

# THE HAPPENING COMMUNITY

OAKLAND COUNTY DIVISION

CITIZENS' ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER



Renee Uitto authors this newsletter on behalf of the CLS/OC Citizens' Advisory Committee

APRIL 2011

## STEPHANIE JACKSON – Know Who You Are and Go For Your Dreams!



Stephanie is a kind-hearted, sweet, and friendly lady who is a joy to be around. She is full of energy and a great advocate for herself and other people with disabilities.

Stephanie enjoys and loves her independent life in her own apartment that she shares with her beloved cat, Jazzy. Stephanie receives assistance to be successful in her home through supports and an individualized budget based on Self-Determination. She utilizes an Independent Support Coordinator and hires her own staff and also receives assistance from a fiscal intermediary for tasks such as processing payroll, paying taxes, and establishing workers' compensation policies.

Stephanie understands the importance of being involved in her community. She volunteers at her church weekly where, among other tasks, she assists with the church bulletin. She has many friends at her church and indicates she truly enjoys her volunteer work. Stephanie is always looking to keep busy and be active. She loves to shop, go to the movies, go out to eat, and connect with friends through CLS/OC Citizens Advisory Committee meetings and events.

Recently, Stephanie attended Speech Crafters classes to help her prepare for her dream career as a public speaker. She indicates she would love to make a career out of sharing her life story and providing inspiration to others.

While in the Speech Crafters class, Stephanie spoke about what it was like growing up with a disability; and how she played tag and hide-n-seek with the neighborhood kids on her hands and knees because she couldn't run or walk like they could. She reports that her friends never treated her like she had a disability. To them she was just Stephanie, their

friend. Later, in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, though apprehensive, Stephanie took part in a panel at her school to share her story about living with Cerebral Palsy. Although she was nervous, she didn't find it to be all that bad. After graduating from high school, she began to think about the day she spoke to her 9<sup>th</sup> grade class and decided to take a public speaking class at the local college.

Today, Stephanie is well on her way to making her dream of getting her story out to others come true. She has participated on committees at Oakland County CMH, co-presented training sessions on topics such as Person-Centered Planning and Self-Determination, has plans to speak on Disability Awareness to preschool classes, her church youth group, and other local churches and schools.

In Stephanie's speech about growing up with a disability, she said that she used to think, "Why me? Why do I have this disability?" But, now she realizes that she needs to be confident and proud of exactly who she is. She feels she was meant to share her story and to let people know that people with disabilities are just like everyone else, and we are all far more alike than we are different.



Thank you Stephanie for sharing your story with our newsletter readers!

If anyone would like to schedule Stephanie and a panel of other self-advocates for presentations at your school, group, club, or civic organization, please call Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.

### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"There is only one success-to be able to spend your life in your own way."*

-Christopher Morley

## GET INVOLVED! NATIONAL PARTICIPANT NETWORK



The National Participant Network (NPN) is a national network of people of all ages and disabilities and their representatives. NPN members participate in self-direction and promote Self-Determination.

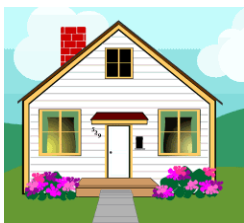
NPN strengthens the local, state, and national voice for self-direction and provides input for the National Resource Center for Participant Directed Services' products and services. NPN members also have the opportunity to provide input on national policy efforts related to self-direction.

There are many benefits of being involved in the NPN, including: developing relationships with peers from other states that will support your work with local, state, and national participant groups, playing a role in expanding self-direction to others, learning about promising practices in other states, and sharing promising practices from your own personal experiences.

The NPN meets via a toll-free teleconference the fourth Monday of every month. Subcommittees may also meet in between the monthly calls.

For information about the National Participant Network, you can visit their website at [www.participantdirection.org](http://www.participantdirection.org). There is no membership fee to join. If you are interested in becoming a member there is an application on the website. You can also contact Althea McLuckie, the NPN Coordinator, for more information at 575-776-1755 or by email at [mcluckie@b.c.edu](mailto:mcluckie@b.c.edu).

## AMAZING HOUSING OPPORTUNITY



A third female roommate is needed for a housing opportunity through Community Housing Network. This opportunity involves a project through HUD, so rent would only be 1/3 of the individual's income and this includes utilities.

This house is a brand new three bedroom home in Ferndale. There is urgency to find someone. If you are a young lady looking to move, call Maria Miller at (734) 829-8950 for more information.

## DR. WOLF WOLFENSBERGER



Sadly, Dr. Wolf Wolfensberger passed away on February 27, 2011. Dr. Wolfensberger's contributions to the field of developmental disabilities were profound. His concepts strongly influenced disability-related policies and practices in the U.S. and Canada.

Dr. Wolfensberger was instrumental in the concepts of Citizen Advocacy and Social Roles. He was an early leader in promoting deinstitutionalization, integration, family advocacy, and the development of comprehensive community services.

Dr. Wolfensberger is the author of numerous books, theories, and initiatives that have impacted the field of developmental disabilities over the last 40 plus years.

Much of Dr. Wolfensberger's work concentrated on services to people and their families. He attempted to inform the world of the gifts and contributions of people with developmental disabilities. Dr. Wolfensberger's work was recognized by the magazine 'Exceptional Parent' as one the great seven contributions to the lives of people with disabilities, along with the polio vaccine, Braille, Americans with Disability Act, and the wheelchair.

## SARAH'S CORNER

I've seen the sunshine  
when I should have seen rain.  
I've held myself up,  
and have everything to gain.

Barriers there will be many,  
cross them I will.  
The sense of being free,  
and never standing still.

No challenge ever too much,  
nothing will keep me down.  
To know that I'm together,  
and I'll always be around.

Keeping my head up high,  
with my feet firm on the  
ground.  
The simple things I do  
making that simple sound.

Finding my own inspiration,  
knowing what I've been through.  
It's a give and take situation,  
and I have much more to pursue.



Sarah Annmarie Vinnay is an aspiring author who hopes to publish her poems in the future.

Sarah is an Oakland County Local Leader through Michigan Partners for Freedom.

## YOU CAN CALL ME RAY!



As a person with a disability and an advocate, it upsets me that some people still use the "R" word.

There is even a national group that continues to call themselves "Voice of the Retarded". This is very upsetting. They must not understand how hurtful that word is. I also wonder if they feel that people with disabilities don't have voices of their own. The truth is we DO have our own voices, and we should use our voices to advocate for ourselves and help educate others.

Remember, language shapes attitudes, so the words we use are very important. Insist on respectful language for ALL people. Please join me in sharing this important anti-stigma campaign.



Wherever you are, if you hear the "R" word used or someone tries to label you by calling you a "consumer," speak up for yourself and let people know that you do not like to be labeled. Politely tell them that you prefer to be called by your name, just like everyone else. You can do it!



## FUNDING OUTLOOK



### A LOOK at the BUDGET

Looking back at 2010, Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) is proud to say that they were able to navigate the cuts in State Funding without substantially reducing services or putting individuals on a waiting list.

The State funding (General Fund) is used primarily to provide services to people not on Medicaid, under insured, or not insured. In 2010, OCCMHA served approximately 9,000 community members with these dollars. This represents a significant increase in demand, and at the same time funding was reduced. State Funding was cut 22% in 2010, with another \$2 million 2011. OCCMHA will continue to have challenges regarding the General Fund. In 2012, funding reductions will likely impact those who received Medicaid as well. OCCMHA will need to determine whom to serve and how to serve a greater number of those in need with fewer resources.

OCCMHA will be hosting monthly Town Talk meetings with the Executive Director throughout the county. They will also host quarterly Community Conversations call-in sessions quarterly. You can look for these events on their website at [www.occmha.org](http://www.occmha.org). If you would like to receive information from OCCMHA by email, contact Debbie Wisser at [wisserd@occmha.org](mailto:wisserd@occmha.org).

OCCMHA is CLS/OC's primary funding source. We appreciate our partnership with OCCMHA and their ongoing commitment to improved quality of life for those we serve.

## SPOTLIGHT ON TROY - *By Renee Uitto*

Troy is an affluent city in Oakland County and the 12<sup>th</sup> largest city in Michigan. While Troy maintains its hometown charm, the city is a vibrant business and technology center and a community recognized for its civic spirit and quality of life. Troy is ranked as the 5<sup>th</sup> safest city in the nation, the safest city in Michigan, and was also ranked among the "Best Places to Live" in the United States based upon education, housing, economic strength, and recreational opportunities. Troy is located in the busy northern Detroit suburbs and is home to more than 81,000 residents and approximately 5,700 thriving businesses. The first land purchases were Troy Township in 1819, and the City of Troy was integrated in 1955.

You can learn more about Troy at the Troy Historical Museum located at the corners of Livernois and Wattles Roads. The museum highlights Troy's progression from the very beginning. The museum has ten original, complete structures that patrons can observe and see how they functioned in the past. There is a log and mud structure used by the first settlers, and also an 18<sup>th</sup> century schoolhouse and estate, general store, a church along with the pastor's home, and the old city hall.

Visiting the museum isn't the only thing to do in Troy. You can visit the American Fun Center for a lot of arcade entertainment, cool down in the summer at the Troy Family Aquatic Center or enjoy a round of golf. Get some shopping done at the Oakland and Somerset Mall, or get in touch with nature and the outdoors at Stage Nature Center or one of Troy's five major community parks. There is a lot of fun to be had in Troy!

## JOIN THE CELEBRATION!



When the state's last institution, Mt. Pleasant Center, was officially closed on September 10, 2009, ten people who resided at the Mt. Pleasant Center had to move to Caro Hospital for temporary placement until plans could be finalized for their return to their communities. Happily, on November 10, 2010, the last remaining person made it home.

Now, it is time to join the celebration of Michigan's Freedom from Institutions. Celebrate, recognize, and memorialize this momentous achievement and thank those who made it possible.



The celebratory event will take place on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1:30pm-4:00pm at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center, 55 South Harrison Road in East Lansing. The speakers include: Allan Berman, Michael Head, Richard Prangley, Gerald Provencal, and Sarah Townsend.

*"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom."*

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

## THANK YOU LUXURY LANES!

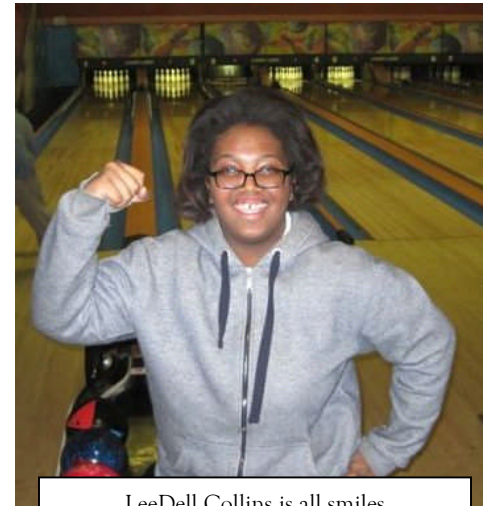


Steve Bean, Mark Thomas, Dawn Rush, and Lana Trifanova enjoyed each other's company while they bowled for two straight hours.

The CAC had another successful event on February 28<sup>th</sup>. A huge turnout of bowlers showed up at Luxury Lanes to shake off the winter blahs and have a great time bowling and socializing with friends. The bowling alley was jammed packed that day, but a great time was had by everyone. Our thanks go out to the Luxury Lanes owner, Paul, and his staff for their hospitality.



George Hamilton, ready for some bowling fun!



LeeDell Collins is all smiles while flexing her bowling muscles.



Austin Howlett, Annette Downey, and Alicia were great bowling fans and cheerleaders!



Jessica Brintley with her mom, Jessica, throwing nothing but strikes! (ok, maybe not ALL strikes, but they had fun!!)

## CONGRATULATIONS SPEECHCRAFT GRADUATES!!!

These Speech Craft graduates wowed the audience with their speeches at their graduation on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Attendees at the graduation laughed, cried, cheered, and were definitely inspired by the terrific public speaking skills learned during this great class. Congratulations graduates!



Back row: Vicki, Priscilla, Lucia, Anton, Sarah, Leigh, Annette, and Leslie. Front Row: Tim, Craig, and the class mascot, Rosie the Dog.

## MORE SPEECH CRAFT CLASSES AVAILABLE!

Would you like to “wow” an audience with a speech? Increase your confidence speaking in front of a group or in public? And do this while having a lot of fun and meeting new friends? Then this is your opportunity!

The next sessions available are: July 26<sup>th</sup>-September 13<sup>th</sup> and September 20<sup>th</sup>-November 8<sup>th</sup>. Classes take place on Tuesdays, 1:30pm-3:30pm at the OCCMHA office, 2011 Executive Hills Blvd. in Auburn Hills.

To register for a class, call Sherri Rushman at 248-975-9531 or email her at [rushmans@occmha.org](mailto:rushmans@occmha.org).



Visit the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCMHA) website, [www.occmha.org](http://www.occmha.org) for valuable information, to join e-lists and to read “The Updater, news from OCCMHA about the public mental health system in Oakland County

## LIVING HOPE SERIES

By Sherri Rushman

These training sessions are designed to encourage, educate, and empower people receiving public mental health services and their allies.



**Defeating Loneliness** will be held on April 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30am at MORC, 1270 Doris Road in Auburn Hills. The training is based on Mary Ellen Copeland’s *The Loneliness Workbook*. Participants will learn how to reduce loneliness, steps to use after the training, and how Person Centered Planning can help.

**An Art Experience** will be held April 21<sup>st</sup>, from 1:30-3:30pm at MORC, 1270 Doris Road in Auburn Hills. This two hour workshop will provide you the opportunity to play with paints, brushes, color, lines, shapes, and more! You'll leave with your own hand-made and painted mini-book, PLUS a greater understanding of how this kind of play may benefit you. All materials will be provided.

**Who we are, What we do, Community Housing Network, We are Here for you!!!** This workshop will take place on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 9:30am-11:30am at Community Network Services, 38855 Hills Tech Drive in Farmington Hills. This workshop will center on housing needs and issues, housing resources that are available, and success stories. Participants will gain an understanding of the biggest housing obstacles in our community, solutions to remedy those obstacles, and how Community Housing Network can help.

Contact Debbie Wisser at 248-858-0929 or at [RegisterMe@occmha.org](mailto:RegisterMe@occmha.org) to register for any of these trainings. Please leave a message with your name, the name of the training, and the date. Leaving a message will automatically register you for the training.



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## THANK YOU CLS/OC CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE!



On Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, CLS/OC CAC members Jim Head, David Dewitt Taylor, Micah Fiaka-Feldman, Renee Uitto, Leigh Hilbert, Matthew Buck, and Lea Wilkinson went to the State Capitol in Lansing to attend the Senate

Budget Appropriations hearing. Thank you to our CAC for speaking up regarding the importance of mental health funding!

Don't miss the next CAC Meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> from 2pm-4pm at the CLS/OC office in Ferndale.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### The 27<sup>TH</sup> Annual Developmental Disabilities Conference.

The American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is co-hosting the Developmental Disabilities Conference on April 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. This year's conference will focus on issues related to healthcare, social, community, and educational services which are of critical importance to the future of persons with developmental disabilities.

CLS is offering a limited number of scholarships to this conference for people whom CLS/OC supports. Scholarships are granted on a first come, first serve basis. If you are interested, call Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.

### Open 'Drum'munity Circle



This FREE event takes place on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 7-9pm at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, 114 S. Main Street in Ann Arbor. All ability levels are welcome, the bookstore is accessible, and the drums are provided for free. For more information, call the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore at 734-665-2757.



**Quality of Life Microenterprise Conference** – Save the date June 18, 2011. For more information about this conference call Ken at 248-840-7611 or Susan at 248-767-2217



Walk A Mile In My Shoes Rally - Save the date May 11, 2011.

## Come Out To Support AJ!



The "Assembly Line Concert, Third Shift, Operation Give Back" is an exciting attempt currently underway to break the Guinness World Record for a consecutive live concert, lasting 360 straight hours, and it's occurring right here in Ferndale!!! AJ's Café kicked off their Assembly Line concert this weekend with an



Mike, Butch, Nathan, Jim, and Ken on stage singing with AJ at the kick off party

awesome pre-party on Friday night. Most of the proceeds from the event will benefit those affected by the hardships of the automotive industry. AJ has also graciously agreed to partner with CLS, so that donations received on certain days of this fun event go to *Friends of CLS*. The next "CLS Day" is Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, which is also the exciting final day of the concert! Please come out to support AJ, CLS, and the automotive workers while enjoying some live music and perhaps sipping on some great AJ's coffee, a milkshake, or a smoothie. The place will be rockin, so try to squeeze in for a great time between 2 and 5pm on April 3<sup>rd</sup> to help celebrate the last three hours of the world



Teddy and Annette with William from the band, *The Blue Effect*, the first band to play and kick off the concert.

record breaking concert, and to thank AJ O'Neil for everything he does for CLS

and our community.

## THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

April 3<sup>rd</sup> is Ann Arbor's Annual Street Festival of **FestiFools** HUGE PUPPETS and random acts of April foolishness. FestiFools is a non-profit production of the START Project, a University of Michigan Lloyd Hall Scholars Program initiative. Specifically, they make huge-papier-mâché puppets and march them around downtown Ann Arbor. FestiFools brings students and community volunteers together to create unique public art that is *free and accessible to everyone*. Get outdoors after those long, gray, slushy months of winter. Feel the sunshine on your face. Shout "Yes!" to spring and marvel at the papier-mâché creations.

This event will take place on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, at 4-5pm in Downtown Ann Arbor For more information, visit the website [www.festifools.org](http://www.festifools.org).



# TOWN Talk

With Executive Director Jeffrey L. Brown

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## **Focusing on Strengths and Abilities** *Learn about the Supports Intensity Scale*

Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority, along with CLS and MORC, will present the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS). The SIS is being piloted in Oakland County for persons with developmental disabilities. The SIS is a nationally recognized standardized assessment instrument that is known for its ability to identify specific supports that each person needs to be successful within their community. During the sessions we will provide information about what the SIS is, why we are using it, how it works, what it means to you and more. There will also be a Q & A time.

### **TWO CHANCES TO ATTEND**

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**March 24, 2011**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Macomb-Oakland Regional  
Center (MORC)**

1270 Doris Rd.  
Auburn Hills, MI 48326

**March 30, 2011**

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Community Living Services  
(CLS)**

642 East Nine Mile Rd.,  
Ferndale, MI 48220

### **WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

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- Persons receiving services
- Family members
- Staff members who support persons receiving services

Light refreshments will be served.

For questions or accommodations please call (248) 858-0929.

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[www.occmha.org](http://www.occmha.org) • (800) 341-2003

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For questions or special accommodations call (248) 858-0929.

