



FEBRUARY
2010

A program of the

Oklahoma
Developmental
Disabilities
Council

The Journal Record Legislative Report Available to Partners

This year, the second session of the 52nd Oklahoma Legislature, 1,083 Senate Bills and 1,154 House Bills have been filed, not to mention joint and concurrent resolutions. As you know, keeping up with legislation can be a time consuming task.

Thanks to the Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council, this year the job will be nearly effortless. You can sign up for daily legislative reports courtesy of the DD Council. These reports contain the bill number, the author, the number of related or similar bills, a brief description of the content of the legislation, remarks made by ODDC staff or Diana McCalment that add clarification, the track or topic of the legislation, and the history of the bill. There is also a status bar pictured below which will let you know where that bill is in the legislative process.

Although we all have access to the Personal Bill Tracking system on the state legislative bureau page (www.lsb.state.ok.us), this report will save you the time and give you more information at a glance. **To receive this report, email rick.barcus@okdhs.org with your email.** You will be added to the distribution list.

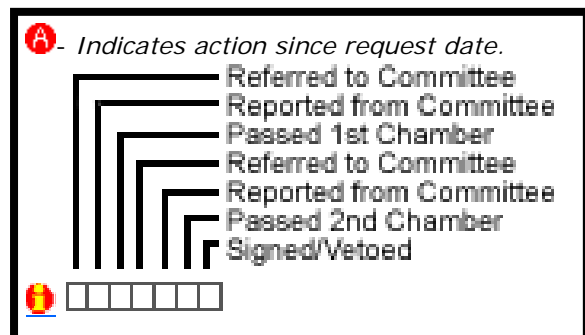
If there is a bill of interest to Partners that you do not find on the report, please email dmccalment@aol.com or rick.barcus@okdhs.org. We will review the bill and, if appropriate, add it to the tracking list.

There are three steps to advocating through the legislative process. The first step is to vote. The second is to develop a relationship with elected officials. The third is to let those officials know your position on legislation. Your training as a Partner prepared you to be a part of the legislative process. Now is the time for steps 2 and 3. Visit with your legislators when they

are at home in your district. E-mail or call them to let them know about bills that are important to you. And if you have an idea how a bill could be improved, let them know. They count on you to be their subject matter experts. Don't let them down!

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Tracking legend for the Journal Record Legislative Report.

PIP News and Notes ... Activities and Thoughts

Editor's Note: To those who took the time to tell us what you're doing, THANKS! To those of you who think you're doing nothing, read through these briefs. Large or small, we ALL have ways to impact the lives of people with developmental disabilities. What you do, if the idea is shared, may inspire another. DDM

Class of 1995

The First Oklahoma Partners in Policymaking Class

Dee Blose

- DDSD Advisory Committee
- Board of Directors – Association of Youth Services
- Board of Directors – Oklahoma Family Center for Autism
- Executive Committee – Canadian Valley Family Center for Autism
- This summer I coordinated and ran a job training program for 9 young people with disabilities. This was a brand new program never done before at our agency.

Speaking activities:

- Last year I spoke to approximately 1000 people in at least 15 speaking engagements to people about including people with disabilities in school and community. I would estimate that about half of these people were teachers in public schools.
- Last year I personally informed about 30 legislators about the effects of autism on a family.
- I know my son David hasn't been through partners but he has been through YLF and he has started being a part of my presentations, so I would estimate that he "spoke" out to about 150 people.
- Also we both testified at the House Interim Study on Autism and there were about 15 legislators in attendance and about 60 public members. Part of his speech and mine was replayed on public radio in one of their reports. Also, I would say David and I were on TV at least 20 times over the past two years on autism issues.

Kim (Hamilton) Beach

Currently, I am on the Human Rights Committee at the Chickasha Opportunity Workshop, where we meet, sometimes on an hours notice, to discuss how issues are being handled within the agency to provide the clients there a safe and productive way of life. It is important that even after graduation, people with disabilities should be in the least restrictive environment that they are able to manage successfully. It is a pleasure to serve on that board, and I feel that as an agency, they have sincerely made great strides in moving forward and providing a safe place for the people they serve to work.

Also, I am on the DDSD Advisory Committee. This group meets every quarter and discusses policies that are being changed, updated, or corrected. I represent a "family at large" member from southwestern Oklahoma on this committee. I have been shadowing Wanda Felty for this past year, and as last October's meeting, the

responsibility has officially shifted to me entirely. These are open meetings, in that the public at large has every right to be there. This group has sub-committees that address specific issues from time to time and also provides a forum so that families awaiting services from DDSD are able to meet with the DHS Director himself regularly.

This last year, I have held small workshops that help inform teens and tweens about life with a sibling that has disabilities. Nothing real fancy or organized just some small groups that have come to me, asked questions about things they wanted clarified. I would estimate around 125 people.

Finally, on a more personal note, in my little neck of the woods out here in Ninnekah, I took on a challenge several years ago, and have found myself having to take on the role on a

(Continued on page 3)

permanent basis. The school system is very small here, and funding is tight (as it is everywhere), which led the school to offer my daughter a transfer to another district every year she was in school there. I never allowed this to take place, and because of that, I have found myself taking on the advocacy role for other families who have arrived in the district after us. My daughter graduated, with her class, a year ago, and this was an "On-time" graduation. (She didn't stay in longer, or get out earlier) Since then, I have been asked to help evaluate what the school could do to improve services to other students (all that are in the district now are far less involved than my daughter) who have followed in her wheel tracks. In the spring, two other students were playing on the

varsity basketball team, in the County Tournament none-the-less, which proved to me that all the aggravation I endured was very worth it. Our family was able to give the school the opportunity to learn how to provide successful services that are also usable to the students in need, without having their students being transferred. We not only provided our daughter with a place to grow, learn, and gain friends, but taught the school that it is not at all a problem to facilitate this. She now has friends, in the community, that are not paid. When she goes into Wal-Mart, she is greeted, when she goes to the bank - the teller knows her because they graduated together. This has been a bit of a challenge from time to time, but, for the most part, the struggles have been very much worth it.

Class of 1998

Lyn Thoreson Land

A few of the things that I'm doing include that I chair my city's Parks & Rec Board, I'm a member of the Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and I serve on my county's Community Sentencing Council. As a side note, when I was going through Partners, the State had just mandated that each county create a Community Sentencing Council as part of the law that limited what crimes people could be ordered to serve time in prison for. The judge, the DA and the sheriff were required to be members. When we had to do a project for Partners, I decided that this was a council that I wanted to observe. I happened to get in on the first organizing meeting, and the sheriff (who I used to dispatch for) said he wanted me on the committee. I tried to explain that I was just there to observe, but I walked out a member. It's probably been a good ten years now, and I'm still a member of that committee. Every time we meet, I'm reminded of what got me there!

Pat Looper

Sarah and I want to thank you again for keeping us updated with all the info. Sarah and I stay really busy. Things are going well. Sarah and I go out as much as possible. She is on facebook now and I am posting some of our photos. Our community project for flowerbeds at the Intermediate High School is going really well. State Farm Insurance is donating \$1000.00 to our project and volunteers. The Coweta Public Schools superintendent, principals, teachers, and staff treat Sarah with the utmost respect. Where ever we are they make a point to speak to her. Sarah has been in the paper and will be again. Wal-Mart continues to donate every six months \$250.00 for every 25 hours community service. She is well respected in the community and spoken to like a typical person in society. They admire her for her endurance through this whole project. Sarah has also received their local Community Service Award.



PIP News and Notes ... continued

Class of 1999

Lessons from Tia

By Amy Corley

Oh, the lessons that child has taught me. I was really worried about her trying out for cheerleading in Junior High. There were 52 girls trying out and the school district had independent judges from OU who would be choosing the squad. Tia was determined to learn the dance and tryout for the squad. I made excuses about the tryouts and tried to talk her out of it without actually ever saying that I did not think she had a remote chance of making the squad. There were all these tall girls trying out and Tia was half their size. Reluctantly I showed up for the tryouts all prepared to pick up the pieces when she did not make the squad. They posted the girls who made the squad on the school website. All the cheer moms had to meet at Mazzio's and someone brought a laptop and we all waited. When the names were posted there were a lot of girls crying who did not make it. I was on the other side of the room visiting with others and could tell by the other parents that the scores were in. Tia came running across the room to announce to me she had made the squad. Still in disbelief I said, "Let me go double check." She really had made the squad.

Driving home that day I began to understand that I cannot decide what Tia is going to do; only she knows that. Which reminds me of a funny story. Tia has a friend for several years now that uses a wheelchair because she has brittle bone disease. She is a bossy little girl and really cannot do any physical activity at all without breaking a bone. Now she and Tia had a lot in common like dolls and art and things like that. I thought to myself one day, this friendship won't last long because Tia is into sports and loves to go places, so eventually she will outgrow this friend and will move on.

They have been friends now for 7 years. Tia still goes to her house at least once per month to spend the night. Tia had gone to spend the night with this friend who actually lives in Del City about 2 blocks from a Taco Bell. I decided to run into town and do some errands. I was driving through Del City. Here came a wheelchair rolling down the sidewalk at great speed. I could not help but notice the child in it was not rolling the wheelchair but there was a brown head bobbing behind her pushing her down the sidewalk to Taco Bell. Then it hit me as I drove closer. Well that was Tia pushing her friend down the sidewalk to Taco Bell. They were laughing with big smiles all over them. I had to learn a lesson again. They will always be friends and Tia will never outgrow her. I have learned to keep my mouth shut and leave room for Tia to surprise me. Relationships often don't look like what we've always imagined, but they are relationships that someone values.

Class of 2000

Brenda Garrett

Brenda is always busy advocating through her position with TARC as the ARCCorps Volunteer Recruiter/Coordinator. ARCCorps is the program that pairs advocates and guardians with people with intellectual disabilities. She also speaks to a lot of groups about advocacy including each new year's PIP class.

Class of 2001

Wanda Felty

- Family Advocate - Oklahoma Infant Transition Program
- Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (Appointed 1/09, 3 year term) – Appointed by Speaker of the House Rep. Chris Benge
- Self Directed Services Advisory Committee – Appointed by Jim Nicholson, OKDHS/DDSD Division Director
- Advisory Committee on Services to Persons with Developmental Disabilities (Term ends Jan. 2010) – Appointed by OKDHS Director Howard Hendrick
- Children's Hospital Family Advisory Council
- Oklahoma Family Leadership Council
- Oklahoma Family Support Partnership Council
- Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council
- Child Health Advisory Task Force (Oklahoma Health Care Authority) – Family Alternate
- Coordinator Oklahoma Waiting List Meeting (Meeting to allow families to meet and talk with OKDHS Director Howard Hendrick, DDSD Division Director Jim Nicholson, and other administrators of OKDHS www.okwaitinglist.org)
- Coordinator Consumer Advisory Committee for The Center for Learning and Leadership/UCEDD
- Family Mentor for Oklahoma Family Network
- The “r” Word Campaign www.therword.org
- A Special Touch Portraits www.okphotopros.com
- Accredited Photographer - Special Kids Photography of America®
- Dunganvin Oklahoma, Inc. Human Rights Committee - Chair (Membership started 2005)
- Special Needs Day Care Task Force
- LEND Fellow
- Will speak about PIP at the Norman On the Road Family Perspective Conference next month



Janet Borden

- Mentoring parents/families/people with disabilities though community, medical, and school issues
- Developmental Disabilities Council, Vice Chair
- Statewide Independent Living Council
- School
- Pip Alumni group Tulsa
- Service dogs
- Scheduled to speak at the 2010 Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities

Bob Heinemann

Having just rotated off the Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council, Bob will speak about PIP at the Idabel On the Road Family Perspective Conference in March.

Catherine Patrón

- Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council - Former Public Relations Committee Chair
- Attending IEP's and mentoring families in western Oklahoma and recently in Pennsylvania

PIP News and Notes ... continued

Class of 2003

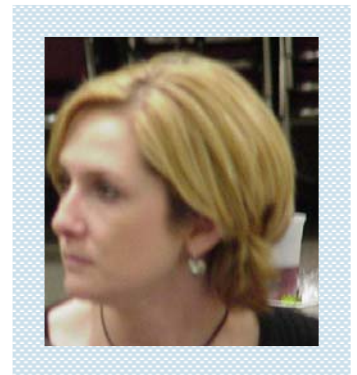


Lisa Johnson

I use the PIP training everyday in my job as a DDS case manager. I am an advisor for the Ada chapter of People First. I use the knowledge and books that I received during PIP training with this chapter. I am helping others fight to get SSI benefits, contacting Susan Paddock regarding disability issues. I send emails to my Representative and Senator regarding lack of funding for DDS and adults with disabilities on Medicaid. I am educating the community regarding people with disabilities by talking annually to the Lyons, Rotary, and Elks organizations and help parents with IEP issues.

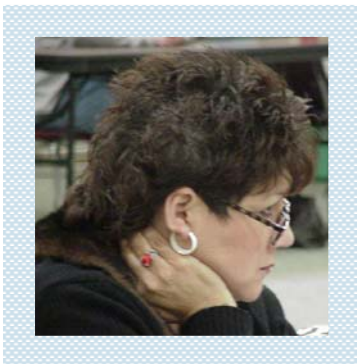
Heather Pike

- Oklahoma Family Network (Between the OFN staff, has presented to 786 individuals)
- Interagency Coordinating Council- Member
- ICC - Family Leadership Chair (new committee)
- Family Leadership Council at CLL UCEDD
- Part B Advisory Panel



Anne Pemberton

- OK-AIM monitor
- Residential Director at a provider agency
- Serves on the transition team that educates high school students about services for students with disabilities and their options after high school
- Presented at the Caddo Kiowa Vo-Tech center to educators from the local high schools about disability issues.
- Spoke about disability issues and using People First language with 40 people who are Native American at a local resource fair held at the Indian Health Center.



Keep us in the loop!

Let us know what you are doing to make Oklahoma a better place. Also, if you move, change email or cell phone number, please call the ODDC (1-405-521-4984 or 1-800-836-4470) or email LeAnna Hart at leanna.hart@okdhs.org.



Class of 2004

Charlotte Casey

- Perry Public School Board Member (running for office again this year)
- Guardian of two young ladies



Pam Burr

Right now I am one semester and some make-up work away from graduating from Southern Nazarene University with my MA in Counseling Psychology. In addition, I am a contractor for CREOKS, which is a behavioral health agency in my part of the state. At this time, I am only seeing hearing clients, but that will shortly change, I believe. I also continue to work part-time as a sign language interpreter at Tulsa Community College and in the community, which I regard as an essential part of my work in developing my sign language skills and cultural sensitivity. One day every week, I have the

time of my life working as an intern in the office of Tulsa child psychologist and SNU professor, Dr. Rick Walton. His wife is Sherilyn Walton, of TARC, and she has extended an invitation for me to visit their office as I have time, for some additional learning opportunities there.

Perhaps you know that my goal is to become Licensed Professional Counselor, teaching parenting skills in families who have deaf or hard of hearing members. It has taken me many years to get close to acquiring my dream! Across the state of Oklahoma, there are less than twelve people with the credentials and sign skills who work directly with people who need mental health services, but must communicate visually, through sign language. I long to be a member of that group.

One highlight of my education has been made possible through the funding I received from the ODDC Consumer Involvement Fund. I am very grateful for the financial assistance which allowed me to travel to Washington, D.C. in June, 2008, where I attended the National Counselors of the Deaf Association. As in our state, the number of people qualified to serve the needs of this particular population in the United States is very small. A Cherokee myself, the best way to describe the experience was that I finally found my professional "tribe!" To my delight, the proceedings were conducted exclusively in sign language! When officer elections were held, I was elected a member of the Ad Hoc Committee, representing the Midwest region of the U.S. Our next conference will be March, 2010, closer to home, thankfully, in Kansas City. I look forward to meeting again with my colleagues, and look forward to carrying back to Oklahoma.

1995: Mark McCarver

2000: April Bennett, Chuck Roberts

2001: Suzan Carroll, Wanda Felty, Janice Williams,
Catherine Patron

2002: Michelle Butts, Lisa Copeland

2003: Janet Borden

2005: Sylvia Watson-Baker

2007: Brett Cunningham, Donny McCulloch

2008: Eric Dysart

*PIP Oklahoma
Developmental
Disabilities
Council Members*

PIP News and Notes ... continued

Class of 2005



Sherri Herriman "Thanks, without Partners in Policymaking I would not be doing any of these things."

- OK-AIM volunteer
- OK-AIM Oversight Committee
- CASA volunteer
- Volunteers to accompany parents when they go to school to do their child's IEP

Jenifer Randle

- Working towards her Master degree in special education
- Advocacy and Training Manager of Youth Programs for the Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council
- Mentor for PIP from 2005-2007
- Oklahoma Transition Institute
- The OKAY Project
- Executive Committee, Association of Youth Leadership Forums



Anngela (2005), and Clayton (2006) Moreno have both used their PIP training to counsel people in the Broken Arrow area on educational rights and Clayton has done home modifications for his sisters that both use wheelchairs.

Class of 2006



Lori Phillips

Lori recently spoke at a Parent to Parent support group and the PIP applications have not stopped flowing in from that one. Go Lori!

Kim Clement

- Member of the Ambucs
- Started a support group in Stephens County, "We're More Alike than Different"
- Volunteers to help families at IEPs
- PIP mentor for 3 years





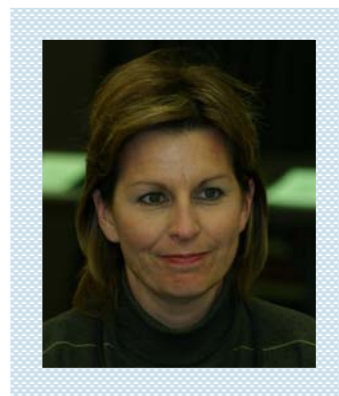
Dionne Lewis

Dionne is working in the Tulsa Public School District as a certified teacher. Her duties include working with students with a wide range of disabilities from mild/severe to self contained and also inclusion. She also works with TARC (Tulsans Advocating for Rights of Citizens) as a monitor for home visits.

Class of 2007

Joni Bruce

- Integris Baptist Family Advisory Council (approached them to start this)
- Saint Francis Family Advisory Council (helped to start this one too)
- Sooner SUCCESS Advisory Council
- OFN Family-to-Family Health Information Center Advisory Council
- OK State Advisory Team for ODMHSA
- OK Child Health Advisory Task force for OHCA and ODH
- OK Perinatal Advisory Task Force for OHCA and ODH
- CLL Family Advisory Council
- CLL Consumer Advisory Council
- OK Transition Council
- OK County Fetal Infant Mortality Review Community Action Team
- Title V Director's Council
- LEND Family Mentor
- OCCY SoonerStart Family Advisory Committee Advisor



We have great news! It looks like we will be developing a Consumer/Family Advisory Council for Child Health at the OK Health Care Authority!



Ben Sherrer

In September, Representative & PIP Graduate, Ben Sherrer, was found at the Green Country People First Meeting in Pryor. Ben is with a friend of his, Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Graduate Cody Sword, who is the current Historian of this People First Chapter. Since graduating from PIP, Ben has attended every mock legislative hearing and has referred four new PIP applicants.

Robin Arter

- PIP mentor for the 3rd year
- President of OCP (Oklahoma Community Based Providers)
- Board of Chisholm Trail Kiwanis
- Executive Director of Duncan Group Homes
- Presented at the "More Alike Than Different Conference" on Effective IEPs, and to the Kiwanis on Duncan Group Home services



PIP News and Notes ... continued



Shelly Greenhaw

Shelly is actively involved on the Board of Oklahoma Family Network. In her career, she also shares with clinicians in the hospital on a daily basis the many things she learned going through PIP. This past year she spent a week in Berkeley at the CFC Conference speaking with geneticists and scientists as well as working with international families to share resources.



Class of 2008

Eric Dysart

Eric has been actively advocating for/on educational issues within the Moore Public Schools system.

He was just appointed by the Governor to serve as a member of the Developmental Disabilities Council.

Lisa Turner

Lisa served as chair of the initiative to form a therapeutic horseback riding program in Durant in 2008 and 2009. During this time, she helped organize the Hoofbeats and Heartbeats Hoedown which over 450 people attended and raised over \$90,000 for the cause. Lisa also worked as the SE Regional Coordinator for Oklahoma Family Network until December. In this role, she trained/informed over 500 people this year, including speaking engagements with Choctaw Nation Head Start, Lion's Club, Rotary Club, and Leadership Durant and supporting families trainings. Lisa and her family recently moved to Texarkana, Texas where she hopes to use her advocating skills she learned in PIP to advocate for individuals with disabilities.



Lora Roberts

Lora continues to serve on the Family Advisory Council for St. Francis Children's Hospital where she speaks to new residents on family centered care. Recently, she accepted a position on the Board of Directors for the FG family Alliance. She continues to serve as the NE Regional Coordinator for the Oklahoma Family Network. She has spoken to OSU physicians, ETL teachers and Little Mended Hearts about OFN and her son. She co-founded the metabolic/genetic support group, Extraordinary Connections and is coordinator of Tulsa Sibshops.

Class of 2009



Theresa Sharp

- Town Board of Lahoma,
- 4rkids board member
- Garfield County Sooner Success
- Secretary for Lahoma Lions Club

Trina Naff

- Speaker on a parent panel at the June 2009 Autism Symposium (62 participants)
- Writing and emailing congress about different issues on the topic of disabilities
- Scheduled to speak at the 2010 Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities



Brenda Cunningham

- Chouteau Town Council
- Chouteau Public Works Authority Board Member
- Title VII-Federal Indian Grant Board-Chair
- CLASS Foundation Board
- CLASS Foundation Grant Selection Committee
- Special Olympics Head Coach-Chouteau-Mazie School

Wynter Olson-Casallas

Wynter has been accepted to Leadership Edmond.



Jill Scott

Jill is working to be a volunteer guardian for a lady with a disability and will work on the Transition Council for Putnam City Schools.



PIP News and Notes ... continued

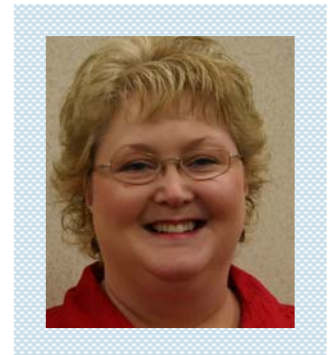


Jenifer Zink

- Family Support Coordinator for the Oklahoma Family Support 360 Project, through the Center for Learning and Leadership at OU Health Sciences Center
- Secretary, Autism Society of America-Central Oklahoma Chapter
- Member of Samuel's Call Special Needs Ministry Committee at St. Luke's United Methodist Church
- Member of the Family Leadership Committee of the Interagency Coordinating Council for SoonerStart
- Parent member of the Autism Subcommittee for the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority
- Member of the Consumer Advisory Committee for People with Developmental Disabilities
- She participates in various other projects pertaining to early intervention and healthcare for children with developmental disabilities, to include Sooner SUCCESS, OK Kids, and the Interagency Coordinating Council for SoonerStart
- She provides daily support to families of people with developmental Disabilities both in a professional and non-professional capacity

Eilene Plaza

- Parent Mentor for the Oklahoma Family Network
- Working on her business plan to open a day care center for children that are medically fragile with a projected opening time frame of Fall of 2010
- Made presentations to the Oklahoma Healthcare Authority and Sooner SUCCESS
- Eilene spent quite a bit of time educating a teacher who had worked all summer with "autistic kids" about people first language. The teacher loves kids, had a wonderful experience and wants to work more with children with autism, so the "lesson" was well taken



Resources...

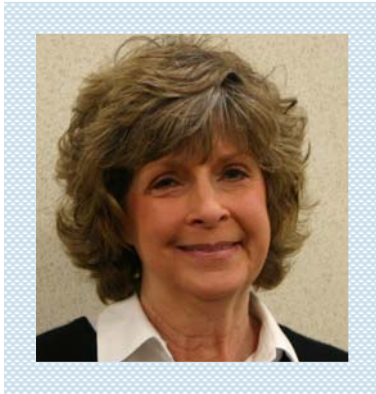
The Autism Center of Tulsa welcomes the LINK Project to our offices once a month to offer free autism, developmental, speech and hearing screenings by trained professionals. This service is extended to families with concerns about the development of their children from birth until they turn 6 years old.

Screenings are free and by appointment only. Contact the Autism Center of Tulsa to schedule your appointment. Screenings are offered one day a month between the hours of 9:00am–3:00pm

Autism Center of Tulsa
6585 S. Yale, Suite 410
Tulsa, OK 74136
918-502-4823
info@autismtulsa.org

Innovative Residential Options

By Paula Owens



Linda, my niece, and I visited Duncan Group Homes in Duncan, Oklahoma. Robin Arter, (class of 2007) Executive Director, and 2 other employees spent the afternoon showing us the agency's apartment complex that houses both Duncan

Group Homes clients who have disabilities and senior citizens who are private pay. The residents/clients' services are funded through the State-funded assisted living or the In-home supports waived services with one home being DLS funded and state-funded assisted living.

The 20 unit apartment complex was built in a U shape with a common laundry/recreation room in the middle. Approximately 10 to 15 washers and dryers are provided free of charge for the residents (this is included in their rent.) The laundry room was very clean and orderly. One of the comments from a resident was "It should have CLOROX run through the washing machines after each use."

The main reason for the visit was to capture the atmosphere of this living arrangement shared with seniors and people with disabilities. We "captured" more than we expected! The following are profiles of the senior citizens we visited. (Residents were not told we were coming.)

Dot - Visiting with Dot was an hour packed full of seeing and experiencing her wonderful spirit and the life she has made even while battling MS. Dot had been working out and had a sweatband around her head. Her kitty was playing out front on a long leash (the apartments have "a no pet policy.") She has lived in her beautifully furnished apartment for 7 to 8 years. A leopard skin lounge in the living area and a comfy bed with a beautiful comforter and lots of pillows show her decorating talents. She has plans to enlarge her patio with pavers that she can handle. We asked her how she felt about having neighbors with disabilities. Her answer was profound and spiritual. "It's simple" she said as she teared up. "You see God in them!" Dot's sensitivity makes her aware of what goes on in the complex. If she thinks there is a problem with any of the residents she lets management know.

Jean - A tri-athlete was strong in body and mind. Her participation in athletic activities has paid off. She had just painted her apartment a very nice shade of gold. She also is a gardener who enjoys her flowers and shares the results of her "green thumb" with her neighbor who has disabilities. This

neighbor and Jean also share a bird, and jointly care for their "feathered friend." Jean enjoys her morning coffee sitting on her patio and visiting with anyone who drops by. One resident carries a portable seat with him so that he can sit with Jean. She also enjoys watching the print shop that is located across the street from the apartments which is an employer for many of the residents with disabilities. She said "It is wonderful to see how the folks greet each other and the fondness that is shown each morning." Jean's husband also lived there before his death.

Pauline is one of the oldest residents, but like the other two we visited, is very much a part of the life in this complex. Her apartment was packed full of mementos. She seemed to be a lady who enjoys her "church life" and whose spiritual life is studied and shared. She also has a small dog that she loves and cares for. Her helpmates are the residents with disabilities. One man helps her with carrying in groceries, getting cans from the top shelves and just checking on her. The agency will get calls from other residents asking about Pauline if her habits are a little different on a certain day or she is not in her apartment. She told us that one gentleman patrols the complex at night to make sure everyone is home and safe. When it is time for her to host bunko or have her Bible Study group in the community center, her neighbors participate. One of her comments was "I could leave my billfold out front and it would never be taken." Pauline feels safe and loved in her surroundings.

When asked what they would change about their living arrangement the three women mentioned minor touches to the configuration, storage, and insulation of the apartments. But, nothing was said about the residents with disabilities. All three ladies "beamed" when they spoke of their relationships with them.

We also visited with the other residents who have disabilities. All of them seemed able to care for themselves with little supervision. Each apartment was equipped with a kitchen, living room, and bedroom and was personalized to fit the individual's desires. This was their home and they were content!

Mike, an adult with Down Syndrome, lives in a home that he shares with 2 other gentlemen and a houseparent. He has his own bedroom and living area, but has meals with his roommates. Mike tried

(Continued on page 14)

PIP News and Notes ... continued

(Continued from page 13)

apartment living, but is better suited to home living. He works at the printing shop across from the apartments. While attending Partners in Policymaking in Oklahoma City, I had met Robin and Mike and they are now new friends.

Our trip was a spiritual experience that no day in church could have given us more to think about. When I first visited with Robin about the apartments I asked her, "How did having people with disabilities and senior citizens live side by side come about?" Her comment

was, "It just happened." There was a screening process with the applicants but the "just happened" is readily apparent when you step onto the property and visit with the residents. We also observed that the residents have a support system in place, and know Robin and the other employees of Duncan Group Homes who accompanied us on our visit.

This shared living arrangement is an example of the way it should be with people of all ages and degrees of ability working together to have an excellent quality of life.

Mark Your Calendar...

2010 Oklahoma Governor's Conference on Developmental Disabilities

Keeping the Dream Alive

March 8-9, 2010
Embassy Suites - Norman
Hotel and Conference Center
2501 Conference Drive
Norman, OK 73069

In spite of the advocacy of champions like Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Donna Nigh, old attitudes and stereotypes remain about people with intellectual disabilities. In order to ensure that every person, irrespective of ability, is treated as a person of worth, we must continue with our predecessors' advocacy and *Keep the Dream Alive*. For more information, contact LeAnna Hart (800) 836-4470 or leanna.hart@okdhs.org.

17th Annual Children's Behavioral Health Conference

April 28-30, 2010
Embassy Suites Hotel-Norman
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Professional, youth and family workshops regarding today's top behavioral health issues.

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