

*Mr. Brian Beaton is a brilliant, motivated gentleman who is currently receiving support services from the Ballston Lake office. Brian (with some assistance from his staff) has assembled a support group that meets the first Friday of every month. Brian was very gracious in providing us with a summary of his support group to publish in the newsletter. It is my hope that he will continue his graciousness on a monthly basis!*

## **Fabulous First Fridays**

***“Don’t be discouraged, stay encouraged”***

By Brian K. Beaton  
Ballston Lake, NY

**F**abulous First Fridays is just that... Fabulous! This program was created to help integrate those of us with brain injuries and disabilities back into society. Consumers are encouraged to express their opinions and ideas for events to take place the first Friday of every month. The support and efforts between consumers and staff at RRI is the backbone to our success with Fabulous First Fridays.

Without the guidance and collaboration from staff and consumers, it would be next to impossible to bring to reality these events. The empowerment the staff of RRI puts behind each and every one of their consumers allows me, along with my staff, to work diligently to make possible a new event every month. There is a great diversity of topics. Since December we’ve attended the musical “The Nun Cracker”, a holiday party at the Cracker-Barrel restaurant, a luncheon at the Olive Garden, dinner and a movie at Amies, and “Speaking Out” night, with testimony from a recovering brain injury advocate that was highly motivational.

Our upcoming events include Bowling and Pizza night and Picnic in the Park in June. In July we’ll saddle up and go to the rodeo. At our Fabulous First Fridays, we welcome families and friends of the consumers to join in the spirit of fun, food, support and socialization... all in order to motivate persons with a TBI. I feel that change for the better is possible. ♦

## **An Emerald Street Olympian**

By Petra Blount, DSP  
Emerald St., Keene, NH

As soon as the snow begins to fly Gregg Levitre is dusting off his skis. As a long time member of the Special Olympics Team, Gregg has participated in cross country skiing, bowling and track and field. He has been a dedicated and valuable member of the team for over 21 years. In that time Gregg has received over 200 medals for his efforts. His hard work has been supported by another group of dedicated and hard working individuals—his trainers and staff. As a team, Gregg and the RRI staff and his trainers, prepare each year for Special Olympics, and it’s an event that we all look forward to! ♦

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## **PLAY TIME!!**

By Lisa D’Orsi, Program Supervisor  
Hampstead, NH

**W**ho says that work has to be that place that you drag yourself to and count the minutes until you can leave? Sherrie M, who has volunteered at the MSPCA for about a year now, looks forward to Fridays. She packs up her cat teaser toy, her bag of catnip and her volunteer badge and heads out to play. She visits each and every cage in the cat area to say ‘hello’ to all the guests and socialize with them. Once she has finished entertaining all of the cats in the large room she goes into the two smaller community rooms. She generally has her support staff sprinkle some catnip on her electric wheelchair to welcome the cats to come and investigate. She has had a cat or two try to spring themselves from the confines of the community room by hiding on the back of her chair. Once she has socialized with all of the cats she goes across the hall to the kennel area and visits with the dogs. She has been intimidated by dogs in the past, but has now grown to feel secure enough to take one for a walk around the grounds. ♦

## *My Dinner Party*

By Davis Suprenant, Bow, NH

I spent most of the summer at Hampton Beach and I enjoyed having my friends come up to visit me there. One friend that was unable to come up was Jon. Jon and I have known each other for many years and he has always been a strong advocate for me. He lives in Boston and travels to New York for work so he is very busy and I do not get to see him as much as I would like.

He invited me to a dinner party and I was so excited to see him and meet some new friends. The weather was great and we ate outside on the deck. We had a huge salad and lasagna and garlic bread. I was very full. Jon rode his motorcycle up and I got to sit on it but I was too afraid to go for a ride with him. I even tried on the helmet. Jon and I laughed a lot and talked about stuff. He can sign some but he understands my signs. I had a great night seeing him and I want to go to Boston to see him one day when he is not very busy.

I email Jon a lot and he is a very good friend to me. He likes Chris too. Here is a picture of us all together. ♦



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### **From The WKS Safety Committee**

Looking for a cost-effective way to freshen your carpet? Try sprinkling some baking soda on your rugs before you vacuum. It'll help reduce odors and freshen your house without the extra scents and unnecessary chemicals found in scented carpet fresheners that can be irritating to people and pets!

♦

## **Laugh 'Til You Cry**

By Bridget McCabe, Associate Director  
Scarborough, ME

The little seaside community of Damariscotta is home to Youth Promise, an organization that works for youth with substance abuse issues to keep them involved in their community and out of institutions. Four years ago, Youth Promise began holding a midwinter fundraiser that attracts folks from all around, the “Guys in Gowns” show. If you can just imagine a bunch of rough and tumble, bearded and bellied, mid-coast Maine men dressing up as women, you have a pretty clear idea of what we all were seeing.



This year, as in year's past, our one and only Patrick Leeman, DSP from the Pemaquid program, participated as a contestant in Guys in Gowns. This year he arrived as Ms. Brit, persona non grata to Britney Spears, only he was much more beautiful and poised. As much as he misbehaves, he behaves much better than his namesake. Patrick, or should I say, Ms. Brit, works at the Pemaquid program and most everyone connected with that program attended the great performance. It was a sight to behold with mouths open and eyes glued to the stage. Ms. Brit borrowed Moose, a female Chihuahua, to accompany her during the performance. The event was a success for several reasons: Ms. Brit won the competition - I think it was her high kicks, Youth Promise raised a good amount of money and we all had a great time laughing until we cried! We are all looking forward to next year. ♦

## Mardi Gras

By Christina Fogarty, Office Admin. &  
Jen Boisvert, Health Services Director  
*Bow, NH*

**A**fter our successful Halloween party (and haunted room) and with the quickly approaching holiday season the Bow Office was looking to do something different for our next event. We knew that the holiday season is always so busy with family and friends, and we wanted our event to be something joyfully planned and attended.

Inspiration struck with the suggestion of having a Mardi Gras Party. February 24 was the actual Mardi Gras date this year, and ultimately we had to schedule our party on Friday, February 27.



Tyra, Karin and Carol Ann were very busy for weeks making the invitations and most of the decorations. Other people were invited to participate in the crafting and a few people dropped in during scheduled sessions. The added color and sparkle was energizing during what is often a bleak time of year.

Each individual and DSP made, or brought, their own masks. Many people came dressed in costume. Some of the office staff were inspired to participate in making something to wear to the party. For a special activity (and treat to give to party goers), chocolate covered pretzel sticks were made, decorated and wrapped by Tyra, Karin, and Chris on Thursday (to ensure freshness).

Celebration food items found their way to the buffet table (mac and cheese, tortellini salad, meatless taco salad dip and chips, veggie platters, hot dogs,

American Chop Suey, shrimp cocktail, yummy chocolate desserts and Deb Aherrera brought in her famous chicken wings. If you tasted her chicken wings, you would want them at every party too.)

Everyone had a great time socializing, dancing, and, of course, eating. We had a King and Queen elected, and they wore special crowns that were made by Karin and Carol Ann with help from Tyra.



**Queen  
Diane**

**King  
Arthur**

I can say that our parties may be small in numbers attending but they ROCK! ♦



**Left:  
Ken in one of the  
beautiful masks we  
made.**



**Right:  
Karin enjoying the  
festivities.**

## Onward and Upward... In a "New York" Minute

By Kevin Defayette, Regional Director  
*New York*

**Progress** [prog'res' n a forward movement; advance; improvement, gain in proficiency; passage from place to place; a journey of state, or a circuit.-vi **progress'**, to go forward; to go on, continue; to advance; to improve.-n **progression** [-gresh'(o)n] motion onward; progress; movements by successive stages; a series of numbers or magnitudes increasing or decreasing according to a fixed law.- n **progress'ive**, moving forward; advancing by successive stages; tending to improvement; favoring reforms, or encouraging the adoption of new methods and inventions; increasing as the base increases.

Over the past two years, the New York offices have been presented with an exciting opportunity. This opportunity is a result of a state regulation change that has necessitated us to apply for a Home Health Care License in order to continue providing Home and Community Support Services. Currently, planning has begun to prepare for licensure as we wait anxiously for the green light from the NYS Bureau of Licensing.

Another opportunity that has knocked on our door is the NYS Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Medicaid Waiver Program (NHTD). We've recently been approved to provide services through this program and have already begun to receive referrals. This program is designed to provide community based support services to individuals who would otherwise require nursing home level care. The NHTD services we are now offering mirror the programs that we provide via the NYS Traumatic Brain Injury Program.

We have learned and are continuing to learn new concepts and approaches to serving individuals throughout the communities in which we serve. As we move forward, our collaborative efforts will continue to strengthen and shine. Some say it "takes a village" in order to keep up with changes and take on new challenges. How fortunate we are to belong to the Residential Resources village. ♦

## Spring Has Arrived!

By Ella Belden &  
Jane Valentine, Service Coordinator  
*Cobleskill, NY*

**T**here is a green thumb living here in Schoharie County in upstate New York. This great green thumb is a lovely lady by the name of Ella Belden. She is a gardener from way back. When asked what she includes in her garden, she replies, "Just about everything". Her partner in this annual endeavor is her husband Arthur, who is also quite the green thumb.

Ella's mobility is mainly through the use of her motorized wheel chair. How does Ella manage her gardens? She has raised garden beds, and yes, some ground level garden, too, so Arthur can participate also. Ella can plant, weed, and attend to her portion of the gardens and together, Ella and Arthur produce a wonderful harvest.

Ella not only has a green thumb outside, but inside her fall harvest produces canned goods and frozen produce to utilize through the year. You will meet Ella again in the fall to get a glimpse of the wonderful finale of her gardens. We hope to share some pictures. Any other green thumbs out there? We'd like to hear about your green thumb experiences. ♦



The Peru Management Team dressed in red in observance of National Heart Day for Women. The team members pictured above are Amanda Maggy, Molly Farrington, Karen Jock, Vicki Felio, Tammy Benway, Devin Krawlic and Theresa Guynup. ♦

## The Day After

By Kevin R. Defayette, Regional Director  
New York

Theresa Guynup, Amanda Maggy & Kevin Defayette were bright eyed and bushy tailed following the two day New York Planning Retreat.



The Corporate Team and the Administrative Teams from all three of the New York Offices met for two days in Keene recently to discuss, plan and strategize in order to optimally support existing programming while creating solid systems for new initiatives. ♦

**THANK YOU to everyone who contributed articles and pictures to the newsletter.**

Articles are due by the second Tuesday of each month for the following month's newsletter. The newsletter will be posted at [www.ResResources.com](http://www.ResResources.com) on the fourth Friday of each month.

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of the newsletter mailed to you, please contact your local Residential Resources office to make arrangements. ♦



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## *Our Guiding Principles*

***Creativity*** We foster creativity by exploring and learning, embracing change, and pursuing best practice. We always ask ourselves, "Is there a better way?"

***Truth / Honesty*** We foster an environment where open and honest feedback and sharing are expected, encouraged, and supported. We honor commitments; and we share feelings, opinions, experiences, ideas, and information in order to optimize each individual's personal and professional growth and development.

***Empowerment*** We empower people through a process which includes giving them the opportunities, the authority, the information, and the examples necessary to become successful decision makers.

***Diversity*** We welcome and value different perspectives, contributions, and capabilities. We promote growth, opportunity, and experience.

***Quality*** We continuously improve our services by: Promoting positive change; Increasing knowledge and skills; Encouraging personal growth; Valuing individual differences; Learning from our experiences.

***Respect*** We believe that respect is a right, and we conduct ourselves accordingly. Our standards include the exercise of human dignity; the honoring and valuing of self and others; and communication that is clear, direct, and honest.

***Trust*** We create trust by being consistent, stable, honest, and reliable. Trust also requires sincerity, knowledge, and capability.