



Renee Uitto, CLS/OC Citizens' Advisory Committee Chairperson

**MAY 2012**

**CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER**

## **LOVING MY LIFE! By Katie Nagrant**



Hello, my name is Catherine Elizabeth Nagrant, or "Katie." I am 22 years old and love it!

I have lived with my parents in Royal Oak my whole life. My brother Paul moved out recently. We get to babysit his fiancée's dog, Apple, during the day when they are working.

Apple is my niece; I take her for walks and play with her in the house. At five o'clock, I feed her.

For four years I have gone to Jardon School which I love. They teach us things like money, math, working hard, how to dress appropriately at work, and many other things. My jobs have been great. I just got a certificate that shows I have worked 117 hours as a volunteer at Beaumont Hospital. My favorite job there is working in the gift shop. I stock shelves and the best part is delivering flowers to the patients. On Fridays I work in the store at Jardon in the afternoon. I met my boyfriend, Mathew, at Jardon. He is so handsome and nice. He has a great sense of humor.



In addition to school, I have a lot of activities that keep me busy every night of the week. I am a cheerleader for Oakland County Special Olympics and have been for eight years. One night a week, I am at drama class in a Performing Arts group. We put on a show one time a year in the spring. I will be performing in the Legend of Mackinac Island this year. Drama is my passion. I also

like to sing and dance. Exercise is important to me, so I take an aqua zumba class and a regular zumba class with my brother's fiancée. In the summer, I play baseball at the Boys and Girls Club. I also take cooking classes when I can.

I have participated in Special Olympics since I was eight; track and field is my favorite, but I have done bowling, too. My Dad is my coach and I love walking with him in the Opening Ceremonies. My brother, Paul, and his fiancée, Katie, went to Central Michigan University, so it is very special when they come to my events. This October, I'm going to be a bridesmaid at my brother's wedding; I will feel really special when I am a bridesmaid at the wedding.



When I can, I love to go to the movies. I've seen every Disney movie made since I was born. Stage shows are also my passion. Phantom of Opera is one of my favorites. My very best place to go is Disney World. Every few years we try to go in early December. One year, Mickey Mouse picked me out of a crowd to give me a tour of his

house. I was so excited. Ariel is my favorite Disney Princess. Well, all the princesses are my favorite. I could live at Disney World!

When I am done with my school years at Jardon, I would like to get a place of my own and a paying job. There are still some things that I need to learn, but I am working on those with my parents and my staff, Maggie. I hired Maggie through a Self-Determination arrangement. I am very happy with my life and am excited about my future.

## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.*

-Albert Einstein

## 2012 OCCMHA ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNERS

We are happy to announce that two CLS/OC nominees were honored with an Oakland County Community Mental Health Achievement Award at the Annual Recovery Conference on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. CLS/OC sends many congratulations to all of the OCCMHA Achievement Award winners and nominees!



### **Stephanie Jackson was honored with the Stigma Buster Award.**

Stephanie is a kind-hearted, sweet, and friendly lady who is a joy to be around. She is full of energy and a great advocate for herself and other people with disabilities. Stephanie enjoys and loves her independent life in her own apartment and understands the importance of being involved in her community. She volunteers at her church weekly, where she has made many friends and indicates she truly enjoys her volunteer work. Stephanie also keeps busy by connecting with friends through CLS/OC Citizens Advisory Committee meetings and events and participating in the Steering Committee for the Neighborhood Garden Coalition.

Stephanie has also attended Speech Crafter classes to help her prepare for her dream career as a public speaker. She would love to make a career out of sharing her life story and providing inspiration to others. Stephanie is well on her way to making her dream of getting her story out to others come true. She has participated on several committees at Oakland County CMH, co-presented training sessions on topics such as Person-Centered Planning and Self-Determination, and speaks on Disability Awareness to preschool classes, her church youth group, and other local churches and schools.

In Stephanie's speeches about growing up with a disability, she said that she used to think, "Why me? Why do I have this disability?" But, now she realizes that she needs to be confident and proud of exactly who she is. She feels she was meant to share her story to let the world know that people with disabilities are just like everyone else, and that we are all far more alike than we are different. Stephanie's story is a wonderful example of Self-Determination, as she sets dreams for herself and then makes them happen. Congratulations Stephanie!



### **Ryan Gray was honored with the Helping Hands Award.**

Ryan Gray is a very sociable and outgoing gentleman with charisma, charm, and the ability to make conversation and "work a room." Ryan is diagnosed with Fragile X Syndrome and sometimes he has difficulty staying focused, but he surely doesn't let his disability slow him down. He has high-energy, enthusiasm, and a love of life that you just don't see everyday. Ryan dreams of one day being a Channel 4 TV reporter and is intelligent, upbeat, and oh-so-knowledgeable on so many topics-everything from pop culture, sports, and movies, to current events, politics, and history.

Ryan is now taking his high energy out into the community to help others. For more than a year now, Ryan has taken on a volunteer job that is less glamorous than anything he has done before; he volunteers at a Soup Kitchen through Grace Centers of Hope. Grace Centers of Hope (formerly the Pontiac Rescue Mission) is a faith-based outreach center for individuals and families who are homeless and disadvantaged. Some of Ryan's tasks include cleaning the lunch room before and after meals, preparing food, and assisting with keeping the pantry organized and stocked with fresh food items.

Ryan also volunteers every Thursday at the Rochester Hills Museum at Van Hoosen Farm. At the museum, Ryan does a variety of tasks including folding brochures, assisting with wedding preparations, and directing guest traffic.

Ryan is a unique, outstanding young man, who leaves a positive impression on everyone he meets. When asked why he chooses to spend his time volunteering, Ryan replied, "because people need help, and I like to get out in the world and help people. It makes me happy." Congratulations Ryan!!!!

## PEER RIGHTS ALLY COMMITTEE FORMS AT OCCMHA

By Renee Uitto

A new committee has formed at OCCMHA called the Peer Rights Ally Committee. Members will get training in the rights of persons receiving services from the mental health system. After the allies are trained, they will use their education to extend their knowledge to their fellow peers.

The goal of the Peer Rights Ally role is listening, advocating, educating, explaining rights, explaining options, encouraging self-advocacy, and empowerment. The ultimate goal is to build a network of interconnected, competent, educated individuals who can self-advocate, advocate for each other, and support a strong people-driven system. Kristen Milefchik, Recipient Rights Trainer and Advocate at OCCMHA started this new committee.

Recipient Rights are very important in the mental health system. A recipient is someone who receives public mental health services. A right is something in which a person is entitled to have, to do, or to receive from others within the limits prescribed by law.

In this forum, peers can talk to each other about what worries them the most and get support and suggestions from the group. If you would like more information about the Peer Rights Ally Committee, please contact Kristin Milefchik in the Recipient Rights office at OCCMHA at 248-215-2904 or [milefchikk@occmha.org](mailto:milefchikk@occmha.org).



The next CLS/OC CAC Meeting will be in June. Stay tuned for further details in upcoming newsletters!!

### Get "The Happening" Newsletter by E-mail!



Would you like a nice, color version of "The Happening" Newsletter e-mailed to you every month? All you have to do is contact Diana Kaszyca at CLS/OC at 248-547-2668 or [dkaszyca@comlivserv.com](mailto:dkaszyca@comlivserv.com).

## GT INDEPENDENCE WANTS YOUR INPUT!



GT Independence, fiscal intermediary for people who self-direct services through CLS-Oakland is

announcing plans to significantly modify their monthly budget report format in an effort to make reports as helpful and user friendly as possible. GT will be seeking feedback from their stakeholders around Michigan and particularly from individuals served in Oakland County. The company plans to survey users about what they would like to see (or not see) in their monthly reports. Surveys will be conducted through their website ([www.gtindependence.com](http://www.gtindependence.com)) or via phone at 877-659-4500 beginning in May.

Stay tuned for more information in upcoming newsletters.

## APPLAUDING ADVANCEMENT, ABILITY, AND ADVOCACY *By Renee Uitto*

The Champions for Achievement Celebration was held on March 29<sup>th</sup> at the Troy Community Center. The event was sponsored by OCCMHA, CLS/OC, and MORC to celebrate March as Developmental Disabilities month.



Multiple local micro-enterprise owners sold their goods and services that afternoon. The celebration also featured talent performances, speakers, refreshments, a photo booth, and a surprise visit from Paws of the Detroit Tigers. Syma Chowdhry from First Forecast Mornings Reporter on CBS and CW 50 in Detroit was a Special Guest and speaker at the event.

The last act of the day was a rap performance by artist Tony Banks of the group, Masterpiece. He isn't your ordinary rapper; his songs are motivational and uplifting, and don't contain any negative language. Tony's songs are about his life experiences living as a man with significant physical disabilities. He has released one CD and is currently working on his second. It was a joy to see his performance and be inspired by his positive messages of hope, courage, and perseverance.

## THE NEW ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING



On April 16, 2012, Secretary Kathleen Sebelius from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a press release announcing the creation of the Administration For Community Living (ACL). The ACL will be dedicated to improving access to community

supports and achieving full community participation for people with disabilities and seniors. ACL will bring together the Administration on Aging, the Office on Disability, and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities into a single agency.

As a single agency, they will work on enhancing and improving the broad range of supports that individuals may need to live as full members of their community. Secretary Sebelius indicated, "These support needs go well beyond health care and include the availability of appropriate housing, employment, education, meaningful relationships, and social participation."

The Department of Health and Human Services indicated that the Administration for Community Living was established in order to achieve several important objectives: reduce the fragmentation that currently exists in Federal programs addressing the community living services and support needs of both the aging and disability population; enhance access to quality health care and long-term services and supports for all individuals; promote consistency in community living policy across other areas of the Federal government; and complement the community infrastructure, as supported by Medicaid and other Federal programs, in order to better respond to the full spectrum of needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

If you would like to read Secretary Sebelius' press release and learn more about the Administration for Community Living, visit the website [www.hhs.gov/acl/](http://www.hhs.gov/acl/)

*"For too long, too many Americans have faced the impossible choice between moving to an institution or living at home without long-term services and supports they need. The goal of the new Administration for Community Living will be to help people with disabilities and older Americans live productive, satisfying lives."*

- Secretary Kathleen Sebelius

## NEIGHBORHOOD GARDEN COALITION

The Neighborhood Garden Coalition and the Song and Spirit Institute for Peace are partnering together to



create an accessible garden. Jim Greenwood from the Neighborhood Garden Coalition indicates, "This is a wonderful and unique opportunity that will advance both organizations' goals to promote greater understanding among people with diverse abilities, religions, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds through music, art, and gardens."

On Thursday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, ground was broken at the Song and Spirit Institute for Peace in Berkley on what they are calling the "Back to the Garden" project. Then, on April 21<sup>st</sup>, they began the planting with a kick-off celebration including arts and crafts, music, a tree dedication, and fun garden activities.



The Neighborhood Garden Coalition (NGC) was established in 2010 to develop and support community based garden programs, provide a database of resources and information to support local agriculture, and implement a model system of "farm to consumer." NGC works to establish a network of community gardens by forming partnerships with local residents, youth, seniors, educational institutions, social service agencies and more. They are a 100% volunteer



organization that relies on private funding, grants and sweat from their volunteers. If you are interested in learning more about the NGC, visit their website at [www.thengc.org](http://www.thengc.org). If you are interested in volunteering with the Neighborhood Garden Coalition, contact Lisa Ballien or Matt Buck at 248- 547-2668.



The Song and Spirit Institute for Peace works to promote a greater understanding among people of diverse religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds through music, art, cultural, programs, dialogue, study, and compassionate acts of community service. If you are interested in learning more about The Song and Spirit Institute for Peace, visit their website at [www.songandspirit.org](http://www.songandspirit.org).

## WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE PICTURES? AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Beginning on April 12, 2012, the Equal Rights Center (ERC), a national non-profit civil rights organization, and the D.C. Office of Human Rights, an agency of the District of Columbia government that seeks to eradicate discrimination, launched a new campaign, "What is WRONG With These Pictures?" This campaign was designed to create awareness around the issue of what is accessible or "visitability." Leah Maddox, ERC Communications and Outreach Associate, indicates, "One in five people in the United States have a disability, yet there is still a great lack of awareness when it comes to what exactly is accessible and what is not. This campaign is a fun and stimulating forum through which people with and without disabilities can learn more about accessibility."



The campaign uses the website, [www.disabilitygame.org](http://www.disabilitygame.org), to create an interactive forum for education. The focus of the site is a game in which users are asked to identify physical barriers in real life situations. The site contains an image gallery of photos with something "wrong" in terms of accessibility, as well as a ten where you can test your knowledge of accessibility requirements. The photographs present a range of barriers; both easily recognized ones, such as a step in front of a doorway, and those may not be so familiar, such as a round doorknob.



The website also features the stories of people with disabilities encountering accessibility barriers in their daily lives, quick links to the ERC's five disability advocacy and self-advocacy toolkits, ways in which anyone can become involved in disability rights, and access to help for those who feel they have experienced discrimination. The campaign includes a two-month roll out on social media sites, and a three-month print advertisement campaign.

Jill A. Nerby, ERC member and campaign contributor, says, "By sharing my experiences and successes in my life, I hope to inspire every person with low vision and legal blindness to know that there is hope for the future, ways to overcome challenges, and that by working together, we can make a difference in the lives of many."

## WALK A MILE IN MY SHOES RALLY



This year's rally will be held **Wednesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>** at the State Capitol Building in Lansing. Check-in begins at 12:30pm and the rally is from 1:30-2:30pm.

We walk because:

- May is Mental Health Awareness Month;
- Legislators need to hear our voices;
- To put an end to the stigma related to mental illness and developmental disabilities;
- To promote mental health and wellness.

All 83 counties will have a designated county flag carrier who will be making an anti-stigma statement. Let's support Oakland County's flag carrier with a big turnout!

**Catch the Bus! It's free and wheelchair accessible!!!**

- ◆ Space is limited. You must RSVP to save your seat on the bus. Call Debbie Wisser at 248-858-0929 to reserve your spot.
- ◆ Bring your own lunch, beverages, & snacks.
- ◆ Buses will leave promptly at their scheduled time.
- ◆ There are two locations where you can get the bus:
  - ⇒ North Oakland: MORC, 1270 Doris Ave. in Auburn Hills
  - ⇒ South Oakland: United Cerebral Palsy of Metro Detroit, 23077 Greenfield Road in Southfield

### BUS SCHEDULE

<b>9:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Leaving North Pickup location</b>
<b>10:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Leaving South Pickup location</b>
<b>12:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Arrive in Lansing</b>
<b>3:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Bus Leaves Lansing</b>
<b>4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Bus arrives at South drop off</b>
<b>5:15 p.m.</b>	<b>Bus arrives at North drop off</b>



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS WEBINAR SERIES



Community Living Services is hosting a Webinar Series at our Wayne and Oakland County offices. This webinar series includes 12 seminars by renowned and revolutionary

leaders. At these webinar sessions you will learn about the best practices from the trailblazers and torchbearers who have helped shape the disabilities field through their work.

The webinars are free and will take place every Wednesday over a 12 week period, 1:00-2:30pm. Registration is required and seating is limited. Below you will find the May webinar topics and presenters.

- **May 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Waiting Lists and Litigation - The Good News and The Bad News; with Tony Records.
- **May 9<sup>th</sup>** - Health Care for People with Disabilities: Best Practices; with Karen Green-McGowen.
- **May 16<sup>th</sup>** - Transition Planning and Instructions: Best Practices; with Michael Wehmeyer.
- **May 23<sup>rd</sup>** - The Supreme Court's Olmsted Decision: How will it impact future community supports; with Sue Jamison and Colleagues.



To register and attend the webinar at our office in Ferndale, please contact Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668 or [dkaszyca@comliveserv.com](mailto:dkaszyca@comliveserv.com).

To attend the webinar at the Wayne County office, contact Katy McDonnell 734-722-4595 or Cynthia Whisler 734-722-7493.

Check out next month's newsletter for the June Webinar topics and dates.

### LIFE WITHOUT LIMITS THROUGH ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

United Cerebral Palsy of Metro Detroit Life (UCP)



will be presenting this Conference on Tuesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:00am-4:00pm at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel

Detroit- Dearborn, 5801 Southfield Expressway in Dearborn.

The goal of the Annual "Life Without Limits Through Assistive Technology" Conference is to provide access to information and resources to families, individuals with disabilities, and professionals. The cost of this conference is \$30 (limited scholarships are available for persons with disabilities and family members). Registration is required. For more information call 248-557-5070.

### LIVING HOPE SERIES *By Sherri Rushman*



These training sessions are designed to encourage, educate, and empower people receiving public mental health services and their allies. The trainings are open to all. Social Work credits are available.

**Hope Givers, Hope Receivers, & Hope Stealers** will take place on May 7<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:30 at Community Network Services, 38855 Hills Tech Drive in Farmington Hills. At this class, you will learn the double-edged strategy of how to grasp a hold of Hope when you don't have it, and how to keep it when you do! Sherri "the Hope Master" will show you why you must become a Hope Receiver and exactly how to become one; how to become a Hope Giver and how it helps you and others; and what a Hope Stealer is and why you don't want to become one. Please register.

**Defeating Loneliness** will be held on May 22<sup>nd</sup> from 2:30-4:30pm at Dreams Unlimited Clubhouse, 1222 Catalpa Drive in Royal Oak. The training is based on Mary Ellen Copeland's *The Loneliness Workbook*. Participants will learn how to reduce loneliness, steps to use after the training, and how Person Centered Planning can help. Please register by May 15<sup>th</sup>.

Contact Debbie Wisser at 248-858-0929 or [RegisterMe@occmha.org](mailto:RegisterMe@occmha.org) to register for any of these trainings. Please leave a message with your name, the name of the training, and the date. Leaving a message will automatically register you for the training.



**COMMUNITY**  
*Living* SERVICES

**Oakland County Division**

642 E. Nine Mile Road  
Ferndale, MI 48220  
Phone: 248-547-2668  
Fax: 248-547-3052

# THE NEXT CAC EVENT



Attention all you Bowlers out there!!!! We will be going bowling on Thursday, May 24<sup>th</sup> from 3:00-5:00pm at Luxury Lanes, 600 E. Nine Mile Rd. in Ferndale. Please join us for a great time!! The cost is \$5.00 per person for unlimited bowling for the two hour event (shoes included). Bowlers of all ability levels are welcome. The bowling alley is fully accessible. Feel free to come by and say hello even if you don't want to bowl. Luxury Lanes sells pizza and has a full snack bar, so bring extra money if you'll want snacks.



Please RSVP for this event by calling Leigh Hilbert at 248-547-2668 no later than May 18<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

# THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**2012 Green Street Fair.** The Fifth Annual Green Street Fair will take place in Downtown Plymouth on May 4<sup>th</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.



Green Street Fair, Inc. was founded to help educate and inform people of all ages about the benefits of green, organic, and eco-friendly products and services. To promote global interest and personal well-being, the Green Street Fair blends companies, artisans, entertainers, workshops, and speakers together in a friendly and family-oriented outdoor environment. People who attend the Green Street Fair will learn the advantages of taking strides, large or small, towards living a healthier and greener life. Highlights of the 2012 Green Street Fair will include: exhibitor displays, live music, street performers, interactive displays, children's activities, fitness and well-being demonstrations, organic cuisine, art installations, and more. For more information visit their website [www.greenstreetfair.com](http://www.greenstreetfair.com).

## Oxford Backyards & Burgers



Bring your buns to Downtown Oxford on May 17<sup>th</sup> through May 20<sup>th</sup> for the Oxford Backyards & Burgers. Come downtown and start off the carnival season at this fun event including a Best Burger in Oxford contest, live entertainment, carnival rides, kids activities, teen zone, seedlings and plants for sale, do-it-yourself projects, and more. For more information, call (248) 770-8587 or visit their website at <http://oxfordhamburgerfestival.com/>

## St. Mary's Polish Country Fair



This fair is an affordable fun event for everyone and has been a Michigan Memorial Weekend tradition for over 25 years. This event will begin on May 25<sup>th</sup> and runs through the 28<sup>th</sup>. St. Mary's Polish Country Fair will be held at the Orchard Lake-side campus of St. Mary's Prep, 3535 Indian Trail in Orchard Lake. This fair has it all; more than 45 Carnival Rides, a Kid Zone, crafts for youngsters, authentic Polish and All-American food favorites, a wide variety of musical acts, a big dance floor, bingo, Vegas tents, raffle tickets, and unique shopping.

For more information visit their website [www.stmaryspolishcountryfair.com](http://www.stmaryspolishcountryfair.com) (248)-706-6775.



# SAVE THE DATE

It is almost picnic time once again, so mark your calendar for **Thursday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 12pm-2:30pm** and join us at Martin Road Park in Ferndale for some summertime fun at the CLS/OC CAC Picnic.

Stay tuned for more information in the next newsletters.



# Mental Health First Aid Training



## Class Schedule:

**Tuesday, April 17 & Thursday, April 19, 2012**

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Welcome Missionary Baptist Church  
143 Oneida, Pontiac

**Mondays, May 14 and 21, 2012**

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Beaumont Hospital  
44201 Dequindre Road, Troy  
Ground Floor, Classroom #5

**Tuesdays, June 5, 12 and 19, 2012**

6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Beaumont Hospital  
3601 West 13 Mile Road, Royal Oak  
Administration Building  
Lower Level Classroom #2

**Monday, July 23 and Wednesday, July 25, 2012**

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Beaumont Hospital  
44201 Dequindre Road, Troy  
Professional Office Building Classroom

**Tuesday, August 14 and Wed., August 15, 2012**

8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Beaumont Hospital  
44201 Dequindre Road, Troy  
Ground Floor, Classroom #5

## Save Lives and Build a Stronger Community

The stigma surrounding mental illness often prevents people from seeking help or even acknowledging that they need help. When they do want help, they don't know where to turn.

Mental Health First Aid, sponsored by Common Ground and Beaumont Health System will equip you with the necessary tools to help people in your life get connected to appropriate care.

You will learn to provide the initial help to someone showing symptoms of mental illness or in a mental health crisis (severe depression, psychosis, panic attack, suicidal thoughts and behaviors) until appropriate professional help can be engaged.

The class is open to educators, school administrators, human resource professionals, the faith communities, policy makers, primary health care providers, first responders, police and fire personnel, security personnel, family members or caring community members.

Become a life saver—pick a class that fits your schedule and call or email to register. \$75 fee payable by check or Mastercard or Visa. Checks payable to: Common Ground.

[www.commongroundhelps.org](http://www.commongroundhelps.org)

**\$75 fee includes registration,  
workbook, snacks and lunch.**

**Payable by check to Common Ground  
or by Mastercard/Visa**

**To register, call or email Joani Roberts  
at 248-451-3733 or  
[jroberts@commongroundhelps.org](mailto:jroberts@commongroundhelps.org)**

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