

Enable Voices

AUGUST 2008

Volunteers Turn House into Home

Residents at Enable, Inc.'s Lebed Group Home in Somerset County were the beneficiaries of a house transformation on Saturday and Sunday, June 7 and 8 by Martial Arts with Heart volunteers. Over 50 staff, students and their families from Central New Jersey martial arts studios gathered to paint the interior and landscape the exterior of this home where five men with disabilities reside. Martial Arts with Heart (MAWH), is a non-profit organization devoted to raising funds to give to worthy charities.

The volunteers worked tirelessly to make this house a new home for the individuals living there. One of the volunteers said she loves to do hands-on work because she believes taking action is important rather than just writing out a check for a good cause. She also likes to include her children in volunteer experiences.

This is the first of many projects that MAWH, headed by Bryan Klein, Michael Crocco and Dr. Nick Despotitis, have planned for Enable. Throughout the coming year, Enable will continue to receive volunteer and fundraising assistance from Martial Arts with Heart. Bryan Klein and Michael Crocco are 5th degree black belts and directors of the United Taekwondo Academies whose students helped organize the Lebed project. The students associated with United Taekwondo Academies (UTA) are encouraged to live by the philosophy of being a champion for justice and a cause for good.

Dr. Despotidis said, "In my 20 years associated with martial arts, this is my proudest moment, witnessing the power of people of all ages rallying behind one worthy cause. Despite record breaking high temperatures, the volunteers enhanced the lives of the Lebed residents by making Lebed feel more like a home rather than just a



Newly Decorated Living Room at Lebed

residence." The volunteer's work included painting all rooms inside the home in colors chosen by the men who live there, adding a mural to a bedroom wall and framing prints and objects to hang on the walls, adding window treatments, and securing donated furniture for the living room. Outdoors, the volunteers planted flowers and shrubs in the front and placed planters filled with flowers around the back deck.

The work ended on Sunday evening with a barbeque on the deck for the families of residents and volunteers. Franklin Township Mayor Brian Levine was able to join the gathering to see how pleased the resi-

dents were with their freshly painted and decorated rooms and the beautiful landscaping.

"I am pleased that Martial Arts with Heart chose to assist the Enable home in Franklin Township. Not only was it a great volunteer event—it was an exemplary display of community service

Continued on page 2.

Volunteers Needed on Saturdays

Enable offers a Saturday Respite Program. Starting September 20, 2008, it will have a new focus and it will be held in a new place. Club Chameleon will consist of four, six-week sessions occurring from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays. The first session will run from September 20th through October 25th. Club Chameleon will be held at 13 Roszel Road, Princeton.

Enable is looking for volunteers to help teach sessions in Photography, Baking, Dance, Gardening, and Computers – anything that you have a passion for and want to share with someone. You needn't be a pro, just enthusiastic and willing to commit. Teach one class or teach a whole session. Do it alone or with a friend. You can also volunteer to help out, rather than teach.

Interested persons should contact Kirsten Yard, Community Engagement Coordinator, at (609) 987-5003, ext.124 or by email at saturdayprogram@enablenj.org.

Enable
inc.

Enable is a non-profit organization that has provided services to persons with physical and cognitive disabilities since 1989. Enable is devoted to supporting individuals with disabilities

to live full and independent lives. We promote individual choice that reflects what matters most to the persons we serve and their families. We provide services, supports, programs, and living arrangements that facilitate full inclusion into community life throughout the central New Jersey area.

The Perfect Career Choice



Diana Brownback,
Residential Group
Home Manager for
Lopatcong Group Home

One surefire way to tell that someone loves her profession is to see her stay at an agency over time and see her continue to be promoted. That is what happened for Diana Brownback, Residential Manager for Lopatcong Group Home. She is a 14-year employee of Enable who left for a short time to work outside the field of human services. She recalls it being "the worst decision she has ever made."

When Diana began her career with Enable, which was then called United Cerebral Palsy of Mercer County, she worked as a morning aide at Benford Group Home. Within months, she became an Assistant Manager. In 2004, she moved to the Lopatcong Group Home as the Residential Manager.

She feels she was called to work in the field of disabilities because she likes knowing that her work is helping to improve the life of someone else. She lives her life everyday by treating others the way she would want them to treat her.

A typical day for Diana may consist of organizing staff schedules, taking a consumer to a doctor's appointment, reviewing progress notes and logs, planning menus, ensuring the home is meeting licensing standards, reporting incidents and maintenance needs, attending meetings or welcoming volunteers that visit the home. All of these different tasks bring fulfillment to her life. "I feel good at the end of my work day," says Brownback.

Outside of work, Diana enjoys spending time with her husband and three teenage children. Her dream is to travel to Australia with her husband to relax and enjoy the natural beauty of the country.



Enable Night at Trenton Thunder

Staff, consumers, and volunteers of Enable enjoyed an exciting night of baseball at Trenton Thunder's game on July 25th. On this night, the Thunder featured Enable as the charity to receive a donation from their Gram Slam "We Care" Foundation. The Foundation sponsors a 50/50 raffle. Volunteers and staff from Enable sold raffle tickets at the game. The winner received half of the raffle and Enable received the other half. In addition, the Thunder offers the charity to sell tickets prior to the game and receive a portion of the revenue from each ticket it sells. Enable sold over 250 tickets to the game and, with the raffle, raised over \$2,000.



Beth Steinwehr of Calvert Group Home was given the opportunity to throw the first pitch for Enable's game night at Trenton Thunder on July 25. This was an exciting experience for Beth who is an avid baseball fan. Our thanks to all who bought a ticket, made a donation, attended and helped make this a fun night for all. We look forward to holding another Enable night at Trenton Thunder next year.

Calling all Golfers



Join Martial Arts with Heart (MAWH) on Sunday, October 5, 2008 for their golf outing which will benefit Enable. It will be held at the Cream

Ridge Golf Club. MAWH is a non-profit organization devoted to collecting and donating funds to worthy charities and they have selected Enable to be the beneficiary of their 2008 efforts. Funds raised by MAWH will be used for various projects identified by Enable such as putting a badly needed sidewalk in at the Lebed group home. Come on out and join in the fun!

Fees are \$145 per golfer (\$160 per golfer after September 25th) and \$75 per person for dinner only. The registration fee includes the greens, a cart, and dinner. Registration begins at 11:30 am with a shot-gun start at 12:30 pm and play by Scramble rules. The dinner will be at 6:00 pm.

To register, contact: Brienne Alfano at (609) 462-7925 or by email at eyeprofessionals@aol.com.

Volunteers Turn House into Home

Continued from page 1.

which benefits not only the residents of the home but our entire town. When someone generously assists a segment of our community, that person elevates our entire community," said Mayor Levine.

"We are very appreciative of the work completed by the volunteers of MAWH. The volunteers were so friendly and pleasant to work with and we would welcome them back again with open arms," said Deirdre Brittingham, Residential Manager for Enable. Sharon Copeland, Executive Director for Enable added, "and working with MAWH is a perfect example of Enable's approach to providing services to persons with disabilities. We are here to enable persons with disabilities to live full and interdependent lives in the community. That means engaging persons in the community in the lives of those we serve as well as helping someone with a disability to function well in the neighborhood."

A Match Made In Heaven

Most of us have tried looking for the perfect match whether it be in a friend, a partner or even a physician. When the match works out really well, both may feel it was a “match made in heaven” and that’s just how a volunteer and a person served by Enable feel.

When Carin suffered severe brain trauma from a terrible car accident, she didn’t know how she would get her life back together. With doctor bills, medical visits, and a weakened physical state, she wondered who would be there to help her. Of course there are family members and friends, but they cannot always be there to help when you need it.

Through Partners in Caring, a collaborative of agencies funded through United Way of Greater Mercer County, Enable’s Community Engagement Coordinator, Kirsten Yard, found worked magic to find Carin a volunteer. Not every volunteer experience or pairing is a match made in heaven, but Zandra and Carin seem to fit extraordinarily well together.

“I think she is spectacular. She has a positive attitude and overall is so kind. She is mature beyond her years. I couldn’t imagine anyone



Pictured above is Zandra Man organizing paperwork with Carin Preston. Photo taken by Leigha Cohen.

working better with me. We have to work on cloning her,” says Carin.

When Zandra began volunteering, she stepped right in and started cleaning Carin’s house, organizing her bills, running errands to the food store and pharmacy, and most importantly keeping her company. They even share similar interests in music and literature and have traded reading materials and CDs that they knew the other would love.

“I feel that I have gained a lot from volunteering with Carin,” says Zandra. “I have learned how not only to do the little things, like changing the curtains, but also life lessons from talking with and being around Carin.”

Enable began providing services in January through Partners in Caring. This collaboration assists seniors over age 60 who are experiencing age-related difficulties, and people of any age with physical or developmental disabilities, to remain in their own homes, live in good health and with dignity, and achieve the greatest independence possible. Services available include case management, counseling, nurse assessments, volunteer assistance, transportation, meals, respite care, and home modifications such as installing a ramp. Participating in this collaboration expands Enable’s reach so that we are now able to assist seniors with disabilities who are not connected to the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Carin claims that without the help of the collaboration working together to assist in her time of need, her life would have been completely different once leaving the hospital. She believes she has been blessed. “Things really happened for me. It gave me back faith that there was some help to be had,” she says.

Need Help or Want to Help?

You may qualify to receive services funded through United Way. Call Diana DiMaggio, Case Manager, at 987-5003, ext. 122, to explore what services may be available to you. Or, if you can volunteer to be a friendly visitor or to drive persons to appointments, contact Kirsten at ext. 124.



The United Way of Greater Mercer county partially funds our programs.

National Preparedness Month is September

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities presents training seminars on emergency preparedness for individuals who have developmental disabilities. Persons living in group homes, supervised apartments, or on their own can register for a free training session. Preferred class size is five individuals; however, single individuals may be trained as well. Half-day trainings begin September 8. To schedule your training, please contact Jane Dunham or Frank Latham at (609) 292-3745 at the Council.

Enable Staff and Consumers Appear on TV

On June 20th, Enable’s Day Program consumers, volunteers and staff participated in a video taping for “Helping Hands,” a television show which runs on EBRU TV. This particular program highlights volunteers working at their community service work with the charity or organization. Enable was invited to have its volunteers highlighted for a “Helping Hands” segment.

The camera crew filmed Day Program staff, volunteers and consumers participating in different activities such as gardening, baking, scrap booking and playing board games. Some volunteers and staff were individually interviewed. “Helping Hands was a wonderful experience for our day program participants and staff. Now, we can all say, we had our 15 minutes of fame,” said Diana Lastra, Day Program Manager.

The volunteers in the filmed segment are from JusticeworX. This is the fourth summer that high school students are volunteering at the Day Program through JusticeworX. Each student volunteers for one week (about 25 hours) and different students attend each week over a 6 to 8 week period. JusticeworX is a summer camp experience conducted by St. Joseph’s Seminary in Princeton that challenges students to put their faith into action by learning about and participating in social service programs. Their motto, “training for transformation,” symbolizes the focus of their organization.

The “Helping Hands” episode is scheduled to be televised in the fall. For more information on EBRU TV and the program “Helping Hands,” go to their website at www.ebru.tv.

Summer Picnic Attracts Over 100 Attendees



Day Program Manager Diana Lastra with Joe Schifano

Enable's annual employee and consumer picnic took place on a beautiful, breezy summer day at Mercer County Park. Employees and their families and consumers came together for hours of fun in the sun and shade.

The Day Program participants had a major role in planning the picnic this year. They chose the theme, the decorations and the games and crafts. As persons arrived, each was greeted with a hug and given a lei to wear around their neck. The decorations included centerpieces that had fish

in a bowl which were raffled off. There were team races, a water balloon toss, making sand castles in sand boxes, face painting and other fun things to do. The food was delicious as well.

Many employees were honored for their work anniversaries and received a certificate in appreciation for their commitment to Enable. Employees celebrating their 5, 10 or 15 year anniversaries also received a gift.

George Flanagan, Director of Human Resources and Administrative Services, was in charge of planning the picnic. "I want to express my thanks to a great Picnic Committee and the Day Program consumers who did a terrific job planning the event. It looked like consumers and staff—everyone there—enjoyed themselves."

Ways To Be Involved

The **Holiday Gift Appeal** begins in September. Each year, Enable asks those we serve if they have any special needs during the upcoming December holidays. These needs are matched with persons, businesses, congregations and groups who provide in-kind gifts.



Get in shape for "Walk 'N Roll with Enable" to be held at PEAC Health & Fitness in Ewing, N.J. on February 8, 2009, 1 pm, on their indoor track. The walk is for persons with disabilities, their families and friends, community citizens, volunteers and staff of Enable—anyone that wants to participate.

Partner with a person who has disabilities during "pre-training" season; Walk or roll on 2/8/09; and Raise pledges from family, friends and colleagues who will sponsor you.

To participate, send an email to events@enablenj.org or call extension 124.

This newsletter can be downloaded from www.enablenj.org. Help us save postage by letting us email a notice to you when the next issue is available. Email us at newsletter@enablenj.org to give us your email address so we can send you a notice. Enable does not sell or share addresses or email information.



Enabling individuals with disabilities to live full and independent lives in the community

13 Roszel Road, Suite B110, Princeton, NJ 08540



August 2008

Sharon J.B. Copeland, MSW, LSW
Executive Director

Barbara Strapp Nelson
President, Board of Trustees

Edited by: Kirsten Yard

Published by: Enable, Inc.

Tele: 609-987-5003

info@enablenj.org

www.enablenj.org