

## Learning Skills for an Independent Life



ARI's Day Service Options (DSO) provides individuals with developmental disabilities

opportunities to master various life skills in a multitude of settings. The program is designed to maximize independent functioning by providing training in the areas of self-care, socialization, communication, physical and emotional maturation, and cognitive and leisure skills. Services are provided to develop valued, non-work related adult roles in the community and are based on individual choice and preferences.

Our DSO program encourages and facilitates community integration through meaningful community service, therapeutic recreation, leisure, and practical daily activities. Some of the activities include a friendly shoppers program (weekly grocery shopping for the elderly), horticultural therapy, arts and crafts, bowling, and dining out. Participating in structured activities through Senior Services and volunteering at Stamford Hospital are also popular.

Fifty-three people participate in the DSO program.



Several small groups, each of which are supported by a staff member, are developed upon

individual preferences and desires. Each group maintains a schedule and strategy that allows individuals to meet their personal goals. These goals may range from developing friendships and social relationships to self-advocacy, from cooking, safety and money skills to crossing a street.

Individuals served by the program have the opportunity to take advantage of ARI's computer lab, thereby accessing alternative modes of learning. ARI staff has chosen software specifically designed to foster skills in the areas of health and safety, functional reading, money and budgeting skills and communication skills.

ARI's DSO program plays an essential role in acquiring the skills necessary to live as independently as possible. It is the key to success at ARI.

*For more information please call Tammy DeLeo, Director of Day Programs, ext. 3022 or Darlene Caviness, Manager of Day Service Options, ext. 3027.*

## From the CEO



With the change of seasons we often reflect upon our future. As with the advent of Autumn, the fiscal landscape of our industry is changing. The state of Connecticut has offered no increase to our base funding for fiscal year 2009.

With rising costs of energy, food, and operations, the reality of “Zero COLA” has a significant and severe impact on non-profit agencies like ours. We remain committed to being the highest quality service provider—but with limited resources we must realign our strategy for success.

While negotiating challenging budget and escalating costs we are highly aware that *most* nonprofit human service agencies in Connecticut are struggling because of the lack of support we receive from the state. As we all tighten our belts, both personally and professionally, we must not lose sight of our most vulnerable citizens—the clients whom we serve and support.

One program that continues to set us apart is the state’s Quality Service Review (QSR). This is a process that determines the caliber of services delivered. It includes a “personal outcome review” to assess individual client’s experience and satisfaction with our services and supports. QSR is administered by the State of Connecticut’s Department of Developmental Services.

Amidst these hard times ARI received the highest level of accreditation from CARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. CARF uses a set of international standards to measure the delivery of support and services to people with developmental disabilities. ARI was visited by a team of professionals reviewing programs and facilities. For more information on the process, please read the article on page three. The ARI staff, with their commitment to and support of our clients, are to credit for achieving this three-year accreditation. Thank you to everyone who made this happen.

You can also read more about our new “Continuous Quality Improvement” program (CQI) on page three. Spearheaded by Dr. Bob DiDomenico, it will review the efficiency and effectiveness of ARI programs throughout the year. We already have instituted program changes to ensure that we are meeting the CARF standards, as well as the QSR program review process, on a regular basis.

Clearly, we are 100% committed to providing the best possible services to our clients and their families. In this economy we must pledge to find creative and sustainable ways to meet and exceed the expectations of our clients and families within our limited resources. Thank you for your support as we strive to achieve our mission very day.

—Matthew Reyher

## From the Board Chairperson

If one takes a hard look at ARI’s services and programs and assesses their impact on the lives of those we serve, it is clear that our “Day Service Options” program has an enormous influence upon our clients. Life skills, community socialization, and other necessary skills are crucial to everyday successes. Our clients spend hours learning these essential tasks at ARI and out in the community by engaging in their surroundings and setting the goals for their future.

The success of our programs is rooted in the dedication of our staff. They realize that, in many ways, they are *teachers*, who enable each client to achieve their full potential. Every skill they model helps clients to become more independent. ARI will always strive to sustain and improve these services because we know the better the program, the better our clients will be.

And, as ARI ages, so do our clients. As our clients live longer, they need new skills. Tasks that were simple and routine need to be re-taught. Old programs need to be updated and transformed. Senior management is actively working with staff to make sure they are prepared to handle the concerns of this aging population. Constant re-training is one of the many factors that help to ensure the high quality of our programs.

The Board of ARI fully supports the agency’s effort to meet these challenges. Over the past few years, we all have become increasingly aware of the need to provide services to our seniors. Working with a variety of state agencies and other support groups, they have taken a hard look at this problem and the alternatives currently available. Together, we have explored various funding options. While most are limited, we are committed to obtaining the resources needed to provide the services required. Our mission is to enable independence—age must not become a barrier to our goal.

The future of ARI is rooted in its Day Service Options programs. They are at the core of all the other services we provide. Whether it is High School Transition or Residential Housing, all clients interface with Day Services. The services we offer are excellent. We must continue to look at ways to expand their reach. As the needs of society change, ARI will be ready to embrace these changes. As the poster in the executive board room reads “no limits”, we are continually making sure that the range of programs provided by Day Services also without limits.

—Allan Sussman

## ARI of Connecticut Receives Three Year CARF Accreditation

We are proud to announce that ARI of Connecticut, Inc. has received a three year accreditation from CARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, the highest level of accreditation an organization can receive. International standards were used to measure the following aspects of our agency: Community Services; Community Housing and Supported Living and Employment Services; Community Employment Services for Job Development; Job Supports and Job Site Training.

This level of accreditation distinguishes ARI as a professional organization which meets strict, global standards of excellence. Some specific areas reviewed during the site visit include person-centered planning, strategic planning, fiscal management, staff orientation and training, outcomes measurement and performance improvement plans, corporate compliance, code of ethics, risk management, health and safety, accessibility planning, input from stakeholders, clinical and behavioral interventions, advocacy, housing, employment services and much more.

The community served by ARI of Connecticut, Inc. can be assured that we will continue to provide quality care and support to those receiving services, while assessing the growing needs for more services and offering cost-effective and efficient delivery.

You can find more information about CARF at [www.carf.org](http://www.carf.org).

## ARI of Connecticut is Dedicated to Quality Assurance.

A “Continuous Quality Improvement” (CQI) plan has been implemented by ARI’s Manager of Quality Assurance and Compliance, Dr. Robert J. DiDomenico. The extensive plan incorporates many systems and merges federal, state and accreditation standards. The process allows ARI to survey and evaluate all aspects of our organization to ensure compliance. This process includes utilizing applicable regulations and standards by addressing them in all of ARI’s programs, services and leadership functions.

The CQI plan will

1. measure goals and outcomes from strategic plans
2. look at the effectiveness and efficiency of our systems, services and programs
3. review input and satisfaction of stakeholders, including persons served, guardians and families, businesses employing our clients, funding and referral sources, volunteers and staff members.

The four key components of the CQI program are planning, measurement, assessment and improvement. The CQI process includes Utilization Review, Peer Review, Case Records Review, Review of Safety and Risk Management, Leadership including Policies and Procedures, Corporate Compliance, Fiscal Management, Governance, Conflict of Interest, Codes of Ethical Conduct, Volunteerism, Client Rights, Accessibility Planning, Health and Safety, Human Resources Management, Information Management, Staff Development, ensuring staff competence, Training and Education and many more aspects. The CQI process and plan presents a big responsibility and will encourage all staff and volunteers to work cooperatively as integral members of the ARI team.

## Nintendo Wii hits Group Homes

If you have the chance to visit an ARI group home you will probably witness the residents playing Wii games with great skill and enthusiasm! Four of the ARI group homes currently own and totally enjoy the new Nintendo Wii. This new interactive video game system allows residents to have fun while being physically active. If you are at the Palermo home you will probably find Libby bowling. If you go to the Tally Ho residence you will find Ricky either playing baseball, tennis, or bowling. The game has become such a hit that President & CEO, Matthew Reyher, has been known to stop at different residences on his way home to challenge clients to a game. Just be careful if *you* are ever challenged!



## Visiting Our State Capitol



Two civic-minded members of the ARI Self-Advocacy Group organized a tour of the Connecticut State Capitol Building and Museum on Thursday, August 28th. Tremaine Wilson and Latoya Hunter, travelled up to Hartford with fellow SAG members Jesse Estrada, Rickey Denes,

Neftali Soto and ARI staff Darlene Caviness (Manager of Day Service Options) and Gerard Gasparino (Manager of Development & Recreation.) Tremaine and Latoya wanted to learn more about government so they chose to visit the Capital and learn more about Connecticut's rich history.

The Self Advocacy Group meets every other month. It is member-initiated and self-governed under the supervision of Darlene Caviness. They meet to discuss issues that affect or concern them and they work together to make positive changes in their own lives. Currently the group is made up of eight active members.

## Staff News

### WELCOME NEW STAFF MEMBERS:

Deidre Sommerer, LPN—Sunrise Cottage; John Conrad, RDSW—Sunrise Cottage; Ahisha Douglas, RDSW—SLS program; Clifford Beaulieu, Manager of Employment Services; Jheanell Dhamalie, RDSW—Palermo Residence; Kinshasha Rhodes, RDSW—Truglia Residence.

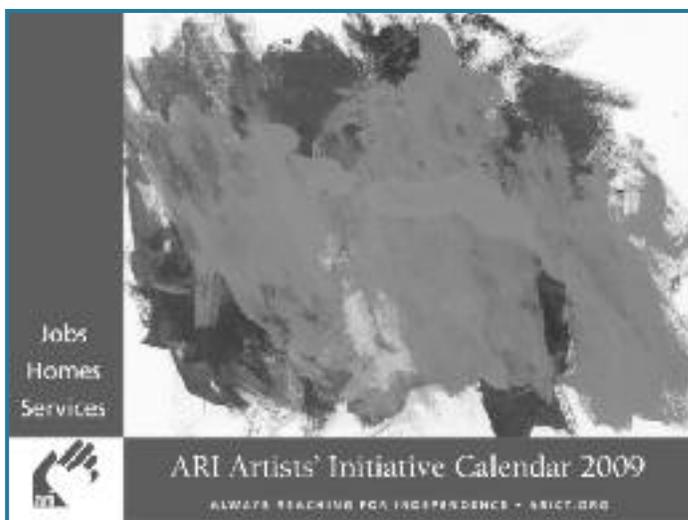
### CONGRATULATIONS ON THESE NEW PROMOTIONS:

Valerie Ennis, from Day Direct Service Worker—Day Options to Day Direct Service Worker—Job Placement; Michelle Campbell, from LPN to Nursing Supervisor; LaVerne Rollinson, from Group Leader—Supported Living Services program to Day Direct Service Worker—Day Options.

## ARI Artists' Initiative Calendar

ARI has proudly produced the 2nd Annual Artists' Initiative Calendar. It showcases artwork from thirteen clients who faithfully participate in the weekly art program. Currently twenty individuals attend these classes under the tutelage of volunteer teachers Charles Wieseahn, Carol Lyngholm, Julian Judge, and founder Donald Axleroad.

This year's calendar gained the support of many sponsors including Bank of America, Hope Street Pharmacy, Donald Axleroad, Benefit Planning Services, LLC., Beardley, Brown, & Bassett, James P. Murphy Associates, LLC., Economy Auto Body, Pellicci's Ristorante, and the Law Firm of Cacace, Tusch, & Santagata. We thank everyone for their support of our Artists' Initiative Program.



Calendars are being sold for \$10. All proceeds will be used for supplies and workshops. You can also purchase them in four Miller's Hallmark Stores in the Stamford/Norwalk area, courtesy of the Miller Family!

If you would like to purchase a calendar, or for more information on the Initiative, please contact Gerard J. Gasparino, Manager of Development and Recreation at ext. 3023.

### WE REMEMBER MAGGIE FIORE



MARGARET FIORE, passed away on Wednesday, October 22. Maggie will be remembered for participating in many ARI activities. Her interests included bowling, bocce, and most importantly, art. Maggie's artwork can be seen on the walls of ARI as well as in ARI's Annual Artists' Initiative Calendar. Maggie was a regular at all of the ARI parties. She also went on several ARI sponsored vacations. ARI has lost not only a friend but a piece of its family. Maggie will be missed by all!



## Recreation and Volunteers

Over twenty ARI clients participated in the Challenged People in Motion Golf Program last summer. Seven of them also competed in their annual Golf Outing at Sterling Farms Golf Course on August 7th. They celebrated the end of the season with an awards banquet on September 24th.

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We were fortunate to have had two corporate-sponsored bowling parties this summer. The first was sponsored by RSM McGladrey/McGladrey & Pullen on July 21st. Twenty-four ARI clients had fun bowling, eating pizza, and getting to know the 15 RSM summer interns who volunteered at this event. The second bowling party was sponsored by Thomson Reuters on August 21st. Thank you to all!

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Last August Ethel Bennett and Betty Quick travelled to Portland, Maine with Recreation Coordinator Holly Bosley. Highlights included a trolley ride through downtown Portland, a Portland Seadogs baseball game, and a day trip to the L.L. Bean flagship store in Freeport.



During September, Michael Flynn, Adriano Gatto, Ryan Goldberg, Anne Marie Joyce, Cheryl Lotstein, Kevin Pirro, Ricky Sanders, A.T. Walker went to 1000 Acres Ranch

Resort in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, where they enjoyed a range of activities including horseback riding, swimming, and golf. They were accompanied by Holly Bosley and Gerard J. Gasparino, Manager of Development and Recreation.

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Our Special Olympics Bocce Team—comprised of Jim Goldsmith, Maggie Fiore, Fred Frese, Anne Marie Joyce, Marie Kerr, Francine McMillian, Betty Quick, Libby Ryan, and Tim Walsh—practiced diligently in July and August in preparation for the Fall Sports Festival on September 6th. Unfortunately, the competition was rained out as a result of tropical storm Hanna. We are looking forward to sending an ARI Bowling Team to compete in the Special Olympics Holiday Sports Classic in East Haven on November 22nd.

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Other summer highlights included trips to three Bridgeport Bluefish baseball games, a fun-filled trip to Rye Playland, two ice cream socials, and a trip to Shea Stadium to see the New York Mets defeat the Washington Nationals.

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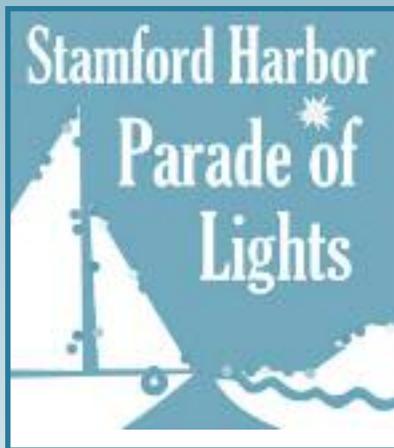
The annual ARI Halloween Party was held on October 27th at the Knights of Columbus (see below). Everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner and then danced the night away! We are appreciative of the invaluable support we received from volunteers at this party. A special thanks to Emily Russo for the festive table decorations!

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We will be participating in a holiday gift-wrapping fundraiser at Borders Book Shop on High Ridge Road on Saturday, December 6th and Wednesday, December 17th from 9am–4pm. Please contact Holly Bosley at ext. 3036 if you would like to help out by signing up for a 2- or 3-hour shift!

## The Annual ARI Halloween Bash at the Knights of Columbus!





Come see the  
ARI Artists' Initiative Artwork  
and the ARI Holiday Boat  
at the  
Stamford Harbor Parade of Lights

Saturday November 29, 2008  
at the Avalon on Stamford Harbor Marina  
150 Southfield Avenue  
beginning at 5:30pm

save the date!



Sunday, May 3, 2009  
Cove Island Park, Stamford

Sign up online at [www.arict.org](http://www.arict.org)  
or please call 203 324-9258 x 3023



## Donations July 1, 2008 to October 30, 2008

Thank you to the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their kind generosity. Please call us at (203) 324-9258, ext. 3028 to find out how you can help by making a donation to ARI or volunteering your time for those we serve. You can also find more information@www.aric.org.

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## Risks & Rights: Developing Relationships Workshop With Leslie Walker-Hirsch, Ph.D.

On Thursday, October 30, more than 30 clients, staff members and family members participated in a workshop led by Leslie Walker-Hirsch exploring the rights and risks of relationships with the opposite sex. The objective was to gain a better understanding of the rights, joys and risks of individuals who have a developmental disabilities to have relationships. Dr. Hirsch is recognized internationally as an expert on abuse prevention and relationships for individuals with developmental disabilities. She has created the "Circles Curriculum" that is widely used throughout the world for educational purposes. If you are interested in learning more about this topic please contact Carey Jaffee at ext. 3017.



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ARI of CT received over 200 men's suits, sports jackets, and other accessories from the **The Men's Wearhouse Suit Drive**. The clothing will be used by ARI clients and other at-risk Stamford men transitioning into the workforce. We are truly thankful for being part of this wonderful initiative.

ARI of Connecticut, Inc. is a non-profit organization under IRS code 501(c)(3). The ARI News is published for the members, board of directors, family members, people served, staff and friends of ARI of Connecticut, Inc. Edited and designed by Barbara C. Aronica-Buck. Published by ARI of Connecticut, Inc., 174 Richmond Hill Avenue, Stamford, Connecticut, 06902-5696. (203) 324-9258. Fax (203) 324-3949. Email: [www.arict.org](http://www.arict.org). ARI of Connecticut, Inc. supports equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, marital status, age, disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, citizenship or sexual orientation. ARI of Connecticut, Inc. is accredited by CARF and funded by DDS.

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