



President's Corner

Thanks Giving

The holidays are rapidly approaching. My favorite is Thanksgiving for it brings friends and family together in a way that I think usually doesn't happen the rest of the year. (That could be good or bad, but I choose to emphasize the good.)



Tom Fisher,
President/CEO

The focus upon "thanks giving" is what I actually believe is important. We rush from task to task every day, most of us striving for the next goal in a frenetic, never ending tornado. Thanksgiving is an opportunity to stop, look around, and realize what we have to be thankful for. Of course, that includes living in this country, our family, our health, and so much more.

Some of you have seen me in the last couple of weeks dragging myself around with crutches because of a bad back. I have been very healthy most of my life and have developed a tremendous appreciation for the patience, fortitude and courage that someone chronically afflicted with pain must have to maintain a positive attitude every day.

This situation has once again renewed my appreciation of those who care for others. That would be you, each one of us in this agency. And so, I include among the many things for which I have to be grateful, each one of you, working everyday to help others who are in pain and distress.

Thank you.

You are appreciated by more people than you realize because of our New England reluctance to express gratitude. I have always been floored when a service recipient from years past shows up at the agency looking for staff members, some of whom have left the agency,



Thanks Giving continued on page 7.

Residential Unit

Elizabeth Mello,

HomeFinder/Foster Parent Supervisor

What do a musician, an actress, an NFL Hall of Famer and the founder of the Wendy's national fast food chain all have in common?

Bo Diddley
Melissa Gilbert
Eric Dickerson
Dave Thomas

They are all adoptees.

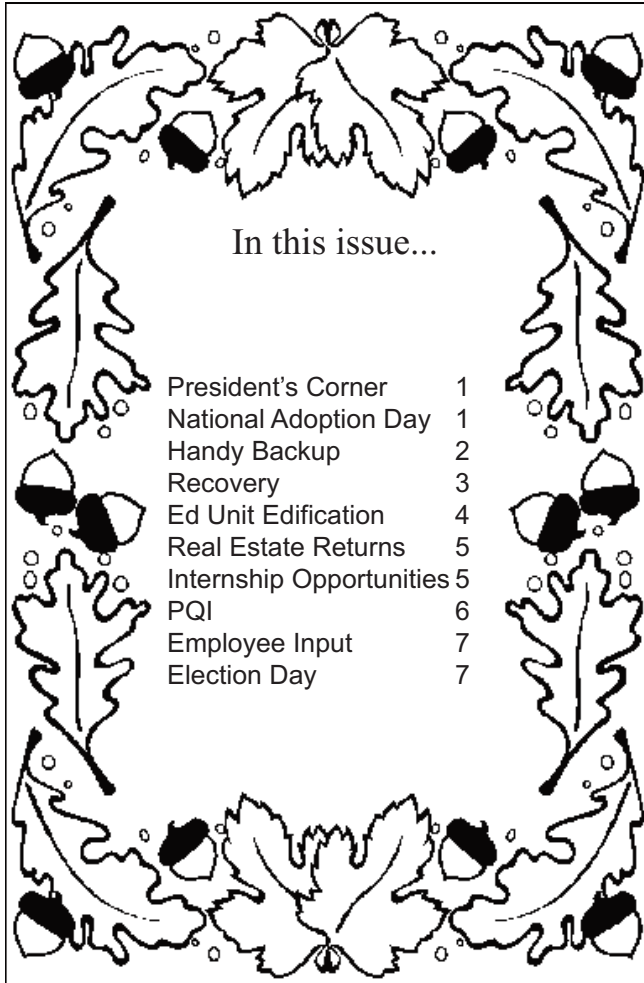
Across the country November is celebrated as National Adoption Month and National Adoption



Day is celebrated on November 21, 2008. In courthouses across Massachusetts approximately 200 children will be marking the day by celebrating the finalization of their adoption. It is hoped that these celebrations will raise awareness about the many other children who continue to wait for families to call their own.

At any given time more than 100,000 children in foster care are available for adoption. These children wait an average of two years for an adoptive family to be found and 19% of them spend five years or more waiting for a family. Unfortunately, for more than 26,000 children each year this waiting is in vain as they reach their 18th birthday without ever finding a forever family.

National Adoption Day continued on page 7.



Our Policy of Respect

Community Care Services recognizes the dignity and worth of all persons. We value the diversity that arises from individual characteristics such as, but not limited to, racial and ethnic origin, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, and being differently abled.

Community Care Services asks that all staff, clients, and guests conduct themselves with respect for others while here. Disrespectful behavior or language towards others, or the appearance of such, is not acceptable on Community Care Services premises, or during agency-sponsored events.

Management Information Systems



Jim Kristopik,
Director of MIS

Handy Backup-- a new tool for keeping your data backed up

Data backup is always a major concern. Many of us have lost files due to the failure of a floppy disk, hard drive, flash drive or other type of media.

MIS is introducing a new tool to help you stay backed up. It is Handy Backup and we think it's slick.

Handy Backup will back up files directly to CD or DVD. This is, of course, providing the computer is equipped with a CD or DVD burner, as most of our computers are.

It lets you create a job that will first initialize (erase) the media, which means that you can use the same CD or DVD day after day, if you wish. Or, you can make a backup and save it forever, if that's appropriate. A typical scenario might be to have a different CD for each day of the week; thereby having not only one, but several backups.

It also allows you to schedule recurring backups. For a single user, we might suggest scheduling a daily backup of your "My Documents" folder.

It also permits for the encryption of the backup if necessary.

We're excited about this product after testing it in MIS. It's not hard to envision small networks like most of our remote locations have with a shared directory on a central computer that gets backed up daily. Best yet, a license for Handy Backup is only \$39.00.

If you have interest in purchasing a copy of Handy Backup, please let us know. We'll be happy to assist you set up a backup scenario that works for you or your program.

Housing and Support Unit

Chris DiCostanzo,
Director of ASN



"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
---Eleanor Roosevelt

.....Transformation Times

Recovery: An Opportunity to Transcend Our Differences

It has been refreshing to see all the recent interest from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and our peer organizations in **Recovery** in the movement toward service systems.

The Adult Support Network staff and service recipients have embraced this transformation and belief evidenced by the positive outcomes of our restructuring, to include the creation of a therapeutic milieu, a Recovery Resource Center which is peer driven, through the input of the peer advocacy council. We offer programming up to seven days a week, offering consumer choice. Psycho-social rehabilitation currently offers wellness, computer classes, cooking skills, vocational assistance, motivational interviewing, to name a few. ASN clinical services now include Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Illness Management, Substance Abuse Treatment, Psycho-pharmacology and Expressive therapy.

In addition, many internal staff are inquiring about ASN to include interest in internal movement to our department and/or volunteering with a group.

We are in the process of launching an Anti-Stigma campaign through collaboration with state and federal initiatives to include collaboration with MA National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) and our local NAMI. Community Care Services, Inc. will be hosting our local NAMI meetings, trainings and initiatives.

Our service systems often reflect the fragmented and divisive culture in which they have been conceived—a culture that emphasizes those things that distinguish us from one another rather than those things that we share. As a result, our systems are mired in the politics of conflict and in struggles for power rather than being grounded in peace building and collaboration. Most of us have had a hard time seeing this, even as we divide our worlds into “us” and “them.” If we allow ourselves to look, it is hard to deny that we are really not so different from the people we treat. We all have something to recover from, whether it is mental illness, addiction, a physical disability, loss of loved ones, victimization, or loneliness. The list could go on. Our goal is to try to remove the stigmas associated with mental disabilities.

The process that we must employ to overcome these kinds of barriers to living a meaningful and satisfying life is the same regardless of our affliction. For change to occur, we must first recognize what we need to change. Although there are some things that we have no control over, we must come to believe that we have the power to influence what happens to us through the choices and efforts that we make. It is through this belief that people develop hope and find the courage to confront the challenges they face and accept responsibility for change. Recovery creates a community that all can take part in as it erases the distinctions of position, age, skin color, religion, language, and education and joins us in our common humanity.

.....Stay tuned for more new and exciting initiatives.

Education Unit Edification

Deb Smusz,

Vice President, Education Unit



Fall brings the start of another school year and while many of you may think that there isn't much going on in Ed Unit during the summer, consider that this summer:

We started two new summer programs, **Camp We Can**, a camp program for teenagers with Asperger's Syndrome and related characteristics and **REAL** (Responsibility, Education and Effective Attitudes for Life). Camp We Can is held at the Cape Cod YMCA's Camp Lyndon in Sandwich.

REAL is run out of our Southeast Alternative School's Middleboro campus.

Our three TAP programs, contracted therapeutic activity programs funded by the Department of Mental Health, private insurance companies, MBHP and the Department of Children and Families (formerly DSS), have a uniquely complex mission during the summer months. Each of these programs, located in Attleboro, Plymouth and Hyannis, partner with local YMCA camps during the summer. Our TAP staff implement their program's goals while TAP service recipients participate in camp activities with their more typical peers. Without the vigilance and expertise of our TAP staff, our service recipients would not be able to benefit from positive summer experiences that participation in camp represents.

Grant writing took center stage this summer also. Tim Hurley, our Southeast Alternative School's Berkley Campus Director and Deb Smusz, VP for Education Services were responsible for **Title I grants** from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (formerly Department of Education) that brought over \$60,000 for educational support for service recipients to our Lindencroft, Crossroads, Journey Home, STARR and Attleboro Center. Lisa DaPonte, our Taunton Youth Court Director worked with Sue Furtado, PQI Director, and Mary Mercier, Ed Consultant/Grant Writer, to write a **Safe and Supportive Learning Environment grant** that was funded to provide training and support to the faculty at Taunton High School so that the needs of students with trauma histories or those who experience trauma can be better understood and more effectively served. Deb Smusz and Stephanie Albernaz collaborated on the **School Climate Grant** from the Office of the Attorney General. This grant continues our SCORE Peer Mediation program at Taunton High School and expands its mission to include impacting organizational change. Deb Smusz also worked with the Taunton Police Department to submit an application for **Shannon Grant** funds. If funded, this program will bring much needed youth development services and support for the police departments of Taunton, Norton and Attleboro.

There were also changes in leadership in our Education Unit. Annie Tracey left our Plymouth TAP directorship and we welcomed Kate Sweeney to her new role. Claudia Alifano joined us as director of our Cape Cod TAP program. We bade farewell to John Bonin, who stepped down as director of our Southeast Alternative School's Middleboro campus, and welcomed Brian Kelly, who is now at the helm. Sammi Robertson, who brought us much enthusiasm as she planned conferences and workshops that the agency sponsored for professionals and parents from the community, moved on to other opportunities when it was decided that we would no longer provide these services.

Real Estate Returns

Mike Healey,

Real Estate Asset Manager

Safety Committee

The Safety Committee will be meeting every two weeks until further notice as we make an effort to improve our facilities. We have conducted inspections at almost all of our sites. We are becoming more familiar with COA safety standards and working towards applying those standards at our locations. We are also updating emergency contact lists and evacuation plans. During the summer we have continued to make improvements around the properties such as cleaning basements and storage areas, checking and adding exit signs and staying current with our annual city and state inspections. If you are interested in learning more about the safety committee, please contact me at mhealey@communitycareservices.org.

Hillside - Attleboro

The community development grant that was awarded to Hillside over a year ago is about to become reality. We have signed a contract with the city to move ahead with this project and a walk thru with interested contractors was scheduled for Friday, September 5th. Contractors will submit pricing for the work back to the Community Development office for approval. The work will include carpet, storage lockers for the bathrooms, a door to the nurse's station in the MDU and replacement of damaged ceiling tiles. We are hopeful this work will take place during the fall.

Southeast Alternative School and TAP Program, Hyannis, MA

We have been working over this past summer with Schadler and Associates on a conceptual architectural plan for the proposed Camp Lyndon site in Sandwich, MA. Schadler has brought this project a long way with Coastal Engineering that has helped to bring this project one step closer to reality for SAS Hyannis. On September 4th,

Real Estate Returns continued on page 7.

Volunteers and Interns

Joan Keiper,

Director of Volunteers

Researching an Internship at Community Care Services

Again this fall, we happily welcome dozens of student interns from many schools. This is our reward for year-round recruitment. Internship fairs that we attend provide necessary exposure for us; but I feel that our most effective, 24/7 recruitment tool is a website. Students and their schools' field placement coordinators often find us through their schools' websites and/or our agency website, where they can review many detailed intern position descriptions. These descriptions tell the potential intern about your program and the agency, provide contact information and list responsibilities and educational opportunities. They are encouraged, and sometimes mandated, as a "best practice" with colleges and universities. Positions are available at Community Care Services in many fields, including education, social work, business, human resources, photography and criminal justice. We are advertising close to 30 opportunities, but more could be added.

If you know a student who is researching field placement/practicum opportunities, please advise them to visit the agency's website:

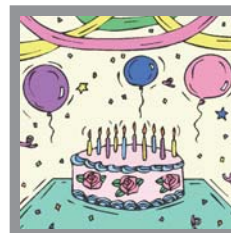
www.communitycareservices.org.

Click on the "Volunteer/Intern" link on the Home Page. Recently added links to intern position descriptions are available with almost all of our programs.

During Fiscal Year 2008, volunteer and intern hours totaled 14,100, a 32% increase over Fiscal Year 2007. Interns contributed 10,100 of these unpaid hours at 21 programs. This increase is the result of many efforts on our part, including agency and program recognition, easily accessible information on websites and word-of-mouth marketing.

In Fiscal Year 2007 we had 27 interns, and in Fiscal Year 2008 we had 35! Volunteers and interns who find rewarding experiences will recruit for you – if you ask!

PS: In each *Community Care Currents*, I will share "Volunteer/Intern Appreciation Good News." If you tell me the **good news** happening at your program, I will share one story in each newsletter.



In September, Victor Santos, Director of HR, sang a very professional rendition of "Happy Birthday" to Anna Boivin while she was volunteering in Human Resources. Anna and the HR audience were all impressed! I think Victor's "Happy Birthday" should be an auction item at the next agency gala!

Performance and Quality Improvement

Mind your P's and Q's



Susan Furtado,

Director of Quality Management

You have all now officially survived your first full year of PQI reporting and we have just completed our first PQI Annual Report to Community Care Services' Board of Directors. We are in the process of completing program specific annual reports and distributing those to all programs by early October, and we hope all staff will have the opportunity to see all that was accomplished by their programs in the past year.

We have successfully determined the five measures that we are tracking across programs, which include **Documentation, Finance/Budget status, Incident Reports, Satisfaction Rates** and **Staff Turnover**. We have increased the number of programs with mechanisms for reviewing **documentation** from 7 (26%) at the start of the process to 21 (78%) by the end of FY 2008. Documentation review is important to ensure we are meeting standards and funding requirements and documenting the good work that is being done. During this next fiscal year we will be ensuring that **every** program providing service or treatment at Community Care Services has a consistent mechanism in place to monitor the high quality documentation of the high quality services we provide.

We know that despite facing **financial** challenges this fiscal year, we managed to finish the year successfully. This was accomplished through the work of all CCS employees working as a team. We learned that we had 1247 **incidents** in the past year and that the documentation of these incidents has improved. We know that while there were increases in some categories; for instance allegations, environmental incidents and critical incidents, this is likely due to a more comprehensive reporting process where we are capturing more of the data. The two areas where there were decreases included: Infection Control and Medication. **Satisfaction surveys** demonstrated a 99% satisfaction rate with our payer sources across the agency, with 99% of respondents stating they would refer to us again in the future. **Staff turnover rates** continue to be consistent across quarters, and remain consistent with industry averages at 34% for the year.

Our next goal will be to identify and put in place qualitative measures that will help us to demonstrate how our service recipients experience improvements in their lives based on services and treatment received at Community Care Services.



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in order to thank them for work that literally happened years ago.

Your work doesn't always reap the reward you deserve, including appreciation, but it is so important to help individuals and families heal. Your work has ripples that will be felt for generations.

Thank You.

National Adoption Day continued from page 1.

If you or someone you know is considering adoption, please call our adoption program at 508.821.7774 or visit our website at <http://adoption.communitycareservices.org> for more information. We are available to help families decide which type of adoption is right for them and can assist in completing the entire adoption process from initial application to matching to finalization.

(Sources: Massachusetts Department of Children and Families and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Administration on Children; Interim estimates for FY06, and www.nationaladoptionday.org.)

More important than the presidential election!

NO on Question 1!

That's what a number of people are calling Question 1 on the November ballot because of the devastating effects it would have on state, city, and town governments in Massachusetts.

The September 30th *Boston Herald* headline screamed ...

“For fiscal sanity, vote “NO” on Question 1.”

If you think that this won't affect you and your family, you're wrong.

For more information, ask your program or department director or go to www.votenoquestion1.com ...

And please, **Vote** on November 4th!

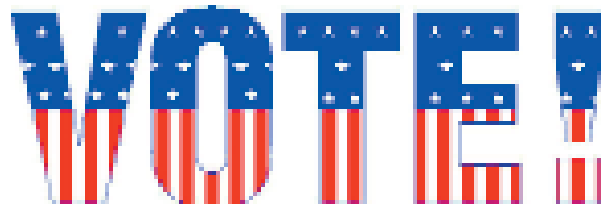
Real Estates Returns continued from page 5.

architectural specifications were sent out to five architectural firms that Community Care Services would work with in the event we are able to reach an agreement with the YMCA of Cape Cod. Architectural bids are due back to our office on September 29th.

Facilities Update

We are preparing for winter weather even though the temperature is still around 65 degrees. Snow removal bids went out on Friday, September 12th and are due back on October 1st. We will also be sure to have ice melt at sites or available to be delivered to sites while preparing for winter weather.

We have completed 83 facilities service requests since our last article. We have had a productive summer; working to pay attention to taking care of a number of items at our locations and spending more time at sites when we are there to respond to facilities requests. As always, requests need to be submitted on the Facilities Request Form by fax or e-mail. The Facilities Request Form can be found on the agency intranet site on the Facilities Home Page.



Please let us know what you want!

Our last employee surveys indicated that a number of people in the agency don't feel that they are well informed about what is going on in the agency. This newsletter is an attempt to remedy that, but perhaps it isn't working as we had hoped. Please let us know what information you are not receiving and what the best method would be for you to receive it. We understand that we need a variety of ways to satisfactorily communicate with everyone, but that is our goal. You could e-mail or phone your suggestions to Chris Luthy (508.821.7777x710 or cluthy@communitycareservices.org) who will make sure that we get the information.