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Newsletter Date: September 2009

Family Care - A Year Later

Sheboygan County has had Family Care for about 1-1/2 years now; Wisconsin has had IRIS (Include. Respect | Self-Direct) -- the self-directed long term program and alternative to Family Care -- available for about 1 year now. We thought it was time for everyone to be able to share how it is going and what has and what hasn't worked.

There were about 70 people that joined a panel at Paragon Day Services in Plymouth on September 10th for our Family Care listening session. Our panel consisted of Amy Bridges from the Sheboygan County Aging and Disability Resource Center, (ADRC) Kathy Arndt, a parent of an IRIS participant, and Betsy Abramson, program manager of the Family Care Ombudsman Program.

Amy began the evening with a presentation on what happens when someone is interested in information on IRIS. She started from the first phone call and told how the ADRC would proceed. She detailed what information they could provide to an interested consumer before they would decide if they were going to try IRIS. She also pointed out the flexibility IRIS has and how it has supports available as well.

Betsy then explained the Ombudsman Program's role in Family Care and what they have been seeing through out the state. She gave a few specific items and cases they have worked with, enumerated some general suggestions for procedures and courses of action. She then answered a lot of specific questions of how people should proceed.

Kathy followed by sharing her family's experiences with setting up an IRIS plan and how IRIS works for them. She was then able to answer some specific questions the group had about how to work with and use IRIS as well as how it adjusts to the changing needs of the consumer.

Marie Schwinn shared that she is on the Quality Assurance Advisory Committee that Community Care has set up to work on specific issues or problems and is looking for and welcomes feed-

back from consumers. Community Care also reminded us they employ a Member Rights Specialist for the purpose of providing help with the grievance and appeals process.

HearthStone groups rarely let us down and this meeting was no exception. There were many questions, which is why we were there and how we learn best. Betsy was even able to explain different elements of Family Care and other resources that not everyone knew about or understood. The RAD process was also talked about; this is the procedure the "team" uses to decide if they can approve a service. She also explained who was part of the team. She was able to give us a little more insight into the appeal process, especially for those that have considered it. A few other participants shared some of their experience with appeals, including an appeal that was heard in front of a Judge and an appeal that was decided with a telephone conference call.



There have been growing pains with Family Care on both the consumer and provider sides. Some items have been addressed but there are still issues that need to be dealt with. The same concerns were almost always heard more than once. Betsy also mentioned that they often see the same issues, about the same time throughout the state at their office. The most important thing Betsy shared was that consumers have to appeal decisions they do not agree with and Disability Rights of Wisconsin is there if you need help.

There was time after for more questions and sharing of contact information. We are so pleased our panel could provide so much information. Thank you everyone for attending, sharing experiences and asking questions.

Sincerely,
Sue Ann Schuh, Education Chairperson



President's Report

A New Budget. New Challenges. Same Dedication.

By Jon Rost

As we continue to face these tough economic challenges, we remain dedicated to making sure the people we care about have a strong voice in the community. HearthStone's involvement in advocating in support of people with disabilities remains a major mission.

Fortunately, we have developed strong partnerships with State and Local Government, Agencies, and providers who are working together to assure that services remain intact.

With the conversion to Family Care, including the self-direct IRIS option, there have been some "bumps in the road". This combined with severe Federal, State, and County budget challenges have led to challenges in keeping service levels adequate to the needs of every individual.

We thank you for your continued support and participation. Please note some important dates listed below on the calendar. Please join us.

Regards,
Jon Rost, President
HearthStone of Wisconsin



Director's Notes

By Thomas Gierke

In your possession is another entertaining, fact-filled edition of Stepping Stones, HearthStone of WI's official newsletter. Along with the usual articles and updates, you will notice a new section. We decided to put a "face" on HearthStone, so HearthStone Faces was created. If you or someone you know would like to tell the stories of inspiration, motivation, successes or challenges please send me your story along with a photo. Who knows, you could be a "face" in a future issue.

Thanks for your support!

Regards,
Thomas Gierke, Executive Director
HearthStone of Wisconsin

Upcoming Events

Friday, October 9th, 2009 - 7:00 a.m., HearthStone Monthly Meeting
Fountain Park Restaurant in Sheboygan

Wednesday, October 21st, 2009 - 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., Supported Employment
Information Session, RCS Empowers in Sheboygan

Saturday, October 23rd, 2009 - 1:30 - 3:00 p.m., HearthStone Bowling Party
Maple Lanes in Sheboygan, Free Bowling & Pizza

Tuesday, October 27nd, 2009 - 11:00 a.m., Employer Recognition Luncheon
The American Club in Kohler

Tuesday, October 27nd, 2009 - 6:00 p.m., County Budget Hearings
3rd Floor, County Supervisors – County Courthouse.

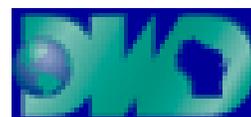
Friday, November 5th, 2009, Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
moves to new location in Sheboygan Falls

Friday, November 13th, 2009 - 7:00 a.m., HearthStone Monthly Meeting
Fountain Park Restaurant in Sheboygan



8th Annual Employer Recognition Luncheon

On Tuesday, October 27th, 2009 HearthStone with co-sponsors RCS Empowers, Inc and the State of Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will be celebrating the 8th Annual Sheboygan County Employer Recognition Luncheon at the American Club in Kohler. At least one hundred employers will be honored for their efforts in employing individuals with disabilities. Special guest Dinah Chaudoir-Federer, author of her book "Chasing Normal" will be the keynote speaker. Highlights of the event will be recognizing the new initiative to increase the number of people wishing to seek employment being offered to RCS customers and students involved in school to work programs. October is National Employment Awareness Month.



Supported Employment Info Session

Have you ever thought about working in the community? Wonder what it would be like? Worried about how it will affect your benefits? If you or your guardian/caregiver has a desire to learn more about what it means to have a job in the community, please come to an informational panel discussion that is being co-sponsored by Hearthstone and RCS on Wednesday, Oct 21st from 6:00pm-7:30pm at RCS.

ADRC on the move

The ADRC's new address as of November 5, 2009 is, 650 Forest Ave, Sheboygan Falls.



Sheboygan County's Aging & Disability Resource Center, (the ADRC) is moving November 5th. The ADRC will be moving to the Sheboygan County Ag building at 650 Forest Ave Sheboygan Falls. The new location is a one story; easily accessible building that is already a senior meal site and has plenty of free parking behind the building. The ADRC may also be reached by using Sheboygan Transit route 20, or for individuals over age 60 or disabled, Regional Transit connection may be used. (Call 920-459-3420 for more information)

The ADRC's new phone numbers are; 920-467-1999 voice, 920-467-1996 TTY or toll free 800-596-1919, Hours are Monday through Friday 8AM to 5PM

"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you have imagined."

Henry David Thoreau



Elkhart Lake Picnic and Boat Tour Enjoyed by All

By Jon, Carol and Eric Rost

There were over twenty hardy HearthStone members present on August 1 – a sunny but WINDY day on the shores of Elkhart Lake. We yummed it up with a picnic lunch at Firemen’s Park with plenty of pizzas, burgers, sodas and ice cream. It was a little too cool and breezy for swimming or beach activities, but Captain Tom’s big pontoon boat ride more than made up for it. Our hour long, narrated cruise around beautiful Elkhart Lake was delightful. If you missed it, be sure to join us next year!



HearthStone Friends enjoy a guided tour around Elkhart Lake

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

HearthStone Faces

Never Say Never

I felt drawn to the beach today still reeling from the words, "I do not know Joe very well but he does not have the cognitive ability to get a degree in natural resources." The sound and motion of the waves brings comfort and salve to my wounded heart. When I feel thrown off balance this is where I come to write my thoughts and regroup. Lord, creator of heaven and earth, what is my lesson for today? My heart is open and ready to listen and learn. For several days I have been listening to the mantra, "never say never" and not sensing any movement from these words. The singer Paul Sebar at the nearby Victorian Village tiki bar echoes over the shoreline directly into my heart soothing me with lyrics I needed to hear...yes, it was part of the song he was singing.."never say never". Jumping inside and writing with renewed energy I recommitted to the original plan to support my son in pursuing his goal....after all...he already has 15 credits toward that goal...what can those words mean...never? "He is not going to be able to make it in college....It is questionable whether it would be safe for him to get a driver's license.....it does not appear that it would be good to live in an apartment by himself...etc. etc.... My son J. R. (Joseph Robert) is now 22 years old, is living in an apartment over one hour away from home, attending college classes for three years, and just passed his road test July 29th. Though Joe has been diagnosed with PDD (Pervasive Developmental Delay) recently included in the autism spectrum, he has a determination to work in the field of natural resources and continues to jump hurdles viewed as unattainable by some. One lesson I have learned is that I do not know how he will get there but we take one step at a time and never say never.



Joe poses proudly with his deer

I began attending Hearthstone meetings at a time when I needed some encouragement. I found the uplifting reports of parents and professionals involved in advocacy and listening to successes provided me with the boost I am glad for today.

I hope this account from a mother's perspective will bring some hope to a reader.

Kathy Arndt

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

Yes, I'd like to help HearthStone help our special population

Please help us help others right here at home. Your contribution is fully tax deductible
HearthStone of Wisconsin is a 501(C)3 non-profit corporation.

Yes, I'd like to donate:

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ \$250 _____ \$500 _____ other

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

If you'd like to donate
securely on-line, visit:
www.hearthstonewi.org

You can make a difference. Volunteer for HearthStone
In addition to your financial support, you can help HearthStone with your
donation of time and energy. We are an entirely volunteer organization. With your help,
our expenses are minimized and more goes to the people we serve.

Volunteer opportunities

- Educational meetings Fundraising Maintain our growing database
 Website update Newsletter production Events for our young people

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