

The League Connection Online Newsletter

April/May/June 2010

Issue 45

Quote: A right is not what someone gives you; it's what no one can take from you.
William Ramsey Clark, Former Attorney General and Lawyer.

Upcoming Training Opportunity for Youth and Parents

The League's Youth Services Program has an established history of successful intervention. This is accomplished by developing the core feature of the League's Youth Services Program which includes: 1. Community Involvement Activities - that support the involvement of young people with severe disabilities (ages 3 through 21) in existing non-disability related community programs for young people, 2. Self-Help/Self-Advocacy Training - for young people with disabilities and their family members and, 3. Mentoring & Peer Support - providing opportunities for young people with disabilities and their family members to develop positive peer/mentor role model networks and learn from the experiences of others.

After discussions with Vocational Rehabilitation, educators, parents and youth, the League decided to use the "40 Developmental Assets" model developed by the Search Institute. Each year the League will identify specific developmental assets that the agency will help children and young people with disabilities acquire. In fiscal year 2010, the targeted assets will include the development of: 1. positive values, 2. social competencies, 3. positive identity and, 4. commitment to learning.

Assets in these areas will be taught through eight structured social and/or recreational activities that the League will plan and conduct. The activities will be designed to be fun as well as educational in order to encourage participation. In addition, the League will use existing community programs and activities whenever possible. Activities in fiscal year 2010 will include money management and budgeting training through Junior Achievement's Finance Park, character building through meeting with the Mad Ants coach and attending a game, and self-esteem and self-control presentation by Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES followed by food and games.

Please mark your calendars for April 21, 2010 for training in the "40 Developmental Assets". Both parents and the youth will receive training in separate groups. A social activity will be planned for after the training. Please call Kevin or Carmen at the League office for more information (260-441-0551 or 800-889-3443).

Nancy Gasparini
Independent Living Director

Spring Cleaning

It's that time of year again when many of us start that yearly ritual known as spring cleaning. While you are cleaning, you will probably find things you don't use anymore. Don't forget to recycle all you can.

One way to recycle is to consider donating used adaptive equipment that you may not use anymore. Magnifiers, talking clocks & watches, CCTV's, strobe alarm clocks, large button phones, wheelchairs, and white tipped canes are just some examples of equipment that you can donate. Maybe the loved one who used that equipment has passed away, and you don't know what to do with items that were very important to them. What a wonderful way to remember that person by allowing their equipment to help someone else be independent.

Please consider recycling your adaptive equipment or medical furniture this spring. Feel free to call the League at 260-441-0551 with questions about the items you have to donate.

Enjoy the sun and spring weather!

Cheryl Gillespie
Donor Relations/Grants Director

In-Home Care Division Expands With a New Position

Juanita Deleon, Director of the In-Home Care Services Division, is proud to announce the newest staff member to the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc., Brenda Srisupa, as the new In-Home Care Scheduler/Supervisor. As a scheduler, her responsibilities will include ensuring services are provided with the highest quality standards available for the In-Home Care Division. A native of Elkins, WV, Brenda relocated originally to Fort Wayne in the 1980s and moved to Florida in 1990 to assist in the care of her elderly parents. Brenda proudly accepted the position and was proud to move her three sons and herself back to Fort Wayne which she feels Fort Wayne is the All-American City.

One of goals for the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc. was to implement a position for an In-Home Care Scheduler/Supervisor due to the expansion of the In-Home Care Division. David Nelson, President/CEO, and the Board Members of the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc., implemented this position to ensure the highest quality service. Because of the high standards expected by the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc., and the strong adherence to policies and procedures, the agency went through the process of interviewing a lot of well-qualified applicants. It is our responsibility to ensure that we hire the most qualified applicant. Brenda Srisupa accepted the position as the In-Home Care Scheduler/Supervisor to oversee the In-Home Care program.

After all of the interviews were conducted, one of the things that stuck out above the others about Brenda was that it was obvious that she was a caring person and would be eager to show the same care and respect to our consumers as she would have expected to have been shown to her own parents. Brenda shared with me that after the death of her parents, she knew she had more to give of herself and knew she would be able to make a difference in the lives others.

Brenda told me that “I was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to fulfill my desire to give back to the community by being offered this position.” With the responsibilities that come with this position, I will ensure that services will be provided in a timely manner and ensure that the highest possible standards are being given to the members of the community. I look at each one of our consumer as if the services they are receiving would be delivered like I would expect them to be for my own parents. I realized this is my calling. I had the opportunity to go out in the field on my second day at work. I had the pleasure of assisting one of our consumers who stated that “he was glad that I was treating him with the same respect that I would expect someone to show me”. As a result of the lack of quality services available in my community while in Florida, I saw how much there was a need for In-Home Care Services that provided excellent customer service.

The League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc In-Home quality Home Care will assist you with just about everything you might need to maintain the activities of daily living in your home. We know it can be challenging if you are experiencing declining health or are faced with a serious illness or long-term disability. It's equally difficult if you are the loved one of a declining elder. The forgoing is a sample of what services we offer here at the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc. If you or anyone you know can benefit from our services, please call Juanita or Brenda at 260-441-0551 or 800-889-3443.

Juanita DeLeon
In-Home Care Director

Zoo-perdooper, Zoo-perific, Fun!

Note: This article originally appeared in the October 2009 issue of this newsletter. With April just around the corner, enjoy and make plans with your family! Don't let your vision loss stop you from enjoying life's activities.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo has always been an icon in our community, and this year is no exception! Ranked in the top 10 zoos across the country by Parents Magazine, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo continues to amaze, educate, and delight people of all ages. This season, with the opening of the new African Journey, a record number of tourists passed through its gates to learn about the wonders of the animal world. My husband, Tom, two and a half year old grandson, Braden, and I were among these multitudes, and what a great adventure we had!

Weather wise, we had a perfect day: sunny, breezy, and 75 degrees. The zoo was crowded but not packed and lines were nonexistent or moved very quickly.

As young parents, Tom and I have fond memories of visiting the zoo with our boys. Now as grandparents, we are revisiting those old memories and making new ones. Being blind has not detoured me from thoroughly enjoying the attractions the zoo has to offer.

Since any zoo trip usually involves several hours of walking, standing, and carrying all kinds of paraphernalia such as a camera, snacks, water bottles, and tote bags, I opted to leave my long white cane in the car. Using sighted guide with Tom or holding onto the stroller handle served my mobility needs very well. We were able to navigate the African Journey, Australian Adventure, Rain Forest, sea lions, birds, reptiles, and all manner of creatures without incident. We even relaxed on a log canoe ride and ventured into a gift shop, where we helped to stimulate the economy!

Since Braden is recently out of diapers and wearing big boy underwear, we made frequent visits to the restrooms. They seemed to pop up whenever he or we needed them. A nice feature available to people with young children or people with a disability is the family restroom, located near the front of the zoo. We also took advantage of it!

Braden is just starting to understand that grandma Linda's eyes do not see like other people's eyes. He was concerned that I was unable to see the animals. He would bring me close to an exhibit and point something out to me. I would ask Braden to tell me about what he was seeing. Since he is very young, the lions were big, the giraffes were tall and the penguins were funny. Tom filled in the rest! Asking Braden to explain something visually to me serves two purposes. It allows me to see through my visual memory and it helps him to express himself through descriptive language. Tom explained exhibits to Braden and he would read more detailed information to me. It was absolutely delightful to listen to Braden's peels of laughter or his excited questions and comments as we traveled from exhibit to exhibit.

Interactive displays are scattered throughout the zoo. The huge puzzle in the Australian Adventure or the drums in the African Journey are just two examples. Riding the pony was a great treat. Braden appeared to be a natural, and possibly he was a cowboy in another life! Whether we were listening to exotic talking birds, feeding the giraffes, watching the playful sea lions, exclaiming over the orangutans, or resting during lunch, there was never a dull moment. The camera was working over time and already we have the pictures in a photo album. Even though I am unable to see the pictures, I still page through it with Tom and Braden so we can share our memories of our trip to the zoo.

It is almost impossible to see and do everything in just one zoo visit. Already, Braden is planning whether to choose a train ride or a carousal ride, since he experienced the canoe ride this time. He has been assured that a pony ride is a given. Next summer,

we will definitely be purchasing a family membership since Braden has a new baby sister and our three granddaughters from North Carolina will be visiting us. I can hardly wait!

No matter what your ability, the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo is an incredible experience filled with color, sound, texture, information, charm and fun. The zoo is accessible, animal packed, activity laden, and truly awesome. So plan to grab your friends, family, out of town relatives, wheel chair, walker, stroller, or cane and head out to the zoo between April and October of 2010! It is an event worth planning and waiting for that you will not want to miss!

Linda Scribner
Senior Blind Services Coordinator

2010 Elections

Indiana:

Governor Daniels and Senator Lugar's elections are not until 2012. Senator Bayh is retiring so this slot will need to be filled. All nine congressional districts will be up for election this year.

Upcoming dates:

Tuesday, May 4, 2010: Indiana, Primary Election.

Tuesday, November 2, 2010: General Election Day.

Websites:

Indiana Election Division: <http://www.in.gov/sos/elections/>

2010 Congressional Election:
http://uspolitics.about.com/od/elections/tp/2010_congressional_election.htm

Election Predictions: <http://www.electionprojection.com/index.php>

Patricia Howard
Information and Referral Coordinator

From the DeafLink Desk

It has been my privilege to work at the League for the Blind and Disabled as DeafLink case coordinator. I have learned so much about human services, about providing resources to help the deaf community in whatever capacity I may be able. I have worked here for two years, and I work with a terrific staff of colleagues at LBD. It is such an honor to be here.

I have been associated with Northeast Indiana Deaf Awareness Council (NIDAC) off and on over the last couple of decades as my available time has allowed. I've been a member of NIDAC for two years straight now, and was elected on the board of directors in November of '08. NIDAC hosts deaf events like deaf picnic, Deaf Halloween, Deaf Santa, and this year for the first time in several years the New Year's Eve party Dec 31, 2010.

This past weekend I went to Indianapolis along with a couple of other members of NIDAC including Donald "Ducky" Dunten (past president of NIDAC and current treasurer, and also board of directors of LBD) for the Indiana Association for the Deaf (IAD) conference. Saturday morning I learned a great deal from several renowned deaf professionals including the president of National Association for the Deaf (NAD) Dr Bobbie Beth Scoggins.

After a hearty five-star lunch dinner catered in, I enjoyed a regular IAD board meeting. In the past, they always had four year commitments for officers and board members, and they approved to change that to two years. I sincerely thought that was an excellent idea as NIDAC too has two year elections. After this was approved, that proceeded to make nominations for new officers and board members. When all the officers were voted in, there were nominations for board members. Ducky was nominated, but he turned it down due to his many responsibilities as a husband, father, working fulltime for AEP, treasurer for NIDAC, and board member for LBD.

Then I was shocked and honored to be nominated as well. I accepted this nomination for the simple fact that this was a great opportunity for me as a representative for LBD working as case coordinator for DeafLink. I thought it would be good too especially to be a voice for all the deaf community of northeast Indiana. Whatever issues I learn from various people of the deaf community in this part of Indiana, I can bring it up to board meetings. And what I learn overall at these meetings I can then bring it up in DeafLink staff meetings, LBD staff meetings, and just as important the NIDAC board meetings.

I also learned that IAD will be happy to pay mileage for my trips to and fro Fort Wayne and Indianapolis for these board meetings. They promised to have one board meeting a year here in Fort Wayne so that all members from this area can have the privilege of participating on their own at least once a year. The meetings normally are every two or three months. So I may only have a meeting as few as four times a year which will be even less strenuous on my own time as dad and other commitments I have.

The most important thing though is being a voice for the deaf community of northeast Indiana. And I was humbled when I was voted as one of the five persons on the board. I accepted this position on board of IAD, and I will execute my responsibilities to the best of my ability. What an honor!

Jaye "JJ" Johnston
DeafLink Case Coordinator

Help Out Others as You Clean

Since we are entering into spring cleaning season, I want to remind everybody to donate clothes, furniture, and food to area resource banks. Many of the furniture and food banks are getting used more than ever since the economy has been struggling. Items that you no longer want or need can benefit others in the community. Furniture banks such as the Mustard Seed and Cross Borders will accept used furniture, lamps, bedding, pots and pans, plates and kitchenware. In addition, Cross Borders will accept clothes and electrical items. For more information about how to donate, contact the Mustard Seed at 471-5802 or Cross Borders at 484-8580.

Laura Lindsay
Independent Living Skills Coordinator

Computer Technology and Accessibility for People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision

Computers and computer technology have had a profound and significant impact on the lives of people who are blind or have low vision. Until recently, the only way that people who were blind or had low vision could access printed material and the Internet was by using a sighted reader.

Today, using computers equipped with specialized hardware and software that provide speech capability and screen magnification, people who are blind or have low vision can surf the web, communicate via e-mail, read electronic books, and access daily newspapers independently.

The goal of accessibility is to ensure that every Web user, regardless of visual, auditory, or other physical impairment, has access to all information and experiences that are now available online.

Who Is NEIRRS?

The Northeast Indiana Radio Reading Service (NEIRRS) is a free 24/7 service providing access to printed information for people who have visual, physical, learning, or

language challenges. Volunteers read 15 local and area newspapers, plus over 30 magazines, public service announcements, grocery ads, obituaries, and short stories. The NEIRRS service area includes northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio. Reception is provided by SCA radio, podcast and streaming to select facilities. To request service, complete and return a receiver application, available on the web site: www.acpl.lib.in.us/neirrs, Podcast: <http://blog.acpl.lib.in.us/neirrs>, E-mail: NEIRRS@acpl.lib.in.us or by mail: 7615 DiSalle Boulevard, Fort Wayne, IN 46825, 260-421-1376 (phone), 260-421-1387 (Fax).

Mark A. Williams
Volunteer Coordinator

Welcom Kevin Showalter to the League Family!

I am 24 years old, and earned a bachelor's degree from Indiana University at I.P.F.W. I was a concert choir soloist for the I.P.F.W. University Singers. Through that choir I was able to travel to Washington D.C. to perform on the steps of the Lincoln Monument, as well as New York City to perform in one of the Nation's largest churches, seating 1,600 people.

I sustained a spinal cord injury through an incident at the age of 14 months. I have been using an electric wheelchair since I was old enough to learn how to use one, which was two years old. Because of my disability I was able to play wheelchair basketball for the Turnstone Flyers. With them I traveled to Alabama, Pennsylvania, Missouri, etc. I have even traveled to Mexico on a mission's trip with my church.

As the League's new Youth Services Coordinator, I look forward to assisting children with disabilities, as well as their parents, through the confusing and often intimidating transition process of I.E.P.s and life after high school. I am working towards the never-ending goal of giving the children I work with the confidence and knowledge they need to become good self-advocates.

Favorite Food: Tacos
Favorite Color: Blue
Favorite Hobby: Baseball

Kevin Showalter
Youth Services Coordinator

Need of Participation

Mayor Tom Henry encourages citizens to help set community goals for housing, homelessness, Community Development, special populations and other projects

administered by the City of Fort Wayne's Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services (OHNS).

If you were unable to attend the meeting March 24, 2010, you can still participate by filling out the survey or the green comment cards being circulated. If you received the comment cards they are due back by April 23, 2010. See the address below.

OHNS is the local agency responsible for receiving, distributing and monitoring federal funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). HUD requires the City to submit plans outlining how community priorities are set, how needs and gaps are identified and how programs are designed to meet those needs. The public meeting format, held March 24, 2010 at the Allen County Library, Meeting Rm A is one way the city offers residents an opportunity to learn more about the process, from how much funding was allocated to Fort Wayne to how best to direct those funds in the coming year. Please take the survey or mail back the comment cards.

Here is the web site for your participation and comments (Deadline: May 31, 2010):
www.surveymonkey.com/s/neighborhood_needs.

Address: City County Bldg.
Attn: Office of Housing and Neighborhood Services (OHNS)
2 East Main Street, Rm 800
Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Beverly Harding
Advocate Coordinator

Robotics: Rethinking Rehabilitation

On February the 19th, I went to a "Cerebral Palsy Training". The speaker was Donna Roberts. Donna talked on different topics; one of the topics that interested me was Robotics. At Riley Hospital, they have the "Riley Robotic Rehabilitation Center". They have a new robotics project which will help children from age 4-12 who have cerebral palsy with hemiplegia and tightness in the upper extremity and may possibly help a child to walk using the new Robotics project. The project is only for those who live in Indiana. During a robotic therapy session, a therapist will supervise the exercise and develop a treatment plan depending on the child's strength and weaknesses and then monitor the child's movement. The child must be able to follow directions. When put on the robotic machine the robot can then adjust to the support range of the upper extremity to full support of the arms or will find the range that is needed for each individual child. For the lower extremity it will help find the range of motion to possibly help a child to be able to walk. The current research is for the upper extremity only and will consist of 8 weeks of therapy, which involves a total of 16 therapy sessions 2 times a week with each session lasting around 1-hour. It is very important that you not miss

any appointments as this is a research project. Each child will be assessed before and after the 8 week robotic treatment. The child cannot have any other therapies during the 8 week program, or be on any botox or medication so the program can see if the robotic treatment project research was beneficial to the child. After the sessions you can transition back to your regular therapist. The program will then provide you, the parent, with a summary of the therapy results. The research project for the lower extremity will be at a later date. For those who are interested in having their child in the Robotic Rehabilitation Research Program, please contact: Danielle Faires, her Email address is dfaires@iupui.edu or her mailing address is Riley Hospital – 702 Barnhill Dr. Room 1601 – Indianapolis, IN. 46202.

Sylvia Adams
Adaptive Equipment Coordinator

Quote: How far you go in life depends on you being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these. George Washington Carver, January 1864 – January 5, 1943, was an American scientist, botanist, educator, and inventor.

League Sponsored Support Groups:

Allen County Area:

Schedule of Support Groups sponsored by the League for the Blind and Disabled, Inc. Anyone with a disability or anyone interested in disability issues is welcome. The groups' main focus tends to be sight loss, vision impairment, and blindness.

If you need transportation, please contact the League at 441-0551 on the Monday before the scheduled meeting. We will arrange for a volunteer to pick you up and take you home.

Fort Wayne:

First Thursday of the month:

Structured Support Group, 1:00-3:00 pm,
League Office, 5821 S. Anthony Blvd, Fort Wayne.
We discuss specific issues related to sight loss.

Second Thursday of the month:

Consumer Education Group, 1:00-3:00 pm,
League Office, 5821 S. Anthony Blvd, Fort Wayne.
We bring in a speaker from the community to keep us informed about current issues and services.

Fourth Thursday of the month:

Social/Recreational Group, 1:00-3:00 pm,
League Office, 5821 S. Anthony Blvd, Fort Wayne.
We have fun, playing adapted board games, making a craft, taking a field trip, going to lunch, having a picnic or a party.

Second Monday of the month:

Structured Support Group, 7:00-9:00 pm,
Good Shepherd United Methodist Church, 4700 Vance Ave, Fort Wayne
This group is specifically designed for a person with a sight loss and their spouse, friend, or family member. We do not provide transportation for this meeting.

Adams County Area:

The League for the Blind and Disabled, sponsors a monthly support group meeting in Decatur. This meeting is open to any individual with a vision impairment and any friends or family members who are interested in learning how to live successfully with a vision loss.

This support group meeting is facilitated by Linda Scribner, Senior Blind Services Coordinator for the League. Linda has been legally blind or visually impaired her entire

life and she brings a very positive out look to those dealing with a vision impairment. Please join us for a chance to look beyond your blindness to a world of independence and productivity.

Structured Support Group, 1:30-3:30 pm,
Third Tuesday of the month,
Woodcrest Retirement Center, 1300 Mercer Ave., Decatur, 260-724-3311

We discuss issues related to sight loss. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions, please contact Linda at 1-800-889-3443.

Dekalb County Area:

The League for the Blind and Disabled, sponsors a monthly support group meeting in Auburn. This meeting is open to any individual with a vision impairment and any friends or family members who are interested in learning how to live successfully with a vision loss.

This support group meeting is facilitated by Linda Scribner, Senior Blind Services Coordinator for the League. Linda has been legally blind or visually impaired her entire life and she brings a very positive out look to those dealing with a vision impairment. Please join us for a chance to look beyond your blindness to a world of independence and productivity.

Structured Support Group, 1:15-3:00 pm,
Third Thursday of the month,
DeKalb County Heimack Center, 1800 E 7th St, Auburn, 260-925-3311.

We discuss issues related to sight loss. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions, please contact Linda at 1-800-889-3443.

LaGrange County Area:

The League for the Blind and Disabled sponsors a monthly support group meeting in LaGrange. This meeting is open to any individual with a vision impairment and any friends or family members who are interested in learning how to live successfully with a vision loss.

This support group meeting is facilitated by Linda Scribner, Senior Blind Services Coordinator for the League. Linda has been legally blind or visually impaired her entire life and she brings a very positive out look to those dealing with a vision impairment. Please join us for a chance to look beyond your blindness to a world of independence and productivity.

Structured Support Group, 1:30-3:30 pm,

Third Wednesday of the month,
Miller's Merry Manor, 787 N. Detroit Street, LaGrange, 260-463-2172

We discuss issues related to sight loss. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions, please contact Linda at 1-800-889-3443.

Noble County Area:

The League for the Blind and Disabled sponsors a monthly "Focus Points" Forum in Kendallville. This meeting is open to any individual with a vision impairment and any friends or family members who are interested in learning how to live successfully with a vision loss.

This support group is facilitated by Linda Scribner, Senior Blind Services Coordinator for the League. Linda has been legally blind or visually impaired her entire life and she brings a very positive out look to those dealing with a vision impairment. Please join us for a chance to look beyond your blindness to a world of independence and productivity.

"Focus Points" Forum, 1:30-3:00 pm
Second Tuesday of the month,
Shepherd of the Hill, 351 N. Allen Chapel Road, Kendallville, 260-347-2256.

We discuss issues related to sight loss. Hope to see you there! If you have any questions, please contact Linda at 1-800-889-3443.

Steuben County Area:

The League for the Blind and Disabled sponsors a monthly Insight Forum in Angola. This meeting is open to any individual with a vision impairment and any friends or family members who are interested in learning how to live successfully with a vision loss.

This Insight Forum is facilitated by Linda Scribner, Senior Blind Services Coordinator for the League. Linda has been legally blind or visually impaired her entire life and she brings a very positive out look to those dealing with a vision impairment. Please join us for a chance to look beyond your blindness to a world of independence and productivity.

Insight Forum, 1:00-3:00 pm
First Wednesday of the month,
Cameron Woods Senior Living, 701 W. Harcourt Rd, Angola, 260-624-2197

We discuss issues related to sight loss. Hope to see you there. If you have any questions, please contact Linda at 1-800-889-3443.

League for the Blind & Disabled
5821 S. Anthony Blvd., Ft. Wayne, IN 46816
V/TT: 260-441-0551 or 800-889-3443
Fax: 260-441-7760
www.the-league.org
the.league@verizon.net