



REFLECTIONS

May-June 2007 • Volume 28 • Number 4

Congratulations, graduates!



Bobbie B. Fairfax

*Gentaro Nomura
Nathan Christopher Glasgow
Christopher Andrew Flores
Jason Allen Bowers
Sean Andrew Jackson
Katie Sue Weinheimer
Shafone Vanecia Hope
Rheannon Nicole Turner
Danielle Marie Boyd
Jeannetta Nina Fairbanks*

On May 18, 14 graduates of schools operated by the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD were honored in ceremonies that drew hundreds of families, friends, and supporters.

At Bobbie B. Fairfax School, 10 graduates were recognized. Superintendent Cheryl Phipps and Board President Shelley Goering bestowed certificates upon the honorees.

Across the county, at Margaret B. Rost School, four graduates received recognition, led by Children's Services Director Bev Smith and Board Member Pat Leary.

Graduation ceremonies at MR/DD schools are recognition for students who receive diplomas from the public school district in which they live.



Margaret B. Rost

*Brian Anthony Hahn
Daniel Stephen Luchsinger
Justin Paul Mossburger
Julie Marie McClain*

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County PTA honors staff, students

The Hamilton County Board of MR/DD was well represented by award winners at the annual meeting of the Hamilton County Council of Parent Teacher Associations in April.

Children Services Director **Bev Smith** (far left), received the council's prestigious Service to Children Award.

Melissa Holmes (second from left) and **Lisa Bauer** (far right), Fairfax School Instructors, received Educator of the Year and an educator scholarship, respectively.

Students **Rheannon Turner** (second from right), Fairfax School, and **Brian Anthony Hahn** (unable to attend), Rost School, received vocational readiness scholarships.



From the Superintendent

We're in! Our lease on the building in Blue Ash that housed our support center operations for the past 13 years expired in mid June, and we are all (mostly) in at 1520 Madison Road in East Walnut Hills.

You'll have the opportunity to visit this new location on July 17 (see open house details elsewhere in this newsletter.) Please join us to celebrate our move to a place that is more accessible to those whom we serve, their families, and many of our valued community partners.

Members of the Northeast Service Facilitation and Early Intervention, and Southeast Early Intervention teams are also moving, but not to Madison Road. They are moving to office locations on Montgomery Road in Kenwood and Fair Lane Avenue in Mariemont.

The past several weeks have been a bit hectic, as we have moved different parts of our Support Center operation in phases to accommodate completion of renovations and meet our lease expiration date.

While glad to be getting yet another stipulation of the Tax

Levy Review Committee (TLRC) process from 2004 checked off our list, we're even more glad to be in a central location that will allow us to serve the needs of the people we serve and their families with greater access.

Staff who have been involved in this move to Madison Road have new desk phone numbers, but have kept their cell phone numbers. In addition, we were able to keep our main phone numbers the same – 794-3300, and 794-3308 (for reporting abuse and neglect.)

Speaking of the TLRC process, we have received word that our mid-levy review will take place later in the summer or early fall, after the committee has had time to review levies that are scheduled for the fall ballot.

In the midst of move madness, we have also been testing new ways of gathering information from families and individuals about the services they receive to make our strategic planning process more person-centered and truly focused on what it is that individuals want and need.

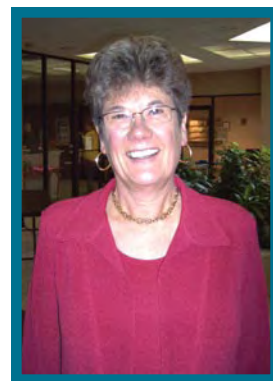
A description of that process that we are hoping to make as bold, creative, relevant, accessible, and

all-inclusive as humanly possible is also included in this newsletter.

Last, but certainly not least, we were proud to recognize 14 graduates across our two schools – Margaret B. Rost and Bobbie B. Fairfax - on May 18. We wish our fine graduates well, and are anxious to continue to provide the level of support they and their families choose as they move into adulthood.

It's hard to believe that we have already come through the school year that we anxiously awaited when we closed Frederick A. Breyer School at this time last year, consolidating our former three schools into two. It's been another fine year in our schools, with few blips, due to the tremendous professionalism and flexibility exhibited by staff, families, and students alike.

No summer slowdown at the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD! Hope to see you at the Madison Road open house July 17.



Cheryl

Passport to Self Advocacy

A retreat for Ohio's self
advocacy groups

July 6, 7, 8, 2007
Xavier University

Buenger Residence Hall
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207

Sponsored by:
Empowered People Reaching Out
(Butler County)
and
Leaders in Action
(Hamilton County)

\$150 cost includes shared dorm
room, meals for three days

Registration forms must be received
by June 15, 2007

Contact:

John Romer
Hamilton County Board of MR/DD
541-2021, ext. 35

or

Keith Banner
Butler County Board of MR/DD
867-5932

The conference brochure and reservation
form is on the Hamilton County web site at
www.hamiltonmrdd.org

Hamilton County advocate has unique connection to Martin Medicaid law suit

By Mike Fasanella, Advocacy & Support Coordinator

William (Bill) Roe is a unique individual who has an interesting story to tell.

Bill attended a session in March called "The Settlement of the Martin Law Suit" at a two-day legislative event in Columbus.

The 1989 law suit, formerly known as "Claude vs. Governor Richard Celeste," called for Medicaid funding to allow Ohio citizens with developmental disabilities the opportunity to leave institutions and move into the community.

During a presentation by Ohio Legal Rights Service Director Michael Kirkman, Bill raised his hand to make a comment. After being called upon, Bill said: "I just want you to know that Claude Martin was my roommate at Columbus State Institute when we were both seven years old."

Bill's comment quite dramatically changed the tone in the room and made everyone realize that Claude Martin was a "real person" among all of the waiver discussion.

The next day, Bill had a pre-arranged meeting with Ohio Senator Robert Schuler where he shared his story about his childhood friend, Claude Martin.

After he thanked the senator for supporting the settlement, Senator Schuler invited him and his supporters to a Senate session that afternoon.

During the session, Bill was introduced on the Senate Floor to 32 Ohio Senators.

Bill has come a long way since his time at Columbus State Institution, overcoming many obstacles in life yet continuing to advocate for himself and others.

He now lives at Geier Apartments in Kennedy Heights with his cat "Lady." He worked at Bob Evans Restaurant for 16 years and currently works at Goodwill Industries.



**New
Support Center
Address**

1520 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45206

513-794-3300 (main phone)
513-794-3308 (to report abuse and neglect)

Time Passes - Things Change

By Jo Krippenstapel

We've all heard this expression. Perhaps we first heard it from our parents or grandparents. It's one of those sayings that has survived the ages because it expresses a simple truth.

It is true that time is passing and things are changing for people with disabilities and their families in Hamilton County.

Some things are changing for the better. More than ever, people with disabilities are finding their voice and expressing their "hopes and wishes" for a better future. Parents of younger children with disabilities are seeing new possibilities for their sons and daughters. We are all getting better at supporting the capacities and contributions that people with disabilities make to our communities.

Some things are changing in very challenging ways. As people with disabilities and their care givers age, they need services that are responsive to their changing situations. As more people with disabilities are included in community schools and provider organizations, our County Board serves a growing number of individuals with complex issues. Many individuals we support are asking us to help them face their challenges with loneliness, poverty, and accessibility.

The Hamilton County Board of MRDD stays responsive to these changes by engaging in strategic planning. In May, we began engaging many stakeholders in conversations that help us learn how to position this organization to respond to these changes in ways that help us continue our tradition of excellence in our services to people with disabilities and their families.

Our stakeholders include everyone who has a stake in the future of the Hamilton County Board: individuals and families we support, staff, provider organizations, community organizations, to name a few.

We will use a variety of participative and creative approaches to engage stakeholders in strategic planning, based on best practices. Over the next few months, you can expect a number of roundtable conversations, interviews by "roving reporters", surveys, and graffiti walls --- all designed to capture ideas that

help us plan for the future.

Time passes – things change – and the HCBMRDD welcomes your contribution to a strategic planning process that helps us continue to be responsive to both the changing times and the individuals we support.



“Building A Future Together”

Sharing bold and creative strategic planning activities at the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD

Steering Committee

Jo Krippenstapel, Facilitator

Jenny Dexter
Susan Gear
Kim Hauck
Peggy Kurz
Craig Landers
Malti Patel
Cheryl Phipps
John Romer
Dawn Rothe

Self advocacy leaders lend expertise to strategic planning

One of the first undertakings for the newly-formed Advocacy Leadership Network was to kick off this strategic planning process with a “Cafe Conversation” about their hopes and wishes for the future of people with disabilities in Hamilton County.

This network was deliberately chosen to start conversations to ensure that the process is bold and creative and person-centered. Members will also be hosting and facilitating more cafe conversations.

Individuals who hold self advocacy positions at various agencies that serve people with disabilities are members of the network.

A Cafe Conversation is a technique based on the model of a “cafe” where participants move among tables and engage in conversation around a guiding question.

This technique is widely used in community and organizational planning to generate thoughtful responses to complex questions about the future. Often, use of a “Graffiti Wall” is included.

Graffiti walls are large sheets of paper placed on walls that encourage use of colored markers to draw or write about hopes and wishes for the future.

Large sheets of paper have been placed on walls around the agency to give everyone the opportunity to draw or write their hopes and wishes for the future of people served by the agency.

Advocacy Leadership Network

Lindsay Brillhart

Hamilton County Board of MR/DD

Linda Kunick

Resident Home, Inc.

DJ Maes

United Cerebral Palsy

Diana Mairose

World Images Unlimited

Patrice McHale

Down Syndrome Association

Marvin Moss

ARC - Hamilton County

Robert Shuemak

Jewish Vocational Service

Brady Sellet

Cincinnati Children's Hospital

Amity Elementary honored by Autism Society

Congratulations to Amity Elementary in the Deer Park School District for its recent recognition by the Autism Society of Greater Cincinnati with the Tree Rooted in Hope Award.

The school was nominated by Mark and Cindy Molloy, parents of Shannon. Shannon attends the satellite classroom operated by the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD at Amity.

In the nomination, Mark and Cindy said:

“Amity has generously given space for Hamilton County Board of MR/DD to have an intermediate class in a community school setting. This alone is tremendous support to individuals with autism, but it is the people of Amity who have made a world of difference in the lives of the children in this class.

Two and a half years ago, our daughter Shannon joined the class directly from hospital-based severe behavior treatment. It was not

an easy transition. Many people worked very hard to make it happen.

The MR/DD classroom team has been phenomenal, but they could not have done it in isolation, and the Amity staff has been phenomenal as well.

The atmosphere that has been created at Amity by Principal Deborah Farler is one of genuine acceptance, acknowledging that the children in this class need special supports, but that these same children have strengths, that they can participate in and even contribute to school activities.

At the Amity Arts Fair, Shannon sang a duet of “God Bless America” on stage in front of a full house. It was an amazing accomplishment for a child who, just two and a half years earlier, couldn’t even go to school.

Everyone knew that she loved to sing, but it was the willingness of Amity’s music teacher, Eve

Pierre, to recognize the strength and, working with the classroom team, use it to overcome Shannon’s limitations and allow her to perform in a concert with her peers.

Some of the children in the intermediate satellite classroom, including Shannon, will be moving on to junior high school next year.

They will miss Ms. Farley and all their teachers at Amity School, but, as they face new challenges, their capacity to meet those challenges will be greater for having been in that supportive Amity environment.

Furthermore, the capacity of the typically developing children to understand their peers with autism is also greater because they, too have been at Amity.

Therein lies the greatest hope and the reason that we think this exceptional school is so deserving of this award.”

We've Moved!



The administrative offices (Support Center) of the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD have moved to:

**1520 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45206-1747**

Phone: (513) 794-3300

Fax: (513) 559-6600

24-hour Emergency: (513) 794-3308

“Wheels for Wishes” raises money for CARA Fund

About 12 different kinds of wheels and 200 people rolled around Beech Acres Park in Anderson Township on April 28, raising awareness and more than \$2,700 for the Community Ambassador Resource Alliance (CARA) Fund.

The fund provides up to \$250 a person per year for special needs that cannot be provided for with public funds.

“We have recently given more than \$6,000 to several individuals for summer camp and other summer activities, so the success of ‘Wheels for Wishes’ was just in time,” said Kate Hawkins, CARA President.

CARA members include 12 contracted partners of the Hamilton County Board of MR/DD, who were out in full force to assist with Wheels for Wishes.

Mark your calendars now for next year’s event on April 26, 2008, at Beech Acres Park.

CARA provides for special purchases like adapted bicycles, amusement park and entertainment venue tickets, and classes for hobbies.

Individuals with disabilities would not be able to have or participate in requested items or activities without assistance from the CARA fund.



Tax-deductible donations to the CARA fund are welcome and accepted at any time!

Send checks made out to CARA to:

CARA

c/o Kate Hawkins, 1520 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45206

559-6672



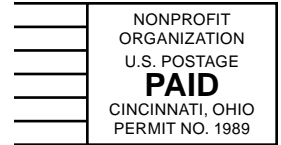
Hamilton County Board of MR/DD
1520 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 452206-1747

Shelley F. Goering, President
Greg Webb, Vice President
Robert Hall, Secretary
Cindi Andrews
Pat Leary
Martin Miller
Cheryl Phipps, Superintendent

Office of Community Relations
(513) 559-6649
www.hamiltonmrdd.org

**24 Hour
Emergency Number
(513) 794-3308**

HCBMRDD does not discriminate in provision of services or employment because of disability, race, color, creed, national origin, sex, or age.



Please Come to an Open House

*Tuesday, July 17, 2007
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.*

to introduce and celebrate our new
Support Center building



***1520 Madison Road, 45206
East Walnut Hills***

Refreshments

tours

RSVP to Kate Hawkins, kate.hawkins@hamilton-co.org, 559-6672