

The Leaflet



Spring 2006

Newsletter of the Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs

Operation Hope Gives Support for Special Needs



Through a community project called Operation Hope, the Knights of Columbus recently donated \$2,016 to help support the Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs, and special needs programs at Marion School Districts 1 and 2. Each organization received a check for \$672. Operation Hope was created to help citizens with mental disabilities. The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic fraternal men's organization that was created to help the church and community. The organization thanks the citizens and business community for their support. From left, Manny Alegria, co-chair of Operation Hope; Michael Keith, executive director of the Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs; Kristin Wilson, director of Programs for Exceptional Children at MSD 1; and Robert Clark, grand knight of the Knights of Columbus Council #8790. Russell Causey from MSD 2 is not pictured.

(Picture & article courtesy of the Marion Star & Enterprise. Reprinted by permission.)

Success – 11 years and counting

The Supportive Employment Program of Marion/Dillon Disabilities and Special Needs is always willing and eager to provide job development to its consumers. Jerome Davis is an excellent example of the success of our program. Jerome is a very dedicated associate of Walmart in Marion. He has been employed there since May 11, 1995. He works Monday through Friday. Jerome truly enjoys his work and always displays a positive attitude toward customers, as well as his coworkers. Manager of Walmart, Jason Eudy, says that Jerome is very dependable and always works hard. Mr. Eudy says that he hears Jerome's name called over the intercom several times a day. He commented that Jerome is always "on top of things." Marion/Dillon DSN is very proud of Jerome for his accomplishments. Congratulations Jerome for eleven years of hard work and dedication!



Jerome Davis (center) is congratulated by Store Manager Jason Eudy as Job Coach Marcia Bryant looks on.

Disability Advocacy Day at State House on March 1

Hundreds of South Carolinians with lifelong disabilities, their family members and service providers met with legislators at the State House on March 1st for Disability Advocacy Day.

They saw the SC General Assembly at work and personally urged their representatives and senators to support essential services for children and adults with disabilities. The top legislative priorities for citizens with developmental disabilities and their families are:

1). Reducing waiting lists for services; 2). Increasing family support services and 3). Strengthening protections for citizens with developmental disabilities, said Mary Bennet, one of the coordinators of Disability Advocacy Day. "Essential services such as residential and vocational support must continue and new services must be available when needed."

Families who seek services today are faced with waiting lists that continue to grow. Of the 3,893 individuals now on waiting lists, 1863 are waiting for residential services-this is a growth of 75 people over last year. It is anticipated that 150 people will require placement during next year. Almost 1600 individuals with disabilities currently live at home with parents who are age 65 or older. At least 759 of these individuals live with parents who are 72 and older, almost 300 with parents age 80 and older. Another 960 individuals are waiting for day programs, employment and individual or family support services. Family support services include attendant and respite care, early childhood intervention, day and employment services and specialized medical and behavioral services. In-home support services are especially important and cost-efficient because they allow families to care for their loved one at home. Not only do these services save money by allowing families to care for these individuals, but they allow family members to work instead of having to stay at home to provide full time care. They also make employment possible for many adults with disabilities.

20,000 persons served by DDSN live at home, according to DDSN figures. More than 1,600 live with parents who are age 65 and older. Of great concern to families is "What will happen to my loved one when I die or am no longer able to provide the care and protection that is needed?"

Family members are looking to their legislators and the Governor to provide needed safeguards to prevent the abuse and neglect of people with developmental disabilities. South Carolina needs to ensure that there is independent monitoring and that there are qualified investigators to examine allegations of abuse and neglect.

Co-sponsors of Disability Advocacy Day are: SC Partnership of Disability Organizations, SC Autism Society, The Brain Injury Alliance of SC, The ARC of SC-Advocates for Special Needs, SC Humans Service Providers Association, The Disability Action Center, Inc. Epilepsy Foundation of SC and the SC Chapter of American Association on Mental Retardation (SCAAMR).

This year marks the seventeenth anniversary of Disability Advocacy Day in South Carolina. Governor Mark Sanford proclaimed March as Disability Awareness Month in South Carolina. In addition, Governor Sanford proclaimed the month of April Autism Awareness Month in South Carolina. People with autism are among the special needs population served by The Department of Disabilities and Special Needs.



**Executive
Director's
Column:**
Mike Keith

I am pleased with all the work that has been completed by our staff and consumers to get the "Happy Blooms" Greenhouses ready for its spring opening on March 28th. It appears as if this spring's plants are especially healthy and beautiful. Truly this has been a labor of love that will continue for many years to come.

Also on March 28th will be our Disabilities Awareness Open House at the Dillon Center. We have done a lot of work in preparation of this event. The Dillon Center has received a fresh coat of paint and new tile floors in the workshops that has greatly improved everyone's outlook. We have also worked hard to get the word out to the community and we hope that many folks will come by to see how what people with "Special Needs" can do.

March has been designated as "Disabilities Awareness Month" as proclaimed by Governor Sanford. Disability Advocacy Day was on March 1st and we had our Advocacy Group to attend. The consumers indicated they got to meet some of our legislators and enjoyed this very much. We also had Mayor Todd Davis of Dillon and Mayor Kenneth McDonald of Mullins to sign the "Disability Awareness Month" Proclamations for their cities. Thanks to our Mayors and all those others in our community who support efforts to promote our consumers.

We are continuing in our efforts to make our services better throughout our agency. The day program has received new training and will be soon adopting a new curriculum centering on choice, consumer rights and more functional activities. We have sent out a Parent/Guardian questionnaire that we hope to have a good response to help us improve in these needed areas. We urge all Parents/Guardians to

send this survey back to us. Those who bring the survey to drop in our box at the Open House on March 28th will get a free raffle ticket for a 50 inch, Color TV. (Proceeds to benefit the PGA and Marion Dillon Disabilities Foundation).

DHEC has inspected our Dillon ICF and we are now projecting the license date for the Dillon CRCF to be April 3rd. This conversion has been a long time coming and should be a real boost for our program. Thanks to Marcella Mitchell our Acting CRCF Administrator, Angela Gee our Residential Coordinator, Debbie Boyce, Financial Director, James Cox, Maintenance Coordinator, Rob Horton, CQI Coordinator, Dianne Thompson, HR Administrator and all our ICF Residential Staff for their hard work in making this happen. Also thanks to our SCDDSN partners, Dr. Stanley Butkus, David Goodell, Bill Barfield, Tom Waring, Brad Beasley, Joan Cooper, Vickie Wilkes and the many others working behind the scenes to bring this to reality.

The Marion-Dillon direct support staff are the best in the world. Thanks for continuing to S.M.I.L.E. (Our agency mission: Support, Motivate and Improve Lives Everyday). Also thanks to all those in our communities who continually support what we do.



Rep. Jackie Hayes meets with a delegation from Marion-Dillon BDSN at the Statehouse on Disability Awareness Day. Pictured are (Front, l-r) Demika Gause, Lavesa Felton, Rose Cawthon, (Back, l-r) Cynthia Breeden, Rep. Hayes, and Devon Knox.

150 and Above Weight Club

By: Elaine Weston

In the spirit of becoming more health conscious, Mullins Professional Services Office which includes service coordination and early intervention departments have developed a weight club which primarily focuses on losing weight but also focuses on other issues such as high blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol control. The club was developed on February 20, 2006 and each participant was asked to weigh in as well as to track in a journal the things being done to reach their desired weight. At the end of four weeks, participants were weighed again to track progress. Thus far, 42 lbs. have been lost collectively at Professional Services.

The following persons have participated in this challenge: Linda Belin, Ivery Davis, Carisa Gerald, Angela Godbolt, Agnes McDonald, Vernetta McNeil, Shannon Rutledge and Elaine Weston. All club members received a certificate of participation. The top three winners were Elaine Weston, Ivery Davis and Linda Belin who each received a "Gold Certificate."

During this process, team members have been supportive of each other by offering tips for reduced calorie recipes, monitoring each other during times of "weaknesses" and encouraging others to participate in exercise activities. It is our belief that "**healthier**" employees will be able to provide more quality and efficient services to our consumers. Healthier employees will likely utilize fewer sick leaves, which over time could be a cost savings to the board. Since the inception of this club, team members have reported that they have more energy and have noticed a decrease as it relates to their blood pressure. We are very proud of each of our participants and encourage the team to stride forward for a healthier, fit life-style.

*From the Desk Of:
Dianne Thompson
Human Resource Administrator*

The Mission Statement for Marion Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs is "SMILE - Support Motivate Improve Lives Every day." One way we are putting forth an effort to accomplish this mission is through encouraging the consumers we serve to have an active voice. We have begun this process through advocating and promoting the organization of a Self-Advocacy Group.

What is Self Advocacy? Self Advocacy means that individually or in groups people speak or act on behalf of themselves or others on issues that affect their lives on a daily basis.

The first meeting of the MDCBDSN Self-Advocacy Group was held on November 30, 2005. It was explained to the volunteers at this meeting that "your" voice matters. The group has been afforded to receive additional information about Self-Advocacy by onsite training from Kim Cannon, Technical Assistant, Rock Hill, South Carolina.

The group is very excited and is now in the process of electing officers and working together in order to develop their mission statement.

Kim Cannon, will continue to provide technical assistance and Cynthia Breeden, Jeanette Gurley, Diana Barfield and I will continue to assist in an advisory capacity only!

Employee Updates!

Congratulation goes out to Debbie Boyce, Financial Administrator who completed all the requirements and received her Master's Degree in Management, from Troy University, December 2005. Continued success in the future, Debbie!

Employee Updates! (Continued)

Belva Britt - began employment with MDCBDSN on 01/02/05 as a full-time Early Interventionist.

Wendy Small - began employment with MDCBDSN on 01/17/06 as a full-time DSA.

Shenita M. Townsend - began employment with MDCBDSN on 09/12/05 as a Temporary Employee has now become a full-time DSA effective 01/03/06.

Sabrina F. Johnson - began employment with MDCBDSN on 11/17/05 as a Temporary Employee has now become a full-time DSA effective 01/03/06.

Diana Barfield - began employment with MDCBDSN on 1/17/06 as a full-time Workshop Supervisor.

***From my desk to you and yours let us remember,
“Spring is a time for new beginnings. Why not let it start with me.”***

HAPPY BIRTHDAY BLAKELY!!!!

Some of the consumers from the Marion and Dillon Centers celebrated Blakely McIntyre's birthday with a cook-out on March 1, 2006. The consumers enjoyed hamburgers and hot dogs cooked on the grill, cake and ice cream. Mr. McIntyre treated the consumers with four wheeler and golf cart rides.

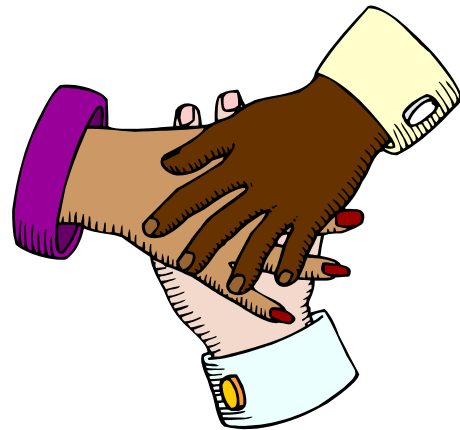
***Marion – Dillon Foundation Update***

The Marion – Dillon Foundation is currently selling, The World's Finest Chocolate Bars to help with the cost of the upcoming Prom for our Consumers. If you are interested in helping sell candy, please notify Janet McKenzie at the Dillon Center 774-6775 or Linda Martin at the Marion Center 423-4484 ext. 100. Your help is greatly needed and will be very much appreciated.

We feel that our Consumers need to participate in events that all adults have an opportunity to enjoy. Please help so that we can make this prom a night that our Consumers will never forget.

In addition we still have quite a few magnetic ribbons that we need to sell, if you can help please contact Janet or Linda.

If you are interested in becoming a Board Member please contact Janet McKenzie or Mike Keith- Executive Director. We concentrate on making the lives of our Consumers more productive and enjoyable..



Helping Hands *** Changing Lives

WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

As you are aware, we have planned a Prom for all Consumers for June 09, 2006. If you or someone you know has a Prom dress or Tuxedo that you would like to donate, please contact Janet McKenzie at 843-774-6775. In addition if you would like to volunteer for this special night, please let me know.

Valentine's 2006 King and Queen Crowned

On February 14, 2006, Marion Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs hosted their annual Valentine Ball for the consumer of Marion and Dillon Counties. Approximately 150 consumers, staff and guests attended. The lovely decorations in the Valentine's theme were created by D's Florist of Marion. The event began with a fashion show and highlighted with the crowning of the Valentine Queen and King from each Center. Delicious refreshments were served and all enjoyed dancing to the music provided by Tim Cousar, DJ.



Marion King and Queen-Michael Fore and Damika Gause



Dillon King and Queen-Derrick Bethea and Annette Nance

Travels of our Special Olympians

by : Frank Morris-Special Olympic Coordinator

- Feb. 5-7, 2006: Southeastern Winter Games in Boone, NC - Travis Boyd and Herman Denton participated in skiing. Travis won 2 plaques in green rope climb and Herman won 4th place in green rope pull.
- Feb. 8-10, 2006 National Unified Bowling Invitation in Corpus Christi, Texas. Staff Frank Morris and Travis Boyd participated. Won 4th place in the team competition and "Most Pins" over the three day tournament.
- Feb. 24-26, 2006 Mid-Winter Games in Charleston, SC. Ten consumers participated and won a total of 12 medals. Staff also participated.
- Mar. 13-15, 2006 Southeastern Tennis Invitational in Hilton Head Island, SC. Four consumers participated and won a total of 4 medals. Herman Denton won the Sportsmanship Award.
- Mar. 28, 2006 Spring Games at Francis Marion University
- Mar. 31, 2006 March Madness Basketball Tournament in Marion, SC Florence DSN, Chesterfield DSN and Marion DSN to compete

Up-Coming Events:

- April 21, 2006 State Basketball Tournament in Columbia, SC
- May 5-7, 2006 Summer Games at Fort Jackson in Columbia

Calendar of Events

April 2006

4/13/06	Wellness Walk-Dillon Center
4/18/06	PGA Meeting-Marion
4/21-22/06	Special Olympic Basketball Tournament-Clemson, SC
4/27/06	Board Meeting-Marion

May 2006

5/5-7/06	Special Olympic Summer Games-Columbia, SC
5/16/06	PGA Meeting-Dillon
5/25/06	Board Meeting-Dillon
5/29-31/06	Special Olympic Coca Cola Classic Softball Classic

June 2006

6/9/06	Prom Night - (sponsored by Marion-Dillon Disabilities Foundation)
6/20/06	PGA Meeting - Marion
6/22/06	Board Meeting - Marion

SPECIAL OLYMPIANS HONORED AT BANQUET

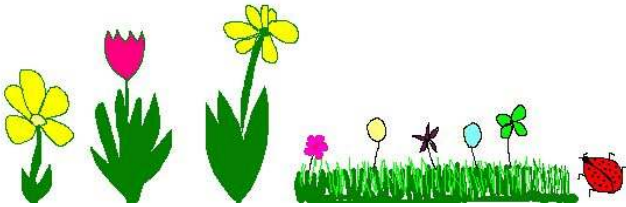


Front row left to right: Katina Charles- female athlete from Dillon, Mechelle Hamilton-female athlete from Marion; **Back row, left to right:** Paul Brown-male athlete Dillon, Frank Morris-MDCBDSN Special Olympic Coordinator, Germaine Ford-male athlete from Marion

The Marion-Dillon County Board of Disabilities and Special Needs hosted their 1st Annual Special Olympics Awards Banquet on Friday, January 27, 2006. The banquet was a special event honoring all who participated in the Spring Games at Francis Marion University with a certificate. The traveling all-stars received a plaque. Trophies were given to the female and male star athlete from both Marion and Dillon Counties. Billy Wilson, Special Olympic Coordinator from Florence County DSN and some of his athletes were guests for the occasion. After the awards ceremony everyone was treated to a meal of baked ham, potato salad, green beans, rolls, cake and tea. The consumers finished off the afternoon with a party and danced to music played by Timothy Cousar, DJ. The Disabilities Board would like to thank the Marion-Dillon Disabilities Foundation for their sponsorship of the event.



Happy Blooms Greenhouses



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