



At Ability Beyond Disability we so often talk about the importance of our direct support staff – they are the backbone of our organization. These individuals spend their days truly caring for people with disabilities; assisting them with their most intimate needs, supporting their quest for independence, helping them achieve their dreams and building relationships with them. **Our employees are the key that allows people with disabilities to live successfully in the community.** So as you can imagine – having consistent staff is something that is very important to the people we serve.

To that end, we implemented our Pathways to Excellence program in 2008. This career path program allows our staff to expand their skills and knowledge in the field of supporting people with disabilities. It also offers bonuses and incentives for graduates of the program, in hopes that they will spend the entirety of their career with us. We have had 155 people graduate from the program to date and we have a 92% retention rate!

Since its inception we have been continuously recognized for this innovative program. Just this past month, we were nationally recognized with the “Moving Mountains Award” provided by the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. The award is presented to organizations using best practice in the development of its direct support workforce that result in a higher quality of care for the people being supported. We are one of only two organizations chosen to receive the award nationwide.

It is through the support of people like you that we are able to continue to offer the Pathways to Excellence program to our employees. Thank you for helping us provide the best care possible to those who need us.

Regards,

Tom Fanning

**Ability Beyond Disability 2010 - 2011  
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**Inside  
this issue:**

A Note from  
the CEO

*Why I work at  
Ability  
Beyond  
Disability*

*Family  
Support*

**Our  
Community**

**The Reach for  
the Stars Gala**

**Memorial and  
Honor gifts**

**Grant updates**

**And much  
more!**



## A Remarkable Transformation

When Walt arrived at Ability Beyond Disability just 18 months ago he weighed over three hundred pounds. He was on numerous medications for diabetes, asthma and even sleep apnea. **At only 28 years old, his health was a major concern...his life was at risk.**



Walt has Down syndrome and is unable to live on his own. He had been living with his mother but she also had severe medical issues, so he was not receiving the level of care that he really needed. Then he was given the opportunity to move into an Ability Beyond Disability group residence that was better equipped to support his medical needs.

Our dieticians and nurses worked together to get Walt on a nutrition and exercise plan that would help him become healthier. Walt has always loved to eat, but staff quickly discovered that he was as happy with a salad as he was a greasy sandwich! Staff also discovered that Walt

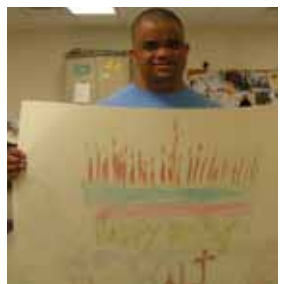


loved to run, but because of his health concerns it was difficult for him and even dangerous. So - he started walking as much as he could. He even joined the Special Olympics track team as a walker.

**After just a year and a half at Ability Beyond Disability Walt's life has changed completely.** To date, he has lost over 125 pounds! He no longer needs medication for his diabetes and both his asthma and sleep apnea have greatly improved. He uses a treadmill at home and he loves to race staff and show off his newly found speed.

Holly Schultz, assistant services director, has been a part of the team supporting Walt since he first arrived at Ability Beyond Disability. *"It was difficult for Walt at first to leave his mom, but he has flourished in the structured environment that a group home has to offer,"* she said.

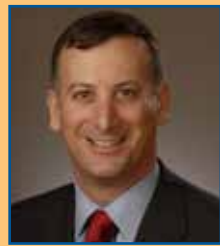
Michele Smith, service manager, has seen Walt's remarkable transformation happen right before her eyes. *"He knows he's healthier than he's ever been before,"* she said.



Holly said that he never complains about eating healthy and exercising and that he has made dozens of new friends. *"We are all extremely proud of Walt and his accomplishments,"* she said. *"We all know that he is going to live a much longer, healthier and more productive life now."*

More than anything, Walt wants to run at the Special Olympics games this spring...and he's well on his way to achieving that dream.

To give a gift online visit [www.abilitybeyonddisability.org](http://www.abilitybeyonddisability.org)



*Why I Work At Ability Beyond Disability*  
- David J. Cappiello, Vice President of Development

I first got involved with Ability Beyond Disability over 10 years ago. I was in the Connecticut State Legislature and Tom Fanning had approached us about getting people with disabilities fully integrated into the community. We developed a good relationship and I continued to work with Tom over the years.

In 2009 I left office and Tom asked my wife and I to co-chair the Ability Beyond Disability gala. It was a resounding yes for both of us as we very much believe in the mission of the organization. It was an incredible experience. I got to work more closely with employees and really see what the organization does every day. Plus, it was a fun way to get involved (Yes, I think fundraising is fun!).

I was very touched by the staff. They take their jobs so seriously and it was eye-opening to see how much they care about the consumers. Right around that time, I was asked to join the Board of Trustees. I felt like Ability Beyond Disability was a great fit for me. They were known to have one of the most active boards in the area...I was proud to be asked.

I took my role as the Vice President of Development at the beginning of this year. I am committed to raising awareness about our mission and what we do, while encouraging philanthropic support to fill the gap between the funding we receive and the actual cost of providing services. Of course, the ultimate goal is to wake up someday and find that there is no waiting list for services for people with disabilities.

I've had quite a long history with Ability Beyond Disability, so it's not hard to see why I seized the opportunity to commit myself as a staff member here. But when asked "why" I work at Ability Beyond Disability, I go back to the mission and what we do for people. Every parent wants to be sure their child has the best life they can live and is reaching their fullest potential. What we do here by providing opportunities for independence and a fulfilled life touches me deeply. As a parent of two, I know there is nothing more important than that. That is why I work at Ability Beyond Disability.

**Thank you to the following funders for your support through recent grant awards:**

- Autism Speaks - \$25,000
- Ceres Foundation - \$10,000
- George Link Jr. Charitable Trust - \$10,000
- People's United Community Foundation - \$7,000
- Boehringer Ingelheim - \$5,000
- USDA CT Grown - \$2,000
- General Reinsurance Corp. - \$2,000
- William H. Pitt Foundation - \$1,000



[www.facebook.com/AbilityBeyondDisability](http://www.facebook.com/AbilityBeyondDisability)

**Our Community**

Partnering with Ability Beyond Disability

**Duracell Lends a Hand**

Volunteers from Duracell spent a day sprucing up one of our homes in Bethel, CT in February. They painted the dining area, living room and stairwell. Everything looks fantastic!



Interested in volunteering? Please contact Nneka Maiurro at 203.826.3182.



**New Fairfield Knights of Columbus**

The St. Edward Knights of Columbus Council 12968 in New Fairfield raised over \$1,300 for Ability Beyond Disability through its annual Tootsie Roll drive. The funds will be used to support two of the Ability Beyond Disability group residences in the town of New Fairfield.

Know of a club that wants to raise money for Ability Beyond Disability? Please contact Robyn Wicks at 203.826.3181.

**R.S.V.P.**

A group of volunteers from the Retired Senior Volunteer Program came to our corporate office in Bethel, CT to help put together a mailing for an upcoming event. The ladies worked hard to make sure that the letters got out on time!



**The Reach For The Stars Gala 2011**



Kristin and Darren

The 2011 Ability Beyond Disability gala is just around the corner. This year's event will be held on Saturday, April 30 at the Amber Room Colonnade in Danbury, CT.

We are excited to be working with co-chair couples David and Melissa Beylouni and Darren and Kristin Beylouni! They have been working hard along with our Board, committee members and staff to ensure that this year's gala will be the most successful to date.

M. Jodi Rell will be honored with the Robert S. Young Humanitarian Award and there will be both silent and live auctions, dinner and plenty of dancing. If you're interested in supporting the gala as a sponsor, guest or volunteer, please contact Robyn Wicks at 203.826.3181.



Melissa and David

**Memorial and Honor Gifts**

Since January, gifts have been made in honor or memory of the following people:

- In Honor of Arthur Bennett
- In Honor of Linda Berry
- In Honor of Pearl Cohen
- In Honor of Mr. and Mrs. Hugh D. Davis
- In Honor of Rhonda DeLetis
- In Honor of Robert F. Emrich
- In Honor of Kokyo Henkel
- In Honor of Paula and Tom Ringwald
- In Honor of Michael Sabath
- In Honor of Bryan Scheffer
- In Honor of Ability Beyond Disability Staff
- In Honor of Carolyne and Sol Steiner
- In Honor of Karen Ungania
- In Honor of Ginny and Roy Young
- In Memory of Evelyn and Joseph Bennitt
- In Memory of Rusty Bergman
- In Memory of Catherine Blair Fredlund
- In Memory of Delores Brandon
- In Memory of Michael J. Davis
- In Memory of Virginia Gracy
- In Memory of Kathleen B. Knipe
- In Memory of Laurence Kogos
- In Memory of Julia and Nathan Lefkowitz
- In Memory of Mattie Schachter

Charity donations make a great gift! Please visit us online at [www.abilitybeyonddisability.org](http://www.abilitybeyonddisability.org) to make a gift in honor or memory of someone today.



**Have You Heard?!**

Roses for Autism is now selling ONLINE and shipping NATIONWIDE! Visit the website today - your purchase supports employment opportunities for people with autism. [www.rosesforautism.com](http://www.rosesforautism.com)

*Family Support*

**Family Network**

We recently held two family network meetings in CT and NY that touched on the future of Ability Beyond Disability and how families of the people we serve can help support this future through their involvement. Four key areas for family involvement were highlighted including advocacy, family giving, community outreach and education, and volunteerism. Anyone who was unable to attend but would like additional information on how they may become involved in one or more of these areas, please contact Nneka Maiurro at 203.826.3182 or [Nneka.Maiurro@abilitybeyonddisability.org](mailto:Nneka.Maiurro@abilitybeyonddisability.org).



Steve Tracy, chair of the Family Advisory Board, his wife Mary and son Christopher

**Family Giving Circle**

The Family Giving Circle program is alive and well! We have made some modifications to the program to provide flexibility and help make it easier for families to raise money for Ability Beyond Disability. We are currently contacting all of our participating families with the help of our Family Advisors. To date we have several new members joining circles and families continue to express interest in creating new circles. If you would like to create a Family Giving Circle in your loved one's name, please visit us online to sign up or contact Nneka Maiurro at 203.826.3182 or [Nneka.Maiurro@abilitybeyonddisability.org](mailto:Nneka.Maiurro@abilitybeyonddisability.org).