

always reaching for independence



jobs



homes



services



ARI of Connecticut, Inc. Annual Report 2006

board of directors

ari president/ceo

This has been another exciting year at ARI. The highlight would have to be the hiring of Matthew Reyher as our new President & CEO. Matthew brings a solid financial background that is needed in these tough economic times, and a client based philosophy of teaching as well as care giving.

We have also spent considerable effort on the acquisition of a new facility to replace our headquarters. Putting our clients and staff in a state-of-the-art, fully accessible facility has been a goal for much of this past year.

During my two-year term as Chairperson, I have had the pleasure of working with a very devoted and hard-working Board. We undertook a major initiative to create a strategic plan for the next five to eight years, along with a system to monitor our progress. The growth and improvement of service delivery has been laid out in a very broad vision and I have confidence that Matthew and future boards will honor the hard work that went into this vision and bring to fruition its bold initiatives.

We have revamped the Development and Marketing Committees to better serve the needs of management, and to work to make ARI's name a household word in Stamford and its surrounding area. The Finance Committee has worked hard to get a better grip on the budget and to make sure it is clearly tied to our programs and sources of income. Finance has also been instrumental in the sale of the Minor Place apartment complex to Friends of ARI, as well as the establishment of a line of credit on excellent terms. We are always reminded that although we are a non-profit we must continually run our agency like a business.

We just had a very successful 11th Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Outing. Plans are in the works for a gala in February, and we hope to kick off a building campaign for the financing of new headquarters.

My sincere thanks go out to our very dedicated staff. They responded to every challenge and continue to work hard to constantly improve the lives of our clients.

And high-fives and great big hugs go out to our clients. They are a wonderful group. The best part of being involved with ARI is time spent with them, at recreation, in the office, or just hanging out.

As I turn the gavel over to Mario Musilli, I have great confidence in the strength of ARI as an agency, and in the dedication of those who will keep it a vital part of our community. Thank you all for your support.

—Peter A. Buck,
Chairperson



It gives me great pleasure to present you with our 2006 Annual Report. It has been quite a year. We are proud of our many accomplishments, and look forward to the challenges ahead.

One of the most exciting developments this year was the creation of our new agency DVD. It is an exciting and uplifting snapshot of the services that we provide here at ARI, and will be a valuable tool in our efforts to raise our profile in the community.

We have been looking for a new site in which to operate our day programs. Our current facility is outdated and in need of significant capital improvements. A new, up-to-date facility would enable us to combine our administrative offices with our day program facility.

While our year has been successful, there is much to be done. Our annual increase from the Department of Mental Retardation has not kept pace with inflation or general increases in doing business. We must continue to do more with less. At the same time, we are committed to providing the best possible services to all of our clients.

One of the key challenges is our ability to market ourselves to prospective clients and their families. The Department of Mental Retardation is in the process of changing its funding model from a grant-based funding stream to a client/family choice model. With this in mind, ARI must be able to meet the ever-changing needs of the clients we serve.

Lastly, the determining factor in providing quality service is our staff. Our employees are the heroes of our agency. They are a caring, dedicated group of individuals who together create a wonderful team. It is a team that helps our clients reach a level of fulfillment and accomplishment that might not otherwise be possible.

Thank you for making this year a great success. We look forward to an even better Fiscal Year 2007!

—Matthew P. Reyher,
President/CEO

day services

ARI strives to enrich the lives of the people it serves by providing a variety of community and work experiences in Stamford, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan and Norwalk. More than 100 people, ranging in age from 18 to 71, have the chance to make connections within their local community and move away from the traditional “facilities-based” services.

Day Service Options lead to community integration as well as potential work options. Clients participate in community service, therapeutic recreation, leisure and functional daily activities. During this past year, 21 people have been placed in individual volunteer situations, giving them the chance to give back to their community, as well as develop job skills. Elderly clients served through Day Service Options also enjoy making connections with other Senior Services in Stamford.

sheltered employment

We have begun moving away from sheltered employment for a variety of reasons, including requests from clients and families to work with job coaches, automated assembly and mailing services, and consumers participating in Senior Services activities. During this past year four people have moved into individual supported employment, three people have moved into group supported employment, and three have been placed in the community experience program.

Group Supported Employment staff provides clients with skill development and supervision as they work in janitorial and landscaping services. Group Supported Employment helps our clients develop skills so they can pursue individual employment. During this past year two clients have carried out contracts with minimal oversight. Staff also placed two clients in competitive jobs.



individual job placement

Individual Job Placement services help clients obtain and advance in employment. Each individual is given ongoing support to maximize work skills and stay employed. Six clients who needed more than the usual job support have been successfully placed in competitive jobs with local employers. Additionally, forty clients who have been referred through the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services have received the help they needed.



transition services

Transition Services supports young adults who are transitioning from high school into the adult world. Students receive appropriate academic, independent living, social and vocational skills instruction so they can be as independent and successful as possible after graduation. This past year ARI and a local school district collaborated on a comprehensive community based academic/vocational program for one high school student. Instead of receiving academic instruction in a typical classroom setting, the student learned on site in the community. ARI staff provides other experiences such as job hunting, shopping, banking, etc.

recreation services

Clients enjoy recreation activities based on their preferences and the availability of necessary support. Activities and events include golf, bocce ball, bowling, art lessons, dance lessons, music lessons, fishing trips, aqua-aerobics, karaoke, basketball, visiting museums, holiday parties, gourmet cooking lessons, attending Yankees and Bluefish games, Special Olympics and more. During this past year an average of 14 activities were scheduled each month. About 160 clients participated in these activities. This total includes clients who may have attended one or more activities. Also, ARI began giving recreational interest questionnaires to each client. We hope this will lead to more individualized preferences as well as greater participation in recreational activities with non-disabled individuals.

residential services



Home, it's not only where you hang your hat, it's where you belong, where you can relax, be yourself, have fun, learn some new things, take pride in your accomplishments.

ARI provides this and more to the twenty eight-individuals who live in our five group homes.

At every house you'll find a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Our homes are indistinguishable from our neighbors on the outside. On the inside, we may very well be having more fun.

Visit Bruce at his home at *Palermo* in the afternoon and you'll find him putting on a pot of coffee so that it'll be ready when his housemates return from their day. He and

Robert can usually be found sitting around the table, trading stories and jokes.

Both Michaels will give you a warm greeting when you arrive at *Lotstein*. Nefti loves a good joke and is always ready to tell some tall tale, almost daring you to believe him.

At *Sunrise*, everyone is so busy with activities and pursuing their various interests that you'll be hard pressed to find everyone in one place at the same time. They are either at drama group, working, biking, skating boarding, at a concert in the park.

In Supported Living Services, twenty-eight people live in either single or shared apartments. ARI provides support based on their individual needs—this can vary from five hours a week working on budgeting, shopping, cooking, etc., all the way up to 24/7 support.

The idea of home is the same in SLS as it is in the group homes. The people we support take pride in their homes, their independence, and their accomplishments.

health services



In the Health Services Department, we are faced with new challenges regarding the health of our clients every day. Our focus is simple—to maximize the mental and physical well-being of every person we serve. To be able to

“Always Reach for Independence,” our clients must have the ability to enjoy optimal health.

ARI has always taken the health of our clients very seriously. This year, we were pleased to hire Lucie Labreche-Queening as Director of Health Services. She is responsible for oversight and coordination of medical care for ARI's clients. Prior to joining ARI, Lucie was Health Services Director with ARC in Greenwich.

“I am very excited about joining ARI. My goal is to continue to work towards providing our clients with top quality medical care. I am thrilled to join a team that is

focused on providing the best care available,” says Lucie.

The Health Services Department oversees medical care for over 50 clients served by ARI's residential services. Our Health Services Department works closely with more than 80 community health providers to promote optimum physical, dental, and mental health for whom we serve. We are fully in compliance with CT/DMR regulations in providing health services to persons with disabilities who live in CT/DMR-funded facilities.

This year, ARI is proud to recognize Dr. Richard Slutsky with our Community Health Care Provider of the Year award. Dr. Slutsky has been working with ARI of Connecticut for over eighteen years. His commitment to the clients of ARI is deeply appreciated.



human resources



The Human Resource Department was very busy this past year hiring thirty two new employees. Three direct service professionals were promoted into management positions and we welcomed three new members to our senior management team. Over the past year we have been lucky enough to experience a decrease in turnover: dropping to 16%. This represents a 9% decrease from the previous fiscal year.

In the fall we entered into wage negotiations with the union. Within a few weeks, and without any incident, we

amicably came to an agreement on wages for a two-year period.

Over this past year we have had the opportunity to redesign training programs for our direct service professionals. We now offer employee orientation on a quarterly basis—providing new employees the initial training they need and existing employees ongoing retraining. We streamlined a number of training courses which made existing training more efficient. A large number of our management team takes part in the orientation program, which allows employees, at all levels of the agency, to get to know one another. This has had a positive impact on retention.

In January 2006 we began using a new database for our human resource department. The database helps us to efficiently track, gather and analyze information between the human resource department and the payroll department.

As we do every year, our goal is to hire and retain the best possible staff, making sure the clients' needs are always a priority.

information technology

Communication within the agency, as well as with outside sources such as DMR, DSS, sponsors, donors, etc., is critical to fulfilling our mission. We ensure that ARI has the tools and technical support needed to supply client services.

The IT department currently consists of an IT Director, and a Network Administrator who support an internal computer LAN network of 65 workstations, three servers and associated peripherals, with 24/7 accessibility. Services within this network include email and groupware services, Internet access, a central file server, application server for financial applications, fundraising software, and a client information database. These resources are located within the administration building, and within the five group homes run by the organization.

The past year has been a challenging one in the "IT world"—the exponential increase in computer viruses, email SPAM and other nuisances have made it increasingly difficult to maintain a smoothly operating network for any company. We meet these challenges with antivirus software on all pcs and servers, and email scanning software, which scans all files being sent into and out of the organization. This year we added SPAM filtering software to our arsenal. The SPAM software prevented an average of 10,000 SPAM emails a week from reaching their intended recipients within our organization. Our security policies and settings have

greatly reduced our exposure to new viruses and we have been successful in continually maintaining the highest level of security on our network.

This year the IT Department implemented a new web-based time and attendance system (where time-clocks communicate via the web with our vendor's servers) as well as new hr/payroll processing software, which is also a web-based application. This change to a web-based application has been our greatest challenge this year, but is expected to realize a significant reduction of cost.

Perhaps the most visible and client-centered use of technology within ARI has been the creation of the computer lab in our Richmond Hill facility. Clients from our day programs are busy in the lab each day using the Internet. ARI staff uses of interactive software, which teaches money skills in addition to providing assistance to clients emailing friends and family members. Our mandate is to utilize new technologies only if there can be measurable improvement in delivering services to our clients. We are a person-centered agency and the IT department's primary objective is to help achieve our main mission—that of improving the lives of the people we serve!



finance

It has been an exciting and challenging year in the Finance Department. This year we changed to a new payroll service and installed new time clocks. We produced a detailed agency budget and put it onto the network for the first time, began a new audit process for the group homes and the management of client funds, and scanned major documents onto the network. We began the process of putting vacation, sick and personal day balances onto the new payroll system, automated the bank reconciliation process using our accounting software, set up online banking, and created monthly recurring entries in the accounts payable system. We also changed to a new supply vendor, automated the salary distribution and entry using our accounting software, hired a new staff member, and started a banking relationship with Citigroup. Our annual audit was excellent.

The challenges we faced this year have made us a stronger department. The Finance department came under new management this year, resulting in new controls and better reporting processes.

The success of the Finance department can be attributed to the longevity and dedication of our staff. Three of the four department members have worked in the Finance department for a total of 68 years combined. The fourth staff member has recently been hired and also has a proven track record of commitment.

The hard work of our staff and the enthusiasm that they show each day help ensure that payroll is done on time, that checks are paid, that billings are sent out, that payments are being received, that reports are completed on time, and most importantly, that the needs of our staff and clients are being met.



ARI OF CONNECTICUT UNAUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT 2005-2006

SUPPORT & REVENUE

FEES	\$5,723,492
CONTRACTS	\$63,128
GRANTS	\$70,634
UNITED WAY	\$24,000
MISC.	\$167,207
INVEST. INCOME	\$152,165

TOTAL REVENUE **\$6,200,626**

EXPENSES

ADMIN	\$615,019
DAY PROGRAMS	\$1,995,206
RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS	\$3,560,529
OTHER	\$128,407

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$6,299,161**

**NET PUBLIC SUPPORT AND
REVENUE OVER EXPENSES
BEFORE DEPRECIATION** **(\$98,535)**

Depreciation **\$163,000**

**NET PUBLIC SUPPORT AND
REVENUE OVER EXPENSES
AFTER DEPRECIATION** **(\$261,535)**

The financial report presented is an unaudited report. The audit for the fiscal year 2006 will be completed by October 15, 2006.

development



This is been a great year for Development and for ARI. Over the past year, the Development office has worked hard to raise ARI's profile in the community by improving our newsletter and

creating awareness of our programs and services. As the primary agency serving people with developmental disabilities in this community, it is critical that we maintain a strong presence. In addition, we have created the framework for increasing our financial support.

One major undertaking was the production of the new agency DVD. This was a long and detailed process. Bob Becker Productions shot more than twelve hours of footage to produce what ultimately became an eight minute piece. We believe this DVD captures the essence of ARI and the difference we make in the lives of people with disabilities. It is quite compelling. If you have not seen the DVD yet, please contact us for a copy.

Another accomplishment was the creation of a strategic plan to improve awareness of what we do, and help us achieve fundraising goals. This plan features a professional development program that includes improvements in our database, communications, events and fundraising strategies. With this undertaking, we are setting development priorities and creating a case for support.

This year we also hosted a fundraising event at "Agabhumi"—an open house with proceeds benefiting ARI. We hope to build on this event in the coming years. Our golf tournament continues to be a success, with record-breaking results this year.

Looking forward, we are excited about future development opportunities. Look for more agency events, including a 55th year gala celebration scheduled for February of 2007. We are also planning an agency calendar that will spotlight the beautiful work of our ARI artists. Our goal is to make our supporters stakeholders in ARI—to develop opportunities for them to strengthen their connection with the organization and the important work we do.

Lastly, thank you for your support of ARI of Connecticut. It is only with your help that we are able to provide quality programs and services to our clients and their families.

donations

july 1, 2006 through june 28, 2006

Thank you to the following individuals, businesses and organizations for their kind generosity. Please call us at 203-324-9258, ext. 3059 to find out how you can help by making a donation to ARI or volunteering your time for those we serve. You can also visit our website to find more information and to make a secure donation online at www.aricet.org.

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Foundation *(In Honor of Dr. & Mrs. Melvin Grove)*
First County Bank Foundation
Herbert & Sarah M. Gabor
Charitable Foundation
Jewish Community Endowment
Foundation *(In Honor of Rini Banaryee)*
Knights of Columbus, Council 41
Knights of Columbus, Council # 5833
Louis J. Kuriansky Foundation
Leon Lapine Charitable Trust
RBS Greenwich Capital Foundation,
Inc.
(In honor of Anna Maria Egan)
The Rich Foundation Inc.
The Daniel K. Roberts & Betty
Roberts Family Foundation, Inc.
The Sarezky Family Foundation, Inc.
The Umbrella Club of Fairfield County
United Way of Eastern Fairfield County
United Way of Stamford
The Walters Family Foundation

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ARI mission statement

Enriching the lives of people with disabilities
and their families by enabling them to achieve
their fullest potential at home, at work
and in the community.

ARI of Connecticut, Inc.

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