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All Day. Every Day.
For a Lifetime.*

GATEWAYS

Spring into the Siblings Program for Fun and Support

by Karin Harvey-Olson, Program Coordinator

Autism Center Hosts Training Sessions – Next One Wednesday, May 19th

by Michelle Abbott, Center Coordinator

Gateways' Autism Center offered a series of workshops in March and April presented by Kirsten Murphy, Administrative Director, NH Council on Autism Spectrum Disorders. The workshops were very successful in providing families with a "two for one" night. Families were educated in areas to help the success of their children and had the opportunity, at the end of each workshop, to network with others.

The March workshop, "Core Deficits in Autism Spectrums Disorders," unraveled some of the "social cognitive deficits" individuals on the spectrum face. Theory of Mind is the ability to not only understand that people have different beliefs, motivations, knowledge and moods but also understand how that affects their actions and behavior. Many parents of individuals with autism can recount humorous, and sometimes embarrassing, stories that revolved around their son's or daughter's lack of social skills. Kirsten enlightened these theories with actual stories providing the audience with a better understanding of why their children are having such difficulties.

April's presentation, "Systems of Care & Best Practices in the Treatment & Support of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)," focused on the three major systems of care. Kirsten described the resources available through the systems of medical, educational, and human services – and how to maximize the benefits of each. The presentation also provided an overview of the types of treatment/interventions that the three systems of care speak of as "best" or "evidence based" along with the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The Autism Center will offer another workshop, "10 Safety Tips of Care," presented by Kirsten, on May 19 at the Immaculate Conception in Nashua starting at 6:30. Please contact Jo-Ann Sheehan at (603) 459-2758 or jsheehan@gatewayscs.org to RSVP.

We will continue to offer a variety of workshops and networking opportunities each month geared to give families more for their time. You can keep up to date on the latest workshops available on www.nashuaautismnetwork.com. Please contact Michelle Abbott at 459-1798 or mabbott@gatewayscs.org for more information.

Gateways' Siblings Program is for children and teens that have a brother or sister with a developmental disability or chronic health condition. It provides a chance to get together to share a time of fun and support; along with the opportunity to connect with peers who have the same fears, questions and mixed feelings about their sibling. The program helps kids obtain reliable information on their sibling's special needs, talk to each other without the worry that they may upset someone, and comfort each other knowing that they are not the only one feeling angry or confused about their sibling. Once a year, these sibs get together and share an extra special time with their parent.

On the weekend of March 26th, the Siblings Program hosted two special events for its families. On Friday night, the fathers and sons from the program attended their 3rd annual Night at the Monarchs. This year, 20 fathers and sons attended the game and were treated to a Monarchs win! The Manchester Monarchs gave each attendee a free chuck a puck coupon and everyone took part in the festivities.

The following morning started our third annual Mother/ Daughter Spa Day where we created an entire day of beauty and wellness for our moms and daughters. We started the day off with a Zumba class, taught by Instructor Jessica Harvey. Moms and daughters learned the steps and danced away! Following Zumba, Yoga Instructor Gabi Teed provided a relaxing yoga session for everyone to relax and center themselves. We followed yoga with a delicious luncheon from Panera that everyone raved about!

During lunch the daughters chatted about what beauty treatments they were most looking forward to that afternoon, while the mothers discussed special diets, behavioral challenges, and even frequently visited the Gateways library to pull out books to look through while sipping herbal tea. Once lunch was over, everyone was treated to 4 hours of pampering. There were Arbonne consultants present who offered tips, and makeovers – starting from cleansing to finishing spray. There was a hairstylist present who curled hair and made everyone look like a queen. Moms and daughters also had the opportunity to get their nails soaked and painted, their hands dipped in paraffin and feet soaked. A favorite of the day was the massage therapists who were present and definitely helped everyone feel wonderful!

To learn more about the Siblings Program, please contact Coordinator Karin Harvey-Olson at 459-2774 or kharvey-olson@gatewayscs.org.



Hannah English – Before



After a day at the Spa!



From The
Desk of
Sandra Pelletier,
President & CEO



Spring is a time to open the windows to air out the house, clean the garage, plant flowers, and plan for summer fun. This spring, in Concord, under a bleak revenue cloud, our representatives, along with the Department of Health and Human Services, have been looking for ways to reduce spending and plan for a balanced budget. As a result, funding for the DD and ABD Wait List has come under serious scrutiny and attack. For nearly two months, families have vigilantly made phone calls, provided testimony, written emails, and made certain that their voices were heard.

Time, and time again, we have sent out a Legislative Update with a call to action. Families, Board members, and Family Support Council members have changed schedules, moved meetings, solicited child care at the last minute, and made the trek up Route 93 to bear witness to the protections afforded with SB 138. Our region has even shared their emotional, powerful stories with the general public in newspapers and on television.

It pains me that our families are once again put in this position of vulnerability. At the same time, I am proud of how our region pulls together to ensure that the voices of those with disabilities are heard. At the SB 519 hearing, which had an overflow crowd that reached down the third floor hall of the Legislative Office Building, I watched Freda Smith, who was an advocate for the closing of the Laconia State School thirty years ago; sit next to Crissy Shaffer, forty years her junior. Crissy gave passionate testimony under the watchful eye of Freda Smith and I saw two powerful women making a positive impact.

I sincerely hope that spring ends the debate over the elimination of Wait List funds and that summer brings some much needed respite. It is terribly important that our community be vigilant advocates for those with disabilities, but right now, I believe we, just like Freda Smith, have earned some well deserved rest.

Environmental Modification Ideas

by Bill Stumpf, Family Support Liaison

Gateways' Home Modification Program has been very busy this past year. Like most, we often wait until the nice weather rolls around before we start house and vehicle improvements or modifications. So, now that spring is here, it is time to start getting things moving. If families are interested in exploring a modification that would make life easier, safer, or help create more independence, please contact Bill Stumpf, Family Support Liaison, at bstumpf@gatewayscs.org or 459-2776.

Traditionally, when families think of environmental, vehicle or home modifications, they are thinking about things like wheelchair ramps, van lift systems, door widening, cabinet lowering, shower grab bars, and home lift systems. If these are some of the things that you think would help, then contact us now.

In the last few years, we have seen an increase in the children on the autism spectrum and we have done numerous projects to help families with the challenges that may present when living with a child or adult with Autism.

We have helped families install safety windows so children or adults do not get cut or injured. We have installed fences for those who may have wandering behavior. Alarms and push button combination locks have been installed for entryways to let us know when someone has left or is trying to leave the home unexpectedly. Families have installed cabinet locks and locks for refrigerators. We recently installed a shut off lock box to a microwave that a child had put a toy in and turned it on. Guards have been put on gas stove knobs to prevent someone from turning the burners or oven on.

Most of these modifications can be funded through the NH Medicaid Community Care Waiver. Gateways will help with this process and answer any questions you may have. If you, your child, adult or a relative does not presently have NH Medicaid Insurance, please call Gateways and we can direct you in becoming eligible for these funds or help look for other funding resources.

May 3rd New Transition Information

Gateways' Transition Program has redesigned the written informational material sent to individuals ages 16-20. Individuals who do not have Medicaid (Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled - APTD) will be expected to provide documentation, to show that they have applied for Medicaid by age 18.3, to continue to receive transition services from a Family Support Service Coordinator.

On May 3, we will mail out new Transition information. Please contact your assigned Family Support Service Coordinator, if you have any questions about the materials.



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If you wish to be removed from the Gateways Community Services mailing list, please call (603) 459-2716.



Pictured are Gateways Board Members (l to r): Secretary Vince Kelly, President Carol Bambrick, Treasurer Ed Carter, and Vice President Rich Pietravalle.

Please contact them with any questions or concerns at info@gatewayscs.org.

What Does Medicaid Mean to You?

by Nzenalu Obinelo, Family Services Director

Medicaid is a joint program between federal and state governments to fund health and social services. Ninety percent of services provided by Gateways are funded through Medicaid and in order to continue to offer diverse, innovative programming, Gateways needs to be able to bill Medicaid for services. Gateways will work with families to assist them in applying for Medicaid so we can continue to deliver quality supports.

Gateways encourages individuals/families to apply for Home Care for Children with Severe Disabilities (HC-CSD), also known as Katie Beckett, or Medicaid (Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled - APTD).

HC-CSD is a Division of the Health and Human Services (DHHS) program providing benefits to children under 18 years of age who have a severe disability or chronic illness. A child may be eligible for HC-CSD if he/she has a developmental disability, sensory impairment, progressive or life threatening condition, behavioral disorder, mental illness, emotional disturbance or genetic disorder that requires ongoing medical monitoring. The financial eligibility for HC-CSD is based solely on the child's income and not the family's income.

If a family has private medical insurance, HC-CSD can act as a child's secondary insurance. A child's pharmacy, dental, and medical co-payments may be covered by HC-CSD. HC-CSD has a transportation reimbursement program as well. A parent may be eligible for mileage reimbursement to and from their child's medical appointments. HC-CSD may assist with the funding of a modification to your home or vehicle to help keep your child safe and to increase their accessibility in your home or the community. If a child is age 3 or older, and in disposable diapers, your child may be eligible to receive diapers or pull-ups from your local pharmacy or delivered right to your home free of charge.

Medicaid Health Insurance Premium Program (HIPP) may reimburse a parent for a child's portion of his or her private insurance premium. Under the HIPP program, the State pays a recipient's cost for group health insurance.

Gateways relies on Medicaid reimbursement to pay for most services; including Family Support Service Coordination. We require students going through the transition from high school to adult services to apply for Medicaid (Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled - APTD) by age 18.3. This specific program includes only the individual's income and resources, and is based on their disability.

Those currently receiving Gateways' services through HC-CSD or Healthy Kids Gold or Silver, must still apply and obtain Medicaid APTD when they turn 18.6 years old.

Medicaid approval will afford recipients access to specialized high school transition service coordination from a Gateways Family Support Service Coordinator. The coordinator will connect you to community services, develop a service need plan, and request any long term funding you may need. Gateways long term supports are funded solely through Medicaid. Long term funding may only be available to those participants who are 21 years or older who have Medicaid and have identified a service plan with a Service Coordinator. Funds for long term services are subject to availability.

It is important that an individual's Medicaid is kept active since it secures access to support, guidance, Gateways long term support services, medical coverage, and cash assistance. Gateways can help you apply and facilitate the application process with the local Medicaid District Office.

For further information, please contact your Service Coordinator at 882-6333 or DHHS, 19 Chestnut Street, Nashua, NH 03060 or 883-7726.



Family Support Council Update

by Eric Shaffer, Chairperson

Council hosted its first Family Support movie event at Chunky's on April 18th. Council was excited to provide an opportunity for Family Support consumers to come together to mingle and watch a movie. All who attended had a great time and enjoyed a wonderful evening out.

The Bureau of Development Services (BDS) has provided employment grant monies to the Council to help design employment workshops. This year's workshop is called Mission Possible and is geared toward Family Support consumers who are 16 years of age or older. Part one of two is taking place on April 22nd and offers parents an orientation to tools and strategies for influencing the process of creating meaningful employment outcomes. For more information or to RSVP, contact JoAnn Sheehan @ 459-2758.

The Council has begun planning for our annual Family Support Picnic. Mark your calendar now for June 5th. You will receive more information as the picnic draws closer.

In other Council news... We would like to extend a "Thank You" to Kelly Walker for her time and assistance with helping on the Council. After being on Council for over seven years, Kelly resigned from the Council so she could transition to her new position at Gateways. We look forward to continuing to work with Kelly in her new role. Congratulations!

If you would like to help with either of these events or learn more about joining the Council, please contact me at familysupportcouncil@gatewayscs.org.



Tough Economy Taking Toll

by Deb Scheetz,
Director of Communications

Often I am asked how the continued down economy is impacting Gateways and how fundraising is going. Over the past year, I have seen a significant increase in competition for grant funds, with some grantors suspending funding indefinitely, and have observed a decline in general giving. The impact is significant for many of the programs Gateways delivers. Reduced giving translates into fewer dollars for our Sibs, Adult Day Service, and Parent-2-Child programs.

Our Sibs Program relies on contributions to host support groups, recreational events, and training efforts. If giving is down, we simply do not have the capacity to sponsor a workshop or host a Father/Son event.

Seniors who attend the Adult Day Service Program at Alvirne High School receive "scholarship" dollars, from contributions and grants, so they can afford the hourly rate to attend. Many of our seniors are on fixed incomes and rely on scholarship funds to reduce the hourly rate. We have seen a decrease in attendance at Adult Day and are certain that many families are choosing not to send a senior, or enroll the senior for fewer hours, because they simply cannot afford the hourly rate.

Our Parent-2-Child Program is successful because families get a significant level of funding from the state. However, child care and many supplies are not covered through traditional funding. Without contributions and grants, many families cannot enroll in this program since a sibling cannot be left alone during the class sessions and the program is best executed with the right tools, toys, if you will. We rely on grants and contributions to fill the gap for these families.

Many people I speak with believe that Gateways' programs are fully funded through Medicaid and state dollars, but this is not true. Last year, \$43,758 in contributions and \$94,376 in grants supported Gateways programs. Grant revenue helped with the delivery of the Partners In Health, Time Exchange, Family Support Training, and Autism Center program efforts.

With only three months left to this fiscal year, we are shy of our goal, which was to maintain giving at last year's level, by nearly \$7,000. Please consider contributing now so we do not have to consider program pull-backs later. You can make an impact!



Gateways employees honored at this year's Rotary Club Exemplary Worker Breakfast include (l to r): Danielle Fuller, Sherry Jette, Laura Drouin, Leslie Boggis, Mindy Pond, Carolyn McLaughlin, Gabi Teed, and Kerri Goodell

Close Connections Pilot Launched

by Oliver Bengle, Project Manager

Gateways has always listened to the opinions and needs of the families we assist. So, when several people voiced an interest in knowing who else in their community were in similar situations to themselves – who were making the same trips to events and facing like challenges – we brainstormed about how we might help. We have been trying to figure out how, in a time of on-line social networking and geographic mapping technology, how we might assist in bringing those we serve closer together.

The pilot program, **Close Connections**, builds upon various community networks that already exist – be they on-line or on the ground. With **Close Connections**, those that choose to participate can be part of a community that is built upon close geographical proximity and defined using mapping technology. We emphasize the voluntary nature of **Close Connections** because we have designed it to be community driven and sustained. While Gateways will help to facilitate interactions, we really see this as an opportunity for individuals themselves to become more self-sufficient through direct collaboration and real world engagement with one another.

Groups that form through **Close Connections** are not meant to displace others that may already exist, but to potentially strengthen them given new levels of awareness of the spatial relationship of members to one another. Geographic information is what makes **Close Connections** unique and is the key feature upon which the program is premised.

Using mapping software, we are able to gain new understanding of where people are, giving us new insight into the potential for communities to emerge based on com-

mon interests, situations and, most importantly, proximity. Many current networking mechanisms – support groups, on-line forums or chats – similarly allow people to engage with others based on identical needs and criteria.

Close Connections introduces a new level of engagement based on individuals' proximity to one another in the hopes that they will find exciting opportunities for support "just down the road." We refer to these types of supports as "natural supports" – supports not bought or paid for, but supports that emerge through building relationships within a neighborhood, with friends and family.

Close Connections is now in its initial pilot phase. The pilot will target three towns (Amherst, Hudson, and Milford) and clients with an autism diagnosis. Mapping technology will help us gain a new understanding of spatial, geographic relationships between people for the purpose of collaboration. New systems of visual reference and analysis will help better direct clients to services and enable us to gain a new perspective on the state of services for our clients. We hope that this new level of awareness will lead to improved service delivery down the road and more opportunities for natural supports. It is our ultimate hope that once we have learned what we need to, and find that the project is a success, that we will be able to enroll all of those in the Gateways community who want to participate.

If you live in Amherst, Hudson, or Milford, and have an autism diagnosis, and would like to participate in this pilot, please contact Michelle Abbott at mabbott@gatewayscs.org or 459-1798.