

ADVOCACY IN ACTION NEWS

Volume III, Issue II

Summer/Fall 2007

CAMPERSHIPS DELIVER DOUBLE REWARDS

When you make a donation to the **Ben M. Bonanno Campership Fund**, you're not only providing children with opportunities they otherwise may not have, but also giving families and caregivers a break from their daily routine.

In Ohio, approximately 21 percent of families in need of respite care do not receive assistance. That trend can be seen locally as well. This year, CMR received 66 requests, totaling nearly \$78,000, for camperships. Thanks to generous donations, CMR was able to fund approximately \$12,000 of the total amount requested, supporting children to attend more than 20 camps.

Respite care, including camp and recreational activities, makes it possible for family members to establish individual identities and enrich their own growth and development—all of which can improve their ability to better cope with daily responsibilities and maintain stability during a crisis. This especially is important because 42 percent of families that have children with disabilities lack basic workplace supports, such as paid sick leave and vacation time, according to the National Respite Coalition. So remember—when you support the campership fund, you're not only helping children, but also providing much-needed assistance for their families.

Here are just a few examples of how CMR can help children and families through camperships.

William, who is developmentally handicapped, has been in my care since he was 18 months old. His mother is

mentally ill, and his father left before he was born, so William gets no emotional or financial support from either of his birth parents. I am 74 years old, and on a limited, fixed income. Therefore, I cannot afford to...send William to camp. William is a well-behaved, respectful child. Over the years, he has won numerous awards for citizenship for being the star pupil of his class. However, I cannot drive, so I am limited in my ability to provide William with any social outlets other than school. Subsequently, during the summer months, he complains of feeling lonely, bored and isolated. I believe that Camp Happiness would allow William an opportunity to participate in recreational and social activities with other children his age and developmental level in a safe, non-threatening environment. William is very excited about the possibility of attending camp this summer.

– Helen, grandmother

Charlie attended Lose the Training Wheels™, a five-day camp that teaches children, ages 8 through 18, how to ride regular bicycles without training wheels.

My son Charlie (10) was one of the first children to learn how to ride in his group. Charlie is now riding around our neighborhood with confidence he never had before. In addition, it's an activity I can share with him. Riding a bike has changed Charlie's life and truly enhanced his sense of self and independence. This was an excellent program.

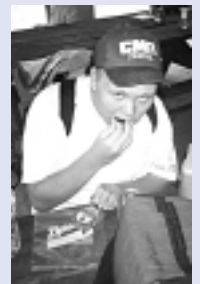
– Judy, mother



Camp Cheerful is just one of the many options for families.



Jeremy, a Lose the Training Wheels participant, gained confidence—and speed.



Kurt enjoys brown-bagging-it at camp.

For more information about Lose the Training Wheels, email Nancy Geschke at ngeschke@oh.rr.com, or call 440.892.1481.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Cindy Norwood

I commend the efforts of all individuals who helped to get Senate Bill (SB) 165 introduced in the legislature. Drafted by Senator Eric H. Kearney (D-Cincinnati), SB

165 would require that county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities (MR/DD) increase their membership by two individuals and that the new members be persons who are eligible to receive services offered by the board.

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC) is encouraging advocates to write to their state senators and ask them to co-sponsor or support the bill. Mike Rich, a graduate of the Partners in Policymaking class of 2006 and president of People First of Cuyahoga County, was instrumental in gaining the ODDC's support for the bill. In addition to contacting the ODDC, Mike has written letters to his senator, the editors of *The Plain Dealer* and the *Sub-Press Community Newspaper*, local television stations and the state board members of People First. Mike currently is sending letters to all Cuyahoga County mayors, commissioners and probate court magistrates.

While SB 165 would serve as a positive step in local MR/DD boards including

people with disabilities in the administrative decision-making process, I can't stress enough the importance of creating a collaborative environment by providing the time, resources and assistance to ensure that self-advocates receive the support they need to be active—and meaningful—participants. Only when all members of a group are open to listening and considering issues from different viewpoints can good decisions be made. If SB 165 passes—and if members of county boards embrace the concept of a shared vision—then people who historically have had decisions made about them and for them truly can impact their own lives and the lives of others. We must ensure that token representation is not the intent.

SB 165 has been assigned to the Finance and Financial Institutions Committee, but no hearing has been scheduled as of this publication date.

Contact our People First Helpline at 216.622.0755 ext. 18 to offer your support to Mike and our local People First self-advocates.



Mike Rich serves as a local advocate for change.

PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING® IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

CMR is facilitating the **Partners in Policymaking** leadership training program between the months of January and May 2008. Partners in Policymaking is an internationally recognized training series that is designed for adults with disabilities and for parents of children with disabilities. The program is designed to provide state-of-the-art knowledge about issues and policies related to disability and to help participants become more effective in influencing policy development at all levels. Currently, there are more than 20 Partners in Policymaking graduates in northeast Ohio, and CMR is anticipating adding to the delegation with the class of 2008.

Partners is about creating, working toward and achieving a vision of shared values with respect to individuals with disabilities. **Application packets are available now for the 2008 class of Partners in Policymaking.** Reserve your space early by calling CMR at 216.622.0755 or by emailing gmitchner@cmr-cleveland.org for more information.

Partners in Policymaking helped me become a stronger advocate for my child as well as other individuals with disabilities. The Partners in Policymaking program replaced "fears" with hope, knowledge and the confidence to be a more effective advocate and to understand and work with the schools and communities in a positive and productive way. This program will give you the insight and skills to effect positive change in your family, community, state—and even the country. For me, it was a life-changing experience.

— Gina Mitchner, Class of 2006

CMR THANKS ITS GENEROUS DONORS

The Center for Mental Retardation wishes to express its gratitude to the following supporters for their generous donations from March 31, 2007, through June 30, 2007. If your name is incorrect or has been inadvertently omitted, please contact us so our records can be corrected.

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BAKER WALK AND EXPO

DELIVERS ACTION-PACKED DAY OF FUN



Bagpiper Wayne Holscott and friends lead the walk along with Brooklyn Mayor Ken Patton.

The weather was touch-and-go, but walk-goers didn't let that put a damper on the much-anticipated, yearly event. More than 300 people took part in the activities on June 3 at Brooklyn Memorial Park. The skies cleared just in time for the walk—headed up by Brooklyn Mayor Kenneth E. Patton and a trio of bagpipers. To make sure everyone stayed well-hydrated, The Salvation Army was on hand to pass out water to walkers along the route.

After the walk, the action continued inside with groovin' music by deejays Rick and Robin Cutright; topsy-turvy tricks by the YMCA Tumblers; drumming by Chris Stolle and The Rhythmic Arts Project; and mystical feats from Magic by Andy. By the end of the day, Datz' D Nation: Phunk Dance Company had everyone gettin' down and phunky on the dance floor. And, of course, there was plenty of food to go along with the fun, including Starbucks Coffee®, Pepsi® beverages, Little Caesars® pizza and



Karen Baker came all the way from Florida to share in the fun.

bagels from Corky and Lenny's. Thanks to the leadership of Dr. Robert E. Schweid, walk chairperson, and all of the supporters, volunteers, entertainers and participants, the event was a great success—and we look forward to including even more interactive activities next year!



WKYC Anchor Lydia Esparra passes along warm wishes to Dorothy Mainer.

This year's walk offered something for all ages.

Photographs courtesy of Abe Robinson, Blind 7 Photography



The Center for Mental Retardation presents its Second Annual Legacy Luncheon, honoring Clevelanders who have made a significant impact to improve the lives of those affected by intellectual disabilities.

The Ben M. Bonanno Excellence in Advocacy Award

*is being presented to
WKYC TV-3's Dick Russ,
whose personal and professional life has been devoted to advocacy on behalf of individuals with disabilities.*

*Thursday, October 4, 2007, at 11:30 a.m.
InterContinental Hotel & Conference Center
9801 Carnegie Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio*

Emcee Del Donahoo, WKYC TV-3 feature reporter

For more information, visit the Center for Mental Retardation Web site at www.cmr-cleveland.org or call 216.622.0755 for reservations.

CENTER FOR MENTAL RETARDATION

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SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST

- 20 People First
- 23 Special Needs Estate Planning
*(for home managers, team leaders, QMRPs,
program managers and CFO/accounting staff)*

SEPTEMBER

- 12 CMR Open Golf Tournament
- 17 People First
- 22 Making Choices, Opening Doors
- 29 Making Choices, Opening Doors

OCTOBER

- 4 Legacy Luncheon
- 15 People First

NOVEMBER

- 19 People First

Watch your mail for information on *Your Blueprint for Success: Building a Positive Future*, a series of workshops for parents or professionals on different topics related to working with children and young adults with disabilities.

DONATE your CAR



CALL 24hrs/7days
1-877-267-0001

CMR center for mental retardation
BMT Auto Group, LLC acts as a professional solicitor on behalf of CMR to operate the car donation program.

- Help individuals with disabilities
- Get a tax deduction

24-48 hr. pickup



FALL SCHEDULE

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) Basics
Wednesday, Sept. 19 / Friday, Nov. 9

Communicating with Your Child's Teacher
Wednesday, Oct. 10

Participating in the Individual Education Plan (IEP)
Wednesday, Sept. 26 / Wednesday, Nov. 14

Writing Measurable Goals to State Standards
Friday, Oct. 19

All of the above workshops will be held from **10 a.m. to 12 p.m.** at the CMR office. A registration fee of \$10 per person will help to cover materials and refreshments. To register, call 216.622.0755, or send a letter noting the date(s) you'd like to attend along with a check for \$10 per person/per workshop to: **CMR, 1331 Euclid Ave., Cleveland, OH 44145.** Parking is available at a reduced rate; please ask for details when you register.

Evening workshops also will be offered from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (location to be determined). Please check our Web site at www.cmr-cleveland.org for further information.

On February 2, 2008, Kathie Snow, author of *Disability is Natural: Revolutionary Common Sense for Raising Successful Children with Disabilities*, will lead a workshop on *Disability Is Natural and Inclusive Education*. Kathie has more than 16 years of experience as a public speaker, trainer and consultant on disability issues.

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