

Family Update



Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Region III Family Support Council



Pumpkin decorating was a big hit! Some of those attending the fall family gathering displayed their decorated pumpkins outside the Leavitt Park clubhouse.

Family Support Council Annual Get-together a Success

By Susan Michaelis Gunther, FSC Chairperson

Despite the rainy weather, this year's FSC family get-together yielded lots of brightness and laughter. About 45 people met at Leavitt Park in Lakeport on October 6th and were treated to a “delicious lunch” of pasta, green salad, assorted chicken dishes, meatballs, sausage, soft drinks, ice cream sandwiches, and snacks. No one went home hungry. Activities included pumpkin decorating, face painting, bowling, golf, board games, coloring, raffles, and books to take home. Paul Luff played music for us, and after eating, we danced and sang. Six lucky families won gift cards to local businesses. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. Thank you to the Family Support Council for providing a “fun, well-organized” event.

(More photos from this event can be found on the following page.)

Medicaid Care Management Set to “Go Live” on December 1

By Karen McDowell, Family to Family Coordinator

Step 1 of New Hampshire's Medicaid Care Management Program is set to “go live” on December 1, as New Hampshire begins its move from fee for service Medicaid to a Managed Care model.

Step 1 includes medical & acute care and mental health services. The State has contracted with three Managed Care Organizations (MCO) – Well Sense Health Plan, New Hampshire Healthy Families, and Meridian Health Plan – to administer the program. Medicaid recipients received letters from the Department of Health and Human Services in September indicating whether they are categorized as Mandatory (must choose an MCO before the November 14 deadline), Voluntary (can opt out of choosing an MCO and remain in fee for service Medicaid for one year) or Exempt (can not choose an MCO and must remain in fee for service Medicaid).

The community-based, long-term care services currently provided to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through NH's designated Area Agency system are part of Step 2 of Medicaid Care Management, which DHHS plans to roll out on December 1, 2014.

In October, LRCS staff, including Resource Coordinators, participated in training webinars held by DHHS to help them understand the enrollment process so they could help individuals and families. The enrollment deadline is November 14. If you sign up with an MCO, **don't throw out your Medicaid card**. You will need both cards when you see your doctor. You should also be receiving a Welcome Packet from your Health Plan with more information

- continued on page 2

Fun, food, and music were enjoyed by all at the FSC annual get-together!



Each pumpkin was uniquely decorated.



Paul Luff had some joyful audience participation.



Hand painting added to the festivities.

Medicaid Care Management Set to "Go Live" on December 1 - continued from page 1

about getting your health care. The Welcome Packet will explain the services your Health Plan provides.

There are many ongoing initiatives relative to Developmental Services and Managed Care. In August, plaintiffs including families, individuals, and Area Agencies filed a Declaratory Judgment Action in Hillsborough County Superior Court seeking a ruling that DHHS' efforts to develop a managed care program for Medicaid services should not include long-term care services for people with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders served by New Hampshire's developmental services system. The full 18-page document can be viewed at www.csni.org or www.lrcs.org.

A large stakeholder group is in the process of designing a plan to reform payment and service reform for long-term care, which includes Area Agency services and the long-term care services provided to the elderly. That project, the State Innovation Model, is being funded by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare and will inform the State how to design managed care for long-term care.

For more information, contact the following:

Care Management Contacts:

Well Sense Health Plan

www.WellSense.org

Member Services: 1-877-957-1300

New Hampshire Healthy Families

www.NHhealthyfamilies.com

Member Services: 1-866-769-3085

Meridian Health Plan

www.mhplan.com

Member Services: 1-855-291-5221

NH Easy

You can set up an online account and/or access Care Management information via DHHS' consumer website: www.nheasy.nh.gov. ■

*Newsletter Design/Editing by
June Tillotson-Norman*

LRCS Receives Prestigious Management Award at Statewide Conference

By Karen McDowell, Family to Family Coordinator

Lakes Region Community Services is proud to announce the agency has received the 2013 Corporate Fund Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management. LRCS Executive Director Christine Santaniello accepted the award on September 20, at the Annual Nonprofit Leadership Summit.

This prestigious award is given annually by The Corporate Fund in tribute to Walter J. Dunfey, New Hampshire business leader and philanthropist. Walter J. Dunfey was a successful entrepreneur and business executive, a co-founder and director of Dunfey Hotels (now known as Omni International Hotels) and subsequently The Dunfey Group.

The Corporate Fund recognizes that management in the nonprofit sector is among the most demanding and most important work in our society. Often, effective management within the nonprofit community goes unrecognized. This award is presented for outstanding management skill and talent within the nonprofit sector.

“The Corporate Fund Nonprofit Management Award applications were very impressive,” said speaker Cameron Tease of Markem-Imaje, who presented the award. “It was difficult to make a decision among the distinguished list of nonprofits. The winners stood apart for their excellence. LRCS really impressed the judges with its nimble and innovative work in job development, its depth of commitment to those it serves, its success in selling tax credits to 37 area businesses for its relocation, its caring management practices for a staff of 350, and effective leadership all around.”

Upon reflecting on this honor, Santaniello commented that the dedication and hard work of all agency employees have played a role in achieving this recognition.

“I am extremely proud of the work of all of the LRCS employees,” said Santaniello. “As I have said on more than one occasion, everyone associated with the organization contributes their piece to the whole. No one person is solely responsible for the success or trials of the organization. So while I accepted the award on behalf of the organization, it is a tribute to everyone who plays a role in supporting the families and individuals we serve. I am very proud of this organization and who we are.”

As a recipient of this award, LRCS also receives an unrestricted award of \$3,500. The agency's Board of Directors has decided these funds will go to the LRCS Employee Assistance Fund in honor of the employees that made this possible.

The Boys and Girls Club of Souhegan Valley was also honored for its active arts program. ■



Accepting the Dunfey Award was LRCS Executive Director Christine Santaniello (center), along with Board Member Dona Murray, (from left to right), Board Treasurer Stuart Wallace, Board President Gary Lemay, Director of Finance Rebecca Bryant, and Director of Development Joanne Piper Lang. Pictured on the right is Cameron Tease, of Markem-Imaje, representing the Corporate Fund.



To follow us on Facebook, find the Lakes Region Community Services Facebook page, look for our logo, and click “like.”

Watch Your Mailbox!

By Joanne Piper Lang, Director of Development

The season of giving is upon us once again! Soon, Lakes Region Community Services families and community supporters will be receiving this year's annual appeal letter. Each year during the holidays, the agency seeks private donations through the year-end appeal. Annual Fund gifts help bridge the gap between what is afforded through Medicaid and limited funding, and the real costs of providing quality, comprehensive care to help people lead meaningful lives.

A gift at any level is put to use to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors, friends, and families. On behalf of the people who are helped through this appeal, we thank you in advance for your kindness and generosity. Donations are always needed and welcome.

Please consider making a donation and sharing annual appeal information with family members and friends. For more information contact me at joannel@lrcs.org or 524-8811 x 1588. Thank you! ■

Introducing Vocational Program Managers Diana Davison and Marie McDonald

By June Tillotson-Norman,
Family Update Editor/Designer

Lakes Region Community Services is pleased to announce that Diana Davison and Marie McDonald have joined the agency as Vocational Program Managers. Diana is assigned to the Northern Team and Marie is with the Lakes Team. Both have had a couple of full months as they have learned the ins-and-outs of the agency and have met staff members and many individuals and families served by LRCS. Marie observed, "Every day is different – there is no typical day."

Diana and Marie will oversee the daily operations related to the Direct Service Providers and the individuals they serve. Both will focus on obtaining employment opportunities and connections for individuals to assist in achieving career goals.

Diana had worked in Plymouth in banking for 27 years and decided she wanted a change of pace when she came to LRCS. One of her responsibilities is to manage the STRIDE program. As a lifelong resident of Plymouth, she is familiar with many resources, individuals, and organizations that can benefit individuals served by the agency in regards to employment and other connections. Diana said, "I find the work interesting and rewarding. The day-to-day interactions are refreshing."

Marie has a background in human services, most recently working with the elderly and chronically-ill as a Regional Care Coordinator, In Home Care. She received a Masters degree in Social Work from UNH Durham and a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Psychology from UNH - Durham. She states "I'm in the process of learning and I look forward to learning some the skills sets of my co-workers, as well as sharing some of mine." Marie resides in Gilford.

Please join LRCS in welcoming Diana and Marie to its staff. ■

Success at Work

Liz (center) with Mandy (left) and Susanna (right)

"We are so impressed with how much work Liz does and how thorough she is!"
Susanna Buonopane, Owner, POCO Day Spa, Plymouth, NH

LAKES REGION COMMUNITY SERVICES
Engage. Empower. Inspire.

REGION III FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL

Looking for qualified employees? Call LRCS and ask to speak to a job developer.
603-524-8811 • Offices in Laconia and Plymouth • www.lrcs.org
Serving individuals with developmental disabilities and acquired brain disorders

Brought to you by the Region III Family Support Council

Employment-focused LRCS Associate Director Recognized for Excellence

*New Hampshire Business Review Honors
Laurie Vachon for Excellence in Retail*

By Karen McDowell, Family to Family Coordinator

Laurie Vachon, Lakes Region Community Services' Associate Director, has been recognized for Excellence in Retail by the New Hampshire Business Review's Business Excellence Awards program. Vachon won the award in 2012 and was featured in the October 3, 2013 issue of *New Hampshire Business Review*. The NHBR Business Excellence Awards recognize small business owners and operators of businesses with 100 employees or fewer in 13 different categories.

Vachon, who works full-time for LRCS, also co-owns and runs *Off the Hanger*, a popular women's resale boutique located in downtown Plymouth. For the past 12 years, she has put her entrepreneurial spirit and keen business sense to work for the individuals LRCS supports by starting businesses that have created employment and ownership opportunities for people who experience disabilities.

"I'm sure I speak for the entire Family Support Council when I say individuals and families receiving services from LRCS are lucky to have someone as purpose driven as Laurie working to create opportunities," said FSC Chair Susan Gunther.

In 1996, Vachon opened her first agency-operated business, a secondhand clothing store called *The Clothesline*. She repeated the success of the first store by opening *The Readery* in 2001. Both stores, located in Plymouth, provide employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities served through LRCS. But in addition to providing jobs, Vachon wanted to help individuals with disabilities become business owners. So after doing research into worker-owned cooperatives, Vachon opened a store in downtown Plymouth called *Boomerang Used Furniture and Funky Stuff* in July 2010. The store is owned by 18 individuals, several of whom have disabilities. Their ownership stake in Boomerang allows them to earn an income and be more connected to their community.

Vachon has also spearheaded other LRCS efforts to promote employment, such as the acquisition of a hot

dog cart. "*Dawgs to Go!*," currently positioned at Smoke N Barley on Route 3 in Tilton, is providing employment and job training to individuals who receive services from LRCS. She also initiated an arrangement with the town of Ashland to run the Snack Shack at the Ashland Town Beach for the past two summers. Vachon worked with a team of people from LRCS, Plymouth State University and Sodexo, Inc., to create the STRIDE internship program, which provides training to individuals interested in careers in the food service industry. Because of the success of that program, she is actively pursuing opportunities to create other sector-based internship programs with area businesses.

"As an agency, LRCS is focused on helping the individuals we serve lead full, meaningful lives. Gaining satisfaction - and a paycheck - from a job well done is a cornerstone of a good life for most people," said LRCS Executive Director Christine Santaniello. "It's a challenge both because of the struggling economy and because adults who experience disabilities are unemployed at a much higher rate than adults without disabilities. I am very glad that Laurie has been recognized for her achievements and proud that LRCS has someone with her gifts working with those we support and the larger community on this very important need." ■



Laurie Vachon and Chris Lemay enjoy their time together working at Boomerang in Plymouth.

Family Support Council member Denise Colby is one of 35 members of the 2014 Leadership class and agreed to share her impressions from the first session with Family Update.

Impressions from NH Leadership

*By Denise Colby,
Family Support Council member*

Substantive positive changes have taken place during the past decade in New Hampshire and many of these changes are a direct result of work by leaders who have graduated from the New Hampshire Leadership Series offered by the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability/UCED. The seven-session series, which began in 1988, is held from September through April and provides parents with state-of-the-art information and strategies to effectively impact local and state organizations on issues related to individuals with disabilities. More than 700 parents and adults with disabilities have graduated from the NH Leadership Series. These leaders advocate with service providers, use the legislative process to achieve change, and organize communities to support inclusion.

Leadership graduates serve on school boards, family support teams and councils, judicial benches, local and state government, and in the State Legislature. When asked about their entrance into the world of leadership positions, many graduates point to the NH Leadership Series as a pivotal experience in their lives.

I was very excited to be nominated for NH Leadership. I had been asked in the past if I would be interested in being nominated. However, because of time constraints and other obligations, I had to decline. After my first weekend at Leadership, I realize it is not a sacrifice to be there – it's an honor and privilege.

I am among approximately 35 other individuals in the 2014 graduating class. Leadership will be one

weekend a month for seven sessions. Each session takes place in different locations throughout the state. I am hoping to gain better tools and resources to learn more about policy making and advocating at the State level. It's exciting to know Governor Maggie Hassan was a graduate of this very program.

I just completed my first session and it left me excited for the second! I was nervous going into it. After being there the first day, I knew I would be gaining many new friends. It was empowering being in a room surrounded by individuals who all have the same interest at heart, fighting for rights of individuals with developmental disabilities. This weekend took us back in time, to the history of The Laconia State School and the history of developmental disabilities system. This first session was an emotional journey – there were many tears flowing!

If ever anyone is given this opportunity, I can already say, don't let it pass you by!

For more information about this series and to view the NH Leadership Impact Video, visit www.nhleadership.org. ■



Family Support Council member Denise Colby has enrolled in the New Hampshire Leadership series.

The key to change... is to let go of fear.

- Rosanne Cash

Race Dedicated to the Memory of Allison Tucker

3rd Annual "Mile for Smiles" 5k Raises Over \$4,500 for Dental Care

By Joanne Piper Lang, Director of Development

September 17 was a perfect early fall evening for 150 runners, walkers, and volunteers who gathered in downtown Plymouth for the 3rd Annual *Miles for Smiles* 5K fundraiser hosted by Lakes Region Community Services (LRCS). Proceeds from the race help to fund dental care for adults with developmental disabilities. Dental services for adults with developmental disabilities are not covered by Medicaid, leaving many unable to access the care they need for good oral health.

This year's race was dedicated to the memory of Allison Tucker, a local resident whose untimely death last month touched many in the community. Allison was a former participant of the *Smiles* event and was known for always "meeting everyone with a smile." Together, the Tucker family and friends donated over \$500 to *Miles for Smiles* in her memory.

"*Miles for Smiles* is a fabulous event. It shows just how caring our community is," commented Laurie Vachon, Associate Director of LRCS. We had 15 local businesses step forward to donate gifts for the raffle, 11 individual and business sponsors, including 6 major sponsors, along with many LRCS staff and community volunteers." Runners included the PSU Women's Lacrosse Team and other participants of all ages. Fran Gonsalves, Director of Special Education for SAU 48 and a former LRCS Board member, designed the race course and led the community volunteers again this year. LRCS staff member Erin Pettengill coordinated the event details and staff volunteers.

Major sponsors, many of whom have generously supported the event each year, included: Dr. Raymond Thomas Finn Jr. of Beautiful Smiles in the Lakes Region; Region III Family Support Council; Delta Dental; NH Dental Society; and NH Endodontics. ■



And they are off...PSU Women's Lacrosse Team members are quickly out of the gate at the 3rd Annual Miles for Smiles 5K Fundraiser in Plymouth benefitting Lakes Region Community Services by funding dental care for adults with developmental disabilities.



LAKES REGION COMMUNITY SERVICES

Engage. Empower. Inspire.

Lakes Region Community Services Office
and Family Resource Center - 524-8811
719 North Main Street, Laconia, NH

Chris Santaniello, Executive Director - LRCS
581-1500

Family Support Services

Laurie Vachon, Director of Family Support
996-3976
Karen McDowell, Family to Family Coordinator
581-1544

Family Support Council

Susan Gunther, Chair - 293-7371
Joel Fisher, Vice-Chair and State Delegate
Valerie Lemay, Secretary
Debra Nugent, State Delegate
Irene Chapman ■ Denise Colby ■ Angela Currier
Elliot "Spike" Davis ■ Ginger Donaldson
Patricia Gray ■ Lynn Hilbrunner ■ Cheryl Larose
Cindy Sullivan ■ Nancy Ward





Family Support Services
Lakes Region Community Services
P.O. Box 509
Laconia, New Hampshire 03247-0509

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Laconia, NH
Permit #203

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Lakes Region Uncorked
Showcasing Locally-made Products

LRCS' gala fundraiser will be held
November 2nd
at the Belknap Mill in Laconia

To purchase a ticket or for more information,
visit www.lrcs.org or contact Joanne Piper Lang
at 581-1588 or email uncorked@lrcs.org

**Autism Center
of Central NH**

You and your child are invited to
participate at the Autism Center

Location: Family Resource Center of
Central New Hampshire,
719 N. Main Street, Laconia

Hours: Mondays and Thursdays
from noon to 1:30pm
(please bring a bag lunch!)

Info: Call Jen Doris at 581-1559 or
email at jenniferd@lrcs.org