

*Helping children and adults with disabilities
gain greater independence since 1926*



Network News

The newsletter of Easter Seals Wisconsin • Winter/Spring 2011

Grant Will Expand Services to Farmers with Disabilities Nationwide

Farming has always been a way of life, as well as an occupation, that values the family working together for a common goal. When a family member is affected by a severe disability, that way of life is challenged.

Easter Seals Wisconsin's FARM Program is teaming up with the national Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), University of Wisconsin-Cooperative Extension, and with three other regional partners to consult with state vocational rehabilitation agencies across the country and train their staff to improve employment outcomes for farmers and agricultural workers with disabilities. The work is funded by a three year grant from the U.S. Department of Education's National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

"This isn't like any project our agency has managed before," says Paul Leverenz, Vice-President of FARM and Vocational Services for Easter Seals Wisconsin. "We're basically training State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies across the country in adopting the successful practices we've developed here in Wisconsin so that they can better support farmers with disabilities in their own areas."

The purpose of the Agricultural Assistive Technology Training (AATT) project is to create the first national training program designed to assist vocational rehabilitation staff to consider agriculture as a viable employment option for farmers with disabilities. This training will enhance their cultural competencies and preparedness in rehabilitating agricultural clients, and will be offered in-person in five states by Leverenz and Manuel Lugo, retired Deputy Administrator for Wisconsin's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. An online curriculum will also be developed and offered nationwide by UW Extension and will be eligible for continuing education credit.



Paul Leverenz, Vice-President of FARM & Vocational Services, Easter Seals Wisconsin.

Leverenz, who has been heading up the Easter Seals Wisconsin FARM Program since its inception in 1992, has worked hard to create the partnerships that have helped make Wisconsin's program the most successful of its type in the country. He's pleased that, once again, the importance of strong partnerships is demonstrated through the groups who are working together to meet the goals of the AATT project.

Work activities are underway. On his return trip from the national AgrAbility Conference in West Virginia, Leverenz met with a representative of CSAVR in Ohio and the UW-Cooperative Extension has begun the work of developing the online curriculum related to the training. Two state VR administrators, one from Utah, and one from Pennsylvania, have agreed to serve on the Advisory Council for the project.

"I just can't thank the people who work in this program enough. I am doing my work with a lot less pain. Without the help of the FARM Program, I would have been forced to quit farming."

- note from a FARM Program client

Easter Seals Wisconsin News

New Board Members Welcomed



Pam Birschbach has been in real estate for 11 years, working with the First Weber Group in the Fitchburg office. There, as part of “Team First Weber”, Birschbach has been actively raising funds for Easter Seals through the Annual Campaign for several years.

A graduate of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Birschbach moved to Wisconsin in 1990 and currently lives in Verona with her husband Eric, a private consultant in the farming industry. Her involvements are very family-oriented and include her church and her children’s school activities.



Wayne Corey has been an Easter Seals volunteer since 1975, and has served several terms on the Board of Directors over the last four decades, including two terms as chairman. Corey is the recipient of the Clare D. Rejahl Memorial Award and the Easter Seals Lifetime Achievement Award. He has also held numerous committee positions with National Easter Seals, served as a member of the Governor’s Committee for People with Disabilities since 1989 and chaired the ADA Statewide Coordinating Committee.

Corey is a retired government affairs executive, an active music history and theory student at UW-Madison and a writer about music. Wayne and his wife, Diane, live in Madison. Their three sons and granddaughter all live in the Madison area.



Michael Fitzpatrick was born in LaCrosse and attended St. Norbert College in Green Bay and Thomas Cooley Law School in Michigan. His law practice is located in Milwaukee where he specializes in Social Security Disability Law.

Fitzpatrick has been involved with Easter Seals Wisconsin for more than 20 years, working with the organization through the WI-UM Kiwanis District, long-time Easter Seals friends and supporters. During his term as Kiwanis Governor, his Governor’s Project was to build the news Ropes Course at

Camp Wawbeek. The state-of-the-art course is a great favorite among campers. Fitzpatrick lives in Milwaukee with his wife Kathleen and their two children.



Jon Menz received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Olaf College in Minnesota and is working towards a graduate degree in Organizational Leadership/Business. Menz is the Business Services Manager for West Central Wisconsin via the Workforce Investment Board and is passionate about job creation and working in partnership to attract businesses to this region as well as local business expansion.

Menz is involved with a number of activities in the Western Wisconsin region. Some of these include the Board of Directors for Chippewa Valley Society for Human Resources, the State of Wisconsin Workforce Development Association, current president of the Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors,

and Board of Directors for the Greater Menomonie Area Chamber of Commerce. Menz is also the UW-Stout Student Liaison for the National Society of Human Resource Management. He currently resides in Menomonie.

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Easter Seals Wisconsin News

Easter Seals Welcomes New Staff Member



Kris Ackley

Kris Ackley joined Easter Seals in November, 2010 and brings with her many years of fundraising experience on the local, state and national level. She has planned golf outings, black-tie awards dinners, bowling tournaments, silent and live auctions and has worked with individual and corporate donors. Ackley will be working on the Annual Campaign, the Easter Seals Golf Outing for Kids!, Fall Sprawl and Blizzard Blast, among other things.

“I’m looking forward to putting my skills to good use to support the many wonderful programs provided by Easter Seals Wisconsin,” says Ackley. “I feel very lucky to be making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities that we serve throughout the state. Growing up in a farming community in central Wisconsin, the FARM Program is something I am very proud to help support and I’m looking forward to helping Camp Wawbeek and our Respite Camp, too. I’ve heard great things about them.”

Ackley has a degree in Sports Management from the UW – La Crosse. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Greater Madison Chapter.

Easter Seals Wisconsin CEO Christine Fessler gets acquainted with a calf on a November visit to the farm of Steve Rosga.



Board of Directors Visits Farm

On November 12th, members of the Easter Seals Wisconsin Board of Directors paid a visit to the farm of Steve Rosga in Brooklyn. Rosga, who was born without a left arm below his elbow, worked with FARM Rural Rehabilitation Specialist Jeff Kratochwill to adapt his practices and machinery to accommodate his disability.

“It’s great for board members to get a first-hand look at what the FARM Program does,” says Paul Leverenz, Vice President of Vocational Services. “It really clarifies what we do, particularly for members who have no farm background.”

Easter Seals Gives Thanks for Legacy Members

Easter Seals Wisconsin wants to recognize the generosity and commitment of those who have established a gift annuity, a charitable trust or a bequest in their wills. In addition, it is our hope that that recognition will inspire others to consider making long term plans to support our work. To provide this recognition and inspiration, Easter Seals Wisconsin has established a Legacy Society.

One member of the new Legacy Society is Anna, who became involved with Easter Seals as a volunteer over 40 years ago. Through her volunteer efforts, Anna learned about the valuable work being done with children and adults with disabilities and, even when her volunteer work came to an end, retained a special place in her heart for our work, particularly at Camp Wawbeek. Over the years she has made a number of significant gifts to support Camp Wawbeek. Now in her eighties and living in Florida, her commitment to supporting Camp Wawbeek is still strong. She has let us know that Easter Seals Wisconsin Camp Wawbeek is named in her will because she wants the work there to continue for years and years to come.

If, like Anna, one of our programs has a special place in your heart, please make sure that your long term plans to support Easter Seals Wisconsin include information about the program you want to support. And, be sure to let us know about your plans so that 1) we can thank you for your longer term support for children and adults with disabilities, 2) we can help ensure your gift has the impact you desire, 3) you are part of the Legacy Society receiving recognition and inspiring others to consider Easter Seals Wisconsin programs in their long term plans.

We Want to Hear From You!

Please let us know of your plans. Contact Nance Roepke or Christine Fessler toll free at 800.422.2324 or directly at 608.575.5464 (Nance) or 608.575.5465 (Christine) or by email at nroepke@wi.easterseals.com. We will only publicly recognize those individuals who have given us permission to recognize their generosity but, whether or not you choose to be recognized, we do want to hear from you.

Donation Center

Pickups to Begin in Southeast Wisconsin

Easter Seals Wisconsin and Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin are partnering to provide pickups in southeast Wisconsin, beginning in January 2011. As in other parts of the state, residents will receive a postcard in the mail letting them know when a Easter Seals Donation Center truck will be in their community. Anyone wanting a pickup at their home is asked to call the Donation Center to schedule their donation of gently-used clothing, household goods or furniture.

In the current economic climate, many are looking to thrift outlets for their clothing and household needs. Easter Seals encourages people who have items they no longer use to consider a donation through the Easter Seals Donation Center operation. These donations are sold to Savers Thrift Stores, providing funding for services at both Easter Seals Wisconsin and Easter Seals Southeast Wisconsin. So, when you clean your closets, you can find a convenient way to dispose of those items through the Donation Center pickup service, keep items out of landfills and provides services for children and adults with disabilities at the same time.



Please contact us with any questions or to learn more:

Easter Seals Donation Center

4201 Monona Drive

Monona, WI 53716

Accepting Donations

7-7 Monday-Friday & 9-4 Saturday

Toll Free: 877.208.5109

www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com

AmeriCorps Expansion Update

The AmeriCorps partnership with Easter Seals Wisconsin continues to grow and expand. In October 2010, Easter Seals Wisconsin received supplemental funding for an additional 7 members bringing the total number of AmeriCorps members serving Easter Seals Wisconsin programs to 58 during the 2010-2011 program year. This increase means that Easter Seals can continue to reach and serve more people with disabilities throughout the state.

Changes at the national level now allow members to serve up to 4 terms in AmeriCorps State and National and earn up to the equivalent of two full-time education awards. Members can use their education award to pay tuition and student loans. Another change allows AmeriCorps members ages 55 years and older to transfer their education award onto a grandchild, a great incentive for baby boomers.

Members who have had great experiences with us in the past can now serve additional terms, lending their expertise to better our programs. Easter Seals Wisconsin has created its own program change; previously, school-year Respite Apprentices

committed to serving the entire school year (September-May). School-year Respite Apprentices are now split into two 300 hour terms, fall and spring, to better accommodate the student schedules of many of our members. We currently have a great group of seven members serving camp weekends this fall and will have an additional twelve serve during the spring semester.



Nichole Garrett

AmeriCorps members are now supported by AmeriCorps Coordinator Nichole Garrett, who comes to Easter Seals from AmeriCorps VISTA in the Twin Cities serving low-income youth and families. Nichole has a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Northern Iowa and is excited to be working in this position with AmeriCorps.

To learn more about the partnership between Easter Seals Wisconsin and AmeriCorps, visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com/ameriCorps.

Upcoming Events & Event Highlights

Oak Bank's Great Pumpkin Giveaway



Madison's Oak Bank selected Easter Seals Wisconsin as the beneficiary of their 2010 Great Pumpkin Giveaway. The event, held on October 23rd, drew a good crowd from the community. Weekend Respite campers drove down from the Dells to join in the fun and a large group of volunteers from Circle K helped to keep activities running smoothly. The Great Pumpkin Giveaway raised nearly \$1700 to support Easter Seals programs and services. Easter Seals extends its gratitude to board member Steve Peotter and the entire staff of Oak Bank for their support.

Eau Claire Fall Fun Fest

Held on November 13th at the Eagle's Club in Hallie, the 2010 Fall Fun Fest attracted 100 guests and raised more than \$8500 for Easter Seals Wisconsin. "I have a great group of volunteers," says Brenda Thompson, Director of Development in Northwest Wisconsin. "They make the event fun - and successful - every year."

Fall Fun Fest Sponsors & Volunteers

Sponsors:

Tom and Pam Kell
John Basche at Eau Claire Realty
Festival Foods
Jeatran & Associates
Great Northern Corporation
United Bank
Advanced Dairy Systems
Lindstrom Equipment
Creative Graphics of Chippewa Valley

Volunteers:

Mary Glassbrenner
Pete Lukowitz
DuWayne Geurts
Sue Endreson
Mark Lund
Cindy Harryman
Jim Sala
Alan Ostertag
David Thompson



Saturday • February 5, 2011

4:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$20

**The Red Mouse in Pine Bluff
3738 County Road P • Cross Plains**

The Dane County Council of Snowmobile Clubs will hold its 23rd Annual Blizzard Blast on February 5, 2011 at The Red Mouse in Pine Bluff. Casino games, food and raffles - including a \$1000 cash prize - and door prizes throughout the night will contribute to a fun event. Pledge ride (weather permitting) details can be found at www.danecountycouncilsnowmobileclubs.com.

Easter Seals Wisconsin deeply appreciates the many years of dedicated support from the DCCSC and all they have done to help provide services to children and adults with disabilities across Wisconsin.

To learn more, call Kris Ackley at 608.277.8288 ext. 109.

2010 Wausau Golf Outing

The 2nd Annual Wausau Golf Outing to benefit Easter Seals Wisconsin was held September 14, 2010 at the Wausau Country Club. The event raised over \$5,000 to support Easter Seals programs and services.

Wausau Golf Outing Sponsors & Volunteers

S.D. Ellenbecker, Inc.

Janke Contractors
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Klinner Insurance
West Bend Insurance
Flip Side Graphics
Reliance Rehab Service & Supply, Inc.
People's State Bank
VanDerGeest Dairy
Foremost Farms
Greenheck Fans
River Valley Bank

Red Eye Brewing
M&N Bakery
PCA Company

Volunteers & Other Donors

Skip Ellenbecker
Dean Ellenbecker
Tom Ellenbecker
Gloria Josephson
Ray Dabler
Color Vision Printing
Creative Paint and Decorating
Wausau Elks



Right: Golfers at the 2010 Wausau Golf Outing paused to send get well wishes to event sponsor Skip Ellenbecker, who was unable to join golfers at the event due to illness.

Respite and Recreation



“The time my daughter spends at the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp is the only time I can just relax and not have to worry about a care provider, teacher, etc. calling me to come get her because (and I quote) ‘it’s just not working out.’”

Respite Care Remains #1 Need

One in three Americans will care for a seriously ill family member at some time in their lives. The birth of a child with a disability or chronic illness, or the deterioration in health of an adult due to illness or injury, has a profound effect on the family. Knowing that you are providing personal, home-based care for your loved one may be satisfying, but it is also a tremendous physical, emotional, and financial burden and many families find themselves unable to cope without periodic breaks.

Wisconsin parents cite respite as their number one need and the single most important factor in enabling them to keep their children with disabilities at home. Respite care provides “time off” to help families recharge, and strengthens the relationship between spouses and between parents and their other children.

“During my daughter’s week at camp, I was able to spend more time with my other children, catching up on their lives, and my husband and I had time to ourselves,” says Maggie, whose daughter attends the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Respite Camp. “Just being able to refocus and channel some of my time to the others has helped immensely in reestablishing our relationships. Respite Camp is such a welcome break.”

The demand for respite services has grown dramatically as a result of a national movement to keep children and adults with disabilities in their homes, more children surviving traumatic births, an increase in autism spectrum disorders, and people living longer with disabling injuries and illnesses. In the state of Wisconsin there is, on average, only one respite provider for every 333 caregivers who may be seeking a break and need qualified providers. The greatest need is for families taking care of someone with behavioral or developmental issues.

Many families live in areas where there is a severe lack of trained providers to help out the caregiver when they need a break. Something as simple as going to the store can become a huge challenge when you’re taking someone along who needs constant attention.

Easter Seals Wisconsin’s camp programs provide the only statewide respite programs in Wisconsin. Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp serve hundreds of people from counties where few or no other respite programs exist. The camps are located on 400 wooded acres in Wisconsin Dells and allow campers to experience things that parents and caregivers may not have the expertise, time, financial resources or energy to provide.

“After a session at Camp Wawbeek, my son seems different, fulfilled and happier than he’s been in a long time,” another camper parent tells us. “And it amazed me to see him in his zip line attire and actually hanging on for himself!! We’re so thankful for everything you gave him a chance to experience!”



Responding to the Need: Lifespan Respite Care

In October, 2010 the state of Wisconsin was awarded a three year Lifespan Respite Grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration on Aging. Through a unique collaboration between the State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS)-Division of Long Term Care, Respite Care Association of Wisconsin (RCAW), Easter Seals Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin Quality Home Care Commission (WQHCC), the goal of the Wisconsin Lifespan Respite Care Program is to expand the availability and accessibility of respite services in Wisconsin.

There are three main components to the Wisconsin Lifespan Respite Care Program. The first includes working with an Advisory Committee comprised of individuals from both community-based and statewide organizations representing a wide variety of disability and aging populations to implement a public awareness campaign about respite care and the importance of the need for trained respite providers.



The second major component is to provide training for potential new respite providers throughout the state. Easter Seals Wisconsin's Caring Network curriculum, written and developed by Val Croissant, Director of Respite Services, will be the basis for the training. The curriculum will be expanded to cover all ages and more conditions, including Alzheimer's disease/dementia, so that the training will cover the entire lifespan.

Caring Network Training was piloted in spring, 2010 with great success; the component concerning caring for those with challenging behaviors was particularly well-received. Other components include personal care/lifts and transfers, medication administration, communication techniques,



disability basics, Mandated Reporter Training, connecting with the family, and free time activities/recreation. During the two-day pilot training participants were given pre and post-tests; the average score increased from 53% to 93% upon completion of the training. One participant stated, "Your sincerity and practical advice are both important aspects of this training."

Between 2011 and 2013, Easter Seals Wisconsin will conduct 14 trainings throughout the state, covering the information most needed by people interested in becoming in-home respite care providers for a child or adult with a disability. RCAW will also conduct a series of 4-hour training sessions to teach best practices for caring for special populations.

The final major component involves expanding the WQHCC Care Registry to a statewide registry. Respite care providers will be able to apply to be entered into the web-based registry and matching service so that families can find in-home respite providers that have successfully completed Caring Network Training.

Knowing that respite remains the number one need for families with a loved one with a disability, Easter Seals Wisconsin has worked hard to address this need. We believe that the Wisconsin Lifespan Respite Care Program will significantly improve the lives of families caring for someone with a disability across our state and our goal is to address the shortage of trained respite providers in Wisconsin. We look forward to making a difference through our strong

"Unless you're in similar shoes, you can't imagine how wonderful even a brief break can be - how it refreshes and recharges me. The chance to go see a movie, to browse the shelves at the library, even to pick up groceries in one easy go - I just can't tell you how much it helps keep me going! You provide an amazing, fantastic service - thank you so much!"



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Happy Holidays!



As the year draws to a close, Easter Seals Wisconsin thanks its many friends for their generous gifts of time and money and for helping us to make a difference in the lives of children and adults with disabilities across our state. We also extend our very best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season and a new year filled with good health and good fortune.

Thank you so much!



There's Still Time to Make Your 2010 Gift!

Donations can be sent to: **Easter Seals Wisconsin**
101 Nob Hill Road, Suite 301
Madison, WI 53713

Gifts can also be made online by visiting:
www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com