

## Inside this issue:

President's Report	2
Spring Dance Recap	3
Estate Planning	3

## HearthStone President Receives Award

Hearthstone's president, Jon Rost was recognized by the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (formerly the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities) on May 22 in Madison. Jon received the Jayn Wittenmyer Distinguished Achievement Award for his outstanding service to adults with disabilities. The award recognizes someone who goes "above and beyond expectations" by providing enthusiasm, vision, broad knowledge, compassion and leadership in the field. Other Hearthstone members who attended the luncheon with Jon were Frank Sterzen (who nominated Jon for the award), Peggy Feider, Jon's wife Carol and son Eric.

Congratulations, Jon on your award. You have earned the respect of many in the disabilities community for your enthusiasm and dedication in serving people who have developmental disabilities.



Jon Rost, HearthStone President accepts the Jayn Wittenmyer Award from Ms. Jennifer Ondrejka, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Developmental Disabilities Board.

## Upcoming Events

**Friday, July 11, 2008 - 7:00 a.m.,** HearthStone Monthly Meeting  
Fountain Park Restaurant in Sheboygan

**Sat, Aug. 9, 2008 - 12:00 p.m. –2:30 p.m.,** HearthStone's Summer Picnic & Boat Ride, Fireman's Park in Elkhart Lake  
Please call (920) 876-2391-seating is limited

**Tues, Sept. 16, 2008 - 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.,** Protecting my Benefits:  
A meeting informing individuals and their families about the very latest in terms of protecting SSI and Medicaid/Medicare benefits and still allowing people to work and accumulate some assets.  
RCS, Sheboygan



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



## President’s Report

*By Jon Rost*

### **WDDDB Award Truly a Team Effort**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, I was humbled and honored to accept the Jayn Wittenmyer Distinguished Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Developmental Disabilities Board (formerly Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities – WCDD).

The award recognizes someone who goes “above and beyond expectations” by providing enthusiasm, vision, broad knowledge, compassion, and leadership in the field. This results-oriented person is able to form or direct effective networks to better the lives of adults with developmental disabilities.

That “someone” is really HearthStone, and all of our valued fellow advocates and partners. From its modest beginnings as “The Parent’s Study Group”, we have grown as individuals and as an organization.

We have formed strong relationships with local and state legislators. We have strong relationships with service providers, our Sheboygan County Department of Health & Human Services, and with The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

We have successfully advocated for millions of dollars locally and at the state and federal level to help fund programs that serve the disabled. We have launched a Respite Program in Sheboygan County in partnership with the Family Resource Center and the Department of HHS.

We have provided mortgage support so that 5 individuals and families could afford to buy a home. We have sponsored dozens of Community Education Meetings and social events for our young adults. We co-sponsor an Employer’s Recognition Luncheon with DVR and RCS Empowers. We provide caring counsel to families trying

to sort out the complexities of living with disabilities.

But it is truly WE. We have an exceptionally talented and committed Board of Directors with the skill and energy to act on our collective beliefs. We have an incredible Advisory Board, some of whom drive over an hour to attend our inconvenient 7 a.m. Board meetings.

WE are a truly a TEAM and I was proud to accept an Achievement Award for everything our TEAM has accomplished. And, is yet to accomplish.

Congratulations to HearthStone. And my sincere thanks and admiration.

Sincerely,

Jon Rost, President

P.S. Special Thanks to fellow founder and board member Frank Sterzen for “surprising” me with this nomination.



Back Row: Ms. Charlene Dwyer, Administrator, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Eric Rost, Jon Rost, Liz Germanotta and Eric Olsen, Jon's brother and sister-in law.  
Front Row: HearthStone Founding Board Members, Carol Rost and Peggy Feider.

## HearthStone Spring Dance

By Terri Sterzen

On March 28, 2008, Hearthstone sponsored its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Dance. It was a huge success and is reported by some to have been

“The Best Party Ever”.

Our theme this year was “30 Something Birthday Bash”. We celebrated Life! We honored those who turned 30 during the past year, those who were looking forward to turning 30 and those who have been 30 for some time now.

We had between 40 and 50 people who enjoyed dancing, singing to karaoke, eating pizza

and of course birthday cake and ice cream. We shared gifts and had many birthday balloons.

It was a great night and we look forward to our next get together. We know how to party!

Thank you to Lakeside Pepsi for donating the soda and water, AC Royal for another outstanding performance and most of all, THANK YOU HEARTHSTONE for sponsoring this great event and opportunity to gather for fun and fellowship.



A “30-Something Birthday Bash”

## Estate Planning

By SueAnn Schuh

On Tuesday April 8<sup>th</sup>, Annette Hammortree, an Investment Specialist and Financial Planner traveled to Sheboygan from O’Malley and Associates in Crystal Lake Illinois, (there is also a Sheboygan office) to share her expertise professionally and personally. Annette has a son with disabilities and has used her knowledge as a financial planner and a parent to specialize in Planning for families with special needs members.

The most important items in this planning come down to a knowledgeable lawyer and planner to help. There are lots of things to keep in mind and to decide when planning for your special needs family member whenever any inheritance is involved, yours or anyone else that might remember your family member in their will. If

your family member is going to be eligible for state and federal health care, or MA, they cannot have cash assets of more



than \$2000.00. There are several exceptions to this; one being a special needs Trust. If set up properly, this is where the knowledgeable attorney comes in, the trust owns the money and a trustee has been appointed to use the assets for the benefit of the special needs family member with out jeopardizing their medical benefits.

There are some restrictions and rules involved with special needs trust but is an excellent tool for most families.

Annette does reach out to others in her profession to educate them with seminars on the complexity of special needs family members. Annette left us with a list of websites that she has found to be useful resources. She did especially mention the magazine, “The Exceptional Parent” as a favorite of hers. It is on the list as well. We were very lucky to have Annette come and share her “special” knowledge with us.

In summary, be sure you have an up to date will at all times and when estate planning be sure the attorney and planner are knowledgeable about Your Special situation and, ASK LOTS OF QUESTIONS.

**“Each handicap is like a hurdle in a steeplechase, and when you ride up to it, if you throw your heart over, the horse will go along, too.**

Lawrence Bixby



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](mailto: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 WISCONSIN

P.O. Box 1444 – SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN 53082-1444 - 920.451.3179 - WWW.HEARTHSTONEWI.ORG

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](mailto:thomas.gierke@hearthstonewi.org)

or

HEARTHSTONE OF WISCONSIN

P.O. Box 1444 – SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN 53082-1444 - 920.451.3179 - [WWW.HEARTHSTONEWI.ORG](http://WWW.HEARTHSTONEWI.ORG)