

# PORTRAITS OF PROGRESS

September 1 , 2006  
Peggi Corsi, Editor

## **J. Thomas Amick, Executive Director**

The Commissioner recently sent out a notification regarding the FY07 Budget and it is very favorable. While this may not be the final budget signed into law by the Governor, it is a very positive step in the right direction; the total DMR budget is \$1,170,470,567. The Department of Education received an additional \$8 Million to continue funding the joint DOE/DMR project. \$6.55 Million was added in excess of what the Governor had requested in his budget. This increase provides for the following: \$1 Million to the Turning 22 accounts, \$4.5 Million in the Facilities account to fully fund drug costs under Medicare Part D and to cover increased fuel costs. Once again this year the budget contains \$20 Million in the salary reserve line for health and human service providers, including DMR providers.

This Salary Reserve money is utilized by DMR to increase salaries of staff providing direct care support to consumers in an effort to bring everyone's salary up to or above \$25,000 per year.

It would seem that the letters and conversations with Legislators and Senators have gone a long way toward increasing the awareness of the fact that direct care workers are providing a wonderful service to the Commonwealth's neediest citizens and that they need to be provided with a salary that recognizes their contribution and that will enable them to remain in the human services field as a long term career option.

Exciting things are going to occur in both the Day Habilitation and the Residential system, but we will save those items until they are fulfilled.

We hope that all of you who are golfers will be attending our second golf tournament that we are having this year. The first one was held at Leicester Country Club on August 19<sup>th</sup>; with the second one to be held at The Woods of Westminster on September 18<sup>th</sup>. To register or get further information



*Life-Skills, Inc.*  
44 Morris Street  
Webster, MA 01570

*From what we get,  
we can make a  
living;*

*what we give,  
however  
makes a life.*

*Arthur Ashe*

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## **From the Executive Director (continued from Page 1)**

regarding tee times, please call David Roth at 508-943-0700, Ext. 112. We always have great golfer gifts, an outstanding meal and auction, so please register as soon as you can and join us in supporting the agency and the consumers that we serve.

We would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone on the outstanding QUEST results. A two-year certification “with Distinction” is the highest certification achievable through the Department of Mental Retardation. This level of certification is given only to programs that meet all safety and quality of life areas for the individuals we serve. Because of this level of certification, our next survey in 2008 will only be based on safety systems. This is the first time Life-Skills, Inc. has ever received a distinguished level of certification.

We feel that it is important to recognize the hard work that everyone does on a daily basis. This is the work that is being recognized and this is the work that results in a distinguished level of certification.

We feel that the most important comment that was made by the survey team was a comment by a citizen volunteer. The citizen volunteer was helping review a site when they commented that the program was wonderful and that they would like to live there. I feel that this is the true measure for quality of life. Would you live there? Would you send a family member to live there?

Again, we would like to express our appreciation for all the hard work that goes on every day at Life-Skills, Inc.

**KEEP UP THE EXCELLENT WORK!!!**

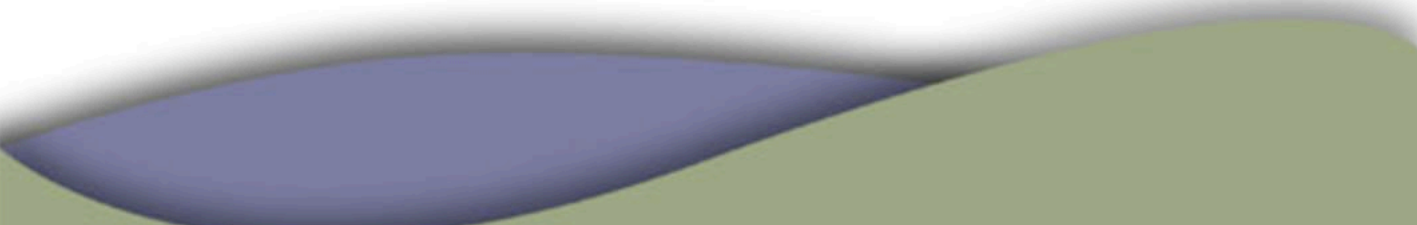
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### **QUEST CERTIFICATION**

**By David Kline, Director of Compliance**

Thank you to everyone in the agency whose hard work and extensive efforts throughout the months and years resulted in our receiving a “Two-years with distinction” on our recent QUEST certification survey. It is certainly no small achievement to have received this “distinction” along with our two-year certification. This added measure is received because all of you do everything in your power to ensure that our individual consumers receive the most comprehensive services and that their lives are as fulfilling as they can possibly be. It also means that the many systems that we have in place to ensure that our programs operate in the most effective and efficient way possible are working.

All of us should be proud of the achievements of our consumers, and of the way in which everyone has pulled together as a team to enable great things to occur for everyone.





## **WE ARE A TEAM!!**

**By Eileen Beringer, Human Resources Director**

Who are we? We are women and men. We are teenagers, “thirty-something’s”, senior citizens and everything in between. We are Baby Boomers and Generation X’ers. We live in the United States, but we may have been born in other countries. And, if we are born in the U.S., our parents or grandparents might have traveled from far away places to make their homes here.

Who are we? We are single or married or in a relationship. We have one child or three children or maybe none by choice or lack of choice. We are college graduates or we have a GED. We live in houses or

apartments and in towns or in the city. We are active in politics or we choose not to vote.

Who are we? We are Black and Hispanic and White and Asian. We worship on Saturdays or Sundays or we don’t worship at all. We are tall or short and we wear glasses or hearing aids. We are artists and tailors and chefs and athletes. We are sisters and brothers and aunts and uncles. We are friends!

Who are we? We are an amazing group of people who have the ability to create an environment of respect and support for individuals with developmental disabilities that

will encourage achievement of their personal goals. We are compassionate and competent employees who are committed to supporting individuals in reaching these goals.

Who are we? We are the employees of Life-Skills, Inc. The new agency name is the first step in letting everyone know who we are and what our agency is all about. We are a mixture of diverse people who bring our unique and personal values and skills to our job. We apply these values every day in our work. We use our skills to improve the quality of life for individuals at Life-Skills, Inc. **WE ARE A TEAM!**



## **EMPLOYMENT DIRECTIONS**

**By Les Weatherell**

Co-workers continually ask me what the heck I do here anyway. So, for the record, Employment Directions helps people find and keep a job. The majority of the people are referred from the Sturbridge MASS Rehabilitation Commission. Life-Skills, Inc. is one of many providers under contract with MRC to perform this service. Our contract goal is to have 10 clients rehabilitated (three month continuous employment) within one fiscal year. This year, nine clients will have been successfully rehabbed and the tenth will miss the deadline by four days. Since last July, we have placed 16 individuals and served a total of 37. On average at any given time, we have 10 to 15 clients either seeking work or on job support/coaching. Because of MRC’s satisfaction with Life-Skills, Inc., our contract amount was increased this year and we have been promised another substantial increase for next year. Since the clients have job skills and experience ranging from none to very solid, a large part of our service is in preparing them for work. Over the next few months, we are hoping to expand this by introducing basic computer training for any of the clients. Networking is our main source of job leads so if you ever hear of any entry level opening, (or if you have any other input) please contact me at 508-943-0700, Ext. 116 or [employmentdirection@swercinc.org](mailto:employmentdirection@swercinc.org). Your assistance is always appreciated.



## NEWS FROM THE WORKSHOP

By Kay Chartier

The workshop had their Annual Easter Raffle. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize was an Easter Wreath from Avon. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize was an Easter bucket full of fun and candy with an Easter Bunny from Avon. The 1<sup>st</sup> Prize was a food basket with a \$20 gift certificate. We sold 258 tickets. After expenses, the profit for the summer cookout and Christmas Party was \$232.

We would like to thank all the staff, friends and families for their donations. Without your help there would not be any parties or gifts for the workshop consumers. The winners of the prizes were: 1<sup>st</sup> Prize: KerKurmation of Rogers Corporation; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize: Richard Henry; 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize: Richard Henry.

Richard gave the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize back to the consumers to share and also gave the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize to one of the consumers. Thank you Richard for making their day!

The next Raffle will be for Thanksgiving!



## SOUTH CENTRAL DAY HAB NEWS

By Audrey O'Leary, SV Day Hab Coordinator

Over the past few months the Day Habilitation Program in the South Central area experienced some changes. Not only have we enjoyed seeing some new faces at the programs, but we have also had to say goodbye to some of our long-term friends.

MSDH welcomed three new individuals to the program, each bringing with them a unique personality. Arthur, Nicholas and Derek are the new faces you will see at the program so be sure to say hi while you are there.

Day Hab II had to say goodbye to Dan. He began going to RRI's new day program on April 18, 2006. Dan was someone who had the strength to overcome any obstacle that got in his way.

Day Hab I had to say goodbye to Donna and Michelle who also began going to RRI's new day program on April 18, 2006. Michelle was relatively new to the Day Hab I program, but had already made an impact on the program. Michelle always had a big smile when Kerry, the little Bichon, came to visit. Donna will also be missed. Her perseverance was incredible.

MSDH was lucky enough to have one more day to say goodbye. Patrick and Jeanne began attending RRI's new day program on April 19, 2006. In the relatively short time Patrick was at MSDH he managed to make a lot of new friends. His great smile and sense of humor made it easy to like him. Jeanne will forever be remembered for her love of tea. MSDH had a nice party for the two of them on April 18, 2006. All of their friends and co-workers had cake and enjoyed watching them open their gifts.

We will certainly miss all of the individuals who have left and hope to still be able to visit. However, we are also very happy to welcome our new friends and look forward to forming just as meaningful, long-lasting relationships with them.

**MORRIS STREET DAY HAB  
CONSUMER PROFILE  
By Michael Flanagan**

**JOSÉ RODRIGUEZ**

José is 28 years old, lives in Douglas and has been attending MSDH for four years. Known for his infectious giggle and wide smile, Jose is one of MSDH's most popular individuals.



During a typical week, Jose performs a multitude of tasks and is available for others if needed. On Monday and Friday, José and his job coach travel to Southbridge to deliver The Southbridge News. José knows the route well, recognizing customers homes and knowing where each individual paper should be placed. On Friday José is responsible for collecting the customers pay envelopes and storing them securely. José takes great pride in delivering the final paper to the MSDH Manager, knowing that his job is then complete.

José also serves as the first substitute when a Meals on Wheels worker is unavailable. José is familiar with the work involved including the packaging, separating, and delivery of the meals.

During times when José is not working in the community he involves himself in various activities in the program, particularly being interested in music, money management and sensory.

José Rodriguez is another of MSDH's many Portraits in Progress.



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**NEWS FROM AUBURN  
By Renee Paronto**

During the 2005 year, Elizabeth Hennessey, Carla Kilbourne, Robert Gamelin, Joseph Brennan, and Theresa Howe participated in several giving back activities.

They made pillows for the elderly at a nursing home in Worcester, baked breads for the Fire Department to show their gratitude to the firefighters in Auburn, and made homemade dog biscuits for two different dog shelters based in Charlton and Worcester. The individuals at these locations were very grateful and sent thank you cards and notes to the residence.

The individuals enjoyed giving back to the community and will continue to do so.



## **NEWS FROM CHESTNUT HILL DRIVE**

**By Lori Szostakowski**

The opening of our new house at Chestnut Hill Drive has been exciting and successful. There are four young and charming young gentlemen that live here. They love their beautiful new home.

The boys have been very busy. They have been enjoying roller-skating, dancing, bowling, swimming, and going to the gym. They have also been learning how to be helpful with chores around the house.

We look forward to hosting parties and cookouts this summer. Maybe we will see some of you there!



## **NEWS FROM GRENADA STREET**

**By Toni Lane**

Grenada Street and Worcester II individuals continually enjoy volunteering at the Salvation Army. Loretta volunteers at Christopher Heights in Worcester. During the past quarter the individuals have attended and enjoyed many activities such as: Kite Day, Country Concert at Indian Ranch, plays at Doherty High School, going to the park, bowling, and the movies. They also enjoy “Ladies Night” every Thursday at Grenada Street.

Grenada Street would like to welcome the following new staff: Alicia Lewis and Anne Mukuna. WELCOME ABOARD!



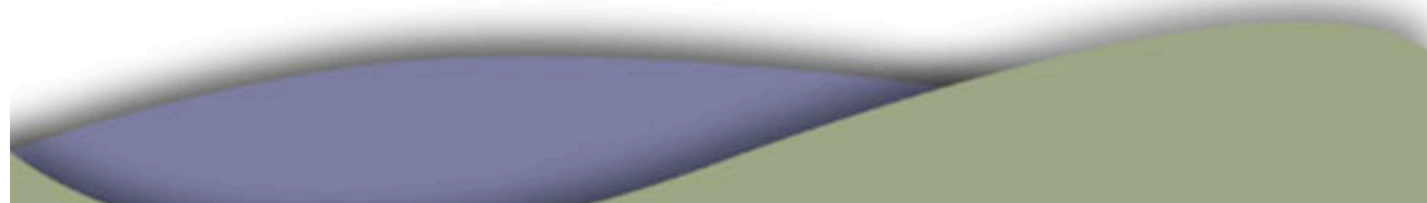
## **NEWS FROM SUPERVISED APARTMENTS**

**By Joe Desrosiers**

Individuals supported by the Supervised Apartments program have many opportunities to be involved with their community. Individuals supported the M.S. Walk in Worcester on April 8<sup>th</sup>. There they manned a water stop handing water to the participants. They participated in the Walk to End Domestic Violence also on April 16<sup>th</sup>. One individual has started to walk the needy dogs at Dog Orphans in Douglas. The dogs there need the attention and the feeling of being wanted until they are adopted. Another individual received a recognition award for his efforts in volunteering at an area assisted living facility. He had fun at their Recognition Ceremony. Individuals cleaned litter at Memorial Beach in Webster. One individual attended Bay Path Night Life courses. Individuals went to Boston to join the supporters at the State House for Human Services support.

Individuals went on a variety of activities to include: Saint Anne’s Shrine, Chili’s Restaurant, Blackstone Valley Cinemas and Shops, ShaBooms, Masonic Lodge breakfast, church suppers, dance class and more!

We are looking forward to Summer in New England and hope to do many of the things that make summer a time to remember.

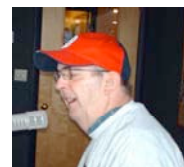




ANNOUNCEMENT OF NAME CHANGE TO “*LIFE-SKILLS, INC.*” AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WORCESTER TORNADES – 2/22/06



VISIT TO WXLO RADIO STATION TO TALK ABOUT *LIFE-SKILLS, INC.* WITH MARK VEAU FROM OLDIES 98.9, JEN CARTER FROM WXLO 104.5, AND CHRIS ENGEL FROM THE PIKE 100.1





## Charity Softball Tournament

By David Roth, Director of Development & Public Relations

Monaco Restoration and WEIM Radio were big winners in the North Central Mass Preliminaries of the Worcester Tornadoes Invitational Softball Tournament to support Persons with Disabilities, taking place at Coolidge Park in Fitchburg this past Saturday! However, the biggest winners are the people with disabilities served by Life-Skills, Inc.

Not only do all the proceeds from the tournament go to aid Life-Skills, Inc. consumers, and those of tournament co-sponsors RRI and Center of Hope, walls were broken down and new friendships were made, as people with disabilities were able to play – many for the first time – on a team with people from their community and employees of the agency. As one of the invited team players remarked, “It was really wonderful to be able help these wonderful people to take part in and enjoy the sport and camaraderie that we enjoy every day and take for granted.”

Life-Skills, Inc. became a charity partner of the Worcester Tornadoes in 2005. Thanks to the support of the General Partner Alan Stone, Community Relations Director Dave Smith, and General Manager Todd Marlin, the team has allowed our organization to use the team name for the tournament. The Mayor of Fitchburg, Dan Mylott, threw out the first pitch on Saturday, and Andy Roy, Recreation Director were instrumental in bringing the tournament to Coolidge Park in Fitchburg for the North Central preliminary rounds. Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field on the Campus of the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, the home field of the Worcester Tornadoes, will host the finals and a Family Fun Day on Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>.

A second round of preliminaries was held at Tantasqua High School in Sturbridge, on July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Monaco Restoration came in first place, winning all three of their preliminary round games, while WEIM overcame the run total of their nearest competitor in the final inning of their final game on Saturday to break a tie for second place! The first and second place teams will face the first and second place teams from the South Valley preliminaries at Fitton Field.

Stand out players for the Life-Skills team included David Watson, Candy Davis, Diana Mandarano, and Steve Sliter, Alex Jones, Nicholas Sanford, June Thompson along with many others.

The tournament was chock full of talented and community supportive teams such as Fallon Community Health Plan, Fitchburg Savings Bank, Probus Club of Worcester (sponsored by Israel Real Estate), Life-Skills, Inc. (partially sponsored by Level Lodge), employees and alumni of Clark University (sponsored by Dana Pierce Photography) and employees and interns of the Worcester Tornadoes.

Thank you to all who participated, volunteered, and just came out to have fun!!!!





# Charity Softball Tournament – Preliminaries at Coolidge Park, Fitchburg







# Charity Softball Tournament – Preliminaries at Tantasqua High School



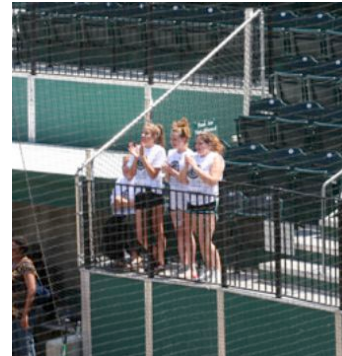




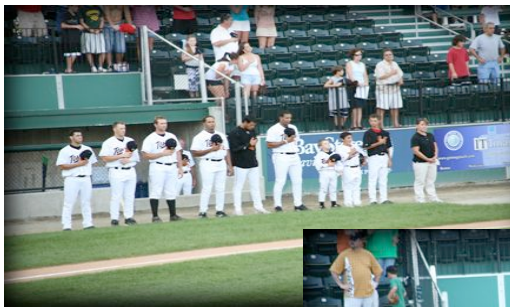
# Charity Softball Tournament – Finals at Fitton Field – Home of Worcester Tornadoes



**LIFE-SKILLS, INC.  
SOFTBALL TEAM**



**OUR  
CHEERLEADERS**



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**Life-Skills, Inc.** (formerly known as S.W.C.R.C., Inc.) is updating our database.

If this has reached you with the correct name and address **AND** you would like to continue getting information from Life-Skills, Inc., you need **do nothing**.

Otherwise, please check one of the boxes below and tear off this half and mail it to us at Life-Skills, Inc., 44 Morris Street, Webster, MA 01570.

*Thank you!*

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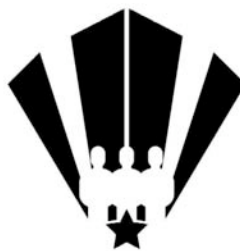
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*Life-Skills, Inc.*  
*Day and Residential Services*

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