



Home Happenings

Winter/Spring
2011

Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Inc.
extraordinary **people**, extraordinary **programs**

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Pictured from top: Kim Strain, staff, with Ricky Terrill.
Emilee Cesnick with Molly Sheffield, staff.
Susan Franz and Janet Brasington.

Message from the Executive Director



Sometimes operating an agency like EHCA can be a series of contrasts. Throughout this issue of Home Happenings, there are stories on a variety of EHCA activities and some of EHCA's newest programs and success stories.

The Options Program, or In-Home Waiver Services, was expanded into Potter County July 1, 2009. We are currently serving 18 persons in these services and have just placed an individual into the Life Sharing through Family Living Program. The OASIS Program, a co-venture with Mercyhurst North East, now has four students enrolled in its third class. This unique program is providing enhanced training and improved employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Another collaboration is with the Early Connections Before and After School Program.

Through this collaboration, we are now able to offer a very inclusive school age program that includes both children with and without disabilities. Family Engagement services have been developed with and funded by the Office of Children and Youth Services (OCY) in both Erie and Venango Counties. This program is succeeding in getting children out of foster care and reunified with their families as well as preventing children and families from entering the OCY system. The new Autism Waiver Program began July 1, 2010, providing a variety of supports for adults with autism to have an improved quality of life and success in the community. There are many success stories in each of these newer programs which are providing very valuable services to people with disabilities.

At the same time, EHCA's oldest program, which offers our residential services or group homes, has continued to perform very well in providing quality services to individuals with some of the most severe disabilities in the Commonwealth. Most of the residents have not only a severe or profound intellectual disability but are also medically fragile with a variety of physical disabilities. Both last year and this year, the program did extremely well on its annual licensing inspection. However, EHCA's oldest program is undergoing its most serious financial challenge ever. Under a new rate setting system which is designed to be a cost based system, the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) has reduced rates significantly for nearly all of the EHCA group homes. ODP has determined that the costs for the group homes are significantly higher than average compared with other houses of the same number of residents throughout the state. However, this is an apples and oranges comparison that does not take into account the acuity or severity of disability and needs of the residents. Individuals served in EHCA group homes have the most severe disabilities of any persons living in group homes anywhere in the Commonwealth. The agency has filed rate appeals for these rates. However, this is a very slow legal process. We are also trying to negotiate a settlement prior to going to a rate appeal hearing. Initially, some success was achieved in negotiating a settlement with the Office of Development Programs. Unfortunately, negotiations have come to a standstill with ODP unwilling to further negotiate a settlement. There is still a significant difference between the rates and the costs necessary to provide adequate and appropriate care for the individuals in the group homes. Because EHCA provides a unique model for these services, comparing costs with other providers is not a fair comparison. For instance, EHCA's day program costs are a part of the residential rate. For nearly all other providers, day program services are provided by either a separate agency or by that agency and billed as a separate cost. When comparing apples to apples, EHCA's costs are only slightly higher than most other providers and significantly less than costs of someone residing in a state center. ODP failed to account for the differences in acuity and the differences in services in its rate setting process. The challenge remains to resolve the rate setting issue in order to be able to continue to provide the necessary supports and services for the individuals residing in EHCA group homes. Anyone who would like more information on this serious issue or who is interested in advocating on behalf of the 81 residents affected can contact me either by phone at 814-454-1534 or e-mail at carpenedo@ehca.org.

Paul Carpenedo
Executive Director

Management Team

Paul Carpenedo
Executive Director

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Director of Nursing & Health Services

William F. Harriger
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
James R. McMann
Director of Human Resources

Peg Smith-Rich
Director of Residential & Program Services
Hope Ruedy
Director of Community Services
James A. Steber
Director of Planned Giving & Community Support
Patricia Straub
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Home Happenings

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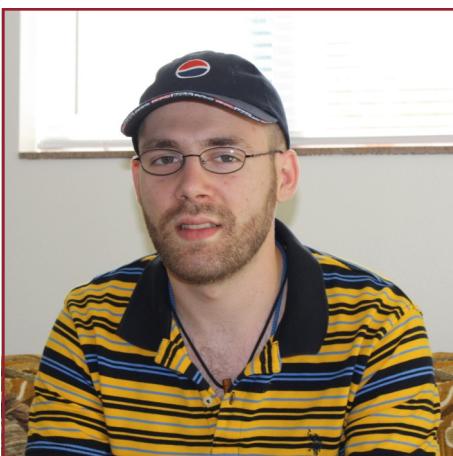
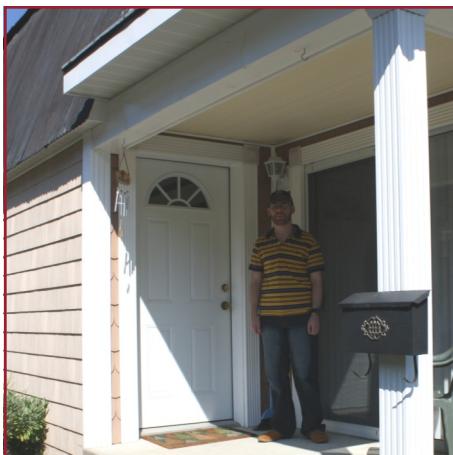
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The mission of EHCA is to assist people with disabilities to live rich and fulfilling lives.

Admissions, the provision of services, and referrals of residents or program participants shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin, age, sex, or limited English proficiency.

A is for Autism Waiver: An Interview with Jonathan

By Emily Fritz, Communications Specialist



The Centers for Disease Control Prevention estimate that autism affects **1 in 110 births**, and that **1.5 million Americans** are believed to have some form of autism.

At EHCA, we want to offer adults with autism a variety of tailored services (e.g., job finding, counseling, community inclusion) to help them feel confident to live independently and enjoy a full, rich life.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about EHCA's newest program, the Autism Waiver, please contact:

Bernadett Wilson,
Program Specialist
(814) 454-1534 x183
wilson@ehca.org

I stepped up on the welcoming porch and knocked on the front door. Twenty two-year-old Jonathan Schenk, who lived in the apartment which is tucked off the main street in downtown Corry, opened the door and said, "Hello." We shook hands, and before he invited me in, he said, "So that's what you look like," giggling. He had been expecting me.

I walked through the front door, kicked off my shoes, and immediately was greeted with the aroma of freshly baked muffins. Jonathan's kitchen looked immaculately clean as I did a quick scan around the room. Not many young bachelors keep their apartments that neat, I thought.

Lori Allen, a full-time EHCA employee, was also at Jonathan's for the interview, and we introduced ourselves. She suggested moving the interview into the living room, which was right around the corner, so we all took a seat and got ready to chat.

Jonathan, who has Asperger's Syndrome, is a participant in EHCA's newest program, Autism Waiver. Providers offering this program are helping adults 21 and over by filling a void after childhood services end for those diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

Jonathan explained that he had been living with his mom in a very rural area and hadn't had a lot of interaction with others, when his mom began looking for services that would help Jonathan. She was referred to EHCA. In January of 2010, Lori was assigned to work with Jonathan for 40 hours a week to address his personal goals.

"I first met Jonathan at his mom's house," recalled Lori. "He was shy, nervous, and quiet."

With Lori's assistance, Jonathan searched through apartment listings in the newspaper and found his very first apartment. "He has a good landlord, who has confidence in him," said Lori. "He has good neighbors here."

With help from EHCA and other charitable organizations, Jonathan was able to get furniture donated and purchase the rest of the items for housekeeping. Lori is working with Jonathan on budgeting, and she has helped him receive other community services, such as the local food bank. She has also linked him to others who are working with Jonathan on social skills, anger management, and community outreach.

Over the past year, Jonathan has learned how to take responsibility for himself. He does all his own household chores, makes important phone calls, and does his own banking, including keeping track of his debit card purchases and paying his own bills. Adopting a daily routine, Jonathan feels confident living on his own.

"Sometimes I surprise myself," he admitted.

Because Jonathan is cognizant of the importance of physical fitness, he joined a gym and is also eating healthy. He has taken computer classes and a karate class. Regular library visits nourish his hobby of reading. Participating in another group's outings allows him to meet peers and socialize. He enjoys surfing the Internet and working on his computer.

"He is much more outgoing now," complimented Lori. "He's had a lot of people step up and help him to get where he's at."

His future goals include meeting more friends and finding companionship. He is also deciding whether he should take online courses to get an education, or find a job at a local store or restaurant to allow him to have some more spending money. Either way, his future is looking brighter, thanks to assistance from EHCA.

"I'm very proud of him," said Lori.

Board of Director Notes



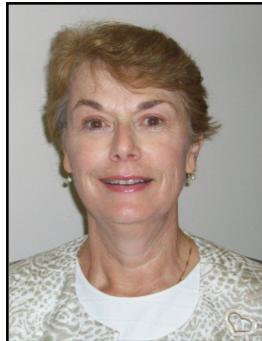
Edison Nicholson III joined our Board of Directors on June 23, 2010. He found EHCA through The Nonprofit Partnership's Project Blueprint, which promotes minority leadership at local nonprofit organizations. Edison has 20 years experience in youth development, working for agencies such as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club of America, and the Erie City Mission. His resume includes initiating an 8-week leadership development program at Gannon University for high school students. Edison lives in Erie with his wife, Antoinette. We welcome him to our Board of Directors!

Jerry Cannon joined our Board of Directors in March 2011. He recently retired after 35 years of working for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For the last 16 of those years, he was a licensing representative for the Office of Developmental Programs, in which he had frequent contact with our agency. He enjoyed visiting our residents and meeting our staff, and seeing the pride that both take in the environment they've created. When he retired, Jerry relocated from Pittsburgh to Erie and is thrilled to be living in his cottage by the lake. We are excited he has joined our team!



Andrew J. Glass also joined our Board of Directors in March 2011. Currently the Director of the Erie County Department of Health, he is responsible for the promotion, preservation, and protection of the health and well being of the 280,000 people and the environment in Erie County. His previous work experience also includes overseeing a network of seven hospitals in the tri-state region. In addition to serving on our Board of Directors, he takes pride in his various other community affairs. Andy has been a volunteer of ours for a while, but we welcome him into his new role on the board!

Susan Strange resigned from our Board of Directors on October 31, 2010, and has retired to living in Georgia. Susan first met Executive Director Paul Carpenedo when she was the relationship manager for our account at PNC during the time when the first group home opened. She served the board for three years, participating on the Finance and Ways & Means committees, and recently serving as chair of the Community Relations Committee. We wish Susan much happiness in her new home and in all of her future endeavors.



Community Integration

Whether its being a good neighbor in the communities where our group homes are located, or inspiring program participants to get involved in community service, we know that community inclusion is an important part of anyone's journey. Our hope is that each person served becomes a fully integral part of his/her community. Everyone has something to contribute to society, and by allowing program participants to experience community activities and participate in meaningful community programs, personal value can be heightened by the value added to the entire community.

Research shows that invigorating physical and social development that is diverse relates to the psychological growth of cognitive and adaptive skills. A decline in these skills can occur if someone is isolated or doesn't have the opportunity to experience such stimulations. In addition, social participation and connectivity to family or a community are linked to happiness and satisfaction.

Because of this, we feel strongly about making sure everyone feels they belong and are connected to the communities where they live. We want to attend special events, participate in community activities, volunteer, and be good neighbors. Our services are designed to help the individuals we serve to become fully integrated within their community.

Donor Updates

We want to say thanks to all the donors who contribute financial or in-kind gifts to our programs and those we serve. Without the generosity of our community, the 500 families we serve every year would not be able to depend on the quality services and rich programming we strive to provide.

After much consideration, we have decided to list all of our donors for a fiscal year in one edition of the Home Happenings each year. Acknowledgement for gifts received will be given in the autumn, after we have time to organize our donor database after the close of the fiscal year on June 30.

We will continue to send thank you letters as gifts are received, as we do appreciate your support.

We are also looking for stories about our donors!

If you are interested in sharing why you give and telling your story, please call Emily Fritz, communications specialist, at (814) 454-1534 ext. 157, or e-mail her at fritz@ehca.org.

Thank you!



Early Connections Merge Offers Fully Inclusive School Age Program

In July 2010, EHCA's School Age Program merged with Early Connections. The merge allows both programs to offer a fully inclusive classroom for children both with and without disabilities. By integrating gifted children with special needs children, all of the students learn from one another and how to interact with people who are different from them.

"The merge has allowed the children to open their views and opinions toward other children who may be different from them. The interactions and experiences they have here will benefit them in the future," said Tara Pekelnicky, a School Age Program teacher.

The teaching staff had to initiate some discussions about why some of the students got different treatment than others, addressing the claims that things weren't "fair." After the first week or so of adjustment and after learning about the individual needs of the other students, the kids are looking out for each other. Many of them have become close friends.

"I've been a big supporter of inclusion most of my life," said Nancy Kalista, executive director at Early Connections. The support and enthusiasm of the Early Connections staff have made the transition rather easy, and EHCA is pleased to be partnering with such a wonderful organization.

The School Age Program is now located at the Early Connections building at 420 West 6th Street in Erie.



Family Engagement Services Reunited Happy Family

When Aaron and Missy welcomed their baby boy, Lawrence, into the world in September 2009, they couldn't foresee the challenges ahead which they would have to face just to bring their baby home with them. Because Missy had previous Office of Children and Youth (OCY) involvement, they stepped in immediately after Larry was born and detained him; Larry went to live with a foster family instead of going home with his mommy and daddy. Today, thanks to the hard work of his parents and the support services of the Project First Step Program at Erie Homes for Children and Adults, Larry celebrated the holidays at home.

Aaron, a first-time father, is dual diagnosed with mental health concerns and intellectual disabilities. Missy also has mental health concerns and a learning disability. Because of their disabilities, and their desire to raise their newborn son, OCY referred them to Project First Step at EHCA. Under the family engagement services, EHCA staff were asked to help Missy and Aaron build their parenting skills, understand Lawrence's special medical needs (he was born prematurely), learn how to properly care for him, and improve their home environment by keeping their living space clean and smoke-free.

"I was skeptical, because I wasn't sure I could raise a child," said Aaron.

Family engagement services provided through EHCA's Project First Step really made a difference. The staff tailored their services to meet the individual needs of the Smith family. They accompanied the Smiths and the foster parents to some of Lawrence's physician appointments, working with Missy and Aaron on communicating with medical providers and understanding how to carry out the doctor's instructions at home. With many skill-building lessons, hours with a Ready-or-Not Tot (programmable baby doll), and supervised visits with their son, Missy and Aaron showed much improvement. They were bonding with Lawrence, keeping their home clean, and meeting all their son's specialized needs. When the circumstances were appropriate, EHCA staff advocated for moving the visits into Missy's and Aaron's home, and the visits got longer with some overnights and weekends.

"Missy and Aaron worked hard, because they really wanted to be parents," says Tina Ferraro, program specialist of Project First Step. "They all continue to do very well."

On June 7, 2010, Lawrence was reunited with his parents on a full-time basis.

HOME
Sweet
HOME

Giving Opportunities

GIFTS OF CASH Online donations are now accepted! Or mail a check made payable to "EHCA" to 226 East 27th Street, Erie, PA 16507. Donors are asked to please specify which fund or program your donation should benefit.

MATCHING GIFTS Many companies (e.g., PNC Bank, General Electric, Erie Insurance Group) have matching gift programs. Ask your employer if they will match your donation! It usually involves a simple form to be completed by the donor, then the matching gift is automatically submitted to EHCA.

GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCK Donating stock has tax advantages, depending on the current market value and length of time it's been appreciating.

PLANNED GIFTS Leaving a legacy is a wonderful reminder of what a generous person you are; planned gifts include charitable bequests, trusts, insurance policies, and gift annuities. We are available to answer your questions, and we encourage you to speak with your attorney, tax professional, or accountant when you are making a planned gift.

VEHICLE DONATIONS We participate in Charity Direct's vehicle donation program. Do you have an old car, motorcycle, truck, boat, motor home, or recreational vehicle? You could turn it into cash for us! Visit charitydirect.com for more details.

VOLUNTEER Your time is also an important gift! We always welcome volunteers to spend time with our residents, help staff with household chores, assist a program with a project or outing, or volunteer at one of our events.

IN-KIND DONATIONS We have a wish list of items that we often need or want to purchase. This wish list can be found online at ehca.org, but it includes craft items, tickets to shows or performances, and household items. Gift cards are also appreciated!

Holiday Recap

This holiday season, we:

- Completed 25 acts of kindness in every MOVE Program group (12 groups; that's 300 acts of kindness!)
- Celebrated as each of the 16 group homes, the Options Program, and the agency staff hosted holiday parties
- Gave away 12 gifts to employees through the Employee Fund during "12 Days of Christmas"
- Ensured 88 people had gifts this holiday through our Be-A-Friend gift giving program



Inkjets, Cell Phones Offer a Unique Way to Donate

Your used printer cartridges and cell phones can

Make a Difference

We are helping keep the earth clean while earning new equipment and cash. You can help us earn even MORE by saving used cartridges and cell phones!

Funding Factory

We have an account at Funding Factory, and you can help by organizing your business or family into donating used printer cartridges and cell phones on our behalf. They recycle them, which is great for the environment, and we collect points for every item donated. We'll turn those points into cash and be able to do more good...all because you remembered to recycle your cartridges and cell phones! For a qualifying list of items, visit fundingfactory.com.

Join our Facebook Fan Club

We are online! Find us on Facebook and Twitter by searching for EHCA, Inc. We also have our very own YouTube channel. You can always visit us at ehca.org, too. Look for a special social media contest coming in February!



K is for Kegs & Corks: Wrapping Up a Great Event



By the Numbers:

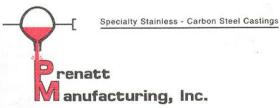
- 1 Wonderful Host: Blue Canoe Brewery
- 3 Hours of Fun
- 6 Beer & Wine Vendors
- 100 Happy Guests
- 8,500 Dollars Raised for EHCA

Thanks to Bill Zimmer and the Blue Canoe Brewery, the dedicated volunteer committee, the generous sponsors, the participating vendors, and the first-year attendees, Kegs & Corks was a huge success! Held in Titusville, it raised awareness of the services specifically provided in Crawford County and raised dollars, allocated for the Special Needs and Capital Improvements funds.



▲ Joy and Becky Link, pictured above, spoke to the attendees of the 1st Annual Kegs & Corks about the services they receive from EHCA, and how the dollars raised at the event would be put to good use giving people with disabilities the opportunity to have a rich and full life.

MAJOR SPONSORS:



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Lifesaver Award



Working as a direct support professional has its challenges, along with its rewards. We sometimes have staff who have to perform lifesaving techniques on the residents and program participants for which they care. When this happens, that staff person is granted a Lifesaver Award. Pictured above, Dana Kramer (left), is acknowledged for successfully performing the Heimlich maneuver on a resident. Peg Smith-Rich, the director of residential and program services, awarded her a certificate at an All Staff Meeting in November.

MOPS Hosted Baby Shower for Project First Step Moms

Mothers of Preschoolers, a mentoring and social group for moms of youngsters, recently hosted a baby shower for five of EHCA's Project First Step moms. Project First Step serves families under the poverty level with doula, family engagement, and visitation services. The doula service works with moms with disabilities during their pregnancy, through the delivery, and post-partum.

Each of the five moms participating received about a dozen and a half gifts each for their new baby, enjoyed a fabulous spread of food, and of course—had cake to celebrate! The MOPS moms doted over the guests of honor, giving them a day they typically wouldn't have been able to experience. The day was special for the five new moms.



N is for Newsletters: Sign up to Receive Our Monthly E-Blast at EHCA.org!

OASIS Graduates Second Class



This fall, three students with developmental disabilities graduated with a one-year culinary certificate from Mercyhurst North East as members of the OASIS Program.

Pictured above are: (back row) Chris Wilson, student; Tamie Tregaskis, OASIS program specialist at EHCA; Beth Ann Sheldon, director of hospitality management at Mercyhurst North East; (front row) Sue Ann Mills, student coordinator at Mercyhurst North East; Teresa Lutz, student; and Helen King, student.

The new class is in session! Four students are currently enrolled in OASIS and began taking classes in the fall of 2010.

Photo Contest Decided Annual Report's Cover



To decide the artwork for the cover of the 2009-2010 Annual Report, we had a contest open to all staff, residents, and program participants at EHCA. The winning photo was submitted by Chris Valentin of our Staff Development Department.

Pictured: Tracey Askey & Christine Cash

Quilt Project to Kick Off this Spring

Plans are underway for our 100th anniversary in 2012! The committee has decided the year-long theme will be, "Stitching together a century of stories." The inspiration project for this theme was the idea that every resident and program participant we serve should have the opportunity to create a memory lap quilt showcasing their personal photos and story.

This is an ambitious project, and we are estimating over 100 quilts will need to be handmade! The quilting, which will be time and labor intensive, will kick off this spring, and everyone's quilts will be ready for exhibition in December 2012.

We are seeking donations to help us accomplish this task:

- Fabrics
- Quilting needles
- Thread
- Batting
- Photo fabric transfers
- Jo Ann Fabrics gift cards
- Gifts of cash



We are also seeking talented volunteers to help with the actual quilt work.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Patty Czulewicz at 454-1534 ext. 164.

Recruited a New Director of Human Resources



Please welcome Jim McMann as our new director of human resources. With a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration from Penn State Erie, the Behrend College, he has previous work experience at employers, such as: The Regional Cancer Center; EmergencyCare, Inc.; Meadville Medical Center; and Hamot Medical Center. McMann was most recently the Director of Marketing for The Tim Smith Team, RE/MAX Real Estate Group in Erie before coming to EHCA.

McMann has been a board member for a number of professional and non-profit organizations, frequently travels the country by rail on Amtrak, is an avid Brown's fan, and is proud to be working and living in Erie.

Staff Work Behind the Scenes on Special Committees

Do you ever ask, "I wonder what they do all day?" There are a lot of things we do that you might not always realize, so here are a few things that help keep us busy behind the scenes!

A Cost Savings Committee takes suggestions from all staff members on how to cut expenses and implement new ways of doing things more efficiently. A Green Team, as part of this committee, reviews environmentally friendly practices and offers tips to staff on how to reduce, recycle, and reuse in their everyday lives.

A Fundraising Committee oversees several fundraising activities year-round and encourages agency-wide support to help close the gap between tighter funding and increasing expenses.

A Health Fair Committee organizes a staff health fair by welcoming health agencies to teach us and distribute information on a wide range of health topics.

An Information Systems Workgroup meets regularly to discuss technology and software needs of the agency.



The Former Director of Human Resources Says Farewell

Polly Momeyer, the former Director of Human Resources, has resigned for a new career opportunity in the community.

She started at EHCA in February of 2000 as the development and community relations director. She soon was assigned dual roles in development and human resources before becoming the director of human resources.

We thank Polly for her nearly 11 years of service and wish her success in her future endeavors.

Upcoming Events

Thursday, March 31

SPRING SWING KICKOFF Join us at the Ambassador Center on March 31, as we kick off this year's 10th Annual Spring Swing! The kickoff event will feature guest bartending, advanced auction bidding, and a chance to win raffle prizes. We will be in a new location this year, using the beautiful Hemingway bar area at the Ambassador Center. Plan to stop by between 5 and 7 p.m.

Friday, April 29

10th ANNUAL SPRING SWING Don't miss your chance to dine and dance the evening away at the 10th Annual Spring Swing on April 29, at the Ambassador Center. A silent auction and cash bar open at 6 p.m., buffet begins at 6:30 p.m., and the live auction and program commence at 8:45 p.m. Advanced reservations are required and can be made online at ehca.org/springswing or by calling EHCA at (814) 454-1534; admission fee is \$50 per attending guest. Tables of ten and sponsorships are also available.



Saturday, June 11

HIGHMARK WALK FOR A HEALTHY COMMUNITY We are one of 25 organizations participating in the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community at Presque Isle State Park on June 11. Online team and individual registrations will be accepted after February 1 at highmarkwalkforahealthycommunity.org. To boost early team registration, we will draw a winning team of five or more who is registered by February 15, to receive a \$50 Panera Bread gift card, so they can get together and plan their fund-raising over coffee and bagels! So start recruiting walkers today!

Volunteer News



Thirty-five volunteers were recognized at the 2010 Annual Dinner in October. Our volunteers served over ten hours each on various committees, by landscaping or completing other tasks, or by offering direct service to our residents and/or program participants.

► Shown here: Paula Michalekko, Zach Webb, Bob Bach, Jim Colvin, Joan Jaskiewicz, Vic Kelley, Jim Laughlin, and Debbie Leasure accept their special gift at the dinner.

In addition to the volunteers honored at the Annual Dinner, ten high school and college students received certificates in the mail thanking them for completing over ten hours of community service requirements at EHCA.



► Shown here, volunteer MiKayla Clayton visits the South Apartment Group Home and delivers handmade jewelry to the female residents, including Stephanie Baranski.



▲ Shown here, volunteer Brendan Scully stands next to the picnic table with moveable benches for optimal accessibility that he built for the 216 Group Home as a special Eagle Scout project.

The Volunteer Program at EHCA offers diverse opportunities for anyone wanting to get involved! All volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer application and will work with a program specialist or house manager to schedule convenient hours for you to volunteer. We'll try to match your personal interests with your volunteer work as best we can. Depending on the length and type of service, you may be asked to provide clearances, but it is not a requirement to begin volunteering.

You can do direct service, serve on a committee, work at an event, participate in media or community outreach activities, help with landscaping, fall clean-up, snow removal, planting, maintenance, or office work, or you may just become a companion and regular visitor to some of our residents—it's up to you!

Call Emily Fritz at 454-1534 ext. 157 to learn more!

“ Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves.”

Walking Program Encouraged MOVE to Get Fit

Under the direction of EHCA's physical therapist and Gannon University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program faculty member, Tom Hudson, four Gannon University graduate students completed a research project titled, *The Efficacy of A Community-Based Exercise Program for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities*. The four students, Alyson Adams, Melinda Gurgul, Andrea Munro, and Nicole Serene, partnered with the MOVE Program (*a day program for adults with developmental disabilities*) and worked with ten participating program members. The Gannon University students developed the program because there is little research assessing the fitness levels of individuals with significant disabilities.

The students met with the participants on August 3, to collect initial data. The program outcome measures included changes in the participants' pre- and post- testing resting heart rate, end of walking session heart rate, heart rate recovery at five minutes, and walking speed. On August 11, the 8-week walking program began. Walking three times a week at the air-conditioned Millcreek Mall (to avoid the extreme summer temperatures), the participants enjoyed not only the activity but also interacting with people at the mall. Each session of walking began with a stretching activity as a warm-up followed by 45 minutes of walking with rest and water breaks provided as necessary. At the end of each session of walking, the participants engaged in a ten-minute cool-down activity consisting of slow paced walking and stretching.

The results were very positive. For the heart rate changes, seven of the ten participants lowered their heart rate scores indicating improved cardiac fitness. The walking speed changes were complete opposite to the heart rate changes. Only one participant increased their speed at the end of the walking program. The Gannon University students learned that the participants were only going to walk as fast as they wished and that walking speed was not an appropriate measure of fitness for this population.

This 8-week program was in preparation for a community walk. The students gave thought to what community walks would be taking place during the walking program, and they chose a walk/run around Presque Isle State Park on September 26. The event, called Run Around Erie, benefitted another Erie-based nonprofit community organization. The MOVE Program participants joined the one-mile walk, despite the rain. At the end of the walk, many onlookers cheered our group on, and the Gannon University students gave out medals and stickers to our walkers. Although the weather was wet, everyone had a great time!

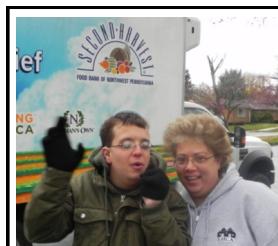
We are hopeful that there will be a continued relationship between EHCA and the Gannon University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program.

X, Y, and Z

To wrap up this newsletter, enjoy these photos of some newsworthy odds and ends!



Kevin Moore of The Erie Community Foundation, Ann Scott of Erie Insurance Group, and Barb Kulisek and Chris Banoc of March of Dimes accept Cornerstone Awards at the EHCA Annual Dinner in October 2010. Not pictured, Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust also was a recipient. Awards are given as appreciation to generous financial support.



Andrew Heath, an Options Program participant, volunteered with his SNAP group and staff member, Terri Blodgett, to collect food and money for the Second Harvest Food Bank/WICU food drive.



Wayside Presbyterian Church made a donation to our Project First Step Program during their December 11, church service. They also supported a number of other local charities. Pictured here, Rev. James Haas (left), is pictured with EHCA's Jim Steber (center) and Paul Carpenedo (right).



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Happy New Year!

As we say goodbye to 2010, we want to thank you for celebrating the start of another new year with us! We are looking ahead to making strides with personal resolutions by our staff and those we serve, in social media and alternative ways to connect with you—our supporters, and by embarking on yet another successful calendar of fundraising events and activities.

Please plan on joining us at our annual favorites—Spring Swing, the Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community, and our 2nd Annual Kegs & Corks. There will be many other opportunities for you to get involved, make a donation, or volunteer to help us with our mission of assisting people with disabilities to live rich and fulfilling lives throughout 2011, as well.

At the end of this year, begin to look for collateral materials on our 100th Anniversary. In just a short year, we'll reach our centennial, and are so proud of our roots. It's exciting to be part of the EHCA story during such an important milestone. Our past has shaped our present, and the efforts we make today will create our future.

We wish you a very happy new year, too!

