

# New Beginnings

Volume 2

Issue 8

## Parkside Residence



Parkside would like to congratulate Andrea G. as our new Day Program Coordinator. We are also welcoming Lisa to the family. Recently, we had the pleasure of hosting Paul and Sherry's baby shower, where many attended. Parkside's Christmas Party was held in December. Many of the staff were in attendance. Everyone enjoyed eating and exchanging gifts. During this year's Re-Focus, Inc. Christmas Party, we were all overjoyed to hear that Janice Savicki would receive the "Lillian's Courageous Life Award."

Parkside was saddened with the recent tragic events that led to the passing of Charly's sister, Doris.

For sixteen years, Sherry has been part of the Parkside family. In the upcoming months, she will be stepping down as Director and into the mom position. She will be missed.

## Olney Arnold Residence

In October, Sandra Bellino celebrated her 63rd Birthday. She was showered by nice gifts and a Birthday dinner. Her mom attended the celebration at the house making it extra special for Sandra. Norm Braley and Ken Lambert attended the Halloween Party on October 28th. Olney Arnold has been dodging snow storms beginning with Thanksgiving. We are currently enjoying the warmer weather here at Christmas, Kwanza and Hanukkah! On the 15th of December, Olney Arnold folks and staff attended the Christmas Party for Re-Focus, Inc. The party was at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. We ate, we danced and enjoyed the music and programs presented.

In November, Suzanne LeFebvre and Sandra Bellino enjoyed their grant of a concert and dinner at Mohegan Sun. Sandra's dream was to invite her mom out for an evening. Sandra, Sue and Gloria Bellino enjoyed their dinner and the group, Chicago, in concert. Souvenirs were bought for the ladies, and we ventured home, all enjoying the evening.

On December 21st, 2005, Olney Arnold had a house Christmas Party with staff and residents. We had a pot luck dinner, Yankee gift swap and Christmas music. Gloria Bellino attended the party as well. The food was great, the gifts were fun and useful. We all left ready for Christmas!

Welcome home from Nigeria, Ronke Fakiyesi.

Sorry for your loss, Miatta Bioma, of your father. Welcome back from Liberia.

Sorry for your loss, Alex Porte, of your step mom.

Happy Birthday, Sata Wonmei.

## Beechnut Residence

Beechnut has been very busy these past few months. The holidays and the many birthdays have been the source of many celebrations! Doris and Peggy continue to enjoy the Holiday Season. Gary and Gino vacationed in the Berkshires. Rita and Joan love going for walks and coffee. Beechnut staff have been wonderfully supportive to the program and Re-Focus, Inc. Thank you.

Beechnut has been hosting Eileen's road to recovery. Each and every staff has been there through the tough times, and they enjoyed the fun times. Eileen's staff and Beechnut staff deserve to be praised time and again. Thank you for your sincere dedication.

Thank you to all the Beechnuts for welcoming our new guest.

## Roving Reporter

By Christopher Vecchia

Sue Desrosiers

- 1) My Purpose: To provide a supportive environment to help people grow and to become the best people they can be.
- 2) Worked at Re-Focus, Inc.: Fourteen years.
- 3) My Positions at Re-Focus, Inc.: Direct Support Professional, official Re-Focus "Floater" and Residential Director.
- 4) My Goal: Being responsible, taking initiative, being as independent as possible and keeping communication open. Don't take life too seriously.
- 5) What I Like Most About Re-Focus, Inc.: Being a part of something that is always changing and growing and being a part of a nice big family.
- 6) How I Started: I fell into it gradually, started at a young age, was interested in helping people, and love to help people in the community. It feels good to offer folks someone to depend on.
- 7) About Re-Focus, Inc.: Re-Focus, Inc. is the best agency to work for. They go above and beyond to help people. They see things in people that others don't. It's a very loving, family oriented agency.

Patty Rich

- 1) My Purpose: Supporting all the folks to help them grow and learn things in the community.
- 2) Worked at Re-Focus, Inc.: Thirteen years this May.
- 3) My Position at Re-Focus, Inc.: Direct Support Professional for eleven years and Assistant Manager for one and half years.
- 4) My Goal: Spending time with the ladies and taking them out in the community. I now enjoy learning the other part of the job.
- 5) What I Like Most About Re-Focus, Inc.: Staff can have really good teamwork and be independent. The ladies can just show the joy on their faces every day.
- 6) How I Started: My aunt's son had disabilities, and I knew him when I was young and became his friend. I felt joy when he was happy and sometimes sad to see the way he was treated.
- 7) About Re-Focus, Inc.: I started at Re-Focus, Inc. when I was 22 years old and coming here, I felt a loving, trusting and family oriented agency. I got to know people easily and I could not see myself working anywhere else.

MaryAnn Grygiel

- 1) My Purpose:: Trying to inject some humor and lightness to my program, its residents and staff.
- 2) Worked at Re-Focus, Inc.: I have worked for Re-Focus, Inc. since March, 1992.
- 3) My Position at Re-Focus, Inc.: I was Direct Support Staff at Aaron Briggs apartments until June, 1998. At that time, I was hired as a Coordinator in the Independent Living Program.
- 4) My Goal: I am not a mind reader, so if everyone would tell me what they need and/or want, it would help me very much.
- 5) What I Like Most About Re-Focus, Inc.: It's different every day. I also love all of the paperwork I have to get done.
- 6) How I Started: I was working as a file clerk in an accounting office, and I was bored stiff. All I did all day was interact with papers, numbers and file cabinets. I felt I was in limbo. Then my sister, Kathy, told me about job openings at another agency's Day Program. I applied, was hired that day, and I never looked back. This field of work has been very satisfying to me.
- 7) About Re-Focus, Inc.: I have worked for several Human Service agencies since 1985, and I feel most at home here at Re-Focus, Inc. There's a warm camaraderie that's very welcoming to outsiders and continually sustaining to long-time members. Re-Focus, Inc. is not 100% perfect, but we are always striving to improve, straining to grasp the future and sailing ahead on a boundless reservoir of goodwill and even better intentions.

## Yajaira Alvarado

- 1) **My Purpose:** The most important thing that I do at Re-Focus, Inc. is provide my clients with friendship and teach them skills that will allow them to live a happy lifestyle.
- 2) **Worked at Re-Focus, Inc.:** Eight months.
- 3) **My Position at Re-Focus, Inc.:** Direct Support Professional.
- 4) **My Goal:** The staff can let me know when I make a mistake or even give me advice that will help me work better. The residents can help me by telling me all the types of activities they enjoy.
- 5) **What I Like Most about Re-Focus, Inc.:** What I like most about my job is seeing my clients happy with a big smile and knowing that I make a difference.
- 6) **How I Started:** I enjoy working with people. I am currently attending school to become a special education teacher. I feel working at a group home provides me with a great amount of experience.
- 7) **About Re-Focus, Inc.:** I feel that Re-Focus, Inc. is the first agency that I have seen treat the clients as family. Most, if not all, the folks we take care of always have a smile on their faces.

## Cooke Drive Residence

It has been a very busy few months at Cooke Drive. Everyone enjoyed all the Thanksgiving and Christmas activities. Sandy and all her busy beavers worked very hard to make and fill stockings for a good part of the agency. The finished product was very impressive to see, and the goodies were very creative.

We are very happy to have Heidi Anderson as a new member of our family. Heidi has adjusted well and is happy in her new home. Thanks to Nikki and her program for taking such good care of Heidi.

We are busy with new projects for the winter and also enjoying each other's company. Snow has hit the Foster-Glocester region, and we have been very busy shoveling. Here's to an early Spring.

## Aaron Briggs Residences

There have been many changes at Aaron Briggs lately after our becoming a 24-hour program. We have added many new and wonderful staff to our program. We are very pleased to welcome Jess Leone as our Assistant Director, and Direct Support Staff: Pat, John, Tara, Janice, Ty, Sandra and Beth.

December has been a very eventful and festive month. On December 6th, Terry celebrated his 55th Birthday with some of his friends and staff. With the help of staff, Jeanne made some Christmas decorations and sold them at the Christmas Bazaar.

Everyone went to the Re-Focus, Inc. holiday party, and Aaron Briggs had its Christmas Party as well. We still have Bingo every Monday (except Holidays) at 12:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. We have prizes, and it's a great social event that's "free." Aaron Briggs is handicapped accessible. As winter settles in, we are planning trips and outings for the good weather. "Happy New Year" from everyone at Aaron Briggs.

## Willow Street/Chestnut Hill Avenue Residences

Chestnut Hill is sorry to report that Ann Marie Stigalt is moving to School Street. Our loss is their gain. Remember, Ann Marie, Chestnut Hill has an open door policy. Come back and visit anytime. Christopher Vecchia won the State-wide Self-Advocacy Award in October at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick. He was presented with an engraved crystal plaque. Good for you, Chris, advocating for yourself!

Dream Grants for 2005 were enjoyed by all of our folks. Chris Vecchia and Phil DiDonato's dream was to go on a vacation to Tucson, Arizona. Denise Johnson and Judy Wood's dream was to go on a vacation to Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Their pictures and memories will remind them of their vacations for a long time to come! Ann Marie Stigalt is enjoying her new Play Station, and Ronald Brittain is happy with his new DVD player. Michael Marseglia enjoys wearing his new wardrobe, and William Stutts is comfortable on his living room couch.

Both Chris and Phil enjoyed their pizza Birthday parties. Chris has been enjoying numerous outings with staff including community outings and movies with Fabiola Estera and Renee Hanley. Phil enjoyed a lunch at the Olive Garden with MaryAnn Grygiel and Evelyn Perez. Phil continues to look forward to visits with his family and spending time with Janet (Barber) Vessella regularly. Chris and Ann Marie enjoyed themselves at the Re-Focus, Inc. Halloween Party where Chris was a judge for best costumes. What a great success! Thank you to everyone who contributed to the party. The Willow Street Halloween Party was a lot of fun, too, with great costumes and food. Chris and Ann Marie enjoyed themselves with Florence at the Plymouth Plantations. It really was a step back in time with all of the dramatizations and communities. It truly was a journey in visiting the Plymouth Rock! Ann Marie enjoyed socializing at the Diamond Club dinner and dance. She had so much fun dancing!

Denise continues to enjoy getting her hair done by Princess Metuge and Fabiola. Denise enjoys being with her co-workers and her community friends. They really look out for, and are there for, each other. Judy is enjoying her job at Burger King and continues to enjoy her community friends with whom she socializes, and takes walks in the community with her dog. All of our folks from Willow Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue took advantage of the Warwick Showcase Cinema Christmas Series that featured Christmas classics.

On the first Tuesday of every month at 1:00 p.m., the Seekonk Showcase Cinema will be presenting a classic movie. The cost is only \$1.00 for the movie, snacks and a drink for everyone who would like to attend.

Bingo continues to go on strong on Tuesday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:30. Bingo will be at Chestnut Hill until the cold weather begins to break. New members are encouraged to participate. We have wonderful new prizes!

Michael loves his new porch and bathroom, which he shares with his housemates and staff. The porch is completely enclosed and has a ventilation system for heat and air. Michael was very happy that he visited his brother, Vinny, in the nursing home and at home. He continues to keep in touch with his aunt Gloria. William continues to enjoy Bingo, as well as Re-Focus, Inc. activities like Music Day and Friday movies. William, along with Michael, just recently won a Fish survey from the Fish Theme Team in which they received a Fish T-shirt and Dunkin Donuts certificates which really made their days. Both guys really enjoy their outings with Austin Thomas, Lisa Gonsalves and Cara Ruzzano.

Ronald Brittain enjoyed a Birthday lunch with Chris Kavanagh and Donna Walton at Hemenways. Happy Birthday Ronald, Chris and Donna! Also, Ron enjoyed another luncheon with his social worker. Per Ron's Birthday request, Nukie Lince bought music CD's with Ron's Birthday money. He is very happy! Ron and Ann Marie provided a Thanksgiving bash for Ron's parents and Ann Marie's brother. The rest of the Chestnut Hill Avenue and Willow Street folks enjoyed their Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities with family, friends and staff. On December 20th, we at Chestnut Hill had a fun potluck lunch and Christmas gift swap. Only Evelyn disliked her gift. Now Evelyn, no pouting!

Willow Street/Chestnut Hill welcomes Lucille Tricomi as a new staff person. Her pleasant smile has won over many residents. Also, Alex Telfer now works at Chestnut Hill and he's fitting in nicely. Thank goodness for new staff.

Congratulations to Janet Vessella on her Staff Person of the Year Award for 2005! A Happy October Birthday to Chris Vecchia! Happy November Birthdays to Ronald Brittain, Philip DiDonato and Donna Walton! Happy December Birthdays to Fabiola Estera, Cara Ruzzano, Warren Green, Janet Vessella and Funmi Akindele!

School Street Residence

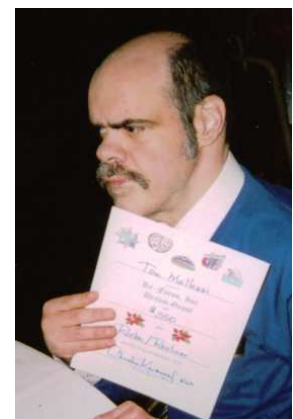
All the girls were off to their parents to celebrate Christmas. Congrats to Tiff for going on an overnight to mom's! Everyone enjoyed the Christmas Party to the fullest. The girls participated in the chorus and sang their hearts out. We are pleased to say everyone has improved greatly!

Tiff received a Dream Grant for a camera. Shelina received a Dream Grant to go on a big boat called the Bay Queen for a day trip. All the girls were pleased to find out they were getting a new roommate. Welcome, Anne Marie!

Bourne Avenue Residence

John Sidlick enjoyed a wonderful Birthday party on December 16th. His favorite gift was a DVD player. He performed a couple of singing and dancing numbers for his guests. The gentlemen had a wonderful time at the Re-Focus, Inc. Christmas Party on December 15th. Each received a Dream Grant. Congratulations to Bobby Sorrentino, Bourne's 2005 Direct Support Professional.

Brian Moran continues to enjoy Tuesday morning Art Classes. He made some very special Christmas presents. Happy January Birthdays to Eleanor, James and Mike Motta. Happy February Birthday to Tom Mallozzi. (5 Pictures)



## Cumberland Street Residence

Happy Holidays. We at Cumberland Street would like to take this time to wish everyone in our Re-Focus, Inc. family a wonderful New Year filled with good health and happiness for 2006. Some of the exciting things that happened for the end of this year were the parties, of course, and Stanley Hackett's turning the big 50 on January 21st—Go Bubba! As for the other exciting activities, when it comes to Mary Shepard and Betty Crocker, Betty Crocker: watch out, because when it comes to baking, there is no competition. Hands down, Mary's the best.

Filomena cannot wait for the next party or fun activity to come for 2006. Having fun and a good time is what she loves most. As for Jeffrey, he is looking forward to having his girlfriend, Janice, over for more dinner dates, thanks to our new addition for a wheel chair ramp. We would also like to welcome our newest member of Cumberland Street and Re-Focus, Inc., Tyeace McRea. Welcome! Well, family, that's all for now. Take care and be well.

## Mona's Program

Over the past few months, our program has been very busy celebrating birthdays, Staff Appreciation Lunch and PSPs for six of the folks. We were busy with preparations for the Thanksgiving holiday, Halloween parties and the big event with the Re-Focus, Inc. Christmas Party, not to mention Christmas celebrations. Everyone participated, having a good time with lots of laughing and happiness. We hope everyone had a good time over the holidays. Happy New Year!

Norma had a wonderful time in New York City. She loved the Lion King play. She can't thank Re-Focus, Inc. enough for her Dream Grant to New York. Florence had a great time at Plymouth with the Willow Street gang.

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## Mission Statement

Re-Focus, Inc. is a non-profit human service agency which serves adults with differing physical and developmental needs. We are an organization of dedicated people offering opportunities for growth in a loving, trusting and challenging environment.

We value and encourage the enhancement of the whole person, each with unique talents and strengths. We also value the right of using these gifts in making informed life choices.