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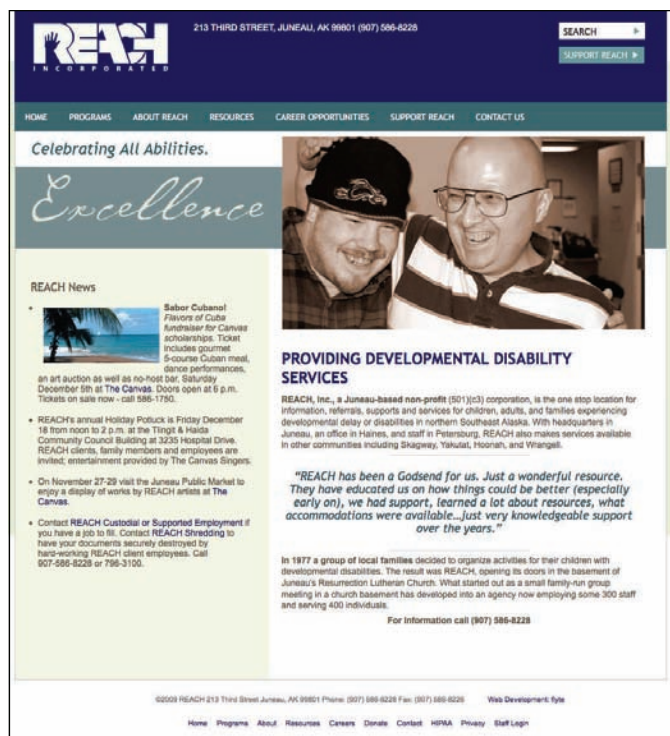
Check Out www.reachak.org

After a great deal of planning and development effort, the new REACH website finally went “live” on November 23. Many staff have been involved in the year-long planning and development effort that now results in replacement of the previous website which has served the agency since 2001. The development of new technology and the need for additional functionality drove a desire to completely redo REACH’s website from top to bottom - although, for historical purposes, some of the old material has still been preserved within the new site.

Important features of the new website include expanded information about REACH and other resources about developmental disabilities for the general public.

The Home Page has a news column about what’s happening at REACH and in the developmental disabilities field. The site offers enhanced information and assistance to potential job seekers and acts as an internal communication organ for REACH employees.

A Website Steering Committee has been appointed to oversee the new website and plan for future improvements and changes. The world of technology is unfolding quickly, and techniques for sharing information via the Internet and social media are becoming commonplace. We hope that our new website will be a useful tool for improving collaboration and communication. Make the REACH website a Favorite in your web browser and use it frequently!



PICK.CLICK.GIVE.

The PFD Charitable Contributions Program is a new way for Alaskans to support eligible nonprofits. Alaskans who file on-line for their PFDs now have an easy way to support organizations they care about. *(Details on page 3)*



From The Board ...

The new REACH assisted living home project continues to move along. At this time, the building is up with a roof. Interior work will continue through the winter. Currently, the projected completion date for the building is in May 2010; however, landscaping and other outside finishing work will continue after that time. Phase Two of this project, a second home, is moving forward with architectural designs and construction estimates. The entire Board of Directors is excited with the consistent progress!

The annual Juneau REACH Employee Appreciation Party was held November 7 at the Baranof Hotel. It was a truly lovely evening and the Board enjoyed socializing with all the employees. Tickets for door prizes were drawn throughout the evening with the Grand Prize, Alaska Airline tickets for two, won by Rachelle Flansaas, a REACH Shredding Technician. Staff awards for service to REACH were pre-



sented. Congratulations to Numeriano Soriano and Henry TudTud for 15 years and to Lou Auger, Debbe Jackson, Willie Gunderson, Michelle Robbins, Joaquin Romero, Annie Geselle, and Jose Rodriguez Jr. for 5 years of loyal service, hard work, and commitment to the REACH mission and core values.

We'd also like to congratulate Micki Jackson for 20 years of volunteer service as a member of the REACH Board of Directors. She has held just about every execu-

tive position on the Board as well as served on standing and ad-hoc committees through the years. We thank Micki for her dedication to REACH clients, families, and staff.

The Board of Directors would like to wish all the clients, families, employees, and supporters of REACH a very happy holiday season.

*Kristine Lewis
Board President*



Chris Brenner hugs his service dog Raz at the picnic in July. Chris and three other REACH clients participated in the November Special Olympics in Anchorage where Chris won the title of best bowler in Alaska.

Construction on the REACH group home at Mendenhall Woods continued apace through the summer until winter arrived with a big snowfall. The building is expected to be completed in May, 2010.



The Canvas—Recognition for a Model of Inclusive Education

REACH's Annie Geselle has been invited to be a panelist at the VSA Arts International Education Conference being held in Washington, DC, in early June, 2010.

Affiliated with the renowned Kennedy Center, VSA is an international nonprofit organization founded 35 years ago by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith to create a society where people with disabilities learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts. The Conference will bring together artists, educators, researchers, and policy makers with disabilities from around the world for a multicultural celebration of the arts and arts education. The conference features visual, performing, literary, media artists, and a

guest list that includes over two thousand participants from all corners of the globe.

A primary goal of the Conference is to gather and disseminate information and effective strategies that can be translated from theory to practice for use as models in the home, community, or classroom. The Conference will focus on three areas—21st -Century Learning, Inclusive Education, and Pathways to Employment. Keynote speakers will include percussionist Evelyn Glennie, Kenneth Eklindh of UNESCO, and author and arts educator Sir Ken Robinson. The Canvas will be presented at the Conference as a model for inclusion through the arts.

Canvas Happenings

The Canvas Art Studio and Gallery has been humming with activity. The Studio doubles as REACH's Day Habilitation program and a community arts project. Recent activities include:

The Boy Who Cried Wolf. Directed by Perseverance Theatre's Shona Strauser, a cast of 10 Canvas clients put on an outstanding performance before a standing-room only audience on the Perseverance main stage on November 23. The actors enthusiastically played the parts of townspeople, sheep, wolves, and of course, the boy. The audience loved every moment. Strauser is the Director of Education at Perseverance and has worked as an artist-in-residence and directed plays for and with young people in Texas, California, Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming and Alaska. Most of her training in theatre education came from working as the resident teaching artist at Seattle Repertory Theatre.



Photograph of rehearsal in the Canvas courtesy of Michael Penn and the Juneau Empire.

Pick.Click.Give.

Continued from page 1

Donations through the PFD Program are "unrestricted" gifts which REACH, Inc. uses to support services for individuals who are underserved or underserved.

Any amount from \$25 upwards in \$50 increments to the total PFD can be donated to eligible nonprofits.

Every Alaskan who files on-line

From November 26-29 the Canvas staffed a booth in the Main Hall of Juneau's **Annual Public Market**. Shoppers browsed through items made by students at the Canvas including glass pieces, magnets, pins, and necklaces as well as cards. The Canvas' Japanese Saori Loom was on hand for demonstrations and hands-on experience by members of the public.

December Gallery Walk. The theme for this year's exhibit at the Canvas is "Family." REACH artists have worked hard depicting ideas of family and what it means for them. So many people are intimately involved in their lives. This theme has brought up many issues for the students; from desires for an accessible home to a desire for an intimate partner to call family. The Gallery drew an overflow crowd from local residents gathering in the downtown area for this annual Juneau holiday highlight.

This year's fundraising event to provide scholarships for REACH students in need of financial support took place on Saturday, December 5 at the Canvas. The event, entitled ***Sabor Cubano!*** included a gourmet 5-course Cuban meal prepared by Maria Uchtyl of Cuba, dance performances by Antonio Diaz of Peru, a silent auction of art, dessert, and drinks, and a no-host bar. Numerous volunteers helped to make the event a rousing success.

for a PFD dividend can give through this program which makes it an easy way to teach children about the value of giving to the community.

When making a donation, a check box authorizes the state to send the donor's name, contact information and the amount given along with the donation. We ask donors to check this box so REACH can honor and recognize each one for his/her generous support.

Two New Leaders

Human Resources

Karen Livingston joined REACH as Human Resources Director on November 24th. Her previous career in the field spans 15 years,



primarily in Juneau, but also in Colorado and Idaho. Karen has worked in state government, banking, manufacturing, software development, healthcare, and tourism.

Karen was born in the Midwest to parents who wanted a large family—she's one of seven children. She has lived all over the United States including California, Virginia, Washington, Colorado, Illinois and Alaska. Home tends to be wherever she is at the moment. Karen is married with three adult children, a wonderful daughter-in-law and one adorable granddaughter. Oh, and two great dogs—Maggie the Magnificent and Baranof!

Karen is a compulsive baker and spent the last year running a small bakery, Eat Cake, in Boise, ID. Besides people, her passion is CAKE.

Infant Learning Program

Bev Ingram handed over the



reins of REACH's Infant Learning Program to Kim Mix in early November.

Bev has been a great support to REACH during her 20-plus years with the agency and will continue part-time with the Alaska Transition Training Initiative and as an OT in the ILP while Kim puts her 20-year career in early intervention to work leading the program—where she has served as a staff member for 7 years. Kim plays the flute in the Juneau Concert Band, and is an avid hiker, cyclist, and kayaker.

Resource Team: Multi-faceted, adds more services

Multi-faceted is the way Kate Wolfe describes REACH's Intake and Resource Team. Kate is the program's director.

Kate shared that a critical role of her team is welcoming new families to REACH services. As the first point of contact with REACH, she said it's important to build a relationship with the client as well as his or her family.

Nancy Lennon, Family Resource Coordinator, seconded that. "It's a pretty special thing to work with families that are brand new into a system. We work hard to help them navigate the resources and services that are available to them."

Other services provided by the Resource Team include assistance with eligibility for state-funded services, respite, care coordination, access to financial support through the Short-Term Assistance and Referral (STAR) program, and general advocacy as needed.

A recent addition to the Resource Team has been a full-time training coordinator. "We are excited about this new position," Kate shared. The coordinator identifies and implements orientation and training opportunities for the agency as a whole as

well as letting families know of local training events.

Another new facet is the availability of goal-directed services in addition to respite for individuals waiting for a Medicaid waiver. "We are now able to provide in-home support, supported living and day habilitation depending on the individual's need," Kate shared. It allows the Resource Team to provide a broader range of support.

For example, the Resource Team was able to assist a young adult continue to live independently in her own apartment by providing Supported Living. In the past, the assistance would have been far more limited and the individual may have had no option but to move back in with family members.

These services have been made available thanks to an increase in REACH's grant funding.

Currently 34 families are receiving grant-funded respite services, one family is receiving in-home support, 12 receive day habilitation and two receive supported living.

The Resource Team is enthusiastic about the increase in grant-funded services. "It allows us to better meet individual needs," Kate said.

Program receives commendation

The Intake and Resource Team at REACH receives a variety of grants to fund the services provided to families. In November, REACH received two letters from Bill Hogan, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, recognizing the assistance provided through two grant programs managed by the Resource Team.

REACH was nominated by Laurie Cooper at the Division of Senior and Disability Services for "meeting or exceeding the Department's expectations in demonstrating successful outcomes to Alaskans."

Executive Director Richard Fagundes stated "I'm very proud that the State has recognized the high quality services we provide."

Resource Team Staff

Carrie Lorenson: Care Coordinator/Program Developer—assists with systems development and manages documentation as well as providing care coordination for 13 individuals.

Kate Wolfe: Program director
Marcy Peska: Medicaid waiver care coordinator.

Marlyn Olson: STAR program coordinator—manages STAR program as well as provides case management and Tefra care coordination.

Nancy Lennon: Family Resource Coordinator—Coordinates all respite services, supervises care coordinators and 56 respite providers and provides case management.

Rosemary Donnelly: Case manager for grant-funded individuals.

Susan Finkelstein: Medicaid waiver care coordinator.

Vita Castellana: Training coordinator



Pictured from L to R: Back Row—Carrie Lorenson, Marlyn Olson, Nancy Lennon, Susan Finkelstein and Kate Wolfe. Front Row—Rosemary Donnelly, Marcy Peska and Vita Castellana.

Family thankful for REACH support



‘When Brady was first born, we didn’t know what was wrong with him. We took him to doctors; they couldn’t tell us. There’s a feeling of helplessness – we didn’t know what he needed, how to take care of him. Then a doctor referred us to REACH.’

*Dareen Puhlick
Mother of REACH client*

REACH provides a wide variety of services to individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities and delays. The following is one family’s experiences ...

“When Brady was first born, we didn’t know what was wrong with him. We took him to doctors; they couldn’t tell us. There’s a feeling of helplessness – we didn’t know what he needed, how to take care of him. Then a doctor referred us to REACH,” Dareen Puhlick shared.

And so, at age five months, Brady Puhlick and his family began receiving services from REACH’s Infant Learning Program.

“REACH specialists came to our home on a regular basis. They taught us what to do, shared with us what Brady was doing or not doing developmentally, told us what to expect in the future. It was great that they came to our house because it is hard to get out of the house with a child with disabilities,” Dareen said.

REACH connected the family with neurodevelopmental and genetics specialists to get answers about what was going on with Brady. At age two, he was diagnosed with Mowatt-Wilson Syndrome.

“The diagnosis didn’t change what we were doing with Brady; it was such a blessing to have the help before we even knew what was going on with him. It’s very overwhelming to have a baby with disabilities,” Dareen said.

When Brady turned three, he transitioned from the Infant Learning Program to REACH’s Resource Team. The STAR program coordinator, Marlyn Olson, assisted the family with applying for a Medicaid waiver, accessing Medicaid through the TEFRA program, and using critical respite and in-home support services. Recently, Brady received a Medicaid waiver which will allow his family to receive the full range of support services.

Brady also started preschool at Harborview Elementary.

Dareen shared that she learned a lot about Brady during his transition to preschool. “He has been so sick in his life, I wasn’t certain about him going to preschool. I really thought it would be too much for him. But he loves it! He is thriving – he has the best attendance out of all the preschoolers. He comes home laughing

every day. Brady would be content playing with a piece of string or a ball for hours; I would never have known all that he is capable of without the services and programs we’ve been a part of. REACH has helped guide us through the services. I know I won’t be caring for him his whole life. What about the day when he doesn’t want to hang out with his mom anymore? He’s getting used to having other people care for him.”

Now that Brady has a Medicaid waiver, he and his family will be working with the Support Services program. But his connection with the Resource Team will continue through the care coordination services he will receive.

“I feel so fortunate to live here and have a place like REACH where you can get all these services in one place,” Dareen said. She shared that she’s connected with other families through the Internet and has learned the support and services are not as readily available in other states.

Dareen’s advice for other parents: “Keep pushing forward, don’t give up. There’s help and support out there from people who are so dedicated to their jobs.”

Season's Greetings!



The corner window at REACH's administration building glows with holiday cheer.

Winter Events

- December 18:** REACH Holiday potluck
Noon—2pm, 3235 Hospital Drive, Tlingit and Haida Community Council Building
- Dec 24—Jan 1:** The Canvas will be closed
- February 22-24:** Key Campaign: statewide gathering of advocates
- March 20-26:** Kutandara from Boulder, CO, teaching marimba classes
- March 26:** Kutandara Marimba Concert
Thunder Mntn High School

Go to www.canvasarts.org to get information about art classes this winter

For more information on the above and other events, please call 586-8228

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