

Today's Quotes: *"I was allowed to wander where I could. Here is a case in which you search for your independence and allow something creative to come out of that."* George Woodcock, Canadian, Writer Quotes

On April 25, 2009, the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities held its 8th Annual Self-Directed Supports Conference with the theme of *"Together is Better: Connecting to People and Places in the Community for the Life You Want."* The conference was advertised through DDD Today. We would like to pass on to you one of the stories shared during the conference:

A Life Transformed

Submitted by Scott Davis and Joann Davis

Scott Davis is a kind and fun loving guy. He is a man in love with his community and the people in it. He laughs...he smiles...he kids around with friends and support staff that he cares about, and he knows they too care about him. To meet Scott now, you might think that he was born with a smile on his face that carried him through to this very day. But, unfortunately, you would be mistaken.

In 2005, it seemed as though Scott had begun a long and painful journey down a road from which we feared he would not return. He was challenged by a very long list of medical and behavioral issues. His weight escalated and he was diagnosed and hospitalized with diabetes. Life was

becoming very difficult for him, and sadly, the worst was yet to come. Four months later, Scott's world literally and tragically stopped when his Dad suddenly passed away at the age of 60. Grief engulfed his life. His interest in the things he used to enjoy quickly began to fade.

In 2006, his Grandmother also passed away, and the following year he lost his special dog Rosie. Scott's depression worsened and then in 2008,

he lost his other Grandmother and another very special friend. His grief was overwhelming, and his difficulty coping revealed itself in his behavior with the need for police intervention and several crisis center visits, including one lasting ten days. Medication changes were frequent and unsuccessful. Day programs were investigated,

but Scott refused, saying that he felt he didn't belong there. So for three years he sat in his room, slept, ate and played video games.

Finally, in October 2008, we were notified by DDD that Scott was eligible for Self-Directed Day Services. We developed a person-centered plan for supports and by

December it was approved and we began seeking supports. We were impressed by one agency in particular, and their director's knowledge and understanding. We felt it was just what we needed. The agency connected us to a support staff person, a young woman named Jenn, who happened to be a licensed EMT/Firefighter. Jenn was positive and immediately likeable. In just a matter of a few months, Scott's life was finally moving forward.



Scott Davis (second row, third from right) holds WMMR sign.

A life transformed (continued from page 1)

Scott began to go out with Jenn twice a week to lunch, the arcade, the movies, the library, visiting the animal shelter and weekly swimming, too. But the true breakthrough came when Jenn introduced Scott to the local fire company. This turned out to be a match made in heaven that culminated in Scott officially becoming an honorary member. Being a part of this wonderful group of people has had an incredible impact on Scott. His photo is now on their website, and he has his own fire company e-mail! He participates in coat drives, along with other activities, and he was featured on a local radio station website for his efforts. When Scott saw this, he stated, "I am finally a star!" Recently, Scott used his budget to purchase a membership to the YMCA. He is an excellent

swimmer, loves doing it, and is getting the exercise he needs to be healthier.

After three long years, Scott is finally back -- back in his community! Back to being active! Back to smiling! Back to laughing! Back to being Scott! Having Jenn in his life has made all the difference. She genuinely cares about him and uses her skills to help him connect to others.

Scott has big plans for 2009. He is thinking about a trip to Atlantic City, going fishing, getting a beach membership and just hanging out at the firehouse. He has also invited his new friends to the family camper this summer for a barbecue!



How many people have recently moved to the community from developmental centers?

July 2007 - June 2008 = 121

July 2008 - June 1, 2009 = 82 (updated)

Look for a Special "Path To Progress" update in the June issue of DDD Today

ANNOUNCEMENTS

20th Annual Conference on Medical Care for People with Developmental Disabilities

Sponsored by The Arc of New Jersey's Mainstreaming Medical Care Program, the 20th Annual Conference on Medical Care was held on **Friday, May 29, 2009** at the Westin Princeton in Forrestal Village. This year's program focused on "**Promoting Healthy Aging**" among persons with developmental disabilities.

The **featured speakers** were: National Association of State Medicaid Directors' (NASMD) Executive Director **Ann Clemency Kohler**, NJ Department of Human Services' (DHS) Commissioner **Jennifer Velez**; DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities' Assistant Commissioner **Kenneth Ritchey**; and DHS Division of Medical Assistance and Health Service' Director **John Guhl**.

The conference brochure is available on The Arc of New Jersey's website, www.arcnj.org by clicking on "Conferences."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Spina Bifida Resource Network is pleased to announce a Two-Part TELE-CONFERENCE Series:

“Aging with a Disability: The Individual with a Disability & Family Caregivers Growing Old Together”

Presenter: William Ditto, MSW, LSW ~ Director, NJ DHS Division of Disability Services

Dates: June 9 and 16, 2009; 8:00 PM - 9:15 PM

Targeted Audience: People with developmental disabilities such as spina bifida, cerebral palsy, autism, intellectual disabilities, etc., family members, professionals, service providers and interested others.

For a registration form, go to Registration Information (<http://www.sbatsr.org/living/telcomoverview.html>)

Registration is free, but required.

2009 Southern NJ Walk Now For Autism:

Join thousands of walkers on Saturday, June 13, 2009 at the Bishops Gate Corporate Center to raise money and awareness for Autism. *Walk Now for Autism* is a family-friendly event, so bring the whole family along. There will be activities for the children, resources for families, light refreshments and entertainment.



Date: Saturday, June 13, 2009

Registration: 8:00 AM

Location: Bishops Gate Corporate Center
3000 Leadenhall Road
Mount Laurel, NJ

Walk Starts: 10:00 AM

DDD, Neighbours Inc., and the Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey present:

“Information Sessions” on housing options for people who self-direct

Individuals and families who participate in self-directed services using a budget provided by DDD (Real Life Choices, Self Determination and Self-Directed Day Services) are being invited to attend an information session on housing options. There are two sessions scheduled for July:

Tuesday, July 14
Wayne Public Library
461 Valley Road, Wayne, NJ
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Wednesday, July 29
Gloucester Office of Education
1492 Tanyard Road, Sewell, NJ
5:30 - 7:30 PM

The sessions are being presented by the DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities in collaboration with Neighbours Inc. and the Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey. Registration is required and space is limited. To register or to get more information, please contact Anne Romano at 609-275-0606 or anneromano@neighbours-inc.com.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DDD Presents County-Based Forums:

DDD is inviting individuals who are in Real Life Choices, Self-Determination or at the top of the priority and priority-deferred categories of the *Waiting List for Waiver Services (WLWS)* – formerly known as the *Community Services waiting List (CSWL)* or *Residential Waiting List* – to attend a county-based family forum. The forums are geared toward the family's need to plan and prepare for the well-being of their adult child/children with developmental disabilities. Forums are being held in each of the state's 21 counties. For information, contact Janice Delorenzo at 609-689-1794 or janice.delorenzo@dhs.state.nj.us.

Information about the first two of these county-based forums is as follows:

- ❑ The **Morris County Family Forum** is scheduled for Wednesday, June 3, 2009, from 6:30 - 9:00 PM, at the Human Services Building, 340 W. Hanover Avenue, Morris Township, NJ.
- ❑ The **Middlesex County Family Forum** is scheduled for Tuesday, June 16, 2009, from 6:30 - 8:30 PM.
 - FYI – the Middlesex County *Planning Group Meeting* (to prepare for the upcoming forum) is scheduled for May 27, 2009, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM.
 - Both the planning meeting and the family forum will be held at the Middlesex County ARC Building, 219 Black Horse Lane, Suite 1, in North Brunswick, NJ.

DDD expects the following outcomes to be achieved through these County-Based family forums:

- ❑ Families of children with developmental disabilities will receive valuable information about state- and county-funded services, initiatives and resources, especially housing and supports. Participants also will become familiar with local provider agencies they can call upon in times of need.
- ❑ Families living in the same county as other families near the top of the WLWS (and in other DDD programs) will be able to identify potential housemates who are ready for housing and might be able to live together amicably.
- ❑ Families waiting for enhanced services or residential placement through the WLWS will learn how to access state and local supports and services, both formal and informal. This should help families maintain their current living arrangements, and help avert a crisis that could prompt an emergency response that could lead to family disruption and an out-of-home placement.
- ❑ Families will gain knowledge and information that can help them better plan for the future well-being of their adult child with developmental disabilities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DDD and The Arc of New Jersey present:

Navigating the New System -- What Families Need to Know about Major Changes in the System that Serves Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

New Jersey's system of service provision for individuals with developmental disabilities is changing. In order to navigate this new system, individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will need to develop new skills and understand new terminology. This workshop, presented by The Arc of New Jersey and the New Jersey DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), will provide families with valuable information regarding significant changes in the system including: what it means to be on the Community Care Waiver, how individuals will be affected by the move to a Waiting List for Waiver Services and the shift to self-directed services with individualized budgets. Join other families at this workshop and learn how to navigate the system that serves individuals with developmental disabilities as these changes occur.

"Navigating the New System: What Families Need to Know about Major Changes in the System that Serves Individuals with Developmental Disabilities" is being presented in every county in the state throughout the year. The next workshops scheduled are:

Thursday, May 28, 2009

The Arc of Atlantic County
Multi-Purpose Room
6550 Delilah Road
Egg Harbor Township, NJ
6:30 PM

Hosted by The Arc of Atlantic County

Registration required. RSVP to Amy Reber at 609-485-0800, Ext. 161

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

The Arc of Camden County
215 West White Horse Pike
Berlin, NJ
6:30 PM

Hosted by The Arc of Camden County

Registration required. RSVP to Rosemary Godfrey at 856-767-3650, Ext. 24

Wednesday, June 17, 2009

The Arc of Middlesex County
219 Black Horse Lane, Suite 1
North Brunswick, NJ
6:30 - 9:00 PM

Hosted by The Arc of Middlesex County

Registration required. RSVP to Emily Meyers at 732-821-1199, Ext. 135

Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Bergen Regional Medical center
1st Floor Auditorium
230 East Ridgewood Avenue, Paramus, NJ
6:30 PM - Coffee and registration
7:00 PM - Presentation

Wednesday July 1, 2009

Wayne Public Library
461 Valley Road, Wayne, NJ
6:30 PM - Coffee and registration
7:00 PM - Presentation

Both workshops are hosted by The Arc of Bergen and Passaic Counties. **Registration is required.** To register, phone: 201-343-0322, Ext. 2302, or e-mail: registration@arcbp.com. Please indicate which of the meetings you will be attending and leave your name and phone number in case of any schedule changes.

