

Former Muscatatuck residents settle into new homes

By Lesley Stedman Weidenbener
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Cheryl Burns shed a lot of tears when she learned the state would close the Muscatatuck State Developmental Center in Jennings County, where her 28-year-old daughter, Angee Brewer, had lived for more than a decade.

Angee is autistic. She functions like a 5-year-old and can be “very, very violent,” Burns said. And now she was being forced to move into the community.

“It was scary,” said Burns, who lives in Clayton, just southwest of Indianapolis. “It was all so overwhelming.”

But two months after the move, Angee is living in a home she rents with another former Muscatatuck resident in nearby North Vernon. She gets round-the-clock care from a former Muscatatuck staffer under a Medicaid program designed specifically to fit her needs.

“So far, it’s been absolutely wonderful,” Burns said. “She’s settling in. She feels secure. She knows this is her home.”

Angee, who moved March 8, was one of the last residents to leave Muscatatuck.

The doors closed at the institution for good on May 6, after years of a sometimes-bitter battle by residents and employees to keep it open.

In all, 263 residents — all of them mentally disabled, some autistic, some profoundly mentally retarded — have moved since then. Gov. Frank O’Bannon announced in early 2001 that the center would close.

More than 1,000 staff — some of whom worked at the center most of their lives — are gone, too. A formal ceremony celebrated the center, its former staff and residents on June 5.

Then in July, the Indiana National Guard took over much of the property, turning it into a homeland-security training center.

But the transition for former Muscatatuck residents and staff goes on.

The vast majority of residents — nearly 70 percent — have moved to supported living homes, according to information from the state Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA). That means, like Angee, they live alone or with a roommate in a home or apartment where caregivers provide them one-on-one help, often 24 hours a day.

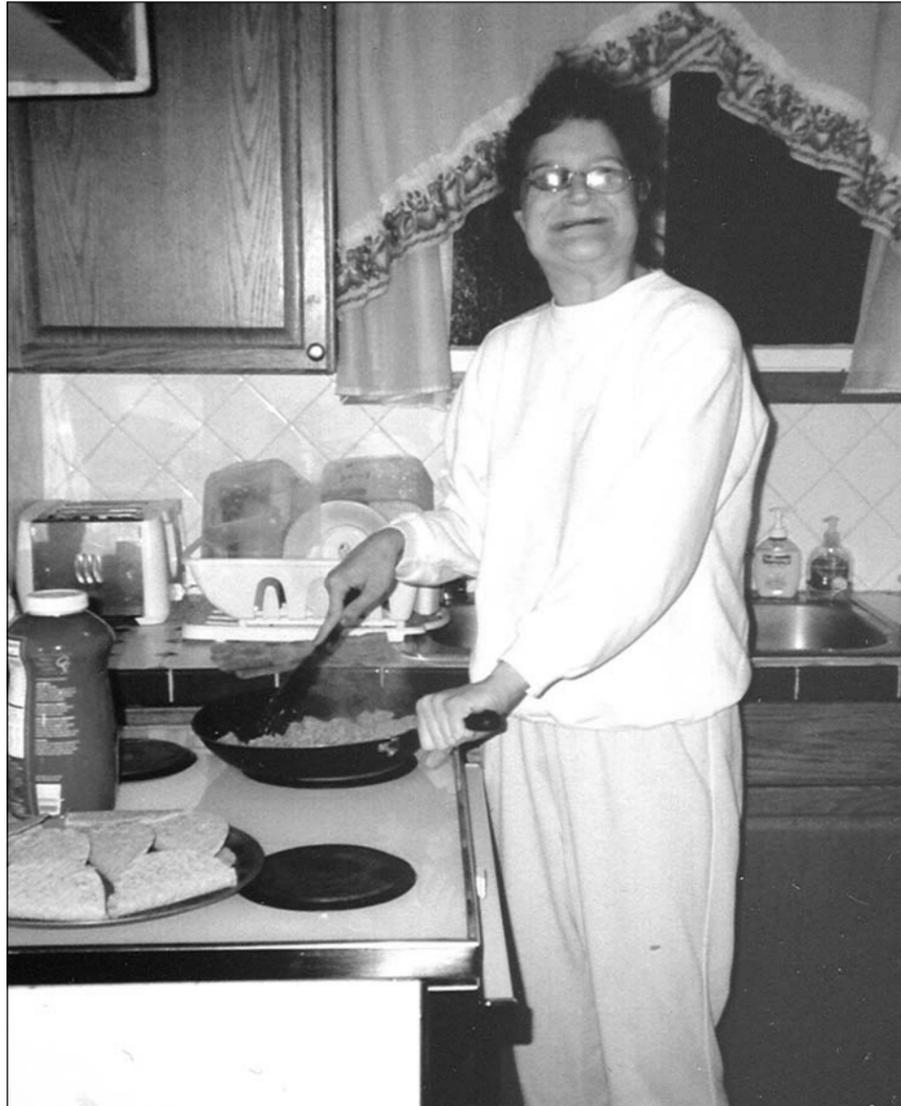
A quarter of the residents moved to group homes, where a larger number of people live together and staff tends to all the residents.

Just a few residents moved to another state facility or to a nursing home, the FSSA said.

The process has not been easy, although agency officials did not return repeated calls to discuss the transition.

Muscatatuck opened in 1920 as a work farm for disabled men, eventually becoming part of a statewide institutional system considered the best placement for people with severe mental disabilities. At its peak, about 1,200 residents lived there.

But as attitudes about people with mental retardation changed, so did the state’s priorities. Muscatatuck was an expensive way to serve the disabled. And



Angee Brewer, once a resident of Muscatatuck State Developmental Center, now lives with a roommate in her own home in North Vernon, Indiana, with support from Stone Belt.

problems with abuse, staff shortages and the quality of care in the mid-1990s caused the federal government to temporarily cut off Medicaid funding to the facility.

Finally, four years ago, under pressure from Senate Republicans struggling to craft a balanced budget, O’Bannon agreed to close the facility.

Employees and families fought the decision.

Frank Migliano, the president of the Muscatatuck Arc, a group of parents and guardians, led the battle, even suing to stop the state from shutting down the facility.

His son, Frank Jr., suffers profound mental retardation along with many medical problems and needed the constant medical care that Muscatatuck provided, Migliano said.

The suit delayed the closing, and an eventual settlement established some rules to help families. Still, Migliano said he could see the state was determined.

In December, after months of evaluating possible placements, the Miglianos moved Frank Jr. from Muscatatuck into a group home with seven other adults in Carmel, just 15 minutes away from their home in Fishers.

Frank Migliano describes the situation as “mediocre.”

“It’s overcrowded and understaffed,” he said. “They have very good (staff) people, but there aren’t enough of them.”

Migliano said his son “doesn’t have much to do. There aren’t enough staff to even walk him around the neighborhood.

At Muscatatuck, he used to go to the park and to the zoo, all kinds of activities.”

Services once provided by the state now are provided to former Muscatatuck residents by several different companies and organizations.

Stone Belt Arc, a Bloomington-based non-profit organization for people with disabilities, cares for 13 former Muscatatuck residents, including Angee Brewer. Each lives with a roommate in a rented home, most of them in North Vernon, just a few miles from the Muscatatuck campus.

They all get round-the-clock care from Stone Belt staff, who are assigned to individuals, not houses.

“We help them with their daily routines and with learning new skills, whether that’s taking care of their personal hygiene or learning to cook,” said Dottie Stewart, director of Stone Belt’s Supported Living Program. “We also work closely with them to increase their social skills and develop appropriate interactions, to help them get their behaviors under control.”

So far, all the placements at Stone Belt homes have been successful, even better than expected, said Mark Norris, the organization’s coordinator of supported living teams.

That’s in part because the organization hired more than 40 former Muscatatuck staff to work in the assisted-living homes, he said.

“They went above and beyond in every scenario,” Norris said of the Muscatatuck workers. “I’ve never met such quality staff

as what we’ve hired in that area.”

Shannon Gilbert is one of those workers. She had been at Muscatatuck for four years when she received her layoff notice in January.

“I knew it was going to happen. They kept saying it and saying it, but it never closed,” said Gilbert. “The day I got my layoff paper, it hit me like a rock. I was going to have to leave the people I’d been caring for. These were my friends. It was devastating for a while.”

Then came the opportunity at Stone Belt.

“It’s awesome,” she said of her new job. “I’ve been taking care of some of the clients that used to live at Muscatatuck.”

Lynn Gibson, another former Muscatatuck worker who is a caregiver at a Stone Belt home in North Vernon, was among dozens of Muscatatuck workers who came to Indianapolis to protest the closing. She was skeptical that Muscatatuck residents could receive good enough care in community-based settings.

But now, she said, the residents she sees are getting better care. At the home where she works, the residents have gotten to know neighbors, who sometimes come over for cookouts. Staff and residents go on walks and to the park.

“I see so many advantages and freedoms they get that they didn’t have living in Muscatatuck,” Gibson said. “It’s neat watching them learn.”

But Migliano said he still believes “it was a horrible thing the state did — just to throw them into the community.”

“Everything is hidden now,” he said. “If there’s any abuse, nobody knows. It’s hidden in the community. We now don’t know whether people are getting good treatment or not.”

Bureau of Quality Improvement Services officials follow up on each placement, visiting at least twice — once seven days after the move and then again after a month.

If a home has problems or isn’t providing all the services that a resident needs, the state files a report and requires the provider to make changes. Inspectors then follow up.

At this point, Cheryl Burns has few complaints. She wishes the home where Angee lives was a little bigger and in a little nicer neighborhood.

But those are minor issues, she said. Although Angee has had outbursts at her new home, none have required the chemical restraints she often needed at Muscatatuck. She gets along well with her roommate, an older man.

And earlier this month, for the first time in nine years, Angee gave Burns a Mother’s Day gift, something her caregiver made possible.

“I cried,” Burns said. “I told Angee these were happy tears.”

▣ This article was reprinted with permission from the Louisville Courier-Journal.

from the CEO

A whirlwind year of growth and success

Most people strive to make a difference in the world, but in many occupations it is difficult to know if your work is having an impact. However, I know that is not the case here at Stone Belt. While it may be hard to measure at times, it is easy to see the impact our services have on individuals and the community as a whole.

Each year we serve more than 500 families in our Healthy Families program, providing them with support and information on maximizing their child's development and handling the stresses of child-rearing in today's society. Nationally, the success rate in preventing child abuse through this program is 98%. We know that preventing child abuse also means preventing disabilities, as the two are strongly correlated.

This past year, we have increased the number of people served in our Supported Living Program by 31%. Ten of these individuals moved from Muscatatuck Developmental Center, which closed in June. Now they live in regular neighborhoods in the community. These



clients are out and about frequently doing their shopping, recreating and, for some of them, working or volunteering. Because of our growth, this program also developed to become its own department, separate from our group living program, which still endures as a positive home environment that facilitates friendships and personal growth.

Also in the past year, we created our Milestones, Clinical and Health Resources department which has grown tremendously.

We moved into our new Adams Street location, started our new psychiatrist, Dr. Mindy Weakley, and increased our capacity to serve persons with dual diagnoses – developmental disabilities and mental illness. The medical, behavioral, psychiatric and case management services provided by this program are critical to successful self-determination.

We also continued our reputation of successful community employment services and helped 27 people with disabilities find new careers in addition to the 120 who get ongoing supports to keep their jobs. The testimonials we heard from several of the employers at a recognition ceremony held in March illustrated the impact these employees have in their workplaces.

In Manufacturing Services, clients are learning new skills in producing our Arts & Craft items, such as Adirondack Furniture and tie-dyed shirts. We have also started making basket handles to supply retailers around the country. New this year has been the creation of a program called Career Advancement Services that provides

career development skills. This, combined with paid work assignment helps clients develop the skills, habits and attitudes that equal success in the workplace.

There are many other ways that our programs and services have an impact. Among these are the professional growth of our staff, the diversification of the communities we serve, and the economic development that we provide. In exchange, we appreciate the opportunity to serve and the tremendous support we get from our consumers, families, donors and the communities where we are located.

Thanks for your support this past fiscal year and we look forward having even a greater impact than before.

Cheers,

Leslie Green
Chief Executive Officer

upcoming events

September 13 Aktion Club Meeting

4 to 5 p.m.

Mt. Gilead Church, 10th Street & Russell Road

■ Aktion Club is a client-based club that offers members an opportunity to give back to the community. The group is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club.

■ For more information contact Ann Dininger at 812-332-2168, ext. 247 or email adininger@stonebelt.org.

September 13 X-Change Club Meeting

7 to 8:30 p.m.

Bloomington Adult Community Center second floor library at 349 S. Walnut Street

■ X-change is a group for family members and support providers of individuals with special needs of all ages. A safe environment to x-change experiences, resources and ideas.

■ For more information contact Denise Brown at xchange@city.bloomington.in.us.

September 15 Job Club Meeting

4 to 5 p.m.

Stone Belt 10th Street Main Conference Room

■ Developing good work habits. Please bring \$5 for Subway snacks.

■ For more information call Joyce Resler at 812-335-3507, ext. 229 or email jresler@stonebelt.org.

September 22 Stone Belt of Lawrence County (LARC) Annual Meeting

6:30 p.m.

Lawrence County Fairgrounds

Enjoy a night of dinner and awards presentations.

■ For more information call Kim Hodges at 812-829-3978, ext. 222 or email khodges@stonebelt.org.

October 14 Stone Belt of Owen County (SOI) Fall Fling

6 to 8 p.m.

Sweet Owen Industries (SOI) building

Participate in a variety of carnival-type events.

■ For more information call Kim Hodges at 812-829-3978, ext. 222 or email khodges@stonebelt.org.

October 21, 22, 28, 29 Stone Belt Halloween Extravaganza

7 p.m. to midnight

Monroe County Fairgrounds
Commercial West Building

■ Activities to include: Dimensions of Darkness Haunted Experience, "Extreme Magic" shows with Travis Simms, Trail of Fantasy Hayride, Costume Contest, Horror Fashion Show and Carnival Games.

■ For more information contact Jack Clark at 812-332-2168, ext. 256 or email jclark@stonebelt.org.

November 5 Stone Belt of Owen County (SOI) Annual Meeting

6 p.m.

Sweet Owen Industries (SOI) building

Guests will enjoy a catered dinner and client and staff awards will be presented.

■ For more information call Kim Hodges at 812-829-3978, ext. 222 or email khodges@stonebelt.org.

touchstone

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STONE BELT CFO ACCEPTS NEW POSITION

In slightly less than three years, Dave Gootee made tremendous contributions to Stone Belt. Now, in a new position in the financial department of the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) with the State of Indiana, he is bound to make a positive impact on Hoosiers across the state.

May 31 was Dave's last day as Chief Financial Officer. During his tenure, he supervised financial operations as well as Management Information Systems (MIS), Manufacturing Services and Maintenance.

Dave started at Stone Belt in July 2002 after a brief retirement from Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals. Stone Belt was a perfect fit for Dave to take his expertise and knowledge from this major corporation and apply it in the non-profit arena.

Upon starting, he immediately teamed up with fiscal manager, Vickie Fry to analyze Stone Belt's financial position and develop tools to communicate this information to the management team and board of directors. He also worked with Jack Clark and the MIS department to effectively utilize and develop Stone Belt's technology.



In addition to overseeing all of these operations, Dave also took part in many other projects including:

- Supervising the planning, building and financing of the 10th Street addition,
- Managing the purchase and major financing of the Adams Street building,
- Accomplishing various business deals to further Stone Belt's mission and financial strength, including the purchase and transition of Stone Belt Leather Works and Accents retail shop.

In addition to his many skills and accomplishments, Dave has been well-loved by many clients and staff. His open and friendly personality created effective working relationships. He could always be counted on for his humor and collegiality.

Stone Belt wishes Dave the best in his new position and hope to see him often.

FSSA SECRETARY VISITS STONE BELT

Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) Secretary Mitch Roob visited Stone Belt on May 24. Roob was recently appointed to the post after Governor Mitch Daniels started his term in January.

Roob spent the morning of his visit meeting with members from Stone Belt's management team. In the meeting Roob discussed his ideas on FSSA restructuring with the group.



After the meeting he ate lunch with clients Kelly Tate, Terry Simpson and Andrew Miller. Kelly Tate's mom, Kathy Hudson also attended the lunch. Following lunch he left for the day.

Roob was formerly president of the Marion County Health and Hospital Corporation. He has said his first priority as FSSA Secretary is

revamping the state agency to address a budget deficit of more than \$17 million.

According to a statement released by the FSSA, the organization will focus on how to "succeed in revamping the [Medicaid] waiver program, implementing the Medicare prescription drug benefit and fundamentally reorganizing how the FSSA provides service."

"We must rebuild financial solvency in the FSSA," Roob said in a press release. "Common sense compassion balances the humanitarian efforts of this agency with the reality that we must live within our means."

To play a role in decisions about disability-related programs and services, the disability community should stay informed and maintain open communication with elected representatives. Contact your local and state representatives to let them know your opinions on policies; this will lay the groundwork to help make a difference at the state level.

JOB CLUB HAS BUSY SUMMER

Job Club kept busy at its May and June events.

On May 19 the group hosted new Assistant IU Women's Basketball Coach, Nadine Morgan to its meeting. Morgan talked to the group about teamwork and how to pull together on the job. This is something as a former basketball player and coach that she knows a lot about.

Morgan attended college at James Madison University in Virginia and is one of only two players in the school's history to score over 1,300 points. This year at IU she will be assisting new women's basketball coach Sharon Versyp.

About 20 clients attended the meeting and were very enthusiastic during Morgan's presentation, answering her questions and participating in her examples. At the end of the meeting Morgan handed out IU Women's Basketball programs to the group.

On June 16 the group held their annual summer picnic at the Lions Den Shelter in Upper Cascades Park. Club members were urged to invite their families or bring a friend to this event.

Attendees could mingle with friends and eat a variety of barbecue type food, snacks and drinks.

Job Club is a support group open to any individual who is currently employed or seeking employment in the community with Stone Belt Employment Services. Job Club meets the third Thursday of each month (except December). All events start at 4 p.m. in the Stone Belt 10th Street Main Conference Room. If you have any questions about the group, or if you would like to get involved call Joyce Resler at 812-335-3507, ext. 229 or email jresler@stonebelt.org.

JOURNEY OF HOPE VISITS STONE BELT

The Journey of Hope Trans America cycling team visited Stone Belt 10th Street on July 27 as part of their cross-country cycling trip from Oregon to Washington, D.C. The trip's purpose is to raise funds and awareness for people with disabilities.

This summer marks the 18th anniversary of Journey of Hope, an awareness event organized by the nonprofit organization Push America, the national outreach project of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity. The organization's mission is to build leaders of tomorrow by serving people with disabilities today.

The Trans America team is one of three Journey of Hope teams on this 70-day trip covering over 4,000 miles. During the course of the trip the team will make 71 stops across the country.

During the team's visit, they presented a grant to Stone Belt for \$750 that will provide funds for Stone Belt's consumers to participate in events at the local YMCA.

During the visit, the 24-man team joined consumers at Stone Belt's annual Fun Day — which featured live music by Stone Belt staff and clients, carnival-style games, a presentation by Wildcare (a local agency that does wildlife rehabilitation) and a lunch prepared by the members of Kappa Kappa Sigma.

Stone Belt To Offer Family Training Seminars

The School Age Task Force, a Stone Belt committee, has been meeting for over a year to identify the unmet needs of school age children with special needs and their families. The committee has been researching what programs currently exist for children, what families want, where there are gaps in services, and what Stone Belt's role should be in filling the gaps.

The committee, chaired by Shirley Stumpner, Director of Infant and Child Developmental Services (ICDS), has representatives from a variety of Stone Belt programs to assure a multi-departmental approach to service provision. The goal of the School Age Task Force is to provide information, resources and services to families of school age children that have special needs.

Team members looked for a way to continue to serve families during the school years and meet their needs despite a lack of funding. One way to do this is to offer families educational opportunities utilizing the expertise of current staff and collaborating with other community members.

"We lose children during their school years," said Director of Employment and Personal Resources (EPR) Bitta Dewees. "We provide services in ICDS and then these children go to school and we might provide services when they are adults. Right now we want to find a way to stay connected to them during school years."

The Family Training Seminars will be hosted by Stone Belt's ICDS and Milestones, Clinical and Health Resources programs, as well as other outside organizations.

Upcoming seminars include Dealing with Challenging Behaviors, Article 7: Introduction to Indiana Law on Special Education, Introduction to Autism and the Planning for the Future Series.

For a calendar of workshops or more information log on to www.Monroecountykidscount.org.



STONE BELT OF OWEN COUNTY (SOI) HOLDS ANNUAL CARNIVAL

Stone Belt of Owen County (SOI) held its annual carnival Saturday, May 28 at the Owen County Fairgrounds.

Event attendees participated in a number of carnival-type games including sucker-pull, nickel toss, basketball toss and paint ball. There was also a raffle where tickets were sold to win a handful of prizes including a 27" flat screen TV that was donated by Insurance Services in Spencer. Other items available were a table lamp, coca-cola clock and a six-month subscription to the Spencer Evening World.

SOI made a profit of about \$1,100 from the event. This money will go to the Consumer Council to help the group fund events throughout the year.

Event Coordinator and Director of Stone Belt of Owen County Kim Hodges was pleased with the event's turnout.

"Once again we are lucky to have a lot participation from area businesses and residents. Without their help this event wouldn't be the success that it is today," said Hodges.



donor spotlight



This is a picture of Miller House before the construction. There was no covered front porch and little landscaping at the front of the home. One of the reasons the porch was created was to give residents protection from the outside elements upon entering and leaving the home. Miller House opened September 11, 1987. It has seven co-ed residents.



Miller House residents and staff stand in front of the finished porch with Ed and Mary Lou Otting. Top L/R: Mary Lou Otting, Angela Otting, Ed Otting, Rocky Freeman, Bill Marsh, House Manager Kay Westfall, Richard Laraway, Brad Gifford, Martha Hines. Bottom L/R: Sandy Gaskins, Marcella Eller.

Donors renovate home, hearts

Ed and Mary Lou Otting are just your typical parents. When I met them they had driven from their home in Indianapolis to Bloomington to take their daughter Angela to dinner for her birthday.

Also, like any parent, they want to make sure their daughter has a comfortable home. This is one of the reasons why they made a donation to Stone Belt for improvements to Angela's residence, Miller House group home.

Miller House recently received a new covered front porch, front door and landscaped garden as a result of the Otting's generosity. The project took the month of June to complete.

It all started during one of Mary Lou's visits to the house. "I thought the house could use a new front door. The old door had a very high peephole and residents couldn't see who was at the door."

This small suggestion eventually grew into a bigger project. First there was talk of adding a sunroom, in addition to the door, then just an awning. Mary Lou became aware after speaking with Miller House Manager Kay Westfall that during rain and snow it was a problem for residents to get from the car to the house because there was

"We just saw a need and filled it. The home is the center of our lives. All we do radiates from there."
— Ed Otting

no covered entrance.

Mary Lou wanted to come up with a solution that would best incorporate the current design of the home with the practicality that the addition required.

She gave control of the project to Westfall. "I felt Kay knew what Miller House needed the best. I turned my ideas over to her and she helped make it all happen."

First Westfall consulted with general contractor Dave Beach. Beach had worked on Miller House before, completing a back/side deck for the home. He came up with the idea of creating a covered front porch. This would keep with the style of the home and provide much needed shelter around the door for residents in times of rain and snow.

Westfall thought this was the perfect solution. She continued to coordinate construction with Beach and help from Stone Belt Maintenance Coordinator Jeff

Harp. Throughout the project she also consulted with Mary Lou to keep her apprised of any developments.

As the project grew from a simple front door to a covered front porch, Mary Lou also suggested that it would be a nice touch to have some landscaping done as well to complete the look. It was this part of the project that Westfall was most excited about working on.

She hired Abel's Nursery to assist with the project. She worked with them and chose a small fish pond with a fountain as well as several small garden decorations and a variety of plants.

"One thing I added to the garden especially for Mary Lou was some peony bushes. She loves peonies," said Westfall.

The Ottings saw the completed construction at the end of June. "We are so pleased with the finished project. It doesn't look like an addition at all. The construction blends into the home," said Mary Lou.

Most importantly, Miller House's residents love their new porch and garden. Richard Laraway likes to sit on a stone bench in the garden after dinner and listen to the fountain. Marcella Eller helps water the plants at night. Sandy Gaskins was so excited she called her friends to tell them to come over and see the results.

Ed Otting perhaps put the project in perspective best when he said, "We just saw a need and filled it. The home is the center of our lives. All we do radiates from there."

Ed Otting is the Vice President of Stone Belt's board of directors. Both he and Mary Lou have been involved with Stone Belt for over 10 years. Their daughter Angela lives in Miller House. This is their second large donation to Stone Belt's group homes. They also sponsored the Otting Match from 2001-2003 which matched all funds donated to group homes during that period. These funds were used for improvements to group homes.

➤ Stone Belt's group homes are always in need of donations. If you would like to help contact Director of Supervised Group Living (SGL) Tonya Vandivier at 812-332-2168, ext. 223 or email tvandivi@stonbelt.org.

volunteer hero

Stone Belt, IU partner through ACE program

Sarah Cohen loves volunteering at Stone Belt. "I have a favorite client that has the ability to make my day great," she said. "No matter what kind of mood I'm in when arrive, by the time I leave, I'm smiling."

Sarah volunteers at Stone Belt through Indiana University's Advocates for Community Engagement (ACE) program. ACEs are IU undergraduates with a record of involvement in community service, service-learning and leadership. Participants serve as liaisons between IU service-learning courses and community based organizations, like Stone Belt.

Stone Belt has been participating in the ACE program since August 2003.

"The ACE program has revitalized the presence of volunteers at Stone Belt. I think many of our clients enjoy seeing fresh faces," said Kristin Manno, Stone Belt's ACE supervisor.

Sarah got involved with ACE in the Spring of 2004 when she took a service-learning class. She was assigned to Stone Belt because of her previous experience in working with persons with disabilities.

At Stone Belt, Sarah coordinates IU students who want to volunteer at the agency. Each semester Stone Belt usually has about 10 volunteers. Sarah orients and trains IU service-learners and volunteers, schedules service-learners and volunteers, consults with faculty and non-profit staff to develop appropriate service-learning experiences, and presents service-learning information to classes and organizations on campus.

2005 will be Sarah's second year working with Stone Belt. "This year I would like to incorporate service learners in more fitting fields within the organization. "For example, we are trying to

set-up some education majors to volunteer in the CAS program. By doing this, students will benefit from "doing" as they learn," she said.

In return for her time Sarah is paid by the IU Office of Community Outreach and Partnerships in Service Learning (COPSL). This upcoming year she will also receive class credit in American Humanics for her work.

"The most successful part of the ACE program is all the volunteer work that results from our service learners. So many hours are put in every semester by all of IU's service learners and those hours are priceless," she said.

Stone Belt couldn't agree more. "We are grateful to have Sarah's experience," said Manno. "She does a wonderful job giving prospective volunteers and service learners a realistic idea of what they will do here and what the level of commitment is."



Sarah Cohen is Stone Belt's ACE representative. She hails from Lexington, Mississippi and is a Junior at IU majoring in Jewish Studies and Sociology.

expansion update

10th St. to get new circle driveway

Stone Belt 10th Street is nearing its final phase of construction with the recent start of the Safety Project.

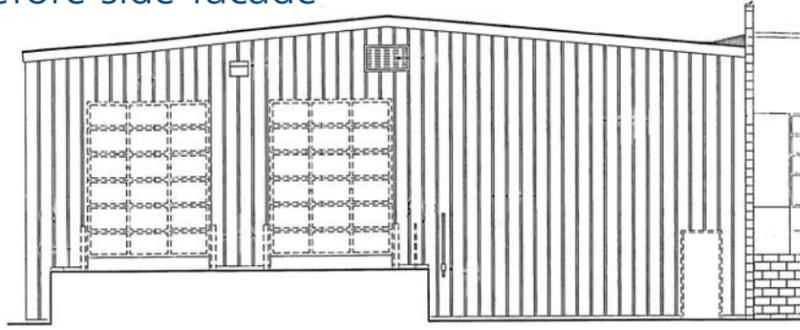
The Safety Project will feature a new circle driveway at the North side of the building. The project will also include new facades for the side cafeteria and warehouse walls (see picture at right).

The project became known as the safety project because it will make client drop off and pick up more secure.

“Traffic was so dangerous in and out of that area at the beginning and end of the day,” said Stone Belt Human Resources Director Brad Galin who is spearheading the project. “This project is two-fold to solve these safety concerns. It will create a one way traffic flow which will allow for a safer and larger drop off point than we currently have. It will also feature a larger covered area for clients’ protection in times of rain and snow,” said Galin.

Galín recently became responsible for Stone Belt’s operations and facilities. This includes overseeing any new construction

before side facade



after side facade



or space acquisitions for the agency.

The \$300,000 project is being partially funded by a \$120,000 City of Bloomington HAND (Housing and Neighborhood Development) grant. The remainder of the funds will come out of Stone Belt’s capital budget.

Planning for the project started in March when architecture firm Tabor, Bruce and Puzzello put plans together. Construction is expected to take about three months. Strauser Construction will be completing the job.

There will be some short-term

difficulties to building visitors during construction. The side parking lot will be cut off for the entire construction period and no one will be able to drive around the building.

“These minor inconveniences are worth their trouble because the project will eventually lead to a safer and more convenient entrance,” said Galin.

✉ For more information about the Safety Project contact Human Resources Director Brad Galin at 812-332-2168, ext. 274 or email bgalin@stonebelt.org.

client spotlight

Jonathan Hossler grows up

By Jeremy Toschlog
Stone Belt Behavior Analyst

Upon Jonathan Hossler’s admission to Stone Belt, expectations were unknown. Not only was Jonathan transferring from a previous placement which was unable to meet his needs, he was also seeking placement at an adult group home although he was only 17 years of age.

Jonathan was admitted to Bridgwaters group home in February 2003 after receiving a waiver from the State of Indiana to move into an adult group home. No one would have guessed the progress that Jonathan would make in such a short amount of time.

Jonathan continues to attend Bloomington North High School and is on track to receive his certificate of completion in October. Despite previous difficulties while in school, Jonathan has progressed to a point where he is able to be successful in a volunteer job. He participates in a program called “Hand in Hand” in which he collects food to be donated to the needy. This program has grown so large that additional volunteers will soon be needed to keep up with the high demand.

Progress has not only been seen at school, but it also has been observed at home. Physical aggression, once seen as a major barrier, has decreased dramatically since Jonathan moved into Bridgwaters. This improvement in behavior has taken place despite significant medication decreases. In addition, Jonathan has displayed progress in the areas of learning new functional skills, tolerating times of transition, and the ability to handle social stressors which were once considered overwhelming.

It is now known that Jonathan will rise to the challenge of future endeavors that may come his way.

Bridgwaters House Manager, Wade Snider, put it best when he said, “Because of the decrease in outbursts, Jonathan seems much happier. People often say of individual clients that when they know their boundaries and are kept firmly within them, they are happier. That seems to be truer with Jonathan than with any other person I have ever worked with. His family now dares to hope for better times and more success with things before thought to be unthinkable. He is an excellent learner and has a genuine desire to improve. A lot of the credit (for Jonathan’s progress) belongs to him.”

manufacturing update

Trays, basket handles among new products

By Larry Pejeau
Sales and Marketing Director

Stone Belt Art & Craft is in the middle of its second season of business and current products, including the Adirondack furniture line, are selling very well.

The 10th Street wood shop is busy assembling products every day under the watchful eye of staff members Chama Henry and Fred Hunter with many clients working to help meet demand.

As business capacity and expertise has grown, so have many new opportunities. Stone Belt Art & Craft has taken on two new and exciting projects that have provided more opportunities for clients to get involved in wood working.

The first opportunity is a contract with local business, Bella Bella Arts, to assemble square and rectangular serving trays. These trays are constructed out of poplar wood and demand a high degree of craftsmanship and the use of sophisticated power tools to complete.

The initial order was for 100 trays. Once completed, the base of the tray will feature Bella Bella Arts’ distinctive hand cut paper patterns in rich, saturated colors, protected by a thick glossy resin finish. These serving trays are sold at fine art galleries and stores throughout the United States.

The second new opportunity for Stone Belt clients in our Art & Craft division is the purchase of another small



Stone Belt Art & Craft has several new opportunities in its wood business including creating rectangular serving trays for Bella Bella Arts (above) and basket handles (below).

craft business from local artisan Rick Knapp. This business will manufacture a line of basket handles to be sold to individual basket weavers as well as larger supply houses and craft schools.

Rick will offer his expertise to help develop a line of decorative wire handles and traditional bent “D” handles in 10 different sizes. The wire handles are woven into baskets as decorative items and come in many shapes including hearts, angels, cats and more traditional utilitarian bean pot handles made with twisted wire with wooden grips.

These handles are formed by hand on custom made jigs out of different gauge coated wire. The bent “D” handles are formed by steaming and bending 7/8” by

1/8” oak strips into the traditional “D” shape and then final assembly and sanding after the handles dry.

Interestingly, one of the hottest new trends in this marketplace is the introduction of leather basket handles. Stone Belt Leather Works has already designed and completed leather basket handles and leather grips to be added to the bent “D” handles for our catalog.

Stone Belt’s marketing staff has completed a catalog of the basket handles and production for delivery of orders started in early July. Stone Belt’s manufacturing staff has high hopes that this niche business will provide new work opportunities for clients as well as independent revenue for the agency. This product line will be made at both our 10th Street and Stone Belt of Lawrence County (LARC) locations.

Stone Belt’s Art & Craft items can be seen and purchased in Bloomington at Elements (2901 East Covenant Drive), Burnham Woods Gardens (6775 North Hudoff Road) as well as every Saturday morning at the Bloomington Farmer’s Market. Art & Craft’s line of bird feeders and houses can be purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited Stores.

✉ For more information about Stone Belt’s Art & Craft items contact Sales & Marketing Director Larry Pejeau at 332-2168, ext. 279 or email lpejeau@stonebelt.org.



staff spotlight

Social Worker celebrates 25th anniversary

Even after 25 years Social Worker Marcella Padgett can still remember her job interview at Stone Belt.

"I met with Mrs. Joan Burton (then Executive Director) for the interview and then with Stone Belt's first Social Worker, Mrs. Singh to discuss the job. One of her tasks that day was to take several clients on a Stone Belt bus to Jiffy Treat so they could try out their new dentures. I was invited and expected to go along," said Padgett. "It was a good outing; however, I was definitely unprepared to be on a bus with developmentally disabled clients traveling through Bloomington. I quickly adjusted."

Since that interview Padgett has been continuously employed by Stone Belt as a Social Worker for 25 years. She celebrated her silver anniversary on May 19.

25 years ago Stone Belt was a vastly different place from what it is today. It was a public school and workshop. There was also a pre-school for children ages 1-3 years old. There were no community employment services and all the adult clients worked in the workshop or were in classes. One of the most obvious changes over the years is the way clients are transported around town. Back then a large yellow bus with "Stone Belt Council for Retarded Citizens" painted on the side was often used.

Padgett remembers these days fondly, but is proud of the agency's growth through the years. She feels one of the biggest changes over this time has been in clients employment, "With the first few jobs, I have watched clients increase their self-confidence and really feel part of the community."

Perhaps one of the most positive changes over the past 25 years is the treatment of clients in the community. "I think we see them more as adult

learners now. Since we have community employment and clients are more integrated into the community setting, they also see themselves as more mature," said Padgett.

Stone Belt currently employs three Social Workers. They work with clients in a problem-solving relationship to help the client cope with challenges they face. A social worker is trained to look at every area of functioning and environmental issues then to work with the client to achieve a desired outcome.

Not only has Stone Belt changed over the past 25 years, but Social Work as a profession has evolved as well. Padgett said today social work focuses more on the social worker as a therapist.

"While we continue to provide more concrete services, we are often seen as counselors or therapists. Our role is better understood by the community and the old stigma of being a 'welfare worker' has decreased," she said.

Padgett works at Stone Belt's newly formed Milestones, Clinical and Health Resources division. After over 24 years of going to work every day at Stone Belt's 10th Street location, she now drives to Milestones' new offices on South Adams Street. She likes her new office, but has had to adjust to a quieter environment and less daily and direct contact with clients and staff from other programs.

Padgett said most of her day is filled with counseling and therapy sessions, paperwork, consultations and team meetings. Since Milestones' inception she has taken on more outpatient counseling and clinical work.

Social Work wasn't a first career choice for Padgett. As a child she wanted to be a secretary, then a nurse, then a psychiatrist. She eventually became



Stone Belt Social Worker Marcella Padgett with client Ron Sipes. Marcella has worked with Ron the entire 25 years of her career at Stone Belt, the longest she has worked with any client.



Marcella sits at her desk in 1980 when she started working at Stone Belt. She cites one of the biggest changes over the years is the growth in clients employed in the community.

interested in social work during her senior year of high school after volunteering. Padgett took this interest with her to college at Indiana University where she completed her bachelor and masters degrees in Social Work.

"Through my volunteer work I began to see the need that was out there. I enjoyed working with people and became interested in their emotional health and how it impacted their daily lives," said Padgett. "Since social work looks at all areas of life that affects us, it seemed to be an appropriate career choice for me. I had always been interested in what makes us feel and act the way we do."

When Padgett first applied for work at Stone Belt she knew from Mrs. Singh, Stone Belt's first social worker and one of her professors that Stone Belt served people with disabilities, however she did not know what this entailed. Over the years she has learned that her work satisfaction has far exceeded her workload.

"One of the first things I learned at Stone Belt was how supportive the clients are of each other during times of illness, emotional pain or loss. I was and am still touched by their compassion for each other," said Padgett.

Stone Belt as an agency is still evolving and getting ready for its next 25 years of service. Marcella is pleased that the agency's vision has expanded and that it is better able to serve the whole person.

In her spare time Padgett keeps busy teaching classes at Indiana University's School of Social Work. She also enjoys playing the guitar, fishing and gardening.

Marcella summed up Stone Belt's mission when she said, "Professionally, my greatest life opportunity has been to witness the change and growth in people and in some small way to be a part of the process."

We at Stone Belt honor and thank Marcella for her commitment to Stone Belt clients over 25 years of service.

program spotlight

Retirement program debuts in Bedford

Stone Belt serves a wide-range of ages in its many programs. Some of our youngest clients participate in Infant and Child Developmental Services (ICDS) programming while some of our oldest clients participate in Manufacturing Services and Day Programming.

However, up until recently there wasn't a specific program option available for aging clients. This is one of the reasons while Stone Belt decided to start a Retirement Program. This new program is debuting at Stone Belt of Lawrence County (LARC) and the agency hopes to gradually expand services into other areas.

The LARC Retirement Program is offered as a programming alternative for individuals that are 55 years of age or older and/or to clients who require a more relaxed, lower level of daily activity. The program's goal is to provide appropriate, quality programming for Stone Belt seniors.

The program began April 1 and runs out of the Steven Avenue site in Bedford. Currently about 15 clients participate.

"I believe it is a more relaxing atmosphere, being in a

separate building and not around the manufacturing site on Vocational School Road where the noise level is very high," said Katie Cunningham, Team Leader for Employment and Retirement Services.

Activities in the Retirement Program don't differ much from what many other retired seniors spend their time doing. A typical day starts with clients socializing and enjoying coffee. After this comes Current Events and Health and Safety classes followed by lunch. In the afternoon clients might listen to a guest speaker, karaoke or play bingo. Some days there also might be a community outing. For the remainder of the day each client can choose their own activity like putting together a puzzle, painting, watching a movie or gardening outside.

Program staff spend a lot of time choosing activities they think clients will find interesting. Carrie Elkin, Employment Support Consultant, has spent hours making contacts with outside groups to give guest lectures. Some speakers have included representatives from the Red Cross, Lawrence County Library, Lawrence County Soil and Water

Conservation District and the Lawrence County Fire Department. Several of these speakers come on a monthly basis and bring materials to share with the group.

Cunningham thinks the program brings an important new option to Stone Belt's offerings, "I believe the program's slower pace activities will also encourage clients to participate in activities more geared toward their age."

One of the group's favorite activities is planning cookouts. Another popular pastime is anything where they get to visit the community, like shopping trips to Wal-Mart and the Dollar Store.

Cunningham praises her team for much of the program's early success, "I love working with the clients and staff. There is not one day that is like the next. My team works very well together and that is what this program is all about, teamwork and helping each other."

Some future goals for the program include increasing programming and client participation. One idea is to hold an open house to let the community know about this new program and what it offers.

upcoming event

Stone Belt to host Halloween Extravaganza

Halloween has been a big part of MIS Director Jack Clark's life since he was a young boy. Over the years his love of the holiday has become a passion and this year he is capitalizing on his passion by coordinating Stone Belt's Halloween Extravaganza, a fund-raising event.

Clark said his love of Halloween started around the age of four when he watched Indiana TV personality Sammy Terry. Terry would show "B" horror films on Friday and Saturday nights. These movies spurred Clark's interest in horror and Halloween. Today he owns over 100 horror movies.

Stone Belt has hosted an agency-wide Halloween celebration for the past three years. Before this the agency did things like passing out candy, decorating and dressing in costume. Three years ago, then CFO Dave Gootee thought the holiday should become an agency-wide celebration. Gootee, knowing Clark's passion for the holiday, tapped him as the coordinator, and dubbed him, "The Great Pumpkin."

It was just last year that the Halloween planning committee, also known as "The Pumpkin People," started thinking of making Stone Belt's small agency-wide celebration into a larger community event.

Planning for this year's Extravaganza started in August 2004. The planning committee is led by Jack Clark and supported by the "Pumpkin People." All committee members are volunteers. Meetings are held during lunch and after work hours.

Many more volunteers are needed. Clark estimates anywhere from 30 to 50 total people will be needed. Anyone from staff to community members are encouraged to



volunteer. People are needed to lead projects as well as help during the event.

This year's Extravaganza has a budget of \$18,000. These funds are coming from community donors and Stone Belt. Stone Belt is seeking cash donors as well as some specific in-kind items.

There are many activities planned for the Extravaganza including "The Dimensions of Darkness" haunted experience, "Extreme Magic" shows with Travis Simms, a hayride, costume contest, horror fashion show and games for all ages. Food and drink will also be available for purchase. All events, except the magic shows, will be held at the Monroe County Fairgrounds Commercial West building. The magic shows will be held at the Fairgrounds in the Auditorium.

The event's main attraction will be the Dimensions of Darkness. Clark said the haunted experience will be geared towards older children and adults. It is recommended

that children under 10 not participate.

Clark has over 10 years experience in creating haunted houses. He started out planning them for his sons in the family basement. Over the years he has accumulated dozens of props. About five years ago he created his first fee-based haunted house for the Bedford Fire Department.

Area magician Travis Simms will offer five magic shows on Saturday, October 29. Some tricks he will be performing include a disappearing act and levitation.

The costume contest will be open to all attendees for a \$1 entrance fee. There will be various categories and winners will receive prizes. Judges for the contest will likely be several IU athletic coaches.

The horror fashion show is one of the event's most unique activities. Several area costume vendors will provide attire. These costumes will be worn by area County Commissioners and City and County Council members. Bloomington Mayor Mark Krusan will MC the event.

There are also several kid-friendly activities including a hayride down a trail of fantasy which will feature friendly monsters and fairy tale people.

Clark said the idea behind offering so many activities was to keep attendees occupied while they wait for the haunted house, which will have a unique entrance system. After purchasing their tickets, attendees will be given a number and paged at the event when it is their turn to enter.

➤ For more information about the Halloween Extravaganza contact Jack Clark at 812-332-2168, ext. 256 or email jclark@stonebelt.org.

stone belt halloween extravaganza

October 21, 22, 28, 29
7 p.m. to midnight
Monroe County Fairgrounds
Commercial West Building

Dimensions of Darkness Haunted Experience

Open all night, every night.
• \$7 for adults, \$5 for children 12 and under. Combo tickets can be purchased for Dimensions of Darkness and "Extreme Magic" shows at \$10 for adults and \$6 for children 12 and under.

"Extreme Magic" shows with Travis Simms

Saturday, October 29
Fairgrounds Auditorium
• 5 shows: 6:30, 7:30, 8:30, 9:30, 10:30. \$6 for adults, \$3 for children 12 and under. See combo ticket prices under Dimensions of Darkness.

Trail of Fantasy Hayride

All nights, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Outside Commercial West Building
• \$3 for adults, \$2 for children 12 and under.

Costume Contest

Friday, October 21, 7 p.m.
\$1 entrance fee. Prizes awarded.

Horror Fashion Show

Saturday, October 22, 7 p.m.
No fee to attend.

Games

Carnival games for all ages will be set up throughout venue. Minimal charge per game.

program spotlight

BOOST summer training program kicks off

A group of 12 teenagers who recently graduated from high school will spend their summer at Stone Belt learning about what it takes to be an employee in Stone Belt's new BOOST training program.

For many this is their first job. It will give them an idea about getting to work on time, working a full eight hour day and learning about the responsibilities that come with adulthood.

BOOST is a training and employment program offered by Stone Belt for new high school graduates – both work-bound and college-bound – who want a position helping people with disabilities. This 10-week program is designed to provide young graduates with not only the training that Stone Belt offers all new employees, but with additional training to "boost" their knowledge of Stone Belt, developmental disabilities, essential on-the-job skills and general good work habits.

Kristi McCann, Stone Belt Manager of Professional Development, feels BOOST is a great option for graduating seniors, "They are given the opportunity to get a position which pays well and gives excellent work experience and training. We also emphasize what a value it is to work in this field as a career."

The program is structured into weeks of in-class and on-the-job training. Weeks 1 and 2 consist of training



Stone Belt welcomed its first group of BOOST trainees on June 20. They are: Top L/R, Jayne Grider, Lauren Berentes, Kayla Brewster, Ashley Freyn, Katie McArdle. Bottom L/R, Julie Baer, Rachel Ryan, Miyako Fuqua and Kathryn Poplewell. Not pictured: Erica Bridges.

classes such as Developmental Disabilities Awareness, Sign Language and CPR. Weeks 3 and 4 consist of shadowing in the residential, day and children's programs. The last day of week 4 ends with a Celebrating Success Party. During the final 6 weeks of the program participants work in Stone Belt's residential or day programs.

Following their 10-week training course, BOOST

participants can apply for any position in Stone Belt and are seen as an internal applicant. If they are chosen for a position they can start right away without completing any additional training.

To enter the BOOST program participants filled out an employment application and completed an interview with a Stone Belt staff member. McCann said interviewers were looking for certain attributes in applicants.

"We wanted participants who see an opportunity right in front of them and who feel a difference can be made through what they know or learn. Experience in this field wasn't a top priority," said McCann.

One of the goals of the program is to give participants training that will develop into skills that help employees within Stone Belt and outside the organization. For BOOST participants, future employment opportunities are limitless.

"In the future we plan on offering advanced levels of BOOST to allow students to earn tuition reimbursement for college-level courses," said McCann. "Until then this is just the beginning and we hope others can see the real value in these quality employees we are trying to target."

➤ For more information about BOOST contact Kristi McCann at 812-332-2168, ext. 240 or email kmccann@stonebelt.org.

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Bloomington, Indiana 47408

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Stone Belt presents news and information for persons with disabilities, families and friends

Picnic Paradise

In the spirit of Summer what else is more perfect than a picnic? Various Stone Belt departments held picnics over the past three months to honor staff and clients.



Melissa Abbitt greets riders with Push America's Journey of Hope Trans America cycling team. The Journey of Hope is a cross-country cycling event that raises funds and awareness of people with disabilities. The team visited Stone Belt on their way to Washington, D.C.

A NEW LIFE

Former Muscatatuck clients settle into new homes. **page 1**

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Donors contribute to Miller House renovation. **page 4**

A SPINE CHILLING OCTOBER

Stone Belt to host first ever Halloween Extravaganza. **page 7**

OUR MISSION

We believe in the uniqueness, worth and right to self-determination of every individual. Therefore, it is our mission, in partnership with the community, to prepare, empower and support persons with developmental disabilities and their families to participate fully in the life of the community.