarship Fund.

Condolences, or other contributions to her memory, can be sent to Speaking for Ourselves, Suite 550, 502 W. Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting 19462. Cards will be forwarded to Octavia’s family.

**Call for New Registrations & Customer Service  
215-685-4MRS (4677)**

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### Let’s hear from you!

Please submit articles to: Editor, Family Forum, Mental Retardation Services, Suite 5200, 701 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1532

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#### Family Forum Contact - Jeffrey Orlin

Voice: 215-685-5911 Fax: 215-685-5959  
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Recent issues of The Family Forum are archived on <www.philly.networkofcare.org> & <mycitymyplace.com>

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Just give us credit. Thanks!



# QUALITY

## It's Everyone's Business

Philadelphia Mental Retardation Services  
proudly announces  
the formation of  
**The Quality Council**

*WE ARE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD  
MEN AND WOMEN  
Who are Self Advocates or Family Members  
to serve on The Quality Council*

- ❑ Are you interested in shaping Quality in the MR System in Philadelphia?
- ❑ Do you like looking at data to measure patterns of performance, or are you willing to learn more about data?
- ❑ Can you make a commitment to meet once a month?
- ❑ Will you help us improve Quality through your participation?

*If you answered yes to these questions, we want to hear from YOU.*

An informational session will be held in September for all who are interested. The Quality Council will hold its first meeting in October.

***Please join us!*** Call Deborah Cackowski at 215-685-5940, or email her at [Deborah.Cackowski@phila.gov](mailto:Deborah.Cackowski@phila.gov), to express your interest.



Sponsored by The City of Philadelphia  
Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services

## 2006 Inclusion Works!

Continued from Front Page



**From left, Stanton Elementary principal Idella Scott, award winner Yasmeen Payton, teacher Robin Goldstein, NBC-10 TV meteorologist Amy Freeze and Home & School Council president Patricia Raymond.**

was Co-chaired by Thad Campbell, Kencrest, and Cathy Silvasi, MRS.

Dr. Creedon told the audience about a young girl, Laquinda Quinn Cooper, who recently perished in a fire. Her mother, Darena Cooper, accepted an award named for her daughter, which was presented to the John B. Kelly School for having the most students participating in the contest.

Julia Danzy, Director of the Division of Social Services, spoke about the contributions all children make and the importance of supporting them to reach their potential, and State Representative James R. Roebuck acknowledged the collaboration between the City and the School District. City Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown presented a Citation from City Council, recognizing the importance of the Contest and honoring the participants.

Freedom Credit Union, represented by Shawn Murphy, Marketing Representative, provided the financial awards to the teachers of the students with the winning entries. The Philadelphia Home and School Council, represented by Patricia Raymond, President, provided the financial awards to the

## And the First Prize Winners Are...

### Literature (See poems on Page 13)

**Kerry Duffy, 3rd grade  
Joseph Greenberg School  
Alysha Meza, 4th grade  
Bayard Taylor School  
Matthew Lord, Ashley Looby, and  
Christopher Rodriguez, 8th grade  
Woodrow Wilson Middle School**

### Visual Art

**Sydney Hall, 1st grade  
M.H. Stanton Elementary School  
Ilya Timofeyev, 5th grade  
Anne Frank School  
John Santiago & James Blumber, 6th  
grade; Robert Perlo, 7th grade; and  
Jennifer Torres, 8th grade  
Woodrow Wilson Middle School**

### Music

**Bonita Douglas, Danae Robinson  
Dazsha James, Kyjae Moore, 5th grade  
Tilden Middle School**

### Special Exhibition Mural

**Demetris Brodie  
University City High School**

winning students. The generosity of our two awards sponsors is much appreciated, and the Committee thanks them for their participation in the 2006 Inclusion Works! Arts Contest.

Other generous sponsors include Staples, which provided gift cards and school supplies for all the students attending the ceremony and Tastykake and Hank's Root Beer for providing their delicious treats to the John B. Kelly School.

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# Spotlight On It's Fun to Have Fun

## It's Fun to Have Fun

by Brenda Tingstrom, *Vision for Equality*

*"Life is like a tube of paint, you can use as much as you want." Paul W.*

Vision for EQuality is pleased to announce their newly-expanded resource book, "It's Fun to Have Fun in Southeastern Pennsylvania."

Vision for EQuality is an organization advocating for people with disabilities and their families with the belief that all people have a right to live a happy and meaningful life. This book assists people with disabilities and their caregivers in finding activities throughout the Southeastern region. Visit gardens, nature centers, museums, stables, zoos, and art galleries. Many places listed are free and accessible.

The book is available free from our website <[www.visionforequality.org/library.html](http://www.visionforequality.org/library.html)>, or bound copies can be purchased by calling Brenda Tingstrom at 215-923-3349 X111.

### Quick Tips for a Successful Trip

The success of any trip begins in the planning process. Include everyone in the decision making. Keep it simple, don't over plan. Always call before visiting a place of interest to check on your personal accessibility needs and to make sure of the hours they are open.

Here are some of my favorites, which are all wheelchair accessible.

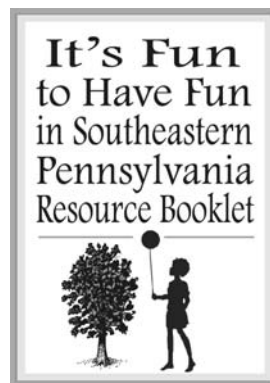
## ZOOS, FARMS & ORCHARDS

Linvilla Orchards, 137 West Knowlton Road, Media, 610-876-7116. Free. Learn how a traditional farm functions and pick your own fruit and vegetables. Also has farm animals. Open daily, <[www.linvilla.com](http://www.linvilla.com)>.

Elmwood Park Zoo, Norristown, 610-277-3825. See jaguars, cougars, elk, otters, and alligators in their natural settings. Open daily 10-5 pm. Adults \$8.50, seniors, children \$6.50, <[www.elmwoodparkzoo.org](http://www.elmwoodparkzoo.org)>.

Snipes Farm & Golf, 890 W. Bridge St, Morrisville, 215-295-1138. Pick your own fruit and take wheelchair-accessible hay rides.

Summer concerts and two accessible miniature golf courses for children \$5.50, adults \$6. Daytime prices are discounted \$1. <[www.snipesfarm.com](http://www.snipesfarm.com)>.



## SWIMMING



French Creek Pool, 843 Park Road, Elverson, 610-582-1194. Swim all day by the Hopewell Lake in an ADA accessible pool. The pool has a ramp with a gentle incline starting with 6 inches. Summer hours 11-7pm, Wednesdays, 10-6pm. \$6/person. <[www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/stateparks)>.

## SEE THE OUTDOORS

Awbury Arboretum, Chew Avenue between Haines and Washington Lane, Germantown, 215-849-2855. Free. A former Quaker estate

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## It's Fun to Have Fun

Continued from Page 5

surrounded by Victorian gardens, large fields, tall trees, gently sloping hills and a pond below. Grounds open sunrise to sunset. <[www.awbury.org](http://www.awbury.org)>.

Briar Bush Nature Center, 1212 Edge Hill Road, Abington, 215-887-6603. Free. A Nature Center created in 1908 by a newlywed Quaker couple who for more than 50 years shared their knowledge and love of nature with their community. Explore the windmill-fed pond, the Bird Observatory, wildflower gardens, observation beehive, indoor pond and Discovery Den. Trails. Open sunrise to sunset; Nature Center open Monday to Saturday 9-5pm, and Sundays 1-5pm. <[www.briarbush.org](http://www.briarbush.org)>.

Horticultural Center, Horticultural Drive, West Fairmount Park, 215-685-0096. Paved trails wind around gardens with a gazebo, a butterfly garden, sun dial, greenhouses, and a reflecting pool. The gardening clubs have an open invitation to persons with special needs and have a raised bed allowing people to reach the plants if in a wheelchair. Open 9-9pm daily. <[www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org](http://www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org)>.

### COOL MUSEUMS



Philadelphia Museum of Art, 26th & Ben Franklin Pkwy, 215-763-8100, 215-684-7600 TDD. From a Japanese Ceremonial Tea House, and medieval armor to Impressionist paintings, modern art, tiles, and sculpture. For discounted tickets and The Access Program, call 215-684-7602. Fee for program is \$6 per person with 1 escort/person admitted free. Touch Tours and Interpreted Tours are available. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10-5pm; Wednesday & Friday 10-8:45pm. Regular admission is \$12 adults, \$9 for seniors, and \$8 for students. Free on Sundays with a small donation. <[www.philamuseum.org](http://www.philamuseum.org)>.

Woodmere Art Museum, 9201 Germantown Avenue, Chestnut Hill, 215-247-0476. Free. A 19th

century stone mansion with sky lit galleries and Victorian parlors, showcasing the art and artists of the Philadelphia area. Sculptural gardens surround the estate. Open 10-5pm from Tuesday to Saturday and Sundays 1-5pm. <[www.woodmereartmuseum.org](http://www.woodmereartmuseum.org)>.

Fireman's Hall Museum, 147 N. 2nd Street, Old City, 215-923-1438. Free. Located in a restored firehouse. Details the history and heroic moments of Philadelphia Firefighters, both past and present from 1731. Includes an exhibit on 911 with artifacts from Ground Zero. Touch Tours are provided with advance notice. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10-4:30pm. <[www.firemanshallmuseum.org](http://www.firemanshallmuseum.org)>.

### FOR THE MORE ADVENTURESOME

Ring Rock State, Bucks County, Ringing Rocks Road, Upper Black Eddy. Free. A field of boulders that produce melodious tones when struck with a hammer. Note: this site is not wheelchair friendly. <[www.unmuseum.org/ringrock.htm](http://www.unmuseum.org/ringrock.htm)>.

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### ***Fialkowski Award Nominees Sought***

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The prestigious Annual Leona and Marion Fialkowski Humanitarian Award will again honor a person for their lifetime achievement in promoting social change, inclusion and empowerment in the lives of people with mental retardation.

This individual's life work, distinguished by his or her gifts to their community as a teacher, pathfinder and advocate, should reflect the ideals personified by Leona and Marion Fialkowski – activists, advocates, leaders and trailblazers. This individual should be a person with a disability, a parent, or community member whose crusading efforts have helped to bring about social change and build community awareness. Nominations must be received by July 17, 2006. Call Rosette Proodian, Vision for Equality, 215-923-3349, for a form.

# DID YOU

▶ **Dental Booklet** – “Preventing Dental Diseases in Children with Disabilities,” by The Arc, Johnson & Johnson Dental Care Co., the American Dental Hygienists’ Association and the Academy of Dentistry for the Handicapped, is available at <[www.TheArc.org/publications](http://www.TheArc.org/publications)>. Designed for parents and other givers, it is a 10-page downloadable folder of information on helping children with disabilities have healthy teeth and gums.

▶ **Panfleto Dental- Previendo Enfermedades dentales en NiZos con > Impedimentos**, publicado por “The Arc, Johnson & Johnson Dental Care Co., La Asociación Americana de Higiene Dental y La Academia Dental para Personas con Impedimentos” esta disponible en <[www.TheArc.org/publications](http://www.TheArc.org/publications)>. DiseZado para padres y otras personas, es un archivo descargable de 10 páginas de información de cómo ayudar niZos con impedimentos a tener dientes y encías saludables.

▶ **Dental Directory** – The PA Dental Association maintains a directory of free and reduced-fee dental clinics. The directory, sorted by county, can be found at <[www.padental.org](http://www.padental.org)>. For children’s oral health care in Philadelphia call Penn Dental at 215-898-8965; Temple Dental at 215-707-2900; and St. Christopher’s Kids Smiles at 215-492-9291.

▶ **Directorio Dental- La Asociación Dental de Pennsylvania** mantiene un directorio de clínicas dentales gratis o a bajo costo. El directorio, clasificado por condados, se puede encontrar en <[www.padental.org](http://www.padental.org)>. Para la salud oral de los niZos en Filadelfia llame a Penn Dental al 215-898-8965; Temple Dental al 215-707-2900; y a St. Christopher’s Kids Smiles al 215-492-9291.

▶ **School Transportation** – Students who are entitled to transportation to and from school are entitled to transportation, free of charge, to participate in activities such as sports or class field trips. If there is a charge to all students for transportation, special ed students cannot be charged



# KNOW?

more than the other students. For more information about school transportation, contact the Education Law Center for their brochure at 215-238-6970, or visit <[www.elc-pa.org](http://www.elc-pa.org)>.

▶ **Transportación Escolar- Los estudiantes** que tienen derecho a transportación escolar hacia y desde la escuela tienen derecho a transportación, gratis, para participar en actividades tales como deportes, o viajes escolares. Si hubiera algún costo de transportación para todos los estudiantes, a los estudiantes de Educación Especial no se le podrá cobrar más que a los otros estudiantes. Para mas información acerca de transportación escolar o para obtener un folleto contacte Education Law Center 215-238-6970, o visite <[www.elc-pa.org](http://www.elc-pa.org)>.

▶ **Go to the Movies** – The Ritz Movie theaters provide listening devices for persons with hearing problems. Call 215-925-7900 for details.

▶ **Vaya al Cine- Los teatros The Ritz Movie** proveen aparatos de tecnología auditiva para personas con problemas de audición. Llame al 215-925-7900 para más detalles.

▶ **ADA about Employment** – You can download a Q & A “About Persons with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace and the ADA” <[www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual\\_disabilities.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual_disabilities.html)>. There is more information about the ADA at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission site.

▶ **“ADA” acerca de Empleo- usted puede descargar de la Internet la sección de preguntas y respuestas “Acerca de las personas con impedimentos intelectuales en el lugar de trabajo” y “ADA”** <[www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual\\_disabilities.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/intellectual_disabilities.html)>. Hay más información acerca de “ADA” en el sitio en la Internet de la Comisión de Igualdad de Oportunidad de Empleo.

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Any websites noted in The Family Forum are provided for your information and are not rated or reviewed. We welcome your input about useful sites you have visited. Email [FamilyForum@phila.gov](mailto:FamilyForum@phila.gov).

## Did You Know?

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▶ **Autism Classroom Strategies** – “The Puzzle of Autism” is a succinct informational guide for educators who work with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). This 38-page guide explains common autistic characteristics and suggests effective classroom strategies for improving communication, sensory, social, and behavioral skills. To download a copy go to the National Education Association website at <[www.nea.org/specialed](http://www.nea.org/specialed)> or call 202-822-7373 (Washington, DC).

▶ **Estrategias para el Autismo en el salón de clase**- “The Puzzle of Autism” es una guía de información precisa para educadores que trabajan con estudiantes con el Espectro del Desorden de Autismo (Autism Spectrum Disorders ASD). Esta guía de 38 páginas explica las características comunes del autismo y sugiere estrategias efectivas para el salón de clases para mejorar las destrezas de comunicación, sensorial, social y comportamiento. Para descargar una copia vaya a la página de la Internet de la “National Education Association” <[www.nea.org/specialed](http://www.nea.org/specialed)> o llame al 202-822-7373 (Washington, DC).

▶ **The Philadelphia Local Task Force** – has an informative email newsletter filled with information about special education news, trainings, conferences, and more. Visit <[www.philadelphia.tf.org](http://www.philadelphia.tf.org)> to sign up or call the message center at 215-400-5151. The Task Force meets the third Thursday of the month at The Arc of Philadelphia. See the Family Forum’s calendar “Repeatables” for information.

▶ El “Philadelphia Local Task Force” tiene un boletín electrónico que contiene información sobre noticias de educación especial, entrenamientos, conferencias y mucho más. Visite la página en la Internet <[www.philadelphia.tf.org](http://www.philadelphia.tf.org)> para suscribirse o llame al centro de mensajes al 215-400-5151. El “Task Force” se reúne cada tercer jueves de mes en The Arc of Philadelphia”. Vea la sección “Repeatables” del Family Forum para más información.

▶ **Medicare SCAM** – Be aware that there are scams to get checking or bank account information from you to set up a Medicare drug plan. Legitimate Medicare drug plans will not

*Thanks to Emilio Pacheco for the Spanish translation.*

ask for payment over the telephone or the Internet. They must bill the beneficiary for the monthly premium. Typically, that amount is set up as an automatic withdrawal from the beneficiary’s monthly Social Security check. Beneficiaries may also opt to pay the monthly premiums in other ways such as writing a check or setting up automatic payments from their checking accounts. Whenever you have a question or concern about any activity regarding Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE.

▶ **Fraude en el “Medicare”**-Esté alerta de que hay fraude para obtener información de su cuenta bancaria para establecer un plan de medicinas del “Medicare” Los planes legítimos de medicinas de “Medicare” no preguntaran por pagos a través del teléfono o de la Internet. Ellos deberán enviar una factura al beneficiario por la prima mensual. Típicamente, esa cantidad es establecida a través de una deducción automática del cheque mensual del Seguro Social del beneficiario. Los beneficiarios también puede optar por pagar la prima mensual de otras maneras como la de escribir un cheque o establecer pagos automáticos de su cuenta de cheques. En el momento en que usted tenga alguna pregunta o preocupación de cualquier actividad acerca de “Medicare” llame al 1-800-MEDICARE.

▶ **Health Info** – The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, the nation’s first medical academy, sponsors Philly Health Info, <[www.phillyhealthinfo.org](http://www.phillyhealthinfo.org)>, a non-commercial, consumer health information website. Philly Health Info provides quick access to information and local resources to residents of the Delaware Valley on over 100 health and wellness topics.

▶ **Información de salud**-El Colegio de Médicos de Filadelfia, la primera academia de la nación, patrocina, “Philly Health Info” <[www.phillyhealthinfo.org](http://www.phillyhealthinfo.org)>, un sitio en la Internet no-comercial acerca de información de salud del consumidor. “Philly Health Info” provee rápido > acceso a información y recursos locales a residentes del Valle de Delaware sobre 100 temas de salud y bienestar.



**A diet is what you keep putting off while you keep putting on!**

## Making Employment Happen Featuring YOUR Success Stories

### John Kilroy, One of the Most Successful People I Know

*By John B. Spencer, M.Ed.,  
COMHAR Core Team*

This is a story of a 27-year-old man who has had to struggle through the public school system and the community in his reach for a successful and independent life. It was my pleasure to meet John Kilroy and his mother at a meeting held at COMHAR's Vanderwoude Center about five years ago. Mrs. Kilroy has battled for her son as a strong advocate for his rights and supportive services in case management, medical services, and therapy. John is a challenged individual with Asperger's Syndrome. Although John has a number of excellent skills, social skills were difficult for him to develop. On a particular day, John had left his house to visit a neighbor. In the past, John seldom visited others, or took any active role in another person's life. As it turned out, he was visiting with a neighbor that he helps with her grocery shopping and had a lengthy conversation with her. When John returned, although she had been concerned about his delay in coming home, Mrs. Kilroy realized the growth that John had made. Mrs. Kilroy is a terrific mother and follows up on suggestions and makes an assertive effort to make John's life enjoyable and normalized.

One aspect of John's life that needed some refinement was developing his ability to carry on spontaneous conversations. This skill included arguing a key point and giving reasons to justify his position. John is an avid Mets and Cowboys fan and, at times, John will now get involved in a

Your picture and your employment success story could be on this page! Submit your story to Family Forum now. Contact info on Page 2.

friendly argument with employees concerning sports teams and future games. Another past struggle was John's difficulty to focus in his environment. While walking down the sidewalk, he would not concentrate on what was in front of him – a very common challenge for people with autism. This also drew negative attention and had the potential to set him up as a possible target. Now, as I watch John walk in his neighborhood, I see a tall proud man looking both ways and straight ahead, just like every one else taking a walk. Recently, John purchased lunchmeat and cheese for his lunch. He told the butcher at the store exactly what he wanted down to weight and specific brand. John proceeded to the cash register to pay for the items – all with no assistance from me.

This story is not finished! John holds down a successful job and has completed over 2,000 hours of community volunteer work with the Frankford Hospital. He is very proud of the pin he recently received at a luncheon for his consistent and dedicated service to the hospital. John works at COMHAR as a paid employee in the medical records division. It is a huge responsibility: filing, locating records, and organizing files. John takes his responsibilities seriously, and if the record he has been asked to find cannot be located, then it is not there. Nothing gets by John; he is a very thorough employee. His coworkers at COMHAR consider John a valued employee, and he gets the same respect as any other employee.

When John first started his present position, he was uncertain and fearful of the neighborhood, how he was going to get to work, and the employees who were going to work with him. John sometimes has difficulty accepting change in his routines, but he was able to make these adjustments with the support of his

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# **T**ransitioning from **School to Work**

*By Michelle O'Connell, JEVS Public Policy Coordinator & Business Development Specialist*

Accessing the workforce is about more than just obtaining a job. It's about helping individuals find their own niche. To do so requires breaking down the philosophy of "can't" surrounding job creation and workforce development for people with disabilities and fostering opportunities for professional growth. Data has shown that compared with students of the general population, students with disabilities are less likely to gain employment after they leave school; 43% of youth with disabilities are employed compared with 63% of typical youth. Although a majority of youth with disabilities identified employment as a goal following secondary education, the desire to work does not guarantee employment.

Employment profoundly affects social and emotional well-being, in addition to financial well-being. Employment also positively impacts the economy and fiscal well-being of federal, state and local governments. When people work, everyone benefits. For most though, pursuing a career isn't easy. It requires effort and can seem especially difficult for youth who haven't been previously employed.

Career counseling, training and placement services provide critical direction and support to students seeking employment or furthering their education. However, gaps in such services, along with the traditional focus on college-bound students, inhibits entrance to the workforce. Students with disabilities are disproportionately affected by these issues.

## **The Groundwork**

In 1994, to help students enter the workforce, the federal government adopted the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) as public law. STWOA identified three points of focus:  
1) school-based learning through career awareness,

exploration and counseling; 2) work-based learning through internships and summer jobs, job shadowing, workplace mentoring, and community service; and 3) connecting activities through a series of learning experiences integrated with classroom studies.

STWOA functioned as the stepping stone for School-to-Work transition efforts. When the legislation ended in 2001, advocates were concerned that programs would end as well. However, this was the beginning of a paradigm shift and program redesign at the federal level.

## **A New Vision**

As schools began integrating classroom and community experiences, the focus of School-to-Work began shifting to partnership and interagency cooperation.

"The principles of School-to-Work are embedded in a number of laws and parts of laws," acknowledged Beth Brinly, Workforce Program Unit Chief at U.S. Department of Labor and former education program specialist at U.S. Department of Education. Instead of funding programs separately, the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education have collaborated to create the New Youth Vision. This interagency collaboration strives to develop the young workforce through a comprehensive approach.

## **Walking the Walk**

JEVS is taking its own steps to put School-to-Work concepts into practice. Ilene King, Director of Business Development and Marketing for JEVS Work and Recovery Services, formed and now leads the School-to-Work Coalition at JEVS. The Coalition began in August 2005 in response to funding from Pennsylvania's State Office of Mental Retardation to provide follow-along services for youth with disabilities. Members represent Philadelphia's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, State

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## John Kilroy

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mother, behavior specialist, and job coaches. Because of his difficulty in crossing busy streets, he rides Para Transit to and from work and is dropped off in front of the building. John is able to independently call for the ride and pick up for the next day. Continuing to be successful at his job, without the support of job coaches, John takes part in social gatherings, such as the Christmas party and other social functions.

John has successfully integrated into the community in which he lives, works, and volunteers. I am very proud of John, and I know he is proud of the progress he has made in his life. COMHAR and his co-workers have also had a tremendous positive impact on his life and, in turn, have been enriched by John as an employee and as a friend.

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## 2006 Inclusion Works!

Continued from Page 4

As they did last year, a special thank you to the Philadelphia Daily News for dedicating an entire page to the to the contest winners on the day before the ceremony. Some of the winning literature entries were read aloud at the contest! Everyone who attended the ceremony received a complimentary copy.

“As the song says, children are our future...teach them well and let them lead the way,” said Judy Kresloff, Public

Awareness Coordinator for MRS. “It is obvious from the entries we received and the energy level at the awards ceremony that the kids felt strongly



**City Councilperson Blondell Reynolds Brown with students from the John B. Kelly School.**

## Transitioning

Continued from Page 10

and County Offices of Mental Retardation, School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania CareerLink, Pennsylvania Protection & Advocacy, Penn State University and Temple University.

The Coalition’s mission is to develop a standard for best practices for school-aged youth with disabilities transitioning into the workforce. As the coalition grows, its hope is to approach School-to-Work transitioning proactively instead of reactively, and in doing so will serve as a “powerful vehicle as we move forward with School-to-Work efforts,” said King. Critical to success is a change in practice and ideology. Providers, schools, employers, parents and advocates must work together to understand the value of a School-to-Work program, the quality of training, and the benefit to all of hiring program graduates.

“Everyone has a place in the community,” says King, “it is our job and responsibility to help them find it.” For more information, call 215-848-6000, or visit <[www.jevs.org](http://www.jevs.org)>.

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about sharing their positive stories about friends, family members or others who have disabilities. Today, these children teach us, and each other, about the essence of community and inclusion. Next year, and in years to come, we hope to expand the Inclusion Works! Arts Contest to more schools and more children. Thanks to everyone who helped make the Contest a big success!”

**See Inclusion Works!  
Poems on Page 13**

## **Oasis – Transforming Lives Through The Arts**

Oasis, a program of Resources for Human Development (RHD) is a non-profit arts and education program that offers classes, open studios and creative interaction to people in our community who are marginalized as a result of mental illness, mental retardation or chronic homelessness. Lori Bartol, Assistant Director, says that, “We empower our students – in particular, those who have not thrived in more traditional therapeutic or day programs – to realize their creative potential, improve their quality of life and develop crucial life skills.” Students have the opportunity to learn practical and professional skills to help them exhibit and sell their artwork, as well as life skills training in other areas, such as reading and money management.

Although many Oasis classes are held at the Journey Home Enrichment Center location, they also do outreach to students who are not able to come there. “The atmosphere at Oasis is creative, social, diverse, fun, patient, and dedicated,” says Lori. Creativity can be flexible and multi-sided. An Oasis Life Skills session, for example, can be anything from navigating a kitchen at home, to learning to count change at the art center, or enjoying a field trip to the art museum. Art sessions can range from creating a visual or written journal of feelings to a large-scale print or painting. There are one-on-one or group classes focusing on social skills, arts development, and life skills development.

Oasis approaches all of their teaching from the firm belief that individuals learn better when allowed to think and learn based on their own ability, pace, and incorporating their own interests and skills. Whether learning to paint or learning to read, they tap each person’s creative potential.

George Fox has been a student at Oasis for many years. He is a quietly creative and prolific artist. George came to Oasis as a member of the Saturday

group class and before long showed a more intense interest in and talent for creating his own art. So, a few years ago, George began coming on a “OneOnOne” basis (an intense course with one student/one instructor) and for group class, and since then his talent has really flourished. He has an



**George Fox at Oasis opening.**

eye for collecting small objects from everyday life and uses them in his artwork. George was encouraged to try art by his residential program specialist, Tad Cornell of RHD, who foresaw that George’s compulsion to collect could be a sign of an undeveloped creative urge. Tad was right, and since his creative redirection, his compulsion to collect has gotten a focus. George’s concentration on his artwork expands beyond the time he spends in class into his home life. He gathers ideas during the week and brings his ideas to class. He has learned to incorporate his interests and daily life experiences into his artwork. George has come so far; he recently sold a piece in Oasis’ first New York exhibit! He also has sold several pieces here in Philadelphia. But, most of all, he has found a way to express himself that goes beyond words. His sense of self is continually being asserted through every new piece of art he completes, and his concentration and desire to create have become an integral part of who is George is.

Christopher Hermes is an Oasis literacy student. Oasis has visited him each week since early this year. His teacher, Patricia Lyons, (who also is the Executive Director of Oasis) has seen Christopher make wonderful progress since starting the reading program. At first, Pat noticed he was very shy and made little eye contact. Over the past months, he has made great progress in breaking out of his shyness to become conversational and interactive. The

Continued on Page 13

## Oasis

Continued from Page 12

Director of Vocational Services at PATH, Alan Ehrlich, also notes Christopher's enhanced self-concept and self-confidence. His earlier short, simple answers have become more elaborate and self-initiated. Christopher's mother has seen the progress manifest itself in his home life as well. She enthusiastically remarks that he has opened up significantly and comes home eager to begin his homework and read the newspaper! He is very excited about learning and looks forward to his weekly reading sessions. Christopher is becoming more integrated into his community with this new skill of reading. Reading has long been a desire of Christopher's and each week coming closer to that goal is fostering his sense of involvement, pride, and great excitement for learning. Oasis is so pleased to be able to help him along that journey.



**Christopher Hermes working on his skills.**

The staff is comprised of artists and educators, but the programs are flexible and consumer driven. They continually adjust and reinvent individual classes to fit the student, and offer group classes to promote social interaction and integration. Goals are not set *for* the students, but rather *by* the students. Their increased self-efficiency fosters pride and self determination. Oasis believes that everyone has the potential to grow, learn, and define themselves, as opposed to living with pre-determined labels or pre-determined limitations. Oasis' goal is to see their students excel, rise above stereotypes, and establish their place in the community.

Oasis is located at 948 N. 8th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19123. For more information, contact Oasis at <[oasisrhd@rhd.org](mailto:oasisrhd@rhd.org)> or call 215-629-0100.

### INCLUSION WORKS

**Ashley Looby, Christopher Rodriquez,  
Matthew Lord, Grade 8, 1st Prize Winner**

*Follow the directions carefully  
and you will find that Inclusion Works:*

Mix all students  
And their strengths and weaknesses  
Into school  
And stir.  
Add a feeling of belonging  
Spread evenly  
Sprinkle caring teachers  
Staff and parents  
On top.



### INCLUSION GIRL

**Kerry Duffy, Grade 3, 1st Prize Winner**

I go to two classrooms everyday.  
They are both fun in their own way.

Two classes are better than one.  
I get a lot of my schoolwork done.

I feel happy because I belong.  
I laugh a lot and we sing a song.

My classmates are so nice to me.  
Alysha and Devon help me to read.

All my friends make me laugh.  
They always help me with my math.

Ms. Pierce is the best in the world,  
I am a real lucky inclusion girl.

## **D**irect Service Professionals Enjoy “Working” Lunch!

*By Marianne Roche, MRS*

In a unique learning experience for everyone involved, representatives from the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Retardation (OMR) and from Philadelphia MRS met with a distinguished group of Direct Support Professionals at a luncheon on March 31, following the Points of Transformation Awards.

The luncheon, hosted by Philadelphia MRS, was attended by more than thirty Direct Support Professionals—many of whom were previous Points of Transformation Award winners—and all of whom are highly respected, both by the service providers they work for and the people they serve. Its purpose was an organized opportunity to discuss “what it takes” to be a successful and accomplished Direct Support Professional (DSP). Attendees had an opportunity to brainstorm the ways in which DSPs promote “Everyday Lives” for the individuals they support. To do this, the participants were asked to focus on five areas that are directly related to outcomes we all try to achieve for people who receive services—choice, community and social presence, competence and respect. Each DSP had an opportunity to discuss challenges related to achieving these outcomes, successfully overcoming barriers, and to offer insights and ideas that could be used by other DSPs.

The discussion, led by Dr. Michael McAllister, Executive Director of Networks for Training and Development, was organized so that each working group included DSPs, and representatives from OMR and MRS. Here are some of the generous and heartfelt ideas that came out of the workgroups –

- ❑ Letting an individual know “I am with you,” and maintaining this attitude is paramount.
- ❑ Encouraging people to work and earn a paycheck is important if individuals are going to be seen ‘as

equals’ by others who do not know very much about the capabilities of people with disabilities.

- ❑ DSPs who actively encourage the development of social skills, relationships, communication and personal safety skills are much more accomplished and content in their work.
- ❑ Teaching skills is something that DSPs should develop an interest in doing. This includes teaching money skills and safety skills so that people have maximum independence when they are in the community.
- ❑ Good communication with the person’s family and other members of the team is critical to supporting positive outcomes to occur for individuals. Making team meetings fun helps too!
- ❑ Listening to consumer’s preferences for things to do and places to go is very important.
- ❑ DSPs who see themselves as a “Social Coach” — encouraging good choices, exposing people to new interests and opportunities, and providing times for independent actions to occur – are much more successful.
- ❑ DSPs who are clear that the residence is the person’s home, also are typically more focused on choice and issues of giving guidance, as they foster a “can do” spirit.

Following the luncheon, Jeffrey Petraco, Bureau Director of OMR Program Operations, commented on how much he benefited from the day’s discussion and how impressed he was with the commitment of the Direct Support Professionals who were in attendance. “This is one of the most worthwhile days I have spent in quite a while. I am so impressed with the honesty and caring of the Direct Support Professionals who were here today and can easily see why they are so admired.”

A compilation of the information presented at the working luncheon will be available soon. Ideally, some of the information will form the basis for future discussions about the critical role of Direct Support Professionals, and perhaps become a component of future training efforts. For information, call Marianne Roche at 215-685-5930.



## Parenting Ideas from Adults with Disabilities

Most parents of children with disabilities lack personal experience with adults with disabilities. Hearing from people who have lived the disability experience can provide all parents with essential information about the possibilities for their children. Reflections from a Different Journey: What Adults with Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew (McGraw-Hill, 2004), edited by Stanley D. Klein, Ph.D., and John D. Kemp, who also wrote the book's Afterword, includes forty inspiring and realistic essays written by successful adult role models who share what it is like to have grown up with a disability. In preparing their essays, the authors were asked to write about something they wished their own parents had read or been told while they were growing up. To read more about Reflections, or to purchase a copy (also at bookstores), visit < [www.disabilitiesbooks.com/reflections/index.html](http://www.disabilitiesbooks.com/reflections/index.html) > .

*“The Brighter Futures Awards” se celebra en el 8 de Noviembre 2006. Si le interesa una forma para participar puede solicitarla, llamando al Sr. Julio Nieves, 215-546-0300 x3387.*

At <[www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia](http://www.cap4kids.org/philadelphia)>, under Parent Handouts, “Legal Services,” you will find links to many legal services that help women and children and people with disabilities. This site also has many other Philadelphia resources and is a good site to bookmark. It is maintained by St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children.



### [Visit WWW.KenCrest.Org](http://www.KenCrest.Org)

Family Forum was impressed with the KenCrest website so we sent a reporter out to interview Craig Weber. Here’s the interview by FF Committee member, Charles Haley:

Q: How did you and/or your team come up with a good layout? A: There was a design team. We checked other sites for ideas. There were four on the team.

Q: Were the website pages easy to do? A: Once the layout was done, it was easy.

Q: Whose idea was it to include Children’s Service and Support locations (including the Roxborough location I went to for preschool)? A: We wanted to show all services.

The Family Forum Editor adds that the KenCrest site has a list of links to local counties and towns that we found so interesting we used the site’s easy bookmark feature to go back to learn more. Of course, KenCrest’s extensive services are highlighted, as well as a calendar of events.

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## Finding “Nursing Pearls” – Do Your Homework!

By Lisa A. Padilla, Advocate  
Vision for Equality

(Editor’s Note: This story was submitted to Family Forum in 2005 and held for the 2006 May/June pre-summer issue.)

Summer is coming, and I’m calling nursing agencies and scheduling appointments. My twelve-year-old daughter, Santina Lia Rosario, has Rett Syndrome and is severely intellectually impaired. We use nursing services because Santina is out of school during the summer and no longer attends camp.

I was apprehensive about having a nurse home alone with Santina. Images of potential problems popped into my head. Although Santina and I are very satisfied with her current nurses, I assure you Stephen King couldn’t have created scarier scenes than the ones I imagined!

Although most nurses are professional and reliable, I want to tell you a few of my stories about interviewing and working with nurses. As an advocate for people with mental retardation, I hope to share some good advice about how to “do your homework” when interviewing agencies and nurses to try to avoid some of the problems Santina and I have had.

The first nurse I interviewed seemed warm and professional. The first week on the job she said she had to leave early, asking when I could leave work. Then she called on Monday and said she “kind of” felt sick, and probably would be sick that Friday! After taking off Friday, she said she couldn’t work Mondays. When I asked about the other days, it was clear she couldn’t work much at all. I had no choice but to fire her.

This helped show the importance of asking in advance about which days will be difficult to work,

and if vacation time is coming. This is especially important to me as Santina only requires in-home nursing services in the summer. Also, even if the agency says there aren’t any “problem days,” or vacations, ask the nurse because sometimes I’ve been told one thing by the agency and another by the nurse. Depending on where they live, I think it’s necessary to have a car, rather than rely solely on public transportation, because arriving on time is so important.

The second nurse was dressed unprofessionally, in an outfit more suited for the beach. I introduced her to Santina, and asked if she’d like a drink. She said, “Like, do you have Pepsi? I don’t like anything diet and forget Coke, and very little ice.” I said to myself, “What, do I look like a restaurant?” To be polite I interviewed her, but knew I wouldn’t hire her. The ten minutes she was there she talked about food. I ended the interview to both Santina’s and my delight. She shouted a goodbye to my daughter, but called her “Chiquita.” Why me, I thought to myself ... no, why does anyone have to put up with unreliable and unprofessional nurses.

This made me think about what is important to me when choosing a nurse, beyond the required technical skills. A professional appearance is a must. To me, it shows the nurse is serious-minded about the job. A non-smoking nurse is important, as “smoke breaks” take attention away from my daughter. I need to know if the nurse is allergic to our cats. Phone calls should be kept to a minimum, and the TV shouldn’t be too loud.

The next interview went great! However, the week she worked was truly memorable. She came late, and her head was glued to her cell phone. I had to clean up after her, and the TV was so loud it was almost impossible to hear her when I called to check on Santina. On her last day, Santina’s shirt was completely wet from her juice. I asked about

Continued on Page 17

## **REPEATABLES**

These activities are marked on the calendar with an asterisk. Although the items have been checked, it is best to call before going.

### **Mondays**

- ☆ 1st Mon 6:30-9p Speaking for Ourselves, Vision for Equality, 6N 718 Arch, Bill Krebs, 267-257-0109
- ☆ 1st Mon 10:30a-12:30p Quality Progressions, 125 S. 9th, 5th fl, Susan Fellows, 267-765-2000 x110

### **Tuesdays**

- ☆ 2nd Tues 10a-12p That All May Worship (TAMW), Vision for Equality, 718 Arch St, 6N, 215-923-3349 x137
- ☆ 2nd Tues Hall-Mercer Parent/Caregivers Together, Lynn Youngman, 215-928-0765
- ☆ 2nd Tues Family Support Group NW, Verna Edwards, 215-248-4415

### **Wednesdays**

- ☆ 1st Wed Consumer/Family Advisory Committee, Partnership for Community Supports, Mary MacAvoy, 267-350-4513
- ☆ Every Wed. free legal advice and representation on general legal problems, Liberty Resources. Call for appt. 215-204-1800

### **Thursdays**

- ☆ 2nd Thurs 1:30p SEPTA Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation, 1234 Market St, 11th fl, 215-580-7145
- ☆ 2nd Thurs School District Parent & Community Roundtable at 2121 Winter St, 1st fl boardroom, 215-299-3634
- ☆ 3rd Thurs 9:30a-12p Phila Right to Education Task Force, The Arc, 2350 W. Westmoreland, Cathy Rocchia-Meier, 215-875-3538
- ☆ 4th Thursday There's a Place for Us (WES), Anita Wright, 215-763-0447

### **Fridays**

- ☆ Every Fri. 1-3p, Training on Accessing Public Transportation, Liberty Resources, for appt. call 215-204-1800, Debbie at x255
- ☆ 1st Fri 6-9p First Friday Gotta Dance at PDDC, 2350 W. Westmoreland St, Lisa Savaria, 215-229-4550 x172
- ☆ 1st & 3rd Fri 7-9p Easter Seals Teen Social Club, 3975 Conshohocken Ave, Kendra Brooks 610-565-2353 x 231
- ☆ 3rd Fri 1-3p Consumer Connection, Liberty Resources, 1341 N. Delaware Ave, 215-634-2000 x320

### **Saturdays**

- ☆ Every Sat Special Teens (13 and older) Bowling at Bristol Pike Lanes, Croydon, Ray Zibman, 215-671-0356
- ☆ 2nd Sat 1-4p Disabled In Action, American Friends Ctr., 1501 Cherry, 215-627-7255
- ☆ 3rd Sat 10-2:30p Super Saturdays, PDDC, 215-229-4550

## **Nursing Pearls**

Continued from Page 16

the soaked shirt. The nurse said, "Oh, I was about to change it, once I finish this call." That was the last straw. I told the agency I no longer wanted her to be Santina's nurse. After that, my mother stayed with Santina. I was lucky to have her help. I'm fortunate my employers are understanding. Other parents might lose their jobs. I think of the many people with no one to help them who still must find a way to go to work.

I've had my share of ordeals, but I must admit I've been pleased with the three nurses we have now. They arrive on time and conduct themselves professionally, and they're doing a wonderful job with Santina! I've looked in many oysters and finally found my pearls. As an advocate, I receive calls about nursing. It's difficult to depend on people to help you with your child. Nursing is a must for many of us; we need and deserve reliable, competent and caring nurses, and shouldn't settle for less. So, "do your homework," and the more likely you'll be to find your "nursing pearls."

Contact Lisa A. Padilla at 215-923-3349 x105.

### **You Choose PCHC Training Location**

Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care offers trainings for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities in the place of your choice: residential provider, day services, or community home. Here are just some of the available trainings:

- \* Aging
- \* Oral hygiene
- \* High blood pressure
- \* Illness/infection control
- \* Grief & loss
- \* Tips for medical appointments
- \* Hydration
- \* At the Hospital

To schedule a training, or to get more information about all the trainings, call PCHC at 215-546-0300, ext. 3602.

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November 8, 2006**



The 15th Anniversary of the  
Brighter Futures Awards will celebrate  
the past as we envision enjoying  
community life in the future!