

Barrier Free Press

An Informational Publication from the Office for Individuals With Disabilities

New Youth Social Club

Newly formed, Meadowedge Social Club in Barnegat, is a facility that offers individuals with special needs recreational opportunities. Their open house was on February 2, 2008 and will be open for daily use Monday thru Friday as of late April.

Meadowedge believes that increasing an individuals independence is possible when the individual is give special tailored programs. This is done by teaching life skills and strategies so that the young members grow to their fullest potential. They offer groups for 9-13 year olds and 14 and up. The clubs feels that group interaction with peers will give the child the ability to learn through sharing various experiences.

State Taskforce under way for DD/MI population

Jennifer Velez, Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Human Services, has begun to set the ground work for addressing issues regarding services for individuals with co-occurring developmental disabilities with mental illness (DD/MI). The Task Force is comprised of providers, advocates, and consumers. The Task Force will develop a proposal to present to Commissioner Velez by late 2008.

The focus of these meetings is to address gaps in service and access issues for individuals living with DD/MI. Specific focus areas include psychiatric emergencies, collaborations between agencies, service needs, existing services and systems issues.

Through the expertise of a broad spectrum of Task Force participants the task force has a great foundation for analyzing and developing recommendations for our current system of care. Furthermore, through the support of Commissioner Velez, the taskforce has the ability to affect positive change within our community.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DD/MI Taskforce	1
New Kids Club	1
River Lady	2
Ada	2
MDA Hop-a-Thon	3
Department Update	3

River Lady Paddles In the Right Direction



May 1, 2008 was a cloudy day in South Toms River but despite the weather the turn out for the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities proclamation to the Captain of the River Lady was well attended and included multiple members from the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities as well as Toms River's Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher.

The proclamation was made by Regina Ferris, Toms River's Americans with Disability Act Advisory Committee chair to honor the River Lady for voluntary renovating one of their restrooms to be handicap accessible.



Ada

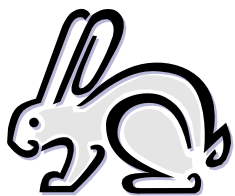
Ada , the super-hero, is a brain-child of Regina Ferris, the chair person of the Toms River Americans with Disability Act Committee.

Ada is meant to epitomize the inner strength that we all have regardless of our physical well-being. She is a symbol of fortitude and resolve. She is also a forceful reminder that we can accomplish much more than even we imagine is possible. A champion for equality, accessibility, inclusion and universal design, Ada is constantly striving to heighten awareness to the concerns of the disabled.

Office for Individuals with Disabilities

Department Update

- This year the Office for Individuals with Disabilities (OID) is looking to strategize towards growth and improvement based on the amplified need for information in our community.
- Since January of 2008, the OID has experienced an increase in the number of inquiries for information and resources. The current statistical analysis shows approximately 60 inquiries a month recorded by OID staff. Compared to the past two years, inquiries between January and February have increased nearly six times. As anticipated, the month of May has also brought an intensified number of individuals seeking assistance through the OID.
- In February of 2008 the Commission for Individuals with Disabilities hosted an information and education session regarding emergency preparedness for individuals with disabilities. Ocean County Office of Emergency Management, the American Red Cross - Jersey Coast Chapter, and the NJ State Police Emergency Management were represented in an effort to share critical information with our community. some planning ideas for individuals.
- Currently the Commission for Individuals with Disabilities is in the planning stages for a Disability Awareness Month project for October 2008. The Commission will update the community through future newsletters.



Kids Hop Into Spring with the MDA Hop-a-Thon

Throughout Ocean County the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) is sponsoring a Hop-a-Thon. The Hop-a-Thon has children, generally in the preschool ages, collecting donations for the local MDA. The child learns about disability awareness in class and receives a book that has disability awareness concepts in it. The sponsored child has a two minute timed period during class where they collectively hop. The participating child receives a sticker, coloring book, and Hop-a-Thon certificate.

Commission for Individuals with Disabilities

The Commission serves as the advisory board of the Ocean County Office for Individuals with Disabilities. The goal of the Commission is to address the needs and concerns of people with disabilities, their communities and organizations by providing education, information and advocacy through the Office and the volunteer advocates serving as Commissioners. All duties of the Office and the Commission for Individuals with Disabilities are aimed at improving the quality of life for all residents of Ocean County and to ensure full and equal participation in all aspects of life.

Linda Capuano, Chair	Regina Ferris	Colleen O'dell-Multer
Helen Springer, Vice Chair	Sally Jankowsky	Linda Radcliffe
John Budenas, Secretary	Bert Kormann	James Rodgers
Priscilla Barden	Scott Lepley	Margaret Rossetti
Robert Barden	Loren Marino	Thomas Spadaro
Nancy Coll	Dorothy McDowell	Mary Thomas
Michelle Feery	Jeanine Niemira	Philip Vales
		Fay Wilson

Ocean County Department of Human Services

Jill S. Perez, Director

Tracy Maksel, Assistant Director

Office for Individuals with Disabilities

Ryan L. Reilly, Coordinator

Terri Battaglio, Clerical Support

An Activity of the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders

John C. Bartlett, Jr.

John P. Kelly

James F. Lacey

Gerry P. Little, Liaison

Joseph H. Vicari

