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## Upcoming Events!

**12/11/2010**

*Roses for Autism, Open House*  
Guilford, CT  
12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

**4/30/2010**

*Reach for the Stars Gala*  
Amber Room Colonnade,  
Danbury, CT

Please visit  
[www.abilitybeyonddisability.org](http://www.abilitybeyonddisability.org)  
for more information

## In Loving Memory

*Ability Beyond Disability lost three very special people over the past month; Albert, Leo and Jennifer.*



**Albert N.** was an icon at the SIL Farview Ave. location since 1999. For those who knew him, he was a loving and caring individual who always wanted to help and give advice to both the residents at the house and to his staff. He enjoyed being on the computer well past midnight, going out to dunkin donuts, going for long walks and sleeping in.

Albert will truly be missed by everyone, especially those fortunate enough to work with him and the consumers who he formed friendships with throughout the years. A memorial service will be held at Fairview Ave. on Sunday

March 20, 2011...the first day of Spring.

**Leo B.** was a member of the Ability Beyond Disability family since 1985. Anyone who had the good fortune to know Leo will remember him for his good nature and warm personality. Leo was social butterfly who loved to spend time with his niece, girlfriend and friends at the Balmforth SIL program and was happiest when dancing or enjoying his favorite musical *The Sound of Music*.

Leo touched the lives of many people and will be greatly missed by his friends and family.



**Jennifer R.** had been with Ability Beyond Disability since 1993 and made great progress over the years with our help and support. Jennifer was an amazingly beautiful person in every aspect of her being. She woke each morning with a smile on her face, excited to start her day.

Jennifer touched all that knew her and her ability to capture everyone's heart was beyond compare. She will be missed by her friends, family and staff more than words can say.

## Look Who's Joined Our Team

We would like to welcome new additions to our team for November:

Latoya A. Blair, LSI

Danielle A. Blythe, LSI

Syrbreana L. Colon, LSI

Lauren M. Johnson, LSI

Jennifer A. Keating, LSI

Shanna A. Lincoln, LSI

Leon A. Lombardi, LSI

Richard J. Luby, Emp. Spec. I

Ashleigh L. Repko, LSI

Krystal M. Rich, LSI

Karen M. Samperi, LSI

Cecil D. Snowden, LSI

Christopher J. Solla, LSI

Clara A. Willey, Emp. Spec. I

Sarah E. Wilson, LSI

*With diverse backgrounds (including many in the human services field), all of our new hires will be great additions to our organization!*

## Our Vision For The Future...

**Ensuring a successful future for our consumers, families and employees**

As we continue to grow our services, we recognize that we must be creative and innovative in order to achieve our goal of doubling the number of people we serve. That is why we are so excited to announce that this past weekend we opened our newest residential program in Yonkers NY!

The program is the first of its kind, serving six young men and women. The program consists of two three bed condos and for the individuals living there, it will be their first time away from their families.

The program will provide 24-hour support for the first 18 months. In that time, the residents will participate in a training program and obtain the skills needed to graduate to lower levels of support. This unique staffing pattern is a creative solution to the funding challenges organizations are facing in the state of NY. The Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the Hudson Valley Developmental Disabilities Service Organization (HV DDSO) were both very supportive throughout the development of the program; it truly was a collaborative effort.

Special thanks to I&R, IT, HR, Maintenance, Service Coordination, Lynn Pucino, Carol Drummond and Liz Sunners for all of your hard work! This project took two years to get off of the ground and never could have happened without you.

## Ability Beyond Disability has partnered with People's United Bank

### What does this mean for YOU?

Ability Beyond Disability will convert all corporate banking to People's United Bank (see transition schedule below). This means all checks written by Ability Beyond Disability will be from a People's United account instead of our current Wachovia accounts. People's United is a local bank with branches conveniently located where we work and live.

People's United has some great benefits for our employees. Stay tuned for more information & for opportunities to meet with bank representatives and learn more! People's United has been and continues to be supportive of Ability Beyond Disability's Mission and Vision.

Accounts will be transitioning from Wachovia/Wells Fargo over the next month. You will receive additional information through payroll stuffers over the next few payroll cycles - so be on the lookout!

**Important:** Unless you have a bank account with Wachovia/Wells Fargo, they will not cash Ability Beyond Disability paychecks once the accounts have changed. Please refer to [www.peoples.com](http://www.peoples.com) to find locations where you can cash your check with no service fee.



# connections

## “Oh My” Employee of the Month -Jajaira Espinal



One only has to enter the Maple group home when Jajaira Espinal is on duty to know why she was nominated for the “Oh My” award. Her fun and friendly demeanor exudes throughout the home, and all of the consumers, and co-workers are obviously happy that she is there.

Unfortunately, just like many of us, the people she serves also face some hard times. It was during one of those sad times that Jajaira was recognized by her Service Manager as she “acted calmly, professionally, and compassionately during a life-threatening event at a home where she was subbing”. During this time an ambulance was called and Jajaira was able to help keep the other consumers safe and calm, and to act with “courage and quick thinking” during the life and death situation.

Even the ambulance personnel made a point of telling Jajaira’s Service Manager about her ‘outstanding performance’ that day.

Jajaira’s long experience with Ability Beyond Disability probably helped. She worked with our agency for 6 years before moving to Florida to try her hand in the manufacturing business, as well as working as a legal secretary. She returned to CT and decided that she missed working with the people we serve and came back to Ability Beyond Disability, where she has been for 2 additional years now.

Jajaira also stays busy in her private life, as she and her husband raise two teens - a boy and a girl - and as if that were not enough, she also volunteers about 50 hours a month with her church. For fun, she enjoys exercising and dancing, especially the Merengue, and the Salsa.

Congratulations Jajaira, and thanks for all that you do to help make the lives of the people we serve better and better every day.



### November “Oh My” Award Nominees

- Olga Garcia - Life Skills Instructor
- Denisse Goris - Life Skills Instructor
- Ashlyn Godbee - Direct Support Professional
- Adam Pratt - Residential Coordinator
- Jen Heffernan - Residential Assistant
- Susan Hancock - Direct Support Professional
- Michelina Saunders - Life Skills Instructor
- Adam Smith - Facilities Supervisor
- Janine Crawford - Life Skills Instructor
- Sheena Addison - Life Skills Instructor

### Anniversaries

Kathleen Healy	25	Cheryl Perry	3
Kelly Moody	20	Kevin Borden	3
Oscar Steadman III	18	Krystal Koenig	3
Louis Cordani	17	Michelle Torres	3
Chad Sinanian	17	William Marchetti	3
John Sikorjak	15	Andrea Hartofilis	3
Marie Caprio	15	Lisa Colon	3
Tracy Hawley	14	Kelly Scott	3
Perlita Concepcion	14	Iris Bartone	3
Paul Starybrat	12	Allison Loosigian	3
Nicole Kammerer	12	Debora Okech	3
Okechukwu Uzoh	12	Sotero Rivera Jr.	2
Preference Sullivan	11	Ronald Inconstanti	2
Monique Anderson	11	Lora Bellamy	2
Daryl Harris	10	Thrisha Thomas	2
Barbara White	10	Jonathan Baiden	2
Michael Micari	10	Emely Lopez	2
Kristine Foss	10	Michelina aunders	2
Stephanie Jordan	8	Stephanie Nelson	2
Dawn Briscoe	7	David Mumbo	2
Anthony Willis	7	Adam Pratt	2
Ruby Rivera	6	Sharon Schreiber	1
Michael Duggans	5	Kristopher Smith	1
Oscar Pesantez	5	Keisha Morgan	1
Theresa Hoyt	5	Courtney Coogan	1
Randall Baker	5	Sylvester Anderson	1
Mark Bossone	5	Jonathan Irizarry	1
Carline Brown	4	Kayla Newman	1
Tracy Cargill-Moore	3	Kayla Garriott	1
Danielle Gibbs	3		
Ibrahim Mansaray	3		

## Safety Corner

- Submitted by the Central Health and Safety Committee

Winter is a beautiful season but with it comes rain, snow, sleet and ice, which are all very dangerous. According to the National Weather Service about 70% of winter time injuries are the result of vehicle accidents, and about 25% of all injuries result from being caught out in a storm.

There are many things you can do to prevent injuries. Here are some suggestions:

1. Make sure everyone is dressed appropriately: warm clothing in several layers, gloves, hoods, proper footwear. Some consumers have medical conditions that makes them more sensitive to the cold weather.
2. Avoid overexertion.
3. Allow more time to get around.
4. Provide extra assistance to those that may need it.
5. Keep walkways and driveways clean, put down some sand and salt before, during and after the storms.
6. Safely remove icicles from overhangs that may fall on someone.
7. Put a heavy welcome mat at the door for everyone to wipe their feet.
8. If you must travel, check the latest forecast, stay informed and be prepared.
9. Keep your vehicle gas tank full to prevent gasoline freeze-up.
10. Check your tires for proper pressure.
11. Make sure that you have a good ice scraper to clear your vehicle of all ice and snow. Good vision is a key to good driving and it's the law.
12. Plan your stops and keep plenty of distance between cars.
13. Make sure you always have a cell phone with a full battery.
14. Always inform someone of your travel plans.

**Remember that safety is everyone's responsibility. If you see something that is not safe, correct it. If it is something you can not correct, report it immediately. Please be safe and enjoy this winter season!**

## BRAVO!

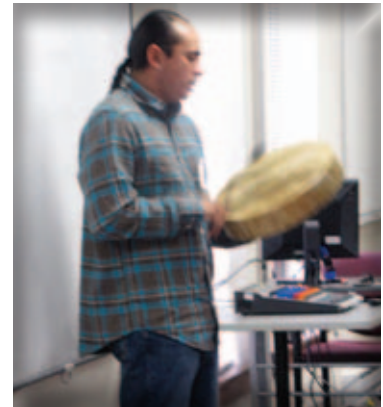
Some noteworthy happenings at Ability Beyond Disability

The team at **Deer Hill** completed a cite free ICF survey last month. The inspector was extremely complimentary throughout her three-day long observations, interviews and records reviews. These outcomes are due to the exceptional teamwork of the entire staff. Congratulations to all!

The **Holiday Festival** held at the Leir Pavilion last month raised just under \$4,000 for Ability Beyond Disability! Thank you to everyone who helped coordinate and everyone who participated.

## Diversity is the spice of life

On December 3rd, the sounds of Native American song rang throughout the Leir Pavilion. Members of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation spent the afternoon at Ability Beyond Disability as part of a cultural diversity presentation put on by the Career Development department.



This effort was on behalf of the Department of Mental health and Addiction Services - one of our major funding agencies. As part of their efforts to be more sensitive and responsive to the needs of people of diverse backgrounds, they assign each service provider a month in which they are supposed to host a presentation focusing on a different demographic of society. We welcomed Silvermoon Mars and Quanah LaRose to educate us about their culture. Silvermoon Mars spoke to staff and consumers about the history, values, and cultural issues affecting Native American and indigenous cultures. She is the Program Manager for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation Vocational Rehabilitation Program. The program is very similar to ours... it provides services that help American Indians with disabilities get and keep employment throughout Connecticut and Rhode Island.

When she had finished, Quanah LaRose awed the crowd with his music. He played and sang many different songs; each with a different meaning and history. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to learn about and appreciate a different culture.