



Timm Slota and Dennis Oakley participate in many activities when they are together. Some of these include ringing the Salvation Army bell over the holiday season and watching monster truck races in Indianapolis, a hobby they both share.

Stone Belt to host 5K Race

Runners! Start training now.

On Saturday, April 29 Stone Belt will host, "Run with Me" a 5K Run/Walk and 1-mile Fun Run/Walk. The event will be held at 2815 East Tenth Street in Bloomington. Proceeds will benefit Stone Belt programming, helping to offset decreased government funding.

The Fun Run/Walk will begin at 9 a.m. and the 5K will begin at 10 a.m. Check-in and event day registration for both races will begin at 7 a.m. Entry fees for the 5K are \$15 in advance and \$17 the day of the event. Entry fees for the Fun Run/Walk is \$10 (pre-registered or the day of the event). T-shirts will be given to all pre-registered entrants with a limited number available on race day.

For the 5K awards will be given to the top finisher male and female in each age group. All Run/Walk participants will receive a ribbon. Door prizes will be drawn after the races.

Stone Belt Records Manager Kyong Ge Williams came up with the idea for the race. "The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of our organization in the community," she said. "We've been around for over 45 years, but surprisingly a lot of people don't know what we do here."

Williams is familiar with the world of running. Her daughter Aubrey was on the cross-country team in high school and her husband Kenny has directed the Ellettsville Exchange Club "Quarters for Kids" run for the past eight years. After talking with him about what was involved in planning a race, she thought a similar event would work well for Stone Belt.

"I thought a race would be a perfect event that our clients could participate in with members of the community. It will definitely raise awareness," she said.

Stone Belt clients will be participating in the events and will also help by manning water stations and serving as guides for tours of Stone Belt's facility.

Stone Belt thanks its sponsors for helping make this event possible. As of publication date these include: \$2,500 gold sponsor: Winters Associates. \$1,000 silver sponsors include: Bloomington Paint and Wallpaper, Cinergy Foundation, Carlisle Brakes, Taylor Imprinted Sportswear, and WBWB. \$500 bronze sponsors include: Smithville Telephone, Budget Blinds, Nationwide, United Commerce Bank, Edward Jones, First Insurance Group and Monroe Bank. Other sponsors include Ed's Auto Center, Cook Pharmica, Kroger, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Kroger, Shoe Carnival and Starbucks.

➤ To register for the race, send in the registration form on the back of this newsletter, or contact Kyong Ge Williams at 332-2168, ext. 285 or email kwilliam@stonebelt.org.



My Pal Dennis

By Timm Slota
Stone Belt Volunteer

Approximately five years ago I walked into the Stone Belt building at the bypass. I told the receptionist that I used to be involved with the Big Brother/Big Sister organization and that I was wondering if there was some way I could volunteer with one of their clients. She took some information from me and said someone would get back to me.

A few days later a social worker from Stone Belt contacted me and I gave her some more information about myself. She asked if I would be interested about the possibility of being a companion to Dennis Oakley, a Stone Belt client with developmental disabilities. Although Dennis had a foster mother who was in a nursing home, he didn't have any other family members that kept up a relationship with him. The social worker thought it would be good for him to have some friends outside of Stone Belt.

We arranged a meeting for Dennis and I and after a few informal contacts we seemed to get along well. We quickly became comfortable with each other and looked forward to spending time together. Initially I thought that I was getting a whole lot more out of the relationship than Dennis did, but that quickly changed.

Now sometimes I sneak up on him while he is working at the Indiana Memorial Union and at Stone Belt. As soon as he sees me his whole world brightens. He takes on an ear-to-ear grin, yells my name and runs up to give me a big hug. He usually takes me by the hand and brings me over to his friends to introduce me.

When we rang the bell for the

How Do I BECOME A VOLUNTEER?

Stone Belt welcomes volunteers to assist clients in many areas including:

- Day Services: Classroom or community-based activities.
- Group Homes: In-house activities or community outings.
- Special Events
- We especially welcome volunteers to share special talents, like singing, playing music, storytelling (such as travel stories), playing sports.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at Stone Belt please contact: Kristin Manno
812-332-2168, ext. 302
kmanno@stonebelt.org.

Salvation Army over the holidays, he seemed to know someone that came by every 15 or 20 minutes. Dennis is well known in Bloomington because he has worked at several places around town, attends church and of course knows many people who have worked at Stone Belt over the years.

Dennis loves McDonalds, pizza, music, carnivals, basketball, bowling, loud motorized vehicles, county fairs, concerts, movies, the Fun Frolic, monster truck shows, motorcycle races, demolition derbies and stock car races.

There are a lot of activities we like to do together, such as listening to Christmas music. Everytime we go out Dennis looks forward to popping one of his favorite discs into the car CD player.

We also both love to watch large earth moving devices or anything that is under construction.

I take pleasure in the opportunity to watch and support Dennis while he participates in Special Olympics sports like bowling, basketball, softball and track.

Dennis has truly become part of my family. He has met all of my immediate family and some of my extended family. He has been over for Thanksgiving dinner and sees us around town. He has a great memory and asks about my wife and children routinely. My wife bakes him cakes and he and some of his fellow group home residents sometimes even help us decorate cakes.

Dennis and I help and support each other. There is no one else in this world that I have such a profound and positive effect on as I do with Dennis. He allows me to reaffirm the goodness of the world and to place my life in perspective.

I try to see Dennis every week, but sometimes that is just not possible. When this happens, we keep in touch by calling each other, especially when there is a big event coming up for him. But the most rewarding thing for me is that for him to see me is one of the highlights of any day for him, even if it's just to stop by and say hello.

The last time I took him to a stock car race he must have thanked me for taking him 5-6 times while we were there. By taking Dennis with me to family affairs and events around the community I know I've made a huge impact in bringing some color into his life and to the lives of my family and friends that have met him.

Dennis is my pal, or as he tells me, "You're my main man, Timm."

from the CEO

Two stories illustrate the need for support

I read two stories this week that exemplify the importance of the inclusion, advocacy, and support that is provided by community-based organizations such as Stone Belt Arc, The Arc of Indiana and The Arc of the United States.

One story is of Jason McElway, the amazing basketball player with autism in Rochester, New York. He made national news last week for hitting 6 three-pointers in the last minutes of the last basketball game of his high school career. Jason had been the faithful manager of his high school team prior to this opportunity to suit up and play. He was carried out on the shoulders of his fellow team members.

The other story, not nearly so happy, is of Jeff and Molly Daly who were separated as children when she was sent to an institution in Oregon in 1957. Jeff was told to forget about his three-year-old sister (who had significant disabilities) because his parents were told by the professionals that raising such a daughter would be a burden to the other children in the household. That family, like many others of the time, had no local support systems and no one to turn to, so they felt they had no choice but to institutionalize their children with disabilities. Luckily, Jeff and Molly have finally been reunited and are trying to make up for lost time.

What a difference between Jason and Molly. By the time Jason was born, early intervention and special education services were widely available. Jason was included, not only in his family, but in his school and community life. Molly, languished in a public institution for years, before having the opportunity to move into community life in 2000 when the institution closed.

Everyday we support many people with very similar stories at Stone Belt. We provide new parents of a young child with Down syndrome with resources and information. We support and educate families of school-aged children who are coping with the social-emotional issues of autism or other disabilities. We help youth with disabilities make the transition from high school to the world of work. We create supportive and enriching environments for people who are moving directly out of institutions, such as Muscatatuck or Fort Wayne Developmental Center and getting their first crack at community living. And we do a whole lot more.

Our local, state and national chapters have been mobilized at the grassroots level since the 1950s fighting for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to fully participate in their communities. We've made a lot of progress. When I read of these two stories and reflect on those we support locally, I feel the great sense of accomplishment. When I experience the challenges to operate despite funding cuts and learn of looming cuts at the Federal level, I get emboldened to rally the troops.

There is no doubt that the current environment for disabilities services is getting tougher. However, we are meeting these tough challenges with fortitude and resolve that amazes me every day. We look for every opportunity to be more efficient and put our resources directly in client services. We seek and acknowledge the support of families, donors, volunteers, legislators, and community members who can help us continue to create the best and highest quality community-based services available. We've seen the heartbreak of segregation and the celebration of inclusion. We know ours is the right cause to support and the one worth fighting for. Go Jason. Welcome home, Molly.

Leslie Green, Chief Executive Officer



upcoming events

March 24

Supervised Group Living Client Awards Banquet / Welcome Spring Dance

Stone Belt 10th Street

■ This annual awards ceremony will honor client's achievements. It will be followed by a "Welcome Spring" dance complete with snacks, music and dancing. For more information contact Tonya Vandivier at 812-332-2168, ext. 223 or email tvandivi@stonebelt.org.

April 4

Self-Advocates Monthly Meeting

6 to 7:30 p.m.

Stone Belt 10th Street, Main Conference Room

■ Self-Advocates Indiana, Inc., is a statewide organization based in Indianapolis. It is comprised of individuals with disabilities active in raising awareness regarding the positive contributions of persons with disabilities in the workplace and community.

■ For more information contact Nancy Smith at 812-332-9959 or email nsmith@stonebelt.org.

April 11

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.

April 20

Job Club Meeting

4 to 5 p.m.

Stone Belt 10th Street Main Conference Room

■ Customer Service in Action: A visit to Starbucks. Please bring \$5 for a snack. Pick-up will be from Starbucks at 5:30 p.m. Please pre-register by April 18.

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

April 29

Run with Me

5K Run/Walk and 1-mile Fun Run/Walk

Stone Belt 10th Street, Bloomington

■ Check-in and event day registration starts at 7:30 a.m. Fun Run begins at 9 a.m. and 5K begins at 10 a.m.

■ Entry fees. 5K: \$15 pre-registered, \$17 day of event. 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk: \$10 pre-registered or day of event. All proceeds benefit Stone Belt programming.

■ For the 5K awards will be given to the top finisher, male and female in each age group. Fun Run/Walk participants will receive ribbons. Door prizes will be drawn after the race. T-shirts will be given to all pre-registered entrants with a limited number available on race day.

■ Registration forms can be found at www.stonebelt.org and at all Stone Belt locations. For more information contact Kyong Ge Williams at 812-332-2168, ext. 285 or email kwilliam@stonebelt.org.



touchstone

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS BEGIN

Stone Belt held its first Leadership Development Seminar entitled, "What Leaders Do," on Saturday, December 10. Mary Held of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) presented.

"The session really challenged you in what your leadership skills are," said Kristi McCann, Manager of Professional Development at Stone Belt. "Mary was an exceptional speaker and the session was very interactive."

McCann said about 20 staff members attended. Organizers were pleased with the staff turnout which ranged from substitutes to department directors. The session was the first in a series of Leadership Development Seminars planned by Stone Belt's Human Resources department.

The next session will be March 25 and John Dickerson, Executive Director of the Arc of Indiana, will explain what the organization does,

how it is structured and describe Stone Belt's role as an Arc member. Participants will also learn about the importance of networking from board member and Regional Director of Employment Plus, Cathi Canfield. This session is sponsored by board president Don Hossler and his wife Carol Anne.

Stone Belt's goal is to have a different session each season. Employees can choose whether or not to attend, attendance is not mandatory. "It's a way to grow leaders," said CEO Leslie Green.

Employees who missed the seminar and would like to see what information was covered can log on to the Intranet to have access to PowerPoint slides from the presentation. The slides will give readers some key points from the presentation.

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

CLIENTS DELIVER VALENTINES TO INDIANA STATE HOUSE

Stone Belt CEO Leslie Green and Director of Monroe County Day Services Bitta Dewees accompanied three Stone Belt clients to the Indiana State House on February 14.

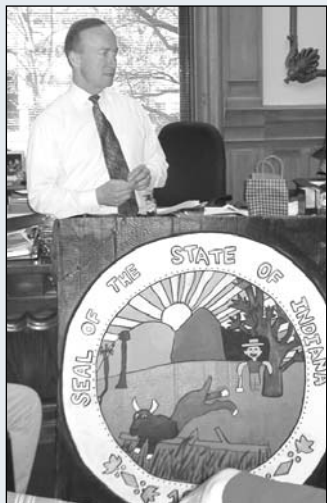
The visit was part of an event organized by the Arc of Indiana to thank legislators, FSSA Secretary Mitch Roob and Governor Mitch Daniels for supporting persons with developmental disabilities.

Over 85 people attended the event. Stone Belt clients Kelly Tate, Phyllis Gibbs and Joy McCune hand-delivered thank you Valentines to State Representatives Matt Pierce, Vern Tichner, Peggy Welch and Vi Simpson. They also left cards for other area legislators.

Governor Daniels met with about 75 clients and advocates and personally received their thank you Valentines. Stone Belt also presented the governor with a 4' x 4' hand-made state seal (see below). Upon receiving this work of art he said, "This is a real winner."

Stone Belt client Kelly Tate exchanged a "high five" with the governor and Phyllis Gibbs managed to give him a bear hug before leaving.

Kim Dodson, Associate Executive Director of the Arc of Indiana said, "The positive response to the personal, hand-made cards have been overwhelming. Legislators especially mentioned their appreciation of constituents traveling to the State House for a positive message rather than when they are upset or asking for something."



CLIENT RECEIVES DONATION OF STAMP COLLECTION

Stone Belt client Bobby Pate has many interests including sports, horses and history. He is involved in a variety of community activities which reflect these many past times.

When Bloomington resident Mike Natalie called Stone Belt and said he'd like to donate his collection of American postage stamps to one of our clients, Bobby seemed like a perfect pick to receive this generous gift. A collection of stamps would allow him to learn more about a dizzying array of topics.

The stamp collection included 600 block plates, all in glassine envelopes, a magnifying glass and a copy of the most current stamp catalog. Natalie's only requirement was that his stamps would be given to a person who might not be able to afford this collection, but one that would treat them as a valuable possession and learning tool.

Bobby seemed to fit those requirements perfectly. He was interested in the stamps and would treat the collection with curiosity and respect. This was obvious when he received the stamps. He excitedly opened the boxes and started leafing through the envelopes. He quickly found a stamp that would become his favorite.

"I love the horse stamp," he said. "It reminds me of when I ride horses at PALS."

Bobby's Supported Living Program Caseworker, Tammy Reuter, has helped him set up the collection in his apartment. "Bobby loves the collection and looks through it often. There are so many stamps, it will take him a while to see them all."

Reuter said Pate has already learned a lot. "When we look a stamp, I tell him about the history behind it."

Pate has plans to get involved in the local Bloomington stamp collecting club. He is eager to share his collection with others in the community.

CARF SURVEYORS TO VISIT STONE BELT

A survey team from CARE, formerly the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, will be visiting Stone Belt from April 24 to April 26.

The CARE surveyors will evaluate how well Stone Belt's services meet international standards for quality. The survey team will be looking at many things about Stone Belt and its services. They will give advice on what the organization is doing well and what might be improved. As a result of the survey, Stone Belt services may earn or continue to be accredited by CARE.

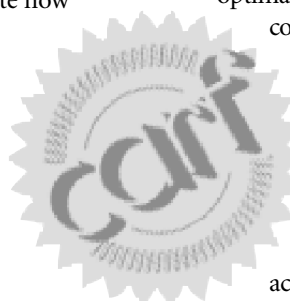
As part of the survey, CARE surveyors will interview people who use Stone Belt's services, their families, staff and others.

"These past three years we've made many improvements based on CARE's suggestions," said

Michele Shepherd, Stone Belt Organizational Effectiveness Coordinator. "We look forward to showing off our recent accomplishments."

CARE is an independent, not-for-profit accrediting body, promoting quality, value and optimal outcomes of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the persons served. Since 1966, CARE has established consumer-focused standards to help organizations measure and improve the quality of their programs and services.

In 2003 Stone Belt received an accreditation for a period of three years for its Community Living Services, Employment and Personal Resources and Manufacturing Services programs. This accreditation, which represents the highest level of accreditation, is awarded to organizations that show substantial fulfillment of the standards established by CARE.



NEW EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAMS LAUNCHED

Stone Belt celebrates employee achievements in multiple ways including day to day recognition of good work, planned departmental activities and outstanding employee awards given at annual meetings in the fall.

To provide additional opportunities for recognition and support of employees, Stone Belt has developed a new program, Awards for Excellence, which will be inaugurated in the spring of 2006. It will be a monetary award given to a select number of exceptional staff.

In addition, Stone Belt is working to establish a scholarship awards program for employees who are pursuing higher education or life-long learning goals in an area relevant to the mission of Stone Belt. These awards will be given beginning in the fall semester of 2006.

Both of these programs are funded through Stone Belt's development activities. Board member Ed Otting and his wife Mary Lou have issued a Challenge Grant to raise funds for the programs over the next two years. In addition, due to the generosity of Betty Underwood, grandmother of client Betsy Higgins, the match money is in hand to move forward with this year's Awards for Excellence.

The Awards for Excellence will be given annually in the Spring. Up to five recipients will receive a \$1,000 award for meritorious service. Senior management will not be eligible.

Staff, clients and board members may submit nominations, then the CEO, Human Resources Director and Board President and Vice President will determine the award winners. A recognition event will be held for recipients.

All recipients will also be assigned as a "reverse" mentor to a member of the senior management team. They will help provide insight to executives on the employee's perspective of Stone Belt. This mentor relationship will last for one year.

The scholarship program will award up to \$500 per applicant. The number of scholarships given will be contingent on the funds raised for the program.

Criteria for participation and eligible expenses will be developed as will an application process. If more applications are received than awards are available, Human Resources staff will constitute a review committee of impartial staff to evaluate which applicants should be awarded the scholarships.

donor spotlight

Education is key to change, says donor

Stone Belt donor Betty Underwood feels strongly that education is the key to helping communities understand more about persons living with developmental disabilities.

"We really need to get the word out that persons with developmental disabilities are valuable members of our society," she said. "It is important that we change the concept that many people have."

Underwood is a strong supporter of Stone Belt both personally and financially. She has generously contributed ideas and funding to the organization for over 10 years. Some donations have been general while others have gone towards specific projects including new landscaping for Southern House group home. It is with the help of people like Underwood that Stone Belt is able to grow and offer more opportunities to its clients.

Underwood became involved in Stone Belt in 1994 when her granddaughter Betsy Higgins moved from Kokomo to Bloomington to live with her father David Higgins. Upon her arrival, Betsy immediately got involved with Stone Belt Day Services programming. She utilized Employment Services to find work in the community at TIS College Bookstore (a job she still holds today) and Manufacturing Services to work at Stone Belt while not at TIS.

At first Betsy lived with her dad in town, but after a few years of this arrangement she decided she wanted to become more independent. Betsy thought she could achieve this by moving into a Stone Belt group home. This news was met with hesitation by Underwood.

"I resisted a bit at first when I heard she was thinking about a group home. I asked her why she wanted to move when she was comfortable with her father in a house where she had her own bedroom, bathroom and study," said Underwood. "She just kept saying she wanted to become more independent."

It was at this time that Underwood's involvement with Stone Belt really began. "I came down and visited



Betty Underwood with her granddaughter Betsy Higgins. Underwood believes that educating others about the lives of persons with developmental disabilities is one way to change the concept that many people have.

the group homes to see what they were all about. I was so impressed with what I saw."

She discovered that Stone Belt's group homes were more like living with family. Betsy would still have her own bedroom and a group of other clients with whom she could forge relationships. Underwood became a convert to group homes and Betsy moved into Southern House in 2003.

This is a decision that Underwood doesn't regret, "I'm so grateful for the atmosphere that exists at Southern House. The residents are free to express themselves and to grow. I feel confident that Betsy is getting the best training."

Since Betsy's move to residential living, Underwood has naturally taken more of an interest in learning about Stone Belt. She is pleased with the amount of growth, but is concerned about how recent cutbacks in government funding will hurt the organization.

"I wish I could just pile money into Stone Belt and say 'spend it!'" she said.

One program she is particularly interested in seeing grow is Stone Belt's new Career Advancement Services (CAS). The program is still in its early stages, but Underwood has expressed an interest in seeing computers

and software made available for program participants.

Underwood's idea to educate the community about the lives of those with developmental disabilities isn't a new one. Her granddaughter Betsy Higgins has recently become active traveling around the State giving speeches on what it is like to be a person with developmental disabilities. She talks about her rich life and challenges people to take a harder look about their ideas about persons living with developmental disabilities.

"When Betsy speaks, it gives people a whole different perspective," said Underwood. "I would love to see Stone Belt start something like this where clients can travel to schools, service groups and other places to educate the community, answer questions and make a connection."

Underwood encourages others to get involved, contribute and to form a connection with Stone Belt in any way they can. "Stone Belt enables so many people to reach their potential where otherwise they wouldn't be able to. It is people helping people. Stone Belt is right there on the cutting edge," she said.

■ If you would like to learn more about giving to Stone Belt contact CEO Leslie Green at 812-332-2168, ext. 249 or email lgreen@stonebelt.org.

construction project

New circle driveway makes 10th Street building

Stone Belt 10th Street has finished a long construction phase with the completion of the Safety Project.

The project features a new circle driveway at the North side of the building and includes new facades for the side cafeteria and warehouse walls. Construction started in July and the project finished in January.

The project became known as the Safety Project because it will make client drop-off and pick-up more secure. Traffic was often dangerous in and out of that area at the beginning and end of the day. This project is two-fold to solve these safety concerns. It creates a one way traffic flow which will allow for a safer and larger drop-off point than before. It also features a larger covered area for clients' protection in times of rain and snow.

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

"We have had such great feedback on the new entrance by clients and staff. It is definitely more safe for all," said Brad Galin, Stone Belt Director of Human Resources who oversaw the project.



Phase one of the Safety Project involved tearing up old concrete that was in the area. A bulldozer assisted in this task.



In the before picture of the area the old garages were replaced with new windows.

staff spotlight

Susan Russ sets her sights on Stone Belt East

Eight years ago Susan Russ sat in a meeting where she volunteered to provide needed services to a handful of clients in Columbus. Little did she know at the time, that this would grow into a full-time job.

Russ was recently named Director of Stone Belt East Day Services. She moved into this position due to the large amount of growth in the Bartholomew, Jackson and Jennings county areas. Russ will oversee Stone Belt's two day services programs, one located in Columbus and the other in Seymour.

"I am so happy about this new position," she said. "I love these areas. I've already bonded with so many people including the staff, clients, their families and many community members. It's great to be able to focus on those programs full-time."

Russ is a 12-year veteran of Stone Belt. She has held several positions within the organization including, Employment Consultant, Team Leader, Marketing and Training Coordinator and her most recent position, Assistant Director of EPR. Before coming to Stone Belt Russ held positions at IU and the City of Bloomington to name a few.

"I've had a lot of jobs in my lifetime," she said. "When I came to work at Stone Belt I felt everything I had done up to that point was leading me here; like it was home."

This homey sort of feeling is one of the things that Russ loves the most about working at Stone Belt even today. She said Stone Belt is one of those places where you can't be unhappy for too long when you walk in the door. "Everyone is always glad to see you," she said.

For now Russ is settling into life at her main Columbus office. She lives in Bloomington and makes the 45-minute commute daily. She doesn't mind the drive because she's been doing it on and off for over eight years. She has a new office in Columbus, but drives to Seymour a few times a week.

She has spent the early days of her transition getting to know everyone at Stone Belt East. "I've been going to conferences for clients. I want to learn everything about them and have them get to know me," she said.

Russ has jumped right into her new position, having already implemented a creative solution to solving an East work shift dilemma. She has created a new shift in which staff will work from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the day program and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in a supported living setting.

"I'm so excited about this. We've just started this new shift and I hope it will be a bridge builder among the two departments. It will allow staff to know more about different jobs at Stone Belt instead of just their particular program," said Russ.

Other long-term goals that Russ has for Stone Belt East day services include: developing in the area of transition services with Columbus High School, increasing participants in the Day Services and the Employment Programs and to continue making community connections.

"I definitely see Stone Belt East day services growing. I know that there are clients out there that need our services more and more, especially in the wake of the recent funding cuts. We offer cost effective, high-quality services," said Russ.

✉ If you would like to learn more about Stone Belt East Day Services call Susan Russ at 812-376-7149, ext. 25 or email sruss@stonebelt.org.



ICDS spotlight

Setting goals: A recipe for success

By Lyrna Siklóssy Schoon

Stone Belt Family Support Specialist

Kristin Hash (21), mother of Alazaya Nicole Hash (16 months), has been part of the Healthy Families program for the past two years. Hash's Family Support Specialist (FSS), Lyrna Siklóssy Schoon, said she has been a model participant of the program. "Kristin wants to be the best mom that she can be. She works very hard to accomplish this goal."

Healthy Families Indiana, a voluntary home visiting program for new parents, is a strategy for strengthening families and promoting healthy child outcomes. Many services are provided including child development, access to health care and parent education.

When Hash isn't taking care of her daughter, she spends time working or hanging out with friends and family. She has been employed by Taco Bell for over four years and is a dedicated employee, accepting shifts all hours of the day. While she is at work, Alazaya's great-grandparents provide childcare for "Alli." Hash said she feels lucky to have the support of family in raising her daughter.

Hash and her FSS develop Individualized Family Support Plans every six months. Hash has set a variety of goals from spending time daily to play with and to read to her child, to setting up checking and savings accounts for both herself and her daughter. "Setting goals every few months has helped me reach what I want to do. We set up steps that make the process easier," said Hash. Recently, she set language development goals for Alazaya. They use a lot of sign language, because Hash wants her daughter to be able to express herself with greater ease.

When asked about her proudest moment as a mom, Hash said that she enjoys helping her daughter reach developmental milestones. She said Healthy Families has provided her with "access to a lot of interesting information about children and their development." She went on to say that she would not hesitate to recommend the program to friends who have children. Going to the monthly parent group meetings hosted by Stone Belt's Infant and Child Developmental Services has been a popular activity for both mom and toddler. "I try not to miss the parent group meetings because I like them best," said Hash. "It gives me a chance to meet other parents and also allows the children to play together."

With the support of her FSS, Hash has attended play groups at the various Family Resource Centers in the community and at the Monroe County Public Library. She continues the work with the assistance of her family and her boyfriend, Tim Mobley. Hash also brings Alazaya to the library and grocery store at least once a week in order to provide a variety of experiences in different environments.

"Working with Kristin, Alazaya and their extended family has been a pleasure," said Schoon. "Kristin, with the support of her family, works hard to provide a safe and healthy foundation for Alazaya's growth. It is always a great feeling to leave a family's home and know that they will continue the work until the next visit. If Kristin sets her mind on a goal, I know she will be successful."

✉ For more information about Stone Belt's Infant and Child Developmental Services (ICDS) department and the Healthy Families program please contact Director Shirley Stumpner at 812-323-4631, ext. 240 or email sstumpne@stonebelt.org.



Building safer during drop-offs and pick-ups



The old warehouse wall is visible. The concrete facade and concrete facade.



The completed circle driveway entrance. The awning is in place to protect clients in times of inclement weather.



The circle driveway entrance is pictured during the busy 4 p.m. pick-up. Vans are assigned an arrival time to help organize traffic flow.

“The Ringer” turns ‘laughing at’ into ‘laughing with’

By Don Oldenburg
Washington Post Staff Writer
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In the first half-hour of the new Farrelly brothers comedy, “The Ringer,” words like “retard” and “feeb” are freely tossed about as a man persuades his nephew Steve to pretend to be mentally disabled so as to easily win the gold in the Special Olympics.

Audiences will laugh, perhaps nervously, guiltily. And that discomfort you feel laughing at it? The fidgeting, the guilt? All part of the plan.

And here is where you would normally place your bets on how quickly the people who run the Special Olympics would unleash a mighty indignation on behalf of those now called the intellectually disabled and immediately begin issuing press releases demanding an apology.

But you’d lose that bet.

The Special Olympics gives “The Ringer” five thumbs up! The group’s official endorsement came out weeks ago. (The National Association for Down Syndrome has also given its assent.) Almost from the start, Special Olympics International made an unlikely deal with the Farrellys to assist this most unusual and ambitious comedy — under certain conditions. It was two years of negotiations between the Special Olympics and the filmmakers before a single frame was shot.

“The risk of failing was enormous, but the upside of succeeding was even bigger,” says Special Olympics Chairman Timothy Shriver.

Shriver is the son of Sargent and Eunice Kennedy Shriver — part of the Kennedy clan. His mother, Eunice, inspired by her intellectually disabled sister, Rosemary, founded the Special Olympics in 1968.

Shriver is counting on the movie to accelerate public acceptance and understanding of people with intellectual disabilities. But a lowbrow pratfall could set back the Special Olympics’ great strides.

“This is a movement that people have come to trust over many, many years as being a safe place for the best of human values, a safe place for the best of human spirit . . . without humiliation, without denigration of children or adults, a place where you could come no matter who you were or what you do or how well you do it and feel accepted and welcome,” he says. “So if you run around and decide to have a little fun on the set with the Farrelly brothers and throw that down the tubes, you made a big mistake.”

He doesn’t think he’s made a mistake.

The Farrellys’ intent all along, Shriver says, was to make a comedy that alters the perception of intellectual disabilities. “The risk was that you would start out with the ridicule moments, with the mockery, and have it not succeed in transforming into respect and humanization,” he says. “And it would just stay at the level of trite humor.”

So why risk at all? “Sixty percent of Americans say they don’t want a child with special needs at their child’s school,” Shriver replies, doling out statistics: Worldwide, an “infinitesimal percentage” of people with

“People with disabilities do have some struggles, but they also have a great deal of joy in their lives. This movie brings that to light.”

— Leslie Green, Stone Belt CEO



Stone Belt clients Bobby Pate and Cheryl Downs attended a screening of “The Ringer” with several other Stone Belt clients and staff members. Pate said he didn’t think the movie poked fun at people with disabilities. “Just the opposite,” he said. “I think it made fun of the rest of the people in the movie.” Downs particularly enjoyed the character of Jimmy Washington, an arrogant, six-time Special Olympics winner who arrives at the competition in a limousine with a fawning entourage. “I’ve never seen anyone like that at Special Olympics,” she said. “But it was funny.”

intellectual disabilities get an education, a large percentage are institutionalized, a larger percentage are unemployed. “Most don’t have friends, live lonely, depressed and isolated lives,” he says.

The Pitch

In the fall of 2000, when Peter Farrelly first telephoned him, Shriver hadn’t seen any of the brothers’ movies. He had somehow missed the hair-gel gag in “There’s Something About Mary” and the diarrhea scene in “Dumb and Dumber.”

But Shriver knew the brothers regularly wrote disabled characters into their films and often used intellectually disabled actors.

“Peter approached us and said, ‘I want to figure out how to take this thing on head-on and I think I’ve got a great script for doing it,’” recalls Shriver, who also knew the Farrellys had been participating for years in Best Buddies, a non-profit program his younger brother, Anthony Shriver, founded in 1987 to partner volunteers with intellectually disabled people. It’s where the brothers befriended Scott Gasbarro, who became a regular companion and appeared in small roles in their films.

“What always bothered me is that any time there’s been a movie with intellectual disabilities, it was sad,” Peter said. “All the time I hung out with my guy, Scott, I don’t remember ever being sad. I remember laughing, him joking and me joking. I felt like nobody ever captured the fun side of being

with somebody with intellectual disabilities.”

He loved the concept screenwriter Ricky Blitt pitched at the Farrellys’ production company. But 20th Century Fox, and later Fox Searchlight, required that before they invested \$15 million in the movie, the Farrellys had to get the endorsement of the Special Olympics.

After a breakfast meeting with Peter Farrelly, Shriver began scribbling notes on the script. He rented all of the brothers’ movies and quickly learned what he was up against. The Farrellys made comedies that were juvenile, inappropriate, contained four-letter words and bad behavior. And they were funny.

But the bottom line was they didn’t ridicule or mock the people society so often dehumanizes. They took characters who get their butts kicked by reality day after day, and include them — which is what most people don’t do.

Shriver was particularly taken with the Farrellys’ 2001 film “Shallow Hal,” despite its potential for poking fun at obesity. “The whole question of all of a sudden feeling like you are connecting with someone on the inside,” he says. “When I saw that, I was sold.”

Shriver hopes audiences embrace an intellectually disabled actor like Eddie Barbanell, a Florida Special Olympian who’s in the movie. “We ought to be good enough for you to look at Eddie and say, ‘He’s cool. . . . It would be fun to hang out with those guys!’ So that’s what we set out

to do,” Shriver says.

But the Special Olympics board of directors still had to be convinced. In March 2001, Peter Farrelly and producer Bradley Thomas traveled to Anchorage, location of the Special Olympics World Winter Games, where more than 1,800 athletes from 70 nations competed. They met with the board. Farrelly recalls seeing fear in the eyes of half the board, support from the other half.”

“To them, I’m just some guy from Hollywood, and that’s not who you want to put your trust in,” he says.

Script Negotiations

It would be another two years of talking before the cameras rolled.

Tim Shriver and others pored over the script versions, red-lining bad language, raising sensitivity issues, balking at technicalities. He recruited Special Olympics athletes and their families to weigh in. “There were language issues,” he said. Like immediate objections to the early “retard” references. “They wanted them cut,” says Peter Farrelly, who defended the putdowns as the whole point.

“By the end of the movie, they’ve become people, not retards,” he says. “That’s when Steve’s uncle calls them ‘tards and Steve says, ‘Don’t ever say that word to me again. They’re my friends!’ We did say we wouldn’t use that word excessively.”

Some pejorative stayed with Special Olympics blessings. “A whole lot of things can happen to people in the first half-hour,” Shriver says. “Ya know — who is this uncle and is what he’s saying funny or not? And if it is funny, should I be laughing? Or is this the kind of thing I can laugh about when I’m only with my friends and we make retard jokes, but I shouldn’t be laughing about it in a theater full of people? And what’s that about?”

“So there’s some degree of conflict. But that’s all out there, so why should we go around pretending it isn’t?”

Even after the script was complete, the Special Olympics board was still nervous that the Farrellys might add something objectionable during shooting, when scenes can change and actors may ad-lib. Shriver asked for 100 percent sign-off. “They were afraid,” Peter says.

“So we gave them a Special Olympic person on the set every day all the time. We were going to be winging it and adding stuff, but anything that we put in that was not in the script, they had the option of cutting. Nothing got cut.”

The Litmus Test

So far, post-production appraisals have been a lovefest. Barry Blaustein, who directed the movie and auditioned 600 intellectually disabled people for parts in the film, says, “It’s empowering to anyone who has ever felt different.”

Johnny Knoxville, who was cast not only for his acting abilities but for the audience he’d bring to the movie — a younger MTV crowd — says making the film changed his own perceptions: “I’d never hung out with any intellectually challenged people before. The experience made me look at them 100 percent differently.”

volunteer spotlight

Sorority deserves much gratitude

For those whose knowledge of Greek is limited to phrases like “the alpha male” and “delta ray,” understanding the many Greek philanthropic organizations is confusing.

All community Greek organizations, to varying degrees, are involved with charitable activities. One of these local chapters of note is Kappa Kappa Sigma.

The sorority is composed of women ranging from young professionals to senior citizens. The group meets once a month and gathers in members' homes to discuss how to raise funds for those in need. Kappa Kappa Sigma is not affiliated with the Indiana University Greek system.

Kappa Kappa Sigma has been volunteering at Stone Belt since 1979. The parents of two Stone Belt clients, Michael Murphy and Bob Smith (who are still clients today) were members of the sorority and mentioned Stone Belt might be a good place to volunteer. Since then Kappa Kappa Sigma has hosted two annual events for Stone Belt clients including a summer picnic and holiday party. The group also gives a monetary donation to be used as Stone Belt's needs dictate. One year the funds were used to purchase a Hoyer lift to assist the restroom mobility needs of persons with physical disabilities.

“We are so grateful to the ladies of Kappa Kappa Sigma. They generously give their time to make life better for Stone Belt's clients,” said Bitta DeWees, Director of Monroe County Day Services.

One of the reasons the summer picnic



Kappa Kappa Sigma member Marion Incollingo passes out holiday goodies to Stone Belt client Brenda Ikerd. The Kappa Kappa Sigma sorority hosts two annual events at Stone Belt including a summer picnic and christmas party featuring an appearance by Santa Claus.

and Christmas parties are successful is because of the contributions from sorority members as well as their husbands. For the picnic the husbands cook hundreds of hot dogs on a grill and at Christmas there is always someone available to play “Santa.”

During this year's Christmas party all clients were given a bag of goodies which included home-made cookies. Sorority member Patty Gibbs said the group spent a

week making dozens of cookies for the clients.

Marion Incollingo, Kappa Kappa Sigma member, said visiting Stone Belt is one of her favorite events. “I love to watch the clients. No matter what, they are always having so much fun. There is no group that seems more appreciative or makes us feel more welcome,” she said.

Through the years Stone Belt has honored Kappa Kappa Sigma for its

contributions to the organization. In 2004 the sorority was named Volunteer of the Year at Stone Belt's annual meeting.

A group of 10 ladies founded Kappa Kappa Sigma in Indianapolis in 1919. The sorority grew and there are currently six active chapters in the state of Indiana.

Bloomington's Iota chapter of Kappa Kappa Sigma was established in 1927. Its goal is to “promote social welfare and create a higher standard among women.” The 2006 membership roster lists 31 active status members who donate their time and talents to the continued success of the sorority.

Some of the money that is raised each year by the active chapters is used to support one of the National Projects. The projects rotate from year to year and include: muscular dystrophy, leukemia, mental health, breast cancer and heart disease. On a local level, the sorority supports Stone Belt, the Shalom Center, Girls and Boys Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Area 10 Agency on Aging, Community Kitchen, Girls Inc., and Middleway House to name a few.

Over the years the sorority has changed with the times to find successful and interesting ways to raise money to support their on-going projects. The group's annual garage sale has been one of its major fundraisers for the past 30 years. Other events include a fashion show luncheon. Some ongoing activities include the sale of Abbott's caramels, candy bars, bagged pecans and gift cards for local grocery stores.

volunteer spotlight

Cook group brings holiday cheer

This holiday season a group of ladies at Cook, Inc., a Bloomington-based developer of health care devices, sponsored Stone Belt's Maxwell House group home to be the recipient of Christmas gifts.

“Angie's Group” consists of about 20 women who work at Cook. This year the group decided that instead of doing a gift exchange amongst themselves, they would spend their own money and buy presents for the children of Maxwell House.

Maxwell House is one of Stone Belt's two Group Homes for children. There are six children at Maxwell, one girl and five boys, that range in age from 13 to 19.

Maxwell House was notified that they would be receiving these gifts in October. House staff were then asked to assist the children in writing out their Christmas lists. The lists were then forwarded on to the Cook employees.

The employees split up the children's Christmas lists among the group and spent the days leading up to Christmas shopping. Then they came to Maxwell House to help distribute the gifts. Read on to find out more about the day.

.....

By Beth Richardson
Maxwell House Manager

On behalf of the children and staff at Maxwell House I would like to share with you our special day.

Just a few days before Christmas a



Sheena Abbs, Maxwell House's only female resident, is given a Christmas gift by a Cook employee and member of “Angie's Group.” Members of the group purchased gifts for Maxwell House residents and visited the house to pass out the gifts.

very kind and generous group of smiling ladies from Cook, Inc. came to Maxwell House for a Christmas party. The door bell rang and as we opened the door, they appeared with their arms full of beautifully wrapped Christmas presents for all of the children.

The ladies arrived with warm smiles and excitement written across their faces. It was obvious that they had put forth a

lot of thought and energy as they prepared for the party and that they felt great about their efforts.

Presents were excitedly passed out to all the children by the ladies. They also spent one-on-one time with each individual child. To top it off, the women did not choose just one gift item from the child's Christmas list, they seemed to have gotten them everything

they asked for. Some gifts included new clothes, movies, a jumbo sized keyboard, posters for their rooms, Spider-Man items, cologne, Teddy Bears, flashlights, brushes and hair ties, lotion, bath items, markers, colored paper, cause/effect toys, action figures and brand new Cook t-shirts.

The children were thrilled beyond words. The warmth and compassion we saw coming from the ladies' interactions with the children touched us beyond words. The gratitude that my staff and I felt was immense. No words could describe how much we appreciated everything these ladies did for the children.

Before they left the ladies gave the house one more surprise. Earlier in the day our clothes dryer stopped working. This was unexpected and since it was not in our planned budget for the year we had to cut something else from the budget in order to purchase a new dryer. One of the items we had to cut was arts and crafts supplies. As the ladies were leaving one of them came to me with a big bag of items for the house. I looked down in the bag and it was full of arts and crafts supplies. Somehow the ladies knew just what we needed.

The Cook, Inc., Maxwell House Christmas party was a special day for us all. All the children and staff at Maxwell thank Cook, Inc. very much for their generosity.

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



what
 5K Run/Walk and
 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk

where
 Stone Belt, 2815 East Tenth
 Street, Bloomington, IN

when
 Saturday, April 29.
 Check-in and event day
 registration starts at 7:30 a.m.
 Fun Run begins at 9 a.m.
 and 5K begins at 10 a.m.

awards
 For the 5K, awards will be
 given to the top finisher,
 male and female in each
 age group. Fun Run/Walk
 participants will receive
 ribbons. Door prizes will be
 drawn after the race.

age groups
 5K Age Groups: 0-13,
 14-19, 20-29, 30-39,
 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70+

questions?
 If you have any questions
 or need more information
 please contact Kyong Ge
 Williams at 812-332-2168,
 ext. 285 or email
 kwilliam@stonebelt.org.

registration form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Age _____ Sex _____

T-shirt size (circle one): S M L XL XXL
 (T-shirts will be given to all pre-registered entrants with a limited number available on race day)

Referred to event by (circle one):
 Family Friend Client Radio Newspaper Sponsor Website Other

- I will be participating in (mark one):
- 5K Run (\$15 pre-registered, \$17 day of the event)
 - 5K Walk (\$15 pre-registered, \$17 day of the event)
 - 1 Mile Fun Run/Walk (\$10 pre-registered or day of the event)
 - I can not participate, but would like to sponsor a Stone Belt client for \$_____.
 - I would like to make an additional donation in the amount of \$_____.

Total amount enclosed \$_____.

Payment method (circle one): VISA MASTERCARD CHECK (payable to Stone Belt)

Name on Card _____ Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

Mail form and payment to:
 Stone Belt Attn: Run With Me 2815 East Tenth Street Bloomington, IN 47408
 Fax: 812-323-4610 (credit card registration) • Phone: 812-332-2168 (phone registration)

WAIVER: I waive and release any and all rights, claims and damages against any sponsors, race directors and Stone Belt for any injuries suffered during this event. I understand the risks of running this race. If I am under 18 years of age, I understand that I must have my parent/guardian's signature in order to participate.

Entrant's or Parent/Guardian's Signature _____



In January Stone Belt finished the "Safety Project" a new circular driveway and covered entrance on the North side of its 10th Street building in Bloomington. To learn more and view pictures from the construction see Page 4.

RUN WITH ME 5K
 Start training now! Stone Belt to host
 5K fund-raiser on Saturday, April 29.
page 1

VALENTINE'S DAY SURPRISE
 Stone Belt clients deliver hand-made
 Valentines to the Indiana State House.
page 3

DONOR SPOTLIGHT
 Betty Underwood believes education
 builds connections with the community.
page 4

CHRISTMAS CHEER
 An area business and sorority bring
 holiday cheer to clients.
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.