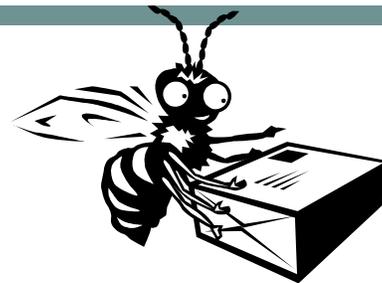


Newsletter Date: May 28th,
2010

THE BUZZ



Issue # 1 Volume 2

Advocacy in Action: By Mr. James Burney

Joke of the Quarter:

How do you know your baby is going to be a lawyer?



You crave a lot of bologna.

By : Lori Shapiro

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Advocacy can take many forms. One way to stand up for yourself is in the political world of Virginia government. To find out more, I interviewed Kevin Benton to learn about his trips to Richmond to advocate not just for himself but for all people with disabilities.

James: Kevin, tell us a little bit about yourself.

Kevin: My name is Kevin Benton and I have been with Hope House for about ten years.

James: That's great Kevin, I hear you go to Richmond to meet the legislators and tell them about your life. What was your first experience like?

Kevin: The first time I went I was really nervous. It was hard to get the words out.

James: What else happened on that trip?

Kevin: We stayed in a hotel, which was fun. We went dancing that night, and

that was great, but I was really tired after that long day!

James: Do you still go to Richmond and what is that like now?

Kevin: I do still go and now I am very calm when I get to speak. I feel more confident speaking in public now and that helps me be a better advocate.

James: Congratulations Kevin. Does that confidence now help you in your everyday life?

Kevin: Yes, I feel better about talking about my needs. I am very proud of what I have been able to do in Richmond. I am now more confident and better at expressing myself.

James: Would you suggest going to Richmond to advocate to others? And how could they get involved?

Kevin: I definitely would tell Hope House people to try this kind of trip. It is fun and you learn a lot. They should tell their staff if they want to do it.

James: Thanks for sharing your story of advocacy at the Virginia state government level.

I hope you will try self-advocacy or find another way to practice standing up for yourself when an issue arises. Let me know how it's going by emailing me at jamesburney20@yahoo.com

If you have any comments, opinions, or just want to contribute, contact the Hope House Foundation Administrative Offices at 625-6161.



Fins, Feathers, and Paws: By Jeremy Norman

The most recent addition to my pet family is Splinter. He is an albino rat. Splinter is white like snow with the cutest red eyes. His fur is super soft and he is very playful. Splinter's favorite thing to do is to be out of his cage.

I recommend a boy rat. One rat at a time to develop a close bond is a good idea. If you are looking into getting a rat I would stay away from the girl rats. Female rats are more likely to bite because they tend to be protectors. I also say one rat a time because if you get more than one together they will bond together and not to you, and lets face it you want them to bond with you. Having a rat is like having a cat really. They can be as smart as cats and they are very trainable. You can train them to do tricks like a cat or a dog. Another thing about rats is that they can live up to 12 years.

The setup for a rat is not

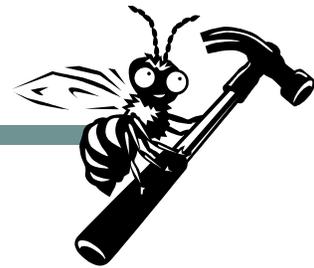
very expensive. You can use an old aquarium, like I am, or a specific cage built for a rat. They are easy to take care of. The most common misconception is that rats carry diseases but they don't. Of course if you by some chance got bit I would apply first aid to the bite.

Some rats can be as long as 12 inches from the tip of the nose to the end of the tail. I purchased my rat at the Greenbrier Mall pet shop. He was only \$6. Rats are fun and affordable pets. Rats can eat pretty much anything because they are scavengers but I recommend plain old rat food. If you are looking to give them a treat try fresh veggies like kale, lettuce, carrots, cucumbers or fresh fruit like apples or grapes. Whatever you do don't add sugar to the food. That can be harmful for your pet. Rats also need bedding. I use bedding made of pine. Rats also

like places to hide so try adding a little house to their cage. Rats also need chew sticks because their front teeth keep growing. This is true for any other rodents like a guinea pig, hamster, or a mouse. They also need a water bottle to hang on the side of their cage and a food bowl. Like all rodents, rats like to run so I recommend a wheel. Wheels come in all different sizes and shapes so choose the one that best fits your rat.

If you have questions, concerns, or even a cool experience you want to share please e-mail me snowball0758@yahoo.com.





Dream Big-Then Set Goals to Get There.....An interview with Josh Turner.



Josh Turner is a young man who recently achieved a rare thing: extraordinarily rare in the state of Virginia, statistically still quite rare everywhere else. He has a disability and lives in his own home; and not only that, he does so not in a group home, not in a supervised apartment setting, but in a townhouse development where his neighbors are couples and young families, many enlisted military. He still receives services, but needs far fewer now that so much time need not be spent trying to support him in a setting that wasn't really what he wanted.

Josh's history includes a stay as a young man in a large residential center, later a move from that setting to a group home, then to a supervised apartment setting, first with a roommate, and then by his own preference, alone. It's certainly not that Josh is antisocial, in fact he is outgoing with charismatic charm, flamboyant good humor, and a cheerfulness that just feels good to be around. But he does cherish his privacy and if he ever lives with someone again, he hopes it to be a life partner, not a roommate or caregiver.

When I arrived at Josh's home, it was the first time I'd been there since he'd moved in, so of course he first showed me around his place. The walls were still a bit bachelor bare, but he pointed out a nice collection of turtle figurines set up neatly on an occasional table, a similar collection of frogs on another. His home is a bit messy, with various arts and crafts materials giving evidence to his creative and artistic nature; but surprisingly clean, at least for the bachelor living stereotype I carry in my mind.

"Things are good" Josh says, "My dream came true"; he adds referring to his recent move away from the supervised apartment setting. "I miss Bison" says Josh of the apartment setting where he lived prior to his current address, "but I love living on my own, living my own life." "I met a neighbor who lives over there and she always speaks to me and has made me feel welcomed and touched" he says, indicating a duplex behind the one where he now lives. "I've met a couple across the street, two men, they are like me, and they have a son. I can walk to the beach, the pizza place, the Family Dollar, and to see some of my friends who live on Granby Street. I'm so proud of myself, I'm proud of who I am."

Josh has other people in his life too, he talked about how much he loves his sister and her family, misses the mother he lost a few years back, the importance of his relationship with his dad who lives out of state, his friends at his day program and Bison, and some favorite staff.

Josh and I discussed what was pivotal in achieving his dreams,

and if you boil it down it was about being able to fully envision a future life, something it took Josh a while and a few bumps in the road to do. We discussed how we (staff) often tend to spend a lot of time working on helping people with disabilities achieve skills to cope with things as they are, where they are, instead of working toward the bigger changes that are really needed. He's right too: after all, who past college age, besides people with developmental or age related disabilities, spends so much energy trying to compromise and adjust their own preferences to live peaceably with people who have no connection to them? What other group stays so entrenched in trying to be satisfied with what they have instead of pursuing what they really want?

Josh says, "Set long term goals; make sure everything you are working on is getting you to those goals. I worked hard on my goals to live more independently, and staff helped. I have other big goals too, I want to work on getting my driver's license, I'm ready for a job change, I'd like to write children's books, I'd like to have a husband someday, and maybe adopt a child."

Josh now articulates these dreams so clearly as goals, versus wishful thinking of a future perceived as something only other people have, people without disabilities, that I know he will pursue them with the same purposefulness that he pursued achieving the skills he needed to make this move.

Josh, did in fact provide me with the opening for one of his stories about two magical wizards, they live in a castle where they are raising 29 kids. I think that could generate material for a whole series of children's books.



My Story: By Timothy Howard



My name is Timothy Howard and this is my story. I have had a very exciting and opportunity-filled life; 30 years to be exact. My story is about my thirtieth birthday. On February 24th, 2010 I turned the big 30. I was quite excited about the whole process. I planned on going to the circus with my father and sister. The Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey were coming to town and that sounded like a way to celebrate. Also I had a birthday party. My roommate and I collaborated and had an awesome party. We had cake, balloons, and of course presents. I made cupcakes because I like them better, I know they turned out great because we had none left. My staff and I

made punch. We had so much left over that we brought it to my other birthday party at my day support.

My second party was at Expressions, where again I had cake and warm wishes. I had a great time and was glad to have brought the punch. My family also gave me a party. This time I had a nice home-cooked meal and great presents. Turning 30 and having 3 parties to celebrate is not half bad, in fact I loved it. I wish I could turn 30 every day, of course I don't know how my waist band would take that.

My 30th birthday would not have been as well supported if it was not for my friends and staff. I have a great friends. Before my birthday Jeanne, who I really like, met me at Tranquility, my group home at SSVA, to go shopping and hang out for the weekend. We hang out a lot. We like to go shopping, especially at the dol-

lar store. She took me to Wal-Mart as well. I love staying with Jeanne. We went to Cinema Café to see a movie. On Sunday we had Taco Bell for lunch, which is always good. I am always on my best behavior with Jeanne. She means a lot to me. We really had a great time and will hopefully be spending time at her house for another weekend in June. Without Jeanne my 30th birthday celebrations would not have been as great as they were.

Turning 30 was really fun and I had such a great time.





Interested?

Have you had a great adventure recently? Do you write short stories? Paint, take photographs, or draw? Does your dog or cat do a fancy trick? *The Buzz* wants to hear from you! Help us share your personal story, fictional story, artwork or other creative talent. Do you have a question you would like answered by other service users? Maybe you are looking for a running partner, the best place to go for ice cream, maybe you know the best place to go: contribute to *The Buzz*, and tell our readers! We can be your artistic source, help you connect with others in the community, and give you an outlet for your creativity, knowledge and talents. Below is our most recent short story submitted by one of our readers.



The Magical Wizard: by Josh Turner



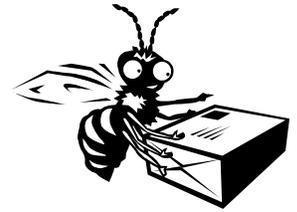
Once upon a time there lived a very magical wizard named Daniel Bryan Jones. And the wizard lived in a very very big castle in ancient times. Then the wizard met another very powerful wizard named Joshua Lee Turner and later they both got married. And had twenty nine kids their names are Jason Edwards Jones, Justin Anthony Jones, Benjamin Lee Jones, Jonathan Michael Jones, Joshua Lee Jones, Charles Matthew Jones, Daniel Lee Jones, Daniel Bryan Jones Jr., Anthony Bryan Jones, Joseph Lee Jones, Dustin Edward Jones, Robert Lee Jones, Michael Brian Jones, Mark Edward

Jones, Luke Lee Jones, Samuel Bryan Jones, Jeremiah Lee Jones, Joel Edward Jones, Timothy George Jones, Peter Edward Jones, Titus Lee Jones, Matthew Timothy Jones, Peter Bryan Jones, Joshua Edward Jones, Samuel Lee Jones, Luke Edward Jones, Mark Bryan Jones, Jeremiah Matthew Jones, Titus Edward Jones.



HEART TO HART

...AN ADVICE COLUMN ON RELATIONSHIPS



In a relationship, trust is important. If both people want to be together they have to be truthful to each other.

The steps you have to take to trust each other:

- Don't lie to each other.
 - You should not lie to each other because it is going to affect both people. Both people are going to get hurt. When you lie it makes both people feel bad. You can't trust that person.
- They can't date any other person but you.
 - When you date two people you are going to get caught. You are hurting both people and you are going to have to make up your mind who you want to be in a relationship with.
- You have to be with that person through thick and thin.
 - When you are going through thick and thin you can be there for each other because it shows you love that person.
- You have to love that person.
 - Show you love the person and they will love you back and you will both benefit from it.

Love is a wonderful thing.

If you and the person you are with follow these steps your relationship will only get stronger. Trust me, I'm a doctor. Once again, if you have question's about love, life, and relationships, send them to me at the Hope House Foundation Administrative Office.

Always on Call,
Dr. Hart



This Is What I Think...

A Critique Column by Blake Thomas



Hi! Its Blake Thomas again and playing video games is what I like to do most. You know the drill, if you want my opinion on cool and not so cool video games to play then please continue on...

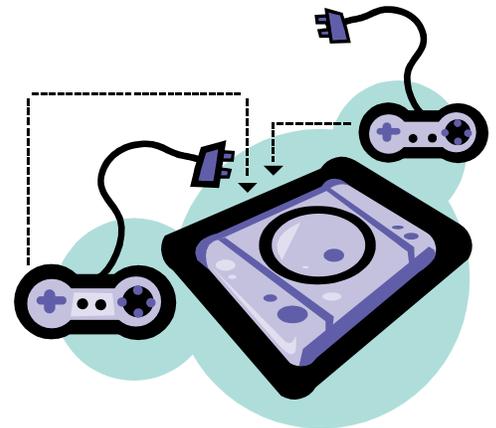
For the first video game, I would like to tell you about Legends of Wrestle Mania. I play this game on my X-Box 360. I got this game as a gift for Easter. It is so cool to play. I give this game two thumbs up. If you're like me and love to watch wrestling, just imagine how cool it is to play with your favorite wrestler and get to do their awesome moves. I love

this game because it has my favorite wrestler the Undertaker in it. When I wrestle with the Undertaker I like to wrestle Big Show and kick his butt. If you would like to know which other cool characters you could play with this game I suggest you go out and play this really cool game.

The next game I would like to give my opinion on is Duck Dodgers. You can play this game on the Nintendo 64. Yes I said Nintendo 64. Although this is a real old game system, the graphics aren't that bad. I received this game as a Christmas gift a long time ago. I give this game two thumbs up also. One of the cool things about this game is it has space creatures in it. It is a really easy game to play and it is not too violent, meaning

no blood or guns. My favorite part of the game is when the Duck Dodgers say funny things like "Duck Dodge 24 hour century"... Yeah, I know. Funny right? Well if you want to hear more funny things they say, then you know what to do. Find someone with a Nintendo 64 and the game Duck Dodgers and see for yourself!

Good luck on that one *ha ha ha!*



Events/ Classifieds

Have any events coming up you want to share? Do you have items you just don't need and want to sell? E-mail buzz.connections@yahoo.com .



John Waff is looking for someone to learn to Ballroom Dance with. He is a beginner who has only taken classes a few times, but would like to keep learning. If interested please contact him at 757-622-8595.

The Buzz is looking for contributors. If you have an opinion or story to tell please call 757-625-6161, ext. 14.



“People for People” is an advocacy group open to service users. The group meets every 1st Wednesday of the month. The meeting takes place from 6 pm- 8 pm at Eggleston Services on Ingleside Drive. Starting at 5:30pm, there is a dinner available. Dues are \$10 a year.

Stephen has a 13” television he is interested in selling for \$20. He also has a VCR he would sell for \$10, and VHS tapes, 3 for \$5 or \$2 each. If interested please e-mail the newsletter.



The Able Gamers Foundation has unveiled a groundbreaking area of accessible web games on their website, AbleGamers.com. The accessible games are an unprecedented development in the area of gaming for people with disabilities. The new games on AbleGamers.com are sorted by what devices are needed to play (mouse, keyboard, both, etc).

If you have any comments, opinions, or just want to contribute contact the Hope House Foundation Administrative Offices at 625-6161.