

touchstone

A quarterly publication providing the latest news & information for individuals with disabilities, families, friends and our community.



ADVOCACY

A Cause Worth Fighting For!

Stone Belt Hosts Federal Advocacy Event

On October 15, Stone Belt hosted a public forum giving participants information on making their voices heard in Washington, D.C., especially related to important Lifeline programs such as Medicaid and Social Security Disability.

The event featured former United States Representative and recent recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom Lee Hamilton. Mr. Hamilton gave a rousing and impassioned appeal to the audience to get involved in advocacy.

"You've got a lot at stake, depending on what the United States Congress does," Hamilton said, adding "You've got a wonderful cause to fight for, and you want to let everyone know how important it is to you."

Nicole Jarwic, from The Arc, provided an overview of the potential threats to Medicaid and other programs as Congress considers changes in Lifeline programs for people with disabilities. Hal

Turner, district office manager for 9th District Representative Todd Young's office, gave practical tips on how to get involved, including the best ways to contact Congressman Young. Audience members included self-advocates, family members, Stone Belt staff and board members, and other community advocates.

Visit www.stonebelt.org/advocacy for more information on federal advocacy issues.

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Good News at Last!

It's good to give good news! If you've been reading this column over the past few years, you know of the challenges we are facing with funding cuts and subsequent pressures this creates for employee retention, having resources for client services and maintaining our facilities. Most crucial over the past two years has been our **Care Gap Crisis** – having woefully insufficient numbers of direct support staff to meet clients' needs. I'm happy to report that our plan for Fiscal Year 2016 looks brighter. This has allowed us to provide some improvements in wages and benefits for many employees and hopefully will help us begin to fill the care gap to some degree.

The revenue increases we are seeing are a result of our combined and successful advocacy efforts with the state legislature and the state administration. As you may recall, we held several forums to galvanize local advocacy efforts and have very actively engaged our local legislators. Our colleagues around the state have done this as well. As a result the state legislature voted to restore many of the rate cuts we received in 2010 during the height of the recession. This is a good first step in helping Stone Belt and other agencies like ours have more sustainable services supporting individuals with disabilities in our communities.

We give our heartfelt thanks to the many Stone Belt supporters that joined in our efforts and made their voices heard on these critical funding needs. When enough people let the legislators know what is important, it makes a difference. We will be continuing our advocacy efforts to hopefully affect even more positive changes ahead. And we need you to continue being actively engaged in these efforts.

Our program goals for the year are aimed at helping clients experience more individualized and community-based services, especially through employment. The funding system for employment services through Vocational Rehabilitation has changed. We hope the new system will enable more people with more significant disabilities to have the opportunity to work in the community.

Throughout the year we will continue our extra training efforts for our supervisors and the Direct Support Professionals, giving them the tools, skills and information to be their best. Our board, the development staff and I will be putting increased efforts into our fundraising efforts. We've made good strides this year and want to continue to build momentum for raising additional philanthropic support. Restored reimbursement rates support basic services, but your donations help create programs of excellence where clients thrive.



Even though we face ongoing challenges, we continue to focus on providing quality services that support clients in achieving great outcomes. I see daily the difference you help make in people's lives throughout all of our programs. Families are supported, clients are engaged in meaningful activities and employees are positively impacted by helping to improve others' lives. This edition of Touchstone will give you a few stories and highlights of these accomplishments.

Thanks for all you do to keep us moving forward. We are happy to have any of you come visit and learn more.

Happy New Year,

Leslie Green

WHO WE ARE

New Board Members Bring Experience & Enthusiasm



Stone Belt welcomes new board members L/R: Dan Lodge-Rigal, Trish Bushey, and David Prince.

Stone Belt's board of directors provides leadership, support and governance for Stone Belt to be a strong and effective organization. In addition to returning members Doug Wilson, Patrick Robbins, Trish Ierino, Anne Higley and Betty Davidson, we are pleased to introduce three new board members who started their three-year terms in July of 2015.

Dr. Dan Lodge-Rigal is a pathologist and is an Associate Clinical Professor of Pathology at the Indiana University School of Medicine. He has been involved in several other social-service agencies throughout the community and has an appreciation for the challenges that people with disabilities face in living their lives to their fullest.

Trish Bushey, JD/MSW is an attorney in the Monroe County Prosecutor's Office. She feels it is important that the community understands the value and potential of people with disabilities. She plans to support the organization's mission and spread the word about Stone Belt's valuable services.

David Prince leads Program and Project Management at the Kelley Executive Partners in the Kelley School of Business. He fondly recalls several Stone Belt clients, placed through the Community Employment program, he worked with during his years at IU Athletics. His hope is that by joining the board, he is able to contribute in some meaningful way to the future spirit and viability of Stone Belt.



MILESTONES

CLINICAL & HEALTH RESOURCES

a division of Stone Belt | milestonesclinic.org



SUCCESS STORY

Making a Difference

One of the many services provided at Stone Belt includes clinical and health resources. Our Milestones Program aids our clients with these kinds of essential resources. The heart of our mission is to help improve our clients' lives by focusing on their strengths to create a healthy difference that is long lasting. With this focus, we serve more than 2,000 children, adults, adolescents and families on an annual basis.

The Spears family (pictured above) is one such family that has realized the benefits of their participation. Milestones Services offer a lot of support to parents of children with disabilities. Learning how to respond to the reactions of all the family together has been very useful" says father, Dennis Spears.

Milestones Clinical Services offers accessible, comprehensive, integrated community mental health and behavior support services for south central Indiana children, adolescents, and individuals with disabilities of all ages. The integration of these services gives the Spears family the most successful outcomes.

"Melissa is very helpful and caring. She helps me to get over things," says Olivia Spears, a Milestones patient about Melissa Hinkle, a Milestones Licensed Therapist.

Milestones is a certified outpatient mental health clinic that offers a wide range of supports. Our staff has an average of more than 15 years of experience with counseling.

Our **clinical services** include:

- Individual counseling • Play therapy • Couples and family therapy • Stress management • Support groups • Staff training and consultation • Program development • Families/caregiver support and education • Case coordination/case planning

These kinds of supports have helped the Spears family overcome personal difficulties. At Stone Belt, it is our goal to aid client families' triumph over any hardship they may face.

Another part of the Milestones Program includes behavior support services. To effectively reduce challenging behaviors and increase desired behaviors, it is sometimes necessary for families or support providers to seek help. Milestones has many services in place to help with such challenges.

With this focus, our intention is to aid clients and their families so they can develop a brighter future.

WELCOME

New Milestones Director

James Wiltz, PhD recently joined the Stone Belt staff as director of Milestones, succeeding Maureen Gahan, who directed the program for the past 15 years.

Wiltz holds Master's and Doctoral degrees from Ohio State University in Clinical and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and German from Indiana University. He has worked for Benchmark Services (formerly



AWS) since 2007 where he most recently served as a regional director. He currently teaches psychology at Ivy Tech Bloomington.

Jim says that our excellent reputation attracted him to the position, stating that, "It is difficult to exaggerate

how unique Milestones is. If you look across Indiana, it is the only program of its kind. I've worked in a number of other states too, and have never seen another Milestones-type operation with so many clinical services offered under one roof. Stone Belt and Bloomington are lucky to have such an innovative community resource, and I am very excited to join its talented group of clinicians."

As Maureen Gahan announced her retirement, there was some concern because of the huge role she had throughout the agency. Her talent and experience are certainly hard to replace. In Wiltz, Stone Belt is very fortunate to have found such a qualified successor. He brings new things to the position, but will also provide continuity that will allow Milestones and the entire agency to continue to excel and grow.

BEHAVIOR SERVICES

Expanding Clinical Support Services

To many clients, families, and providers, Mari Shawcroft has long been the name and face most associated with the Behavior Support Services (BSS) Program at Milestones. Now that part of her role is going to increase. In collaboration with behavior services manager Julie Miller and Director Jim Wiltz, Mari is going to focus on planned expansion of behavior supports for more people in southern Indiana. That means Mari is going to be taking new referrals, meeting new clients and their families, and conducting intake interviews and assessments. So keep an eye out for her as she works to increase this vital part of Milestones clinical supports for people and families in need. Thanks Mari!

For more information about Stone Belt Behavior Services, contact Mari at mshawcroft@stonebelt.org.



LIFELONG LEARNING

Nicolas Lyford-Pike - A Passion for Art

"Some people think that because Nicolas is deaf, and also has autism, that he is in his own world, but he is not. I have to depend on his body language to tell me if he is happy, nervous, or any other emotion. Nicolas is productive and I know he is in good hands at Stone Belt." — Pilar Lyford-Pike, Nicolas' mother

Nicolas Lyford-Pike participates in Stone Belt's Lifelong Learning Program in Columbus. Nicolas is one of Stone Belt's many success stories. He has a passion for producing art, and your support helps provide the supplies he uses in his artwork. Nicolas' artistic work has made a lasting effect on his life and on the lives of others. He produces his creative works at the Stone Belt Studio, and he excels at what he does. His work has been featured numerous times in various venues throughout south central Indiana. There's no doubt that since he discovered his love of art, through Stone Belt's Lifelong Learning Program, he has grown to be a productive member of the community. Nicolas is an inspiration to everyone at Stone Belt.



Through the Lifelong Learning Program, Nicolas learned about art and its many qualities. At Stone Belt we believe that learning creates empowerment. Each person has the capacity to learn and grow – throughout their lifetime – as both an individual and as a member of the community.

The goal of this program is to always reach toward excellence by:

- Providing the highest quality instruction
- Maximizing time individuals are actively engaged in learning
- Focusing on individual needs
- Building consistency in staff supports
- Strengthening communication within each individual's network of support
- Developing effective structures for utilizing staff resources
- Expanding staff training and professional development

We provide the knowledge and useful skills our clients need in order for them to discover themselves, their independence, and their individual talents. Our support helps them grasp these concepts so they excel above and beyond. With these attributes, individuals such as Nicolas become inspiring and proficient members of the community.

**Donations of art supplies are always welcome.
Our wish list includes:**

- drawing and watercolor paper
- paint brushes of various sizes
- ribbons, buttons and other decorations
- glue sticks



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Brittany & DJ find professional success

At Stone Belt, we believe that employment is a fundamental part of daily life. Our Community Employment Program aims to help our clients obtain fulfilling jobs as employees in area businesses.

The goals that individuals in the program aspire to achieve include:

- Gaining meaningful employment in a community setting
- Increasing opportunities for developing relationships with others
- Improving opportunities for informed decision-making
- Developing stronger competence

Brittany and DJ Reynolds are two individuals that successfully found employment opportunities. This married couple acquired jobs through Stone Belt's Community Employment Program. Their jobs have had a meaningful effect on their lives. Not only have they gained employment, but this program has also helped them gain a sense of independence within the community.

Since Brittany and DJ have acquired positions in the workforce, they have made valuable additions to their lives, while enjoying other independent benefits. They purchased a new car, opened bank accounts, and began going on couple's dates with fellow employees. It could be said that this couple is enjoying the spices of life with the money they earn from their jobs in the community. These two have positive outlooks on their jobs, and we are proud of the impact they're making with their accomplishments.

THANK YOU DONORS

Stone Belt extends appreciation to all our generous donors from January 1, 2015 – November 30, 2015. We are grateful for their continued support. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of this listing. If you think there has been an omission, please accept our apology and contact Lori Garraghty at (812) 332-2168, ext. 214 or lgarraghty@stonebelt.org.

Summit Society (\$25,000+)

Anonymous (1)

Cornerstone Society (\$10,000-\$24,999)

Community Foundation of Bloomington & Monroe County, Don, Carol-Anne, & Jonathon Hossler, Smithville Charitable Foundation

Pillar Society (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

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Builders Society (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

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GIVING MATTERS

Why I Give: DJ Masson

Dubos J. (DJ) Masson is an Associate Clinical Professor at the IU Kelley School of Business, where he teaches in the Finance Department. His areas of interest include Working Capital Management, Risk Management and Valuation. DJ is currently a member of Stone Belt Board of Directors and serves on the Finance Committee.

I first became aware of Stone Belt when I was teaching a group of young students from Europe in our Global Social Entrepreneur Institute (GSEI) Program that were visiting IU over the summer in 2013. The culmination of their month of studies was a business plan contest featuring their ideas for Stone Belt. In addition, many of the students also worked as volunteers for the organization.



Through the (GSEI) program director, I was introduced to Leslie Green (Stone Belt CEO) who invited me to visit the organization and discuss the possibility of joining the Finance Committee. As a Clinical Professor, one of my key roles at the university is to provide service to both the profession and local organizations. After learning more about Stone Belt, I felt that joining the Finance Committee would be a good way to accomplish this. After being on the committee for a year, I was invited to join the board as well, which, for me, was an easy choice.

Another motivation for joining with Stone Belt was the help that has been provided to my nephew Jonathan over the years by The Arc of Greater New Orleans. Jonathan was born with Down syndrome, and for the last 16 years, The Arc in New Orleans has helped with his development with a wide variety of programs. I feel that my involvement with Stone Belt is a way to pay back to The Arc community for some of this support.

Complete the enclosed giving envelope and drop it in the mail, or visit stonebelt.org to donate today.

UPCOMING 2016 EVENTS

March

Disability Awareness month

March 30 • 11:30 am to 1 pm

Awards of Excellence - Staff Recognition Event

St. Mark's Methodist Church

April 18 • 6 pm

It Matters to Me - Education & Advocacy Event

St. Mark's Methodist Church

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Stone Belt

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If you would like to receive our publications, please contact Jana Surigao at jsurigao@stonebelt.org.

Stone Belt is an affiliate of
The Arc and a member of
United Way of Monroe County.



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