

THE ASSOCIATION CONNECTION

NEWS from the Director's Desk

By Barbara T. Pilarcik, RN
Executive Director



APRIL IS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

Dr. Michael Burry was a neurology resident who had a hobby of writing an investment blog. His blog became so successful, attracting the attention of money managers across the country that he left his medical residency to start hedge fund named Scion Capital. Michael Lewis describes what happens next in his book *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine*. Dr. Burry was "madly, almost comically successful" because he realized that the bond market was absorbing subprime mortgage loans in incredible volumes. He pored over arcane documents issued by various lenders, realized that the millions of dollars swirling around the markets were artificially inflated and decided to bet against the value of these loans. This was not the prevailing wisdom; in fact it was counter to the heady days of the first few years of the new century. But as we all now know all too well, the heady days came to an abrupt and painful end in 2008 with the collapse of the subprime mortgage market and the subsequent difficult realities of bank bail-outs, high unemployment, and other ills we are still slogging through today.

So what does this have to do with Autism Awareness Month? Dr. Michael Burry has Asperger's Syndrome, a condition on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In fact, the author states that it was his ability to read and synthesize pages and pages of dry, mind-numbing financial reports that led him to a conclusion that very few other people, very highly paid experts, were unable to see. Michael Lewis says "...Dr. Burry (was) able to see the failures of the market before the rest of the world because he viewed the world differently. This is a story of human perception as much as it is anything else." Dr. Burry's ability to see things from the perspective of what was really going on and to then make an informed guess about where it would all lead made him a very wealthy man.

This is not to glorify one person but to illustrate the impact that awareness has in our own lives. How we see things, the assumptions we make, how much we follow the crowd-or not-and the choices we make follow from our awareness. Recognizing that there are different perspectives, different ways of interpreting the world around us has a very real impact on our lives and the lives of others. Where would we be today if more people had read all those financial reports and not accepted everything at face value?

This past year, Community Resources for People with Autism, a division of The Association For Community Living, celebrated its 20th anniversary. Started by a group of parents when the incidence rate of autism was 1 in 1500, it serves well over a 1000 families today. During that time, the rate of autism has increased dramatically and is now 1 in 110 children. No single factor explains the changes in the identified autism spectrum disorder. Although some of the increase is due to better detection, a true increase in risk cannot be ruled out. (Centers for Disease Control)

Despite the increasing need for services, funding for our autism division was cut last year by more than 57%. The cuts eliminated one of the most effective programs offered, in-home problem solving. Also cut severely was respite for families. CRPA has worked very hard this year to obtain grants and funding to help make up the loss in respite support. We are fortunate that we have community partners who are aware of the need for family support; Hampden Bank and Chicopee Bank stepped up and provided significant funding for families. And CRPA was just notified that they have received a \$20,000 grant from the Flutie Foundation.

As part of Autism Awareness Month, there are several events occurring; the 20th Annual Conference on April 6, the Hole in One for Autism on April 9, and the Flutie Rock N' Hoops event at the Basketball Hall of Fame on April 16th. For more information on these events go to the CRPA website at www.communityresourcesforautism.org; we hope you will attend one-or more of the events. You will have a great time, perhaps make some new friends and definitely be a richer person for the experience!

Barbara Pilarcik

14th Annual Statewide Advisory Council State House Celebration

The Department of Developmental Services hosted the 14th Annual Statewide Advisory Council State House Celebration in Boston on March 22nd. Individuals, families, providers and other citizens who have contributed to improving the quality of life of individuals with intellectual disabilities were recognized. "Take Action; Take Charge" was the theme this year and Luz Eneida Garcia, Family Empowerment Advisory Board chairperson and a Corporator of The Association, was recognized for her accomplishments. She brought her son Freddy, now 21, to Massachusetts 16 years ago to find services for his significant physical challenges and intellectual disability. From the beginning, Luz believed that Freddy's place was with his family and proceeded to put supports in place that would create opportunities for Freddy, herself and her other two sons. Beginning as a person with very little English, Luz developed her capacity with language and knowledge of the educational and service systems. She is currently co-director of Casa Latina, an advocacy organization for Latinos in the Hampshire county area. She understands that advocacy is an integral part of securing funding for people with disabilities and wanted to educate lawmakers about the daily struggles parents face in raising a child with a disability and the language barriers that can block access to services. Luz has been active in the legislative advocacy efforts whenever budget cuts affect people with disabilities and has hosted meetings in her home where area lawmakers have the opportunity to meet with Latina families to discuss their struggles. Representative Peter Kocot, Luz's Legislator, took time from his schedule to be present in the Great Hall of the State House when Luz received her recognition.



Along with Luz and her family, this picture includes Elin Howe, Commissioner - Department of Developmental Services (DDS); Larry Tummino, Deputy Commissioner - DDS; Teresa O'Hare, Regional Director - DDS; and Representative Peter Kocot.

Formation of Safety Committee

The Worker's Compensation Steering Committee has been working this past year to review worker's compensation claims and make recommendations to promote a culture of safety throughout The Association.

As a result, we are looking for interested employees to become "Members" of an agency-wide Safety Committee. We are also looking for one "Champion" to lead the Safety Committee.

GOALS OF THE SAFETY COMMITTEE

1. Education and Training
 - a. Promote a culture of workplace safety throughout The Association.
2. Review Worker's Compensation Incidents
 - a. Determine trends / identify problem areas
 - b. Make recommendations for problem areas
 - c. Visit periodically or as needed
 - d. Share helpful information throughout agency
3. Regulatory Compliance
 - a. Ensure agency compliance

The "Champion" is responsible for chairing the Safety Committee. We estimate the time for the "Champion" to be approximately one day per month.

Safety Committee Team "Members" serve on the Safety Committee to review incidents, make recommendations and promote a culture of safety throughout The Association. We estimate time commitment to average four hours per month for the first three months, then quarterly one hour meetings. Assignment length is 18 - 24 months.

Interested staff should complete the form enclosed in this newsletter, review with their supervisor and submit the completed form to Barbara Pilarcik, Executive Director c/o Tracy Romeo, by April 2, 2010.

Save the Date . . .

The Association's 57th
Annual Dinner and Awards Ceremony

Tuesday, June 15, 2010
5:00 pm - Social Hour
6:00 pm - Dinner

The Log Cabin Banquet and
Meeting House, Holyoke

Invitations will be arriving soon
PLEASE RSVP BY JUNE 9th



CAMPAIGN 2010 BEGAN MARCH 10 – CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

The ♥ of Our Mission: Caring for Children, Adults and Families

The Kick Off Meeting held at MassMutual Learning and Conference Center was a huge success. We heard from David Specht, Division Director Community Resources for People with Autism, and Mary Martin, David Specht, Division Director of Family Support Division, about the support for families The Association has been able to provide as the result of funds raised through the campaign– families with children with autism, Down syndrome and other developmental disabilities. We also were apprised about possible state budget cuts and its negative impact on the families we serve. Campaign 2010 reflects what our efforts together will allow us to continue to do - care for children, adults, and families. Board members Jim Foard and Marie Stebbins, co-chairs of the development committee who sponsor this meeting, welcomed all and shared the campaign's achievements over the years.

15th Anniversary

This year is the 15th year of The Association's annual campaign. Together we have raised more than \$2.4 Million. In 1995, \$23,000 was raised and in 2009 over \$377,000. We started with 100 donors; today we have more than 4,600. During the kick off meeting, we recognized past campaign chairpersons, campaign committee members at 5 year intervals, and the Board development committee who leads this effort. (See below)

The campaign initially solicited businesses, today we appeal to individuals, foundations and businesses. Today also, The Association's Board of Directors, The Legacy Society, Corporators, Senior Managers, families, employees, and Care Providers all support the campaign. What a tremendous success achieved in only 15 years. **Thank you.**

CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Members FY2010

Lisa Clewes
 Jim Foard, Co-chair
 Phyllis Grondalski
 Kim Howe
 Crawford Lincoln
 Jim Shriver
 Marie Stebbins, Co-chair
 Bill Ward
 Executive Director - Barbara Pilarcik
 Staffed by Tracy Romeo, Beverly Herbert

Former Development Committee Members

Tom Burton
 Judge Sid Cooley
 Scott Houghton
 Mary Knight
 Steve Levine

CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

The campaign began with Richard Stebbins, Regional Bay Bank President, who, without hesitation, said "yes" when asked by Jim Shriver and Donald Fletcher. However, his agreement had a requirement – he would only lead our campaign IF The Association's Board of Directors participated. Thus the beginning of the Campaign and the rest is history. Mr. Stebbins, now deceased, is fondly remembered and we say thank you to his wife Marie who is now a member of The Association's Board, and his family.

The other chairpersons (and their affiliation at the time) are.

Jim Shriver, President of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Campaign

Steve Davis, President, American Saw, and Trustee of the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation, became chairperson in 1996 and has served since for 14 consecutive years, Campaigns 1996 - 2010.

Mary Ford, Former Mayor, City of Northampton, Campaign 2000

Donald Williams, President and CEO of Westfield Bank, Campaigns 2001, 2002

Al Griggs, President of Griggs Industries, Campaigns 2003, 2004

David Scott, Former UMASS Chancellor, Campaigns 2005, 2006

Kathleen "Kay" Sheehan, former principal, Campaign 2007

John Heaps, President, Florence Savings Bank, 2008, 2009



2009
 World Champions!!

(article continues on Page 4)

The Association For Community Living
CAMPAIGN 2010



MEMBERS of the CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

5 Years or More

Paul E. Bureau
James F. Foard, Jr.
Mark A. Germain, CPA
Al Griggs
John F. Heaps, Jr.
William S. Hogan, Jr.
Crawford Lincoln
Kathleen M. Rogers
Eleanor L. Rose
Janice B. Rose
Kathryn A. Selvia

10 Years or More

Thomas R. Burton
Stephen A. Davis (co-chair for 14 years)
Bruce H. Eger
Beverly L. Herbert, CFRE
Paul G. Kelliher
Stephen J. Levine, MD
W. Guy Ormsby

15 Years - Initial Members

Judge Sidney Cooley
Phyllis Grondalski
Kimball Howes
James Shriver

Our Leaders Continue Their Giving

Please join us in saying "Thank You" to:

Alfred Griggs
Andre Fafard
Ann Lincoln
Anthony Caprio, PhD
Barbara T. Pilarcik, RN
Beverly L. Herbert
Charles Johnson
Crawford Lincoln
David Eagle
Donald J. Fletcher
Elaine Henshon
J. William Ward

James Bell
James F. Foard, Jr.
Joanne Murphy
Judge Sidney Cooley
Kathleen Rogers
Kathryn Selvia
Lisa Clewes
Lucy Mueller Young
Marie Stebbins
Mark A. Germain
Mark Eagle
Mary Martin

Mary Lou Chapman
Joanne Odato-Staeb
Oscar Seldin
Paul Bureau
Phyllis Grondalski
Pudsie Cooley
Richard Ottani
Robert Fafard
Ruth Banta
Ruth R. Seldin
Thomas Burton
William H. Loomis, RPH

*Development staff has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information.
If we omitted anyone, please contact the Development Office, 413-731-4577.*

Please make your gift to **Care for Children, Adults and Families - The ♥ of Our Mission.**

On-line giving is available at www.theassn.org accepting American Express, MasterCard and Visa.

Thank you.



Steve Davis, Campaign 2010 Chair ,
and Marie Stebbins

New Employees

Tatyana-Ali Henderson
Marc Bousquet
Razwan Mohammed
Barrington Johnson, Jr.

Myra Streeter
Jacqueline Sanchez
Jillian Philips
Lissette Ramos



Calendar of Events

“WHAT’S HAPPENING AT
THE ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING”

“What’s Up” in April

Sunday, April 11 - *Springfield Falcons Autism Awareness Day*. Tickets are \$10.00. For more information, contact Bill Bullock at 413-739-3344 or wbullock@falconsahl.com.

Thursday, April 22 - *Tour of Fenway Park*, 11:30 am. For information, send an e-mail to usp@comcast.net.



The Safety Corner

SPRING CLEANING THE SAFE WAY

AH, SPRING! It's time to shed the heavy winter coat and boots, breath in the fresh, warm air - and dive into spring cleaning! But it's important to stay safe while you're doing it. Here are some safety tips:

When cleaning out closets or re-organizing things, always keep stairs, steps, landings and all floors clear.

- ▶▶ Carry loads you can see over, and keep one hand free to hold banisters and railings.
- ▶▶ Five gallon buckets are often used while cleaning and present a serious drowning danger to young children. Never leave a bucket or any standing water unattended and store buckets empty and upside-down.
- ▶▶ Follow safety recommendations when using harsh products, such as wearing gloves and masks. Do not mix products together because their contents could react with dangerous results.
- ▶▶ Never use gasoline to clean something and never use or store gasoline in your home, even in tiny quantities. Gasoline vapors can explode with just a spark. If you must keep some, use a special safety container. Store it in an outside shed.
- ▶▶ When you clean out your cabinets, look at the labels on the products. If you see the words “Caution,” “Warning,” “Danger,” “Poison,” or “Keep Out of Reach of Children,” be very careful. These products should be locked up when you are not using them.
- ▶▶ Remember to put things away so people cannot trip on them. Safely tuck away telephone and electrical cords out of walkways. In homes with children, make sure toys and other items are always safely put away when not in use.
- ▶▶ If you need to climb to clean something, use a stepladder or ladder. When using a ladder, stand at or below the highest safe standing level. For a stepladder, the safe standing level is the second rung from the top, and for an extension ladder, it's the fourth rung from the top. Before using, make sure the rungs are dry.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MIMI CHILSON

FOR WINNING THE SAFETY CORNER CONTEST!!

Mimi won a Dunkin Donuts Gift Certificate for how she incorporated the winter driving safety tips outlined in January’s Safety Corner article.

You too can WIN A PRIZE!!!

Each month, you have the opportunity to win a prize, as an incentive to promote safety within The Association!

All you have to do is read the Safety Corner Article, and tell me how you have used the information in the article to be safer in your daily life, either at home or at work. Remember, you must have already incorporated the information, and not just how you are planning to use the safety tips.

To be eligible, either send me an email or leave me a voice mail message by the 10th of every month. One winner will be selected per month and all decisions are final. The winner will be notified by the 15th of each month and announced in the following month’s Newsletter.

Suzanne Laba, HR Generalist

Email: labas@theassn.org

Phone #: 800-536-2910 ext. 109 or 413-731-4509



Looking For Submissions

Is there an individual, staff or volunteer that you would like the readers of *The Association Connection* to get to know?

If so, contact Tracy Romeo at 413-732-0531 or romeot@theassn.org and they could be featured in an upcoming issue of the newsletter.



THE ASSOCIATION

FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

One Carando Drive, Suite 2, Springfield, MA 01104-3211

Address Service Requested



Secure the Future . . . join The Legacy Society



Happy Easter

Creating Opportunities, Building Relationships, Improving Lives For Children And Adults With Developmental Disabilities Since 1952
www.theassn.org

APRIL CALENDAR

Birthstone - Diamond
Autism Awareness Month
National Kite Month
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month

- 1 April Fool's Day
- 2 Good Friday
- World Autism Day
- 4 Easter Sunday
- 7 National Day of Hope
- 15 Income Tax Pay Day
- 16 National Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day
- 21 Administrative Professional's Day
- 30 Arbor Day



The Legacy Society Members

Securing the Future

individuals and couples who have designated a planned gift

Sidney and Pudsie Cooley*
Nancy F. and Kenneth Robbins*
Paul A. Tardif*
Crawford and Ann G. Lincoln*
Oscar and Ruth Seldin*
Mr. and Mrs. William B. Martin*
Reverend Beverly L. Herbert*
Donald J. and Merka Fletcher*
David K. and Kathleen Scott*
Cynthia St. George*
Richard M. Niedel*
Dr. and Mrs. Stephen J. Levine*
Paul E. and Charlotte C. Bureau*
James and Regina Shriver*
André and Karin Fafard*
Robert and Wanda Fafard*
Therese Fafard*
Meyer Schoenberg*
Michael J. Cooley

**Charter Members*

Quote for the Month:

The nice thing about being senile is you can hide your own Easter eggs.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail or have anything you'd like to share, please contact the newsletter editor at romeot@theassn.org.



Editor: Tracy Romeo

SAFETY COMMITTEE
Safety Committee Team Member / Champion

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____

POSITION: _____

WORK LOCATION: _____

INTERESTED IN: (check one)

- CHAMPION**
- SAFETY COMMITTEE TEAM MEMBER**

BEST WAY TO REACH ME: _____
(i.e. phone number, email, etc.)

Employee Signature _____ **Date** _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ **Date** _____

Submit by April 2, 2010 to:
Barbara Pilarcik, Executive Director
c/o Tracy Romeo, Executive Assistant
The Association For Community Living
One Carando Drive, Suite 2
Springfield, MA 01104