

touchstone

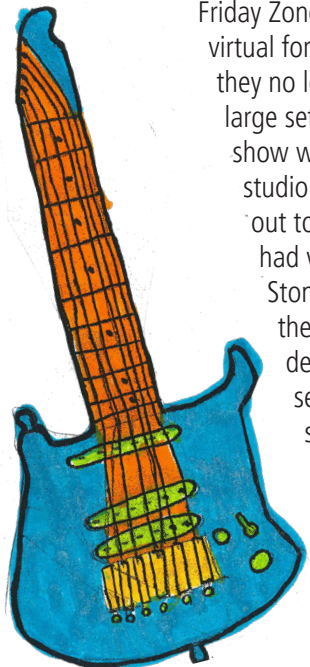
A quarterly publication providing the latest news & information for individuals with disabilities, families, friends and our community.

Friday Zone set finds new home

The Emmy award-winning children's program The Friday Zone has been watched by thousands of families throughout Indiana for the last 20 years. The locally produced program offers kids and families an entertaining and educational half-hour of performances, guests, activities, and ideas for fun and exploration.

For the past decade, when tuning in each week, the audience has seen Friday Zone hosts and local guests perform in front of the sets designed by artists with developmental disabilities at Stone Belt and brought to life thanks to collaborative artist Joe LaMantia and his dedication to inclusivity and belief that people of all abilities have contributions to make to their community.

Last year, WTIU Public Television decided to take its locally produced Friday Zone program to a virtual format which meant they no longer needed the large sets used when the show was taped in the studio. WTIU reached out to LaMantia, who had worked with Stone Belt to create the sets almost a decade ago, to see if he had any suggestions on what to do with the no longer needed sets.



LaMantia seeing the potential of finding a new location—and audience—for the sets, worked diligently with Stone Belt and WTIU to procure not only a space to house them but a communal place where they could be seen and appreciated. Together they reached out to several community agencies to find a new home for the sets.

It turns out Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) wanted to help preserve the sets and had the perfect location to display all of them. Once MCCSC joined the collaboration, things moved quickly. LaMantia worked with a dedicated team of individuals from WTIU and MCCSC to carefully dismantle the sets and transport them from IU's public television station on campus to Arlington Heights Elementary School.

The Friday Zone set's new home at Arlington Heights Elementary School has given these artistic pieces another chance to be seen. The bright, colorful, and fun sets are now displayed in the cafeteria/gymnasium and have added a playful touch to the existing setting.

Arlington Heights currently serves over 340 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through sixth. Staff from the elementary school were excited by the opportunity to use the sets to brighten up the school, built in the mid-1970s.



A set used by WTIU's Friday Zone and created by artists at Stone Belt now hangs at Arlington Heights Elementary School.

The student response to the new installation of the art pieces proves the relocation effort was well worth it.

By working together, Stone Belt, WTIU, and MCCSC preserved the sets and gave them an encore performance—another chance to inspire future artists of all ages and abilities.

Contacting Your Legislators

In Indiana:

Every Indiana citizen has a state representative and a state senator. To find your legislators go to: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/>.

In Washington:

To express your concerns about federal issues, contact these legislators.

- Senator Todd Young
202-224-5623 in Washington, D.C.
or 317-226-6700 in Indianapolis
www.young.senate.gov/contact/email-todd
- Senator Mike Braun
202-224-4814 in Washington, D.C.
or 317-822-8240 in Indianapolis
www.braun.senate.gov/contact-mike
- Representative Erin Houchin
202-225-5315 in Washington, D.C.
or 812-288-3999 in Jeffersonville
<http://houchin.house.gov/contact>
- Representative Greg Pence
202-225-3021 in Washington, D.C.
or 812-799-5230 in Columbus
<http://pence.house.gov/contact>

FROM THE CEO

Planning for the future...

By BITTA DEWEES

After ringing in the New Year, many of us set goals for the future. We are in that same mode here at Stone Belt. The future holds so much uncertainty in terms of service provisions for the clients we support. But it also holds more hope and opportunity than I have seen in my career.

Stone Belt's strategic plan focuses on its next three years of operations. Our next plan will carry us from July 2023 through June 2026, therefore, we are starting our strategic planning process now. Our Board of Directors, along with Bryan Orander, a consultant from Charitable Advisors, will lead this process and guide us to a thoughtful plan.

We will use our Mission statement and Principles of Services to stay on track with our values and what is important to and for our clients. We will evaluate our priorities as we discover the issues we need to address.

So the next several months will be filled with assessing the current landscape of services and gathering input to develop a forward-thinking plan allowing Stone Belt to continue providing the best services and supports for clients.

- We will seek input from clients, families, community partners, and staff, along with board members.
- We will meet with other providers to learn best practices and gather new ideas.
- We will consult with state leadership about future trends in service delivery.

Our number one issue continues to be staffing, so finding better solutions to improving hiring and retention will be a big part of the plan. The state of Indiana is shifting the focus of funding and evaluating rates for services, so navigating the changes and responding in a way that best supports clients will also be a significant focus. Financial stability will always be important to our planning process and goals.

Clients achieving positive outcomes that improve their **Quality of Life** will always be the reason for everything we do. In evaluating Quality of Life, we will focus on improving the following:

- Choice and control
- Developing personal capabilities
- Relationships and community inclusion
- Living a purposeful life
- Engaging in meaningful activities

Celebrating success is also crucial to our planning process. As many of you have heard me say, we need to get back to having fun, getting out more, doing new things, and celebrating our successes.

We are moving forward from this pandemic every day. We are hiring more staff and working to improve training and support. We are supporting clients to get back into their communities and their lives. I truly enjoy the many stories from clients and staff about success, goals reached, and connections made. I enjoy seeing our award-winning clients and staff, and this edition of Touchstone is full of those stories.

So let's plan for the future together. You can set personal goals. You can support clients in discovering their interests and setting goals. You can give input into Stone Belt's plans. You can keep having fun and learning new things. You can share success stories. You can nominate others for awards. You can celebrate Stone Belt and all the clients, families, staff, community partners, and Board members who make this a wonderful organization.

I look forward to any input you have about what our priorities should be in the next three years. I also look forward to hearing any success stories you want to share.

Fondly,

Bitta DeWees



Bitta DeWees
Chief Executive Officer

Clients, staff honored at celebration gala

In 2022, Stone Belt's most popular event — the Annual Celebration — returned to the Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington. Mayor John Hamilton and Monroe County Council President Kate Wiltz were guest speakers. Congratulations to all the winners!



Client Self-Determination
Therese Walker



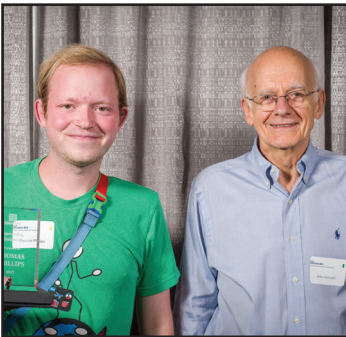
Staff Self-Determination
Robin Haywood



Client Empowered Learning
Renata Mize



Staff Empowered Learning
Karen Freeman



Client Outstanding Contributions
Thomas Phillips



Staff Outstanding Contributions
Cherri DuPree



Client Positive Supports
Lisa Dickey



Staff Positive Supports
Melanie Litke



Client Self-Directed Home Life
Charlie York



Staff Self-Directed Home Life
Kenny Hays



Client Quality of Life
Jeffrey Phillips



Staff Quality of Life
Kaitlynn Rodriguez



Client Employment
Terry Simpson



Staff Employment
Kayla Cornwell



Steven Warren Hero Award
Tyler Frazee



Elbert Johns Self-Advocate
Betsy Higgins



Henry & Celia Upper Lifetime Achievement Award
Vicki Borelli



Outstanding Community Partner Award
Nick's English Hut - Kip Presslaff



Outstanding Community Partner Award
Texas Roadhouse/Columbus - Jared Hoye

2022 Community Innovation Awards

During the second annual Community Innovation Awards ceremony, Eric Ford and Brian Bolton were recognized as Fast 15 MVP Employees.

Eric Ford Stone Belt Employment Fundamentals

From the nominator... "I have worked with Eric Ford for 14 years at Stone Belt. Eric has supported hundreds of new direct care employees, laying the groundwork to ensure that people with disabilities in our community are cared for, taught valuable living skills, and most importantly, respected as adults who are valuable community members."



CONGRATULATIONS
Eric Ford

Brian Bolton Stone Belt Hiring Coordinator

From the nominator... "Brian Bolton has been a steadfast presence in a tumultuous period for Stone Belt and the Human Resources team. The pandemic has vastly disrupted hiring across the planet, and Stone Belt is feeling those effects as much as anyone else. However - we have had the benefit of a calm, cool, and collected presence steering our hiring all this time. His friendly demeanor and boundless dedication to our cause make Brian the perfect person to be the face of hiring at Stone Belt."

Congratulations, Eric and Brian, on being named Fast 15 MVPs!

Why I Give...

By Kimberly Hurley

I give to Stone Belt because its mission is essential.

As part of my graduate speech and language pathology training, I was lucky enough to arrange an externship with Stone Belt, working with Doreen Devitt.



Kimberly Hurley,
Stone Belt Board
of Directors

During that externship, I met several Stone Belt clients and saw how communication impacted their independence and autonomy. That experience informed my subsequent work. I also witnessed the hard work of DSPs, house managers, and other Stone Belt staff who made each client feel successful. It was then I realized how vital Stone Belt's work was to the whole community, especially to the clients.

As a speech-language pathologist in the public school system, I serve students with complex communication needs due to intellectual or developmental disabilities. In my work, I strive to help my students develop 'autonomous' communication skills – the ability to say what they want when they want. I value my students' autonomy – and I secretly cheer when a student can use language to protest or self-advocate (even when they are saying something the teachers don't like). I work to ensure my students have ways to participate with their peers and community in all the 'fun' things the school offers. I strive to break down barriers that leave my students excluded.

I give to Stone Belt because I believe its mission is essential. We all benefit from a more inclusive society. Stone Belt helps to make sure that continues to happen in our community.

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

For information on corporate sponsorship, visit www.stonebelt.org/giving. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Development Manager Adam Hamel at (812) 332-2168, ext. 269, or ahamel@stonebelt.org.

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Congratulations

Stone Belt receives accolades at Conference & Impact Awards celebration

The Arc of Indiana recently named its 2022 Impact Award recipients honoring individuals from across the Hoosier state. Carol-Anne and Don Hossler received the Family Advocate Award, and Ryan Peek received the Outstanding DSP (Direct Support Professional) Award.

2022 Family Advocate Award

The family advocate award recognizes a family member who strongly advocates for their loved one and others with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their community.

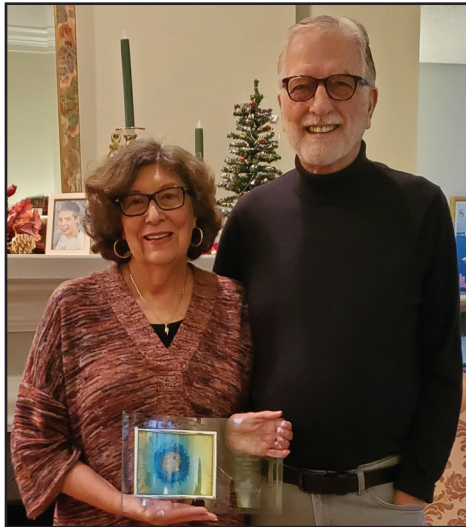
Carol-Anne and Don Hossler have always worked to help their son, Jonathon, achieve. When his teachers told them that they could never expect him to be able to work, they took it upon themselves to keep him engaged in his community and build job skills by crafting a volunteer job for him. Each week, Jonathon picked up canned goods from his neighbors and delivered them to Monroe Community Kitchen. This initiative is now known as the "Hand-in-Hand" program.

When Jonathon began residential services with Stone Belt in Bloomington, he brought this program with him. Through Don, Carol-Anne, and Jonathon's tireless efforts, this program has grown within Stone Belt to become the second largest food contributor to Monroe County Community Kitchen, providing over 8,000 pounds of food and contributing over 5% of the total food donated. Hand-in-Hand has had a tremendous impact on the community and has allowed many other individuals to volunteer, build job skills, and give back to their community.

Don and Carol-Anne have both served as presidents of Stone Belt's board of directors and give incredible amounts of time and energy to support and uplift Stone Belt's programs.

Any time there is a need for outreach, volunteerism, or speaking, Don and Carol-Anne are the first in line. As family members, they are fierce advocates for their son and other people with developmental disabilities. As board members, they have been invaluable, lending their knowledge, time, and personal resources. As community members, they push for a more equitable society.

Thank you, Don and Carole-Anne, for making a difference in your son's life and the lives of countless people with disabilities in your community.



2022 Outstanding DSP Award

The Direct Support Professional award recognizes a DSP for their outstanding effort and contribution toward the lives of those with whom they work.

Ryan Peek has worked as a direct support professional at Stone Belt for more than 21 years. Stone Belt would jump at the chance to promote this man into a leadership position.



However, Ryan has chosen to remain a DSP because directly impacting others is what he loves.

At this point in life, Ryan has been a mentor and teacher to hundreds of individuals with disabilities, guiding them as teenagers, respecting them as adults, and teaching them to navigate society, quite literally, throughout their lifetime.

You will often see Ryan take a step back to allow the clients to make their own choices and mistakes. A lifetime of experience lets him to know when hand-over-hand is needed and when it's appropriate to allow someone to learn from a mistake.

Ryan is the epitome of what a DSP should be in a world where agencies throughout the state struggle to find staff - he is a rare breed.

Congratulations Ryan; thank you for your dedication to the people you serve.



Belt Out Loud! tickets available now

Tickets are now available for Belt Out Loud!, a benefit concert featuring Hank Ruff. Funds raised by the show will help Stone Belt improve the lives of those we support, including providing employment services and increased community involvement through volunteering and self-advocacy. Tickets are \$20 and are on sale now at the BCT Box Office (114 E. Kirkwood Avenue) in Bloomington, online at bctboxoffice.org, or via the phone at 812.323.3020. Belt Out Loud! is sponsored by Old National Bank and IU Credit Union.

Hank Ruff brings his neo-traditional brand of country to the Buskirk-Chumley Theater. His latest EP, "Hellbender," went #1 on the iTunes all-genre chart. He has been playing country music around Indiana since he was 11 and performed with his dad's band, The Dew Daddies, while he was in high school.

Belt Out Loud! Benefit concert for Stone Belt
Saturday, May 13 at 8 p.m. (doors open at 7:30 p.m.)
Buskirk-Chumley Theater, 114 E. Kirkwood Avenue, Bloomington



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www.stonebelt.org



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