

CELEBRATIONS

CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

SPRING 2008

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Legislative Day Trip

On March 26, 2008 a handful of CDD residents attended Disability Rights Legislative Day in Jefferson City. During the day they saw some of the state capitol sights, and met with state Legislators. Margie O., from Villas Apartments, was one such attendee, and she wrote this article about her experience:

Legislature Day at Jefferson City was titled "Day of Concern" and was held at the Missouri State Capital Building in Jefferson City. Many residents with developmental disabilities from Kansas City rode to Jefferson City on a bus to the State Capitol Building. When we arrived we all stood in line and had our pictures taken on the steps of the Capital Building. Once inside the building we were given a tour. We sat through a (Missouri) Senate hearing where laws were passed, negotiated and the people of Missouri got to say "I second that" or yeah or nay.



We did get to go to a conference room and talk with two legislatures that work in the Capital Building. One of them, Mr. Yates, has a son with Autism and he is very frustrated like we are with some of the Missouri medical and funding cuts for people with disabilities. He even said that he sees the challenges of trying to get medical benefits for his own son in the state of Missouri. Mr. Yates expressed to us that he would continue to advocate for us and he asked us, "What can I/we do for you, staff and families of people with disabilities?" It was nice to be given the chance to express our own problems and we felt like our voices were heard by someone in the Capital building. 

Residents Meet Chiefs!!!



On April 15, 2008, Elms house residents went to a Chiefs meet and greet at 18th and Vine. House Manager, Veronica Edwards, heard about the event on the radio and knew her residents would love to go. While there, they received autographs from Chiefs players Jeff Webb, Tyler Thigpen, and Bobby Sipo. They also got to meet and take pictures with KC Wolf and some of the Chiefs cheerleaders! Many of the residents now proudly display their autographed items around in their bedrooms, while looking forward to their next jaunt around Kansas City. 



Contributing Writers:

- Megan Pence (editor)
- Jim Johnson
- Betty Szafranski

CDD Resident One Step Closer to Realizing Dream

CDD resident Cedric B. is currently taking a class so that he can eventually get his GED. He studies in the evening with staff assistance and is working towards his dream of getting his GED. The following is an article he wrote about his time in the class

The first week of Feb. 2008 I took the test so that I could get into a Adult Basic Education Class. I passed the test and was enrolled in classes. I attend classes Mon, Tues, Wed, and Thurs. I learn about Math, Science, and Grammar. Sometimes it is hard for me to remember some of the things I learn in class. I am in class with a woman who has been attending classes for two years. She said that she is having a hard time learning things too. We both help each other study and help each other keep a positive attitude toward our goal of getting our GED someday. This is a goal that I want to meet in my life and will do everything I can to get my GED.



-Cedric 

CDD EMPLOYEES GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

May Employee of the month !!

CDD's May Employee of the month award goes to Melva Kerns, Lafayette Manor's new House Manager! Melva has worked for CDD since October 2007, when she started as Kinbrook Apartment's Assistant Manager. She jumped right in to the position and caught on fast with instruction from House Manager Connie Johnson. Connie considered Melva the missing link, and appreciated that she took on responsibility from day one. The residents took to Melva immediately and saw her as a person they could confide in. Because of this, Melva was often the first to know about issues going on with the residents.



In early April there was an opening at CDD's Lafayette Manor group home for the Manager position, and Program Coordinator, Carmen Jordan, knew Melva would be the right person to fill it. Carmen said, "Melva is very goal-oriented and has good follow through. Not only does she come up with some great ideas, but then she maps out how to implement the ideas and make them really happen." For example, within the first month of Melva being House Manager she recognized that a couple of residents could use some assistive walking devices for their limited mobility, and was able to obtain a specialized cane and walker for them. She also coordinated Lafayette Manor staff working together with the staff at Kinbrook to help each other get residents to doctor appointments and recreational outings. This helps limit the amount of time each Manager is out of their home, giving them more time to focus on the residents' needs, getting paperwork finished, and other various tasks.

CDD is always appreciative to have such hardworking and dedicated staff such as Melva. Congratulations Melva for earning the May Employee of the Month, and thank you for helping CDD provide a wonderful home environment for our residents! 🏠

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT



Christia C. is a person everyone would benefit from knowing. She is a very invigorating individual who is a lot of fun and has a sense of "it's a wonderful life" which she is very willing to share with everyone she meets. Before moving into Lafayette Manor she traveled a lot with her family, and therefore is very knowledgeable about many parts of the world which lends to her being a great conversationalist. Christia is 71 years young and can still run circles around most of us. Although retired, Christia continues to work approximately 4-6 hours each day. When you enter Lafayette Manor, Christia will be the one doing dishes, mopping the floor, cleaning the laundry room, or playing a game with or reading to another resident. Christia says that "Staying busy keeps me from going down hill and feeling every ache in my old body." Besides her work at home Christia enjoys bowling, bingo, going out to eat, gospel music, concerts, and leading the Seniors Exercise Group.

Christia is very good at being both a self-advocate and advocating for her peers. She will let staff know when she thinks residents need to be

heard more or given more choices. She will also explain to other residents of Lafayette Manor that they can speak up for themselves if they do not like the way something is or if they want something changed. Christia is a role model for other residents in that she talks about eating healthy and the need to exercise to maintain a healthy body. She is the first responder if another resident wants to play a game, go for a walk, or needs assistance in any way.

One of Christia's major strong points is her willingness to help other people. Christia has been a volunteer both at home and through her church, Friendship Baptist Church, for many years. Christia volunteers in the nursery at her church and she used to sing in the choir. She also writes letters and cards to church members who become ill or hospitalized. Christia visits people in nursing homes and loves to read to them if they can no longer see to read. She also visits an ex-housemate from Lafayette Manor who is in a nursing home and she loves spending time with him and reading to him. Christia has received a total of eighteen different awards for her volunteer service over the years. She said "I am not about being spectacular. I just like living healthy and helping others." Christia does both in great style and with a passion we can all appreciate. 🏠

Spring Employee Anniversaries

1 Year

Tiffney Burnett
Osa Sanders
Janice Weldon

2-5 Years

Angela Carey (2)
Kendrick Emery (2)
Burton Gomez (2)
Betty Hawkins (2)
Arthur Mourning (2)
Toisha Nave (2)
Barbara Rolfe (2)
Kevin Deboe (3)
Patsy Whatley (3)
Patrick Ukecha (4)
Apryl Williams (4)
Larry Goodman (5)

6-9 Years

Regina Mann (6)
Jody Michael (6)

10+ Years

Sarah Mudd (12)
Jenifer Kemp (18)
John Marshall (19)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JIM JOHNSON



started placing an envelope in the newsletters for the contributors' convenience. This has been the extent of our solicitation efforts.

To my great surprise, we've gotten generous responses that have contributed to quality life experiences for residents and often the staff who accompany them. Many are currently preparing for camp, a trip to Worlds of Fun this month, and individual and household vacation trips this Summer. The people who receive this newsletter have made it possible, and our Board, staff, and residents thank you for your contributions.

The year 2008 is treating us well so far. In April, for the first time since early 2006, CDD had no resident vacancies. Also, just last month agency staff and one resident were recognized by EITAS and were presented three awards at their Annual Board Meeting and Awards Presentation on April 23rd. The details on those awards are in this edition of CELEBRATIONS, so please read on. We are now into the construction phase of the Summit Apartments being built at 9th and Brooklyn. We will keep readers informed of the progress.

In the Spring edition of CELEBRATIONS,

I feel compelled to comment on the positive actions of our elected officials. The second session of the 94th General Assembly will end this month, and I am gratified with the support we received from our elected officials again this year. They acted to help us deal with the ever-increasing inflationary costs we are bearing due to stressful increases in the cost of food, fuel, utilities and insurance. Community providers will receive a 3% boost in rates on July 1st. Please thank your legislator for his/her support.

Finally, I will end by recognizing the contributions of our immediate past Board President, B. Jerome Wheeler, who we all call Jerry. Jerry Wheeler's tenure with the agency began as legal counsel in 1979. That role continued until 1984. In 1987, Jerry joined the Board of Directors and became a volunteer. He went on to serve three, six-year terms and always remained available in an ex officio status for a year or more in-between being an active Board member. Jerry received recognition and a champagne toast from us on March 27th as we thanked him for his 29 years of affiliation. Some of us doubt, however, that we have seen the end of this story, but from all us once again, "Thanks a million Jerry." 

Hello from CDD. Some of our readers will recall that we recognized three long-term contributors to the agency in the Fall 2007 edition of CELEBRATIONS. I further stated then that we will recognize other contributors in a later edition. Those contributors are you. And, please understand how much these contributions to our Resident Donor Account are appreciated, and how useful and productive it is. Resident recreation and travel, along with some underfunded personal expenses are subsidized from these contributions. We set this up when we started producing quarterly newsletters, because we started getting earmarked donations for certain residents and events and had no place to segregate the dollars. Therefore, the Donor Account was created and we



CDD recognizes former Board Member, Jerry Wheeler, for his commitment to the agency over the past 29 years.



CDD Board of Directors

President—James Breed

Treasurer—Rudy Arredondo

Executive Director—Jim Johnson

Vice President—Nancy Huerta

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Mark Arnesman



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Developmental Disability Services of Jackson County



Empowering individuals through advocacy and support



EITAS Dinner

On April 23, 2008 several of CDD's residents, staff, and board members attended the Annual Board and Awards Presentation meeting for Developmental Disability Services of Jackson County—EITAS. During the awards presentation CDD took home a handful of honors. The Direct Care Staff of the Year award was presented to CDD staff member Bertha Brown. Bertha works at Kinbrook Apartments, and also received CDD's employee of the year for 2007. The Residential Services for Semi-Independent/Independent Living award was presented to CDD resident Kay Drinkwater. Kay is actively involved in her community and serves as a self-advocate for the Metropolitan Council on Developmental Disabilities' Women be Healthy classes. Finally, the Innovations in Programs and Services award was presented to CDD apartments Manager Jody Michael. She aided the Villas residents in establishing the "Villas Government". This is a resident government group in which they hold meetings, elect officials, make their own decisions on resident activities, and do community cleanup once

a month on their block, along with other responsibilities. Congratulations to all of the award winners at CDD, and also the winners from other providers in the KC area, for a job well done.



Kay, Bertha, and Jody with Executive Director, Jim Johnson.



CDD has one resident opening in our homes. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a resident with our agency, please contact us.

We also have employment opportunities available. If you are a caring, responsible individual who is interested in becoming a part of CDD, please contact us.

CDD is a private, not-for-profit organization. We are designated as tax exempt by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501(c)(3).

All donations to CDD are tax-deductible. We have a restricted account for donors to assist the residents with financial needs. If you wish to contribute, please send your check or money order to:

CDD Donor Account
1010 W 39th Street
Kansas City, MO, 64111

Additional information about the agency will be made available upon request.