



# News & Views

WCI — *Work, Community, Independence*

A Biannual Newsletter Volume 5, Issue N° 1 — Summer/Fall 2010

## Message from the President and CEO

FY'10 has been a busy year at WCI. We have worked on several projects that focus on our Strategic Goals.

### New Housing

One of our Strategic Goals is to create new housing for the individuals that we support. We had been looking for a home for four men for about six months who lived on Lyman Street in Waltham, who had to move as the owner of the home wanted to move back into her house after 15 years. The men were attached not only to the home, but also the neighborhood, where the shopping and bus line were so close to Main Street in Waltham. The men spoke to us about what they wanted in a new home and after much searching, they finally found the ideal home. It is just four blocks from their old home on Ellison Park, in the same residential neighborhood with the same amenities nearby. However, the new home has a large front and back yard where they can have barbeques and parties, a renovated basement which acts as a separate living area for them and a brand new kitchen with an open dining area for great entertaining. In addition, WCI just purchased the home as the men wanted it to be something that they could live in for life. This was extremely important to them. They moved in on June 29th after all of the renovations were done and are so pleased. They can walk to their favorite stores and restaurants, and catch the same bus to get to work in the morning. Soon, they will have an Open House and invite all of their friends and family members. There is also one open bedroom for a new housemate.

Another similar Strategic Goal for WCI is to search for first floor accessible housing for people who are aging and require more accessible living. In early



Nancy Silver Hargreaves, President and CEO

2010, we began looking for a new home for three people who currently live in Brighton and wanted to live in a more residential neighborhood. They need the home ramped, all of the bedrooms on the first floor and an accessible bathroom, which could not happen in their current apartment. We were lucky to have connected with Gretchen Morse, a realtor and guardian, who assisted us to locate a new four bedroom home in Waltham for her sister and her two housemates. They will also be looking for another housemate to move in with them. The home needs renovations and the move will probably be in late October, 2010.

### ADA ANNIVERSARY

Monday, July 26th marked the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark federal civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination in areas of employment, transportation, telecommunications, public accommodations and services and provides full inclusion in education and other aspects of society.

As the ADA anniversary approached, WCI initiated a project to provide accessibility for our Life Skills Day Habilitation program at 45 Rumford Avenue, Waltham. The program needed to become

more accessible to more people in need of services. In October, 2009, we expanded the program to the second floor. Currently, everyone can use the stairs. However, the building needed a Wheelchair Lift. We are now working with Garavanta, New Hampshire, and are in the process of building the lift this summer, which will create a more accessible program for everyone. We are excited to finally complete this project very soon.

### BENTLEY SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

In January, 2010 as Bentley University students returned to school, the Service Learning Project was initiated. Students spent a semester providing computer training to our staff so that they could more efficiently do their jobs, while the Bentley students received course credits towards their degree. We will welcome the students back in September, 2010. Thank you Bentley University, Service Learning program for all that you do for WCI.

In May of 2010, WCI launched its new WEBSITE. Please check it out at [www.wearewci.org](http://www.wearewci.org). We want to thank Jon Tapper of Melwood Global and Trish and Steve Di Tunno of DiTunno Design for assisting us with this project.

*Nancy Silver Hargreaves, President & CEO*



Peter Filosa, Frank Brazie, Eric Royal and Ronnie Thebado outside their new home at 77 Ellison Park in Waltham.

## WCI Art Initiative Program

The WCI Art Initiative Program is part of the Employment Program at 45 Rumford Avenue. The brainchild of Neil Wyatt, former Employment/Day Director, the Art Initiative Program provides an alternative and creative activity for the Individuals in the program when they are not working or volunteering in the community. Neil, an accomplished artist in his own right, started the program with the concept that "it doesn't exclude anyone. Anyone with any type of disability can participate in some part of the Art Program."

With the original concept in place, the program is now lead by Jerome Hogan, Art Specialist. Jerome, who is an artist, as well, runs the Program so that everyone can participate. The program is organized to have many tiers of activity occurring simultaneously as different pieces of artwork are always at different stages in the process. Jerome, along with assistance from the Direct Support Staff provide a creative, not to mention profitable outlet for the Individuals. With different pieces of art always at different stages, it allows any individual that chooses to participate to be able to do so at any given time and an end product be available for sale at all times.

Currently, there are three, 2 hour sessions of artwork each week. Depending on the time of year and other employment and volunteer activities this can fluctuate. To assist in the creation of the artwork, Jerome utilizes many different painting techniques. For example, one group puts strips of tape on a canvas allowing for different shapes and designs to be painted by the next group of Individuals. There are those Individuals that enjoy the prep work, such as purchasing supplies and some that enjoy the clean up, such as washing paintbrushes. Upon completion of a piece of art, one person, in particular, Ana Vega, studies the piece and comes up with a name. This is part of the process that Ana truly enjoys and has shown a flair for seeing a piece of art, it reminding her of something, and creating a name. People also name their own pieces if they choose.

**Erik Danielson is also busy at work doing his part of a painting at the Art Initiative Program now located at 45 Rumford Avenue; 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.**



The process does not end there; however, many of the paintings' images are made into boxed notecards tied with a beautiful ribbon that the program also sells. This also means that another set of supplies must be purchased and inventoried. The notecards are created, labeled and packaged all by Individuals in the program. Since the Art Initiative Program began approximately 5 years ago, local businesses have requested that paintings be displayed in their place of business. Each of these paintings is labeled and for sale. Jerome and the individuals not only purchase the

supplies to hang the paintings, but go to actually display them. Jerome must then keep track of which painting is where so that he can rotate them. Jerome takes a digital image of each painting prior to the painting being sold, donated or displayed for tracking purposes. As a result of the success of the Art Initiative Program, Neil and Jerome recently decided to began a new venture, a Photography program!



**The "Heart" picture that is now on display in the Saal Family Cardiovascular Center at Mt. Auburn Hospital.**

Robert Lynch, Job Developer, does a lot of advertising for the Art Initiative Program, often securing new places to display the artwork and to those that want to purchase it and the notecards. There are times when the Individuals from the program donate a painting to local charity and non-profit events. Two years ago, a piece of artwork was donated to a Silent Auction. It just so happened that the CEO of Mt. Auburn Hospital purchased that painting. At that time Mt. Auburn Hospital was in the process of completing the Saal Family Cardiovascular Center. They were utilizing an Art Consulting Group to find artwork for the center. The Consulting Group contacted Jerome, visited the program and liked what they saw. After looking through the Programs' Art Catalogue, they immediately chose 6 large paintings and 17 small paintings. Large paintings sell for \$500 each and the small paintings sell for \$75 each. This was quite the sale for the program as every dollar made on the sale of paintings and notecards goes directly back into the Art Program. Two months later, Jerome received another call and Mt. Auburn Hospital commissioned the Art Program to create one more piece. This meant that Mt. Auburn would pay the Art Program up front for the piece. They only had one request. It needed to have a "heart" in it.

The Individuals quickly got to work and created a beautiful piece that is now on display at the Cardiovascular Center. Although the series of events was a large undertaking for a small program, the outcome was immeasurable. It set the wheels in motion for the program to create a system of providing large orders and the media attention that the program received was invaluable.

Overall, the Art Initiative Program at WCI is innovative and inspiring. From the involvement of the people in the program to the dedication of the staff, it is an impressive program that has had a great impact on so many. There are many more stories to tell on how the Art Initiative Program effects each individual in its own way. These stories are intriguing and touching and will be told in future issues of the WCI News and Views!



**Ana Vega and Paul Gallinaro working on a new creation at the Art Initiative Program.**



**Judy Nichols, Vice President of Human Resource, Geri Gottlieb and Ruth Harutunian, Board Chair help prepare for the Haiti Pot Luck Dinner, celebrating Haitian Food and Culture.**

This past January, Haiti was struck by one of the worst natural disasters any of us have ever seen. A 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck, crumbling the majority of Haiti's infrastructure killing and injuring thousands. During the weeks that followed, we watched the news as the world responded assisting with rescue and recovery operations and providing survivors with medical aid, shelter and water. Haitians living here in the United States needed to assist their families back home.

The Boston Area has the third largest Haitian community in the United States. Over 20% of WCI's employees are from Haiti, making it the largest sector of WCI employees from one country of origin. Many of our employees were left wondering the fate of their loved ones. Judy Nichols, Vice President of Human Resources, welcomed many with an open door and open arms to talk about their ordeal. Judy heard first hand of what our employees were dealing with. Homelessness, lack of food, clothes, medications, loss of a family member, and orphaned children to name a few.

*continued on page 3*

continued from page 2

As time went on, our fellow WCI employees faced financial hardship. The WCI Management Team discussed ideas as to how WCI could assist. Many needed pre-paid phone cards to continue to contact their relatives and find out their status, others needed to send supplies to family in Haiti. A few had to travel to Haiti to help their loved ones and one employee, upon finding out that his relative was alive, headed to Haiti and brought her to the United States. It was decided that WCI would provide monetary grants to those in need. Each person applying for the grant had to fill out a form that briefly stated why the assistance was needed. One simply stated, "My mother passed away. My family's house is totally destroyed. Any assistance will be helpful and grateful."

In February, Judy Nichols spearheaded somewhat of a grassroots campaign to raise money to create the Haiti Relief Fund. At that time, Judy did not know the extent of the need or who would give and how much. Over the course of the next two months, 42 out of 250 employees requested assistance from the Haiti Relief Fund. Although a total of \$14,600 was raised from WCI employees, former employees, Board Members and Family Members, the requests for assistance were far beyond what we had available to give. Judy petitioned the WCI Board of Directors to assist our employees by utilizing \$11,000 from the WCI's Fundraising account. With this assistance, a total of \$25,600 was available to provide all 42 employees the assistance they requested. Many people could only afford to help in small amounts. One former employee even brought in a jar full of pennies. All of that, along with larger donations, and the assistance from the Board added up to WCI being able to help the employees that we and our Individuals depend on each and every day. Many of the employees at WCI that



**Nancy Silver Hargreaves, President & CEO and Judy Nichols, Vice President of Human Resources flank Jeannot Melon, following an inspirational and educational speech about Jeannot's native country of Haiti.**

Program at Rumford Avenue for the Haiti Pot Luck Dinner. The evening was rich in Haitian food and culture. Julia Hurst assisted in organizing the event and Jeannot Melon, a long time WCI employee, spoke eloquently of his native country, educating many of Haiti's history.

The impact of January 12, 2010 will be felt by those living in Haiti for many years to come. WCI hopes that we can continue to be a source of comfort and stability during these times.



**Emmanuel Cherry and Asti Asdelina enjoy their time at the Haiti Pot Luck Dinner held on May 19<sup>th</sup>.**

## KAREN DOOLEY WINS ANCOR AWARD

Karen Dooley has been a dedicated employee at WCI for ten years. During this time, Karen has demonstrated a deep commitment and dedication to all of the people she supports. She consistently has gone above and beyond the requirements of her job.

- After beginning work at WCI, Karen pursued training in American Sign Language and now is proficient in the use of ASL to communicate with the Individuals we support and staff who are Deaf.
- To safeguard health and safety, Karen became certified as an Instructor in First Aid and CPR, and provides ongoing emergency skills training to WCI employees.
- When WCI received a large grant for recreational activities, Karen took a leadership role in the planning, organizing and delivery of those activities, including monthly dances, boat cruises, social and sporting events, and other community activities enjoyed by those we support on a year-round basis.

Karen treats every person with warmth, dignity, and respect. She has developed deep and abiding relationships with the people she supports, who, in turn, trust and rely on Karen to advocate on their behalf.

This trust and reliance was validated last year, when one woman, Laura was diagnosed with cancer. Laura's Treatment Plan has required frequent, ongoing hospitalizations involving round the clock 1:1 staffing support. The diagnosis and in-patient procedures, combined with communication challenges, resulted in a significant increase in her level of supports. Especially in the beginning, WCI was uncertain whether these supports would be funded.

Despite these challenges, Karen has responded to every crisis and every obstacle in order to safeguard Laura's physical and emotional well-being. On countless occasions, Karen put her personal life aside to spend nights, weekends, and holidays providing comfort and 1:1 support for Laura. In the absence of sufficient funding, Karen frequently provided these hours and days of support on a volunteer basis. Karen sought out and secured a grant from the New England Medical Center to help pay a portion of the supports needed. However, the quality of supports that Laura has received could not have been achieved without Karen's personal commitment and sacrifice.

Karen and Laura also shared a friendship before the cancer diagnosis. Their friendship has grown deeper and been enriched by the dedication that Karen has shown in supporting her. Karen takes on every challenge with resolve, every setback with encouragement, and every frustration with humor. Her commitment to the Individuals she supports is matched only by the trust, respect, and affection they feel for Karen.

WCI is proud to announce that Karen Dooley has been awarded the 2010 American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) Direct Support Professional Recognition award. ANCOR is a national organization whose Mission is to inform, educate and network providers to safeguard, develop, grow and extend their capacity to support the choices of people with disabilities. Congratulations, Karen!



**Joe Donati, Division Head for Deaf Supports stated that Karen Dooley (pictured above with Laura Briefer) "never ceases to amaze us with her dedication and abilities. She is a major part of the heart and soul of WCI's Deaf Supports Program."**

## News Bites

- \* Aneta Hazen was hired on April 1st as the new Employment Division Head. We are very excited to have her at WCI. Please welcome her!
- \* The Annual Red Sox Raffle prizes were given out on June 1st. Melanie Marcou and Ed Keljick each won two tickets to see the Arizona Diamondbacks vs. the Red Sox.
- \* The Wheels of WCI enjoyed many events so far this year, including a Spring Dance, Ice Chips, Canobie Lake Park and a Charles River Boat Cruise.
- \* We are very proud of those Individuals that competed in the Special Olympics this past year. Robert Friedlich, Felicia Swenson-Jones and Tom Gosselin (pictured below) competed in basketball and won Gold! Natalie Parker competed in Swimming and also medaled. Congratulations to all!



## WCI Wish List

### Items for Donation:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Artwork or other hanging items (non-breakable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digital cameras and other electronics | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small and large appliances            | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift cards or sports tickets                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home furnishings and decorative items | <input type="checkbox"/> Men's/Women's gently used clothing             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor furniture and equipment       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & crafts or board games          |   |

Please note: we can only accept new or *gently used* items. Thank you for your understanding. If you would like to donate an item, please contact Jamie Alongi at 781-899-8220 ext. 134 or email [jalongi@wearewci.org](mailto:jalongi@wearewci.org).

## *Wine Tasting and Silent Auction*

Thursday, November 4, 2010 • 6:00pm-9:00pm  
at The Robert Treat Paine Estates

Featuring Red and White Wines from Italy, Spain, Chile, France and Switzerland  
Hot and Cold Hors d'oeuvres • Silent Auction • Balloon Pop

Tickets available for advance purchase at \$50 each.  
Tickets purchased after October 1, 2010 will be \$60 each.

For more event information including ordering tickets over the phone, donating an Auction Item, or placing an Ad in our Ad Book, please call 781-899-8220 X227.



Work, Community, Independence  
135 Beaver Street, 1st Floor  
Waltham, MA 02452

p: 781-899-8220  
[www.wearewci.org](http://www.wearewci.org)

*We are an organization dedicated to supporting and empowering people with disabilities to achieve a rich, full life at home, at work, and in their communities.*