

*“Dreams that you dare to dream . . .”*



**2007 Annual Report to the Community**

## **Mission**

To enable individuals whose independent living skills are impaired by disability, illness or injury, to achieve and maintain self-reliance, fulfillment and comfort at home, at work and in the community, by providing the best comprehensive home, health and rehabilitation services.

## **History**

In 1953, a small group of parents who envisioned a brighter future for their disabled children founded DATAHR, now known as Ability Beyond Disability. Since our founding, Ability Beyond Disability has grown into a leading provider of home, health, employment and rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities living in Connecticut and New York. Ability Beyond Disability has helped to make the hopes and dreams of thousands of people with physical and mental disabilities a reality by providing services that ensure lives full of independence, respect and dignity.

## **Vision**

Ability Beyond Disability will provide the highest possible quality of services to people with disabilities so that they can pursue their dreams and lead lives enriched with endless opportunities.

### **Ability Beyond Disability, Inc.**

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*“Somewhere over the rainbow  
Skies are blue,  
And the dreams that you dare to dream  
Really do come true”*

— lyrics by E.Y. Harburg

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# President's Message *"Dreams that you dare to dream ..."*

Dear Friends,

We dream of a world where people with disabilities have a home of their own, have work they love, have friends to share, have hobbies to enjoy, have time to call their own, have charities they cherish, and have many more dreams of their own.

When you look in the rear view mirror ... you can see how far you've come. But as you drive down the road ... you know there are many stops along the way and many obstacles to overcome. Dreams come true because of people who persevere and never lose sight of what that dream is. Dreams come true because there are many people working hard to make dreams a reality. And what we also know about dreams ... is that once one dream is realized ... there is another one worth striving for ... somewhere over the rainbow.

This past year is probably best described as one of exploration and planning to be better able to build the dreams of the future. There have been many obstacles to overcome and many opportunities to pursue. We have also been experiencing a steady growth in, and demand for, the services we offer. In these pages, you will read of the groundwork that has been laid, of the progress that has ensued and the realm of opportunities that continue to grow for people with disabilities. We believe that each step we take together moves thousands of people a little closer to their personal dreams.



Thomas H. Fanning  
President and CEO

# Consumer Need and Choice

## “A Room of One’s Own”

Virginia Woolf’s famous essay stated that “a woman must have money and a room of her own” if she were to have the personal liberty to create a life of her own. Since that phrase was penned over 75 years ago, both men and women have talked about the need to have “a room of one’s own”. For someone with a disability it is a defining milestone.

Ability Beyond Disability provided residential services for over 350 people in fiscal year 2007. While the types of services they received differed - from licensed residential to supported living to transitional housing to in-home supports - each signified an important benchmark in someone’s quest for personal liberty.

## Licensed Residential Services

In fiscal year 2007, close to 200 people were receiving services in licensed residential settings. While that is an impressive number, what is far more impressive is the quality of life and sense of family that exists in each of these homes. Each year, every home goes through an “inspection” by state regulators. The outcomes are consistently positive - as they should be. What inspectors frequently note; however, is how fulfilling the life of the individuals who live in these homes are - from choosing the decorations in their homes and their rooms, to choosing their friends and activities. The lives of each individual reflect their hopes and dreams - and it all begins at home.



New York residential services has grown to include over 40 individuals receiving services as the 6 new residents at Burke Court house in Buchanan were settling in at the beginning of the fiscal year. Each year there continues to be greater interest among family members for their children who are “aging out” of their school system. We have responded to this need - over the past year thirty family members chose to have their children served by our organization. Their dreams may take a little longer to come true - because it often takes as long as two years to go through the approval process and actually move into the home. We began the planning for two homes in Dutchess County to serve these individuals. We met with the families and their children to better understand their needs, develop the proposals to serve them and put the plan into action. One of the homes to be built is for six individuals who had no choice but to go out of state to receive the services they needed because their own school districts couldn’t meet their needs. Now, however, they are graduating and our goal is to reconnect them with their communities. Four other individuals are taking the next step - finishing school, moving out of their parents’ home - and securing “a room of their own.” For these individuals, this home will most likely be a transitional home -one that will prepare them to someday live in an apartment of their own.

## Consumer Need and Choice

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In Connecticut, we have been fulfilling the dreams of many individuals for a long time – and many of them have grown old with us. As it is with anyone who is aging – their need have changed. During fiscal year 2007, we devoted a great deal of time and energy to planning for the future of these individuals – and the many others who we know will follow them in time.

To meet this need, Ability Beyond Disability has undertaken an ambitious initiative called “The Reconfiguration Initiative.” The premise is a simple one – evaluate the current and future needs of the people we serve – and ensure they are in the best possible environment to meet those needs. It encompasses some basic assumptions. For example,

if someone is in their prime - working and enjoying an active community life – are they living in an area that will support their interests? Or are they in a rural area where access to public transportation is limiting? If somebody is aging, are they in a home that will accommodate limited mobility and contains the supports that can promote their health – or are they in a home where it is difficult for them to get around?

Working with one of the country’s leading experts in Universal Design, Ability Beyond Disability evaluated all of its 35 licensed residential facilities in fiscal year 2007 and developed a long-term plan that will allow people to grow and age while meeting their personal goals and objectives at each stage of their lives. Universal Design strives to be a broad-spectrum solution that helps everyone, including people with disabilities, to achieve accessibility, function and pride in their homes. The principles of Universal Design include:

1. Flexibility in use
2. Simple and intuitive
3. Perceptible information
4. Tolerance for error
5. Low physical effort
6. Size and space for approach and use

During the past year, we have identified five different models that correspond with individuals “life” stages or needs. They are: 1) Aging 2) Behavioral 3) Accessible 4) Medical and 5) General. As we move forward in the next couple of years, we will be working to adapt, renovate and build new homes that will provide the safest and most functional environments for all individuals as they move through these universal life experiences.

## The Check-out Line

When you reach the check-out line at your local supermarket Russell might help you bag your groceries. He also might smile at you, offer help carry things to your car and ask you how your day is going.

Russell has been working as a bagger since June and he loves it! He came to the local grocery store quiet, timid and unsure, but since then he has flourished and gained a sense of real independence.

“He is growing in leaps and bounds,” said his job trainer, Debra Nardello. “He used to immediately ask for help when he got into a situation where he was unsure of what to do. Now he tries to figure things out on his own and doesn’t come to me for help until he has made an attempt to solve his problem independently.”

Russell seems to know when somebody needs a little extra assistance; he is always there to lend a hand. Whether by helping an elderly couple load groceries into their car or staying late at work to fill in when someone is absent, Russell is eager to help in any way that he can.

“He never complains, and I mean never,” said Nardello. “The store gets really busy, he gets tired, someone gives him a hard time...but he never complains.”

Russell loves coming to work and his desire to move and succeed is inspirational. But what Russell really gets a kick out of is getting his very own paycheck! He loves to buy flowers for his mother and sister and takes his family out for pizza whenever he can.

Russell is up for an award at his place of employment because of his dedication and motivation as well as the kindness and generosity he brings with him to work every single day.



## Consumer Need and Choice

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As with any of us - people with disabilities want to grow old with grace and dignity and want to be as healthy and comfortable as possible. Therefore, a pivotal role was established with the addition of a Medical Support Assistant. This position emphasizes Ability Beyond Disability's commitment to choice and offers consumers the highest quality of service around the clock. MSA's work closely with Primary Care Nurses, Residential Coordinators, physicians and Life Skills Instructors as they assist in meeting the medical needs and establishing a system of consistency throughout the homes. The addition of this position was also central to restructuring services around a person-centered "team" approach. The results have been remarkable with numerous "cite-free" inspections at our homes and improved health and safety for the people we serve, along with a higher quality of life.

In Connecticut the number of people in licensed group homes also grew with the most recent addition of Cheryl Lane, located in Prospect, CT which is home to five individuals.

### Supported Services

There are many people with a disability who only need the occasional "helping hand", or a safety net to help them pursue their dreams. Some of these are young men and women who experienced a horrible accident with a resulting traumatic brain injury. For many years they were in nursing homes and only within the past five to ten years have been able to develop a new life. Others have continued a personal path of growth and development that has brought them from an institutional setting to a home of their own. Supported services is what allows them to remain in the community - pursuing their dreams and contributing to the community in many varied ways.

Supported services is a broad-based category that loosely defines those services which are less regulated, thus allowing for more flexibility. Between New York and Connecticut we have provided supported services to nearly 160 individuals.

Supported services are the next step on the path to independence. They vary from transitional services, in-home supports for younger adults living with their families, to services offered through a "waiver" program- allowing somebody to have an apartment of their own while maintaining a safety net of services that supports and teaches that person the life skills necessary to live as independently as possible.

Fiscal year 2007 brought with it many challenges - the most significant being how to continue providing Supported Independent Living services for people with acquired brain injury. This service is available through a Medicaid Waiver and was significantly under funded. Lobbying efforts, along with a re-evaluation of the services made it possible for us to continue delivering supports to help these individuals live more independently.



### In-home supports

One area of major growth has been in the services provided for children aged 10-18 in their family's home. Currently there are close to 20 individuals who receive these services in both Connecticut and New York. In their homes we teach them independent living skills, we provide respite for the families and frequently we help keep families together by providing them a support system.

What we have discovered to be the greatest challenge with these services is finding staff - largely due to the hours required to do the job. Often people are looking for someone to come in after school hours and on the week-ends. Progress is being made and innovative recruitment and training options were explored during fiscal year 2007 that will be implemented in fiscal year 2008.

### Transitional services for youth with behavioral disorders

The success of our program for young adults at a home in Bristol, Connecticut, has brought greater demand for our services. To date, 4 individuals successfully graduated from Nicholas House and are now receiving services in a more traditional setting. It sounds simple - yet these were young adults who were told they would need to live their lives in an institution. Few people had any belief in their ability - and fewer still recognized they had their own dreams to pursue. Our fundamental belief is that every human being can be assimilated into the community. Nicholas House is a shining example of that belief.

Fortunately, there are those in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services who share our belief and during fiscal year 2007 they came to us asking us to expand this initiative to include an additional 22 individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. They too will soon be able to explore dreams of their own. An additional 9 person home for young adults aged 16 to 21 in New Haven County licensed through the Department of Children and Families was explored and is ready for implementation in fiscal year 2008. The children who will be in these programs are coming out of institutional settings or broken homes, some with histories of abuse. Our goal is to reintegrate them into the community and help them graduate from school with the skills needed to succeed.



### Community Employment and Civic Engagement

In addition to a room of one's own – is the need for money. Both contribute to the pursuit of personal liberty. And nowhere is the pride more apparent than in someone who was previously locked out of the job market and has recently acquired their first job. After all, this is the American Dream.

During the past year, over 80 individuals came to Ability Beyond Disability seeking assistance in finding a job – and every one of them were led to successful employment. This was due to the team of employment specialists and job coaches who helped individuals determine their interests, develop job skills, hone interviewing skills and found employers willing to see the differing abilities of people.

A partnership forged with Boehringer Ingelheim early in the year spotlighted the opportunity to work with corporations and businesses in cultivating diversity and creating more opportunities for people to work. The success of moving individuals from a sequestered workshop into the mainstream of employment caught the attention of providers across the country and catapulted Ability Beyond Disability into the spotlight at numerous conferences nationwide, in The New York Times and on a number of Web sites, including Forbes, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Wire and Business Ethics.



Recognizing a growing need, key staff attended several workshops on “Asperger’s Syndrome and individuals with high functioning autism” to pave the way for providing more transitional services for young adults in this area. Understanding the specialized needs of individuals ensures greater success in the workplace and enhances the potential to pursue their dreams.

Employment services in New York became an area of focus this past year – recognizing both the need and the opportunity. The expansion of programs, such as the one at Cabbage Hill Farm in Mount Kisco where consumers work in the greenhouse and gardens cultivating produce and flowers for restaurants and farmers’ markets, is just one example. A partnership with the Pepsi Bottling Group is another where employers are open to looking at different possibilities.

## A Dream Come True

Maureen came to Ability Beyond Disability in 1991 looking for help in learning the skills that would allow her to one day live on her own. At first, the dream of living independently seemed unattainable. However, nine years later that dream came true.

Maureen started her quest for independence in one of our group homes where she received 24 hour staff supervision. While in this setting she began to acquire new skills and progressed quickly. In two short years, Maureen moved from a group home setting to a supported living arrangement where she began problem solving on her own and became more independent with each passing day. She got a job in the community, learned to get around by bus or train and even began volunteering her time at several different charitable organizations.

In the years ahead, Maureen grew closer and closer to realizing that dream of independence. She was grocery shopping and preparing meals, earning a paycheck and budgeting her money, keeping up with her personal care and sharing housekeeping responsibilities with a roommate.

On December 1, 2005 Maureen discharged herself from Ability Beyond Disability's supported living program. She moved into her very own apartment and began living that life she had always dreamed of. Since that day she has continued to move in a positive direction. She has continued to progress and to learn and to live.



## Consumer Need and Choice

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Work and a paycheck are venues through which to create a meaningful life. Yet life is made of something more – the pursuit of personal interests or discovering new ones. An essential part of helping others achieve their dreams is opening the right doors. This past year, some very exciting doors were opened by some very dedicated individuals.

- Brian MacCarry, a teacher who holds a BA in Jazz and MS in Education helped to develop and lead the Ability Chorus – where they share music they like, learn to play instruments and of course sing.
- A creative writing class led by writer Jordan Jankus has been producing a newsletter entitled “Abilities: We’re Living It!” They were inspired by guest speaker BJ O’Brien, a reporter from the Bethel Beacon.
- Relax Arts Class returned with visiting artists and had two showings throughout the year.
- A Summer Speakers’ Series brought together consumers and community members in a relaxed environment where everyone shared and explored their hobbies.
- The Theatre Group continues to thrive and promote new talent.



### Volunteerism

The opportunity to give back is one that is as important to someone with a disability as it is with anyone else. It is ironic to hear someone with a disability turn and thank somebody for the opportunity to “give back.” It is even more powerful when you hear them say they do so “because they feel so blessed.” It is the moment when we know it is not just our dreams – but the dreams of many others who come true when we are truly engaged in our communities. The following people were recognized for their volunteer efforts – they were recognized for their ability.



- Christos Chaar, Celeste Lanoue, Ricka Schwarta, Michael Keeley and Mathew Gerlach all received recognition for their work with the Interfaith AIDS Ministry.
- Chad Sinanian received the American Red Cross Grace Award recognizing his advocacy for persons with disabilities.

And numerous other fun activities filled people’s time: Cheering on the US soccer team against Latvia; Unified Special Olympics; Yankee Games; Museums; Essex Steam Train and Riverboat Ride; apple picking, summer picnics and barbecue’s; chess matches and winter games to name a few.

### Specialty Services for people who are aging

The reality is clear – aging is a natural process for us all – including people with disabilities. However, services for people who are aging with disabilities are not readily available. From elderly parents caring for their adult children at home, to individuals “aging in place” – it is apparent that a crisis is impending.

While many are sitting on the sidelines, Ability Beyond Disability has been actively seeking and developing solutions over the past several years. During fiscal year 2007, a proposal for developing a facility that will meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities who are elderly was presented to funders in both Connecticut and New York. While believing the best option for all is to have the opportunity to “age in place,” Ability Beyond Disability proposes to make key refinements in the area of elderly services to ensure that additional options, tailored toward older people with developmental disabilities, are developed. Frequently, nursing homes will not or cannot accommodate these individuals. There are not sufficient supports to care for their needs and make it possible for them to age in place. After five years of planning, the model for our facility was finalized in fiscal year 2007. During the coming fiscal year, our goal is to move this proposal forward and create a state-of-the-art environment for individuals with moderately severe to late stage Alzheimer’s disease or other medically challenging conditions that cannot be accommodated in more traditional settings.

### Families

The families of the people we serve are an integral part of Ability Beyond Disability. Their dreams for their children are as powerful as any of ours – yet too often they have to fight far harder. This past year, family members played a significant role in a number of ways – all fighting for the rights of their children.

On March 29, 2007, over one hundred family members, along with employees, consumers and members of the public joined a giant rally in Hartford, Connecticut, demonstrating the need to provide an adequate wage for the employees who work so diligently for the people we serve. While the COLA increase received was less than hoped for, their voices were heard and did have a positive impact.

Meanwhile, in New York, families banded together to spread the word among legislators and commissioners that the funding for their loved ones through the Acquired Brain Injury Waiver was instrumental in assuring that vital services for 25 individuals continued.



An outreach effort was also begun during the past year to help families understand the need for succession planning and to lay the groundwork so that their children will be able to transition into a home of their own while their parents are alive and able to facilitate the transition. When the life expectancy of someone with a disability was less than forty years, the concern of aging parents was not prevalent.

Today, many people with disabilities are living at home with their parents who are in their 70's, 80's and even 90's. A smooth transition into a different residential setting is not possible upon the sudden death of a parent – and the alternative may be far different than what the family would have chosen. In fiscal year 2007 a concerted effort was made to reach out to family members who may be in that situation. A number of successful placements were made and discussions with many more parents have begun.

## A Flair For Style... And For Life

Upon meeting Celeste, one of the first things most people recognize is her obvious love for fashion. She has become known for her stylish clothes, trendy shoes and her apparent talent for accessorizing every outfit with the perfect jewelry, scarf or hat. There is no doubt that she takes great pride in the way she looks.

What most people don't know is that the zest for life Celeste now shows hasn't always been there. Up until two years ago Celeste was working in our sheltered workshop. She had good days and bad days. She was often depressed and unmotivated to participate in social activities. Forget matching outfits; on some days Celeste could have cared less about her appearance. She rarely helped out with chores at her home and needed a lot of support from staff to help her with daily living skills.



That all changed when she had the opportunity to work in the community. Celeste works at Boehringer Ingelheim where she helps with company mailings. She interacts with her coworkers and has made a number of friends. This job means more than a paycheck to Celeste; it has given her a great sense of pride and has really boosted her confidence.

Her staff have noted that there is a noticeable difference at home too. "Celeste offers to help more at dinner time with meal preparations and overall has a much more upbeat positive attitude and is a joy to be around," said Susan Sheppard, Residential Assistant.

She is actively involved in community outings and enjoys grabbing a cup of coffee with friends from time to time. She is very close to her mother and despite a recent move that added miles between the two, worrying staff about how she might respond, Celeste has done great.

One of the biggest improvements her staff noted was at the annual Ability Beyond Disability picnic. "To see Celeste up at the microphone singing Karaoke was definitely a giant step forward. Last year she did not have enough confidence in herself to do that although she had expressed to staff that she wanted to try it," added Sheppard.

The changes in Celeste and the strides that she has made since starting her new job are incredibly encouraging to others. She has brought great joy to the staff that work with her and everyone around her.

## Consumer Need and Choice

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The first step in helping someone realize their dreams - is helping them understand that they can dream. This is often the role of service coordinators. In New York, service coordination provided support, education and advocacy for over 100 family members and their loved one with a disability. Many individuals were referred and received vital services that now allow them to function more independently in the community. They also began offering workshops and support groups for family members who are interested in learning more about what comes next for their children who are aging out of the school system and moving into the adult world of service. Families learned how to access adult services, how to explore and visit day programs and what to look for in them, what needs to be considered when planning for residential services and how to develop future residential projects that can meet the needs of their loved ones.



### **Clinical and Primary Care Services**

In the early 1990's there was an unmet need for services for people with traumatic brain injury in New York. At the request of the state, Ability Beyond Disability began providing residential and therapeutic services in New York for people with traumatic brain injury. Today, one of the greatest needs is for primary and specialty medical care and therapeutic care for people with disabilities. It is very difficult for people who all have a disability to find physicians and therapists who will serve them. With this in mind, we expanded our services with the addition of an "Article 28" clinic that provides physical, speech and occupational therapies, along with a Wheelchair Clinic. Plans are now underway to expand this service to reach more people on an outpatient basis. This is expected to be operational by the end of fiscal year 2008 and will offer individuals both more choices and better health.

# Quality of Services

Delivering the highest quality of service to every individual we serve should be an assumption on the part of every person involved - but it is not one we take for granted. For many years we have been developing quality measures so we can evaluate the needs of the people we serve and ongoing improvements we want to make. In Fiscal Year 2007 we took it a step further and established the Department of Quality and Organizational Development and introduced a new vice presidential position to oversee it. Under the leadership of Jane Davis Bunt, a reporting system has been developed and quality monitoring and effectiveness has become both a focus and a force. Every area in the organization is now able to obtain current and accurate data relative to service delivery benchmarks, training certifications of employees, vacancy rates and consumer demographics. With this information, service and support areas are now actively engaged in improving every area for the betterment of the people we serve. Along with this improvement comes the need and response for more information and better reporting parameters. So it is that a fluid and dynamic system for quality monitoring is now evolving and meeting the growing needs of an organization that continually adapts to a changing environment.

## Systems Change Project

Part of the changing environment is how people access the system and receive the services they need. It is not an easy process, as it involves many players and incorporates an array of funding sources. During the past year, Ability Beyond Disability undertook an evaluation of the systems it currently uses for receiving and processing requests for services. This evaluation was called the Systems Change project and looked at everything from how someone inquires about a service all the way through the intake and admission process. A number of recommendations were made by an interdisciplinary team who spent many months looking at every detail. A blueprint was developed which will be implemented during the coming year with the goal of creating a more responsive, streamlined and user-friendly process for family members and individuals requesting services.

## Mission Validation

The Board of Directors of Ability Beyond Disability is responsible for governing many areas of the organization. One committee that plays a critical role at Ability Beyond Disability is somewhat unique in the not-for-profit world. The Committee on Mission Validation has always had the responsibility for ensuring that every service we provide is consistent with the mission we are charged to accomplish. During fiscal year 2007 it broadened its scope to also ensure that the services we provide are of the highest quality possible. Looking for benchmarks against which to compare the services we deliver led to some interesting findings. First, there is limited aggregate data and trending in our field. Second, the absence of national data has driven us to develop our own criterion which has become a quest for higher standards of excellence within ourselves. And third, as we develop state-of-the-art benchmarks, we are finding other providers nationally requesting that we share our practices and that they are becoming some "best practices" on a national level.

Connecting people is critical for Ability Beyond Disability, as it employs over 800 individuals in as many as 250 diverse locations throughout an 80 mile radius that runs from west of Hartford, Bridgeport, greater Danbury and continues through Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess counties in New York. Keeping individuals connected means giving them the ability to access a central site for information which can flow in many different ways. The implementation of “Citrix” by the Department of Information Technology was accomplished during fiscal year 2007 and it now empowers employees to function from wherever their work may be. In this way, data and information becomes instantaneous and the quality of service is enhanced each minute.

### Professional Supports

Systems are only a part of the story, though. Critical to the hands-on quality of the services provided to consumers every day is the foundation that comes from professional supports. In fiscal year 2007 two critical positions were added, the first was the behavior services manager which assumes overall responsibility for the behavioral services provided by Ability Beyond Disability and the second was the manager of professional supports which is responsible for conceptualizing and implementing best-practice professional support services and provides oversight of the clinical services administered by the agency including dietary, therapy, and nursing care. Each of these areas, through accomplished and dedicated professionals, deliver services critical to the immediate and long-term success of the people we serve. During the past year, they were integral in reviewing all the protocols of every person we serve, ensuring that the right level of service was being delivered in a way that encourages the individual’s greatest potential for success.

### Measuring Satisfactions

Benchmarks and data are effective ways of ensuring quality service. Equally important to what we do however, is evaluating the satisfaction of the people we serve. Asking the question of whether someone is happy with the services they are receiving is crucial. We have also learned that how you ask the question is equally as important. The Department of Quality Services spent a great deal of effort researching and evaluating “best practice” methodologies for accurately assessing “satisfaction” of the people we serve. An effective tool was decided upon and will be rolled out during fiscal year 2008.



# Employer of Choice

Our greatest challenge as a human service agency is attracting and retaining a qualified direct care workforce. During fiscal year 2007 we implemented new recruitment and retention initiatives to meet this need.

## Recruitment & Retention

To ensure we hire the best employees, we implemented an application assessment tool to evaluate the skills and qualifications of all applicants. Additionally, because we recognize that the first six months of crucial employment area period, we found ways to speed up the process and now ensure that employees will be able to more quickly connect with their new supervisor, consumers and coworkers; all which have proven to be key factors in retaining new employees.

A crucial factor in both recruiting and retaining good employees is providing an attractive benefits package. Based on feedback from our workforce we implemented a variety of enhancements to our benefits offerings, including orthodontia coverage for children, increased dental coverage and a consolidated pension and tax deferred annuity plan. In addition to the enhancements we have made, we also undertook an extensive outreach effort to ensure that employees are aware and fully utilize the benefits we offer.



## Training

Training employees is essential for a number of reasons. It provides them the tools they need to do the best work they can. It also is critical to the quality of services we provide. In addition to a comprehensive hands-on training approach, we increased the training offerings to provide employees, hiring supervisors, and those we serve the ability to mutually choose the right person for the right job.

Recognizing the value of accelerated learning concepts - both in classroom settings and online- in helping employees learn and retain information, Instructor's went "back to school" to learn how to implement such concepts into their trainings. This resulted in three annual certification courses developed into online "game shows" that refreshed and assessed employee knowledge while minimizing employee time away from services and travel and simultaneously increasing training effectiveness and compliance.

An online guide for supervisors was developed, linking each supervisor with the tools and information to support them in effectively managing their programs and accessing timely and accurate updates. In fiscal year 2007 we continued the Leadership Ability program offering topics including; Conflicts in the Workforce, Dealing with Complex Situations, Team Building, Motivating Staff and Enhancing Staff Initiatives, and Advanced Communication Skills. Catherine Hayes, a national expert on Intermediate Care Facilities, taught a workshop for Programs and Services Management emphasizing best practices and active treatment strategies. This past year we also focused on building future leaders and forty-eight participants successfully completed our initial leadership program.

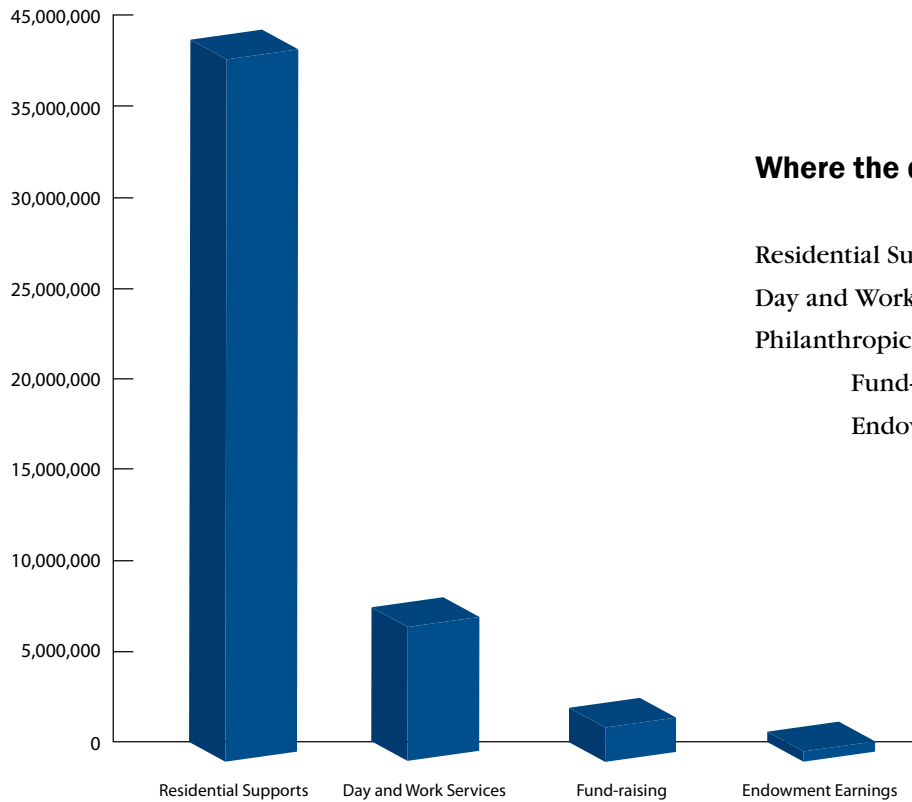
Additional efforts included successfully reinvigorating our LPN Incentive program, with seven employees participating and three having already earned their license and filling LPN positions within our organization.

### Recognizing the Stars of Our Workforce

This past year we enhanced our focus on outstanding employees, and provided managers with the tools to better recognize these “stars”. Our on the spot recognition program, which placed resources directly in the hands of supervisors, was kicked off with a visit from best selling author and world renowned speaker Chester Elton. Mr. Elton has co-authored “The Carrot Principle”, “A Carrot a Day”, and the “The 24 Carrot Manager”, and has worked with numerous Fortune 100 clients. We also began a standard practice of recognizing a person or group at the beginning of our quarterly management meetings. Our annual recognition awards luncheon continued as we honored long-term employees and superior practice award winners.

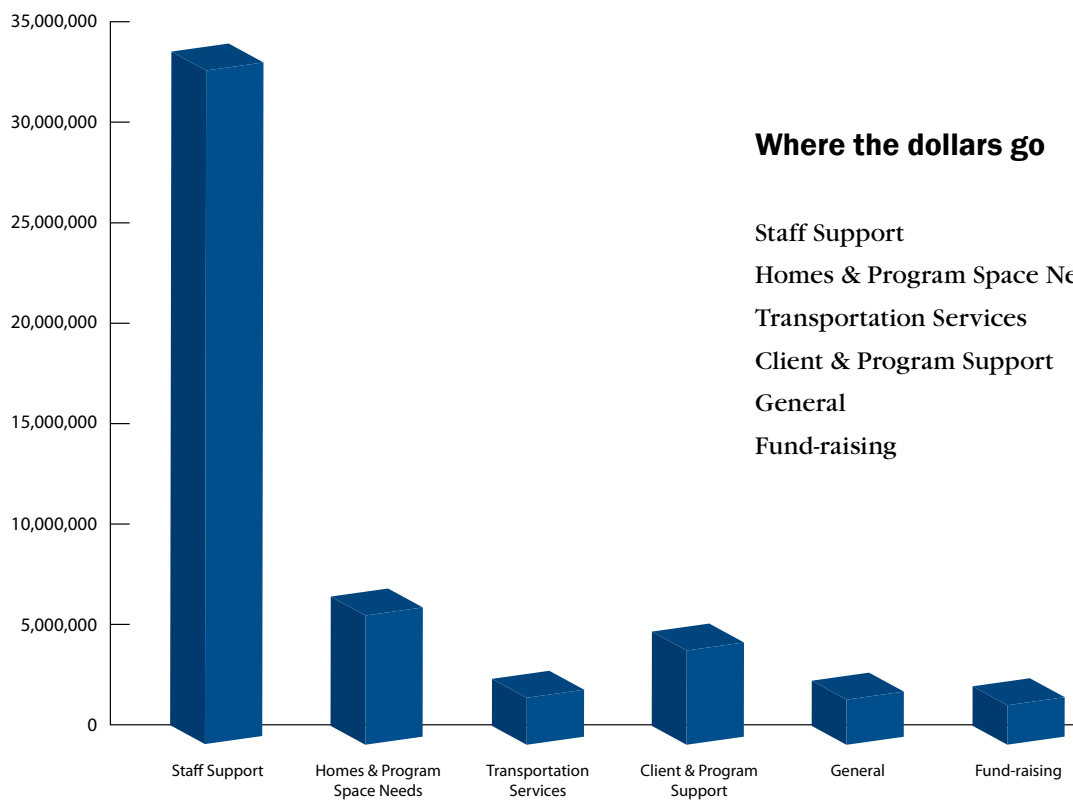


For the first time our national trade association ANCOR presented Direct Support Professional Awards and we nominated three stars from our workforce. Bob Popp, Ability Beyond Disability employee of 20 years, was honored as the Direct Support Professional of the year for the state of Connecticut. Dorothy Ayoo, employee of 5 years from New York and Lucia Riviere employee of 12 years in Connecticut were named finalists for their respective states. This culminated with an award ceremony in their honor at the Leir Pavilion that was attended by close to one hundred of our closest friends and supporters.



### Where the dollars come from

Residential Supports	37,214,685
Day and Work Services	5,998,687
Philanthropic Support	
Fund-raising	1,290,687
Endowment Earnings	463,436
	<hr/>
	44,967,495
	<hr/> <hr/>



### Where the dollars go

Staff Support	32,454,235
Homes & Program Space Needs	5,377,289
Transportation Services	1,288,801
Client & Program Support	3,584,161
General	1,205,984
Fund-raising	988,515
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	44,898,985
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# Philanthropy

## Many communities make a difference

Dreams don't come true without people who believe in them - people who are willing to lend a hand and make a difference. During fiscal year 2007 Ability Beyond Disability saw an outpouring of support from many people in many different communities throughout Connecticut and New York.

The first philanthropic event of the year began in August, in North Salem, New York at Waccabuc Country Club. The 2006 Greater Westchester Golf Challenge was chaired by Gary Smith of Fairfield County Bank and brought corporations and dedicated golfers together for a day of fun and fund-raising. Members of the Waccabuc Country Club guided the golfers around the course while the people we serve greeted them and handed out beverages.

In October, Walk Beyond Disability brought 2,000 people together to walk, along with many more volunteers and friends who gave their support, and demonstrated their belief in people with disabilities. Held in conjunction with National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and supported by Cumulus Media, this final walk showed a community united and provided a base of many new friends and volunteers who continued to lend their helping hands throughout the year.



The Annual Meeting, also held in October, was an opportunity to thank and acknowledge all who helped us throughout the year. Attendees were inspired by employees, employers and consumers who constantly show remarkable strength and courage in the face of adversity. Highlighting the night was the Philanthropist of the Year Award given to George Uihlein, an individual who has supported Ability Beyond Disability consistently for over twenty years.

Another philanthropist was honored at our Annual Gala. George Mulvaney received the Robert S. Young Humanitarian Award to an ovation of over 450 people attending and, collectively raising over \$400,000 in one night. The 'Chrysalis Gala' transformed The Amber Room into a blaze of colorful butterflies while guests raised and lent their hands to help the dreams of so many come true. Maureen Echrich, whose story of success was highlighted during a video presentation, thanked each and every person during the successful "Lend-a-Hand, Fund a Home" portion of the event.

Events are only a part of the fund-raising activities throughout the year; however. During fiscal year 2007, many of our supporters made outright contributions to The Annual Fund totaling in approximately \$350,000. Volunteers donated close

to \$75,000 in goods and services and the employees of Ability Beyond Disability gave over \$15,000 out of their own pockets to make the dreams and hopes of people with disabilities come true. In addition, many individuals and companies made their final contributions to the 50th Anniversary Campaign helping us fulfill the initiatives we had embarked on a few years ago.



There are so many people to thank and acknowledge — and we appreciate each and every one. We would like to extend a special appreciation to a few who have given unwavering support to Ability Beyond Disability for over a decade: Boehringer Ingelheim; Duracell; Newtown Savings Bank; People's Bank; Pepsi Bottling Group; Ridgefield Bank; Wachovia Bank; Union Savings Bank; Belimo; The Ceres Foundation; The Barden Foundation; Wadsworth Lewis Trust; The Ridgefield Thrift Shop and all of the local cities, towns and community groups. Thank you.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to four individuals — who do not wish to be named — who made the decision to contribute to Ability Beyond Disability by joining Ability Beyond Disability's Legacy Society. The Legacy Society is comprised of individuals who believe in the dreams of people with disabilities and have made provisions in their estate plans to ensure that these dreams will continue for generations to come. A complete listing of our Legacy Society may be viewed on our Web Site at [www.abilitybeyonddisability.org](http://www.abilitybeyonddisability.org).

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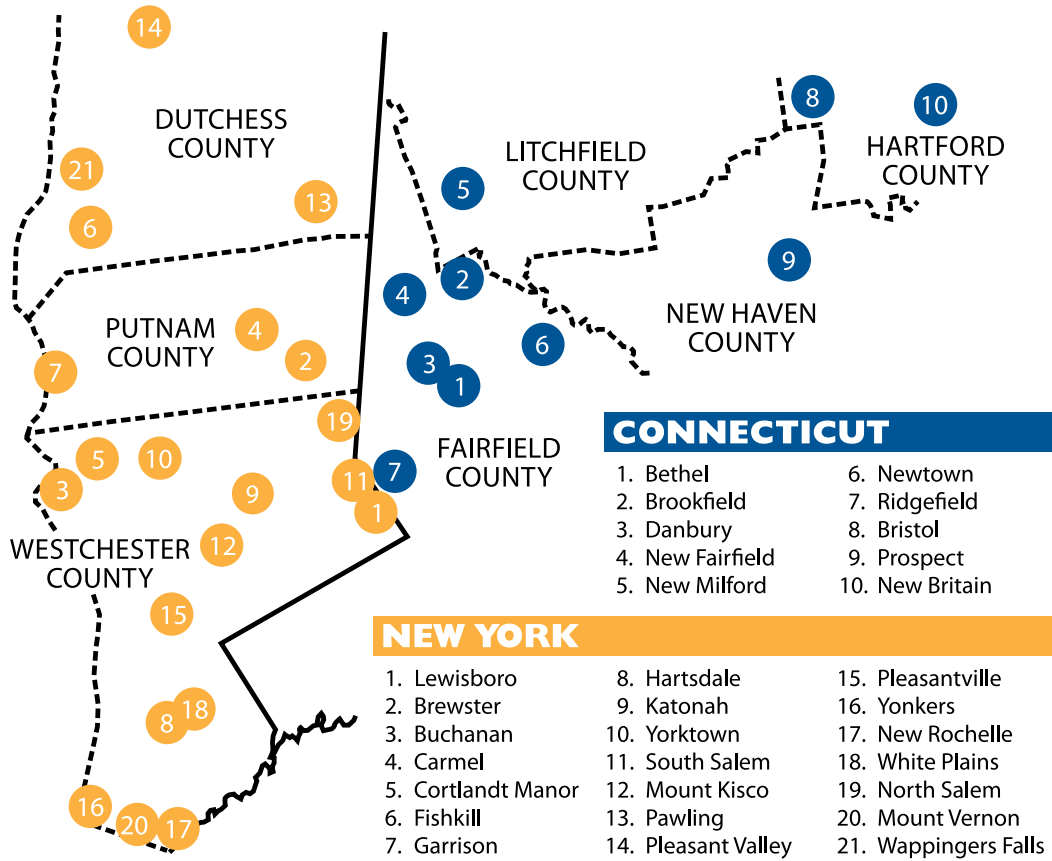
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# Ability Beyond Disability Service Area





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