



## Thank you!

from Executive Director Todd Centybear

As the large contingents of Vermont's citizen soldiers—our neighbors, friends, coworkers, and family members—prepared to leave home for deployment, stanzas of Robert Frost's poetry came to mind:

*Home is the place where, when you have  
to go there,  
they have to take you in.*

As these neighbors prepare to put themselves "there" —in harm's way—we at home understandably feel a desire to play a part in helping those whose lives have been disrupted by these events. We affirm a promise to "take in" those here who need our support and encouragement. Vermonters know instinctively that the concept of home is profound and not quite definable by a Google search. "Take you in," Vermont style, might mean going out to tackle the daily tasks that keep a household running—shoveling a driveway, scraping a windshield, taking kids to school, or plowing a field while our community men and women are over "there."

The Vermont Guard is shouldering an important mission; so too does HowardCenter embrace a mission: "To improve the well being of children, adults, families, and our community." In response to the needs of these unique times, we have redeployed resources to serve the increase in mental health, substance

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Erika Nestor at Zoe's Race.



Mat Robitaille from KeyBank washes a van at HowardCenter facilities during the United Way's Spring Days of Caring.

## The Year in Volunteers

**E**ACH YEAR, HOWARDCENTER, and those we support through our programs, benefit from the generous volunteer efforts of numerous community members and organizations. This past year, volunteers washed cars, sponsored benefit golf tournaments and fun-runs, mentored youth, baked and delivered food to community residential homes, and assisted with computer networking. We are grateful to the many folks who have contributed. Here are a few volunteer highlights from the past year:

### Zoe's Race

This past June, Erika Nestor, the mother of Zoe, a six-year-old who became disabled following a swimming accident when she was about 18 months old, began working with HowardCenter to organize a fundraising event in her daughter's honor. Erika's goal was to set out to establish a fundraising event to raise funds for families who are served by HowardCenter and who need

financial assistance to retrofit their homes for a child with disabilities. As an avid runner with several marathons to her credit, Erika proposed a benefit fun run, Zoe's Race. The first annual Zoe's Race took place on August 30 at Oakledge Park in Burlington. More than 250 runners participated in the event, raising more than \$13,000. It took the combined effort of many other volunteers to organize this successful fundraiser, and we thank you all.

### SymQuest Invitational Benefit Golf Tournament

On September 15, the SymQuest Group, a South Burlington company offering office technology solutions, sponsored an invitational benefit golf tournament at Spruce Mountain Resort in Stowe that benefited HowardCenter. More than 120 business people participated, raising \$5,325. Our hearty thanks to SymQuest

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## Online Contributions

If you would like to make an online contribution to HowardCenter, please visit us at [www.howardcenter.org](http://www.howardcenter.org) or [www.firstgiving.com/howardcenter](http://www.firstgiving.com/howardcenter). Your support makes a positive difference.



**Lis Mickenberg hosted Junfang Wang and Stuart Friedman, from Sun Yat-sen University in China. On a tour of several states to observe “model” programs, Wang and Friedman were in Vermont to visit HowardCenter’s ACT I/Bridge.**

## In the News

**Lis Mickenberg**, former Director of HowardCenter MHSAS residential programs, recently hosted visitors from China’s Sun Yat-sen University. Stuart Friedman, a consultant in Social Work Studies at the University and Junfang Wang, Director of the University’s Social Work Research and Education Center, recently visited several states to observe some “model” programs. Their tour brought them to Vermont, where they visited HowardCenter’s ACT I/Bridge, an alcohol and drug detoxification program, and talked with supervisory staff about day-to-day challenges.

**Dr. Anthony Quintiliani**, Clinical Director of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services at HowardCenter, delivered the keynote address at the Seventh Annual Vermont Collaboration Conference on Children, Youth & Families, on October 16, at the Killington Grand Hotel, Killington, VT. The presentation focused on the positive effects of mindfulness-based training on our interaction with others and our capacity to collaborate. CYFS Director **Catherine Simonson** served as a member of the conference planning committee.

**Bob Bick**, Director of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services at Howard Center, appeared as a guest on Jane Lindholm’s Vermont Public Radio show, *Vermont Edition*, on September 23 to discuss substance abuse in Vermont. In October, during National Mental Illness Awareness Month, Bob also represented HowardCenter in a panel discussion, “Mental Illness in Vermont,” which aired on *Public Square*, a Vermont Public Television show.

**Tuipate Mubiay** led a six-person panel to address an audience of social workers and other clinicians on October 23 at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier. The theme for the discussion was “Building on Strengths: The Refugee Story.” Tuipate was recently elected as the Vice President of the Vermont chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and is a member of the Association’s Diversity Committee. ■

## Welcome Aboard!

HowardCenter is pleased to welcome three new members to its Board of Trustees.



**Dan Balón** is Director of Diversity and Equity for the Burlington Schools. Dan completed his Ph.D. at the University of Maryland

in Education Policy, Administration, and Leadership. Dan serves on several community and advisory boards in the Chittenden County area, including the City of Burlington’s Legacy Project, Mater Christi School, Good News Garage, United Way of Chittenden County, and the Fletcher Free Library. Dan lives in Shelburne.



**Michael Lipson** is an administrative law officer for the Vermont Office of Professional Regulation. Michael attended the University of Connecticut, the National Law Center of George Washington University, and Georgetown Law Center. He is a member of the Chittenden County and Vermont Bar Associations and a member of the Boards of Maple Leaf Farm and of Vermont Legal Aid. He also serves on the Finance Committee for Ohavi Zedek Synagogue. Michael lives in South Burlington.



**Gail Stevenson** is Executive Director for the Vermont Council on World Affairs. She has been Director of International Programs at Champlain College, Consultant for the World Bank in Washington, D.C., and Consultant for the United Nations Development Program in Mongolia. Gail has a Ph.D. in Economics from The American University, Washington, D.C. Since 2002 she has served on the HowardCenter Child, Youth and Family Advisory Council as a member and Vice-Chair. Until recently, she was treasurer and board member of the Vermont Council on World Affairs. Gail lives in South Burlington. ■

**“Pine Forest is a good community of people who care about the children and families that they are working with.”**

—Lydia Carroon, Pine Forest Children’s Community volunteer

## More than an Extra Set of Hands



**Volunteer Lydia Carroon, a junior at UVM.**

ON A RECENT AFTERNOON AT the HowardCenter Pine Forest Children’s Community (PFCC), volunteer Lydia Carroon, a junior and a social work major at the University of Vermont, kneels on the floor rocking a 9-month-old infant in her arms as she tries to get him to stop crying.

Lydia first became involved with the PFCC in February 2009 to fulfill a volunteer requirement for one of her social work classes. Lydia had wanted to work with infants, because she had never worked with children in that age group before. When the course ended and she had fulfilled the volunteer requirement, Lydia continued to help out at PFCC; for a brief period this past spring, she worked part-time before leaving to spend the summer at home. She felt comfortable with the staff, and she had become attached to the kids in her charge. Upon return-

ing this fall, Lydia approached PFCC to see about volunteering again, this time, without receiving class credit. She now volunteers four hours a week.

While at PFCC, Lydia may change diapers, get bottles ready, or put infants to bed. “With twelve to fourteen babies, four for each teacher, it’s good to have an extra set of hands,” says Lydia.

“The teachers are great,” she adds. “They let me know what each kid needs and let me take initiative.” PFCC is grateful for the volunteers who work at the center. “It’s a win-win situation,” says PFCC Director Wendy Lachappelle. “Lydia is gaining valuable work and life experience, and we are supporting that opportunity while also gaining an extra set of hands. It’s a mutually satisfactory relationship.”

Lydia has been able to apply some of the content from her coursework. In class, discussions often focus on social policy around issues such as childcare. “What’s available in childcare in this country is not what it should be,” says Lydia. “But Pine Forest is taking steps to offer childcare that’s caring and involves the whole family. Pine Forest is a good community of people who care about the children and families that they are working with.”

Until recently, Lydia thought she wanted to become a school social worker. Now, she is thinking that she would like to do medical social work. Whichever path she chooses, she has gained valuable knowledge through her experience as a PFCC volunteer. ■

*The Pine Forest Children’s Community is a full-day, full-year, play-based child care center for children ages six weeks to six years.*

## Development News

### Help Us Meet Our Challenge

We are pleased to announce that we have received a challenge grant to be used for our annual appeal this year. An anonymous donor has offered a \$15,000 grant which will match all new donations and donations made above what supporters gave last year. The result is that this year a contribution from you will go even further in assuring that our programs are sustained.

This year, many of our programs are facing challenges meeting the increased demand within our community for services: First Call, a 24/7 crisis program for children and families, received 3,000 more calls this year than last year; we have designated a position to provide direct mental health services to Vermont National Guard members and their families; and budget cuts have limited our potential to make new mentor matches in our Community Friends Mentoring program for youth.

We welcome your support throughout the year. However, a contribution now will have an even greater impact on our ability to serve those most vulnerable members of our community. If you prefer, you may make a contribution online by visiting our web site [www.howardcenter.org](http://www.howardcenter.org) or through [www.firstgiving.com/howardcenter](http://www.firstgiving.com/howardcenter). ■

“I have a right to live my life and make my own decisions, both good and bad ones.”

—Christine Lamphere, Self-Advocate

## Volunteers

Thank you to all our volunteers who have given so generously of their time and skills throughout the past year. Our programs are richer because of the unique contributions each of you has made. Please accept our apology if we have inadvertently omitted your name from this list.

### ART HOP

Liliana Hall  
Jade Shaw  
Pamela VanDeWeert

### BIG NIGHT

Jessie Bradley  
Diane Carrier  
Cheryl Couture  
Carolyn Fundis  
Liliana Hall  
Carol Hanley  
Karen Hussey  
Mary McKearin  
Annette Perras  
Kesta Perras  
Jennifer Phalen  
Hilary Scharf  
Julie Simpson  
Mary Esther Treat  
Pamela VanDeWeert  
Barb York

### COMMUNITY FRIENDS MENTORING

Amy Alfieri  
Sarah Ashworth  
Nick Beahan  
Rachel Berube  
Cheryle Bilodeau  
Diane Bogdan  
Tom Borys  
Michelle Boutin  
Patty Brosseau  
Gloriane Brown  
Ken Brown  
Vanessa Brunkhorst  
Wendy Byrne  
Kathy Caban  
Barb Callahan  
Nancy Carlson  
Deb Chisholm  
Chittenden Bank

Cindy Chittenden  
Larry Clarfeld  
Gail Clook  
Nancy Colbourn  
Mike Comeau  
Lucy Cooney  
Dan Cypress  
Sally Dattilio  
Nick de Tarnowsky  
Donna M. Dec  
Diane DiGennaro  
Barbara Donnelly  
Anna Dorey  
Michael Dowling  
Alison Duback  
Linda Dusablon  
David Ellenbogen  
Carla Fiske  
Samantha Foster  
Peggy Frawley  
Debra Friedman  
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Emily Gibbs  
Dennis Grage  
Kaitlin Gregg  
Kelli Guider  
Steven Habif  
Jean Haverstick  
Jean Marie Haverstick  
Kristen Hayden-West  
Lyn Hoffelt  
Rachel Hopkins  
Irene Horbar  
Mike Howard  
IBM  
Dawna Jarmusz  
Sarah Jennings  
Natalie Karlin  
Susan Keeler  
Brianna Kern  
KeyBank  
Matt Kihm  
CJ Knudsen

Judy Laclair  
Carmen Lagala  
Cathy Lambert  
Kerstin Lange  
Ann Laramée  
Debbie LaRosa  
Whitney Leighton  
Meira Lifson  
Erica MacConnell  
Sue Macmillan  
Kerry Mahoney  
Matt Malaney  
Arnie Malina  
Nancy McGowan  
Patty McMullen  
Joanne McQuade  
Nick Meltzer  
Merchants Bank  
Cathy Michaels  
Prue Milnes  
Dale Morway  
Joanne & Howard  
Muehlberger  
Shane Muth  
Pat Myette  
Steve Page  
Debba Pearce  
Grace PerLee  
Kaela Plant  
Paula Poquette  
Gordon Raymond  
Nancy Rehm  
Kris Reinhardt  
Lindsay Reszewski  
Ahana Richards  
Kathy Roberts  
Lonni Rodgers  
Gail Rosenberg  
Susan Rosle  
Mary Ross  
Mary Beth Rowe  
Katie Roy  
Neal Sand  
Carly Schuckers  
Bethany Scott  
Jim Sestokas  
Jennifer Shatigan  
Joan Shaw  
Sheraton Burlington Hotel  
and Conference Center  
Ken Signorello

Skip Smith  
Mina Sofer  
Carmen Stafford  
Kate Stattel  
Carrie Stirewalt  
Tyler Stoddard  
Phan Thai  
Alicia Thibeault  
Michelle Trudell  
United Way of Chittenden  
County  
Sandy Vaillencourt  
Marilyn Welch  
Alice Weston  
Neil Whittelsey  
Jill Wilkens  
Marissa Wilkens  
Chris Williamson  
Angela Wong  
Lindsay Wood  
Naomi Wright

### JEAN GARVIN SCHOOL

Shayna Diaz  
Clarissa Gottshall  
Amy Millington  
Emily Scott

### PINE FOREST CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY

Kayli Carlson  
Lydia Carroon  
Joanna Cowen  
Pride Geoffrey  
Jacqueline Kumph  
Keith LaFontaine  
William McClelland  
Brianna Martin  
Lauren Murray  
Faith Poney  
Nicholas Robbins  
Nicole Wilner

### RESOURCE CENTER

Stephanie Favero  
Kim Hatgen  
Julia Kimbell  
Kay Kinnerson  
Janet Lavelle  
Sherri Lombardi

Ryan McGrath  
Krista Morgan  
Paul Prim  
Georgette Safford  
Jill Sweet  
Sarah Whitcomb

### SUCCEED

Rachel Andres  
Amber Casterlin  
Chelsea Cocce  
Catherine Comiskey  
Louise Contino  
Emily Depman  
Natasha Manning  
Michelle Mattison  
Chelsea McShane  
Hang Nguyen  
Monica Picar  
Joanna Riley  
Christa Schestag  
Elisa Vanbuskirk

### UNSUNG HEROES TV SHOW

Susie Merrick

### WESTVIEW

Edita Debeljak  
Linda Li  
Robert Johnson  
Bucky Moorehead  
Benjamin Runyan

### ZOE'S RACE

Karen Allen  
Ben & Jerry's  
Sima Breiterman  
Cathie Buscaglia  
Rich Carpenter  
Cheeks Dance Co.  
Mindy Clawson  
Corn Boy  
Jody Davis  
Sarah Forrest  
Front Porch Forum  
Ben Gallagher  
Amanda Godette  
Liliana Hall  
Derek Kirby  
Max Krauss

**“We are thrilled to be recipients of NPI’s 2009 Martin Luther King community service project.”**

—Russ Stratton, Manager, HowardCenter Information Technology

Delaina Lamoureux  
Gwen Lamoureux  
Alyssa Lewis  
Kaylan Livsey  
Jen Mitchell  
Erika Nestor  
Bill Pence  
Lorraine Pitcher  
Adam Poulin  
RaceVermont.com  
Select Design  
Emma Shaw  
Shelburne Health and  
Fitness  
Beth Tarallo  
Pamela VanDeWeert  
Ali Zura  
Kaitlin Zura  
Marie Zura

*Thanks to all of the above volunteers, as well as those individuals and groups which are highlighted in this article.*

If you wish to receive electronic versions of our publications, please send your name and email address to Martie Majoros at [mmajoros@howardcenter.org](mailto:mmajoros@howardcenter.org).

### **Volunteers** *continued from page 1*

for their sponsorship and special thanks to their employees who worked on the tournament: Joe Noonan, Pat Robins, Zoltan Sachs, Larry Sudbay, and Robyn Terranova. Thanks, too, to HowardCenter employees Tom Borys and Todd Centybear and board members Rick Blount and John McSolely, who also participated in the event.

### **Washing Cars for Facilities**

As part of the United Way’s Spring Days of Caring, a number of volunteer groups from local businesses donated their time on May 5 to assist in various projects across the agency. One group from KeyBank added a new sparkle to both program and service vehicles by washing and waxing cars at our Facilities building, while a group from the Sheraton brought some color to 208 Flynn as they painted empty offices. In addition, the three residential houses at CYFS enjoyed a week of delicious meals, thanks to groups from IBM, the Chittenden Bank, and the Sheraton.

### **Big Help for Big Night**

Behind every great event is a great team. That was definitely the case with this year’s Big Night, held on June 3 at UVM’s Davis Center. Volunteers Jessie Bradley, Carol Hanley, Annette Perras, Jennifer Phalen, Julie Simpson, Mary Esther Treat, and volunteer committee chairperson Barb York worked tirelessly from February right up to the day of the event coordinating and picking up items for the silent auction, selecting menu choices, collecting and arranging flowers for centerpieces, serving as our ambassadors, and much more. Our thanks to guest speaker Kathryn Blume, auctioneer Afi Ahmadi, and emcee Barry Stone whose volunteer efforts contributed to the success of this year’s event.

### **Loaned Execs Lend Muscle**

Four United Way Loaned Executives working on this year’s United Way campaign contributed their time and muscle on the morning of September 14 to spruce up HowardCenter’s children’s residential homes on Pine Street.



**At the Symquest Golf Tournament: Tom Heinrich, SymQuest; Steve Pouliot, Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired; Andy Finelli, Allen Agency; Ted Salerni, Central Vermont Public Service.**

### **Network Performance, Inc.**

Employees from Network Performance Inc. (NPI) of South Burlington volunteered at HowardCenter as part of the company’s Martin Luther King Day community service project. NPI provides computer network solutions and software. As part of an annual volunteer project, NPI’s entire firm of seven technicians and six office staff spent the day at HowardCenter where they established the foundation to an electronic health record (EHR) virtualized environment, renovated firewall security, reviewed server configuration, and provided workstation optimization and refurbishing.

### **Hinesburg 4-H Club**

For the past six years, 4-H club volunteers in Hinesburg have made it possible for the Livery Horse Farm to offer a horseback riding camp for youth enrolled in Community Friends Mentoring (CFM). The volunteers make it possible for owner Kim Johansen to be able to offer this opportunity to CFM at an affordable level. This past year, 10 CFM campers attended and received instruction in riding and, perhaps more important, the confidence gained from mastering a new skill or engaging in a new activity—gifts that will last a lifetime. ■

“Vermonters know instinctively that the concept of home is profound and not quite definable by a Google search.”

—Todd Centybear, Executive Director

## From the Director *continued from page 1*

abuse, and other special needs of our military personnel and their families. So far this year, we have used more than \$150,000 of agency funds exclusively for this cause. We have also assigned a full-time staff position to assist and direct our agency efforts in this specialty area. Jon Coffin has been a HowardCenter staff member for 35 years, most recently serving as Director of our Adult Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Jon is also a Colonel in the Vermont Guard, one of only two Guard psychologists in Vermont with expertise in this specialty area. HowardCenter is fortunate to be able to bring his credibility and skills to bear in the service of both missions.

Our Crisis Service teams, Outpatient therapists, School Services staff and other professionals, along with Jon, are engaged daily in “taking in” those who are leaving, those who are staying, and those who have come home. Except for a small grant from the Department of Mental Health, we do not receive funding from any governmental source to meet this ongoing and surely increasing challenge.

Many individuals, groups, and community organizations, both civilian and military, are stepping forward. We are committed to participating in this community effort. I know firsthand of businesses and individuals that have donated heating fuel, repaired appliances, and made quiet donations to needy families, perhaps to keep a light on in the snowy woods.

*The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

— Robert Frost. ■



**Rob Allen is a member of the board of the Green Mountain Curling Club.**

## Why Watch When You Can Curl?

**G**RAB YOUR BROOMS, FORM YOUR four-member team, and mark your calendars now for HowardCenter’s First Annual “Curling Challenge.” The fundraiser will be held March 20 at the new Ice Barn in Milton, Chittenden County’s new home for curling.

The Green Mountain Curling Club (GMCC) will provide an hour of instruction to participating teams of four, and all the equipment needed: brooms, stones, and sliders to wear over your own footwear.

The day-long Curling Challenge, starting at 8 AM, will consist of 32 teams, with eight teams able to play at a time. Teams will play an abbreviated game of two ends. The two teams earning the most points will compete in a championship game in the early evening.

“We’re hoping that the excitement generated by the curling competition in the 2010 Winter Olympics will carry over to this event,” says Gail Rosenberg, HowardCenter’s Development and Public Relations Manager. According to GMCC Board member Rich Dauphin, “This Challenge will give us the opportunity to promote this great sport that everyone can enjoy, while helping HowardCenter raise funds for the important work it does to help people in our community improve their lives.”

Teams will earn points according to traditional scoring and for raising the most money and having the most creative team name. For information, contact Gail Rosenberg at [gail@howardcenter.org](mailto:gail@howardcenter.org) or 488-6912. ■



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## Our Mission

**HowardCenter improves the well-being of children, adults, families, and communities.**

Child, Youth & Family Services

Developmental Services

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

*CenterScope*  
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Editor

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This newsletter is printed on 30% postconsumer recycled paper.

**“I am pleased to have created programs that help people with mental illness.”**

—Lis Mickenberg, former HowardCenter Director of Residential and Community Housing



## Lis Mickenberg Retires

LIS MICKENBERG, DIRECTOR OF Residential and Community Housing, recently retired after 30 years at HowardCenter Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (MHSAS). Under her leadership, HowardCenter’s residential program grew from one home to eleven. Lis was the first person in Chittenden County to create residential programs for people with mental illness, in collaboration with the local affordable housing organizations. With a strongly held belief that individuals with mental illness should not be isolated, Lis created an array of services for individuals within Chittenden County.

Members of the mental health and housing communities acknowledged Lis’s contributions at a farewell party on September 30. Dr. Sandra Steingard, HowardCenter MHSAS Medical Director, described the housing programs Lis developed as “remarkable,” adding that they offer extraordinary options for people with mental illness. HowardCenter Executive Direc-

tor Todd Centybear said that Lis has consistently done the “right thing.” He remembered 20 years ago, when an individual with AIDS and mental illness could not be placed elsewhere, Lis said, “We will serve him. We will care for him.” Through Lis’s caring and commitment, other staff have embraced her vision of inclusive care for all.

Looking back on her 30 years at HowardCenter, Lis says, “I am pleased to have created programs that help people with mental illness and to work with staff who provide support for the clients, whom I will also miss.” Although her major goal has always been to provide a safe and supportive environment in which clients can succeed as members of the community, Lis also found pleasure in preserving and renovating historic buildings in the process. Her wish for the future is that more residences be created to provide individuals with permanent, affordable places to live. ■

## From Arrowway to Northern Lights: 30 years

Lis started at HowardCenter in 1979 as the social worker at Arrowway (now called **Spruce Street**), a licensed, residential group home for eight people who were coming out of the State Hospital. Since then, HowardCenter has collaborated with community organizations such as Cathedral Square, the Champlain Housing Trust (CHT), and the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) 811 program to provide clinical expertise and staffing at several other residential homes. These include:

**1981 Seventy-Two** is a 24/7 state licensed, transitional residential group home, with seven residents sharing space and one resident in a separate apartment. HowardCenter teaches social skills and the activities of daily living to help residents manage symptoms of their illness.

**1982 Shelter Plus Care** was the first permanent supportive housing project in Burlington. A collaboration among HowardCenter,

the Burlington Housing Authority, and the Burlington Community Land Trust, this option is for residents who are able to function more independently than those in transitional homes.

**1996 Safe Haven** and **Branches** were created as part of the developing Chittenden County HUD Continuum of Care grant program. Safe Haven is a psychiatric homeless shelter, staffed 24/7. Each of seven residents has his/her own room and does not need to leave during the day. Branches is a transitional home that supports residents’ independent living skills.

**1997 Monroe House** operates with Cathedral Square as a HUD 811 program. HowardCenter provides staffing. HowardCenter clients have access to the apartments.

**1998 Lakeview** a 24/7 licensed Community Care Home, with 17 residents and on-site nursing support, created through rented space from the Diocese.

**1998 Allen House** operates in conjunction with CHT to provide clinical expertise in substance abuse and mental illness. There is on-site staff support for the 20+ tenants.

**1999 Next Door**, a licensed intensive residential program staffed 24/7. Initially it was designed to be a short term program within our Crisis Services, but it is now a residential home.

**2000 South End Community Housing** is also a part of HUD 811 grants with CHT. HowardCenter provides on-site support for the five individuals living in the congregate apartments.

**2007 Northern Lights** is a transitional housing program for women coming out of jail. It has been a successful collaboration between HowardCenter, BHA, Mercy Connections, Children’s Aid Society, Vermont Works for Women, and the Department of Corrections. ■

## Slán Abhaile: Safe Home

IN SEPTEMBER, DEVELOPMENTAL Services (DS) Director Marie Zura, DS Director of Children and Family Services Cathie Buscaglia, Self Advocate Christine Lamphere, and DS Safety Connection Coordinator Jim Hessler traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to present workshops at Ireland's National Disability Association's (NDA) annual conference.

Marie addressed the international audience and described HowardCenter's innovative programs that enable clients to live full lives within the community. Cathie followed up with that theme during a break-out session in which she discussed the many proactive services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Conference attendees heard a detailed account of Christine's description of her life while living in an institution in Vermont with 40 other residents, before she began to receive services through HowardCenter. "I arrived at Brandon with my own clothes made from hand by my

mother. I do not know what happened to those clothes, since we did not have a place to put personal items and staff chose what we wore." Christine compared her life then to her life now and told the audience, "Like any of you sitting in this room with me, I have a right to live my life and make my own decisions, both good and bad ones. I have the personal freedom to shower in my own shower, eat food that I choose, and spend time with family and friends when I want to."

Christine's presentation at the NDA conference will serve as a catalyst for deinstitutionalization as Ireland moves toward community support for individuals with developmental disabilities. Since 1993 residential care in Vermont has been completely community based, and Vermont has been ranked number one in the country for its residential services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

According to Marie, the trip was a "great opportunity for us to share what we are doing

and to learn what is happening in Ireland and the United Kingdom. We made some valuable connections, and we were asked to return in June 2010 to speak at the conference." ■

*Safety Connection is a system that uses a combination of home security technology and professional staff to support individuals who need occasional overnight assistance to live more independently.*