

Kaleidoscope

changing . . . adapting . . . growing



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Kaleidoscope

changing... adapting... growing

Spring 2010

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Our Mission

The Spina Bifida Association of Western Pennsylvania is committed to improving the quality of life for people with Spina Bifida and their families by providing a continuum of support services, education and advocacy.



Barriers

Each day, I pass a parcel of land on my way to and from work. Over the past few weeks, I have noticed that the owner has started to erect a fence around his property. It is a slow and laborious process especially when you are doing it yourself as it appears this gentleman is doing. That fence called to mind what I am doing on my property. Over the years, I have planted a number of pine trees that will eventually provide that same kind of barrier.

How different that is from what we do as an association. While many of us are trying to put up barriers, we at SBAWP are trying to tear them down. We want to take away the barrier of isolation by providing housing in communities. We want to take away the barrier of unemployment by working with individuals to train them on how to get a job and how to keep the job they get. We want to take away the barrier of poor health by helping individuals with their medication schedules and insuring that their doctors are aware of changing conditions.

Our job is never ending. But unlike the gentleman who is erecting the fence, we are not a workforce of one – we are a workforce of many! The team that is assembled at SBAWP is second to none in our ability to assist both those with spina bifida as well as their families.

And we are assisted by a team of supporters that is second to none as well! Our funding has shifted over the years from being foundation driven to being individual driven. Today, less than 8% of our income is derived from grants – the rest is from individuals like you and your friends. Your financial support will continue to sustain our efforts in breaking down the barriers so that individuals with disabilities can live independently.

From the staff of SBAWP and from the clients that we serve, thank you for giving us this great opportunity!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Lynch". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "D" and a cursive "Lynch".

{ program update

Striving



for Independence

Our clients strive everyday to be productive members of society. Whether it is learning how to write a resume, conducting mock interviews, or attending local job fairs, the staff at SBAWP are ready to help bring you back into the workforce.

A mong the many services that the SBAWP provides, vocational assistance and volunteer placement play very important roles in our efforts to help those we serve gain independence. Job placement for individuals with disabilities is very difficult and often time-consuming. Things to consider when finding employment for individuals with disabilities include, but is not limited to: Is the building handicap accessible? What vocational skills does the client possess? What kind of skills does the job require? Does the employer understand how ACCESS transportation works? Is the job in Allegheny County? How will this job impact Social Security and other medical benefits? Is this a part-time or full-time job?

Currently there are twelve individuals who reside at the Gatehouse. The Gatehouse is an independent living program that provides life skills that young adults with spina bifida and other related disabilities require to transition into an apartment or other form of housing in the community. The Pittsburgh Pirates, Wal-Mart, Micro Rentals, Cranberry Cinemas, The Carnegie Museum of Natural History, The Northland Library, Cranberry Place, The Chadwick, The Pittsburgh Steelers, Animal Friends, Bounce-U, The Western Pennsylvania Humane Society, Macy's, The National Aviary, Victoria's Secret, and Cranberry Highlands Golf Course are just a few of the many companies in the community that provide employment and volunteer opportunities to our clients.

Our clients strive every day to be productive members of society. Whether it is learning how to write a resume, conducting mock interviews, or attending local job fairs, the staff at SBAWP are ready to help bring you back into the workforce. For more information on vocational assistance or the STRIVE Program, please go to www.sbawp.org. or call (724) 934-9600. ■

BluePrints Update



The latest program offered by SBAWP is the BluePrints Program, funded by the PNC Charitable Trust. BluePrints is a social skills play group for children ages two to five years and a parent support group. Children have many needs beyond the essentials of food, clothing and shelter. While play time may seem trivial as compared to these basic necessities, it is, in fact, critical to a child's social development. SBAWP created this program to address the unique needs of pre-school children with spina bifida and related disabilities.

The group offers children the opportunity to develop social, motor, sensory and cognitive skills by interacting with their peers in a fun and stimulating environment. BluePrints has been designed utilizing the PA Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten aged children. These standards are inclusive of all children and act as a framework for quality in Pre-K programs and provide guidance about what children should be able to do when they enter kindergarten. In addition, BluePrints provides parents a much needed support group. Parents of a child with a disability often spend so much time in hospitals, therapists' offices, and physicians' offices that they may be afraid to let their child play for fear of him/her getting hurt. The parent support group offers an

opportunity not only for children to play together but also for the parents to

see that their child is more like other kids than they might think. The parents in the playgroup share experiences and watch professionals interact with their child to learn what they can do at home. We also provide the parents many needed resources such as books, websites, and at home toys/equipment in an effort to educate them on ways to include activities in their daily lives.

The BluePrints Program is currently offered at two locations, each focusing on different areas of play and development throughout 14 weekly, one hour sessions. Tuesday afternoons the program is held at the Baierl Family YMCA in Wexford where the main focus for the group is on peer socialization, group work and gross motor development. In addition, Thursday mornings we are at the Sweetwater Center for the Arts in Sewickley where the children work on their fine motor skills while developing friendships and increasing their creativity through a variety of arts and craft projects. Each session includes structured and unstructured play time, while giving parents the opportunity to network and share their experiences. The next session for the program starts at the end of May and runs through August. For more information or to register, please contact Bonnie Hoolahan, BluePrints Coordinator at bhoolahan@sbawp.org. ■



SBAWP Announces New Manager, Community Services and Support

On Monday, March 1, Jeremy Pochatko became the Manager of Community Services and Support at the Spina Bifida Association of Western Pennsylvania (SBAWP). The SBAWP's Adult Community Services Program helps individuals with spina bifida and other related disabilities gain independent living skills. Some of these individuals have completed the SBAWP's Gatehouse program, which provides life skills, edu-

educational and vocational goals.

In his new role, Pochatko will coordinate care for individuals in the Villa Riviera Apartments and elsewhere in the community and help remove barriers related to self-care, self-direction, mobility or the ability to live independently. He will also help participants develop and sustain connections in the community.

Pochatko began working part time with the SBAWP in 2009 while working full

I look forward to working hard to make other people's lives as successful and fulfilling as they will allow themselves to be.

cational and vocational training and assists them with transitioning to adulthood in a supportive and structured environment.

The Adult Community Services Program also assists adults with disabilities living within the local community. It helps them locate housing in the community of their choice. The SBAWP also collaborates with other greater Pittsburgh area agencies to provide personal care services through the Pennsylvania Attendant Care Program and the Community Services Program for Persons with Physical Disabilities (CSPPPD). Services include help with housekeeping, money management and personal care.

Twelve to fourteen individuals participating in the program live in the Villa Riviera Apartments, a housing complex in Allison Park. SBAWP staff members provide in-home personal assistance with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, housekeeping and cooking as residents pursue their

time as an Employment Training Specialist with Mercy Mental Retardation Services. He studied Computer Science and Business Administration at the State University of New York at Morrisville and became a Certified Vocational Evaluator of the McCarron-Dial Systems in Dallas.

"I have worked with individuals with disabilities for fifteen years in residential settings, adult training facilities, facility based vocational rehabilitation centers, and most recently as a vocational evaluator and employment training specialist in the area of community employment. I look forward to working hard to make other people's lives as successful and fulfilling as they will allow themselves to be," Pochatko said.

To learn more about the SBAWP's Adult Community Services Program, please visit www.sbawp.org. ■



Firefly Camps and Retreats

exploring new places and doing new things



After a long winter we are glad that “spring has finally sprung” and we are looking forward to summer. We have been fortunate to have good weather for the spring retreats. However, we did brave the cold and rain for the youth and teen weekend to take advantage of the lake at the Family Retreat Center.

We all have heard or told stories of the fish that got away, but Joey DeChellis was our only successful angler of the weekend. Even though we do not have photo evidence he did boast the only catch of the day. Better luck to the rest of us next time! A thank you to Terry Wiles and the Family Retreat Center for the rods and bait!

Our final retreat of the season was our annual youth and teen Mother’s Day retreat that boasted a brunch fit for a queen.

We are busy gearing up for summer camp! Our theme is **A Summer Down Under** which is a combination of an Australian and under the sea theme! This will be our first summer combining all the ages so we are looking forward to this new challenge! All activities for the different age groups will be separate and we are planning a field trip or two for the youth who attend!

Thank you all so much for your continued support of the Firefly Camp and Retreat program! It has been an exciting season, and we have had a great time exploring new places and doing new things! ■



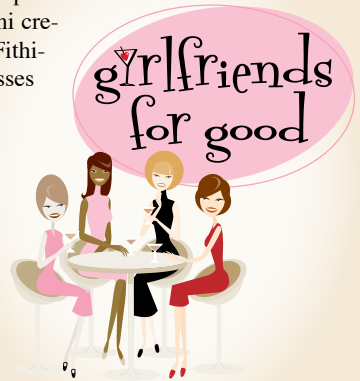
Thank You!

A heartfelt thanks to all those women who joined us at the Girlfriends for Good event! Although the massive February snowstorm forced us to postpone the event that was originally scheduled for February 11th, the SBAWP's Girlfriends for Good event was a great success! The women who attended enjoyed an evening of pampering, delicious cuisine, live music, door prizes and socializing in a classy and chic atmosphere.

Women signed up to visit different pampering stations at certain times. They got their nails, makeup and hair done and relaxed with massages. A jewelry table was also available for women to shop. The Wexford Post Office Deli catered delicious food, including hors d'oeuvres, sandwiches, fruit and dessert. D'Vine Wine Bar and Lounge provided drinks and cocktails, including the "Biftini," a delicious martini created especially for the event and conceived by residents of the Fifthian House. Numerous local restaurants, salons and other businesses donated fabulous door prizes.

Cristin Woodworth, who attends SBAWP's FireFly camps, said her favorite part of the event was getting her hair done. Event attendee, Tina Dollard shared that her favorite part was the massage. "I found myself smiling when I was in that chair." When asked if she would come back next year, Doreen Gerhart said, "Absolutely."

Thank you again to all the women who attended and raised money for the SBAWP and all the businesses who provided services and prizes. We'll see you next year!



Local Unions Sponsor Golf Tourney

For over 20 years, three local unions have poured their heart and soul into the annual golf outing that benefits SBAWP. This year is no exception. On Monday, July 26th, golfers will again assemble at the South Hills Country Club to tee off for the 2010 Tony Yakemowicz Annual Golf Tournament.

The tournament is sponsored by the Boilermakers Local 154, the Steamfitters Local 449, and the Ironworkers Local 3. Dan Quinn, from the Boilermakers, has led the preparation and organization of this event for many years. In 2009, the golf outing raised \$51,700; and since 1994, these friends of the Association have raised over \$600,000. The net proceeds from the tournament are used to defray the costs of individuals who want to go to summer camp but simply cannot afford it.

Lives continue to be changed because of the generosity of those who come out each year and the efforts of these three unions!

If you or your corporation would like to participate in the 2010 outing, please contact either the Association office at 724-934-9600 or info@sbawp.org; or the Boilermakers at 412-343-3072 for an entry form!



Joe Corbi's Fundraiser

Bringing in the dough!



Marissa Courtney & Mom, Gynni Gorman



David Lips

Participants brought in over \$1,400.00 in support of the Firefly Camps and Retreats! All proceeds will be applied towards camp and retreat fees for those who participated in the fundraiser! A special thank you to the Spina Bifida Association staff and their families who purchased or sold products; their proceeds will also be divided among the campers who participated! Our top sellers were Marissa Courtney and David Lips! Thanks for the great work!!

Individuals participated in selling pizza, specialty items such as grilled cheese pretzels and Philly cheese steak calzones as well as Grandma Corbi's homemade cookie dough and mouthwatering desserts! There was truly something to suit everyone's taste! We chose Joe Corbi's because they are one of the leading fundraising companies in the country. Additionally, they offer a tiered margin which enables participants to earn more based on the number of items sold!

We already have people asking, "When will you be selling Joe Corbi's again?" We plan on making this an annual fundraiser to help campers earn money toward their camps! Thanks to all who participated!

If you are still interested in ordering it's not too late! Please place your order online and they will ship your items directly to your door! Go to www.joecorbi.com click on <online ordering> and use our code OL30SPIBAWP.



Arts & Crafts ... Live Music ... Square dancing ... Volleyball ... Bocce ... Archery ... Cornhole ... Horseshoes ...

Spina Bifida Association of Western Pennsylvania

2nd Annual Summer Festival

Presented by Seubert and Associates

Back by popular demand the SBAWP will hold its 2nd Annual Summer Festival Sunday, August 8th at Blueberry Hill Park in Franklin Park Borough! Last year the Summer Festival was a huge success attracting over 400 attendees! Participants enjoyed live music, great food and a multitude of outdoor summer games including, archery, cornhole, volleyball, horseshoe, bocce, square dancing and a lively kid's corner with bounce houses and much more.



The goal of the SBAWP Summer Festival is to raise awareness and funds for children, teens and adults with disabilities, especially those with spina bifida and their families. This year we are planning for an even bigger and better event with more live bands and more fun-filled activities to include spirited tournaments and friendly

competitions! Our activities will start at 2 PM with special tournaments running throughout the afternoon. Mid-Life Crisis returns to the stage again this year! They rocked the house last year and will crank up the amps in this great outdoor venue.





We ask that you please join us for this exciting, one of a kind, family-friendly summer event. Be sure to SPREAD THE WORD by inviting your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to join you!

Tickets are on sale now! To purchase your tickets visit www.sbawp.org or call us at 724.934.9600. Don't miss out on the "early bird" rate. Your ticket entitles you to food and beverages at the event. Rates and timelines are as follows:

Now through July 16: \$15
July 17 through August 4: \$20
August 5 through August 8: \$25

Be sure to check back on our website regularly for updates on what to expect at the event. If you or someone you know is interested in taking advantage of the SBAWP's attractive Summer Festival sponsorship opportunities, please call us at 724.934.9600. Thank you for your support, we look forward to seeing you there!

Many thanks to our Presenting Sponsor!



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CRAFTING FOR A CAUSE

by Melissa McCormick

It all started as a simple craft day at a friend's house.

My niece, Samantha Yetsick, was having a play date at her neighbor Whitney's house. Whitney taught her how to make a beaded, lizard-shaped key-chain. She thought it was so cool that Samantha asked her mom to buy more beads so she could teach her friend Emily Schrob how to make the lizards, and the journey began.



The moms thought the lizards were so cute and Emily's mom suggested that the girls sell them. Remembering a past Lemonade Stand fundraiser inspired by Samantha's cousin Abby McCormick who has spina bifida, Emily came up with the idea to turn it into a fundraiser and call the project "Spina Bifida Lizards." To further help build on their motivation, Sammy, Emily, and Abby's parents all committed to matching what the girls raised up to \$100.00 each.

The girls taught their moms and more friends how to make them and with permission from their homeroom teacher Mrs. Guarascio, they started selling them at school for between 50 cents and \$1.00. They made and

distributed a flyer that stated “Give a helping hand...we are trying to raise money for Spina Bifida.”

The lizards were an immediate hit between teachers and classmates, and sales soon started to expand to family members, friends, and co-workers of the parents. Each lizard was made unique with different colored beads in different patterns. Everyone began to proudly wear their lizards

do, and I wanted to help them out.”

These girls set a wonderful example of the power behind kindness and generosity and how kids can make a positive difference in each others’ lives and actually help others while having fun. We are so very proud of them and on their behalf, thank everyone who helped to make this project such a huge success! ■

The lizards were an immediate hit between teachers and classmates, and sales soon started to expand to family members, friends, and co-workers of the parents.

on their purses and backpacks. It soon became hard to find time to keep up with the orders, but the money continued to roll in.

After a month and a half, the girls had raised \$211.00 and with the matching money from the three families, a total of \$511.00 was turned into the Spina Bifida Association of Western PA in support of the Powers Scholarship Fund which will help fund the cost of summer camp for a child who could otherwise not afford to attend this year. Upon hearing about the girls’ inspiring project and the monies raised, a few board members also decided to contribute to the fundraiser.

When asked how they felt about the outcome of the fundraiser, Emily said, “I’m glad to be helping someone else.” Samantha added, “Some kids can’t do what we



Rolling for Bubbles:

CONNOR'S STORY

Life is like a bubble. It is fragile and beautiful and can change in an instant based on environmental circumstances. The hope is that the bubble will develop perfectly, but such as life, the bubble doesn't always have a perfect beginning. Such was the beginning for Amee and Ray, two parents who unexpectedly received devastating news.

"The last thing that you want to hear is that your child is going to have a medical need," said Amee Passione. Amee was referring to the shock she and her fiancé, Ray Houllihan, felt when they found out 23 weeks into her pregnancy that their son, Connor, would have Spina Bifida.

After a series of tests, Amee and Ray were told that their son would probably never walk or move his legs and would develop a number of medical issues over time. Even with this news, Amee and Ray never lost hope, instead they wished for a small miracle for their son.



When Connor was born at West Penn Hospital on March 11, 2009, everyone held their breath as he was taken into surgery shortly after delivery to correct his diagnosis of myelomeningocele, a birth defect in which the backbone and spinal canal do not close before birth. A week later, Connor had surgery again, this time to insert a shunt to relieve him of hydrocephalus, a buildup of fluid inside his skull. During the next month, Connor moved between Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC's NICU and the Pediatric Specialty Hospital at The Children's Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center.

“We were overjoyed when we were able to take Connor home on April 10, 2009,” said Amee. “It was exciting to know that I had my son home in time for his first Easter.”

Upon bringing Connor home, Amee and Ray had assistance from the Alliance for Infants and Toddlers, who gave Connor in-home physical and occupational therapy. These days, Connor is right on schedule developmentally. Physically he is a bit delayed. He doesn't yet walk or

Bifida Clinic at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC.

“When we found out Connor's diagnosis, we thought raising him would be the hardest thing in the world. In reality it has been anything but difficult. You are taught how to care for his needs and you just do it. Every smile is worth it,” Amee explained, and as if on cue, Connor giggled from her lap.

Ray, Amee, and Connor are just one

When we found out Connor's diagnosis, we thought raising him would be the hardest thing in the world. In reality it has been anything but difficult.

crawl, although he can roll. “He knows how to roll, but you have to give him an incentive. Bubbles, he will roll for bubbles,” Amee explained. From what the therapists and doctors can tell, Connor does have movement and feeling in his legs because every time he is tickled he giggles and pulls his foot away.

Now, one-year-old Connor is “Mr. Personality” at Child's Way®, the day care for medically fragile children that he attends daily at The Children's Home & Lemieux Family Center, while his parents are at work. At Child's Way, Connor is able to enjoy playing with children his own age, receive his therapies, and participate in developmental learning. The skilled staff of child care associates and registered nurses can be sure that Connor's medical needs are met and also communicate his progress with his pediatrician and the doctors at the Spina

of many families who The Children's Home of Pittsburgh & Lemieux Family Center serves each day. For more information about The Children's Home, call, 412-441-4484 or visit: www.childrenshomepg.org ■



PRO GOLF TOUR TICKET SALES TO BENEFIT SBAWP!

The 2010 Mylan Classic, a stop on the Nationwide® PGA Golf Tour, comes to the Southpointe Golf Club on August 30 through September 5. All of the proceeds from the ticket sales are directed to local charities and this year, SBAWP is pleased to be a part of this event! 100% of the money from tickets purchased either online (see web address below) or by using the SBAWP specific order form comes to SBAWP!

Two types of tickets are available – a Grounds Pass at \$25 and a Clubhouse Pass at \$50. The Clubhouse ticket provides access to the dining facilities used by the golfers and their families in addition to access to the grounds. Both tickets are valid for EVERY DAY of the tournament! They are also available in packs of 10 at reduced prices. For our corporate partners, this is an excellent way to thank your clients for their patronage of your business and benefit the SBAWP at the same time!

For more information and to purchase your tickets, visit our website www.sbawp.org and click on the Mylan Classic: Tickets For Charity link on the home page. For SBAWP to receive the ticket proceeds, tickets must be purchased using either the order form on our website or online at:

<https://www.mylanclassic.com/buytix/SpinaBifidaAssocofWesternPA>



Family School Partnership Program

Working together to educate the future

The philosophy of the Family School Partnership program (FSP) is that children with spina bifida can be successful in school when everyone involved works together. The mission of the program is to provide the information required to bring the school and the family together to achieve the goal of providing a free and appropriate public education.

Often times, when a family contacts the Association for help in school they are at a loss. Their child is just not progressing in school and they are not sure what their rights are or what help they can ask the school to provide. They often are overwhelmed at meetings with the school district and feel as though they are not a valued part of the educational team. The FSP program's goal in this situation is to provide the family with their rights as provided under federal and state laws and to help navigate the system. Often this is enough that the family feels confident enough to move forward on their own, and sometimes attending a meeting with the family is necessary to assist them in educating the team about their child.

"The FSP has been wonderful for my daughter and myself. Mrs. Rebecca Crim helped us to navigate through the IEP process which can sometimes be difficult to understand. Mrs. Crim went above and beyond the call of duty to implement an education plan that was truly custom made for my daughter. She attended every IEP meeting. She also took the time to instruct our teaching staff about how children with spina bifida learn. The challenges of school are difficult enough for a student with spina bifida; I am thankful that I had a connection to the FSP." Patti Bell

The program is not just available to families. Schools can call and request information and trainings on spina bifida as well. Often times when a school contacts the Association they have been attempting to provide what the student needs but feel that they are missing something or need some more information on how to best accommodate the student in their district. The FSP program's goal in this situation is to provide the district with as much information as possible about the child with spina bifida and accommodations that have proven successful in the past.

The FSP program is offered by the Association at no cost to the families or the school districts. The goal is to get the school and the family on the same page and working together to accomplish the goal of having the individual be successful in school and life. If you have any questions or would like some assistance with your child, please contact Rebecca Crim at 724-935-5433 or by email at: rcrim@sbawp.org. ■





Gamecycle Study

Brad Dicianno, M.D., Theresa Crytzer, PT, DPT and Andrea Fairman, MOT, OTR/L, CPRP, are carrying out a study, "Effectiveness of an Upper Extremity Device in Adults with Disabilities" at the Spina Bifida Association of Western Pennsylvania (SBAWP). Their study is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development through the University of Pittsburgh's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Department. Dr. Dicianno's experience as the director of 1 of only 4 Spina Bifida adult clinics in the U.S. as well as the need for further research on ways to improve health and wellness of individuals with spina bifida sparked them to look into performing the study at SBAWP.

Obesity, cardiovascular heart disease, and metabolic syndrome are prevalent in individuals with SB. These health issues are known to improve with physical activity and exercise. Women with SB for example, experience twice the rate of obesity than that of the general population (Dosa, 2008). The Centers for Disease Control reports that 25.6% of adults with a disability were not physically active compared to 12.8% of adults without disabilities, highlighting the need for individuals with disabilities to also increase physical activity in their daily lives. This study aims to improve fitness and overall health and well-being of individuals with disabilities and to find ways to motivate individuals to exercise.

The first purpose of this study is to determine the difference in health related measures of fitness (weight, body mass index, waist circumference) in adults with a disability who participate in a 16 week exercise program, 3 times a week for 30 minutes a session. After undergoing exercise testing, one group of participants in the Fithian House will exercise using a Saratoga arm ergometer, which is a standard arm bike. Another group of participants in the Gatehouse will exercise on a Gamecycle, which is an arm bike with a video component. The Gamecycle was designed at the University of

Pittsburgh's Human Engineering Research Laboratory. The cranks of the Gamecycle act as a video game control, allowing the user to simulate race car or monster truck driving. Both exercise devices are easily accessible for individuals with disabilities to use for exercise. A physical therapist initially instructs and progresses participants on the exercise program throughout the course of study. Participants log their calories burned, miles traveled and time exercised after each exercise session.

Participants in each group also fill out questionnaires before, during and after the exercise program. The Physical Activity Scale for Individuals with Disabilities is a questionnaire that will provide information on the level of participation in physical activity during leisure-time, work and household related tasks. The Groningen Enjoyment Questionnaire will provide information on the enjoyment of leisure-time physical activity and exercise.

The second purpose of this study is to determine whether text message reminders to exercise improve participation in a regular exercise program. Each person chooses a message that they feel will motivate them to exercise. An online calendar sends their automated text or voice message on the days they chose to exercise. These low cost personalized and motivating text or voice message reminders to exercise are received by each participant for half of the time they are involved in the exercise program.

References: Dosa NP, Foley JT, Eckrich M, Woodall-Ruff D, Liptak GS. Obesity across the lifespan among persons with spina bifida. *Disabil Rehabil*. Nov 26 2008;1-7.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical activity among adults with a disability-United States, 2005, *MMWR* 2007; 56: 1021-1024. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5639a2.htm>

Fieldwork Provides a Hands-On Experience for OT Graduate Students

For many years the Gatehouse has been host to students of several college programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. The Gatehouse offers a unique arena for these students to apply the knowledge and theories that they have obtained through their course work in real-life situations. This spring the Gatehouse was host to several students from the University of Pittsburgh's Occupational Therapy Graduate Program. Students came once a week for fourteen weeks to gain practical skills in working with adults with disabilities as well as try out assessments and adaptations. Working closely with the residents of the program, the students assisted residents in personal care, made suggestions of home modifications and work adaptations, and provided life skills support

I liked that they were open to different things. I learned from them and they learned from me.

-John Fitzgerald, Gatehouse Resident

through the development of individual and group interventions. During one of the group interventions, two students, Lena Ulses and Kim Grego, planned a thematic dinner with the residents. With their support, each and every resident was involved in the planning and preparation of the dinner.

"The purpose of our fieldwork assignment is to provide us with hands-on experience in applying the assessment tools, ideas for conducting group sessions, and intervention strategies we learned throughout our course curriculum. To this end, one group idea we developed for the residents was a Hawaiian meal planning and preparation session. Everyone contributed to the menu planning with shish-ke-bobs as the main entrée. I was delighted to see the residents' enthusiasm in helping with the food preparation. The event was a big hit, and several of the residents commented on how delicious the meal was." Kim Grego, Occupational Therapy Student

"I liked that they were open to different things. I learned from them and they learned from me." John Fitzgerald, Gatehouse Resident

These experiences are important not only for the students who have the opportunity to complete fieldwork at the Gatehouse but for the residents as well. Through these shared learning experiences,

residents can utilize the students knowledge and experiences as well as gain valuable life skills.

I am grateful for such a gratifying experience and want to thank everyone at the Gatehouse for all their support in facilitating a rewarding fieldwork experience.

-Lena Ulses, Occupational Therapy Student

"My experience at the Gatehouse

was invaluable as I was able to interact with the residents and get to know everyone on an individual basis. The staff was extremely helpful and willing to share their extensive experience and it will continue to benefit us in our future careers. I am grateful for such a gratifying experience and want to thank everyone at the Gatehouse for all their support in facilitating a rewarding fieldwork experience." Lena Ulses, Occupational Therapy Student



Calendar of Events

May, 2010

- 22 | **Highmark Walk** for a Healthy Community
- 25 | **BluePrints** Program at Baierl Family YMCA
- 27 | **BluePrints** Program at *Location to be determined*

June, 2010

- 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 | **BluePrints** Program at Baierl Family YMCA
- 7 | **STRIVE** Session 6 – Application Deadline
- 3, 10, 17 & 24 | **BluePrints** Program at *Location to be determined*
- 21 | **STRIVE** Session 6 – Start Date

July, 2010

- 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 | **BluePrints** Program at *Location to be determined*
- 5 | **FireFly** Summer Down Under Camp for Circle of Friends & Youth/Teen
- 6, 13, 20, & 27 | **BluePrints** Program at Baierl Family YMCA

August, 2010

- 3, 10, 17 & 24 | **BluePrints** Program at Baierl Family YMCA
- 5, 12, 19 & 26 | **BluePrints** Program at *Location to be determined*



Food and Games Highlight Spring Activities

The month of March has been an exciting one for the residents of the Fithian House, Gatehouse, and Villa Riviera. Early in the month, Carrie Jadowiec (LSI at the Fithian House) and Rachel Bestwick, (Community Integration Coordinator) took 10 residents to the new Rivers Casino in downtown Pittsburgh. Before they started playing the slots we ate lunch at the Casino buffet. The buffet was the biggest most of us have ever seen. "If you ever get the chance to go eat there, it is definitely worth it," said Justin Savage, a resident at the Fithian

The buffet was the biggest most of us have ever seen, "if you ever get the chance to go eat there, it is definitely worth it"

House. After a very filling lunch they went downstairs to venture around the casino floor. Some of the residents came out on top while some lost it all, but it was a great time had by all.

One of the Fithian House residents/employee at the Gatehouse, Harry Prince, helped to plan and set-up

a game night in the Fithian House kitchen. Harry invited the Gatehouse residents to come down and eat dinner, play poker, and partake in a Madden tournament on the PS3. Thank you to Kenia Hernandez and Harry Prince who donated all the food and drinks for the night! We had 23 residents enjoy the fun and exciting night and participate in all the games. The boys got a little rowdy during the Madden tournament but the girls had a great time watching them. Harry Prince said, "the night was a thrilling end to a thrilling 4 year ride." His stay here with us, "ended how it was supposed to - with a bang!"

In the next couple months we have some outings in the process of planning such as, The Lernerville Speedway, taking the residents to the Strip District and Primanti's, and going down to the Southside for \$5 movie night. The summer is always a busy time for everyone and we try to get out as much as possible. One of the best outings last summer was taking residents of both buildings to the drive-In, which we will definitely be doing again! ■

BluePrints

For Children 2-5 Years Old with Spina Bifida and Related Disabilities

- Develop Social, Motor, Sensory & Cognitive Skills
- Interact with Peers in Playgroup Environment
- Structured and Unstructured Play
- 14 Week Program
- Professional Supervision
- Networking for Parents
- Parents participate in conclusion of activities

Tuesdays, May 25 - Aug 24
2-3 pm at Baierl Family YMCA

Thursdays, May 27- Aug 26

Time and location TBA

Questions, please contact:
bhoolahan@sbawp.org

For more information:

visit: www.sbawp.org

email: ProgramInfo@sbawp.org

call: 724-934-9600



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