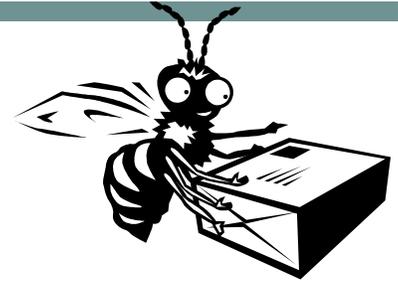


Newsletter Date: May 15th,  
2009

# THE BUZZ



Issue # 1 Volume 1

## Advocacy in Action: By Mr. James Burney

Joke of the Quarter:

What's Irish and comes out in the Springtime?



Paddy O' Furniture.

By : Lori Shapiro

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I am James Burney, a 46 year old bachelor who lives in Enfield Gardens Apartments. I have been with Hope House for almost four years and I work at Chanello's Pizza. My column in the newsletter is dedicated to the issue of advocacy. For me, advocacy means speaking up for yourself. I believe people with disabilities should learn to practice advocacy so that they can help others understand what their particular needs are. When I was growing up I was al-

ways the quiet person regarding things going on in my life that I didn't know how to share with other people. One day I said to myself, I am just going to let others know how I feel and how I like to be treated. Despite my disability I realized that it was OK to ask for what I wanted and needed.

Since that day, and with the encouragement of family and friends, I have gotten better at "speaking up" and now feel empowered and have a great sense of relief after I explain my needs. I would like to help other Hope House service users reach a place where they also feel com-

fortable speaking up for themselves.

I am a member of the "Our Voices" committee, which is a group made up of Hope House service users, Board members, and community supporters who meet monthly to discuss how to make the Hope House better by encouraging and reacting to advocacy issues.

I would like to invite you to send me any questions or stories regarding advocacy. Have you had a success that would be good to share? Please feel free to contact me via email

[jamesburney20@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesburney20@yahoo.com)

or through the Administrative Office.



## Fins, Feathers, and Paws: By Jeremy Norman

My name is Jeremy Michael Norman and I love animals. I want to share my experience and tell you all about animals. My goal for this article is to teach and to inspire people about all kinds of pets. I am 23 years old but have loved animals ever since I was five. My relationship with pets began when I was given a teddy bear hamster named Fivel at the age of five. From then on I had all kinds of pets. I had rats, turtles, birds, hermit crabs, frogs, fish, guinea pigs, and even lizards. Growing up I was lucky enough to be around so many different animals because my Mom and Dad let me have them. Now I have grown up and I live on my own with my own fish, two hamsters named Pikachu and Rychu and a cat named Mewtwo. From the day they placed Mewtwo in my arms I was instantly in love.

Through my experiences I have found that when you get a pet it is as if you have a baby of your own. Pets do the same things children do. They want attention, they want to be held, and even to be loved all day long, especially cats. Well, especially my cat. I hold animals close to my heart because of the joy they bring to me and others around me.

Pets can be your best friends, something to care for, and ultimately make you responsible. Having a pet changes you. It makes you responsible for not only their lives but also for almost every thing you live for. Pets can be very special and can teach you a lot.



Without even knowing or realizing it you become responsible for everything. Not all things dealing with animals are fun and fluffy tails. Pet ownership is demanding and challenging to everyone. Knowing when a pet is sick or not wanting to play is just one small challenge. For instance, when a cat is sick it tends to pat you on the face or just pout. Since cats can't talk we assume it

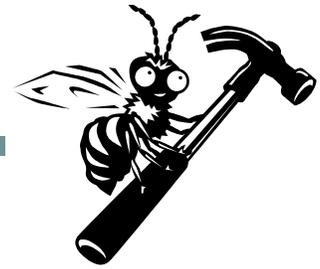
might be the litter box, or they need food, or they need water, but in reality it can be that they are sick. Despite these challenges a pet is wonderful thing.

Living at the Hope House Foundation I have gotten the chance to research and study all kinds of pets. I am lucky for that; however, staff members tend to feel a little different. Typical animals like a cat or dog are usually welcome at teams, however some more high-maintenance animals like rats, fish, and hamsters are not. I'm writing this article to share my knowledge about pets with everybody. If you have questions, concerns, or even a cool experience you want to share please e-mail me at

[snowball0758@yahoo.com](mailto:snowball0758@yahoo.com).

To all you people who have pets, enjoy them while you can; and to those who want pets but are not quite sure, try it out. You may just find your best friend.





## Dealing with Staff: By Tim Sherman

My name is Tim. I am thirty years old and have been receiving services for eleven years. I live in my own apartment. I just got my orange belt in karate. I started with a white belt, then gold, then orange. I plan to keep working on getting the next belt and then the next. It might take me a long time, but I want to go further. The next belt is purple, then blue, then green, then brown and lastly, black. I'd like to have the black belt someday. Staff helped me get a membership to the YMCA, that's where I take classes.



I can do a lot of things without staff help. I have my own cell phone and I can walk to some places nearby. I am learning to ride the bus too. I need staff to help me a bit with cleaning, cooking, money, things like that. I still struggle with controlling my food and my games, so I have a plan in place that I've agreed to, along with my family, to help me. I don't like it sometimes but I know it helps me.

I like that staff check on me, that they are there for me, but I also get frustrated at times and feel like I am being treated like a little kid. No one likes that. I get upset sometimes and say things I don't mean.

It's aggravating to wait for staff all the time: wait for them to come in, wait for them to help me do something or go somewhere. It is especially aggravating

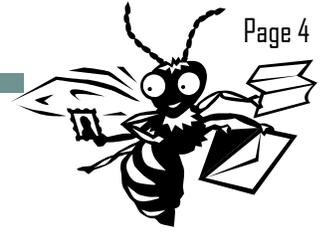
when they are late.

Usually they are nice but not always, sometimes they have an attitude. I have a favorite staff, she is my favorite because she is nice to me, she respects me, she made sure I got to my birthday party, and I really like her. She doesn't keep me waiting but if she does she lets me know when she'll help me. There are a couple of others I really like too.

If I could say what I want from staff it would be:  
Be on time.

Understand how we feel.  
Understand we want to be treated with dignity and respect.  
Don't get an attitude with me. I'm the customer.

If someone is having trouble with staff, that person should try to stay calm and work it out, but if that person needs to, he or she should go to the coordinator for help working it out.



## My Story: By Princess Eunice



My name is Eunice Stepp; Princess Eunice is what I liked to be called. I live in my very own apartment with help from the Hope House people. I have lived in Hampton Roads for over 25 years. I am a hard worker and enjoy many different things. I like to watch TV, play games, take pictures, and do all kinds of arts and crafts. I especially love to paint. My life is very busy. I also have a job with Eggleston Services where I have been working for 31 years. Working 31 years at one place can really be a pain, that's why I decided that I need a vacation.

With the help of my staff, Melissa, I planned a trip to the BAHAMAS. Melissa re-

cently took me shopping to get ready for my trip in October. I am really excited about my new light brown bathing suit I bought and cannot wait to wear it. The only thing left for me for to do was get my passport.

So a few weeks ago my staff took me to the post office to get the picture for my passport. I was really excited to do this, I even dressed up. When we got there and after we waited in line I was turned down. *I was turned down.* The post office worker asked me for my papers. "What papers," asked my staff? The worker replied, "Her papers, so she can travel." The post office worker thought that just because I had a disability I was not allowed to have a passport. I felt very upset. I was scared that I was not going to be able to go on my trip. I was worried and embarrassed. My staff started to talk to the worker, to get everything straight before

we would talk to someone higher up. When we went back home with no picture I was very, very, worried. After looking up the worker's claim we decided to go back to the post office on a later date. We thought maybe it was just that worker being stupid. It turns out she was. We went back and we got it done. I even dressed up again. Now I am planning how to spend my money when I get there. I really want a hat, a t-shirt, and a pair of maracas.

I wanted to share my story for other people out there. I wanted them to hear about the problems we had getting a passport just because I have a disability. I hope my story helps those who are finding it hard to do something as simple as plan a vacation.





## Worker Bees by : Christie Sumner

Do you work, participate in a day program, volunteer, or want to work? Are there issues relating to your employment or job search that you would like to share with *Buzz* readers? If so, I'd love to have the opportunity to meet with you and listen to what you have to say. Consider things such as how you came across your job or day program, how you are treated by co-workers, transportation to and from work, satisfaction level at your job, how would/does work improve your life, wages, accommodation, case manager performance with vocational placement, and what job you would do if you could have any job in the world. If discussing any of these issues sparks your interest, please contact Christie Sumner at the Hope House administrative office at 625-6161 ext. 10 or [csumner@hope-house.org](mailto:csumner@hope-house.org).

### Q & A with Kevin Benton



Kevin Benton lives in Portsmouth and works three jobs! He also volunteers some of his time in serving on Hope House's Our Voices Committee. Between jobs he is often working on various advocacy projects or attending forums on self-advocacy. I was able to take some time to sit down with busy Mr. Benton and ask him about some of his work experiences.

**Where do you work?** I work at Chesapeake Service Systems, PortCo and Hope House Foundation as an orientation trainer.

**How many hours per week do you work?** I work about twenty hours a week.

**Was it hard for you to find work?** It wasn't difficult for me to find work because I have a lot of work experience.

**How do you get to work? Does your transportation run on time?** I take a van to work through Logisticare. Generally, my transportation runs on time but I had one problem where they were taking me to the wrong work location.

**What is your favorite part of your job/jobs?** My favorite part of my job is free time and lunch because I have time to talk to my friends and take a break from working.

**What is your least favorite part of your job?** My least favorite part of my job is getting up so early in the morning because I need my beauty sleep.

**If you could have any job in the world, what would it be and why?** If I could have any job in the world I would be a stand-up comedian because I can tell jokes sometimes and make people laugh. Some people come in to work and feel down and I like to "sweeten their coffee" by making them happy.

## HEART TO HART

...AN ADVICE COLUMN ON RELATIONSHIPS



Dear Readers,

I was born in Glasgow, Scotland. I have two brothers and two fathers I have a lot of cousins, uncles and sister-in-laws. My favorite food is Hawaiian pizza. I was brought up to believe in Jesus and to always take care of my little man Ryan. I bet you are asking yourself why I am telling you this; well, my goal for this article is to help my readers with problems in their personal lives.

The reason I want to be the person folks write to for help with their problems is because I feel that I can help with advice on love since I have been through it myself. I want to help people find the right person. So, 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

### 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](mailto:buzz.connections@yahoo.com) .



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.

Paul has a recycling business going at his team. He is responsible for taking all of his neighbor's recyclables to the recycling center, and he is interested in doing the same at other sites.

#### Upcoming Events:

May 16th and 17th- 25th Annual Stockley Gardens Art Festival

June 18th- the Hope House Foundation's Annual Dinner