

Special Points of Interest

3/14/2008
HearthStone
Monthly Meeting

3/28/2008
Spring Dance

4/8/2008
Estate Planning for
Special Needs

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The Wait is Over

Good news for low-income seniors and adults with disabilities –Sheboygan County has a new program that promises to end the waiting list for long-term care services.

Community Care, Inc., a non-profit organization with three decades of experience in providing community-based long-term care, is partnering with Sheboygan County to provide new services that allow eligible seniors and adults with disabilities in Sheboygan County to live where they prefer most: in their homes and communities. The Family Care program from Community Care launched here in February 2008, making community-based long-term care services available to Medicaid-eligible Sheboygan residents, some of whom have been on waiting lists for such services for up to eight years.

“What is most significant is that the 200 plus individuals who are elderly or have developmental disabilities and need these services will finally get them,” says Ann M. Wondergem, the director of Sheboygan County Health and Human Services. The state requires that the waitlist be eliminated within two years from the program’s February 1st launch, “but Community Care has proven to be able to make that occur even more quickly, as it has in Racine and Kenosha,” she says.

Ms. Wondergem is right. For elderly parents caring for developmentally disabled adult children or an elderly person who doesn’t want to leave her home and neighborhood of many years to move into a nursing home, there is finally hope.

Family Care members will receive support from a Community Care team made up of a nurse and a case manager who conduct a comprehensive assessment of the member’s needs, abilities, preferences and values to coordinate the right mix of long-term care services for that individual.

With care provided by interdisciplinary teams that include medical professionals, Family Care targets prevention and planning in addition to treatment of current medical needs. The program

also offers a wide variety of non-medical long-term care services to members, such as home-making and chore services and home delivered meals.

“Our mission is to help people continue to live in their homes and communities while making wise use of the limited funds that are available,” says Paul F. Soczynski, Community Care’s chief operations officer. “Our more than 30 years of experience in operating quality, cost-effective long-term care services has made us ready to address Sheboygan’s long-term care needs.”



Sheboygan County residents who currently receive long-term and health care services through the county’s COP-W and CIP programs will move over to the Community Care administered Family Care program. And because of the close collaboration between Sheboygan County and Community Care, county case managers will join the Family Care teams. For program participants, that will provide a continuity of services that is sure to be appreciated.

Those receiving services through the COP-W and CIP programs are expected to enroll in Community Care programs over a six-month period beginning in February. At the same time, eligible people from the waitlist will start getting the help they need. After the waitlist is eliminated, new referrals will be accepted.

For eligible Sheboygan County residents who need long-term care services, Community Care’s expansion into Sheboygan is the light at the end of the tunnel.

For more information about the new Family Care program, call the Sheboygan County Aging & Disability Resource Center at (920) 459-3095.



President's Report

By Jon Rost

Cautious optimism, but always vigilant.

After much anticipation, Family Care has arrived in Sheboygan County. Our friends at Health & Human Services have been working for months anticipating the transition from waiver-based funding to Family Care.

Working with Community Care, the Care Management Organization, which has been selected by Sheboygan County, the transition has begun and we are cautiously optimistic.

The good news is that two people, one of whom was on

the "waiting list" for over eight years are getting services.

Wonderful news.

Care must be taken, however, to be sure that individuals who qualified under the waiver program continue to get services under Family Care.

Please let us know if you have any concerns in this area.

Continued vigilance is necessary as we received word that President Bush is threatening to veto funding for a component of Supported Employment. Our friends at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) report that this

could reduce Federal funding to DVR Wisconsin by \$450,000.

This at a time when budgets are already being pinched.

Please contact Senators Kohl and Feingold and express your concerns.

That being said, we wish you a happy and prosperous 2008. We have lots planned for more educational meetings and social outings. See you soon.

Regards,

Jon Rost

President
HearthStone of Wisconsin

**"Hearth" to
symbolize a
loving, caring
home; "Stone"
to symbolize
permanence"**



Director's Report

By Thomas Gierke

Just over a year has gone by, since I was approached with the opportunity to take on the role of HearthStone's Executive Director and what a year it has been.

Looking at the "exterior" of the organization, you may not have noticed many changes, but if you could see the "inside" many strides have been made.

Strides such as centralizing HearthStone operations to one dedicated area, consolidating and updating the membership databases, developing a quarterly newsletter, converting financial management from the pencil and paper age to the electronic age and last but not least, the HearthStone listserv, which enables subscribers to send and receive relevant information, news and events at the click of a mouse.

So... What's next?, you may ask.

A sneak-peek into the future will not only find the exciting, educational events, social outings, and peer support that HearthStone is known for, it will also find improvements to the website, increased electronic interaction (listserv) and a renewed focus on fundraising and outreach.

Since its inception, HearthStone has always focused on reaching out to people and pointing them in a direction to solve their issue or just to lend a supporting ear. For anyone that has any sort of disability, a kind, listening ear can be just what someone needs.

That is most certainly the thing that is most rewarding about

this position—lending an ear, speaking an encouraging word, shaking a hand or even giving a hug.

That is what it is all about!

On a personal note, I couldn't have written a more rewarding script for a year in my life. The new job, the new wife, the new son, the new house and all of my new HearthStone friends.

I very much so look forward to serving as your Executive Director in the future and I also look forward to meeting you at one of HearthStone's upcoming events.

Thank you

Tom Gierke
Executive Director
HearthStone of Wisconsin

HearthStone Respite

By Ray Cary

The Hearthstone Respite Care Program is entering its fourth year of operation. The project was developed as a collaborative effort of Hearthstone of WI, Sheboygan County Health and Human Services, and The Family Resource Center of Sheboygan County. Its purpose is to meet the unserved/underserved respite care needs of families with a developmentally disabled member in Sheboygan County.

The project began in 2007 with 36 eligible enrollees. During 2007, 14 new individuals were enrolled. With a turnover of six individuals, we greeted the new year with a total of 44 enrollees. The project is intended and operates as an inclusive resource for DD families who are not eligible for other funding sources. It has served families in crisis and in the short term. Every family in Sheboygan County with a developmentally disabled member needs to

know they can turn to the Respite Project for support. The program operates as a care provider cost reimbursement fund. It is our hope that we can positively support your family by helping to provide a much-needed break.

Information and application is available from Family Resource Centers of Sheboygan County. Sheboygan - 920 208 6266 / Plymouth 920 892 6706.



Spring Dance

By Andy Sterzen

Hearthstone is sponsoring its 8th Spring Dance. Our theme this year is "30 Something Birthday Bash!" It's for anyone who will be 30 someday, is 30 now or has been 30 for some time.

It will be held on Friday, March 28, 2008 from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm at the Plymouth Youth Center, Riverside Circle in Plymouth.

We will be having A.C.Royal DJ and Karaoke service again this year. Pizza and soda and snacks will be provided.

Friends and family members are welcome to share in the great fun we always have.

We have asked the young people to bring a picture of themselves when they were young so we can make a poster board to see "how we've

grown" and also a small birthday gift to share if they would like.

Of course we will have a Birthday cake.

It's going to be a great party. We hope you can

Please RSVP to Terri Sterzen by March 1.
Phone (920) 467-6801

***"Limitations live
only in our
minds. But if we
use our
imaginations our
possibilities
become limitless"***

Jamie Paolinetti

Upcoming Events

Friday, March 14, 2008 - 7:00 a.m., HearthStone Monthly Meeting

Fountain Park Restaurant in Sheboygan

(Note: This meeting will be held in closed session—see you in April)

Friday, March 28, 2008 - 7 - 10:00 p.m., HearthStone Young People Spring Dance, Plymouth Youth Center

Tuesday, April 8, 2008 - 6 - 7:30 p.m., Estate Planning for Special Needs

Family Members" By Annette Hammortree,
Financial Planner & Investment Specialist
Mead Public Library Rocca Room, Sheboygan





We're here to help you unlock the right doors.

HearthStone of Wisconsin is a not for profit organization based in Sheboygan, WI. Our members are people with developmental disabilities, their families and friends and people within our communities who care about them. We offer assistance, guidance, advocacy and support in transition to and in perpetuation of community-based living.

We believe in working together to help dreams come true. Dreams of Independence. Dreams of Respect. Dreams of Achievement. Dreams of Laughter.

For many people dreams like these may seem impossible or impractical. HearthStone members are dedicated to helping one another break down the barriers that appear to prevent those dreams from becoming reality. Our role as an organization is to facilitate, communicate and educate ourselves, our families and our communities to enable all people to achieve their highest potential. To dream the dream, and strive to live the dream. If you and your family are interested in designing and implementing sustaining individualized support systems for a family member who has a developmental disability, then you may benefit from HearthStone. Our members share a common concern and willingness to actively support individuals with developmental disabilities within our communities.

Our ultimate objective is to help people achieve their highest possible levels of community integration and independent living and to do so safely, securely and meaningfully

We Need Your Help!

Would you like to go "paperless?" Sounds intimidating, right? Actually, all it involves is sending us your current email address, so you can join the over 100 other HearthStone members that have made the transition.

So, what are the advantages? You will not only get your newsletter in full color, universally readable pdf format, you will be included in the

exclusive HearthStone electronic database which will



provide you with instant access to all of the "hot top-

ics" with a click of a mouse. Most importantly, it saves us money, so we can continue to provide you with informational seminars, recreational outings and all of the other great things that HearthStone is known for.

Are you interested? Contact Thomas Gierke at thomas.gierke@hearthstonewi.org.

FREE MEMBERSHIP REQUEST

WHAT IS HEARTHSTONE

HearthStone is a self-help and advocacy organization for people with disabilities and their families. Our mission is to make our communities a welcoming place for people of disabilities and to support and encourage positive life experiences.

BENEFITS OF JOINING HEARTHSTONE

- Free Quarterly Newsletter with news & information you can use
- Free subscription to HearthStone’s email listserve
- Free Quarterly Social Events for Young Adults
- HearthStone sponsored respite program for qualifying families
- Advance notice for Free Community Meetings & Educational Programs
- Free P.A.T.H. Planning resources to help move your dreams forward
- Help, family mentoring, referrals, resources
- Add your “voice” to the hundred plus Lakeshore area families to help us advocate for funding for programs for people with disabilities and service providers – help us end “The WAITING LIST” game here and throughout Wisconsin and adequately compensate our caring service providers.

Yes, please add me to your list of Members. I understand there is NO CHARGE to become a HearthStone member.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Person(s) you are advocating for: _____ Date of Birth: _____

_____ Date of Birth: _____

Special Needs, Interests and/or Comments: _____

Donations and volunteer activities are always welcome.
(HearthStone of Wisconsin is a 5013C non-profit, making your contribution fully tax deductible)

HearthStone of WI
P.O. Box 1444
Sheboygan, WI 53082-1444

We hope you have enjoyed reading

Stepping Stones

A Publication of HearthStone of Wisconsin, Inc.

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, please contact our
Executive Director at: thomas.gierke@hearthstonewi.org

or

HEARTHSTONE OF WISCONSIN

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