

January 2005
Volume 1, Issue 1



SPEAK The News

Support Providing Employees' Association of Kentucky

Inside this issue:

<i>SPEAK Description</i>	1, 2
<i>ANCOR Report</i>	1, 4
<i>DSP in the Spotlight: Vicki Walker</i>	2
<i>SPEAK Partnerships: Agency Involvement</i>	3
<i>Lecture Schedules</i>	4
<i>Tenure Congratulations</i>	5

What? Why? How?

What is SPEAK?

SPEAK (Support Providing Employees' Association of Kentucky) is a professional association within the Louisville area offering training, support, and regional collaboration for direct support professionals (DSPs). SPEAK receives its primary funding from a three year federal grant through the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

Why does SPEAK exist?

Sadly, turnover rates among DSPs nationwide are between 40 and 77%. Contributors to high turnover include limited preparation/skill training, fre-

quent underpayment, limited opportunities for advancement, and an overall devaluing of this profession. These factors, together with the stressful, multi-faceted relationships that characterize direct support work, culminate into a crisis concerning recruitment and retention. SPEAK exists to address each of these critical issues. SPEAK is committed to offering the supports necessary for DSPs to succeed and thrive in their profession.

How will SPEAK reach these goals?

To accomplish these goals, SPEAK offers a variety of services. First, SPEAK offers a



Participant from Day Spring

Job Preview to all job applicants to give a realistic snapshot of the work they will be doing and the lives they will be touching. Second, SPEAK provides opportunities for newly hired DSPs to be mentored by an experienced DSP for their first six months of employment. SPEAK also offers formal and informal



Mattingly Centers' Brenda Elliott, DSP and Mentor, playing the Djembe.

ANCOR Report: Sept 21, 2004

"Reprinted with permission from LINKS Volume X, No. X Month, Year, published by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR). ANCOR is a national network of providers offering quality supports to people with disabilities."

Bill to Buoy Wages for Long-Term Support Workers

Landmark legislation to amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act was announced today by U.S. Representatives

Lee Terry (R-NE) and Lois Capps (D-CA) during the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) annual Government Activities Seminar. The Direct Support Professional Fairness and Security Act is bipartisan legislation designed to provide funds to states to enable them to increase the inadequate wages paid to targeted direct support professionals (DSPs) who, under the Medicaid program, provide

services for individuals with disabilities. This legislation acknowledges, for the first time, the insufficient wages paid to a group of our nation's quiet heroes: DSPs. "Wages matter and this bill takes a landmark step forward in raising the issue nationally!" exclaimed Dr. Renee Pietrangelo, CEO of ANCOR.

There are more than 54 million Americans with (continue on page 4.)



Participant in SCS Networks.



What? Why? How? Con't...

training and further their skill development. It is our hope that these meetings not only will offer answers to questions faced on the job, but they also will help connect isolated DSPs working to a larger network of professionals working and investing themselves in similar capacities. SPEAK also will serve as a vehicle for obtaining greater community supports for DSPs. In addition to all these services, SPEAK will also give com-

memorative and monetary incentives for reaching tenure milestones. For instance, every DSP who reaches six months of tenure will receive a \$75 honorarium. Every DSP reaching one full year of tenure will receive a \$100 recognition honorarium, be featured on the SPEAK website and Newsletter, become a member of SPEAK, and become eligible to be a DSP mentor. We believe that SPEAK will cultivate greater job satisfaction

and strengthen employee relationships that are based on trust, communication, commitment, and influence. We look forward to the ways that we can serve DSPs in this region, and we anticipate great results from our labors, namely continued success and happiness in the lives of DSPs, and improvements in the quality of care given to consumers.

Like many Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), Vicki Walker finds deep satisfaction in her work. She enjoys a sense of accomplishment from making positive impacts in the lives of others. Whether watching a child with autism reach an unexpected goal or helping an adult with mental retardation learn a new skill, Vicki has consistently met each new challenge with creative thoughtfulness and tenacious compassion. For these reasons and more, Vicki has experienced more than one story worth telling.

"Zach" is a man labeled mentally retarded who has lived in the same nursing home for the past 20 years. Due to one too many hurtful comments from others, Zach determined to shut himself up in his room away from the world. Vicki entered the scene as a DSP two years after Zach made that decision. Weeks and months passed as Vicki made many sincere attempts at connecting with Zach. No matter how hard Vicki tried, Zach did not

respond as she desired. With Zach's high protective walls constructed, it would have been easy for Vicki to throw in her towel of defeat. Instead, Vicki consistently went above and beyond her assigned responsibilities. She wrote letters to Zach's family, she brought in books, videos, music, crafts, and a whole host of other creative ideas, but connecting with Zach seemed as far away as running to the moon. Each new week seemed to pile defeat upon defeat until Vicki finally uncovered an interest that Zach possessed in birds. Vicki came back the next week and hung a birdfeeder outside his window. Ever so slowly, Zach came to understand that Vicki liked him, that she cared about his wellbeing, and that she desired his good. Although that discovery took well over a year, it paved the way for future progress. Today, five years later, Vicki knows many of Zach's interests. From favorite movies, to favorite foods, to favorite activities, Vicki has made a strong and meaningful connection with Zach. To see the two of them together leaves no question that Zach trusts Vicki, loves

Vicki, and looks forward with great anticipation to her visits each week. Amazingly, Vicki recently purchased a coat for Zach so that he could sit outside and watch the birds on cool evenings. Given the fact that Zach had no desire to leave his room 5 years ago, this is no small accomplishment. It has taken more than five years to build up enough trust to move Zach out of his room. Realistically, it may take five more years to get Zach out of the nursing home and into the community. Whatever it takes, Vicki is committed to helping Zach reach his most full potential. Because of Vicki's consistent care over the span of several years, Zach is making progress that was thought unlikely, if not impossible a few short years ago. Vicki continues to look forward to the day when Zach will venture out of the nursing home to once again participate in community activities. Until that day, one thing is certain. None of these activities would be possible without the caring work of Vicki Walker in Zach's life. To Vicki and others making similar investments

across our region, we say, "Thank you!" Your life and your work write a story worth telling! For the good of those you support, their families, and your co-workers, keep up the great work!



Biographical Portrait

Vicki Walker is a Seven Counties Services (SCS) employee who works in the Developmental Services Division. She has devoted more than 15 years of her life to caring for adults and children who have developmental and/or mental disabilities. Five of those years have been on staff at SCS. In addition to work, Vicki is a single mother of three boys ages 17, 21, and 22. When she isn't working or spending time with her boys, she enjoys gardening and doing crafts.

Descriptions of SPEAK Partners

The SPEAK Association would be impossible without the participation of our partners. We are very thankful to have seven partnering agencies that have joined the Council on Mental Retardation and Seven Counties Services, Inc. in this effort.

2 LEAD AGENCIES:

Council on Mental Retardation (CMR); Leadership Institute: The Council on Mental Retardation, a private non-profit association of families and friends of persons with mental retardation, has been advocating for persons with mental retardation in Jefferson County since 1952. The Council is a member agency of Metro United Way. Additional funding sources include: private, state, and federal grants; self-generated and program fees; foundation gifts and grants; and donations from the general public. CMR Programs include Citizen Advocacy, en Tech (Enabling Technologies of Kentuckiana), Faith in Action, FIND of Louisville, Leadership Institute and Parent Outreach.

Seven Counties Services, Inc. is a private, non-profit corporation that provides planning, prevention, treatment and support in the areas of mental health, alcohol and other drug abuse, and mental retardation and other developmental disabilities in Bullit, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble counties. It is Kentucky's largest comprehensive mental health center and one of the nation's largest. More than 1,400 clinical and administrative staff members provide services to approximately 28,000 persons each year.

7 PARTNER AGENCIES:

Louisville Diversified Services (LDS) is Kentucky's largest employer of adults with mental retardation. It exists to help adults with mental retardation contribute to the community. It provide 1) adult day programs, 2) job coaching, and 3) job supervision. Job placements include landscaping, bagging groceries, running the entire VA Medical Center Laundry, and refurbishing cell phones at UPS Supply Chain Solutions. In addition, LDS runs The Coffee Table (selling coffee, specialty drinks, pastries, etc.), and are building a new "Enabling Garden" on the back of Ursuline Campus. They have multiple day program sites, including one at the Enabling Garden and one at the Coffee Table.

The Mattingly Center for Continuing Education is a private, non-profit agency, whose mission is to provide the highest quality of structured services for adults with severe developmental disabilities. We serve adults 21 years of age and older.

The Mattingly Center strives to provide the best possible available services by facilitating each participant's continued education, personal development, and inclusion in, and access to the community.

We are committed to demonstrating a long-term commitment to our participants through our highly accredited Adult Day Community Habilitation program, through our Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy services, our Community Living Support services, and through our Support Coordination services.



Marian Montgomery at The Mattingly Center.

Cedar Lake, Inc. is a system of related not-for-profit corporations designed to provide residential options, housing, specialized services and supports to persons with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. Cedar Lake, a formally-affiliated social ministry organization of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was founded in 1970 and began providing services in 1974. Cedar Lake operates exclusively in Kentucky, providing the bulk of its services in the metropolitan Louisville region.

Exceptional Teens & Adults. ETA is an adult day care developed especially for adults with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities. It provides a structured program of activities for continued learning opportunities, recreational and physical exercise for group or individual participation, and provides care for participants in key medical concerns. ETA Teen Center Inc. is a non-profit day program for adolescents, teenagers and young adults with special needs – operating primarily when school is not in session.

Community Living, Inc. Community Living, Inc. is a private, non-profit agency whose unique mission has remained constant through the years. The organization has assumed life-long responsibility for children and adults with mental retardation in areas of housing, education, employment, and socialization. Community Living serves 75 individuals with developmental disabilities with support and assistance to meet the daily needs of individuals by: 1) recruiting, establishing and supporting family homes and staffed residences; 2) mediating and resolving personal crises and daily living problems' and 3) recruiting and facilitating long-term voluntary relationships with other people in the community.

Dayspring, Inc. provides residential services and programs for adults with mental retardation. Such services and programs provide a stable and secure environment, designed to help individuals develop to their maximum potential under the guidance of competent professionals, living in community (extended family), consisting not only of residents but all who participate in the endeavor.

Dreams With Wings is a not for profit agency that provides housing and support services for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities in the community. A variety of services are provided including residential, day program, therapies and leisure and adult education. Services are provided in the metropolitan Louisville area.

ANCOR Report: Sept 21, 2004 Con't...

disabilities- eight million of whom have mental retardation and other developmental disabilities-with nearly 14 million requiring long-term supports and services...One of the biggest challenges facing the United States in the 21st Century is assuring that individuals who have disabilities have the quality supports they need to lead productive and meaningful lives in the community. Yet, private providers who employ direct support professionals face turnover rates of between 40 and 77 percent; rely on fixed public funding to pay wages and benefits; and face a recruitment and retention crisis that threatens the entire stability and quality of our support system for people with disabilities.

"This crisis is real and it will worsen unless something is done to turn the tide. It is a real issue affecting real people in everyone's community-and it is likely to affect all of us," declared Dr. Pietrangelo.

To read this entire article and to obtain more information on the ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign, visit them online at their Website: <http://www.ancor.org>

"Reprinted with permission from ANCOR *LINKS* Volume X, No. X Month, Year "

A copy of the publications in which the reprint appears must be sent to the editor of *LINKS*.

Should you have any questions, please contact Marsha Patrick: mpatrick@ancor.org

Direct Support Professional Lecture and Brown Bag Lunch/Dinner Series

January – March 05

Lecture Series: The CMR Leadership Institute DSP Lecture Series is a continuing education program provided for Direct Support Professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills in innovative approaches and state of best practice for people with developmental disabilities.

Length of training: 3 hours; 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM or 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Fee information: Free of charge for SPEAK participants; just \$25.00 for all others

Registration: Those who want to participate must register by calling the Leadership Institute at 587-6500. Small interactive sessions require you to register early!

Winter 2005 Dates/Locations

- January 12 (day) and 19 (evening) – CMR Leadership Institute
- February 17 (day) and 24 (evening) – CMR Leadership Institute
- March 17 (day) and 24 (evening) – CMR Leadership Institute

Winter Lecture Series

- January- Coping with the deaths of people we care for.
- February- Specialized and technical knowledge unique to community supports.
- March- Advocacy, Supporting Empowerment and Recognition.

Brown Bag Lunch/Dinner Chats: The CMR Leadership Institute brings to you this unique community support activity for the Direct Support Professional. This activity is free to SPEAK DSP's and focus on the business and issues related to Direct Support Professionals.

Bring a brown bag lunch and a drink.

Length of activity: 1.5 hours; 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM or 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Fee Information: Free

Location: CMR Leadership Institute, 101 Witherspoon Street

Winter 2005 Dates

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| January 25 (evening) | January 27 (day) |
| February 8 (evening) | February 10 (day) |
| March 29 (evening) | March 31 (day) |

SPEAK Guidance Team Description

SPEAK is fortunate to have a team of committed individuals to give guidance, direction, and oversight to SPEAK activities. The SPEAK Guidance Team includes family members of persons with disabilities, a Direct Support Professional; advocates; and community representatives from Metro United Way, Louisville Metro Government, Kentuckiana Works, the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the state Division for Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, and the Council on Mental Retardation. Each partner brings unique insights to the table and has helped shape SPEAK. Thanks in large part to their contributions, SPEAK is better able to meet the real needs of DSPs in this region.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING DSPs REACHING TENURE MILESTONES IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2005:

10 Years of Tenure

Carlos Nazario /MC

Sheriley French /DS

6 Years of Tenure

Greg Gatewood /LDS

2 Years of Tenure

Heather Walker /CLR

Peggy Edwards /SCS

Katie Kipfer /CLR

9 Years of Tenure

Clifton Keith/ SCS

5 Years of Tenure

Inez Thompson /MC

Melissa Mitchell /SCS

Jennifer Francis /DS

8 Years of Tenure

Amy Nelson /CLR

4 Years of Tenure

Erica Franklin /DS

Yolanda Sims /DS

Michelle Cook /Dreams

Brian Anderson /Dreams

Carolyn Bunton /Dreams

Jason Keller /Dreams

Danyel Tingle /CLR

7 Years of Tenure

Christina Arrieta /SCS

3 Years of Tenure

Donna Williams /DS

Mary Jean Gray /CL

Dorothy Coates /Dreams

Sandra Stewart /LDS

1 Year of Tenure

Barbara Wilson /CL

Adam Tilton /CLR

Mark Tassin /LDS

Dana Wagner /MC

Sharon Germain /MC

Chris Wheatley /MC

Angel Jin /CL

Nicole Beeson /Dreams

Rebecca Dant /CLR

Erin Sedaris /Dreams

Jill Dixon /Dreams

Theresa Adamenik /Dreams

Deborah Ann Skaggs /SCS

Jessica Flores /LDS

Robert Martin /CL

Patricia Cambron /LDS

Rosemarie Hart /CLR

Symone Kenney /CLR

Sean Patrick /CLR

Congratulations to you all! Keep up the good work! When you see these individuals in your community, be sure to make known your appreciation for their wise and valuable investments.





The News

January 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1



Phone: 502-459-5292 x120
Fax: 502-452-9079
E-mail: JKing@sevencounties.org

3717 TAYLORVILLE RD
LOUISVILLE KY 40220-1366