

## Inclusion Through Community Participation Support

By: Annetta K. McHale, Deputy Administrator

This newsletter will highlight the new service to be offered at day programs as of July 1, 2017 - *Community Participation Support*.

The intent of Community Participation Support is to encourage individuals to develop and maintain relationships; build natural supports; increase independence; increase potential for employment; and experience meaningful community participation and inclusion.

Community Participation Support will be provided in conjunction with services and activities currently provided at pre-vocational and adult training programs. With the support of staff, individuals will have the opportunity to identify, plan and participate in activities in the community based on their personal preferences, interests and strengths as they relate to the individual's outcome for employment, community involvement and membership. The level of participation in community activities will be individualized and entirely based on the individual's choices and interests.

Our office will be holding an Expo this fall to promote Pennsylvania's Initiative of Supporting Families throughout the Lifespan. This will be an opportunity to learn more about Community Participation and what this could mean for you. The event will be held on Saturday, October 7, 2017, at The Montgomery County Community College - Blue Bell Campus. If you provide us with your e-mail address, we will make sure you receive notification of this event and other future events electronically. Please e-mail Shanda Robinson at [srobinson@montcopa.org](mailto:srobinson@montcopa.org) to get on our listserv.

### Developmental Disabilities Staff



Left to right: Standing: Shanda Robinson, Karen Kenny, Lauren Foell, Amber Wallace, Annetta McHale, Betsy Arena, Lauren Smoyer, Jackie Grimes, Joanna Muth. Seated: Meagan Smolsky, Rebecca Vogelsang, Trish Golden, Gerry Feeny

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS SPOTLIGHT

### **HIT THE TRAILS!**

Did you know that Montgomery County has a myriad of trails and parks that are free to the public? Many of the trails are paved and easily accessible for individuals using walkers or wheelchairs. This year the Health Department is sponsoring the 2017 Montco Trail Challenge - individuals may register to participate in this free program that encourages residents of Montgomery County to get some exercise while enjoying nature. The Montco Trail Challenge runs from May 6 until December 3, giving participants seven months to visit some (or all) of the trails and parks that make Montgomery County a great place to live. The program recognizes three levels of achievement:

- Explorer* Visit 5 trails and earn a patch
- Adventurer* Visit 10 trails and earn a medal
- Trailblazer* Visit 15 trails and parks and earn a back pack cooler

See the following links for more information:

<http://www.montcopa.org/trailchallenge> <http://www.montcopa.org/31/Parks-Trails-Historic-Sites>



One key to a healthy lifestyle is exercise. There are exercise options for everyone. You can take a group exercise class, work out on your own, or play an organized sport.



**Rakhee Chawla** is always on the move. She has been working at Wawa for 19 years, but finds time to exercise on a daily basis. Rakhee walks outside, does Pilates and Yoga, goes to the YMCA to use the treadmill, the row machine, and do strength training. Somehow, Rakhee also finds time for Karate and is a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt. She said the key to Karate is discipline. In addition to exercising on a regular basis, Rakhee works with a nutritionist to make sure that she's eating healthy; she keeps a food diary and cooks great meals with lots of lean protein and vegetables. We could all learn something from her plan for health and wellness.



It's hard to believe that **Steven Fields** is 71 years old because he plays basketball, softball, volleyball and he also bowls! Steven is a team player and earned Most Valuable Player for his basketball team (and received a nifty jacket in recognition of his MVP status). He knows that the key to long life is to stay busy and to keep moving. The exercise that he gets from playing sports has kept Steven healthy in body and mind.

"Its never too late to participate in health and wellness. I'm open minded to learning how to play soccer and golf. Another goal I have is shooting a game of pool and to practice so I can run the table."



## MY LIFE—MY WAY



**Russell** is an amazing person. He loves every minute of life. He is extremely positive and inspirational. When I called Russell to interview him I was caught off guard by his infectious enthusiasm for life. He feels a connection to others and one of his favorite places to join in is church. Connection to his church helps him share his life with others and he invites the congregates to share their life with him. He does much volunteering at his church and recently was honored to carry the cross to the altar.

Russell uses an electric wheelchair which supports him in traveling around his neighborhood community. He enjoys the company of new people, his friends and family. Staying active is very important to Russell. He goes to the movies, shops, participates in Best Buddies, takes music therapy on Saturday, camps in the summer, horseback rides, eats out as much as his budget will allow, takes tai chi lessons and wants to take a computer class. What a busy schedule, Russell! When he is relaxing at home he connects with his community through Facebook. He also likes to assist in the cleaning and cooking at his home. Apparently Russell has a mindset to stay active.

Catherine Nold, Russell's mother, believes individuals with disabilities need more opportunities, not less, to fulfill their God-given role and we, as a society, should expose individuals to everything they choose rather than keep people with disabilities in little boxes. Ms. Nold has approached the bishop of her denomination to start a pilot employment ministry program for people with disabilities to volunteer for activities to prepare for Sunday services. Once the volunteering program ends, the volunteers can have an opportunity to become paid employees. All organizations should be encouraged to find ways to prevent and remove barriers to a full and inclusive society.



**Dr. Richard Rothwell** was interviewed by Shanda Robinson, Program Specialist, and spoke on behalf of his daughter, Colleen Rothwell, about the meaning of community involvement.

**Shanda—What does Colleen do during the day?** **Dr. Rothwell—**My daughter, Colleen, attends Altec Services and loves the many friends she has made there. She and her friends are involved in many activities in their community.

**Shanda—What are Colleen's community favorites?** **Dr. Rothwell—**Colleen is very well known in her community and loves going out. She does not enjoy the typical workshop work tasks. Some of her favorite activities are volunteering to pay it forward, horseback riding at Sebastian's and people watching. Some other favorite activities that we enjoy as a family are going to the local malls and parks, eating at new and different restaurants, car rides, site seeing and food shopping.



**Shanda—Who are Colleen's favorite friends and family?** **Dr. Rothwell—**Some of her favorite people are her grandfather, sister and brother-in-law.

**Shanda—You may have heard or attended outreach meetings and presentations about the community participation initiative. As a parent, what eases your anxiety when Colleen participates in the community?** **Dr. Rothwell—**I became more and more comfortable with the staff at Altec over the past few years. They are very caring and have taken the time to know my daughter. There are issues from time to time and I feel confident that the staff handled the situations that occurred while out in the community.

**Shanda-- What advice can you give to family members that are hesitant about increasing their son's or daughter's participation in the community?** **Dr. Rothwell—** Interview the staff and ask the following questions:

- *How do they secure your son's or daughter's safety in the community?*
- *How will they redirect your son or daughter if any challenges arise?*
- *What general steps of safety are implemented to prevent or decrease situations?*

**Shanda—How do you know Colleen is living an everyday life?** **Dr. Rothwell—**Colleen shows expressions of joy when out in the community and is very happy when she comes home from a day in her community.

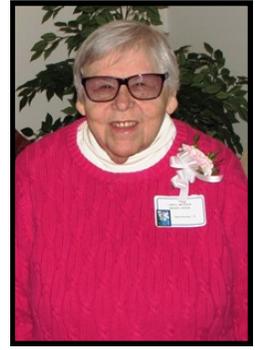
**Shanda—How do you, as a parent, handle people that may not be accepting of community involvement of people with disabilities?** **Dr. Rothwell—**Colleen has always gone out into her community and is used to people. She doesn't let unkind remarks or people staring deter her from living her life. When people stare at Colleen I tell them this is Colleen and Colleen flashes one of her great smiles. Overall, people have been kind and accepting towards Colleen. So, for the few people who are not accepting I see it as their problem.



*Margaret Dougherty*



*Darlene Walters*



*Carol Menser*

The Office of Developmental Disabilities held their **Twenty-Ninth Annual Breakfast** on March 16, 2017 at the Westover Country Club, Jeffersonville PA. We celebrated **Inclusion** and **Marked the 30th Anniversary of Closing the Pennhurst State School and Hospital**. Former Pennhurst residents were our guests of honor and we were happy to have three former residents, Margaret Dougherty, Darlene Walters and Carol Menser, speak to us about their experiences.

**Margaret** loved Pennhurst, felt loved and cared for by her staff. Margaret eventually left Pennhurst and worked at Kencrest as a Service Assistant. Now she is happily retired living in her own apartment.

**Darlene** was very happy to leave Pennhurst; she got married, had children, ran a household and held a job. She currently lives in a lifesharing program with a wonderful person, Sue Mumbauer, and Sue’s daughter.

**Carol** does not have fond memories of Pennhurst; she now lives with her friend Peggy Shelly in a lifesharing program and is very happy.

We were also fortunate to have Jean Searle and James W. Conroy, Ph.D., Co-Presidents of the Pennhurst Memorial and Preservation Alliance, as guest speakers. The Pennhurst Memorial & Preservation Alliance traveling exhibit was available for viewing prior to and after the Breakfast.



*Jean Searle & James W. Conroy*

*Below are some of our guests who were enjoying the day!*



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