

## 9th Annual Points of Transformation Awards

The Public Awareness Committee of MRS presented its 9th annual Points of Transformation Awards on Wednesday, March 25, 2009. Every year March is celebrated throughout the United States as an opportunity to recognize the abilities and contributions of those individuals who have mental retardation (intellectual disabilities). Points of Transformation is provided as a public awareness event in Philadelphia to say thank you to the people who have jobs to support people with mental retardation. These are the people who “Make It Happen!”

This year, the event was held in the Mayor’s Reception Room at City Hall, a grand historical

place where the stories of our winners were passionately read by our Mistress of Ceremonies, Loraine Ballard Morrill, News and Community Affairs Director of Clear Channel Radio. Loraine’s presence has become a welcome tradition at our events. Thad Campbell, Valerie Foresta, and George Callaway, Co-Chairs of the Public Awareness Committee, welcomed everyone. Kathy L. Sykes, Director of MRS, and Arthur C. Evans, Jr., Ph.D., Director of DBH/MRS, were on hand to congratulate the winners. C. Lau, a family member who speaks English as a second language, sent an e-mail summing up her thoughts about the event, “We ...enjoyed the City

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## Congratulations Award Winners!

◆ William “BJ” Carolan  
Life Coach, SPIN Norcom Center

◆ Andrea Davies  
Employment Specialist, SPIN

◆ The Fisher Family: Sarah, Jerry,  
Kristina, Jessica & Jerry, Jr.  
Lifesharing, Catholic Social Services

◆ Ying Huang  
Supports Coordinator, Quality Progressions

◆ Sonny Nwachuku  
Supports Coordinator, PersonLink

◆ PATH Team, Beyer Street: Stephen  
Adesipo, Lorpu Hunter (Supervisor),  
Delmariea McCall, Michael Shiomos,  
Loretta Walker, Leverne Williams,  
Regina Wilson

## Free Adapted Smoke Alarms



PIAT, with additional funding from the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, is supporting a program to distribute adapted smoke alarms to families with special needs

residing in Philadelphia that cannot afford to purchase one. These are smoke alarms that have flashing lights and/or vibrating signals to alert people who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard-of-hearing.

To qualify for a free smoke alarm, you must

- ❑ Have a child (under age 18) with special needs living in the home

- ❑ Need an adapted smoke alarm at home because the child or an adult in the household cannot respond to a regular smoke alarm
- ❑ Meet income requirements—the family income may not be more than 200% of federal poverty level, based on family size.

If you meet the above criteria, contact the Pennsylvania Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT) to get an application, 215-204-3330 (V) or 866-268-0570 (TTY).

Once approved, the smoke alarm will be delivered to your home and installed by a member of the Philadelphia Fire Department. Once installed, your adapted smoke alarm becomes your property and your responsibility. You must replace the batteries at least two times a year.

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What are you doing in your every day life? How are you making community connections? Let Family Forum know about your successes, dreams, and goals.

## Let's hear from you!

Please submit articles to: Editor, Family Forum, Mental Retardation Services, Suite 5200, 701 Market St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1532

The Family Forum is a publication of Mental Retardation Services and is mailed from PDDC. Note that when more than one person lives at the same address, one addressee has been randomly selected. To receive The Family Forum, contact the Editor.

All copy is subject to editorial approval and may be edited. Publication in this newsletter does not necessarily represent the position of Philadelphia Mental Retardation Services.

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Recent issues of The Family Forum are archived on  
<[www.philly.networkofcare.org](http://www.philly.networkofcare.org)> and  
<[www.phila.gov/dbhmrs](http://www.phila.gov/dbhmrs)>

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# Spotlight On Camp & Respite

Ahh, Spring! The weather begins to change – daily, it seems! – and many people’s thoughts turn to summer and summer camp! In this article, we’ll include “camp resources,” such as websites and phone numbers, to find out about camps that could meet the needs of children, teens, adults, and senior citizens with developmental and other disabilities. We’ll also share important information about the service system, such as the Service Definitions, Provider Qualification, the role of the



Supports Coordinator, and other helpful information.

As in other aspects of planning for an individual’s supports and services, the process for planning for camp should begin with your Supports Coordinator (SC). Your SC will help you to understand the process of including camp in the Individual Support Plan (ISP) by explaining the Service Definitions and assuring that services involving camp are included in the ISP before attendance at

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## **Camp or respite services must be included in your ISP**

Whether you receive Consolidated or P/FDS Waiver, or receive Base funding such as FDSS, the service and funding for the service must be approved and authorized prior to attending camp.

Only providers who complete the Provider Qualification process are eligible to receive reimbursement through the Waiver.

Current camp and respite service providers will bill directly to PROMISE for Waiver reimbursement.

Camp and respite providers, classified as vendors who are not billing directly, will bill for reimbursement through another MRS provider. Your Supports Coordinator is responsible for processing all approved invoices.

## **Choosing a Camp Service**

MRS will maintain a list of willing and qualified Waiver providers of camp and respite services and

will make this list available to SCOs and participants so they can identify an alternative if the current camp and respite provider will no longer provide camp and respite as a Waiver service as of 7/1/2010.

The Office of Developmental Programs and MRS will be available to provide technical assistance to any Camp that intends to become a Provider of camp and respite services effective 7/1/2010.

## **Questions?**

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Supports Coordinator. Also, for further assistance, you can call the following MRS staff: Carrie Wise 215-685-5995 (Consortium), Lynette Borum 215-685-4618 (Partnership), Cathy Silvasi 215-685-5986 (QP and PersonLink), Todd Handler, Supervisor 215-685-5952, Connie Falcone, Manager 215-685-5998.

You could also contact the ODP SE Regional Office 215-560-2242.

## Spotlight ...

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camp begins. Having camp services included in the ISP is important because whether an individual is in the Consolidated or P/FDS waiver, or receives Base or FDSS funding, the service and funding for the service must be approved and authorized prior to attending camp. For those who receive their services and supports through the Waiver (P/FDSW and Consolidated), only those camps that complete the Provider Qualification process will be able to receive reimbursement through the Waiver or base funding. The Provider Qualification process will confirm that the camp offers an eligible service, has an approved rate, and is licensed and accredited. Because food, room and board are not eligible for Waiver reimbursement, day camps that are unlicensed or not accredited will be required to separate the cost of food, and, in the case of overnight camp, the cost of room and board from the cost of staff support. The costs of food or room and board may be reimbursed using private funds or Base funds if they are available. The staff support portion of camp costs may be reimbursed through the Waiver or Base funding.

“Vacation” is no longer a funded service. You should review the Service Definitions and talk to your Supports Coordinator.

If you know of a camp that has not completed the Provider Qualification process, please encourage the Camp Director to contact your Supports Coordination Organization (SCO) to find out how to complete the process.

### **Check out these camp resources!**

- ❑ The American Camping Association (ACA) can assist family members with finding the right camp. Camps that have been accredited by the ACA not only examine the quality of the camp experience, but also review standards of health,

safety, and hiring practices. For information, go to <[www.aca-camps.org](http://www.aca-camps.org)> or call 215-886-5385.

- ❑ The Philadelphia Recreation Department offers cultural, sports, and other camps, including day camps, at 150 sites. For more information, call 215-683-3650, or visit <[www.phila.gov/recreation](http://www.phila.gov/recreation)>, and click on camps.
- ❑ Visit Philly S.O.S. at <[www.phillysos.org](http://www.phillysos.org)> and click on search by keyword, enter “camps” for a list of local camp options.
- ❑ CampParents.org –at <[www.campparents.org](http://www.campparents.org)> search for camps and other camp resources, geared to families.
- ❑ Contact the National Camp Association for overnight camps at 800-966-CAMP, or <[www.summercamp.org](http://www.summercamp.org)>.
- ❑ For a free email list of summer camps and schools for children with learning disabilities, email [vschultz@ldaamerica.org](mailto:vschultz@ldaamerica.org) or visit <[www.ldaamerica.org](http://www.ldaamerica.org)>.



### **Keep Kids Safe 2009 Summer Camp**

A program of the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, co-managed by Nu Sigma Youth Services and the Philadelphia Anti-Drug/Anti-Violence Network and part of the Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia, the Keep Kids Safe Camp is a FREE opportunity for 150 youth from Philadelphia (ages 9-13) to have a traditional camp experience. Call Brandon at 215-851-1755 for information.

## Points of Transformation ...

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Hall Points [of Transformation]. This is our first time...up to 2nd floor [of City Hall]. We can look around all the pictures of Mayors. We also feel proud of the people do the good job. My daughter is happy to see all the people. Thanks!" Other people reported that the stories of the award winners were heartwarming and reminded us of why we are here!

Congratulations to the Points of Transformation winners. They inspire all of us to go beyond our job descriptions, forming relationships that encourage, enhance, and expand the lives of others. Their stories show their persistence in promoting opportunities for individuals to have real choices, realize their dreams, live with families who love them. Due to space limitations in Family Forum, the stories of the award winners are much shorter than presented at the ceremony. If you want a copy of the day's program, with expanded stories, contact Judy Kresloff at 215-685-5923, or [judy.kresloff@phila.gov](mailto:judy.kresloff@phila.gov).

The Public Awareness Committee wants to acknowledge everyone who was nominated for doing an exemplary job at supporting people to be self-determined and have the very best life possible. Thank you to the nominators who took the time to acknowledge someone making a big difference in the lives of others. And thanks to the volunteers of the Public Awareness Committee for another terrific event!



**"You don't realize the effect you have on people."**

**William "BJ" Carolan**

**Life Coach, SPIN Norcom Community Center**

BJ (his mother's nickname for him) Carolan doesn't have to wonder what to do with his time. He works full-time for SPIN as a Life Coach/Personal Trainer and as an EMT in the evenings (a 40-hour shift). He is also attending West Chester University to get a degree in Exercise Physiology. On Saturdays, BJ is coaching an inclusive soccer game, or hockey. BJ was nominated by two families (the Porters and the Wasielewskis), exercise participant Elizabeth Sweeney, and his supervisor at the SPIN Norcom Community Center, Laura Fekete-Colon, because he is "... more than just a personal trainer. He is a teacher and a friend."

BJ began at SPIN as a part-time employee six years ago. He said he hadn't had any background of working with people with disabilities so he just "... treated everyone like I did my other friends." Wise beyond his 29 young years, BJ now realizes that was just the right thing to do. "I would never give this up. You don't realize the effect you have on people," he said. "I stroll into the gym and high-five people, and my face hurts from smiling so much."



**"If only everyone knew how different each person's needs are."**

**Ying Huang**

**Supports Coordinator,  
Quality Progressions**

Ying Huang, an energetic young woman who has been at Quality Progressions for two years, was nominated by the Foy Family and by her supervisor, Jen Violi, because "She has always found a way to overcome systemic obstacles with an optimistic attitude that gets the job done for the people she supports."

Ying sighed when talking about the system.

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**“It just needed to be done.”**

**Andrea Davies**

**Employment Specialist,  
SPIN**

Andrea was nominated by her supervisor, Pat Wray, because she “... has made an immeasurable impact on so many people’s lives in so many ways.” Working for SPIN for only three years, Andrea has indeed helped many individuals fulfill their desire to work and to earn a paycheck.

Mentioned in the nomination are several stories (Melissa at Walmart, Colleen at Target, Mitchell at a Drivers’ License Center, Paul at ShopRite, and Susan in her janitorial job) about how Andrea has developed a special relationship with individuals and the people with whom they work so they can be successful. Day, night, weekends ... it didn’t matter. Andrea did what she had to do to find that perfect job, or to find another perfect job when layoffs took place.

Andrea’s optimistic and outgoing attitude has helped her secure employment for many people. She is a true example of someone who sparks the transformation of lives through successful employment! Andrea shrugged, like everything she has done was no big deal. “It just needed to be done,” she said.



From left, Sara, Kellie, Jessica, Teal, and Jerry, Jr.

**“Everybody deserves a family. That’s how I look at it.”**

**The Fisher Family: Sara, Jerry, Kristina, Jessica & Jerry, Jr.**

**Lifesharing with Catholic Social Services**

Once upon a time there was a family called Fisher. No, this is not a fairy tale, but spending an hour or two talking to members of the Fisher family would have you believing in fairy tales. There are Sara and Jerry (Mom and Dad), two natural daughters, one son, three big dogs, one cat, and two rabbits. But that’s not all. There are also Teal and Kellie, Lifesharing daughters who have been

lovingly embraced by this marvelous family. Nominated by Dave Reid of Catholic Social Services, the Fishers were shy about accepting an award, but then thought their story might be an incentive to another family to join Lifesharing.

There simply isn’t enough room now to tell you about this family so look for a full article later this year in the Family Forum. For starters, though, Sara is a Program Coordinator at Catholic Social Services in the Lifesharing program. Seven-plus years ago, Teal’s mother approached Sara about providing a home for Teal, who was then five. And, believe it or not, after one Fisher family confab, Teal went to live with the Fishers. Then, working at a camp for children with disabilities one summer, Jessica met Kellie, whose mother had died. Jessica went home and ... you’ve guessed by now that all it took was another Fisher family confab and ten-year-old Kellie was offered a new home a little over a year ago.

Sara summed up the situation easily when she said, “Everybody deserves a family. That’s how I look at it.”

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## Study finds Pennsylvania Underfunds Special Education

In Pennsylvania, the statewide gap in annual funding for special education totals \$380 million and represents an average shortfall of \$1,947 per special education student.



Released in February 2009, a study conducted by the national consultant firm, Augenblick, Palaich and Associates for the Education Law Center of Pennsylvania, the Disability Rights Network, and The Arc of Pennsylvania, states that the total needed, on average, to educate a student with disabilities (so that each student would have access to basic resources and be provided a quality education under state and federal law) to be \$18,407. Philadelphia currently counts its census to be 24,300 students with disabilities. The cost per student above the basic education amount in 2006-2007, and the last year for which information is known, was \$11,377. Currently, Pennsylvania is rated 39th of 50 states in the implementation of the federal special education law.

Janet Stotland, Co-Director for the Education Law Center, said that the state needs to improve the funding formula. “Under federal and state law, school districts cannot use cost as a reason not to provide a free and appropriate education, and by not properly funding the service, Pennsylvania is not well serving children, educators or school districts.”

For further information and to review the full report entitled “Costing Out the Resources Needed to Meet Pennsylvania’s Education Goals for Students with Disabilities” go online to <[www.elc-pa.org](http://www.elc-pa.org)>, or call 215-238-6870.



### See New Repeatable ... Second Monday Northeast Ambassadors of Advocacy Parent Support Group

#### Online Network Forum for Parents

Especially for Parents is an online network and forum where parents of children and youth with special health care needs can share knowledge and offer support. Members are able to start a discussion, share tips, tricks and shortcuts, offer support to others, write a blog, create a group for parents with similar interests or situations, create a virtual meeting spot for a local community group, invite friends to become community members, and promote events. Go to <[www.pamedicalhome.org](http://www.pamedicalhome.org)> and click on the “Parents” button.



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## EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS STORY

### Sean Healey's Lookin' Up

*Submitted by JEVS*

Eagerness shows on Sean Healey's face with its light tan freckles while energy infuses the room as he talks about the new job he landed with the help of JEVS Community Employment Services. A 2006 graduate of George Washington High School, Sean is a 23-year-old talented, smart, and unique young man. Sean, who is diagnosed with autism, mirrors many other young adults. He enjoys double quarter-pound cheeseburgers at MacDonald's, playing the piano, bicycling, fixing televisions, and working on computers.

His parents, Eileen and Tom Healey, say he is highly skilled technologically and has an amazing memory: Sean never forgets anything. Seeing Picasso's Three Musicians just once, he produced a perfect crayon reproduction, astounding his art teacher.

It's no wonder his mother says, "I always thought he could do a great job no matter where he landed as long as an employer would give him a chance." Thanks to the job placement efforts of Job Developer, Thomas Mingo, Sean found that

employer at the Shop Rite in Bensalem in November 2008. Due to some previous acting-out behaviors, Sean was considered a challenging placement. But once he landed the job, Sean developed a fine work ethic and is able to follow directions and memorize instructions after hearing them just once.

Shop Rite staff say they've "... never had anyone so enthusiastic." He's always on top of where the carts are and gets them, usually right from a customer as she is finishing loading the car. Being outdoors in all kinds of weather is part of what he loves.

On-the-job success has inspired Sean to set even higher goals. "Sean's happy, but not satisfied," says his mother. "He knows if he does a good job, he'll be able to move to a greater position." Sean has also noticeably matured since he started working, and one dream he has is to buy a center city apartment with the money he's saving.

"He never ceases to amaze me," says his father. "Sean loves the new Comcast building in center city Philadelphia. He likes staring at tall buildings, maybe because he's achieved great heights himself."

For more information about JEVS Vocational Evaluations, Skills Training or Placement Services, contact: Cambria Throne-Hill at 267-350-8628, 215-255-4777, or [workincommunity@jevs.org](mailto:workincommunity@jevs.org).

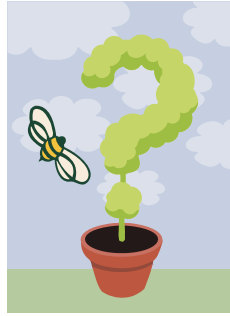


***Sean Healey caught in the act of helping out at home, too.***

Got an Employment Success Story?  
Family Forum would like to publish your story!  
Contact information for the Editor is on Page 2.



# DID YOU



▶ **Natural Pest Repellents** – Get rid of those pesky ants by sprinkling cinnamon, bay leaves, cayenne pepper, or baby power in problem areas and along baseboards and windowsills. Small sachets of crushed mint placed around the home will discourage flies. So will a potted sweet basil plant.

▶ **Repelente Natural para Insectos** – Deshágase de esas hormigas roseándoles canela, hojas de laurel, pimienta cayena o polvo para bebés en las áreas de problema y a lo largo de las paredes y en los descansos de las ventanas. Pequeñas bolsitas de menta molida situadas alrededor de la casa espantará a las moscas, lo mismo que una maceta de albahaca.

▶ **Recycle Locations** – Check out the Consumer Electronic Association website <[www.mygreenelectronics.org](http://www.mygreenelectronics.org)> or go to <[www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org)>. Type in your zip code and a list of area recycling centers will appear. Or call the Recycling Hotline at 800-253-2687.

▶ **Lugares para Reciclaje** – Revise el sitio Web de “Consumer Electronic Association” al <[www.mygreenelectronics.org](http://www.mygreenelectronics.org)> o vaya a <[www.earth911.org](http://www.earth911.org)>. Escriba su código postal y aparecerá una lista de los centros de reciclaje por área. Además, puede comunicarse a la línea caliente del reciclaje al 1-800-253-2687.

▶ **Clip Coupons for Military Families Overseas** – Many groups across the US are clipping grocery coupons for military families to use overseas. They can even use expired coupons (within six months of the expiration date). There are many details, so if your group wants to help out – and this does sound like fun while doing a good deed – google “clip coupons for military families” and follow the various links.

▶ **Recorte Cupones para las Familias de los Militares en el extranjero** – Muchos grupos a través de los EU están recortando cupones para comestibles para las familias de los

# KNOW?

militares para usarse en el extranjero. Ellos pueden usar cupones aun después de expirados (dentro de los seis meses de la fecha de expiración). Hay muchos detalles, si

su grupo quiere ayudar y esto parece ser divertido a la vez realiza un buen acto, google “Clip coupons for military families” y siga los diversos enlaces.

▶ **No Thanks to Catalogs** – Getting zillions of unwanted catalogs? You can stop them by going to <[www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org)>. First gather up the ones you have already received and don't want. Then sign on and follow the instructions.

▶ **No Gracias a los catálogos** – ¿Recibe millones de catálogos no deseados? Usted puede parar de recibirlos entrando al sitio Web <[www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org)>. Primero reúna los catálogos que usted ya ha recibido y no quiere y luego regístrese y siga las instrucciones.

▶ **Affordable Housing Resource** – Order a copy of The Philly Primer: Housing Resources for People with Disabilities. Call 215-576-1150 X4, or visit <[www.newsontap.org](http://www.newsontap.org)> to view a list of vacant accessible housing units.

▶ **Recurso para Vivienda Costeable** – Ordene una copia del “Philly Primer: Housing Resources para personas con discapacidades. Llame al 215-576-1150 o visite el sitio Web al <[www.newsontap.org](http://www.newsontap.org)> para ver una lista de unidades de vivienda accesibles vacantes.

▶ **Brain Injury School Help** – BrainSTEPS is an organization that helps families with issues regarding a student returning to school after a brain injury. A BrainSTEPS Team has just been implemented in partnership with the Philadelphia School District. For more information about BrainSTEPS, call Brenda Eagan-Brown at 724-944-6542 or [eaganbrown@biapa.org](mailto:eaganbrown@biapa.org), or visit <[www.biapa.org](http://www.biapa.org)>.

▶ **Ayuda en la escuela para aquellos que sufren daño cerebral** – BrainSTEPS es una organización que ayuda a las

*Thanks to Emilio Pacheco for the Spanish translation.*

Continued Next Page

## Did You Know? Continued

familias con problemas relacionados al regreso del estudiante a la escuela luego de sufrir daño cerebral. Un equipo de BrainSTEPS ha sido implementado en colaboración con el Distrito Escolar de Filadelfia. Para más información acerca de BrainSTEPS llame a Eagan-Brown al 724-944-6542 o eaganbrown@biapa.org o visite el sitio Web al <[www.biapa.org](http://www.biapa.org)>.

▶ **Documentary of Inclusion** — Watch video clips and slideshows from this documentary film “Including Samuel” that examines the educational and social inclusion of youth with disabilities as a civil rights issue from the eyes of Samuel’s father. Find out where screenings of the film are being held, or order the DVD. This film is ideal for both professionals and parents to gain a greater understanding of inclusive practices. Go to <[www.includingsamuel.com](http://www.includingsamuel.com)>.

▶ Documental sobre Inclusión – observe videos y diapositivas del documental “Incluyendo a Samuel” que examina la inclusión social y educacional de jóvenes con discapacidades como un asunto de derecho civil desde el punto de vista del padre de Samuel. Busque los lugares en donde el documental se esta proyectando u ordene el DVD. Esta filmación es ideal para que los profesionales y los padres obtengan un mejor entendimiento de las prácticas de inclusión.

▶ **Pet Turtles & Salmonella** – The sale of pet turtles (with shells less than four inches long) is illegal due to the possibility of salmonella contamination. Don’t buy small turtles or allow any turtle to roam freely. Don’t clean a cage in the kitchen sink. For the FDA’s full article on this issue, go to <[www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/turtles112808.html](http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/turtles112808.html)>. You can sign up for a monthly newsletter regarding health issues.

▶ Tortugas como mascotas y Salmonela – La venta de Tortugas domesticas (con conchas menos de cuatro pulgadas de largo) es ilegal debido a la posibilidad de contaminación con salmonela. No compre tortugas pequeñas o no las deje vagar libremente. No limpie la jaula en el fregadero. Para el artículo completo de la FDA (Administración de Drogas y Alimentos) sobre este asunto, vaya al sitio Web <[www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/](http://www.fda.gov/consumer/updates/)

turtles112808.html>. Usted puede inscribirse para el boletín informativo mensual sobre asuntos de salud.

▶ **AT Denial Resource** — The Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania has a number of publications on assistive technology including its newest publication, “How to Appeal a Medical Assistance Denial of Assistive Technology.” They can be viewed at <[www.drnpa.org/publications/assistivetechology](http://www.drnpa.org/publications/assistivetechology)>.

▶ Recurso para cuando Asistencia Tecnológica es denegada – La Red de los Derechos de Discapacidad de Pensilvania, DRN, tiene un número de publicaciones sobre asistencia tecnológica incluyendo su nueva publicación “Como apelar una denegación Asistencia Tecnológica por Asistencia Médica”. Esto se puede ver en su sitio Web <[www.drnpa.org/publications/assistivetechology](http://www.drnpa.org/publications/assistivetechology)>.

▶ **Travelers Database** – Easter Seals is sponsoring a website that lists accessible modes of transportation. You fill in your zip code and a list of public and private accessible transportation providers is shown. The URL is miles long so the easiest way to get to it is to google “national accessible travelers database” and follow the link.

▶ Banco de datos para Viajeros – Easter Seals esta auspicando un sitio Web que tiene una lista de modos accesibles de transportación. Usted escribe su código postal y una lista de proveedores de transportación accesible pública y privada aparece en pantalla. El URL es muy prolongado de manera que es más fácil Google en “nacional accesible travelers database” y seguir el enlace.

### Outsmarting Poison Ivy

First comes the itching, then a red rash, and then blisters. These symptoms of poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac can start from a few hours to several days after exposure to the plant oil.

Unless the rash doesn’t improve within a few days (in which case, call your doctor), using wet compresses or soaking in cool water can help.

For full information, go to the FDA’s consumer health website at <[www.fda.gov/consumer](http://www.fda.gov/consumer)>.

## Points of Transformation

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“If only everyone knew how different each person’s needs are,” she said. “The system keeps you on your toes as every few months things change.”

Change, however, does not affect Ying’s optimism or her joy in seeing people she supports reach toward their goals. Ying has in the short time she has been at Quality Progressions helped an individual become an American citizen, arranged for someone else to move to a rural setting in another county, and motivated a couch potato to go to exercise classes. (“A miracle,” wrote the family.) Ying “... makes sure that the individuals she supports are in a position to make their own path in life,” wrote a nominator.



**“I try to see things through the eyes of the family.”**

**Sonny Nwachuku**

### **Supports Coordinator, PersonLink**

Sonny Nwachuku came to the United States from Nigeria in 1998 and has been with PersonLink for three years. When she nominated him, Mayra Cruz, his supervisor, wrote a story about a Cambodian family whose daughter was in the system, but was not active. Sonny met with the father of Keo, who was adamant that Keo could “do nothing.” It took many, many meetings for Sonny to build a relationship with the father, but build it he did. Today, the father is proud of Keo, who is learning English and is helping make sandwiches in the prevocational program at WES.

Sonny said of relationships, “I try to see things through the eyes of the family. I enjoy meeting people. I want to get to know them so I can work with them better to meet their needs.”



From left, Regina Wilson, Donald, Michael Shiomos, Lorpua Hunter, Loretta Walker, Joseph, Daniel Moka\*, and Zenetta Athill\* \*new staff

**It’s more than a paycheck.”**

### **PATH Team, Beyer Street**

**Loretta Walker, Delmariea McCall, Michael Shiomos, Leverne Williams, Stephen Adesipo, Direct Support Professionals; Lorpua Hunter, Supervisor**

Individually, and as a team, this group has supported Donald and Joseph through an especially difficult time in both of their lives. Major hospitalizations wreaked physical and mental havoc. “Joe came back [from the hospital] an entirely different person,” said Loretta Walker, who has supported the two men for fourteen years. It was due to his residential support team’s persistence that Joe was able to develop the confidence he needed to successfully rehabilitate.

And this team advocated for Donald, looking dapper in his cowboy hat, who wanted to retire. He has been able to overcome some very difficult times in his life with the love, patience, and perseverance of his support staff. Nominated by Christie Maher at PATH, the team was surprised to learn of their award. “If they didn’t have the dedication they have,” said supervisor Lorpua Hunter, “... the emotional burden became so great ... you can’t pay them for that. It’s more than a paycheck.”

## Economic Recovery Payments for People who Receive Social Security and SSI Benefits

*By Ed Horan, District Manager  
Downtown Philadelphia SSA Office*

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which the President signed into law in February, provided for a one-time payment of \$250 to most people receiving Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.



The one-time recovery payments will go out in May 2009 and all payments should be received by the end of May. In April, Social Security will send a letter with additional information to each person who is eligible for the one-time

payment. The payments will be sent automatically, meaning no action is required on the part of the person receiving benefits. The economic recovery payments will be made separately from a person's regular monthly payments, but will be sent in the same way that regular monthly payments are made.

All adults who receive Social Security benefits, including disabled adult children (but not minor children) and all persons who receive SSI payments, including minor children, are eligible for the payment.

To assist in processing the payments as efficiently as possible, please do not contact Social Security unless you do not receive a payment by June 4, 2009. Information is available at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) and will be updated regularly. Thanks to Richard Gaudiosi, Public Affairs Specialist, SSA in Upper Darby for forwarding this information to Family Forum.

## Families Reach the Internet

*Submitted by Vision for EQuality*

Through the Digital Inclusion Program, Vision for EQuality was able to serve fifty families/participants that previously did not have home access to a computer. This pilot program was one of four programs Wireless Philadelphia initiated to provide "the technology necessary for full access to employment, education, health and other life opportunities."

Vision for EQuality designed their program to serve families of individuals with disabilities. Wireless Philadelphia through this program gave free laptop notebook computers to each participant, and they also provided an orientation and three training sessions. The College of Physicians of Philadelphia provided a microsite, called Philadelphia Family Ties [www.philadelphiafamilyties.org](http://www.philadelphiafamilyties.org), for the group that is the gateway to searching for services and supports, employment, and connection to each other. A Google group was set up for the participants so they can stay linked and continue their advocacy for their family members and others. Vision for EQuality added a printer, carry bag, and flash drive to the package. em Computers provided mice and Trader Joe's helped out by providing some heavy-duty bags.

Graduation was held in February 2009. Representative Dennis O'Brien, who was instrumental in providing funding for the project, was in attendance as was Greg Goldman, CEO of Wireless Philadelphia.

Vision for EQuality wants to thank the participants for their commitment to the Digital Inclusion Program. This was the first program of its kind designed specifically to include and empower families of individuals with disabilities to the digital world. They are true pioneers!



# Networks 10th Annual Employment Supports Symposium May 20 ~ 22, 2009

## *Cultivating Partnerships & Improving Practices*



### **DON'T MISS IT!**

**Employment Provider Expo on May 21\***  
From 4 to 6 p.m. in the Riverview Ballroom

**Recent or June 2009 High School Grads** – Come to talk with job coaches and others who can help you find paid employment.

**Job Seekers** – Meet people and find organizations to help you locate and keep a job.

**Parents** – Learn more about available supports and services for your son or daughter.

**Supports Coordinators** – Get to know Employment Providers and how they support job seekers.

\* Previously reported as May 20.

*Special Pre-Conference with Denise Bissonnette!  
Renewing Purpose, Passion and Possibilities  
for the Employment Professional  
May 20 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.*

**Hyatt Regency Philadelphia  
Penn's Landing  
201 South Columbus Blvd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19106**

For more information, call Shauna Roman at 215-546-4111  
shaunar@networksfortraining.org ~ [www.networksfortraining.org](http://www.networksfortraining.org)

Funding provided by the Office of Developmental Programs and the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Mental Retardation Services

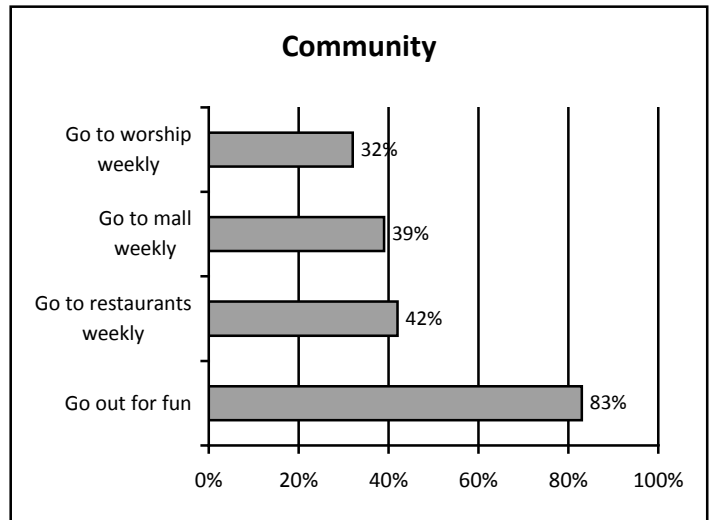
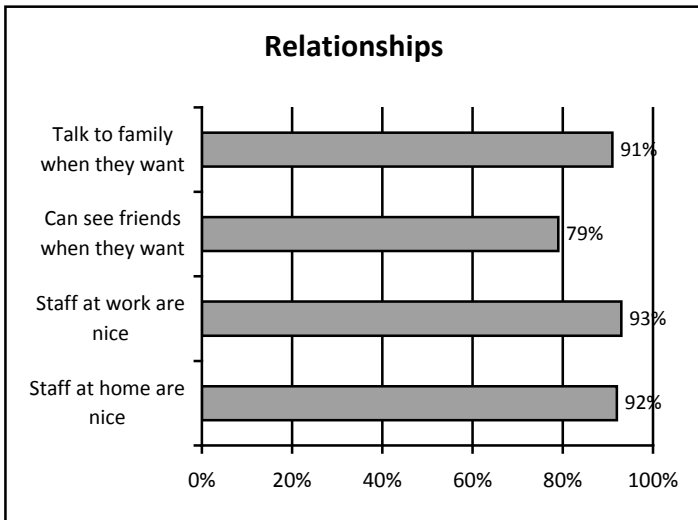
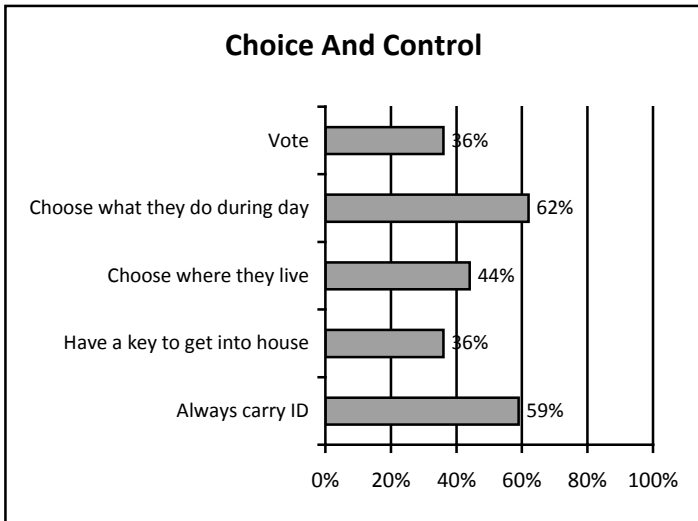
# Independent Monitoring for Quality A Statewide Summary 2007 – Chart View



Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) visits with adults and children age three and over who are supported by the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs (ODP).

IM4Q sends interviewers to talk to people who live in licensed community homes at least once every 3 years. Interviews are also conducted with people who live with their family, life-sharing families, independently, in intermediate care facilities (ICFs/MR), nursing facilities and personal care homes.

Reports created from Independent Monitoring for Quality interviews are shared with provider agencies, administrative entities/counties, and the Planning Advisory Committee for the Office of Developmental Programs for purposes of improving peoples' quality of life. This information presents some of the findings from the 2006-07 statewide report. For a full report please contact your administrative entity/county or go to the Department of Public Welfare (DPW)'s website at <[www.state.pa.us](http://www.state.pa.us)>.



# Independent Monitoring for Quality A Statewide Summary for 2007 – Icon View

Independent Monitoring for Quality



Making Everyday Lives a Reality

We need your help. We are asking for your feedback to improve the Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) summary reports. We have begun to use these new icon formats for reporting the IM4Q information to you. (See the chart version on the previous page.) If you would like to give us your feedback about the helpfulness of the new icon

reports, please contact me at 215-204-1485, or email me at [mkrc@temple.edu](mailto:mkrc@temple.edu) with the best time to contact you. Thank you for your help. – Mary Kay Rentz Cunningham

Satisfaction:



Community:



83% are satisfied with their lives



83% go out for fun



91% are satisfied with their work



32% go to worship weekly



94% of families are satisfied with their relatives' lives



39% go to the mall weekly to shop



90% of families are satisfied with their relatives' work



42% go to a restaurant weekly



Choice:



Relationships:



36% vote



91% talk to family when they want



62% choose what they do during the day



79% can see friends when they want



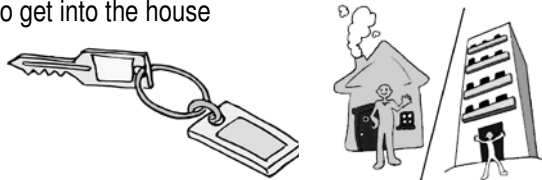
44% choose where they live



92% say staff at home are nice



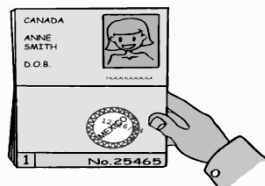
36% have a key to get into the house



93% say staff at work are nice



59% always carry ID



Symbols were compiled from the following sources:

The Picture Communication Symbols™ ©Mayer-Johnson LLC. All rights reserved worldwide. Used with Permission; ESL-Library.com/Red River Press Inc. All rights reserved worldwide. Used with Permission; and Google Images



## **REPEATABLES**

These activities are marked on the calendar with an asterisk. It is best to call before going.

### **Mondays**

- ☆ 1st Mon 6:30-9p Speaking for Ourselves, Networks, 123 S. Broad, Bill Krebs, 267-257-0109
- ☆ 1st Mon 10:30a-12:30p Quality Progressions, 125 S. 9th, 5th fl, Susan Fellows, 267-765-2000 x110
- ☆ 2nd Mon 6-8p Northeast Ambassadors of Advocacy Parent Support Group, 6000 Rising Sun Ave, Crystal El, 215-343-4212

### **Tuesdays**

- ☆ 2nd Tues Hall-Mercer Parent/Caregivers United, Lynn Youngman, 215-928-0765
- ☆ 2nd Tues Family Support Group NW, Verna Edwards, 215-248-4415
- ☆ 4th Tues Asperger Support Group, 7p, St. Christopher's Hospital, Peggy Blank, 215-698-0217

### **Wednesdays**

- ☆ 1st Wed Consumer/Family Advisory Committee, Partnership for Community Supports, Mary MacAvoy, 267-350-4513
- ☆ 1st Wed 10a Latinos con Familias Excepcionales, COMHAR, Ana Pacheco, 215-923-3349 x120
- ☆ 1st Wed 11a Caregiver Brunch at The Arc- all welcome, 215-229-4550 x126
- ☆ Every Wed free legal advice and representation on general legal problems, Liberty Resources. Call for appt. 215-204-1800
- ☆ 4th Wed West & SW Parent Group, 6:15p, 215-473-8744

### **Thursdays**

- ☆ 2nd Thurs 1:30p SEPTA Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation, 1234 Market St, 11th fl, 215-580-7145
- ☆ 2nd Thurs School District Parent & Community Roundtable at 2121 Winter St, 1st fl boardroom, 215-299-3634
- ☆ 3rd Thurs 9:30a-12p Phila Right to Education Task Force, The Arc, 2350 W. Westmoreland, Cathy Rocchia-Meier, 215-432-3178
- ☆ 3rd Thurs 10a-12p PIN Bilingual Support Group, 601 W. Lehigh Library, 215-751-1800 x239
- ☆ 4th Thursday There's a Place for Us, Anita Wright, 215-763-0447

### **Fridays**

- ☆ Every Fri. 1-3p, Training on Accessing Public Transportation, Liberty Resources, for appt. call 215-204-1800, Debbie at x255
- ☆ 1st Fri 6-9p First Friday Gotta Dance at PDDC, 2350 W. Westmoreland St, 215-229-4550
- ☆ 1st & 3rd Fri 7-9p Easter Seals Teen Social Club, 3975 Conshohocken Ave, Kendra Brooks 610-565-2353 x 231
- ☆ 3rd Fri 1-3p Consumer Connection, Liberty Resources, 1341 N. Delaware Ave, 215-634-2000 x320

### **Saturdays**

- ☆ Every Sat Special Teens (13 and older) Bowling at Bristol Pike Lanes, Croydon, Ray Zibman, 215-671-0356

## **NEW THIS YEAR!**

My City, My Place will be held at Temple University's Liacouras Center  
1776 North Broad Street.

Put the 18th Annual Brighter Futures Awards date of November 10 on your calendar now.

### **Call for a Nomination Form**

Also new this year, Family Forum does not contain a copy of the Nomination Form. You can get a copy postal mailed to you by calling 215-685-5923, or by email to [judy.kresloff@phila.gov](mailto:judy.kresloff@phila.gov).








The Selection Sub-Committee of the Public Awareness Committee looks for detailed information about the person or persons you are nominating. What is it that he did to help an individual exercise choice? How did she help support the inclusion of others? How did the individual become successful in his goal? Give specific examples. The more detail, the better.

If you have difficulty writing or expressing yourself, you can call Judy at the above number and just speak to her. She will fill in the form for you and help you describe your nominee's special qualifications.











**Deadline for nominations is June 30, 2009**

**¡Atención! Por favor. Para obtener un formulario de nominación en español, por favor, contacte a Emilio Pacheco en Vision for Equality al 215 923 3349, ext. 118.**

**Family Forum always wants to inform its readers about upcoming events. Be sure to get listed! See contact info on Page 2.**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>May 2009</b></p> <p><b>*See Repeatables</b></p>		<p>JEWISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH</p> 	<p>* Every Wednesday—free legal advice Liberty Resources OLDER AMERICANS MONTH</p>	<p><b>May 1 (Friday)</b> 3rd Annual Autism Conference 8a-4p, 215-843-4528</p>	<p>1 * Easter Seals Teen Social Club * PDDC Dance Cinco de Mayo</p> 	<p>2 * Every Sat. Special Teens Bowling Families First Training session 10a-3p, 215-204-1772</p>
<p>3 The 30th Blue Cross Broad Street Run, 8:30a 215-683-3686</p> 	<p>4 *Speaking for Ourselves *Quality Progressions</p> <p>BE KIND TO ANIMALS WEEK</p>	<p>5 to 8 20th Children's Interagency Training Conference State College PA 1-800-947-4941</p>	<p>6 *Partnership Family Advisory *Arc's Caregiver Brunch *Spanish Session Re: Waiver at COMHAR</p>	<p>7 *SEPTA Advisory Committee *School District Roundtable "Strawberry Moon"</p> 	<p>8 *Every Friday Transportation Trng 33rd Annual DD Conference 215-229-4550 Dad Vail Regatta 7a-8p Kelly Drive</p>	<p>9 * Every Sat. Special Teens Bowling Rittenhouse Row Spring Festival 12-5p 215-972-0101 Dad Vail Regatta 7a-8p</p>
<p>10 MOTHER'S DAY</p> <p>Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure 8:15 am Phila Museum of Art 215-238-8900</p>	<p>11 * NE Ambassadors of Advocacy Support Group</p>	<p>12 *Hall Mercer Parents *NW Family Support Autism Work Group Philadelphia, 9a-12N 866-539-7690</p>	<p>13 Phila Autism Network Session "Behavior Therapy Techniques" 6-7p 215-254-2088</p>	<p>14 Families First Brunch, Phila School District, 10a-12:30p 215-204-1772</p>	<p>15 * Easter Seals Teen Social Club *Consumer Connection NATIONAL PIZZA PARTY DAY</p>	<p>16 Family Fun Day at Carousel House 10a-2p 215-731-2464 ASP 1-3p—Center for Autism, 3905 Ford Rd Ste 6, 215-413-7106</p>
<p>17 9th Street Italian Market Festival, 10a-6p 215-545-8900</p> 	<p>18 Register for Temple-May 28 session (see below), 215-204-3663</p>	<p>19 PRIMARY ELECTION Autism Sharing &amp; Parenting ASP 6:15-8p, CBH, 8th &amp; Market, 7th fl. 215-413-7106</p>	<p>20 to 22 NETWORKS 10th Employment Supports Symposium 215-546-4111</p>	<p>21 *Phila RTE Task Force-The Arc of Phila *PIN Bilingual Support Group</p>	<p>22 *Every Friday Transportation Training 9th Annual Mayor's Centenarian Celebration, 11:30a-1:30p 215-682-2060</p>	<p>23 *Every Sat. Special Teens Bowling</p> <p>Captain Morgan's Jam on the River 11a-10p Penn's Landing 215-922-2FUN</p>
<p>24 24th Annual Captain Morgan's Jam on the River 11a-10p Penn's Landing 215-922-2FUN</p> 	<p>25 MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED</p>	<p>26 *Asperger Support Group</p>	<p>27 *West &amp; SW Parents</p> <p><b>May 27-29</b> PA Bureau of Autism Services 2nd Annual Autism Training Conference, Lancaster, PA 866-497-6898</p>	<p>28 *There's a Place for us</p>	<p>29 *Every Friday Transportation Trng</p>	<p>30 2009 EPIC Community Stakeholder Conference "Be the Change" Temple's Liacouras Center 8:30a-3p 215-683-4046</p>
<p>31 Gershman Y presents "The First Gift", 2-3:30p \$5.00 215-446-3021</p>	<p>May 6, 13 &amp; 27—</p>	<p>Pennypack Park Music Festival, 7-9:30 p Welsh Road &amp; Cresco, 215-281-7664</p>		<p><b>May 6</b>—Community Resource Fair, 11a-1p, Free The Arc of Philadelphia, 215-229-4550, Ext 105</p> <p><b>May 16</b>—"A Toast to Talent" PDDC's Annual Citywide Talent Show, 7p Tickets \$8, 215-229-4550</p>		

← May 20

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NATIONAL CANDY MONTH 	1 *Speaking for Ourselves *Quality Progressions PICC Retreat at SPIN 9a-4p, 215-731-2464	2 <b>June 3</b> UCP benefit UBS Motor Cars Under the Stars, Simeone Foundation Museum 215-248-7609	3 *Partnership Family Advisory *Caregiver Brunch *Spanish Session Re: Waiver at COMHAR Resource Fair, 11a-1p 215-229-4550	4 to 7 Special Olympics Summer Games at Penn State University 215-671-5069  <b>June 5, 11 am, We All Belong! Art &amp; Literature Contest            Award Ceremony—School District of Phila Atrium</b>	5 *Easter Seals Teen Social Club *PDDC Dance Enchanted Evening 	6 *Every Saturday Special Teens Bowling
7 TD Bank's 25th Philadelphia International Cycling Championship 8 am, Ben Franklin Parkway	8 *NE Ambassadors of Advocacy Parent Support Group 	9 *Hall Mercer Parents *NW Family Support	10 *Every Wednesday—free legal advice Liberty Resources 7-9:30 pm, Pennypack Park Music Festival, 52nd St-Billy Joel Tribute, 215-281-7664	11 *SEPTA Advisory Committee *School District Roundtable Arc Phila fundraiser with the Phillies, 7- 12p, 215-229-4550	12 *Every Friday Transportation Training 	13 *Every Sat. Special Teens Bowl Odunde-African American Cultural Festival, 8a-10p 2308 Grays Ferry Ave 215-732-8510
14 FLAG DAY  Odunde-African American Cultural Festival, 8a-10p	15 UNIVERSAL FATHER'S WEEK 	16 "Summer in Love" Lunchtime Concert Series M-F, 12-2pm Love Park thru Oct 31	17 ASP—Autism Sharing & Parenting 6:15-8p, CBH 8th & Market, 7th Flr 215-413-7106	18 *Phila RTE Task Force, The Arc *PIN Bilingual Support Group Love Park Concert 5-7p 	19 *Easter Seals Teen Social Club *Consumer Connection Speaking for Our- selves Annual Conf. 215-923-8600	20 Autism Sharing & Parenting (ASP) 1-3p—Center for Autism, 3905 Ford Rd Ste 6, 215-413-7106
21 FATHER'S DAY Real Men Cook®For Charity, 3-6 pm 3801 Market St 215-924-6263	22 to 23 Penna. Brain Injury Association 9th Annual Conf Lancaster PA 866-635-7097	23 *Asperger Support Group 	24 *West & SW Parents 7-9:30 pm Pennypack Park Music Festival, Tina Turner Tribute 215-281-7664	25 *There's a Place for us Love Park Evening Concert 5-7p HAND SHAKE DAY 	26 *Every Friday Transportation Training	27 Manayunk Art Festival, 11a-8p 215-482-9565 Susquehanna Community Festival 10a-8p Broad to 22nd St, 215-763-2559
28 Manayunk Art Festival, 11a-6p 215-482-9565 	29	30 <b>Hold the Date!</b> <b>July 22-24, Eighth Annual Pennsylvania Community on            Transition Conference, State College, PA 800-441-3215</b>				<b>*See Repeatables</b>  <b>June 2009</b>

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Philadelphia, PA 19140

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Don't Miss the Employment Provider Expo  
on May 21 at the

**NETWORKS 10th EMPLOYMENT  
SUPPORTS SYMPOSIUM  
MAY 20 ~ 22**

More Information on Page 13

**My City, My Place  
Brighter Futures Awards  
November 10, 2009**

**See page 17  
for What's New  
about the event this year!**

**Developmental Disabilities Conference  
Friday, May 8  
Registration begins at 8:30 am  
3535 Market Street, 16th fl**

For information, call Joanne Timmins at  
215-229-4550, or [jtimmins@arcpddc.org](mailto:jtimmins@arcpddc.org).

**For New Registrations Only, call 215-685-4MRS (4677)  
For all other information, call 215-685-5900**