



Renee Uitto, CLS/OC Citizens' Advisory Committee Chairperson

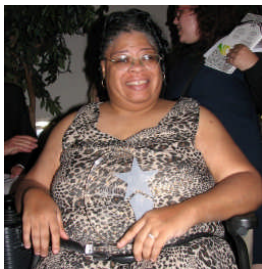
NOVEMBER 2011

CITIZENS' ADVISORY
COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

EVENING WITH FRIENDS 2011 - A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

With over 700 people in attendance, the 19th Annual Evening with Friends event was a fun and exciting night for all. Many enjoyed visiting with friends and colleagues, a great dinner, and the best part of the evening: the awards presentations. The Oakland County honorees are noted below:

Evelyn Dannard



is a self-motivated, hard working, delightful lady with an amazing outlook. She is an advocate with Michigan Partners for Freedom and United Cerebral Palsy, and has advocated for accessible transportation services through SMART. In addition to her advocacy work, she has done volunteer work for the Social Security Administration, Providence Hospital, and Detroit Receiving Hospital. Evelyn has an Associates Degree in Business from Henry Ford Community College and has completed a Medical Billing course at Marygrove College. Evelyn is fiercely independent and makes her own decisions. She is currently an independent sales person for Traci Lynn Jewelry and is working on starting her own business: a resource center for people with developmental disabilities. Through a Self-Determination Agreement, Evelyn has hired her own staff to assist her with her goals of expanding her business and purchasing a home of her own. Evelyn encourages others to not be bound by labels or what others see, but to live their lives the way they want. She indicates that she has fought nay-sayers telling her she couldn't do things simply because she was in a wheelchair and has exceeded even her own expectations. She is truly an inspiration to everyone she meets. Congratulations Evelyn!

Renee Uitto



is the kind of person who doesn't let anything slow her down, or keep her from accomplishing great things in her life. Renee is committed to paving a path for a better tomorrow for people with disabilities. She pays attention to issues of concern related to people with disabilities and never hesitates to speak up when voices need to be heard. Renee has given speeches at local and state-wide conferences to share her life story. She has advocated at Medicaid Appropriations Hearings in both the House and Senate, given public testimony at a Federal hearing for the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, and participates in the Walk-A-Mile in My Shoes rallies every year. This busy lady is also an active member on several committees including three Citizens' Advisory Committees. She is an author, writing for *The Happening Newsletter* and two OCCMHA newsletters. Renee is also the business owner of Renee's Creative Cards; a trained Peer Support Mentor, and a certified Local Leader through Michigan Partners for Freedom. Renee is a respected advocate and leader for people with disabilities. We value Renee and her community outreach and advocacy. She has helped our community grow, and we sure thank her for that! Congratulations Renee!



Sherri Rushman gives us *Hope!* Sherri is known for the trainings she does and inspiration she brings on the topic of Hope. For the past 6 years Sherri has worked at the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority (OCCMHA) as an Education Specialist. She speaks about hope being as essential to life as the air we breathe. Without hope there are no dreams. Without dreams, there are no happy prospects that our life will change. Sherri talks about Hope Givers, Hope Receivers, and Hope Stealers. Sherri fought through her own personal struggles against hope stealers that told her she couldn't succeed in college. A single mother of three, things were not easy for Sherri as she had many bumps in her road, but thanks to hope givers she made it through.

Sherri speaks annually at several conferences, runs a monthly training series entitled the "*Living Hope*", shares her passion and story of Hope in the OCCMHA newsletter, and teaches Speech Craft public speaking classes at OCCMHA. Sherri assisted with the Oakland County Self-Determination pilot group for people with mental illness and was also a volunteer circle member to help encourage people in recovery to receive the support they need to live a self-determined life. Sherri inspires other people to aim high, and dream BIG with regard to their future. She has surely earned her affectionate title of the OCCMHA "*Hope Master*"! Congratulations Sherri!

BULLYING: WHOSE LIFE AM I LIVING

By Anthony Taormina



Anthony Taormina is an aspiring author and public speaker. He experiences Autism and enjoys sharing his insights with others. If you would like Anthony to speak at an event you are hosting, please call Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.

Bullying is one of the worst things that can happen to someone. A lot of people go through it, whether it is being the bully, the victim, the bystander, or the mediator. I went through it during my middle school years. The reason why my story is unique is because in 2005, my former bully, Bill, and I made peace and we are now good friends. In fact if it wasn't for Bill, I would not be here today writing about bullying.

When I first saw Bill, I wanted to be his friend and it never popped in my mind that I would be a victim. I started to like something Bill liked, which was wrestling. We talked about it all the time. I was a popular and respected student in my middle school. I had a reputation of making friends with bullies, like I did in elementary school. When I first saw Bill and some of his friends pick on some of my friends, I didn't do anything. I just kept it inside, not wanting to be their next victim.

For the next two years, when I was in the hallway, I would constantly look over my shoulder. I wondered, "When was he going to pick on me next?" and "Was he going to hurt me? Or my brother? Or my close friends?" I would wake up in the middle of the night after a bad dream, thinking what if he hurt me? Whenever he came up to me, my heart pounded in fear, I felt uncomfortable being around him. Plus, he was in two of my classes, which meant out of a seven hour block, I would have to see him twice, plus in the halls. I had low self esteem and struggled with my self confidence.

I felt like a paranoid mess, with thoughts of pain and hurt. In my opinion, the school made a bandage attempt to fix the problem. The school would give Bill several out of school suspensions, in attempt to fix things, but it felt like a bandage because he would continue to bully kids in our school over and over again. I feared for the worst. I felt he wasn't going to change. It's a common theme with bullies. Only the bully can change his or her attitude.

The last straw came in April 2002. This is something that I strongly regret to this day. One day in class, Bill

and two of his friends, one also a friend of mine, started picking on my brother, wanting him to get off a computer. I watched as everything happened and wanted them to stop, but they wouldn't. I felt I had to do something. I went up to the smallest of the bullies, picked him up and threw him as hard as I could to the cold concrete floor. He screamed in pain. For that one moment, I felt that I stood up to a bully. But, I didn't; all I did was injure a young man. Once I realized what I had just done, I ran out of the classroom not knowing what would happen to me. My mom was called; I was sent to the office and suspended for ten days. The young man that I injured was in the hospital for several days with a broken arm and broken ribs. I apologized to him and have to live with what I did every day for the rest of my life.

After this had happened, I was still afraid of Bill; even more since I had hurt his friend. I wondered, "Was he or his friends going to get back at me for what happened?" But, he didn't. He did, however, make several attempts to make peace with me, but I was not ready to accept. Two years went by before I saw Bill again. A friend suggested that I make peace with Bill. I said I would the next time I saw him. That was at a high school homecoming dance in October of 2005. He came up to me and Bill and I hugged. He was truly a different person. I was so happy. He told me that he graduated early after going to an alternative school near the high school.

Today, Bill works as computer graphic designer and has offered to help me design my characters when I write my fiction books. More importantly, Bill encourages students not to bully and follow the path he went on. I promised Bill that if I do another presentation on bullying, he would be the first person I will call.

In closing, I encourage people to never give up. Don't forget the victims or the bullies. The bullies are people who also need help. Bill told me not too long ago that his experience at the alternative school changed his life for the better. It is not often that bullies and victims make peace and became friends. People can change. Just give them a chance to change. Also, don't live in someone else's life; live your own life. Only you can control you, not anyone else. Back then I wasn't living the life I wanted to live. Today, I'm living the life I want to live and with my friend on my side.



OCTOBER: NATIONAL BULLYING PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH!



A Consumer Reports survey conducted in the US in early 2011 showed that one million children were harassed, threatened, or subjected to other forms of cyber bullying on social networking sites such as Facebook in the past year.

Bullying impacts a person's mental health just as much as their physical health and many students who are bullied make a plan to commit suicide. The Michigan Department of Community Health reports that teen suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year olds. In fact, the average rate of suicide in Michigan for teens age 15-19 was 6.98 per 100,000 in 2007 as compared to the national average rate of 6.91. Recognition is the first step necessary to eliminate bullying from our culture.

In support of Bullying Prevention Awareness Month, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is providing resources for families, teens, educators, clinicians, mental health professionals, and law enforcement personnel on how to recognize, deal with, and prevent bullying.

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is a collaboration of academic and community-based service centers whose mission is to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children and their families across the United States. Combining knowledge of child development, expertise in the full range of child traumatic experiences, and attention to cultural perspectives, the NCTSN serves as a national resource for developing and disseminating evidence-based interventions, trauma-informed services, and public and professional education.

The Network is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and US Department of Health and Human Services through a congressional initiative: the Donald J. Cohen National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative.

If you would like to visit the website for valuable resources on bullying follow the link:

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/public-awareness/bullying-prevention-awareness-month>.

BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

By Renee Uitto

Ken Walendzik from OCCMHA attended the Recipient Rights Advisory Committee Meeting in October to remind members of how to prepare for an emergency. He indicated that the most likely emergencies that would strike Oakland County are power outages, major floods, snowstorms, or an evacuation.



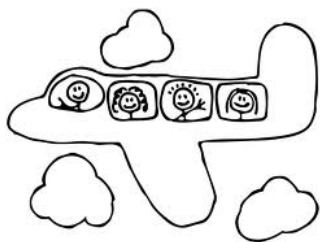
Walendzik suggested that people prepare an emergency kit that they can take with them with little notice. These kits should include:

- A First-aid kit
- Medications
- Items needed for communications: A cell phone and battery powered radio, (keep the batteries current and make sure your cell phone is charged) and an address book with family and friends information so they can be notified.
- Sanitary Items: Rubbing alcohol, cotton swabs, hand wipes, a small bottle of bleach, paper towel, Kleenex, and toilet paper
- Lights: Flashlights and a lantern with a supply of new batteries.
- Water: Keep a large supply of fresh water on hand. Have one gallon of water for each person.
- Food: Keep a supply of non perishable, dry and canned foods. Plus, a manual can-opener and small pots and pans in your kit. Canned tuna or canned chicken could be great choices.
- Clothing: Make sure you have three days worth of clothing with you.

You should draw up an evacuation plan with family, friends, and support groups; map out at least three different geographic locations; find Red Cross and other emergency shelters in your area; and plan what you would do with your pets (if they are going with you then you would need extra food and water). Plus, if possible, have plenty of cash on hand in case you cannot use credit cards.

Check out these websites for additional information on emergency preparedness: www.fema.gov, www.disabilitypreparedness.gov , www.crisiscare.com, www.nami.gov, www.ada.gov.

FLYING FRIENDLIER AND MORE ASSESSIBLE SKYS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



In 2008, Richard Bernstein filed suit against Northwest Airlines (NWA), now Delta, and the Wayne County Airport Authority on behalf of five passengers with disabilities, claiming that

NWA/Delta and the Airport Authority violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Carrier Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. The suit alleged that Detroit Metro Airport could be in violation of federal laws developed to improve access for people with physical disabilities. It alleged that Detroit Metro Airport and NWA have dropped passengers to the floor, denied them accessible parking, damaged wheelchairs, and failed to provide an area for guide dogs to relieve themselves.

On September 27th, it was announced that Delta Airlines and the Wayne County Airport Authority have reached a settlement ending the federal lawsuit. The Detroit News reported that U.S. District Court Judge George Caram Steeh III signed off on an action plan that ended the lawsuit. This plan requires Delta and the Wayne County Airport Authority to make significant changes to the airport's McNamara Terminal, parking garages, Westin Hotel, and shuttle buses to bring them in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act laws.

One of the changes requires Metro Airport and airlines to train workers on disability etiquette as well as the details of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This training will include training on protocol on how to handle wheelchairs so they are not damaged. There will be 15 new curb cuts at the airport, accessible restroom stalls, cane detectors, and altering of the slope of ramps. Some smaller changes include: signage changes, changing confusing elevator switch plates and providing staff to help people with disabilities at airline kiosks and crossing jet bridges. Also, the Westin Hotel will be renovated so rooms, bathrooms and hallways are wheelchair accessible. Some changes have already been made and others are in the process.

This agreement will encourage airports throughout the United States to follow the architectural guidelines of the ADA. This is very good news for people with disabilities who use airline travel.

MUST SEE DOCUMENTARY THAT CHRONICLES THE HISTORY OF THE DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

While there are close to 50 million Americans living with disabilities, *Lives Worth Living* is the first television history of the decades-long struggle for equal rights. Produced and directed by Eric



Neudel, *Lives Worth Living* is a window into a world inhabited by people with an unwavering determination to live their lives like everyone else, and a look back into a past when millions of Americans lived without access to schools, apartment buildings, and public transportation - a way of life unimaginable today. *Lives Worth Living* premieres on the PBS series *Independent Lens*, on Thursday, October 27, 2011 at 10pm.

Lives Worth Living traces the development of the disability rights movement from its beginning following World War II, when thousands of veterans with disabilities returned home, through the 1960s and 1970s, when it began to adopt the tactics of other social movements. Told through interviews with the movement's pioneers, legislators, and others, *Lives Worth Living* explores how Americans with a wide variety of disabilities banded together to change public perception and policy. Through demonstrations and legislative battles, the disability rights community finally secured equal civil rights with the 1990 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, one of the most transformative pieces of civil rights legislation in American history.



To learn more about the film, and the issues involved, visit the film's companion website at www.pbs.org/independentlens/ Get detailed information on the film, watch preview clips, read

an interview with the filmmaker, and explore the subject in depth with links and resources. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions.



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

COMMUNITY
Lives Worth Living SERVICES

Oakland County Division

642 E. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI 48220
Phone: 248-547-2668

CLS' PRESENTATION WORKSHOP WAS A SUCCESS

By Renee Uitto



CLS recently concluded a three part training series focused on skills Self-Advocates need to give effective

presentations and share their personal stories. The workshop series started in June and concluded in October.

The topics for the first session included basic tips to consider when giving a presentation, including: arriving early, wearing professional clothing, turning off cell phones, and being a good attentive listener when it is not your turn to speak. We learned how important it is to look nice, make eye contact, and be warm and friendly toward your audience when doing public speaking; in addition to what you have to say, this will make the audience want to listen to you. On the second day of the workshop, we learned about the purpose and benefits of using a PowerPoint Presentation. The third part of the workshop is where people gave their personal presentations in front of the class. People presented on topics such as overcoming their disability, the riots in Gettysburg, the closing of Michigan's institutions, the Detroit Tigers, and living a self-determined life.

Matthew Buck, CLS Network Coordinator and training instructor commented, "I thought it was a huge success and I was so happy to see how each person learned something new and adapted what was learned into their own presentation." He goes on to say, "I truly hope that many people choose to take advantage of this training opportunity when we offer it again in the future."



Before Powerpoint.

MICRO 2 ENTERPRISE

A volunteer group of representatives from Community Mental Health, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Michigan Commission for the Blind, and other community partners designed a fabulous new Micro Enterprise resource website. This website was designed to help promote Micro Enterprise and Self-Employment as a viable option for people with disabilities.



The statewide website mission is intended to promote micro enterprise owners by providing them with a business directory to advertise, and to act as a common statewide Resource Portal for both micro business owners and support service agencies to share resources and ideas while pursuing sound options for people with disabilities.

At this website you will find an On-line Micro Business Directory and resources for Micro Enterprise development. Plus, each Micro business gets a free page; you just use the easy-to-follow instructions and business info template. Any Micro Enterprise can join, so check it out today at www.micro2e.org.

GET ONLINE - NOT IN LINE!

Check out all your Department of Human Services (DHS) benefits on line at www.michigan.gov/mibridges. Starting now, you can check all benefit programs by phone or online including cash, food, child care, medical, and emergency assistance. Plus, you can view your upcoming appointments with DHS, view letters from your DHS caseworker, check the status of your assistance application, find out your ongoing benefit amount, and learn what is needed to process your application.

If you don't have a computer you can check your benefits by phone anytime, just call the voice line at 888-MIBRIDGES (888-642-7434).

Coming soon in January 2012, for all assistance programs, you will be able to apply for, report changes, and submit required documents.



UPCOMING EVENTS

GETTING MY OWN ADDRESS



Four Oakland County School Districts have invited Community Housing Network to present: Getting My Own Address for People with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities.

These Overview Presentations will introduce the many options, choices, and decisions that are involved in long-term housing planning. A new easy-to-read, yet comprehensive, guide was created through collaboration with housing professionals, service providers, schools, parent advisors, and non-profits. This tool can be used by families and individuals to navigate the housing process with the help of housing professionals. Worksheets and Internet links are provided to enhance an individual's participation and promote successful implementation.

There are four FREE Overview Presentations for Parents/Individuals/Professionals:

- Thursday, October 27th, 7-9pm at Rochester Community Schools-Harrison Room, Administration Building, 501 W. University in Rochester.
- Thursday, November 10th, 6:30-8:30pm, Huron Valley School District, Lakeland High School, LGI Room, 1630 Bogie Lake Road in White Lake.
- Thursday, February 9th, 6:30-8:30pm, Lamphere Center, 29685 Tawas in Madison Heights.
- Wednesday, February 15th, 5:30-7:30pm, West Bloomfield School District, 70741 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 120 (back of building) in West Bloomfield.

The entire 294 page guide is available for FREE on-line at www.communityhousingnetwork.org/GMOA. If you would like a color hard-copy of this guide, they will be available for purchase at each Overview Presentation for 30 minutes before each presentation. \$25 for Oakland County parent/individuals, \$35 for Oakland County Professionals, and \$40 for anyone outside of Oakland County.

For more information contact Linda Brown at Community Housing Network at 248-269-1346 or lbrown@chninc.net.

Mission Impossible: Motivating and Managing Difficult Children and Teens



featuring Ray Levy, PhD., will take place on October 30th 6:30-9pm at the Congregation Shaarey

Zedeck, 27375 Bell Road in Southfield.

Dr. Levy will discuss a practical and effective approach to creating, motivating, and working with children and teens with challenging behaviors. Participants will learn how to interact more positively, and receive innovative and practical tools to help their children/teens develop better frustration tolerance and coping skills, while increasing motivation. Dr. Levy will use role play and humor to illustrate the technique of applying a respectful, yet persistent, approach to creating change.

The cost of this workshop is \$20 per person. You can register online by visiting the website www.jewishdetroit.org/familycircle. If you have questions regarding this workshop, contact Shoshana Baruch at 248-205-2549. Community Living Services/Oakland County is offering scholarships to 30 people on a first-come-first service basis. If you are interested in a scholarship, contact Karen Edwards at 248-547-2668.

Healthcare Reform and Our Community

Are you wondering, "What changes may be coming in the future?" and "What is happening with healthcare reform?" Then, you may want to join in on this community forum to learn and discuss the answers to these questions and how healthcare reform initiatives will impact individuals with disabilities. **Everyone is welcome to join on November 9, 2011, 1:00-3:00pm at Community Living Services, 642 E. Nine Mile Road, in Ferndale.** Interactive presentations and discussion will include: the impact of health reform on us and our community; learning about current and planned primary healthcare efforts that can benefit persons supported by OCCHMA; and an opportunity to discuss the healthcare needs of our community, express concerns, and ask questions.



Community Resources Day Event is sponsored by the Oakland County Taskforce on Homelessness and Affordable Housing. This event is for individuals who are low income, homeless, or at-risk of being homeless in Oakland County.



There will be medical and dental screenings, legal aid, employment, education, human services, and mental health agencies.




The event will take place on November 16th, 10am-3pm at Saint Vincent DePaul Church, 46408 Woodward Ave. in Pontiac. For more information and questions contact Katie Morgan at 248-524-8801 or kmorgan@ttiinc.org.

RED WING TICKETS



Are you a Detroit Red Wing fan and would like to see them play at a discounted rate? Here is an opportunity for you!!!

You can select one or multiple games. The games choices are:

-  Friday, November 11th at 7:30pm vs. Edmonton Oilers
-  Thursday, December 8th at 7:30pm vs. Phoenix Coyotes
-  Friday, March 2nd at 7:30pm vs. Minnesota Wild

Tickets are **ONLY \$30** (\$35 for the March 2nd game) and include a voucher for a Dearborn hotdog or a slice of pizza and small soda.

The Detroit Red Wings have partnered with Community Living Services to offer this exclusive fundraising ticket package. The total package is a \$63 value and for every ticket purchased the Red Wings will donate \$5 dollars to *Friends of CLS*. You will have the opportunity to enjoy a fun hockey game while helping out people with disabilities.

If you are interested, go to the special CLS link at www.detroitredwings.com/cls. This package can only be purchased online through the special CLS link, over the phone, or via email with Sales Representative Kristin Stepinski. Should you have any questions, have difficulty purchasing online or would like to order by phone, contact Red Wings Ticket Sales Representative, Kristin Stepinski by phone at (313) 396-7411 or email at Kristin.Stepinski@Hockeytown.com.

CHECK OUT PATCH

Patch

Patch is a new way to find out about, and participate in, what's going on near you.

They are a community-specific news and information platform dedicated to providing comprehensive and trusted local coverage for individual towns and communities. They give you quick access to the information that's most relevant to you. Patch makes it easy to keep up with news and events, look at photos and videos from around town, learn about local businesses, participate in discussions, and submit your own announcements, photos, and reviews.

Many communities in Oakland County are a part of Patch. You can sign up for daily newsletters about the things that are going on in that community. Plus find "Things to Do." To check out Patch go to www.patch.com.

HOLIDAY PARTY HEADQUARTERS

Get ready to Party! Join friends for food, music, dancing and socializing. Dress casual and be prepared for a good time and many laughs.

CLS/OC staff will provide a yummy turkey and ham dinner feast. This cost is free, just put on your dancing shoes and bring a 2-liter bottle of your favorite soda pop, juice, or lemonade to share.

When: December 15, 2011 - 6:30-9:00pm

Where: Cross of Christ Church

1100 Lone Pine Road
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302

If you have questions please call Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.



The Next CAC Meeting will be held on Monday, October 31st from 2-4pm. November's Meeting will be held November 28th from 2-4pm.

Come help us plan events and discuss the happenings of CLS/OC!