

sowing seeds of closer communication among
Nebraskans working to ensure dignity,
choice and quality of life for persons with
developmental disabilities

From the Directors Desk . . .

The last few months have been a whirlwind of activity!

At BSDC, the greenhouse and the baseball field were both completed and are being utilized to increase vocational and recreational opportunities for the people living at BSDC. The kitchen remodel at the 413 State cottage was also completed, giving the people living there much larger and accessible cooking and dining areas. Thanks to a summer full of rain and the attention given by the people living at BSDC, the grounds are looking fabulously green and the various gardens and flower beds on campus have been consistently bloom-

ing. Additionally, more people continue to be involved in jobs and recreational activities in the community (with 33 people now having jobs off-campus).

All direct support staff working at BSDC have now been assigned to one of seven units on campus. This resolves the concerns that CMS and DOJ expressed in relation to “floating” staff. Staff working in the homes will now be consistent, and that will improve training and support in the homes at BSDC. This change will significantly impact our upcoming DOJ and CMS surveys.

Much is happening in Community Based Services as well! Over 1,522 people on the waiting list have been offered services to date, with 821 accepting services. Service Coordination is gearing up for the next round of

offers this fall. Nebraska is one of the few states in the nation that is actively addressing its waiting list. What an exciting time!

Certification of community-based DD providers has been moved from Public Health back into the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and we are finalizing the hiring of six new surveyors to help take on the additional role of certifying providers as waiver providers. Many of you expressed your concerns to the Legislature last year about the need for more oversight for services being provided in the community. These new positions are a direct result of those concerns.

Our Technical Assistance team is also up and running, with Kim Johnson leading the charge – just in time to assist families and service providers as we prepare this fall to implement our new waivers.

There are many other exciting things going on. Please join us at our monthly Townhall Meetings to hear more!

- Jodi M. Fenner



Pictures: BSDC residents and staff enjoying the new baseball field. Pictures provided by: Julie Belding

Ian -Starting New

By Kierstin Reed,, *ServiceLinc*

It's 9:15 p.m. on a Saturday night. Ian Ham has just finished his shower; he likes to take long, hot showers every evening. The shower curtain he chose for his master bathroom is clear vinyl printed with a colorful world map. He picked out blue and green towels to match and he always chooses those over the brown ones.

Ian knows that he needs to test his blood sugar before he goes to bed and he lays out a paper towel and begins to get his supplies ready. Then he stops. When his support staff asks if he needs help, Ian thinks for a moment and replies, "strips."

His blood sugar is just a little on the low side, so Ian is having a big snack before bed. He chooses crackers with Monterrey Jack cheese and a cup of hot cocoa. While his cocoa is heating, Ian realizes that he hasn't had his evening medications. He looks at his support staff for a bit and then says very clearly, "Meds." He settles into his favorite chair and changes the channel on his new television while he waits for his meds.

Ian wasn't always this comfortable and content. In February of 2009, he was one of forty seven people who were moved from Beatrice State Developmental Center, into area hospitals after being declared "medically fragile." Ian, who has brittle Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus and who, as a result of diabetes related gastro paresis, received all of his nutrition via tube feeding, was transferred to



Above Picture: Ian enjoying a meal on his balcony. Picture supplied by ServiceLinc.

Bryan LGH West in Lincoln.

The hospital opened a special unit that is normally reserved for catastrophic events. The unit was staffed by personnel from the Bryan nursing float pool. Most of this nursing staff had never worked with people who experience disability. Ian had to teach them a lot about autism and how he communicates. During the eight plus months that he lived on that unit, Ian also taught them a lot about jigsaw puzzles, word searches, art, and the importance of fresh air and exercise. More importantly, he taught them about courage, perseverance, and the contributions that every person can make.

While Ian was teaching his nursing staff, he and his team began the arduous process of finding a permanent home. It had to be exactly the right set up, tailored just for Ian. Ian needed significant medical monitoring of his diabetic condition. He would need a minimum of six bloods tests daily, and four or more insulin injections. His tube site would need to be examined and cleaned daily. He would require routine diabetic care for his feet. He would need structured daily activities to stimulate his mind and to help him feel safe and comfortable.

Ian's mom and strongest advocate, Sandy Ham, was diligent in her search. As she put it, "We will not settle for anything less than everything we need." She looked into extended family homes, group homes, and institutional settings. She and Ian interviewed with multiple support service provider agencies. None had a program into which Ian could fit comfortably and safely.

As the months dragged on, with no end in sight, Ian's team seemed to be running out of options. Then someone suggested that instead of looking for a place into which Ian could fit, the team should create a support plan that was a good fit for Ian. It was definitely thinking outside of the box. It would require a lot of work; a lot of planning.

The team began by asking Ian and his mom what the ideal scenario would be for Ian's life. Where would Ian like to live? Who would he like to live with? What would he like to do during the day? Would he like to work? What would he like to try? What did Ian want for his life?

The answers were simple and clear. Ian wanted to be healthy and safe. He wanted to work and be productive. He wanted to live in his own place. And most of all, he wanted to live in Lincoln to be near his mom and family.

Although the destination was now clear, the path was not. As the list of necessary supports grew, so did Ian's team. In July, Kierstin Reed, Area Director of ServiceLinc met with Sandy and Ian. Ian did not waiver from his decision. He told her "apartment." She was convinced that there had to be a way for Ian to realize his goal.

There were many questions to be answered. Who would provide the nursing care that Ian required? How would Ian be able to afford his own place? How could Ian be safe and secure living in his own place with the number of support hours for which he was eligible?

Over the course of the next six months, Ian and his team worked and reworked a plan. It was a nontraditional plan, to say the least. Ian would need to have access to home health nursing. He would need someone to coordinate his medical services. He would need support staff 24 hours a day. They would need to be fully trained in diabetic management, gastro paresis and g-tube care. Mostly, they would need to know Ian and his communication methods very well.

Ian would rent his own apartment. He would manage financially by accessing the same community resources that were available to low income persons who do not experience intellectual disabilities. Because he technically had no home,

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Ian was moved to the top of the waiting list for a housing certificate from The Lincoln Lancaster County Housing Authority. He would be eligible for food stamps and energy assistance through state programs. He could receive assistance with his phone expense through NTAP. His home could be furnished, at least in part, with a special start up fund through Medicaid.

In December, a budget was created that outlined what services DDD would fund in addition to utilizing other community resources that any other person would access. All of the resources combined make it affordable for Ian to live in his own apartment and receive services where he chooses to live.

While Ian's Individual Program Plan (IPP) team was helping him to develop a plan to transition to community living, his medical team was helping him as well. Soft foods were slowly reintroduced even though Ian didn't show much interest at first. He barely touched his tongue to the food, but gradually he began to take three or four of the tiniest bites. One of the nurses noticed him eating just the pepper off of his mashed potatoes. She ordered him some Spicy Southwestern Chicken soup. He ate half of the bowl. Before his hospital stay was over, Ian was eating most meals in the cafeteria, making his own choices with much enthusiasm.

In November, Ian's g-tube became compromised and came out. After thoroughly investigating the options, Ian and his mom had a talk. Sandy said, "Ian, how about if we just be done with the tube? Would that be okay? We can just be done and you can eat food with your mouth." Ian replied, "Done."

ServiceLinc began hiring and training support staff. They also began the process of contracting with a home health agency to provide nursing care. This proved to be a daunting task. There were legal issues to be resolved regarding the direction and monitoring of medication admini-

stration. The first home health company to work with ServiceLinc backed out shortly before Ian's proposed move date. In the end, Tabitha Home Health Care agreed to provide Ian's necessary nursing care.

Ian and his mom began searching for a good apartment that would accept Ian's housing certificate. Ian was looking for an upper level apartment with a minimum of two bedrooms. They looked at several different places. Some were rather unclean, some were very small and some were too expensive. In December, Ian rented a bright second story apartment with two bedrooms in the same apartment complex he had lived in as a child.

Ian's team met nearly every week through the planning and transition process. There were several false starts and moving day was rescheduled several times due to bumps in the road. The nursing care plan had to be finalized. The Medicaid check had not arrived to pay for Ian's furniture. As anyone who has ever moved can attest, there are always bumps in the road and just as it does for us, it all began to fall into place for Ian.

Ian had experienced enough upheaval, so the plan was for a slow transition. He visited his apartment frequently, shopped for furniture and cookware, and even ate a few meals there. He gradually moved some of his puzzles, clothes and other belongings into his apartment. After much anticipation, Ian bought groceries on a Saturday afternoon.

Finally, On February 1, 2010, Ian and his Monday morning staff headed to his apartment. His team took great care to make the transition as low key as possible. His mom stayed at work. His service

coordinator went about her day. Ian spent the day organizing his new dresser and watching television. That night, Ian took his first shower in his new apartment. He put on his pajamas, crawled into bed, and shut off his lamp. He barely woke for his blood tests.

Ian and his team met just recently to discuss a better diet plan and improving communication between his mom and his support staff. They also needed to discuss the number of visits he would have from his nurse. Ian's team continues to work hard to make sure that he has the best opportunities possible and that his supports are meeting his needs.

Ian is working hard at building the life he wants. His home health nurse visits twice weekly right now and he says that he "feels good." At home, Ian does laundry, washes dishes and he is starting to learn some basic cooking skills. He still looks forward to grocery shopping. He volunteers at Cause for Paws once or twice a week. He walks dogs for the Capital Humane Society twice a week, and he's still exploring his vocational options. He enjoys going to movies, restaurants, parks, the library and you can find him shooting some hoops since he's been playing a lot of basketball lately. And every evening, he grabs his own blue or green towel and climbs behind a colorful map of the world, for a nice long, hot shower.



Above picture: Ian enjoying himself at the park. Pictures supplied by ServiceLinc

The Alliance High School 2010 Prom King

Pictures and article provided by: Trent Short, Alliance Times Herald

The Prom candidates, the near-future court of high school seniors lined up on stage inside the AHS Gym. The lights danced across the faces of the anxious crowd of revelers. A disembodied voice began announcing the winners of each court title and the seniors cheered each one.

When the time came to announce the 2010 AHS Prom King and Queen, their was a strange and hesitancy – an expectation in the air.

The voice said through to loudspeakers, “And your Prom King for 2010 is — Jeremy Fifield!”

The young women of the crowd filled the gymnasium with the sound of their enthusiastic screams, screams that seemed to shake the foundation of the school. Young men raised their fists and yelled out “Jeremy!” The revelers of that night displayed a universal approval of their Prom’s King.

Jeremy Fifield? A Prom King? He isn’t the star quarterback or the captain of the basketball team — not even close. Fifield

will never be seen charging for a slam-dunk or throwing a game-winning pass — he’s blind. How is it that this soft spoken kid could rise through the social ranks of high school to don the very crown of popularity?

To know the answer to this question, one would have to sit down with this young man, to experience him, to see him for what he is. It’s obvious that more than a few of his classmates have done just that.

If one were to converse with this young man, perhaps for an hour, one might realize that he is someone with an extraordinarily good attitude about life in general. He’s hard working. He’s reserved, quiet, but articulate. He displays healthy passions for subjects such as public speaking, music and friends.

During this interview, Fifield’s extraordinary attitude was most accurately displayed when the subject of being blind was broached. When asked if he had a philosophy or a motto about blindness, he responded with, “I’d rather be blind than dead,” an answer that required an explanation.

Fifield candidly told of the circumstances surrounding of his birth. He said that when he was born, he was one of two — a twin. He and his brother Eric were born in Denver, Colorado three month’s too soon. Both were premature enough that only Jeremy would survive. Mindy Fifield, Jeremy’s mother said he weighed only one pound and 13 ounces at birth. His lungs were not fully developed, and Fifield added, “I was the sicker of us two. They thought

I would die on day one.”

“I had too much oxygen at an early age,” Fifield said, recounting the reason for his blindness. With underdeveloped lungs, the level of oxygen for Jeremy had to be set one of two ways; if they increased the oxygen to compensate for his underdeveloped lungs, Jeremy would most likely lose his sight. If they regulated oxygen normally, he would most likely develop Cerebral Palsy or even die.

His tones, as he related the reality of his beginnings, were steady and without regret.

“I’m blind,” he said, “This is how it is, and I’m okay with that.”

Fifield, like many teens, has an avid appreciation for music. He said his earliest memories of music began at the age of three or four. At this time, he said he often sang things he should have been saying.

As he grew, his appreciation for music began paying attention to distinct artists. As a child, some of the first groups he began admiring were Queen, Roy Orbison, Sweet, Creedence Clear Water Revival and Bob Seger.

He couldn’t put explain exactly why, but for him, rock and roll, especially older rock and roll attracted him.

In time, Fifield would begin teaching himself a myriad of musical instruments.

“The autoharp,” he said, “was the first thing I played and was able to sing with.” From there he began experimenting and tinkering with the guitar, drums, piano and the harmonica.

Fifield said, “A lot of it was self taught. I did eventually take guitar with Dave Rischling in the eighth grade.”

At this time, he was introduced to the idea of chords, and during his eight grade summer, Fifield said, “That’s when I first



Pictured above: Prom King Jeremy Fifield and Queen Stephaine Burger.

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started messing around with it and playing it with other people. That's when I realized that I was doing something that sounded good to other people."

During his freshman year, Fifield joined the Speech Team at school. This he said, built his confidence and he was able to make some friends. In 2006, he competed for the first time in the Stars of Tomorrow competition, one that he would compete in three more times.

After having been in many school music classes, during his sophomore year, Fifield was approached by a group of teens also very passionate about music. The Grace Notes, a group of students who voluntarily practiced music on their own and performed music at many different community events, asked Fifield if he would like to join.

Fifield said, "They wanted to do some Beatles stuff, and they knew I was the guy for that." He also added, "It was an awesome experience, and it was also the beginning of my social life."

Although his high school music experience has been good a good one, what Fifield is most proud of are his accomplishments on the Alliance High School Speech Team. Fifield has spent all four of his years practicing his oratory skills through classes and competing at different tournaments around the region.

Fifield's first experiences with this became a blend of mixing his music interests with speaking. During his freshman year, he wrote and competed with an informative speech about his musical hero, John Lennon. He continued with the persuasive speaking competitions throughout his high school career, speaking on other topics that interested him. Another year, his chosen topic was Lucy, an extinct, upright-walking African ape. Another year he gave an informative speech about comedian, George Carlin.

Although his Carlin speech was informative, it also evoked laughter from his

audiences. This, he said, might have inspired him to try competing in a new speaking area. During his senior year, after having some success competed at regional and district competitions, Fifield worked up the nerve to write and begin performing in the Entertainment Speaking category.

This would turn out to be a great move for Fifield, and his topic would be something he knows about intimately. He wrote, memorized and repeatedly delivered an entertainment speech about what it is like to be blind.

This year, after years of informative and persuasive speeches, Fifield went out on a limb and throughout the speech season, wowed the judges and audiences. He described his speech as organized, and "The way I delivered it, it flowed; and I made humor out of something not thought of as humorous."

This year, instead of ending his high school speaking career at regionals or districts, Fifield went on to compete at the Nebraska State High School Speech meet at the University of Lincoln at Kearney. There he won first place in the High School class B division with his Entertainment speech.

"Entertainment finals were great," Fifield said. He explained that earlier on in the year, he realized that large crowds were good and that when some people began to laugh, more laughter would follow. He also added that earlier in the season, he found himself laughing too — a disruption to his own speech — but by the time he had arrived at State finals, he had learned to control that.

Fifield described the tense moments before they named the state champion. His whole attitude about going to Kearney had been positive from the start. Fifield said, "I did not think I had a shot. My feeling was I was just happy to have made state. So I thought I'd just have fun with it."



Picture: Jeremy playing the harmonica.

But he found himself as a finalist waiting for the announcement. Even at that point, he thought, maybe he'd get fifth, fourth or maybe third. When they announced the second place winner, and he wasn't it, Fifield said, "I just went into complete shock."

After that line up of competitors, Fifield was given his first place medal. Later, he would find himself lined up against his classmates, his competitors, inside the Alliance High School Gymnasium on Prom night. Here he would be given a crown and a sash, and people would cheer for him again.

It's been a good year for Fifield, one of adulation and accomplishment. Of the two victories, Fifield said that, to him, winning at the Nebraska State Speech finals was a bigger deal.

He said, "I worked really hard to get that." Of being crowned Prom King, he classified it as a popularity contest but did admit, "It's really nice to be liked."

After graduation, Fifield plans include attending Western Nebraska Community College. His aspirations for the future include a career in radio broadcasting, music or record producing.

More Individuals from BSDC are Working in Communities

By Jerry Crisp

Individuals living at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) are now employed in surrounding communities more than ever before. More than 33 people now have jobs that range from working at manufacturing plants and car dealerships to delivering newspapers and Avon booklets. Some work in enclaves or have their own entrepreneurship ranging from lawn care to selling their own greeting cards or calendars.

“The wonderful businesses and community of Beatrice have embraced our employment services,” says **Nancy Sedlacek**, BSDC Vocational Services Coordinator. “I believe employers are now realizing what an untapped resource BSDC has to offer.”

Jenny Rosecrans and **Patsy Rook** both work at the Department of Roads in Lincoln. Their work includes sweeping and mopping tile floors in three offices, a large break room, three bathrooms and hallways. They also dust, take out trash, restock supplies and vacuum the front entry-way and receptionist station.

“I really love my job,” says Jenny. “I love to clean and to help people out. I also love working with my friends, and it’s really good money for doing the job, too.”

While Patsy prefers familiar settings and routine, her job at the Department of Roads has been an opportunity for her to adjust to a new situation and apply her skills.

In addition to washing dishes at the “Back Alley Eatery” in downtown Beatrice, **Robbie Shepard** keeps supplies stocked and does other tasks to help his co-workers.

“Robbie caught on fast and is doing a fine job,” says owner **Kathy Diekman**. “When we deep-cleaned the grill grates, Robbie dug right in to

help, and that’s a tough job. He’s even asked for more hours, and I’m glad he likes his job enough to want to do more.”

Job opportunities don’t just happen, of course, but are the result of ongoing efforts of “a community of BSDC job developers” that includes **Ernie Drent, Karen Engelman, Brenda Guenther, Becky Jones, Rod Koch, Ron Leitschuck** and **Dan Sikyta**.

“We try to get into each and every business in Beatrice and outreach into surrounding communities as well,” says Engelman. “We visit with owners and managers to find out as



REACHING FOR THE HEIGHTS: Jenny Rosecrans dusts at the Department of Roads in Lincoln. Photo: Kory Krzycki

much as we can about their business needs and ask how we might be able to help. Building an ongoing relationship of trust is a key to success.”

Engelman offers the example of watching a cook at a local restaurant who was too

busy with a backup of orders to fill condiment dispensers.

“I told **Teri Todd**, the manager at Risky’s Sports Bar & Grill in Beatrice, that I knew someone who would love to do this kind of kitchen prep work, which would allow the cook to get orders out faster,” Engelman explains. “It proved to be a win/win situation for the employer, employees and customers.”

Todd is happy with **Heather Clark’s** work at Risky’s, where she fills sauce and condiment dispensers and washes and wraps potatoes.

“One of our dishwashers was overheard to say that he was afraid of losing his job to such a hard worker,” says Todd, “and Heather just might have bigger things in store for her in the future.”

“Area employers recognize that we have valuable people with valuable skills to enhance their businesses,” says Nancy Sedlacek. “I’m excited that individuals are seeing their dreams come true and that possibili-



PLUNGING THE DEPTHS: Patsy Rooks finds that clean-up duties at the Department of Roads can be dirty work. Photo: Jessica Hatzenbuehler

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Ambulatory Surgery Center License Approved

By Ryan Broker

Two years ago, Dr. Dennis Pestal and Rosie Reedy set forth to secure a license which they hoped would enhance BSDC's ability to fulfill its responsibility to provide top-quality dental care to the people it serves. On March 19, 2010 their hard work paid off when the State of Nebraska licensed BSDC's Dental Services as an Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC).

Just one month later, Dr. Pestal has performed several procedures under the ASC license and many more are scheduled in the near future.

"The benefits of ASC certification are numerous," Pestal says. For example, undergoing even routine, general procedures at the Beatrice Community Hospital (BCH) was a source of various frustrations and inconveniences for people that live at BSDC. Whereas patients were required to be present at BCH 1 hour prior to their procedure, and recovery times were sometimes quite long, BSDC's on-site ASC allows for patient arrivals only 10-15 minutes prior to the procedure and Dr. Pestal is confident that several factors will mean shorter recovery times as well.

Two Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA), both with considerable experience treating people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, contract their services with the

State to provide anesthesia to patients in collaboration with the dentist in the ASC setting. In addition, a Registered Nurse with experience in surgery assists Dr. Pestal and the CRNA in a "float-nurse" capacity.

While it has already been said that the location of BSDC's ASC provides a convenience for the patient in regards to saved time, there are several other reasons why the ACS certification is valuable.

"For one, there's a certain level of comfort knowing that Dr. Pestal really knows the person he's working with...and that the patient knows and likes him," says Rosie, the ASC's Dental Assistant who's worked at BSDC for nearly 35 years.

Secondly, though certification is still several months away, the outreach service that an ASC of this kind can provide to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the state of Nebraska is needed. Parents, individuals, and providers from across the state have already contacted the ASC inquiring when they can get in for a procedure.

Indeed, that time will come, but several, additional steps must be taken first, including receiving CMS approval for Medicaid reimbursement and a few more on-site inspections.

ASCs

Ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) are health care facilities which offer patients the opportunity to have selected surgical and procedural services performed outside the hospital setting. All ASCs serving Medicare beneficiaries must be certified by the Medicare program. Generally, Services are limited to elective procedures with short anesthesia and operating times. One of the main reasons that ACS's continue to be successful is their keen focus on ensuring the quality of services provided. Patient satisfaction is a hall mark of the ASC industry.

Information acquired from www.ascassociation.org/

Though the full potential of the ASC is not yet fully realized, the ASC license permits BSDC to successfully fulfill its responsibility to provide dental treatments and procedures with top-notch customer service and care. And for that, Dr. Pestal and Rosie deserve lots of smiles.

...Continued from page 6: **More Individuals from BSDC are Working in Communities**



Robbie Shepard washes dishes at the Back Alley Eatery in Beatrice. Photo: Nancy Sedlacek

ties for meaningful employment are virtually endless."

According to CEO **Dan Howell**, "Community employment is a great step in creating the most inclusive environment for persons supported at BSDC. As our facility continues to become a service and not a place, my hope is that we continue to partner with local businesses for employment opportunities."

Employment is a mainstay of almost everyone's existence, and BSDC is working hard to see that the same holds true for individuals they serve.



Heather Clark helps in the kitchen at Risky's Sports Bar & Grill in Beatrice. Photo: Nancy Sedlacek

BSDC Greenhouse helps People Blossom

by Jeanne Atkinson, Communications and Legislative Services

A 40' x 100' greenhouse is letting people at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC) get into gardening in a big way.

“There’s something therapeutic about working in a garden that benefits both mind and body,” says Vocational Services Coordinator **Nancy Sedlacek**.

The greenhouse has paved paths and raised beds. It accommodates up to 60 people at one time and will be available year round. People raising flowers or vegetables they can use them themselves, give away to friends, or even sell them at the Beatrice Farmer’s Market. People can also learn new skills that might develop into paid jobs in the community.



Above Photo: Carl Vacanti tenderly waters a sprout at BSDC’s new greenhouse. Photo:by Ryan Broker

Below Photo: Photp by Nancy Sedlacek



Have you been impacted by the Waiting List?

By Marla Fischer-Lempke, Executive Director, ARC of Nebraska

The Arc works toward and believes in the community imperative: that all people have the fundamental moral, civil and constitutional rights to live, learn, work, play and worship in safe and healthy communities of their choosing. The Arc has responsibility to ensure the safety and well being of individuals.

Now is an exciting time! The Nebraska legislature has begun to

show that it is dedicated to removing people from the waiting list. The Division of Developmental Disabilities is demonstrating its support by providing new waivers that will carry out the community imperative to maximize the potential of people living and working in their community.

The Arc is asking for your story about how the waiting list has impacted you. Are you just being added to the list? Have you

just come off of the list? If so, how long did you wait? What kinds of successes and setbacks have you experienced? The more stories we can collect, the more we will be able to make an impact to ensure that all Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities are able to participate in their community in a meaningful way. To share your story, please contact Marla Fischer-Lempke at 402-475-4407 or marla_arcneb@inebraska.com.

Nebraska Direct Support Professionals Network

By Mary Lawson, NDSPN

The Nebraska Direct Support Professionals Network (NDSPN) is the Nebraska State Chapter of the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (NADSP). It is part of a growing national movement to elevate the status and recognize the abilities and accomplishments of the men and women who directly support individuals with disabilities every day.

NDSPN was made possible through an opportunity grant from the Nebraska Developmental Disabilities Council.

Joining the state chapter of Nebraska Direct Support Professionals gives you the opportunity to join with others to effect change for the direct support workforce. Your state chapter is the voice and the stories of the DSP's, we celebrate successes and

share best practices. By becoming a member of the state chapter you become a part of a team that can make a world of difference for individuals with disabilities and the people who support them.

Membership in NDSPN is open to all individuals, regardless of whether they are direct support professionals, or corporate sponsors who wish to make a world of difference in people's lives by supporting the profession of direct support. Becoming a member of the state chapter offers new and rewarding opportunities; you find camaraderie sharing your experiences with other people who also provide direct support services. Right now there are many DSP's facing the same day to day challenges that you face, whether it be problems with co-workers, advocating for the people that

you support, or discovering best practices that are being used across the country. Recogniz-

ing the value of direct support workers and empowering each other are all reasons to be part of NDSPN.



One goal of the NDSPN is to promote educational opportunities for Nebraska's DSP's. Our educational goal is for 80% of the direct support workforce to be certified DSP'S through the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals. The people that we support deserve nothing less than a well-trained, experienced and motivated staff person at their side supporting them to reach their dreams.

NDSPN is currently looking for dedicated individuals to establish the NDSPN Board of Directors, developing further goals and setting the course for NDSPN. For more information about becoming a member of NDSPN send an e-mail inquiry to Mary Lawson, Nebraska State Contact at Nebraskadsp@gmail.com, then become a fan of NDSPN on Facebook. Check out the national site at www.nadsp.org for additional information and the requirements to become certified. Be the first. Be the best!

Free visit to The Great Bug Adventure!

Due the generosity of the William R. Patrick Foundation Fontenelle Nature Association is offering a free visit to Fontenelle Forest Nature Center for individuals with disabilities & and their caretakers and/or families.
Please see voucher for details.

**Eleven larger-than-life insect sculptures!
Bug-dacious activities and interactive exhibits!**

June 26 – October 3, 2010
Open daily 8am– 5pm & Thursdays until 8pm

- ✦ Mile-long wheelchair accessible & barrier-free boardwalk
- ✦ Acorn Acres playscape for children of all physical abilities
- ✦ ADA compliant facility



Five Year State Plan:

The **Nebraska Planning Council** on Developmental Disabilities has begun their process of developing their Five Year State Plan. The Plan is required by the federal Developmental Disabilities Act which funds the Council. The Council awards grant funds for various projects and they use the state plan to guide them in these determinations. The first step in their planning process is a survey for people with developmental disabilities, families, services providers and interested parties. The survey can be found at <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/ddplanning/>. If you would like a hard copy of the survey, please contact their office at 402.471.2330 or email Sharon.bartak@nebraska.gov.



Division of Developmental Disabilities

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Calendar of Events!

AUGUST

- 13 DD Provider Meeting (NSOB* LLA, Lincoln)
- 20 DD Townhall Meeting (NSOB 1Z 3:00 PM)

SEPTEMBER

- 24 DD Townhall Meeting (NSOB 1Z 3:00PM)
- 26 BSDC Fun Day

OCTOBER

- 2 Region V Dinner Dance (Pershing, Lincoln)
- 29 DD Townhall Meeting (NSOB 1Z 1:00PM)

NOVEMBER

- 5 DD Provider Meeting (Gold's, Lincoln)
- 19 DD Townhall Meeting (NSOB LLD 2:00 PM)

*NSOB = Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509

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