



# GREATER WALTHAM ARC NEWS

September 2008

*Published by the Greater Waltham Arc, an affiliate of the Arc of the United States and Arc Massachusetts*

## From the Chief Executive Officer, Roz Rubin Dear Readers,



It seems as though only a short time ago I was writing last fall's newsletter article, letting you know that our summer was filled with many activities to complete the last fiscal year and begin a new one. Here we are again, starting Strategic Plan '09, Accessibility Plan, annual audit, Performance Analysis '08 and the many other procedures which document our past success. Additionally, we are preparing for our bi-annual DMR Survey and Certification in November, a full review of our programs and services, internal systems, policies and procedures. We look forward to this review by our main funding source as an opportunity to highlight our work, receive feedback about our services, and hear how other agencies provide quality services in these challenging economic times. We expect to excel, as we have always done, and will report back to you on our website and in the next newsletter.

I would like to address briefly but directly an issue which consumers, family/guardians, and other stakeholders are well aware of — the many changes in staffing in the last six months. GWARC has experienced significant staff turnover attributed to a variety of causes. For many of our younger staff, GWARC is a good place to begin work experience in the disability field. Many of them leave GWARC to take positions of more responsibility or further their education. GWARC has been impacted by fuel costs, and though they were predicted, they have proven for some to be too significant to continue commuting to our location. Some staff have relocated out of the area (again related to the cost of living) and some are leaving the disability field. Even as we are grateful for the service that staff are giving us, we recognize that continuity of staffing is critical to consumers' quality of life and progress in programs. We have endeavored for the past year to raise salary levels, research and implement the best possible employee benefits and increase in-house training and attendance at statewide conferences. We continue to keep lines of communication open with all staff, so that concerns, ideas for program improvement, and requests for additional materials and equipment may be met. A survey of other Arcs and similar providers has shown that we exceed some employee benefits, particularly in salaries, annual step increases, tuition reimbursement, and pensions. We will continue to do all of the above and more while challenged by an under-funded budget, living expenses in our geographic area, and a workforce with changing focuses.

We offer to all perspective employees and our current workforce the opportunity to work with a great group of consumers, co-workers and a community that recognizes and respects GWARC. I thank all GWARC employees again for their loyalty, skill, compassion, and energy on a daily basis.

You will find this newsletter packed with information and enclosures about upcoming GWARC events. We hope to see you at our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bounce-a-thon to benefit the Recreation Department, 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Breakfast, and GWARC's Annual Meeting. Your presence at these events shows your support of our agency, so important as we go forward in our service to our consumers and their families. I look forward to seeing you at these events.

Regards,

Roslynn Rubin, Ed.D



### Inside This Issue...

*Look for inserts for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bounce-a-thon, 38<sup>th</sup> Harvest Breakfast, & 2008 Annual Meeting.*

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# From the President of the Board

## From the GWARC Board President, Bob Francis



By the time you receive this newsletter, Harvest Breakfast will be around the corner! If you were to walk through GWARC then, you would see the sandwich boards that we place on Main Street and Piety Corner leaning against the wall and a pile of envelopes with requests for tickets on the Administrative Assistant's desk.

GWARC's Board and staff work in tandem to present this 38-year-old celebration to the greater Waltham community. As you thumb through the ads in our ad book, please make a mental note to thank the individuals and businesses who placed ads or left messages on the message board in the book.

Their generosity continues to help us raise much-needed funds for our ongoing services and programs. I hope we'll see you at the DoubleTree on Sunday, October 19 for this year's breakfast.

Have you visited our website at [www.gwarc.org](http://www.gwarc.org)?

Sandra Nall, Director of Marketing and Development, manages the website and reports that from July through August of this year:

- **612** people visited the website, and of that number, 440 were first visits (71.8%)
- **2,536** pages were viewed (Events, Family Support, Recreation Schedule, etc.)
- **4** pages were viewed per visitor (average)
- **3** minutes per visit was the average length of time visitors spent on our website

We experienced a **24%** increase in web visits and a **33%** increase in first time visits since we launched the website in November 2007. Harvest Breakfast, our Annual Meeting, fundraising appeals, and increased visibility in the greater Waltham community account for some of this increase. We hope that greater interest in developmental disabilities in general accounts for some of the increase as well.

As always, I want to thank our consumers and staff members for their cheerful goodwill and hard work, and our friends, volunteers, and families for their loyalty and support. We're a stronger organization because of all of you.

See you at Harvest Breakfast in October!

Bob Francis

**CELEBRATE WITH GWARC AT OUR 38<sup>th</sup>  
ANNUAL HARVEST BREAKFAST  
at the DoubleTree!**

**Sunday, October 19, 2008**

Bountiful Buffet Breakfast  
Music by KBD Entertainment  
Line Dancing with Marilyn Lefort  
Balloons by Rami Salami  
Magician Matt Roberts  
Face Painting by Lady Jane  
Great Door Prizes



# Happenings & Events



Special Olympic swimmers from Woodland Road (left to right) Brian Delaney, David Letellier, Brian Horrigan, and Susan Bailey take a break from competition to pose for a snapshot.

GWARC consumers, volunteers, and staff spent a busy summer planting our gardens on Woodland Road and Chestnut Street, getting cars washed at the DoubleTree, competing at the Special Olympics at Harvard University's Blodgett Pool, and continuing their summer skills training at the Sovereign Bank in Waltham.



UPS volunteers from Norwood came to Chestnut Street and Woodland Road to prepare our gardens and refinish a picnic table. UPS, you rock (and weed and sow)!

The generosity of A.J. Russo's in Wattertown, and Pizzi Farm in Waltham, and the Wagon Wheel in Lexington made it possible for our consumers to plant vegetables and flowers for our gardens.

We enthusiastically thank the terrific volunteers at UPS for preparing our gardens and refinishing the picnic table on Chestnut Street.

Thanks to the DoubleTree Guest Suites in Waltham for hosting another terrific car wash this past June. We also thank our friends in the greater Waltham community who brought their cars to be washed, resulting in over \$500 for a day's work that was donated to GWARC.

Sovereign Bank generously offered beautiful, accessible space for GWARC consumers who are employed at Brandeis University and Bentley and Lasell Colleges during the summer when campuses were closed.

Please join us in thanking these local businesses for their generosity, good will, and neighborly support.



Helping hands tend the marigolds in newly-tilled soil.



Woodland Road consumers (l-r in the foreground) Patti F., Harry Nicolazzo, and Mark Leblanc a break in the shade while their car is being washed. GWARC Site Supervisor Jennifer Norvilus joins them.



GWARC consumers Sheila Hernández, Joe O'Connell, Kristina Smith, Stephen Scaparrotti and Barbara Gionis speak with a photographer from the Waltham Daily News Tribune after a banking unit at Sovereign Bank in Waltham.



Employees at the DoubleTree Guest Suites in Waltham donated their time to hold a car wash on GWARC's behalf this summer. Thank you, Doubletree!



A squash blossom with a promising future at Chestnut Street. Check out our gardens in the Photo Gallery on our website, [www.gwarc.org](http://www.gwarc.org).



# Day Education News

## From the Director of Day Education, Eileen Nee

Day Ed consumers and staff began the summer of 2008 *on the road!* Our first trip was to Sunshine Farm in Sherborn where we picked our own strawberries to make a variety of treats when we returned. We made strawberry shortcakes, strawberry smoothies and strawberry jam.

Another outing we enjoyed was to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. We visited The Glass Flower Gallery, where over 3,000 flower models are displayed. The models, made entirely from glass, were manufactured from 1887 through 1936. What an amazing, beautiful display!

Day Education welcomes two more staff members to our team, Roxanne Butler, Developmental Disabilities Specialist and Christa Bartkovich, RN, Coordinator of Health Services. Roxanne and Christa both joined the GWARC staff in June 2008. We look forward to the experience they both bring to the team.

We will wrap up the summer with a few fun and exciting events. A Hawaiian Luau and a Back Yard Barbeque are planned for the end of August, along with an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for a member of our Day Habilitation Program. And as always, we are continually engaged in preparations for Harvest Breakfast and the Holiday Season.



Day Ed consumer Olympia Marciello instructs GWARC's Top Chefs in preparing strawberry shortcakes after a trip to Sunshine Farm in Sherborn.



# Recreation & Volunteers

## From Recreation Manager & Volunteer Coordinator, Heidi Barberio



Who is this GWARC athlete swimming to the finish at the Special Olympics?

From Special Olympics to Summer Camp, GWARC consumers, families, and friends took advantage of a beautiful summer to enjoy working as a team, play games, learn new crafts, and take time off from work and school.

Please join me in congratulating Special Olympic swimmers Austen Abele-Castro, Brian Horrigan, David Letellier, Ken McCoy, Maryanne Monette, and Joe O'Connell! Diligent practice paid off as they successfully participated in the swim competition at Harvard University in June. I want to thank the terrific volunteers who helped with Special Olympics: Annalia Aviza, Alyssa Navarro, Kevin O'Brien, Pam and Chandra Pen-ton, and Christine and Sylvie Priez. Thanks, too, to Brandeis University for letting us use the pool to practice for the Special Olympics, and a special "thank you" goes to

Robin Seidman and Jim Zotz at Brandeis.

Summer camp was a wild success! GWARC had campers at three locations in Waltham: the YMCA, Prospect Hill, and Bright School. Our campers enjoyed swimming, sports, arts and crafts, and archery. According to campers, the summer passed too fast!

And no summer would be complete without a dance at the Moose Lodge in Waltham. Our favorite disc jockey, Ken Doucette of KBD Entertainment kept us on the dance floor when we weren't eating the 50 pizzas that arrived! (Dancing is hard work, you know.)



Kevin & Aaron pose for the camera during arts and crafts at Bright School during Summer camp.



## Employment, Plus & Transitions and BIS Mailing Services

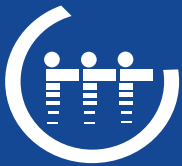
From the Director of Employment, PLUS & Transitions, Mary Anne O'Brien

The Summer of 2008 was a busy one for the EPT Program! The summer began with GWARC having the opportunity and pleasure to host a week long Career Camp. The goal was for high school students to have the opportunity to learn about career interest and job opportunities and to gain job development skills through a comprehensive curriculum including community involvement. Eight students from Waltham, Belmont, and Cambridge enjoyed a full week of activities. When they were not touring City Hall or the DoubleTree Hotel, they were developing resumes, filling out job applications, and holding mock interviews. The week ended with a surprise! Each student received a certificate and a gift card.

The Semester Break Program was fortunate enough to have the perfect location this summer! The Sovereign Bank on Moody Street in Waltham donated beautiful, accessible space as well as a lesson on banking. Our consumers had the opportunity to work on skills training and become better acquainted with Waltham through occasional jaunts to the many places and business of interest in the city.

On July 25 EPT had our annual summer cookout at Lake Cochituate. Consumers enjoyed a beautiful relaxing day. We had hamburgers and hotdogs prepared by Laim Mansfield, Chief Operating Officer. While some of us enjoyed the cool water, others played games or simply enjoyed the company of good friends.

EPT held a memorial on July 30 for Jeff Doucette, a GWARC consumer who passed away earlier in the year. Many consumers had the opportunity to share a memory or two before they went outside to see the new picnic area and the plaque that is displayed in Jeff's memory.



## Family Support

From the Family Support Manager, Anna Thorpe

As I approach my first anniversary at GWARC on September 24<sup>th</sup>, I am delighted to have met so many GWARC consumers and family members during her first year with the agency, and hope to meet many more at upcoming events. Many Family Support activities have been planned over the coming months. Make sure you check the newsletter events calendar for details.

The Family Support Department wants to ensure that families are "in the know," and formed the following e-mail groups just for that purpose:

- a group that provides information about GWARC and other agency programs/services, pending legislation and other topics of interest;
- a group for parents of children on the Autism Spectrum; and
- a group for parents of adolescents.

Please notify Anna at [athorpe@gwarc.org](mailto:athorpe@gwarc.org) if you want to be added to one or more groups.

**News flash:** the Resource Center Directory is now on-line on our Home Page! Check it out at [www.gwarc.org](http://www.gwarc.org) today. You won't believe how many items are available to you.



# Inside GwARC

## Calendar of Events

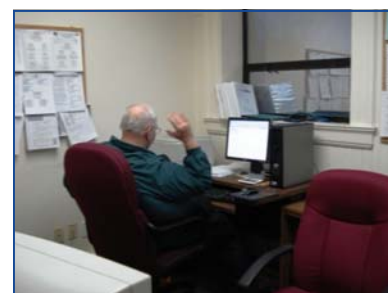
Check the Events Calendar on our website for details

September 17	<b>Parent to Parent Support Group</b> for parents of adolescent children
September 25	<b>Family Support Speaker Series</b> begins with "Transition from High School"
October 4	<b>GWARC's 2nd Annual Bounce-a-thon</b> at McDevitt Middle School
October 19	<b>Our 38th Annual Harvest Breakfast</b> at the DoubleTree Suites
October 23	<b>Family Support Speaker Series continues</b> with "Adding Spice to Life"
October 27	<b>Annual Meeting</b> at the DoubleTree Suites
October 29	<b>Parent to Parent Support Group</b> for parents of adolescent children
November 20	<b>Family Support Speaker Series continues</b> with "Special Needs Planning"
December 3	<b>Parent to Parent Support Group</b> for parents of adolescent children

## GWARC Staff Updates

### A Farewell Salute to our Chief Financial Officer

At the end of November, Bob Donoghue, our CFO, will retire. Bob came to GWARC in October, 1996 as a temp employee! As head of Finance and Administration, he has led the agency in sound fiscal practices which have allowed GWARC to grow and improve. Overseeing GWARC investments, facilities, risk management, technology and employee benefits are only a few of the many parts of this position. There is no question that GWARC's sound reputation and respect from funding sources, GWARC staff, and community members is due in large part to Bob's contributions. The foundation of Bob's work has been his commitment to consistent and compassionate care of our consumers and the best possible employee benefits GWARC can offer. We thank you, Bob, for many years of service with integrity to our agency.



Busy watching over our finances, CFO Bob Donoghue waves at the camera.

As we welcome John Wiswall, Assistant CFO, into the position of CFO, we wish Bob Donoghue our best for the future. Bob will be honored at a staff dinner and GWARC's Annual Meeting, October 27. He has our thanks and admiration for a job well done for GWARC.

### Other Staff News

- Daisy Antonini, GWARC's Transitions Program Manager, gave birth to her daughter, Isabella Grace. Congratulations to Daisy and her family.
- We are happy to welcome our new staff:  
Christa Bartkovich, RN, Coordinator of Health Services  
Roxanne Butler, Case Manager  
Roberta Hirshson, RN, Woodland Road  
Jenna Lundquist, Case Manager  
Jeffrey Smarse, Site Supervisor, Bentley College



# Get Know GWARC

## Get to know GWARC...Governance and Committee Structure

*[Editor's note – this column appears in each newsletter to help our readers understand the structure of the agency beyond our services to consumers and their families/guardians.]*

The GWARC Board of Directors is the governing body of the agency. There are 15 Board members and each serves, with other stakeholders, on Standing Committees, which meet at least quarterly. These committees are named and described in the GWARC by-laws, available for review at our sites. The Standing Committees are:

- **Human Rights** – Perhaps the most important committee of any human service provider agency, this group meets to review consumer behavioral plans, written by consumers and their teams who sign off on the plans annually or agree to end them. The group also reviews quarterly the number of DMR reportable incidents. (Additionally, the committee reviews annually the policy and procedure on human rights, makes site visits to our two locations, and attends conferences and trainings on human rights. This group must have as members a lawyer, psychologist, nurse, family members, consumers, and the Human Rights officers for each site.
- **Facilities and Safety Committee** – This group oversees preventative management of the buildings, safety and public health issues, building inspections, and emergency procedures. Additionally, they forecast and plan building improvements in conjunction with budget planning.
- **Program Advisory Committee**- The committee reviews the upcoming year's Strategic Plan and Accessibility Plan annually and mid-year and is updated on changes in programming, staffing, and trainings. This group has Program Directors, consumers, family/guardian members and other stakeholders as its members.
- **Nominating Committee** – This group is responsible for recruiting new Corporate and Board of Directors members and referring other community members to the CEO and Director of Marketing and Development to increase the number of people interested in supporting GWARC.
- **Friends of GWARC** – The Friends has traditionally been a group of interested persons who wish to assist the agency directly in fundraising, at annual events such as Harvest Breakfast, and with plans for the Annual Appeal, and in the future a Capital Campaign. The group always seeks new members from the community, especially people who may have additional connections for GWARC. The group is chaired by Sandra Nall, our Director of Marketing and Development.
- **Administration Committee** – The Board President, Vice President and Treasurer of the board comprise this committee, and are joined by the CFO, Assistant CFO and CEO as well as other long time associates of GWARC to review the agency finances, including investments and long range forecasting.

Though not in the bylaws, GWARC established a **Computer Advisory Committee** two years ago. Led by our CFO and computer consultant and with staff input, the committee reviews and monitors GWARC's technology needs.

The above committees provide support to the agency, stakeholder input, and, most importantly, oversight of the critical aspects of GWARC's structure.

## HELPFUL GWARC CONTACT INFORMATION

### GWARC

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### DAY EDUCATION

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### FAMILY SUPPORT

Anna Thorpe            athorpe@gwarc.org            ext. 4120

### RECREATION

Heidi Barberio            hbarberio@gwarc.org            ext. 4145

### EMPLOYMENT, PLUS & TRANSITIONS

Tel: 781-899-2206    TDD: 781-899-4710  
Fax: 781-736-0714

Mary Anne O'Brien    mobrien@gwarc.org    ext. 222  
Cherri Perez            BISMAL@gwarc.org    ext. 225

### BIS Mailing Services

**(FAX) 781-736-0714            V/TDD 781-899-0714**  
[www.bismailing.com](http://www.bismailing.com)

### 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

## Save the Dates!



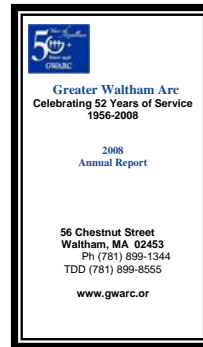
2<sup>nd</sup> Annual  
Bounce-a-thon  
McDevitt Middle School  
Saturday, October 4  
10:00 am—2:00 pm  
to benefit GWARC's Rec Program

38<sup>th</sup> Annual Harvest Breakfast  
Sunday, October 19  
DoubleTree, Waltham  
8:00 am—Noon

New arts & crafts  
available:  
Artists of GWARC  
desk calendars and  
comic book decoupage  
trinket boxes!



GWARC's 2008  
Annual Meeting  
DoubleTree  
Monday, October 27  
7:00 pm—9:00 pm



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

GWARC, Inc.  
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[www.gwarc.org](http://www.gwarc.org)

