



GREATER WALTHAM ARC NEWS

December 2008

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From the Chief Executive Officer, Roz Rubin



Dear Readers,

As the year comes to a close and we complete the Performance Analysis, a comprehensive report of GWARC's achievements, I have been reflecting on what this, my third year at GWARC, has meant to me, as well as to the agency. As I stated at the Annual Meeting in October, it is easy to speak to those achievements that are expected to be completed annually – consumer goals, high stakeholder satisfaction, improved staff trainings and employee benefits, and a balanced budget. Add to this list such successes as high community visibility and respect, our annual events, increase in number served, and new friends of GWARC, and you can sum up this, our 52nd year of service.

The value of my efforts is in going beyond the expected, no matter how difficult to achieve, and seeking the additional accomplishments that we realized this year. And GWARC did "go beyond", and there are many ways in each department that we were able to do so.

On our website, www.gwarc.org, we have condensed a year's worth of "Additional Accomplishments" for calendar year 2008. As you read through this, keep in mind that they were achieved through skill, energy and determination of each and every GWARC staff member. Financial limitations and space considerations, and at times, staffing shortages, did not keep us from tallying up an impressive list of "extras" for the past year. These extras now become expectations for the coming year. Now we begin a new year and reach higher again to improve services to GWARC consumers and their families/guardians. I can't wait to keep reporting on the innovations and improvements as 2009 goes on.

Yet, the best parts of my past year were the times I was able to spend with consumers – making pasta at Woodland Road with Plus Program members, doing a lesson on weekly grocery shopping with the Group Supported Employment consumers during summer break, reviewing the Accessibility Plan with Day Education consumers, dishing up gummy worm green desserts on Halloween, and having dinner with the participants at the Family Support overnight program. While there is pride for all of us in another great year at GWARC, the real memories of these times will endure as I join our staff to keep aiming for excellence at our agency.

Best wishes for a wonderful holiday season and a Happy 2009.

Regards,

Roslynn Rubin, Ed.D



Inside This Issue...

- 2 From the Board President
- 3 Fall Wrap-up
- 4 Day Education
- 4 Recreation
- 5 EPT, Family Support
- 6 Get to Know GWARC
- 7 From Retiring CFO





From the President of the Board

From the GWARC Board President, Bob Francis



It was a proud evening on October 27 when the Board members and I attended the GWARC Annual Meeting. Among the many highlights of the evening, noted on the next page, was a surprise announcement about grant funding involving two community agencies which partner with GWARC. In January, planning will begin for training in disabilities for staff at the Waltham Boys & Girls Club and Waltham YMCA. The trainings will be funded by a grant from Boston Scientific and matched with funds from GWARC's Wheels of Happiness donation, given in 2005. The former Wheels board agreed that this project was worthwhile.

The trainings will include overview of Autism Spectrum Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder, and other intellectual and developmental disabilities. The already skilled recreation staff at both locations will have increased

knowledge about the frequency, challenges, and adaptations that can be made to support children in the recreation setting. The goal – success and fun for all who participate in activities at the YMCA and Boys & Girls Club. Trainings will have written materials and be filmed for ongoing new staff coming into these two agencies. Outside resources will be hired to conduct the trainings.

The efforts to receive funding for these ongoing trainings has taken two years. GWARC is grateful to the former Wheels of Happiness for their significant donation. We especially thank once more Boston Scientific, who, for the fourth year in a row have said "yes" to our ideas. The community can look forward to increased opportunities for all children to enjoy Waltham's recreation services.

Bob Francis

Bob Francis

Here is BIS Mail Services....

BIS Mail Services, our agency owned and operated business, employs approximately 25 skilled workers who complete tasks ranging from folding, collating, stapling, labeling, packaging, and sorting. Quality is assured with our Case Managers trained in completing jobs, adapting the environment to assure success by employees, and tracking production of the jobs. With many repeat customers and new ones arriving weekly, BIS is the place our consumers know will keep them employed and give them a weekly paycheck. The customer base is over 30 repeat satisfied businesses, and through the efforts of Cherri Perez, BIS Marketing and Production Coordinator, more work is coming in...

An example of a new job that BIS Mail completed in November was the packaging of felt tip pens. The pens, numbering 6,170 total, were packaged into bands of 10 and 51 cases were shipped via FEDEX to a customer. BIS Mail and Plus consumers completed this task accurately and on time – in three days.

And, a reliable repeat BIS Mail customer sent employees 28,000 scratch art stylus sticks to pack into 12 piece bags. Ninety-seven cartons went out the door, and, once again, on time.

(By the way, if you are reading a hard copy of this newsletter, BIS folded, stapled, added the insert, sealed and labeled your newsletter, too.)

Consider BIS for your mailing needs, see our web site www.bismailing.com and MOST importantly, let others know that BIS Mail lives up to our motto - "Doing What You Don't Have Time For".



Fall Wrap-up

October was a great month with a lot of community activities for GWARC. On October 4th the Recreation Department held the Second Annual Bounce a thon to raise money for programming. Held at the McDevitt Middle School, thanks to the generosity of the Waltham Schools, many athletes bounced basketballs (and shot a few hoops) to complete their pledge sheets and bring over \$2,500 in donations to GWARC.

On October 19, GWARC held its 38th Annual Harvest Breakfast, a good time for 450 people from the Waltham and surrounding communities. Thanks again to the generosity of Doubletree Guest Suites Hotel (their seventh year as our hosts) the beautiful ballroom and Hastings Room were filled to capacity with our friends enjoying a buffet breakfast, disc jockey, line dancing, balloon animals, face painting, and more. We were pleased this year that many consumers, families, and staff were able to attend thanks to the donated-back tickets purchased by others. We love Harvest Breakfast.

A double header – October 27 found us all at the Doubletree again for a Retirement Dinner for CFO Bob Donoghue, followed by GWARC’s Annual Meeting. After the dinner, poems, tributes, and songs, Bob spoke about his 12 years at GWARC, and it was a bittersweet event for those who have known and respected Bob over these years. Annual Meeting brought presentation of Community Awards, an unexpected grant announcement by the CEO, and a real surprise of the evening as Bob was nominated and voted in as an Honorary Trustee of GWARC. After all this, it would take only the greatest of keynote speakers to cap off the evening – we had that in Bob Johnson, President and CEO of Special Olympics Massachusetts. His message was inspiring, as he spoke about the vision of the Healthy Athletes Program in conjunction with UMass Medical School and showed a drawing of the new state headquarters and training center, now being built in Marlboro, MA. What a great night for those being honored and all of us who came to salute them.

As the year came to a close, a new friend of GWARC has come forward – Extech Instruments, Waltham. Extech has pledged a generous donation to our agency and will be visiting this winter to learn more about GWARC. We thank them for their support and salute them as a community business with ties to GWARC.



Bob Donoghue Retirement Dinner



Bob Donoghue is named GWARC Honorary Trustee



Bob Johnson, President & CEO of Special Olympics Massachusetts showing proposed new SOMA Headquarters, Marlborough, MA



Day Education News

From the Director of Day Education, Eileen Nee

Day Education headed into Fall, 2008 with a full agenda of activities, celebrations, community trips and preparations for upcoming site reviews and audits. The consumers and staff occupied their days preparing crafts for GWARC's Annual Harvest Breakfast. Some of the new items made and sold this year were wreaths, butterfly air fresheners, candle tins, pressed flower candles, and trinket boxes. The items sold like hot cakes and production continues for successful availability for holidays. Crafts are still available at GWARC, 56 Chestnut Street.

It wouldn't be the end of the year unless Day Education celebrated the Holidays with a bang. Halloween seems to bring out the fun and creative side of everyone. Not a lot of costumes were worn, but the artistic snacks were amazing. GWARC consumers all enjoyed jell-o with worms, a brownie graveyard and pumpkin cookies made from fresh pumpkins. The entire Day Education Program celebrated Thanksgiving Dinner together again this year when CEO, Roz Rubin, and COO, Liam Mansfield, hosted dinner. They spent the entire morning preparing mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy and turkey for all to enjoy.

Day Education wrapped up 2008 with site reviews for Mass Health and DMR Survey and Certification. Mass Health reviewed files, toured the facility, observed programming and reviewed all nursing policies and procedures. DMR's survey included interviews with consumers, staff, guardians, and observation of staff and consumers in Day Education, EPT, and at community work sites. As we go to press, we anticipate the results of these surveys to be not only positive, but constructive to us in continuing quality programs. All of us at Day Education hope your holidays and new year will be happy and healthy.



Recreation & Volunteers

From Recreation Manager & Volunteer Coordinator, Heidi Barberio

The Recreation Department has been very busy this season. We started a new P.A.L. Swim program in conjunction with the Waltham Boys and Girls Club. Each pre-school child who enrolled was matched with a swim partner. This program was a huge success. Our second session for children ages 6 and up, began in November. We would like to thank the Boys and Girls Club for starting this new venture with us and hope that it continues.

We held several children's programs with the Waltham Recreation Dept. Our partnership with them is a vital component to our children's programs. Friday Night Fever, our most popular program, and Just Kick It, a soccer program are just two of the successful programs run this fall.

Our second annual Bounce-a-thon was a big success again raising just over \$2,500 for the Recreation Department. Our sincere appreciation to all of the bouncers who made this day a success. A special thanks to Adam Maher who raised a very large sum. Thank you, Adam, great job !

Our Adolescent and Adult programs filled up quickly. Some of the programs that we held were Music Therapy, Bingo/Pizza Night, Ladies Afternoon Out, and Arts & Crafts, just to name a few. We are still supporting the Mall Mania Program at McDevitt Middle School two days a week. We look forward to many new programs in the winter months. The Recreation Department received a donation from the Harmonix Music Systems, Inc.- the video game "Rockband" along with the guitar and drums to play the game. The department will be having a Video Game Night in the winter. Thank you to Harmonix.

The next Recreation Brochure will be out at the beginning of December. Please check us out online in the Recreation dropdown of our web site at www.gwarc.org



Employment, Plus & Transitions

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

EPT welcomes four new staff to our team. Stanley Soko-Samba, Case Manager, Dino Bastianelli and Krystle Shea, Site Supervisors joined the GWARC team starting in early September. Meredith Clemons, Site Supervisor joined GWARC in December. We are certain the new additions will enhance our programs.

The EPT Program began the fall in "Little Italy". It all began one beautiful fall morning. CEO Roz Rubin was head chef as she led the staff and consumers in the PLUS program in preparing a huge Italian feast. It was definitely a sight to see. As the fresh pasta was being cranked out of the machine and waiting to be cooked, meatballs were simmering in a whopping pan full of homemade sauce, and a salad was being tossed on the side. The smell of homemade bread spreading throughout the entire building brought everyone together for some fine Italian dining.

What a better way to close out the fall and welcome winter than with a big Thanksgiving dinner shared by all. EPT once again celebrated the big day with a delicious turkey, steaming mashed potatoes, and an array of fresh vegetables. Oh, and don't forget the traditional cranberry sauce. A wonderful meal prepared by all was thoroughly enjoyed as everyone shared what they were thankful for this year.

EPT is now ready to settle in for a winter full of new adventures and holiday celebrations! GSE employees will be returning to the Sovereign Bank, Waltham for Semester Break Program while the college sites are closed for the holidays. BIS Mail is gearing up to assist GWARC in Annual Appeal mailings and GWARC brochure production. And, probably about the time you are reading this, we will all have fond memories of the GWARC Consumer and Staff Holiday Party, to be held on December 12.

From all of us at Woodland Road, a Happy 2009. We all look forward to seeing you all soon!!



Family Support

From the Family Support Manager, Anna Thorpe

GWARC's Family Support Department has a full calendar with many activities already held and more being planned. GWARC consumers and their families are checking out the Events Calendar on our website or have been placed on an email group list to ensure they don't miss out on upcoming events. If you would like routine contact on what's happening in Family Support and around the area, ask Anna Thorpe to add you to her growing email contact list.

It's for sure that plenty of different events have taken place. Parents/guardians have participated in two types of support groups and attended three speaker series sessions. The session topics were transitioning from school to community, community inclusion, and special needs trusts. Also, in September, a group of adult consumers enjoyed an overnight trip where they visited historical sites in Sudbury, Lexington and Concord. In November, a group of children and their families were amazed by Bonaparte, a fabulous magician, who performed trick after trick after trick. And the year isn't even over yet!

Our support resources are also ever changing. Do you need information on guardianship or the grief/loss process for persons with developmental disabilities? If so, come to GWARC at 56 Chestnut Street. Books on these topics as well as other topics have been added to the Resource Center collection. Check out the full collection on-line or by stopping in. If in the Resource Center, take a moment to flip through the updated *Resource and Benefits Manual*. You may, also, access updated Disability Related Resource and Advocacy Listings on-line. See the Events Calendar for upcoming Speaker Series Events.



Get to Know GWARC

Get to know GWARC...Computer & Technology Security

(Editor's note – this column appears in each newsletter to help our readers understand more about the agency beyond the services to the consumers and their families/guardians.)

Protecting the Confidentiality of Consumer Information

We live in a time of constantly changing technology, and this presents issues regarding the effective protection of information held in computers. Here at GWARC, we take these concerns very seriously. We have several safeguards in place to prevent anyone from inappropriately accessing data stored on the computer.

- Access to specific computer files which contain personal information about consumers or others is limited to those employees who have a need for this information. No Board members, Corporate members, volunteers or interns have computer access.
- At the time of hire, all employees are trained in privacy standards required under the 2003 federal law known as HIPPA.
- HIPPA-protected information is never sent electronically by GWARC.
- Complex computer passwords are assigned to employees, and closely guarded. This makes it extremely difficult to “hack” into GWARC’s computer network.
- The agency’s computer network is protected by an internet firewall.
- We have anti-spyware and anti-virus software to prevent the unintentional downloading of destructive software to GWARC’s network.
- Computer files are backed up daily to an off-site location.
- The agency has a computer consultant whose duties include keeping apprised of possible threats to computer privacy, and recommending strategies for minimizing those threats.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve our consumers, and we consider the protection of consumer privacy to be a basic part of that service. As GWARC updates and utilizes computer technology increasingly for all our data, we continue to explore and upgrade methods to maintain secure information storage and transmittal.



Family Support *(continued)*

Calendar of Events

January 22	State Benefits for Children Under 18 Years of Age 7-9pm—Lexington High School’s Media Room 251 Waltham Street, Lexington, MA Snow Date: January 29
February 26	Social Security Benefits 7-9pm—GWARC 56 Chestnut Street, Waltham, MA
April 30	Housing and Residential Options 7-9pm—Save the date—More details to follow

Check the Events Calendar on our website for details



From Retiring CFO

To the GWARC Family from Robert Donoghue -

As you read this article, I will have retired after twelve years as GWARC's Chief Financial Officer.

This was a position I loved and it afforded me the opportunity to do everything possible to improve the daily lives of GWARC Consumers and Staff. While this was a challenging period and we rejoiced over our successes, we also agonized over our failures while constantly searching for ways to do more. I believe we accomplished much, but much is left to accomplish. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at GWARC, Consumers, Families, Staff, Business Associates and past and present Board members for their support during this time. It will now become the responsibility of my successor to continue assisting GWARC Consumers and Staff as they strive to improve their daily lives.

Prior to the Annual Meeting, I was honored with a retirement dinner. It was a fun filled evening attended by Family, Friends, Staff, Business Associates and Board members. I appreciate the kind comments expressed at the dinner and thoroughly enjoyed a classy roast by my peers.

During the Annual Meeting, I was voted an Honorary Trustee of GWARC. Words cannot express my gratitude for this award. To be recognized by GWARC and join the individuals who founded the Agency and be accepted into the Waltham community is a humbling experience. As I said at the Annual Meeting, Thank You seems so inadequate; however, I cannot find the words to further express my sincere appreciation and thanks. It is an honor I'll cherish for the rest of my life.

In retirement, I cannot simply walk away from GWARC. Hopefully, I'll see many of you at future GWARC events and I'll always be available to assist in anyway I'm needed. I wish GWARC and all members of the GWARC Family the best in the coming years and would like to thank everyone for a great twelve years.



Additional Fall Photos



Lunch at Colonial Inn, Elaine Griffin, Annalia Aviza & Ken McCoy at overnight event.



The Lexington Concord Trolley Tour at the overnight event.



Lunch at Colonial Inn, Brian Horrigan & Brian Delaney overnight event.

HELPFUL GWARC CONTACT INFORMATION

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MEMORIAL/HONOR GIVING PROGRAM

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

Please make check payable to:

GWARC, 56 Chestnut Street, Waltham, MA 02453

Help GWARC GO **GREEN** and help GWARC save money, too.

If you are reading a hard copy of this newsletter, you should consider "converting" to an electronically received copy – you will receive an email with the link to click and view our email on your computer. The GWARC email is published 3 times a year, so you won't have excess emails from us, just the newsletter.

Currently, we print over 800 paper copies of the newsletter, at a cost of over \$1,000. Our goal is to decrease this number by half before the Spring 2009 newsletter goes to press.

So consider doing GWARC and the forest a favor. To help us go green, send your email address to gwarc@gwarc.org or call Mary Good at 781-899-1344 #4101

Thanks for your support!



GWARC is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt agency organized under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

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