



Helping People Help Themselves

GMPInews

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Spring 2008
Volume 1 Issue 1

A note from GMPI'S Executive Director, Carol Manne

Welcome to **GMPInews**, a quarterly newsletter from GMPI for our community partners and supporters. The launching of this new newsletter is an opportunity for us to reach out to the numerous members of the community who have supported GMPI through the years in furthering our mission of promoting the personal growth, dignity and acceptance of people with developmental disabilities. We hope this will become an interesting and informative way to keep you current about long-standing and new programs that respond to the true needs of our consumers.

I hope that **GMPInews** will give you an opportunity to see how your support is used and the good work that has resulted from it. All too often people are asked to donate without any follow-up that lets them know where their donation was used and whom it served and assisted.

Each issue will contain stories about the individual programs at GMPI as well as recent and upcoming events that might be of interest to you. Of course, we want to hear from you with your suggestions, stories, observations, and anything else that will help us to be the best community resource for people with special needs and their families.

Most of all a BIG thank you to all of you who have donated money, goods and services, or in-kind support to us in the past or present. Without your valuable support, volunteerism and donations, the work at GMPI would be greatly abridged.

GMPI recognized for Social and Recreation Programs

Wednesday, March 26, 2008, the Middlesex West Area Office and Citizen Advisory Board, Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) held its bi-annual recognition event. Greater Marlboro Programs received the, **Out and About Award**, in recognition for leadership and excellence in the provision of social and recreation. A representative from the Department of Mental Retardation presented Jim Karami, GMPI'S Director of Social and Recreation, with an award stating that the social and recreation programs offered by GMPI add an important dimension to the services and supports offered in the Middlesex West Area.

Those who attended the event were Carol Manne, Sharon Santello, Denise Vojackova-Karami, and some residents and families from GMPI.

Trip to Pennsylvania Country

April 21st to April 24th, GMPI embarked on a mini vacation to **Bushkill, Pennsylvania, located in the Poconos**. Our group of 48 consumers, staff, as well as friends and family members had a wonderful time. We stayed at the Pocmont Resort and Conference Center which provided us with many activities and delectable meals. The staff at the resort gave GMPI a welcoming reception. People could choose to swim, play bocce, try their hand at mini-golf, Bingo, or just sit and watch a movie.

A sightseeing tour of the Pennsylvania landscape, which included water falls of the Poconos was enjoyed by all. A stop for a tour of a local candy factory and several gift shops was a must! The resort included gourmet five course dinners with an array of selections. Yes, we were pampered for four days and three nights! Many folks have expressed an interest in going back again! Many can't wait for the next trip! And Jim Karami said there will definitely be more trips planned.

Grant will help GMPI Support Children and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

GMPI has won a grant to provide family support services and stipends to disadvantaged families of children and adults with autism spectrum disorder.

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, Inc. has given GMPI \$17,600 to better support the families of children and young adults with autism spectrum disorder whom we currently serve, as well as additional families. These families will have greater access to GMPI support services as well as a greater ability to purchase individualized services on their own, Carol Manne, GMPI Executive Director said. "One of the support services they will be able to more readily access is respite and this grant will also help to provide trained staff for respite care."

"Ten years ago, we started 'Dougie's Team' to increase the awareness of autism and provide support for families caring for children with autism," said Doug Flutie. "Providing this funding is even more crucial in times of federal and state budget cuts and because of the fact that the numbers of children being diagnosed with autism has increased significantly over the past ten years. The respite and other services provided by GMPI will help to improve the quality of life for families and give them a hope for the future. We are very happy to provide the much needed funding."

The Doug Flutie, Jr. Foundation for Autism, Inc.'s mission is to aid financially disadvantaged families who need assistance in caring for their children with autism; to fund education and research into the causes and consequences of childhood autism; and to serve as a clearinghouse and communications center for new programs and services developed for individuals with autism.



Another Residential Home is Purchased!

"Sunset" will be the name of GMPI'S newly acquired residential home. Denise Vojackova-Karami, Director of Residences for GMPI, is currently in the process of looking for placements for the home, along with DMR. Denise feels that the new home will be occupied by mid July. She added, "We are all quite excited about *Sunset*. It is located in a very nice residential area of Marlborough and should be able to house five individuals."

GMPI Hires Two New Employees

As of March 17, 2008, you might have noticed some new faces at our office! GMPI has hired **David LaBossiere** as **Housing Facilities Manager** and **Maureen O'Doherty** as **Human Resources Coordinator**.

David will be coordinating maintenance at all facilities, the office and two houses that need to be addressed for HUD compliance codes. David recently served almost one year on the Board of Directors of GMPI. He and his wife Stacie have three children, Michael, Jesse and Ashley. GMPI is close to David's heart because their son Michael is developmentally disabled and deaf. "I love the opportunities that GMPI provides to the developmentally challenged," he said, "this is my way to give back."

Maureen will be the Human Resources Coordinator for GMPI, focusing on personnel and benefit management for GMPI. Formerly Vice President of Human Resources at Seven Hills in Worcester, she is looking forward to working with a smaller organization. We welcome both to the GMPI family.

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SAVE THE DATE
GMPI's Annual Family and
Friends Outing
Saturday, September 13th
1:00 to 5:00 P.M.
Marlboro Fish and Game



OUR NEW ADDRESS IS:

GREATER MARLBORO PROGRAMS, INC.

**40 MECHANIC STREET
SUITE 100
MARLBOROUGH, MA. 01752**

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GMPI HONORS FOUR DEVOTED VOLUNTEERS

Four volunteers for Greater Marlboro Programs Inc. received Distinguished Volunteer Awards in conjunction with GMPI'S Annual Meeting last November. **Donna Cassella, Kevin Valcourt and Mager Walker** were presented with the Distinguished Volunteer Award and **Richard Achilles** was given a Distinguished Lifetime Volunteer Award. "This award is given each year to the individual who best exemplifies a dedication to the goals and values of Greater Marlboro Programs," explained Carol Manne, executive director of GMPI. Presented to Mr. Achilles at Marlborough Hills, where he resided at the time, "I like volunteering," said Mr. Achilles, "I like to help people out." Mr. Achilles has recently passed away and will surely be missed by his GMPI family.

Donna Cassella, whose son Alan is a Special Olympian, was presented with her award, as recognition of her 20 years of being a volunteer for GMPI. As an employee for Verizon, Cassella has taken advantage of the Volunteer Incentive Program, turning her volunteer hours into a monetary donation from Verizon to GMPI. Distinguished volunteer honors were also bestowed on Mager Walker, who has coached the GMPI Red Hawks basketball team. Some 15 years ago, Walker was looking for a volunteer opportunity and Special Olympics of Massachusetts directed him to GMPI. Kevin Valcourt, also honored, has been the disc jockey for four to five events each year for more than 19 years. "He loves it because the people are genuine, they want him there," explained Jim Karami, Director of Social and Recreation.

In addition, entertainment was provided by ventriloquist Al Getler who, to the delight of the audience, made several characters come to life. "Floyd L. Smith," Getler's wooden partner, engaged several of the Special Olympians in the unique presentation.

Awards were given out at the organization's 34th Annual Meeting and 2nd Annual Distinguished Volunteer Award Ceremony held at Fidelity Investments on Puritan Way in Marlborough.