



Community News

A Newsletter for Friends of WKS, Inc. ♦ March 2010

Spring Resurrection

Jane Perham
Chief Executive Officer

March has arrived, signifying that spring is only a few weeks away. The daylight will grow longer, the cold and snow will decrease over the next several weeks and allow the trees to begin to bud and the flowers to break through the ground and entertain us with lovely greenery and bountiful colors to joyfully greet us in April.

During this time period of reblossoming, RRI will continue to strive forward to obtain our home health care licensure in the state of New York allowing us to return to an important level of Home and Community Support Services (HCSS) under the TBI waiver. During the interim, we have downsized our New York operations by transitioning fifty plus participants to other agencies. The eighty plus employees who had been working with these folks for several years have been given the opportunity to transition to the newly assigned agency, participate in training and then continue to serve the folks that we are all very disheartened to see leave RRI. The HCSS model of service was our most significant provision level in NY and has forced a reduction of annualized revenue to decrease by some \$2.1 million. However, RRI's operations in New York will continue to provide Service Coordination, Independent Living Skills Training, Residential Habilitation, Respite and Day Program services and again offer Community Integrated Counseling.

We are confident that our home health care licensure will be obtained by late spring/early summer enabling us to rebuild our level of Home and Community Support Services in the Peru, Ballston Lake and Cobleskill areas. The

application process is long and arduous and requires many levels of processing and overview which takes a significant amount of time and patience on our part. Plans are currently in place for a strategically planned process of regrowth and development.

Also during this time period, we are continuing to look at various levels of potential reduction of overhead operating costs. These reductions will include long term office space leases, measurement of communication material and equipment necessities and restructuring of transportation goals.

We will continue to keep you apprised of changes as they occur. For now, it is important to recognize and be aware that business, as well as life, has its cycles which tend to work themselves out. Proof of that is that we are here today – right now - and moving forward to make an enormously positive difference in the lives of others and in our own lives. When it comes to change, we are often faced with the same choice – embrace or suffer. RRI shall embrace and endure.

Haiti Donations

Christina Fogarty, Office Admin.
Bow, NH

With the devastation of the earthquake in Haiti, The ladies (Carol Ann and Karin) and I have decided to start making kits that we can send over to Haiti to help out. If anyone would like to help us out you can donate travel size items (toothbrushes in packs, toothpaste, bars of soap, shampoos, facecloths, hand towels, Band-Aids, gallon Ziploc bags) things of that nature. Send everything to the Bow Office and we will assemble the kits and ship them out. It is our way of helping others when in need.

Movie Review: The Tooth Fairy

By Jeremy Stevens

Scarborough, ME

We All Make a Difference

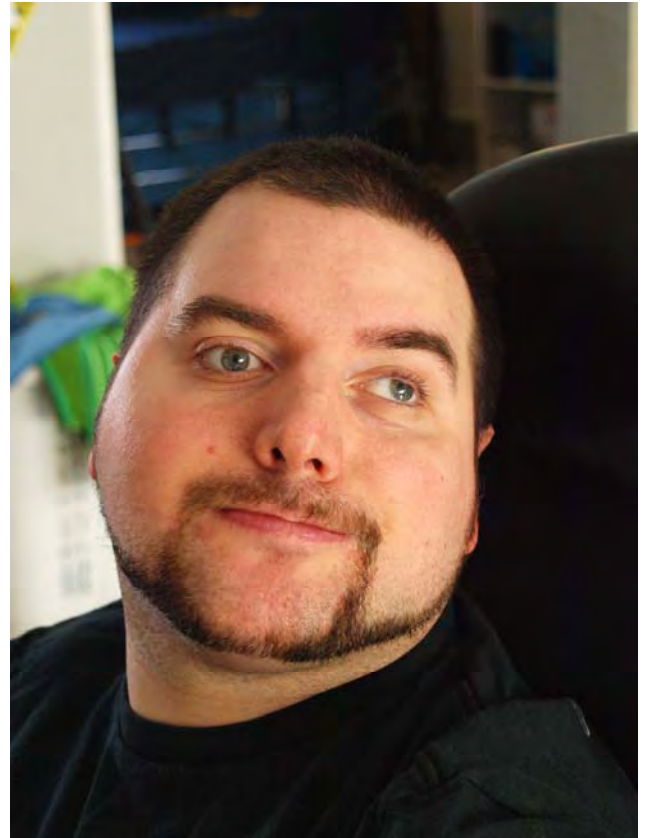
By JoAnn Dickenson, Residential Director

Cobleskill, NY

I was recently reading an article from the March monthly publication of Creative Forecasting. It reads as follows:

A man was walking along the beach. Far in the distance, he could see a stretch of beach where hundreds of starfish had washed upon the shore. As he got closer, he could see a young boy picking up the starfish one by one and throwing them back into the ocean. He stood and watched. He felt the futility of the boy's actions. There were so many starfish and only one boy trying to save them. He shook his head with frustration and walked closer to the boy and the hundreds of starfish. He again watched and finally, when he couldn't watch any longer, walked over to the boy and said, "Why are you doing that? There are hundreds of starfish and only one of you. What you are doing is impossible. You will never save them all, and besides, what difference does it really make?" The boy looked at the man, and as he picked up one starfish and threw it back into the ocean, he replied, "It made a difference to that one."
-Author Unknown

Working with people who have disabilities, injuries, or hardships brings security and hope to that person receiving services. Often progress is slow and may take years to show any results. But if we look at people on an individual basis, and keep our eye on the end result, we can all make a difference in that one person's life. If everyone in this world made a difference in just one person's life, the whole world would be a much better place. Thank you to all who work diligently to provide services to people with needs.



On February 9th I went to the movies to see "The Tooth Fairy". This movie is about a middle-aged man, Derek (Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson) who tears down the dreams of those around him because he believes that his dreams have faded. The whole movie is based around Derek telling his girlfriend's 6-year-old daughter that the tooth fairy isn't real, therefore getting summoned by the fairy godmother, Julie Andrews, to be an actual tooth fairy for a few weeks. At first Derek doesn't take the task seriously because he is so wrapped up in his own world, but once he does he learns how to believe again. I knew going into the movie that it was a comedy, but throughout the entire movie, I found myself laughing more and more. It was a good thing my staff and I had the whole theatre to ourselves!

This movie was rated PG and I would recommend that anyone over the age of six could watch it. It's a very predictable movie, but that can sometimes be comforting.

Out and About with Connie

By Richard Hebert, DSP
Emerald St., Keene, NH

Connie is a 70-year-old woman with disabilities, but that doesn't seem to slow her down. She is in a residential program with a host family who is very supportive and understanding. There is always something going on at home as this family has teens and younger children coming and going. There are also numerous grown members with their own children who visit regularly. Connie likes to talk about these children and grandchildren, their wholesomeness, their activities, and abilities. It's easy to tell that the interaction and surroundings are very important, rewarding, and pleasurable for Connie. Everyone in the household seems determined to provide Connie with the best care possible.

I work with Connie as a Direct Support Professional, and I find her to be friendly and outgoing. In our travels she draws a lot of smiles with her own and her eagerness to greet people warmly. She has a great sense of humor, and we become a duo when interacting with other staff. She loves to play along, with little jokes here and there.

Part of Connie's goal is to get exercise and be out in the community. She loves the dollar store, and we go once a week to pick up a few items. The store personnel know her well from the many trips and Connie's friendliness. Connie has some mobility problems but challenges herself to walk short distances without her walker. For longer distances she uses the walker, which she refers to as "The Batmobile".

Connie likes to help others, or at least volunteer me to help. She's like my volunteer coordinator. She shows concern for others by asking if there's anything they need. If they do need something, it is generally followed by something like, "noooo problem! Right Richard? We are always looking for things to do, right Richard?" And off we go on an errand. She particularly likes to help my mother who is disabled herself and remains shut-in most of the time. Connie says it's like charity work and she likes doing that. We often do her shopping or help out around the house. Connie likes to visit her, and

usually has lunch there so as to have a table and a place to eat her packed meal. While there she also spends a few minutes on a low impact, low stress exercise machine.

During the winter it's sometimes difficult to find things indoors in the community that Connie can participate in. But we try hard to mix in a lot of variety. We go shopping and visiting her friends, occasionally, we go out to eat or buy some take-out and have lunch with a friend. We've visited the Thorne Art Gallery at Keene State College and Connie enjoyed and was intrigued by much of what was on display there. The LifeArt Resource Center is also a place we visit, where she can partake of many structured and individual activities.

Connie wants to do and try many things. She's always game for a new adventure. But there are a couple of things Connie doesn't want that play out in a regular theme. She doesn't want to be confined to a wheel chair, this she says almost daily "like everyone tells me, If I don't use it I'll lose it" and that keeps her walking even if it's just around the house for exercise. The other thing Connie doesn't want is to move back to the city or into an elder apartment or home. She loves living in the country, on the farm, with horses, chickens and other animals.

Spring will be here soon and Connie will get out in nature to walk and see new things. She's always looking to see wild animals which is a treat for her.



Persevere

By Kevin R. Defayette, Regional Director
Peru, NY

Persevere – [per-se-ver] – *vi* to continue steadfastly, esp in face of discouragement. – *n* **perseve’rance**, act or state of persevering. – *adv* **perseve’ringly**. [Fr *perseverer* – L *perseverare* – *perseveres*, very strict – pfx *per*, very, *severus*, strict.]

Recently, the programs in New York State were presented with an opportunity. An opportunity to sharpen our teamwork skills while exercising our strength and perseverance.

As veterans in the human services field, we are no strangers to shifting gears in correspondence with on-going funding and regulatory changes...or as some would coin; revolutions. Recent modifications have had a profound impact on our structural landscape across the board as we were faced this time with a reduction of services, as opposed to a more typical change in services.

The transformation, although still in the works, has been strenuous for all involved. As one can imagine, a reduction of services naturally equates to a reduction in staff as well as global re-assignments and an immediate adaptation of what would be considered ‘the norm’. Accomplishing a viable and respective outcome in this case has necessitated extreme patience and understanding, true grit, a shift from conventional thinking, the spirit of cooperation and unwavering support for our mission. Once again, the administrative and field staff proved to hone all of those skills and more. A high note of acknowledgement must also go out to the individuals we serve who were effected by this recent complexity. Their fortitude has lent to a productive resolution to this transition.

Despite all of the adversity, we are constantly reassured by the support, guidance and expertise that we receive from each other as well as from the Corporate Team, Business Office and Human Resources. Together, we will continue to persevere as we move forward with our planning and continued shared vision. Thank you, everyone.

Helping Your Memory

By Stacey Lloyd, Residential Director
Ballston Lake, NY

Impaired memory is one of the universal problems of people with head injury. Whether your short-term or long-term memory is affected, here are a few strategies that you can use to help improve your memory.

Work with a Specialist in Memory--One of the most important things is to get help from people who specialize in head injury. Most head injury programs have a specialist who teaches memory strategies. There is often a fair amount of testing in order to figure out the best memory strategy for each head-injured person. For some people, one type of memory may be impaired (Verbal recall) but like another type may be intact (remembering visual information). Specialists can help you pick out the best memory strategies to help you. Once you find an effective strategy, keep working on it. Think of memory like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it gets.

Get Organized--We learn better if we are organized. After a head injury, though, the ability to organize gets really messed up. One symptom of not being organized is when someone says, *"I've started 50 projects and haven't finished one of them."* If you organize information, it tends to help you recall it. For example, if you are constantly losing your car keys or forgetting where you put your wallet, there's one simple technique to use. Put things in the same place. Always put your car keys in one spot on the dresser. Always put your purse in one spot in the house and nowhere else. Being organized helps your memory and you will be less likely to lose things.

Break It Down--Another thing that we can do to help memory is to break it into small bits. If you have something really tough to learn, try to break it down into smaller pieces and learn a little bit at a time. Some people call this "chunking"... you are memorizing little "chunks" of information. We've been using this technique for years to learn simple information like a phone number. Someone figured

out that people will learn a 7 digit phone number if you group 3 digits together and then group 4 digits together (a "chunk" of 3 numbers and a "chunk" of 4 numbers).

Get a Daily Planner--Probably one of the best things you can do to help your memory is to use a daily planner. For example, you go to your doctor's office and you are asked to return for another appointment. By the time you get back home, you've forgotten the date or lost the appointment card. Next time, bring a planner to the doctor's office and write your appointment in it just after the doctor tells you the date. Get a medium size planner or something called an organizer... just make sure it's large enough to write a complete note so you are able to read it later and remember.

Make A "To Do" List--In addition to a planner, make a "to do" list. For example, you may have a number of chores to do around the house but none of them in any particular order. What you can do is get a small pad of paper and write down the things that have to be done. Once you have this list, decide which task to do first, second, third, and so on. Cross off each item that you complete as you go.



A Dream Come True

Lisa D'Orsi, Program Supervisor
Hampstead, NH

It was merely a year ago when Sherrie Matarozzo was able to take advantage of the equity that her home of more than ten years had gained and refinance to allow for modifications. Sherrie was able to purchase her home through the “Home of Your Own” program and while it met the accessible standards, it did not suit her individual needs.

Sherrie was able to have her bathroom completely gutted and redone to meet her needs. She now has a pocket door allowing easy access from her bedroom and floor to ceiling tile in the entire bathroom.

She was also able to have all of her hardwood floors refinished.

Sherrie is very proud of accomplishing yet another dream. Sherrie’s staff has been working diligently to refresh and bring the rest of her home up to the standard of the remodel.

Her kitchen, once dull, dark, and very outdated, has recently seen fresh pale yellow paint on the walls and white paint on all of her cabinets.



While there are still several projects left to do, the changes thus far have renewed her sense of pride.



THANK YOU to everyone who contributes articles and pictures to the newsletter.

Articles are due by the second Friday of each month for the following month’s newsletter. The newsletter will be posted at www.ResResources.com on the fourth Friday of each month.

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of the newsletter mailed to you, please contact your local Residential Resources office to make arrangements.

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