



In Our Changing Community

from Hal Colston

AS THE TIME NEARS FOR ME to complete my three-year term and resign from the HowardCenter board of trustees, I reflect on my two previous terms and the many memories of an organization that does so much for the common good in our community. I have always believed that HowardCenter's caring staff is directly responsible for the high quality of life we experience in Vermont, which is second to none. The organization's efforts to create a culture of excellence are already producing outcomes for positive change.

The Vermont community is undergoing historic change with regards to our demographics. From 2000 to 2009, 94.5% of Vermont's population growth has been attributable to people of color as we are a very active refugee resettlement zone. I see this trend continuing. HowardCenter will be challenged to connect with communities of New Americans who may need our services, yet don't know who we are. My belief is that the HowardCenter board of trustees and agency leadership will embrace the entrepreneurial spirit required to turn this challenge into an opportunity to build community and new relationships.

It is important, even vital, for us to strengthen our diversity and inclusion efforts and to participate as a proactive

continued on page 8



Community Friends Mentor Ken Brown looks on as his mentee builds a birdhouse.

KEN SIGNORELLO

Volunteers: An Invaluable Asset

THERE ARE MANY REASONS people choose to volunteer for HowardCenter. Some have a special skill that they wish to share. Others have experienced challenges while caring for a loved one who has a developmental disability or is struggling with mental illness. Still others have decided that they have been fortunate, and they want to give back to their community. The reasons people volunteer are as varied as the individuals themselves. Whatever the reason, their contributions to our organization enhance the support that we are able to provide to children, adults, and families in our community. We have included a sampling of some of the contributions made

by volunteers. While we can't include them all, we wish to thank **all** our volunteers for their contributions.

Ken Signorello, a photographer, has been a HowardCenter volunteer since 2003 when he began volunteering in the Community Friends Mentoring program. Throughout the years, he realized that the connections with his mentee—a shared accomplishment, an exchange of knowledge, a common interest—were crucial to the mentoring relationship. He began to understand that the slow accumulation of such connections over the course of several months and years were what made up the “how” of mentoring. Ken soon decided to capture these connections on film, and on First Night 2009, he began the six-month process of chronicling six mentors and mentees as they got together weekly to explore a shared interest, plan field trips to area attractions, or learn a new skill. The end result is a series of photographs that capture the special qualities of each relationship.

continued on next page

E-News from HowardCenter

Sign up for our new e-newsletter which will be sent out six times per year. Send your contact info to mmajoros@howardcenter.org, or visit our website at www.howardcenter.org to view our first issue and to sign up online.

Our Loyal "Alumni"

by Mary McKearin

THOSE OF US WHO ARE CLOSELY associated with HowardCenter, including our staff and board of trustees, sometimes wish for a large group of alumni (think colleges and universities) willing to support our agency with donations of time and money. What we don't always recognize is that we do have "alumni" spread throughout the community who help in quiet but important ways.

There are people who tell us that they gained their sobriety through HowardCenter more than 20 years ago and now help us by advocating for donations through their employers or by sponsoring special fundraising events. There are parents whose sons or daughters have developmental disabilities or serious mental illnesses supporting the agency year in and year out with donations large and small.

There are families who have experienced the tragic loss of a child or parent through suicide who want to remember and honor their loved one by volunteering or donating in ways that are important to their families and to those we serve. There are many more people who benefit from programs such as First Call, HowardCenter's 24-hour crisis program, not even knowing they are receiving HowardCenter services. When they do make the connection, we gain new supporters.

Our "alumni" are diverse and loyal, resilient and caring. We are grateful to all who understand how the skill and dedication of our employees and board have benefited our communities through the years. Thank you for being out there and for continuing to think of HowardCenter as the place where you or someone you care about experienced recovery and respect.

Volunteers *continued from page 1*



Marcheta Townsend is a retired Methodist pastor. On sabbatical in the 1990's, she began volunteering at Westview House, a rehabilitation program for individuals in the community who are recovering from psychiatric illness. She introduced clients to birdwatching and took them on birdwatching trips. She also encouraged clients to get involved in gardening at Westview, and, often, she just hung out with them. "The clients enjoyed the opportunity to talk and spend time with someone who wasn't a staff member," says Townsend.



David and Margaret Coates first read about the Northern Lights program at HowardCenter in the *Burlington Free Press*. The program provides support to women who have been incarcerated and helps them acquire educational and vocational skills so that they may live independently and be reunited with their families. Shortly after they read the article, the Coates' daughter died unexpectedly. In her memory, they decided to have donations made to Northern Lights. "We knew it was the right decision," says Margaret. "Our daughter always believed in giving people a second chance, and that's what this program is all about."

The first holiday season following their daughter's death, David and Margaret bought a tree and decorations and brought it to the Northern Lights house. For one resident, it was the first time in her life that she had ever had this experience. The Coates have continued the tradition, and each year, they bring a tree to the house and visit with the women as they decorate.

Since then, the Coates have attended the annual graduation ceremony, which celebrates

the women's accomplishments—getting a job, finishing an educational program, getting an apartment, or being reunited with their children. They present each graduate with a book and another present, such as a personalized necklace. In addition, the Coates have set up a fund for the women which is available for them to use for special educational and vocational needs, such as new clothes for a job interview or tuition for a computer course.

"Sometimes I'm just taken aback," says Margaret. "We can see the changes in the women. It's made a difference in so many lives, not just for the women, but for their families as well. We know our daughter would be happy."



In addition to many candid photos, Ned Castle took numerous photos of teams in their curling "attire," including the Dealer.Com team above.



Ned Castle and Alison Redlich, photographers extraordinaire, volunteered their skills to document two HowardCenter events this past year. Both spent many hours in

Cairn's Arena photographing our first annual Curling Challenge. In addition, Alison (*above left*) photographed our 2010 Big Night event and Zoe's Race.

Ken Brown, a Community Friends Mentor, shared his love of woodworking with his mentee. When the teen expressed his dream of seeing a Yankee's game, they built and sold

“The kids are always looking for ways to volunteer.”

—Beth Cole, School Counselor, BFA Fairfax



Left: Mark Bonser during construction of the ramp. By late afternoon that same day, the Sirowayo sisters were able to try out the new ramp.

Opposite: JJ Siarowayo tests the new ramp.

birdhouses together to raise the funds. (See photo on page 1.)

Annette Perras divides her time between Vermont and Florida. However, when she is in Vermont, she volunteers to help with bulk mailings and to help plan fundraising events, such as our annual Big Night.

Mark Bonser (RedHawk Limited) and architect **Christian Brown** (Christian Brown Designs) generously contributed hours of their time to design and build a new, safe ramp with sides so that 19-year-old Emma Sirowayo and her 18-year-old sister JJ can navigate themselves in their wheelchairs. The previous ramp was unstable and dangerous to maneuver in a wheelchair. The project was one of three that received support from money raised through Zoe’s Race, a HowardCenter fundraiser to benefit families who receive support from HowardCenter and need to modify their homes to make them accessible for their children.

Louise Contino is one of many University of Vermont students who mentor HowardCenter SUCCEED students. SUCCEED is a post-secondary education program, offered in partnership with UVM, for students with developmental disabilities. When Contino was matched with her student, she discovered that they shared an interest in photography. Contino taught the student how to use her camera, and they embarked on a joint project, taking pictures all over campus. They printed their photos using the campus darkroom. Other UVM

mentors have helped SUCCEED students build social connections through participation in a variety of activities—getting them involved in clubs, playing pool, or working out at the gym.



Beth Cole, a school counselor at BFA Fairfax, and her students have volunteered for four years for HowardCenter’s Holiday Gift Wrap Project at Borders Books. “The kids

are always looking for ways to volunteer. They really enjoy volunteering, and it is fun to do things like this in the big city,” says Cole. The high school juniors and seniors belong to the Vermont Teen Leadership Safety Program, a national program affiliated with Students Against Destructive Decisions.



ALISON REDLICH

Susie Merrick has produced and hosted a cable television show for HowardCenter for 15 years on a volunteer basis. The show, “Unsung Heroes,” features a different HowardCenter service each month, and staff discuss the challenges and successes of the programs they represent. This past summer, Susie was nominated for a United Way Home-town Heroes Award for her contributions to HowardCenter and for her work with the South Burlington School District. ■

Volunteers: What Can You Do?

- Mentor a young child
- Sponsor a fundraising event for HowardCenter
- Bake a meal for staff and clients at one of our residential homes
- Sponsor a child during our Holiday Giving Project
- Sign up for our Holiday Gift Wrap Project
- Teach a class to adults
- Share your interest or hobby with a child or young adult
- Help with bulk mailings from our administrative office
- Assist at a HowardCenter event

By the Numbers

- 10,000: Estimated HowardCenter volunteer hours from December 2009–November 2010.
- \$17.27: The value of one volunteer hour, according to 2008 national research
- \$172,700: Total volunteer value for one year

If you would like to volunteer, contact Kesta Perras at 488-6913 or at kestap@howardcenter.org. ■

“Thank you. Merci. Grazie. Terima Kasih. Danke. Hvala. Dziękuję. Agradecimiento. Köszönöm.”

Volunteers

from December 2009–November 2010

Each year, hundreds of individuals contribute their time and skills to HowardCenter. We thank you all.

ART HOP

Jade Shaw
Pamela VandeWeert
Ken Ward
Kristen Hayden-West

Kathy Connolly
Kevin Dwyer
Joyce Hagan
Jim Leddy
Roxane Leopold
Jan Marinelli
Sarah Muyskens
Jim Stuart

BIG NIGHT

Mel Allen
Jamie Banghart
Gina Barrera
Jessie Bradley
Diane Carrier
Cheryl Couture
Tammy Cusson
Carolyn Fundis
Jill Greene
Liliana Hall
Carol Hanley
Karen Hussey
Tracy Liebenow
Lynnette Loges
Martie Majoros
Mary McKearin
Liz Mitchell
Annette Perras
Kesta Perras
Jen Phalen
Gail Rafferty
Alison Redlich
Gail Rosenberg
Tracey Schneider
Pamela Steece
Sandy Steingard
Jaclyn Strano
Mary Esther Treat
Pamela VanDeWeert
Ann Yandow
Barb York

COMMUNITY FRIENDS MENTORING

Alisha Aiken
Amy Alfieri
Sarah Ashworth
Nick Beahan
Judy Bergeron
Rachel Berube
Cheryle Bilodeau
Tom Borys
Michelle Boutin
Patti Brosseau
Gloriane Brown
Ken Brown
Vanessa Brunkhorst
Kathy Caban
Brad Calabro
Barb Callahan
Deb Chisholm
Cindy Chittenden
Larry Clarfeld
Gail Clook
Nancy Colbourn
Lucy Cooney
Sally Dattilio
Donna M. Dec
Diane DiGennaro
Barbara Donnelly
Anna Dorey
Michael Dowling
David Ellenbogen
Carla Fiske
Peggy Frawley
John Gallagher

Emily Gibbs
Dennis Grage
Kaitlin Gregg
Kelli Guider
Steven Habif
Jean Haverstick
Kristen Hayden-West
Rachel Hopkins
Irene Horbar
Mike Howard
Larry Hughes
Dawna Jarmusz
Sarah Jennings
Susan Keeler
Brianna Kern
Kerstin Lange
Ann Laramee
Debbie LaRosa
Sheila Lefebvre
Whitney Leighton
Michael Leugers
Meira Lifson
Sue Macmillan
Kerry Mahoney
Matt Malaney
Arnie Malina
Nancy McGowan
Patty McMullen
Joanne McQuade
Nick Meltzer
Cathy Michaels
Prue Milnes
Dale Morway
Joanne & Howard
Muehlberger
Pat Myette
Danielle O'Brien
Grace PerLee
Kaela Plant
Gordon Raymond
Nancy Rehm
Kris Reinhardt
Adam Repash
Lindsay Reszewski
Ahana Richards
Kathy Roberts
Lonni Rodgers
Gail Rosenberg
Susan Rosle
Mary Ross
Mary Beth Rowe

Katie Roy
Neal Sand
Bethany Scott
Jim Sestokas
Jennifer Shatigan
Joann Shaw
Ken Signorello
Carmen Stafford
Carrie Stirewalt
Tyler Stoddard
Hannah Suprenant
Phan Thai
Alicia Thibeault
Christine Toomey
Michelle Trudell
Dana Visser
Marilyn Welch
Alice Weston
Jill Wilkens
Marissa Wilkens
Chris Williamson
Angela Wong
Lindsay Wood
Naomi Wright

CURLING

Keegan Albaugh
Becky Allen
Rob Allen
Shilo Allen
Liz Alton
Stephanie Atwood
Sheryl Bellman
Jackie Bettis
Katie Bloore
Rick Blount
Joel Bradford
Natalie Bradford
Jeremy Brown
Matthew Buckley
Cathie Buscaglia
Sarah Butson
Rich Carpenter
Ned Castle
Mary Cenci
Todd Centybear
Nate Cloutier
Hon. James Crucitti
Peter Cullen
Tom Dalton
Rich Dauphin

Mitch DeHond
Bill Doble
Connie Dollinger
Jack Dubuque
John Egan
Mike Evarts
Colleen Fiske
Meghan Fitzpatrick
Jennifer Foxx
Russell Frank
Lt. James Goslin
Ryan Gurdak
Rich Haskell
Jen Hussey
Karen Hussey
John Isaacson
Lorraine Jenne
Hon. Ben Joseph
Debbie Keel
Grace Keller
Jeanne Keller
Rolf Kielman
Max Krauss
Bob L'Ecuyer
Laurie L'Ecuyer
Blythe Leonard
Tracy Liebenow
Lynette Loges
Martie Majoros
Bob McKearin
Mary McKearin
Annie McShiras
Alison Mercier
Jen Mitchell
Ross Montgomery
Jay Murray
Mike Nolan
Andrea Norton
Tom O'Connor
Meg O'Donnell
Trish Orr
Rufus Patrick
Alexander Pearce
Julie Pearce
Laura Pearce
Michael Pearce
Bill Pence
Chris Pepin
Kesta Perras
Tim Perras
Doug Phillips-Hamblett
Harriette Phillips-Hamblett
Meagan Quinlan
Alison Redlich
Kevin Renaud
Sam Renaud
Katie Ridgely

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS CAMPAIGN

Lesli Blount
Rick Blount
Joe Boutin

Scot Rose
Gail Rosenberg
Lynn Sayyeau
Tammy Shannon
Dave Shepard
Catherine Simonson
Mike Sitko
Slater
Kathy Soulia
Sandy Steingard
JJ Strausser
Whitney Troy-Vowell
Pam VandeWeert
Michael Wanderlich
Susan Weeks
Adam Weschler
Joanne Weschler
Katy Wilder
Matt Wohl
Bob Wolford
Jackie Yenerall
Hon. Patricia Zimmerman
Marie Zura

HOLIDAY GIFT WRAP

Darcy Baird
Sarah Bartlett
Michele Beaupre
Christina Boerner
Peter Burns
Cathie Buscaglia
Rich Carpenter
Susan Carter
Lyressa Chien
Mary Jo Childs
Kathy Connolly
Nancy Danforth
Dave DiElsi
AnneMarie DuBois
Sandra Fary
Joe Fischer
Liliana Hall
Pam Hansen
Robin Harris
Beth Holden
Alyssa Jones
Lisa Jones
Kathy & Michael Larkin
Joy Lasell
Jackie Lehman
Deb Light
Lynnette Loges
Laurie Lovering
Lydia Mosman
Leonora Myers-Nelson
Brenda Norton
Louise O'Brien

Mike Paquette
Holly Parrish
Gail Rafferty
Kristen Rajewski
Kelly Reagan
Brenda Schill
Aren Small
Barbara Stebbins
Pamela VanDeWeert
MiChele Weber
Sue Whalen
Karen Yankowski

HOLIDAY GIVING PROJECT

Kym Asam
Tricia Austin
Diane Bacon
Cindy Benenati
Adrianna & Scott Benson
Bud & Nancy Bigelow
Linda Blackerby
Lindsay Blake
Marissa Bouffard
Amy & Christopher Breen
Katrina Breen & Staff
Patricia Brennan
Irene Brimicombe
Stacey Buonanno
Nancy Carlson-Fisher
Daniela Caserta
Todd & Margaret Centybear
Debby Clemons
Racheal Codega
Amelia Coleman
Annie Condon
Kathy & Tom Connolly
Carolyn Corbato
Mara Coven
Sally Cummings
Jory & Dennis Curran
Juliette Davis
Julie & Robert Devins
Deirdre Driscoll
Donna Ellison
Lisa Eriksson & Family
Todd Fay
Bernie Ferenc
Paul Frascoia
Edorah Frazer
Heather Gagnon
Shannon Ghostlaw
Jim Gorman
Mary Graham
Jill Gray Wilkins
Martha Haley
Liliana Hall

JJ & Janette Hamilton, Jr.
Mr. Rocky Harlow
Lindsey Hebert
Tara Hennigar
Amanda Houlier
Jean Garvin School
Sofia Kimball
Coree & Ned Kirsch
Annette Labombard
Sue Lamay
Kathy & Michael Larkin
Kimerly Laroche
Kevin & Rachel Lavallee
Katy Lemery
Andrea Lovejoy
Lisa Lubas
Steve MacArthur
Karen Malley
Tracey Maurer
Tom McCormick
Annie McCullough
Alice McGovern
Sandy McGuire
Susie & Ben Merrick
Sarah Merritt
Pastor Joe Moore
John & Aliana Murphy
Kristin Murphy
Sarah Myers
Catherine Natale
Rebecca Nelson
Mike Nichols
Delvis Noble
Joan Norton
Grace O'Brien
Anne O'Neill & Crawford Byers
Anne Paradiso
Elsie & R. Allan Paul
Chris Pepin
Annette & Jerome Perras
James Perras
Robin Pesci & First Call Team
Joyce Place
Marcia Purvis
Darcie Rankin
Lynn Reagan
Nancy Reynolds
Marilyn Richards
MaryLee Ritter
Kathi Roesler
Gail Rosenberg & Tom O'Connor
Maryann Russell
Linda Saia
Alison Segar

Jennifer Shatagin
Lisa Shepard
Eileen Simollardes
Michael Simoneau & Geri Reilly
Angela Simpson & Movie Night
David & Angela Simpson
Chris Smith
Jina Smith
Shannon Spofford
Christine & Christopher Staffa
Mary Steiger
Diane Stevens
Jan & Michael Stiles
James Stuart
Rhonda Stuart
Sharon Sturm
Megan Tonelli
Marna & Steve Tulin
Saralinda & Danny Turner
Susan Vaccarelli
Kristie Wildes
Dana Williams
Terry Wilson
Cindy Wright
Alayna Younger
David & Kim Ziegelman

RESOURCE CENTER

Ronel Verbeek

SUCCEED

Gabriel Brunelle
Amber Casterlin
Chelsea Cocce
Catherine Comiskey
Emily Depman
Corey Gibeault
Matthew Guerrera
Michelle Howard
Michael Lawlor
Marie Limoges
Karah Lothian
Tasha Manning
Michelle Mattison
Chelsea McShane
Hang Nguyen
Monica Picard
Joanna Riley
Lesley Schroeter
Greg Swank

UNSUNG HEROES

Susie Merrick

WESTVIEW

Marcheta Townsend

ZOE'S RACE

Bill Allen
Karen Allen
Stan Baker
Sima Brieterman
Amy Briody
Emma Briody
Paul Briody
Cathie Buscaglia
Rich Carpenter
Dana Charlee
Pascal Cheng
May Chow
Mindy Clawson
Katrina DeAnjou
Sean Fitzpatrick
Jen Frolic
Liliana Hall
Troy Headrick
Luisa Hutt
Monica Hutt
Max Krauss
Delaina Lamoreux
Gwen Lamoureux
Alyssa Lewis
Kaylan Livsey
Martie Majoros
Tonya Mason
Flossie Miller
Nancy Milne
Jen Mitchell
James Moore
David Nestor
Erika Nestor
Lucas Nestor
Sam Nestor
Bill Pence
Chris Pepin
Adam Poulin
Mark Prior
Bob Radler
Emma Radler
Jackson Radler
Alison Redlich
Gail Rosenberg
Mark Schroeter
Brian Stroppolino
Brian Switchkow
Beth Tarallo
Barbara Trimmer
Anne Vernon
Michelle Waweru
Josh Zall

Online Contributions

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

HowardCenter Is Site for Three Federal Research Projects

1. A research project being conducted by the National Institute of Mental health to study the value of early intervention and comprehensive treatment for those experiencing a first schizophrenic episode.
2. A controlled study to evaluate the ease of administering a new point-of-care test for HCV (Hepatitis C) using the OraQuick HCV Rapid Antibody Test.
3. A study directed by Mark McGovern of Dartmouth College which will evaluate outcomes of different models of treatment for individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Recently Awarded Grants

■ A Drug-Free Communities Grant was awarded to the Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community (BPHC). As members of the BPHC, Centerpoint Adolescent Treatment Services, a collaborative program among HowardCenter, Northeastern Family Institute, and

Matrix Health Systems, will provide substance abuse and mental health services to adolescents and their families.

- Dwight Asset Management Company awarded \$5,000 to the Community Friends Mentoring program.
- Genentech Foundation awarded \$25,000 to HowardCenter for comprehensive Hepatitis C services for current or former injection drug users.
- The Sills Family Foundation granted \$20,000 to Northern Lights, a supportive residential program for women returning from prison.
- The Vermont Children's Trust Fund awarded a three-year grant with a total award of \$25,725 to the Community Friends Mentoring program. The funds will be used to maintain the current level of 70 mentor-mentee matches per year. ■

Our Loyal "Alumni"

continued from page 2

At this time of year when we count our own blessings and focus on the needs of others, thank you for considering a donation to HowardCenter. We will steward your donation to further our mission of improving the well-being of children, adults, families and communities. And we will add you to our very important group of "alumni." ■

In Memoriam

WE ARE DEEPLY SADDENED by the loss of one of our colleagues, Kathleen Smith. An employee since 1994, Kathleen had worked in various capacities within the agency. Most recently, she was employed as a residential counselor at Branches, a HowardCenter transitional group home for adults with mental health issues. Her enthusiasm and spirit touched the lives of her co-workers and the clients she served. She will be remembered fondly by staff and all who knew her.

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
Martie Majoros
Editor

A publication of HowardCenter
208 Flynn Avenue
Suite 3J
Burlington, VT 05401
Telephone 802.488.6900
Fax 802.488.6901
www.howardcenter.org

CenterScope is published two times a year.

Todd Centybear
Executive Director

Mary McKearin
Planning and Development Director

Gail Rosenberg
Development and Public Relations Manager

Development Office
Telephone 802.488.6912
Fax 802.488.6901

www.howardcenter.org

Board of Trustees

Karen O'Neill
President

Peter McCarthy
Vice President

John McSoley
Treasurer

Marna Tulin, Ph.D.
Secretary

Mark Baglini
Dan Balón, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Bassett
Rick Blount
Hal Colston
Katherine Connolly
Gillian Eaton
Kevin Endres
Elizabeth Grant
Curt Hennigar
Susan Hillman
Michael Lipson
Stacey Miller, Ph.D.
Barbara Oliver
Duane Peterson
Michael Simoneau
Debra Stenner
Gail Stevenson, Ph.D.
Jim Stuart
Carmen Thibodeau

Honorary Members
Jack Dwyer
William Heaslip
E. William Leckerling
Susan Cain O'Brien
George Philibert
Tony Villanti



United Way of Chittenden County

HowardCenter is a United Way member agency.

This publication is available in accessible formats.

If this issue is addressed to someone who no longer works with your organization, please notify us of the address correction at HowardCenter's Development Office, 802.488.6911.



This newsletter is printed on 30% postconsumer recycled paper.

“Everyday is full of surprises and different options.”

—Derrick LaMarch, Shared Living Provider

A Good Match

by Marisa Hamilton

HOWARDCENTER BENEFITS FROM the many skills and talents that volunteers contribute to the organization. These folks open their hearts to the needs of their neighbors and community. There are also other individuals, contracted as Shared Living Providers, who open their hearts—and homes—to the individuals we serve who need support to live within their community.

Derrick LaMarch and Chris Osborne, both in their early 20s, are roommates. In many ways, they are typical of other 20-year-olds learning how to navigate the ups and downs of living in a shared space. However, they didn't become roommates by poring through roommate wanted ads. Instead, they were matched through HowardCenter's Shared Living/Roommate Program. The program matches individuals with a developmental disability with a single person, a couple, or a family in the community. The individual becomes a member of the household and enjoys the security, consistency, and responsibility that are involved in living with roommates. The Shared Living provider offers day-to-day assistance and support tailored to meet the individual's needs. Each placement is carefully considered through a matching process that is designed to ensure that each match is mutually compatible.

LaMarch and Osborne are an example of one such match, and by their own admission, it is a good one. LaMarch, a digital forensics and computer security double major at Champlain College, is a home provider/roommate for Chris. In addition, Jamie Clare, a Specialized Community Support Worker, accompanies Chris at his part-time job at Shaw's while LaMarch is attending classes. The three men recently shared their thoughts—and experiences—related to their unique living situation.

MH: What led you into the career of home providing?

Derrick: I was a Schwann's food delivery driver, and another home provider on my route told me

about the Shared Living Program. *[Derrick was about 22 when he first started. He and Chris have been together for more than three years.]*

MH: What is it like on a day-to-day basis to be a home provider?

Derrick: Everyday is full of surprises and different options. Once, the three of us took a trip to Colorado for Chris' brother's wedding. We brought Chris' sister along with us. It was a great time, and, as a matter of fact, we should do another road trip real soon! *[The three are thinking of surprising Chris' sister in New Orleans with a visit this spring.]*

Jamie: One day we all decided to go play golf, while out on Hole 7, it started pouring rain. Then Chris' chair broke down. (Chris uses a motorized vehicle that weighs over 450 lbs.) We had to carry and haul Chris and the chair back to the van in order to get Chris warm and dry again. *[The three tell the story with obvious enjoyment and animation.]*

MH: What do you like best about being a roommate?

Derrick: It keeps you upbeat—you are never home alone. Chris sees me all the time, even when I “mess up.” We are always doing something, or just hanging out playing video games.

When asked what they have in common, they enthusiastically reel off their shared interests. Both Derrick and Chris love computers, golfing, and especially food. While munching on colorful gummy-worms, they describe their favorites: Chris loves “broccoli and friends,” which is broccoli, onions, and garlic sautéed, then smothered in cheese. Derrick loves a really good Veal Parmigian (his grandmother's recipe is the best) and spudini, an Italian beef dish. Eggs in a basket is a mutual favorite. Jamie loves anything with jalapeños in it!

MH: What would you want other people to know about what you do?

Derrick: Being a home provider is sort of like being a big brother. It also feels like being a stepdad in a way. *[At the word, “stepdad” Chris shakes his head “no.” The three laugh.]* Chris tells us through augmentative commu-



Chris Osborne, Jamie Clare, and Derrick LaMarch (standing).

nication that, “Derrick was great with finding the new van.” Chris now uses that van for transportation.

MH: How does this fit in with your life goals?

Derrick: It is a good way for me to have a full-time job while going to college full time. There is a kind of freedom that comes from doing this job. And who could say “no” to that face! *[Derrick says this while looking at Chris, and they both laugh.]* I have tons of time to study. Sometimes Chris helps me study. Right, buddy?

As the three leave to go on to the next adventure of the day, Chris' job, they portray a solid impression of commitment, compatibility, and joy: commitment to each other and the program, compatibility in experiencing life with a peer, and joy in the simple, and yet important things in life. This indeed is a Shared Living/Roommate match at its finest. ■

For more information about the Shared Living Program, please call Marisa Hamilton at Developmental Services at 802-488-6571.

There are currently—

141 Shared Living Homes, mostly in Chittenden County

167 Providers (some providers are partners)

167 clients in homes receiving services

Our Changing Community

continued from page 1

leader in building community for our changing tomorrow.

This is the sentiment I experienced at the recent HowardCenter Diversity Retreat. Over 50 staff members participated to celebrate the many accomplishments and discuss why it is necessary to expand the agency's efforts to increase diversity resources and impact. Diversity and inclusivity have become the business imperative for success in a global economy. That same imperative can be embraced by HowardCenter as it delivers its services to a growing part of the community who need to know who we are.

We can do this. We must do this. And I say "we," because I will always be part of the HowardCenter family. ■

Thank you to our board of trustees who volunteer to contribute their time and skills in support of our organization.

Ready, Set ... Curl!

VISIT OUR WEB SITE IN THE NEXT few weeks for information about our 2011 Curling Challenge, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, March 19 and 20. The Challenge has been expanded this year and will be held over two days to accommodate 48 teams instead of last year's 32.

Once again, the event will be held at Cairn's Arena in South Burlington, and members of the Green Mountain Curling Club will provide instruction and equipment for all participants. The registration fee is \$500 per four-person team, and teams will soon be able to register through the online registration and fundraising website FirstGiving.com. In addition, participants are encouraged to raise funds beyond the registration fee.

Last year's event raised more than \$32,000, which helped the people we serve by:

- Bridging the funding gap for our Community Friends Mentoring Program, allowing the pro-

gram to match or sustain about 70 matches throughout the year.

- Creating a kitchen at ACT 1/Bridge, our substance abuse crisis and treatment program. Instead of frozen meals cooked in a microwave and eaten alone, this is a chance for a communal and sociable meal, cooked with healthy and nutritious produce.
- Providing supports for adults with developmental disabilities so they can live more independently. ■



www.howardcenter.org