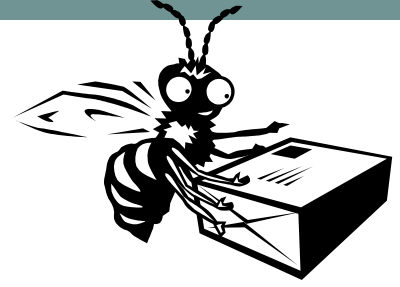


Newsletter Date: November 18th, 2009

THE BUZZ



Issue # 3 Volume 1

Joke of the Quarter:

By : Lori Shapiro

What do Daffy Duck and Bad Doctors have in Common?

QUACK!



Advocacy in Action: By Kevin Benton



For this article the Our Voices Committee wants to share a letter written by one of its members to Logisticare.

Hello my name is Kevin Benton. I am from the Afton site of Hope House Foundation and I live in Portsmouth, Virginia. I use Logisticare services for transportation to my job at PortCo and my day program at PortCenter. They pick me up and take me home from these locations. I think that

Logisticare could be better and that if the drivers came earlier and were on time it would make things a lot better. Sometimes drivers don't show up on time to pick me up from work and one time they did not pick me up at all: I was stranded without a ride. Overall, I think Logisticare services are poor and sometimes the drivers are not respectful and courteous. I would like to see better services and because of my experience with Logisticare I decided to ask other people who use Logisticare about their experiences through a se-

ries of interviews. Another user from Portsmouth also complained about her drivers being late and making her late for work, up to a half an hour late at one time. She also felt like her driver treated her without respect or courtesy. I know that people are trying to run a business and there will always be problems but I think that Logisticare should work on improving the quality of their transportation and drivers so that people can count on them. Hopefully these suggestions and comments will help you better understand how people feel with Logisticare.

Inside this issue:

Advocacy in Action	1
Fins, Feathers, and Paws	2
My Story	3
Dealing with Staff	4
Dealing with Staff	5
Worker Bees	6
A look at Guardianship	7
Events & Classifieds	8

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

Fins, Feathers, and Paws
By Jeremy Norman

I have found out something new about cats that I would like to share. For the whole year that I have been back at Hope House, I've noticed that my cat is like a guardian to me. I bring him in to the bedroom when we are ready for bed because naturally he sleeps at the foot of my bed. When I first bring him in to the bedroom, he has a habit of not staying with me and leaving the room. I wake up and go out and look for him in my apartment, but of course he is always at the door or near the window. I am always wondering what he is doing.

I did a little research on my computer about cats way back in the olden days. After reading numerous articles I learned that male cats are like guardians. Many articles have said that male cats were more aggressive and more willing to attack

back in the day. I also read that people worshiped them. For instance, the Egyptians actually worshiped them as gods. These days we have trained cats to be gentle creatures and to make great pets. More importantly, they are easier than dogs. They do not require the maintenance a dog



does. For example, a cat uses a litter box while a dog needs a walk. I think male cats are the best to have because they are like guardians and will protect you.

I know first hand that in the middle of the night my cat will come to me after he has safely secured our house. When

we are all safe he sleeps at the foot of the bed, between my ankles. I also know that when he is alerted to something he will come and wake me, usually with a small pat of the face. One unique thing my cat does is he shows me what he senses. He will lead me to the source of his curiosity to better secure us. Since male cats are like guardians they act as a better protector for you and your house; I also find them to be more playful.

Thank you for all your questions and comments. Please keep them coming. If you have questions, concerns, or even a cool experience you want to share please e-mail me at

snowball0758@yahoo.com.



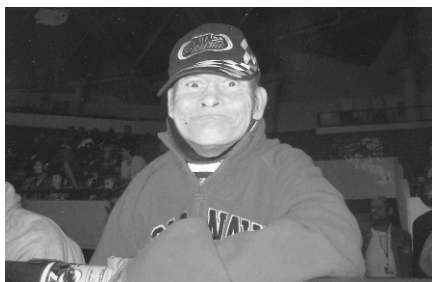
My Story- By Paul Martin

Paul Martin enjoys being active in his community. This summer he frequently attended the weekend concerts at Oceanview, enjoying the view and the music.

“There were a lot of people dancing and enjoying the music,” Paul says.

He liked the music played at the concerts (upbeat and instrumental). “I like to hear different music,” Paul notes, “I like seeing more people coming here because when there are fewer people, it is not as enjoyable.” He adds, “One day, I would like to record a concert to have for my own.”

Paul is not only active in



the summer. Recently, he participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure as part of the Hope House Foundation Team. “I think I did good,” Paul said. Although he uses a wheelchair, Paul walked some of it: “It made me feel better to build my muscles up. I might do it again next time.”

Marathons are becoming a part of Paul’s life as well. Earlier this year, he walked in the Shamrock Marathon, and he is planning on walking another one.

Paul has a lot of plans. He is cur-

rently planning a trip to Disney World for next year. One day he would like “to be on the radio.” He would like to be like Walt Disney, having people drawing pictures of him or make a movie about him. He also enjoys singing.



One of Paul’s goals has already been accomplished. When first interviewed for this article, he said, “I hope to make the newsletter with this story.”



Dealing with Staff: Dorothy Clark

On Dealing with Staff

Words from the shadow writer-

If you are a person with an intellectual disability, this article may be among one of the most important you'll ever read. It's about more than just dealing with staff, it's about dealing with all of people in your life who effect you. It's about advocacy. Until you learn how to use advocacy in your daily life; rights, choice, and empowerment will be something given to you by the non-disabled people around you as though it were theirs to give, rather than an entitlement guaranteed to you by the laws that govern all people in this country. This article is based on an interview session I had with Dorothy Clark, a woman who has a disability and who has given a large portion of her personal time to advocacy on behalf of other people with disabilities. She also serves as a peer advocate. An advocate is someone who helps you get what you want, especially when your staff, or your parents, or your case manager won't listen to you. A peer advocate is someone like you, who also has a disability, but has been trained to help you in this way. I had an opportunity to observe Dorothy Clark in this role not long ago and it made me want to share my experience in observing peer advocacy in action, as well as the interview I sought out with Dorothy not long after.

Usually I remain silent in the process of assisting with the writing of an article for *The Buzz*; trying hard simply to be the scribe of the stories and thoughts that people with disabilities want to share with others. This time I have to share a bit of a story that's mine,

but I think it is important for you and for anyone who is trying to help you learn to make your voice heard. I didn't really understand the power of peer advocacy until I saw it in action. Of course, I understood that an individual with a disability would be acting as an advocate for another person with a disability; but I didn't perceive the less obvious ways in which that would be powerful. For those readers who don't have a disability but are connected to someone who does, understand that it is powerful for a person having a disability just seeing "someone like me" face care providers, case managers, or family members with the expectation of being heard and counted as equal. It is, in my opinion, an opportunity for learning and confidence building like no other.

It was also helpful that although it was clear that the presence of an advocate wasn't welcome, neither the case manager nor the family member could figure out how to be anything but polite and attentive to the peer advocate. We are after all engaged in a meeting in which the parties in attendance understand that they must at least pretend that the individual, for whom this meeting is being held, is the one who is making the choices. That was just another advantage of peer advocacy I hadn't previously considered. You see, I have witnessed an appointed advocate (non-disabled, but with a signed document of appointment) be denied access to a discharge hearing for a woman with Down Syndrome by a CSB case manager and her supervisor. The woman was being forced to move from her own home by siblings. In the case of this individ-

ual and in spite of a brief intervention from the city attorney, along with pleas to those in this fine state who are supposed to protect the rights of people with disabilities, no assistance was offered and she was forced to move. This is just one example of many stories that could be told about instances when the rights of people with disabilities have been trampled and their voices, no matter how clear, have gone unheard in the face of families and professionals. My understanding based on experience, of advocacy as it exists for people with intellectual disabilities, is mostly that it doesn't. There is a lot of lip service to rights and choice for people with disabilities, but not much more than that. So seeing something that looked like real advocacy happen for a person with an intellectual disability, well it got me all fired up and I wanted to help you know more about it.

In meeting with Dorothy to complete this article, I knew that I wanted to get answers to as many questions as I could think of about her role as an advocate: how she became the person she is today, and how others with disabilities can benefit in using her assistance. I have reproduced our interaction like a transcript of our conversation. I hope you find it helpful and informative!



Dealing with Staff: Dorothy Clark (continued)



Dorothy Clark-Peer Advocate

Dorothy Clark is a remarkably self-possessed woman. Deeply spiritual, she will tell you that her

courage comes from God. She lives in an apartment where staff are available to her 24 hours a day. Dorothy thinks through information thoroughly, formulates her responses and delivers her answers or opinions in a composed and non-judgmental way. Dorothy, like most of us, is busy. She works, she is involved with her church, she has friends, and lots of activities in which she participates. In addition, Dorothy serves with two advocacy groups, Our Voices and People for People, and assists other people with disabilities by serving as a peer advocate. She is also on the Board of Directors of Hope House Foundation.

Interviewer: Dorothy can you tell readers what a peer advocate does?

Dorothy: It's someone who helps someone with a disability get what they want. A peer advocate can attend meetings with the person and help prevent them from being pushed into what other people want for them.

Interviewer: What kind of experience have you had to serve as a peer advocate?

Dorothy: I have had advocacy classes sponsored by the City of Virginia Beach and by Hope House Foundation. I have spoken at many conferences. I serve on the Our Voices Committee and with People for People.

Interviewer: Why is peer advocacy important?

Dorothy: A peer advocate really wants the person to get the life that they want. A case manager's primary role is helping connect people to services. Family members want what they believe is best for their loved one, and so do staff, but adults don't have parents or sisters or other adults running their lives.

Interviewer: Adults make their own choices, good and bad. Is that what you mean?

Dorothy: Yes.

Interviewer: In observing you at a recent meeting where you served as an advocate, it struck me that advocacy takes quite a bit of courage. Where does your courage to stand up for people with disabilities, and to stand up against people like staff and case managers come from?

Dorothy: I get my courage from God. I want people to be able to speak up for what they want and need in order to be happy. You can learn that you are your own person, and the first time you stand up for yourself it is scary, but it gets easier, and now for me it is a piece of cake. When I say no, it's no, when I say yes, its yes.

Interviewer: Can you give me some examples of other times when you've actively engaged in

advocacy either for yourself or others?

Dorothy: One of the things I advocated for was an expansion of the Medicaid Waiver along with the City of Virginia Beach. Other examples: I was involved with a woman who wanted a legal guardianship removed, I helped a woman advocate for a change in physicians, and I've advocated for myself regarding medications, work, staffing, and services.

Interviewer: As an advocate, what are some ways that you can assist people with disabilities in their day-to-day lives?

Dorothy: I can advocate for people in relation to their doctors, employers, families, staff, or case managers. I can help people talk about what they want their lives to be like, how they want to be treated, where they want to work, or live, or who they want to date. Case managers are there to help us get services, staff are there to help us live the lives we want, families are there to support us but not decide who we can date or what kind of life we should live, doctors are there to help us be as healthy as we can be, but not take control of our lives when we don't follow or want their treatment.

Interviewer: What do you hope to accomplish as an advocate?

Dorothy: I want people with disabilities to learn they can speak up for what they want and need. I want people with disabilities to be looked at as equals. I want people with disabilities to understand that it is not wrong to speak up for yourself; if you do, you'll get more of the things you want in life, you can live where



Worker Bees : An Interview with Willie Mebane

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. Contact Christie Sumner at the Hope House Administrative Office at 625-6161 ext. 12 or csumner@hope-house.org.



Willie Mebane works at the Norfolk Naval Base as an Identifier. This means that he identifies packages that come in, unloads them and makes sure that the codes are correct. He has been working there full time for twenty years.

Was it hard for you to find work? Not really, it wasn't too hard. I went to school and got training for it.

What advice do you have for people looking for work? I would tell them to get training in the field of work that they are interested in. Ask the people you know if they know of any open positions.

What advice do you have for job seekers in preparing for an interview? Write a résumé, dress for the job and be honest when they ask you questions.

How do you get to work? Does your transportation run on time? I take the bus to work and it runs on time.

What is your favorite part of your job? I like to help other people when they need it. I also like my coworkers.

What is your least favorite part of your job? Nothing. I don't have any complaints.

If you could have any job in the world what would it be and why? I would probably be a professional football athlete. I could work on Sundays. I like to watch football: Penn State is my favorite college team and the Oakland Raiders are my favorite professional team. I've been a fan for a long time.

What are your career goals? My goal is to finish out my civil service. I probably have another thirteen years or so. After that I'll probably work part time because I'd get bored otherwise.

A look at Guardianship with the Idaho Council of Developmental Disabilities.



The Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities has recently published a position statement that *The Buzz* would like to share. The statement reveals the council's beliefs on guardianship as an "outdated attempt at protecting and caring for people with developmental disabilities." Guardianship is used by the courts when a judge feels an individual is unable to make the right decisions for his/herself. The theory behind guardianship is to "take care" of the individual rather than "supporting them." The major conflict that ensues with guardianship is its intrusive nature into ones right for the sake of protecting them. Once a court takes away those rights the individual may never get them back. Below are the outlined steps that the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities feels expands the parameters of guardianship with the best interest of the individual first.

1. An individual's ability to make decisions should be developed and supported to the maximum extent possible, and guardianship should not lessen an individual's dignity or the right to make choices if there is no undue risk.
2. Individual abilities must be carefully looked at, with a belief that people with disabilities are capable. Individuals may need help from others or accommodations based on their disability but are still able to make informed choices. Most importantly, having a physical or cognitive disability does not indicate the need for a guardian.
3. Appointment of a guardian should only be made to the extent necessary to protect the health and well-being of the individual and not for the convenience of the family, service system, or society. Limited guardianships or power of attorney should always be considered first.
4. Guardianship should be granted only if all other alternatives are insufficient, and only to the extent and for the length of time determined to be necessary. Best practice would include annual approved July 24, 2009 2reviews to determine if the guardianship can be terminated or reduced. All guardianships should be as limited as possible.
5. In order for guardianships to be limited and for alternatives to be considered, education of families, transition-age students, and adults with developmental disabilities must be provided over a long-term period.
6. Parents should receive information about alternatives to guardianship before their child turns 16 years old.
7. Students should begin learning about their rights and alternatives to guardianship throughout their transition-age years (ages 14-18). IDEA '04 mandates that students learn of their rights and responsibilities one year before reaching the age of majority. This year is an opportunity for school professionals to assist students and their parents on planning for alternatives to guardianship while also planning for outcomes toward self-determination, meaningful employment, continued education, supports needed for living arrangements outside of their parents' home, etc.
8. Individuals subject to guardianship proceedings should be required to be present at their hearing unless sufficient evidence is presented to the judge prior to the hearing as to why the respondent is unable to be present for his/her hearing.
9. Information about the process for wards to reexamine their individual guardianship, reverse their guardianship, or review unnecessarily restrictive forms of existing guardianships must be made available in simplified and alternative formats.
10. Potential wards going through the process of guardianship should have legal representation at all stages of the process and must be informed about alternatives to guardianship and the possibility and process to have the guardianship removed.
11. Guardians, conservators, judiciary, attorneys, and guardianship evaluation committee members need a process for continuing education on alternatives to guardianship, and progressive education in the area of disability.
12. Guardians and conservators should be accountable for their actions, and best practice would include reviewing those actions bi-annually.

Excerpted from: Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities. "Position Statement on Guardianship". July 24, 2009. Available from www.icdd.idaho.gov.

If you have any comments or opinions on this position please feel free to contact The Buzz at buzz.connections@yahoo.com

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 .



The Afton Team in Portsmouth is looking for items to decorate its new back yard and deck. They plan on planting a garden and making the space more enjoyable. Planters, tools, and garden ornaments welcome. If you have any items please contact Kim at 757-558-2005.

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.



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.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FIRST SAFE CLASS GRAUDATES OF 2009!



"Home for the Holidays"

November 29th

1:00-6:00 pm

Granby Theatre

The event will feature historic homes in Ghent decorated for the holidays
Ticket price \$15.

Not being featured in the issue is Heart to Heart. For the next article if you have question's about love, life, and relationships, send them to Dr. Hart at the Hope House Foundation Administrative Office.

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