always reaching for independence
It gives me great pleasure to present our annual report for fiscal year 2012, our most challenging yet. With this report of the state of the agency, we are continuing last year’s theme of “A Day in the Life of an ARI Client,” highlighting the resolve and creativity of our clients and staff. I am sure you will be enlightened and amazed by this story.

As the year began, we continued the renovations of our Richmond Hill Avenue building. This has been a major focus for the last three years, with the ultimate goal of providing a more efficient facility in which to carry out our day program operations. After the ground-breaking early last year, the upper- and lower-level ramps as well as the remodeling of the lower-level kitchen, cafeteria, and restroom facilities were done. The end of this fiscal year marks the completion of the Phase 2, including the upper-level restroom facilities and the electrical service. There is still much to be done, but the next phases are on hold while we secure funding to execute the completion of this state-of-the-art facility. This will be accomplished over the next three years with an exciting new capital campaign.

While our funding from our major sources has continued to evolve and change, we are confident that our agency will adapt to meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens. Expansion will continue in our residential services program in Ridgefield with our partners, The Ridgefield Sunrise Cottage Board of Directors. The need for residential services continues to increase in Stamford, as well as statewide, with the reclassification of some who receive an Individualized Home Support delivery model to a Continuous Residential Support model. This allows for clients to pool resources to receive maximum coverage without compromising support. ARI is prepared to take advantage of the future growth potential with this model as a basis of referrals. New clients continue to be referred by DDS for day services support, employment opportunities and individualized day programs. Our contract with our local school system continues to provide that vital need for transition from high school to adult life.

Our fundraising efforts have and will continue to have a major effect on our dwindling financial resources from our subsidies from the State of Connecticut. Our efforts promote our mission but also provide the much-needed dollars to continue to provide a quality level of support and care.

I am proud to say that this is our 60th year of service. Sixty years. Not many (nonprofit or other) organizations can say that. ARI thanks our founding families, current family and board members, colleagues, friends and supporters for their contribution to and the support of our “guys” here at the ARI. We look forward to spending our next 60 years together.

I would like to thank our committed and dedicated staff, board of directors, donors and benefactors who continue to inspire our agency to seek greater heights in service to people with disabilities. While we have accomplished much, more needs to be done. We are up for the challenge. I know that you are too!!

Matthew P. Reyher
President and CEO
human resources

We are fortunate to have an extraordinary staff at ARI and are privileged to honor so many for their longevity and special talents. This year’s HR Staff Awards are presented to:

2012 Longevity Awards

15 years
Christine Alexander

10 years
Sherland St. John

5 years
Louise Medoit; Regina Holley; Melody Thompson; Roberto Sanchez; Judy Bruen; Guirlanda Guery

Rookie of the Year – Sabine Ambroise, Manager of Lotstein Residence

Heart of the Agency – Tammy DeLeo, Director of Day Service Programs

Always Reaching for Independence – Willie Clark, Residential Counselor

Team Award – Day Service Options Program; Darlene Caviness, Sherri Norwood, Christine Alexander, Carline Archer, Tiajuana Fogle, Matt Whyte, Vincent Grant, Felicia Drungo, DeKenya Bell, Hector Torres, Robin Dimmock, Cynthia Lowe, Tionaya Jackson, Jacques Richeme, Thaddeus Cuffee, Laura Floyd

This year we received an outpouring of nominations for the HR awards. These are just some excerpts from the nominations – without naming names:

“… she does every part of her job with care and great attention to detail. She is a self-starter. She interacts well with the staff and consumers. She engages well with DDS case managers, guardians/families and community health professionals. She is a team player and is always willing to lend a hand to me and her colleagues. Other departments within the agency have commented on her fantastic job performance.”

“… his work performance has proven to be exceptional. He works more than anyone in this agency. He has had a significant impact on everyone. He is dependable and reliable for all of the residences, including IHS and the Day Program. He is everywhere. He takes initiative, he is creative and he has the willingness and the drive that others should have.”

“… this team maintained client services during the renovations, working together to ensure each client continued to participate in functional activities both inside the main building and in the community. They assisted each of our clients to achieve and maintain their personal goals.

development

With your support our clients achieve their fullest potential by enabling us to continue to deliver the highest quality of services in spite of continued decreases in state funding. Despite difficult economic times, we still received support from many individuals, community groups, foundations and corporations.

• The 16th Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament took place on August 18, 2011. Close to one hundred golfers participated in this event. The 17th Annual Lotstein/Martin Golf Tournament will take place on Thursday, August 16, 2012. For those interested in playing or sponsoring please contact us at (203) 324-9258 ext. 3023.

• The 3rd Annual Fall Comedy Night took place on October 22, 2011. Over one hundred people enjoyed the three nationally-known comedians after dinner, drinks and a successful auction at the Hibernian Hall in Stamford. The 4th Annual Comedy Night will take place in the fall of 2012.

• The 2011–2012 Annual Appeal continues to provide donors the opportunity to make an annual contribution.

• The 6th Annual Walk for Independence was the most successful Walk yet! Over 350 walkers – clients, family members, staff, volunteers, and community supports – joined together on May 6, 2012 in support of ARI. All walkers were treated to a lunch provided by Subway, fruit and hot dogs provided by ShopRite Grade A Markets, grills provided by Lapine, Inc., smoothies from Robeks, and bagels provided by Liz Sue Bagels.

• The ARI Artists’ Initiative produced its fifth annual calendar from extraordinary artwork created in the weekly art class.

• We received grants from the Fairfield County Community Foundation, First County Bank, Young Women’s League of New Canaan, and the United Way. Each year, the FCCF helps fund our respite program which allows families to hire someone to work with their child so that they can take a break. The First County Bank, Young Women’s League of New Canaan and United Way provided ARI with grants that pay for emergency expenses incurred by the Individualized Home Supports program.

We thank each and everyone who supports the agency throughout the year.
Rickey is very interested in finding a job. Over the past year, along with the help of his direct support staff, Rickey has been preparing for a job in the community. He has focused on interviewing skills, completed vocational assessments and was able to complete some trial work. Recently, Rickey has applied for a “greeter” position with the local arboretum. The position is responsible for greeting visitors, sharing information regarding membership, current events, collecting the parking fee and handing out parking passes.

Here is the typical “day in the life” of this process.

After arriving at the day program he greets his friends and puts away his personal belongings. He meets up with his job coach to practice his skills. In a small quiet room Rickey recites his assigned “script.” Different staff members come into the room to help Rickey perfect some of the skills he has learned.

After his practice session, Rickey enjoys lunch with a few of his friends. He cleans up, puts on his uniform and starts to make his way over to his job interview which has two parts; a face-to-face interview and live demonstration. With the support of his job coach, Rickey makes it through the interview and heads home.

Rickey takes some time to “chill” when he gets home. After relaxing, he prepares his lunch for the next day and takes a shower in preparation for a date with his girlfriend. Other nights he participates in activities such as swimming, playing golf, and track and field. Rickey is currently preparing for the Special Olympics where he competes in the 25 and 100 meter Wheel Chair Race and the Softball Throw. On Thursdays, he participates in personal training sessions with one of his roommates in order to stay in shape and exercise. Rickey also enjoys bowling and going to the movies with friends.

When he isn’t busy with these activities, he takes time to check his email, catch up with friends and family, update his Facebook page, and from time to time, plays games on his Nintendo Wii. Rickey is also responsible for daily chores in his group home. He keeps his room neat and is responsible for making his bed each morning and doing his own laundry.

Ricky is a well-loved and respected part of the ARI family and we look forward to hearing about his future accomplishments.
recreation and volunteers

Close to 100% of our clients participate in recreation activities throughout the year – 150 individuals – including those not receiving formal ARI services. Over 2,500 hours of recreation were offered to clients through over twenty different activities.

This past year ARI took trips to see the New York Mets, the Bridgeport Bluefish, and the Bridgeport Sound Tigers. Over twenty clients participated in the weekly aqua-aerobics program at the Darien YMCA. Over fifteen clients participated in the Challenged People in Motion golf program at Sterling Farms Golf Course. Twenty clients participated in the weekly art class resulting in artwork featured in the ARI calendar as well as art shows throughout the state.

Social gatherings continue to be a big part of the program. Again this year, ARI clients attended the Halloween, Holiday, Valentine’s and St. Patrick’s Parties at the Knights of Columbus. Each event drew over 80 clients, where everyone danced, socialized and had a great time with friends. On average, 30 clients attended the monthly Men’s and Women’s Night Out where they met for dinner at a local restaurant.

All recreation activities are designed to serve multiple purposes; allowing clients to have fun, socialize, develop friendships, and be physically active. Whether it is two clients going on a “date” or one learning a new skill/hobby, our programming fosters great life skills.

ARI is grateful for the many volunteers who donate their time to assist with recreational activities, serve on the board of directors, support fundraising events, and provide the labor for improvements at our residential and day facilities.

Volunteers are a key component to the success of the agency. This past year over 350 individuals volunteered at ARI donating over 3,000 hours of their time. Because of the commitment made by volunteers, recreational programs such as Aqua-Aerobics, Art Class, client parties, and much more are able to occur. Fundraising events such as the annual Walk for Independence rely on volunteers to prepare the event over the prior months to the event. The volunteer board of directors continues to work tirelessly with the governance of the agency.

ARI was fortunate to have three groups come to “spruce up” its facilities. On Friday, October 7, thirty volunteers from Ernst & Young worked on the yard at the Palermo residence. On Saturday, April 28, thirty volunteers from the Convent of the Sacred Heart through Rebuilding Together Fairfield County performed worked on the yard, power-washed and stained the back deck at the Truglia residence. On Thursday, May 10, seventy volunteers from the Synapse Group through HomeFront, Inc. cleaned up the yard, created new flower gardens, installed new drainage, and installed wainscoting in the hallways to protect the walls at the Palermo residence. All three projects were fully funded by the volunteer groups. Events like these are important to keeping our facilities fresh and safe for our clients.

Thomson Reuters continued their support through bowling parties along with providing lunch at the annual ARI client holiday party. At that party, three of Stamford’s finest from our police force handed out presents to each of the ARI clients. The Knights of Columbus continued their support, with the assistance of Michael Powers Catering, to sponsor four parties at little cost to the clients.

ARI continues to be grateful for the assistance from all of our community partners who take time out of their lives to assist in programs and projects at ARI.
The Finance Department is pleased to report that although this has been a difficult year financially, we continue to focus on our priorities of providing relevant and accurate information to our Board members, parents, staff, the State and the public at large.

Our department’s goals are many and include enhancing revenue collections from all funding sources, the timely and accurate reporting of financial results, the management of cash flow, controlling our costs, paying bills on time, payroll processing, collection of accounts receivable, billing, internal auditing, ensuring that computer systems are properly secured and backed up, that our communications systems (Internet, telephones, cable, time clocks) are all operating properly, and encouraging and promoting the training for our dedicated staff (Finance Department, I/T Department).

Our Maintenance Department ensures that our Day Service and Administrative buildings along with our five residential facilities are being properly maintained, that our staff works in an environment that is safe, and that our consumers are safe and comfortable.

During the next few months we will have our annual audit for fiscal year 2012 and we will finalize the agency budget for fiscal year 2013. We review all programs to ensure that they are running efficiently and we will identify and take the necessary actions to address any deficiencies that arise.

Many thanks go out to our dedicated financial, I/T and Maintenance staff for all of the hard work, time and support they have given our agency this past year.
A R I  M I S S I O N  S T A T E M E N T

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.