



NEWSLETTER

ADVOCATES FOR PEOPLE WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

FEBRUARY 2013

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P.O. Box 1692

(914) 493-1318

White Plains, NY 10602

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD! Come to Albany with GROW

Wednesday, April 17, 2013

*The Bus leaves from the
White Plains County Center at 7:15 AM
\$6.00 per person
(couples no additional cost)*

Meet

- OPWDD Commissioner
Courtney Burke
- Roger Bearden, Olmstead
Decision Implementation
- A representative from the
Governor's office
- State legislators

***Let us know if you can come.
Call GROW 914-493-1318
and leave a contact number.***

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

It has been some time since you have received a newsletter from GROW. It is not because GROW has been sitting back letting the grass grow (sorry for the pun) under its feet. Quite the contrary, it has been quite an eventful year.

On a personal level I became a grandmother for the first time. Spending those nine months of pregnancy with my daughter caused me to reflect back on my first pregnancy. As a first time parent I planned and awaited the birth of a child with unbridled optimism. However my son Daniel was born in 1968. And for those of you had your child with a disability around that time I'm sure you remember the shock, isolation and in some cases the terror this news caused. In fact it wasn't until I met other parents of children with autism that I learned how to light a candle rather than curse the darkness.

As I said this has been an eventful year. NYS is undertaking a revamping of the entire Medicaid system. In the United States, NYS is the state that spends the most money on Medicaid, and yet we all agree that the services are not what they should be. OPWDD is developing a managed care system of services. While GROW and other advocates for persons with developmental disabilities have serious concerns about this concept, once we were told that it was a done deal, GROW members made certain that they had some input into how this would evolve. There were three statewide committees that had two parents

(continued on page 2)

(Presidents Message continued from page 1)

on each committee. GROW had representatives on all three committees! We attended many, many meetings held in August and September.

We also took part in discussions on legislation concerning abuse, and we will be finding out more about the implementation of the Olmstead Decision.

We recently visited with Deputy Secretary for Health Jim Introne, and we are planning our annual visit to Albany on April 17th. We encourage all to join us!

Several legislators and State administrators, who want to help us, rue the lack of advocacy: the kind of advocacy that brought about the revolutionary legislation of the 1970's. They feel that advocacy then was not just linked to a particular service agency or a particular disability, but rather was all encompassing as well as independent. GROW is such an advocacy group. Although it is very important to support the agencies that provide services to our loved ones, the goals of GROW go beyond those of a particular agency. We are respected for this independence.

Now is the time to exert our influence, while the State is still making decisions concerning the implementation of the Medicaid Waiver, Olmstead Decision, and abuse legislation.

***ALL OF THESE ITEMS AFFECT
ALL PERSONS WITH
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGES!!***

Please, when membership notices are sent out in March, renew or join GROW. Come to Albany with us. Come to our monthly board meeting.

**LIGHT A CANDLE.
BE AS ACTIVE IN GROW
AS YOU CAN BE!!!**

Barbara Masur, President

Officers of GROW, 2012-2013:

OFFICERS:

President..... Barbara Masur
1st Vice PresidentMarilyn Vitale
2nd Vice PresidentPhyllis Smith
Recording Secretary.....Ray Garofano
Corresponding Secretary.....Rochelle Kessler
Membership SecretaryCynthia Ferguson
TreasurerSandy Frank

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2013

Judy Frank
Sheryl Frishman
Shelley Kessler
Sharon McDowell
Stacy Osborne*
Leonard Spano

2014

Sharon Gelfand
Mary Green
Rita Ross
Anne Steinberg
Judy Sugar
Mary Zingaro

2015

Fran Grippo*
Marilyn Hahn
John Niland
Maryann O'Toole
Diane Shand*
Jerrold Shenkman

*New members: Fran Grippo is the parent of Steven who lives at home and enjoys activities in the community. He is presently in the process of developing a Consolidated Supports and Services plan. Stacy Osborne is the older brother of Derrick who resides at home and receives day services from Westchester Arc. Their mother, Bernice, has been involved with GROW for over twenty years. Stacy is a lawyer who works for the New York State Court system in Manhattan and is a member of the Board of Westchester Arc as well as a volunteer coach for the Yonkers Special Olympics Team. Diane Shand is the parent of Sean who lives at home, attends a YAI day program and works in a soup kitchen 2 days a week. Diane is a Senior Director at Standard and Poors.

Rochelle Kessler, Chairman, Nominating Committee

FROM THE EDITOR...

The GROW Board of Directors invites members to meet with us monthly and help shape the future of our organization. Most of the present Board members have been advocating for many years, beyond their own family's needs, to help ensure services for all individuals with developmental disabilities. Advocacy activities have included speaking to legislators in Albany, meeting regularly with OPWDD and Hudson Valley DDSO directors and others, and arranging for key speakers to present information to families. Now more than ever, it is imperative that new members become involved. The changing funding mechanisms require CREATIVE SOLUTIONS to enable services to continue. Residential opportunities, work, day programs are all affected by finances. Those of you whose family member is transitioning from school to adult programs will soon realize how **NECESSARY IT IS TO ADVOCATE** for the appropriate level of services. **WE NEED YOU TO JOIN GROW as ACTIVE MEMBERS!!** Call our hotline number: 914-493-1318. One of our Board members will return your call and explain how you can be part of the strategizing and decision-making that will direct the future activities of GROW. Help GROW fulfill its mission of advocating for the full range of support services for persons with developmental disabilities! GROW meets the second Thursday of the month at WIHD at 7:45 pm. Call ahead. All are welcome!

If you have changed your email address, please let us know. If you are joining GROW, please make sure you write your email address CLEARLY. We get a number of returned emails that are not correct. Thanks!

Marilyn Vitale, Editor

**GROW is here for YOU.
You can get us through e-mail
Info@grow-ny.org
Find out about us through the web
www.grow-ny.org
and there is always the phone
(914) 493-1318**

THE OLMSTEAD DECISION

In 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in **Olmstead v. L.C.** ruled that states, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have an obligation to provide services to individuals with disabilities in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

In 2009, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice launched an aggressive effort to enforce the Olmstead Decision, and President Obama issued a proclamation launching the "Year of Community Living," directing the Administration to redouble enforcement efforts. The Division has responded by working with state and local government officials, disability rights groups and attorneys around the country, and with representatives of the Department of Health and Human Services, to fashion an effective, nationwide program to enforce the integration mandate of the Department's regulation implementing title II of the ADA.

In New York, Governor Cuomo has made compliance with the Olmstead Decision a top priority. New York State is currently creating an **Olmstead Implementation Plan** that will address issues that help seniors and people with disabilities to receive services in the most integrated community settings.

DID YOU KNOW...

WIHD now has a Benefit Navigation team of qualified Work Incentive Practitioners who can work with you to get benefits that you or your loved ones are entitled to depending on disability and individual needs. Some benefits support a need related to a certain disability, while others, like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), provide economic support. The WIHD team can guide you through these complex systems, which often cause confusion and mistaken beliefs.

For more information contact Nicki Turano at 914-493-3953 or nturano@wihd.org.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

GROW: 914-493-1318

info@grow-ny.org

http://www.grow-ny.org

WESTCHESTER COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

112 East Post Road, White Plains, NY 10601

Main Number 914-995-5242

Grant Mitchell, M.D., Commissioner.....	914-995-5235
Michael Orth, Second Deputy Commissioner.....	914-995-5225
Leslie Messina, Office Assistant.....	914-995-5244
Lesli Cattan, Program Coordinator Developmental Disabilities Services	914-994-5944
Cynthia Lanza, Residential Services – Developmental Disabilities	914-995-5276
Matthew Faulkner, OPWDD Eligibility & Transitional Students	914-995-5253

HUDSON VALLEY DDSO

9 Wilbur Road, Thiells, New York 10984-0470

Director, Region 3 (Hudson Valley, Taconic, Capital District)	845-947-6100
Mary Newhard, Deputy Director of Community Supports	845-947-6060
Ray Nicolato, Coordinator of Community Supports.....	845-947-6060
Vicki Tobar, Eligibility and Placement.....	845-947-6011
Sophia Absalon, Eligibility and Placement	845-947-6156
Andrea Bonilla, Eligibility and Placement	845-947-6017
Lewis Prescott, Eligibility and Placement.....	845-947-6025
Lynn O'Dell, MSC Coordinator	845-947-6154
Michele Altenrath, CSS Coordinator.....	845-947-6236
Pat Walker-Albertus, Community Funding	845-947-6344

HUDSON VALLEY DDSO, WESTCHESTER OFFICE

220 White Plains Road, Suite 675, Tarrytown, NY 10591

Main Number.....	914-332-8989
Claudia Spaziante, Family Support Services.....	914-332-8958
Ira Rothenstein, Team Leader, Community Support Services.....	914-332-8957
Marie Yizar, Community Support	914-332-8961
Amy Coccodrilli, Community Support	914-332-8960

OTHER COUNTIES

Janis Levitt, Family Support Services, Orange, Rockland, & Sullivan	845-947-6335
Jill Lipson, Community Support, Orange & Sullivan	845-695-7366
Vivian Street, Community Support, Rockland	845-947-6333

Directions to

Cedarwood Hall - WIHD • WESTCHESTER INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE SOUTH:

Sprain Parkway North to Eastview - 100C - Exit. Go Left.** At Hospital entrance (Second light) go right. Go 4/10 of a mile (passing the county jail) and go left following the sign for All Other Facilities. When you get to the T intersection bear right until the Stop sign. Turn left around oval.

FROM THE NORTH:

Sprain Parkway South to Eastview 100C exit. Go right. Follow directions from ** above.

FOR PARKING: Go around circle, pass through parking ticket dispenser and park in lot opposite Cedarwood Hall. Ask for parking voucher at reception desk.

BUS DIRECTIONS: Routes 1, 15, and 14 will leave you off at Elmwood Hall, a short distance from Cedarwood Hall. Route 40 will leave you off at Westchester Hospital, a longer walk.