

News Without Limits

July 2009

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A Letter from the Executive Director

I received a phone call recently from an employee in our Day Habilitation Program. It was the kind of call every Executive Director hopes to receive. Her message was one of praise for her fellow employees, for the caring and professional way she observes them interacting with our clients, and for the wonderful service they provide each day. In my experience at UCP, this type of call is the norm rather than the exception, due to the great “social capital” we have been building throughout our years of serving the community.



Bobbi Jo Yeager - Photo by Bangor Metro

Here in Maine, we continue to be faced with numerous economic challenges. And as we prepare to face even greater cuts in funding, people with disabilities need more services, not less. But despite the financial gloom, I feel hope and optimism for UCP. The relationships we have built with our clients, their families, and our employees will continue to make us an asset to the community.

We take relationship building seriously, and we know that it is the key to truly making a difference. It is the reason we have begun collaborating with seven other agencies to form a coalition for back office functions. This initiative is growing and I believe it will make UCP more effective and efficient by allowing us to focus on the things we do well. In addition, we have merged with the Elizabeth Levinson Center, which has expanded our residential services to the ICF/R world, bringing us a wealth of new knowledge and opportunities.

We also strive to build positive relationships with our employees. We have made it our goal to become the employer of choice for people seeking work in the social service field. We want to be an agency that cares about and listens to their employees. We want to build a family-friendly culture that actively supports and encourages professional growth and accountability. In order to meet these goals, our management team has begun working with Common Good Ventures, a consulting firm that will assist us in addressing these issues, as well as providing better access to our clients and creating a resource center for the community.

Even in the most difficult times, we are creating positive change because of the relationships we have built. Thank you to our clients, our volunteers, our families, our donors, and our employees for your support in times of struggle and for remaining hopeful for the future. Together, we are strong, and we will continue to make exciting things happen for people with disabilities and for our entire community.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobbi Jo Yeager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bobbi Jo Yeager

UCP ACQUIRES THE ELIZABETH LEVINSON CENTER

On March 1st, the Elizabeth Levinson Center began its new life with UCP managing the program. Staff worked together closely to coordinate a successful transition. To everyone's delight, 95% of staff stayed at the Center to continue the care and support of our clients, including Jane O. French, who was the State's ELC Administrator. She will be continuing her role as UCP's Administrator for the Levinson Center. This outstanding commitment provides a solid, consistent base our clients and families can rely upon.

The Elizabeth Levinson Center was established in 1971 as an Intermediate Care Facility serving people with Mental Retardation Nursing level program (ICF/MR Nursing) for children with severe or profound cognitive disabilities. The Levinson Center is the only ICF/MR Nursing program in Maine with a mission to provide residential care for medically fragile children and young adults with significant cognitive and medical needs. The Center's primary purpose is evaluation and treatment for children with severe and profound mental retardation and multiple medical disabilities. The Center also offers respite care to those parents whose children can not be served in the community and have significant medical needs.



Jane O. French

The Levinson Center was the last ICF-MR program in Maine run by the state. In 2008, the Maine legislature recommended and approved that the administration of this program should be put out to bid, in an effort to increase efficiencies and reduce costs. UCP submitted our detailed application in October and we were notified of the award in December. UCP brings to the Levinson Center a great deal of experience in supporting medically fragile youth who have multiple disabilities. Our agency is very family-centered, and we understand that to effectively serve youth with disabilities, we must develop strong relationships with their families. We are very pleased that so many staff chose to stay on in their positions, as their knowledge and experience in serving these children and young adults is invaluable to sustaining the quality of this program.

Located on the Hogan Road in Bangor, the Levinson Center is a barrier free facility consisting of four wings in the shape of a cross. The South Wing houses administrative offices and the kitchen. The East and West Wings house two residential units with their own dining areas, activity rooms, and fully equipped, barrier-free bathrooms. A pool house is adjacent the West Wing, and the North Wing currently houses a family living room for visits, a sensory integration room, and equipment storage areas.

So far, the transition has been a smooth one. UCP and ELC staff had a great opportunity to become acquainted with one another at our Staff Day at Camp Roosevelt in May, and continue to work together diligently to maintain ELC's high quality of care.



Recent Events

UCP Staff Day

On Friday May 15, 2009, a momentous day for UCP, we hosted our first all staff meeting since UCP began administering the Elizabeth Levinson Center in March 2009. At Camp Roosevelt in Eddington, during morning and afternoon sessions and lunch in between, we enjoyed a mix of fun and reflective activities, expertly led by staff from Common Good Ventures. As they arrived, staff enjoyed red carpet treatment at our Oscars themed event, complete with goodie bags. Many were caught by surprise with interviews on the red carpet, to be aired at lunchtime. Recorded by



UCP's Executive Director Bobbi Jo Yeager, with Common Good Adventure's Barbara Irish

NESCOM student Bill Shepherd, our "stars" commented on who they thought would win the awards, while trying to avoid the "Worst Dressed" list.



UCP's Staff engaged in a competitive game of Hollywood Squares

After some "get-to-know-you" icebreakers, staff assembled in small groups to ponder the accomplishments and challenges we have faced throughout the years, and when shared, their compelling observations often drew applause. On a number of issues, we heard the perspectives of Levinson Center Administrator Jane French, Board President John Heald and Executive Director Bobbi Jo Yeager. Staff competed in "UCP Hollywood Squares" for some great prizes, prompting much laughter.

The event ended "with the envelope, please", as Oscars were awarded for the stories that received the most votes from their colleagues.

Victory 100 Awards & Ice Cream Social

On June 30th UCP held an ice cream social and awards ceremony in honor of five outstanding volunteers who dedicated 100+ hours of their time and service to



UCP of Maine in 2008. John Heald, Jim Bradley, Kathleen Bell, Mary Henderson and Kelsey Pendergast were each honored with Victory 100 achievement awards from the National United Cerebral Palsy of Washington, DC. Many staff and friends of UCP turned out to honor the "fabulous five". We are truly blessed to have such dedicate volunteers that care so much about UCP. The United States average for a volunteer is \$20.25 an hour, so our Victory 100 volunteers provided over \$10,000 worth of services to UCP last year!



Victory 100 award winners Kathleen Bell, Kelsey Pendergast & Jim Bradley with UCP's Executive Director Bobbi Jo Yeager (not pictured Mary Henderson & John Heald).

Upcoming Events

Events on the Horizon:

AUGUST:

Blueberry Smoothie Booth – The 2009 American Folk Festival will be held on Bangor's beautiful waterfront on **August 28 – August 30th**. UCP will be continuing its tradition of selling one of the festival's favorite treats...Wild Blueberry Smoothies. Last year, this crowd pleaser kept our volunteers super busy, serving over 2,000 smoothies to festival goers over the weekend! Stop down and see us! We will be located near the Railroad Stage at the Festival.

OCTOBER:

Pumpkins in the Park, October 31, 2009 - Now in its seventh year, this festive party is a family tradition, drawing thousands of people to enjoy a warm, safe Halloween party for children. Featuring hundreds of glowing jack-o'-lanterns, two bounce houses, face painting, hayrides, clowns, balloon-tying, portrait photos, food and drink, and trick-or-treating, this event draws crowds of over 2,400 people! This year promises to be even bigger as the event lands on Halloween itself. In fact, we expect such a large turnout that we are expanding the event into the Civic Center for the first time. Talk with anyone who has attended "Pumpkins" and they will tell you, "Don't miss the fun!"

November/December:

Holiday Gift Wrapping - In 2008, the Bangor Mall invited UCP to set up a gift wrapping booth and we will be providing this service again this year. UCP will be at the Mall **November 26-December 24** providing wrapping services while at the same time raising money and awareness of our important work.

Would You Like to Volunteer?

UCP invites you to join in the fun and fundraising. You can lend a hand and support UCP by participating in one of our many volunteer opportunities. You can volunteer at one of our special events, serve on a committee, assist with fundraising efforts and the list goes on! If you are interested in making a difference, please contact Tish Pendergast at 207.992.0606 or tish.pendergast@ucpofmaine.org today!

Going on NOW!

2010 Art Contest and Calendar Project - UCP is soliciting people with disabilities to submit their artwork to be considered for publication in our 2010 calendar. We will offer these calendars for sale during the 2009 holiday season via dozens of area retail stores and at our gift-wrapping concession at the Bangor Mall. All art submitted for review will also be considered for display at UCP office locations. The calendar will include important information about UCP of Maine and will include disabilities advocacy and resource information. If you know someone with a disability that would like to submit a piece of art, or would like to help us with the project, LET US KNOW!

Evidence shows that early identification, early intervention and targeted education are critical to a child's ability to develop their full potential, yet many families are unsure where to turn when they first learn their child has a developmental delay or disability. These families need a single, trusted source of information that specifically relates to their needs and interests.

To bridge this gap, the MyChildWithoutLimits.org website and online community was developed by the national office of UCP and UCP of New York City. Providing comprehensive, reliable information and resources for families and professionals, the website will help empower families to make the important decisions they must make to build a bright future for their child.

The Website

The Web site provides access to accurate, user-friendly, and relevant disability-related information and resource guides on early intervention and family support. All material is reviewed by a committee of experts that includes medical doctors, nurses, clinicians, and professionals in the field, as well as family members who help to assure that the language is easy-to-understand and the site as inclusive as possible. Content from media partner Exceptional Parent magazine brings additional resources to the initiative. Visitors to the site will find disability-specific information for the most common types of childhood disabilities including:

- Facts and figures;
- Causes and symptoms;
- Diagnosis;
- Medications and treatment options including alternative therapies; and
- Latest research findings.

The site will also provide information and tips on how to:

- Locate specialists, facilities, and early intervention services;
- Build a healthcare team;
- Communicate with providers;
- Make legal and financial arrangements;
- Exercise rights under the law and advocate for services; and
- Manage family life.

The Community

The first realization that one's child is going to face the many challenges and obstacles encountered by those who live with a developmental delay or disability can be a lonely, frightening and confusing time. The social networking community allows parents to communicate with each other, ask questions of professionals and service providers, and receive support from the critical period of initial diagnosis through school years and beyond.

Visit My Child Without Limits today at <http://www.mychildwithoutlimits.org>.

Sponsor Spotlight



Penn National Gaming began in 1972 with the opening of the Penn National Race Course, and over the years has acquired many racetrack facilities and opened several casinos. Currently, Penn National Gaming operates 19 gaming facilities, seven racetracks, and six off-track wagering facilities making it the third largest publicly traded gaming company in the United States.

Hollywood Slots has had an outstanding impact on our local economy. Construction of the \$138 million facility involved 150 companies and 1,700 employees, with 67 percent of construction funds going to Maine companies. The facility currently employs 418 people, 321 full-time with benefits, and 97 part-time and/or seasonal employees.

Not only has Hollywood Slots been a tremendous asset to our economy, but they have been a wonderful community partner as well. The company supports 169 charities nationwide, including 36 in the Bangor area.

Since Hollywood Slots first joined the community in 2004, they have been a major sponsor of United Cerebral Palsy of Maine and our signature annual fundraising event, Pumpkins in the Park. Hollywood Slots has contributed close to \$70,000 to the community Halloween party for children and families, raising money and awareness for the important work that we do. This past year, Hollywood Slots also supported our fundraising efforts by supplying volunteers to work at our holiday gift wrapping booth at the Bangor Mall over the holiday season.

United Cerebral Palsy of Maine would like to thank Hollywood Slots for all that they do in our community and most importantly, all that they have done to support UCP and our mission: to advance the independence, productivity and full citizenship of people with disabilities who have multiple needs!

Changes for Peace Pals

Peace Pals Preschool & Childcare began in January, 2002, when Penquis Head Start asked UCP to develop a childcare program for children 3–5 years old with emotional/behavioral challenges and requiring a smaller setting with higher staff to child ratios. With Head Starts financial support, the program was able to offer the ideal setting for these children to be the most successful. Many of the children also received Developmental Therapy in the Peace Pals Preschool as well as childcare services.

The program has evolved over the past seven years as staff received weekly consults from Beth Cuddy, Ph.D. and Rosa Livonious, OTRL. These consults enhanced the program and enabled staff to identify the children's needs and develop positive reinforcements and interactions with the children. The consults also helped staff to become more knowledgeable and experienced teachers with preschoolers who have emotional/behavioral disabilities. Teachers learned to develop Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) with ABC data collection (Antecedent, Behavior, Consequences with Subjective Functions) and to develop positive strategies and reinforcers.

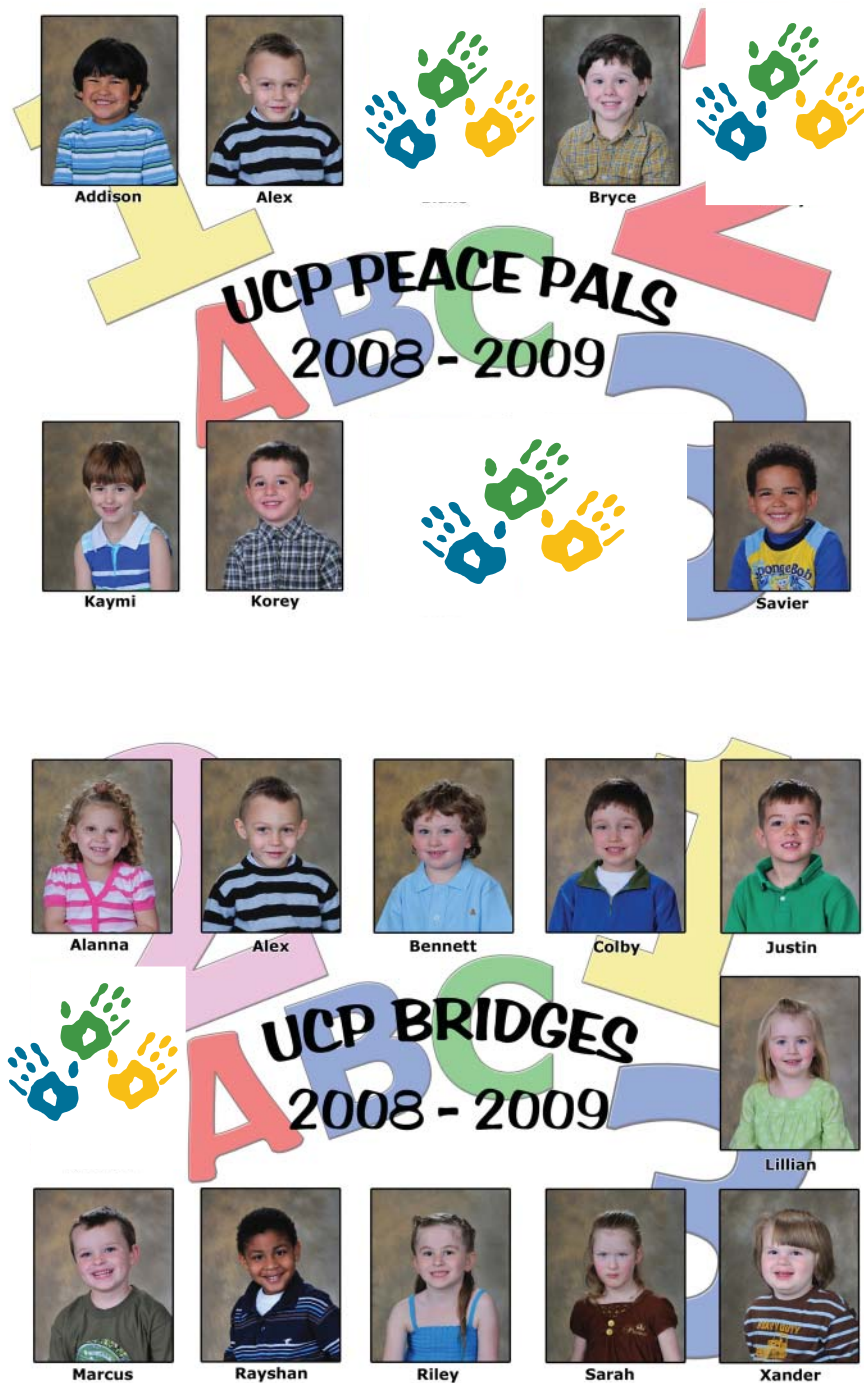
Peace Pals staff also became State DOE (Dept. of Education) certified, to provide Developmental Therapy/Specially Designed Instruction for children referred by CDS. We are proud of our employee satisfaction rates, with an average of 3½ years for teacher longevity, and our newest member here for 1½ years. The program director has been here for over 10 years with a Master Degree in Early Childhood Development. All teaching staff have Bachelors degrees, except for one who is currently enrolled in an Early Childhood Program. We have served approximately 90 children over the past 6½ years.

As of July 31, Peace Pals will no longer be located here at UCP. However, we are excited about the new plans. Peace Pals will be going out into the community for an inclusive experience. We will be occupying space at the Neighborhood Preschool in Bangor where experienced staff will assist these children in successfully transitioning into typical preschools and eventually graduate from needing Peace Pals supports. We will still be able to receive CDS referrals for children needing Developmental Therapy or Specially Designed Instruction.

Peace Pals staff will also be available to go into childcare settings to assist their staff with children exhibiting behavioral challenges. Our goal is to enable these children to remain in typical childcare settings rather than being removed due to aggressive behavior. Our staff will work side-by-side with childcare staff while modeling techniques that have been successful with many children with emotional and behavioral needs.

Change is difficult for everyone, and we are grateful for each and every Peace Pals staff member for their input and patience throughout this past year. We thank the UCP agency and Board of Directors for their belief in Peace Pals, and their assistance in moving forward with new adventures.

Peace Pals and Bridges 2009 Graduating Class



Photos by Douglass Photography

Congratulations Ruth and Seth!



Ruth Shook of Bangor, received the Ethel Hausman Volunteer of the Year Award in April, 2009. This is an award given by UCP National, which recognizes a local UCP volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. UCP celebrates her wonderful contributions to the community over the past 50 years, specifically establishing UCP of Northeastern Maine and Camp CaPella.



Seth Reardon of Orrington, received the Governor's Exemplary Service Award at the Hall of Flags in Augusta on April 21, 2009. This award is given to a select number of Maine volunteers that have earned recognition for their outstanding community service efforts. Seth has been volunteering for UCP for over 20 years and works diligently to help with UCP's many fundraising events and initiatives.

Both Ruth and Seth are wonderful assets to the UCP team, and we are very fortunate to have them. They generously give so much of their time and talent to assist our agency in making a difference. THANK YOU!!

We're on Facebook!

YES! UCP now has a facebook page. Please become a fan of our page! Our page will keep you updated about UCP events and happenings in the community on a regular basis. Check in often and please leave your own comments! We want to know what UCP means to you! You can find us by going to facebook.com and searching UCP of Maine, or by logging on to our website at www.ucpofmaine.org and clicking on our facebook page link!

"We Are So Much More"

We are more than our name...

We are more than a diagnosis...

And we can be *so much more* with your help!



Help us be so much more by making your donation today!

Go to www.ucpofmaine.org or mail your donation to:

UCP of Maine
700 Mt. Hope Ave Ste. 320
Bangor, ME 04401
tel: 207.941.2952

UCP has just launched our "We Are So Much More" Campaign, and we need your help! With only about 3% of our clientele with a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, it's important for our community to know that at UCP, we offer services to the entire spectrum of children and adults living with disabilities. Please consider a donation today, and visit our online donation page at www.firstgiving.org/ucp or fill out the form below. With your help and commitment to UCP of Maine, we can be "So Much More".

_____ **YES!** I would like to donate to UCP of Maine!

Name: _____

(Mr./Ms./Mrs.)

First

Last

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail Address _____

Amount: \$ _____

Payment Enclosed: **OR** Please Bill Me: _____ / _____
Month Year

**Please make your check payable to UCP of Maine and mail to UCP of Maine 700 Mount Hope Ave Suite 320 Bangor, Maine 04401