Lost & Found
A client and his dad reconnect through the Internet. page 1

Congratulations
Valuable partners recognized at Awards Celebration. page 4

Meet the Board
Who is the Stone Belt Board and what do they do? page 6

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 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to participate fully in the life of the community.
Stone Belt client reconnects with family with the help of the Internet

After more than a decade of near isolation from his biological family, Brandon Ramos has reconnected with his father, thanks to the Internet and his Stone Belt community.

Following the divorce of his parents, Brandon lost touch with his father, who had relocated across the country. Brandon was just 10 years old when he came to live in Stone Belt's Deckard Group Home. His childhood was marred by the strained relationship with local family and the disconnection from his father that left him emotionally isolated. Despite this, he maintained a strong connection to his Stone Belt community, which was his lifeline and kept him from feeling entirely out of his control.

Throughout his life, Brandon has wrestled with questions about his absent family. "Brandon's lack of contact with his father was a source of major grief for him," said Stone Belt social worker Mary McKinney. "The open-ended questions in his mind about why his father was no longer in his life haunted him and kept him from feeling settled in his current life."

Brandon craves a true family connection to help him understand himself and his place in the world. His advocate, Kari Brock, shared, "Brandon has wanted contact with his father for a long time. He wanted to find out who he was." Stone Belt staff worked to ensure Brandon was comfortable with his new family, and he eventually visited his father's extended family.

"Initially Brandon's father was reluctant to have contact because he was scared Brandon would be upset if it didn't work, and he had reason to believe that there was a possibility that it might not," said Mary. "He was afraid that he was going to lose touch with Brandon again. He wanted to keep Brandon from feeling this loss when he first found out. Brandon was just 10 years old when he first found out."

On May 15, 2010, Brandon's family drove from North Carolina to reconnect with him in person. For the first time in over 10 years, Brandon was reunited with his father, step-mother, sister and great aunt. Brandon had not seen his father in 10 years. "At the end of the visit, everyone said that they were happy to have reconnected with Brandon."

Since then, Brandon and his father have maintained weekly contact by phone and over the Internet. Through Facebook, they often share photographs of recent life events and play Web-based video games. Brandon's Advocate, Kari, said, "On Facebook, Brandon has been a great motivator for Brandon. He gets his work done quickly so he can talk with his dad and see the latest family updates."

The individuals closest to Brandon have seen a meaningful improvement in his outlook on life now that he found the family connection that he craved. He now has an answer to his lifelong questions about who he is.

There are many families of individuals with disabilities that have experienced separation. However, Brandon's story shows that reconnection is possible and there is hope for desperate families still searching for their lost loved ones.

If you are searching for a lost loved one, the Internet now offers a plethora of resources. One to consider is The ArcLink's relative-search database that has fostered more than 100 reunions. The ArcLink was started by former Stone Belt Executive Director, Elbert Johns. For more information, visit www.thearclink.org/findfamily.
quarterly donors
Stone Belt sincerely appreciates all our generous donors from July 1 through August 31, 2010. We are grateful for their continued support.

DONORS (July 1 – August 31, 2010)
Mr. Gilbert Christian Church, Edward & Mary Lou Dilling, Donald & Caroline Snyder
EXECUTIVE LEVEL GIFTS ($1,000 – $2,999)
ADVOCATE LEVEL GIFTS ($500 – $999)

Celebrating Success
Our Annual Celebration, held in August, is now again a flavored event which celebrates the achievements of clients, staff, volunteers and community partners. If you are interested in serving as a board or committee member, please get in touch with Leslie Green or visit our website.

Upcoming events
September 2 – October 31
Stone Belt Art Exhibit @ the Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center
Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center (122 S Waldron Street, Bloomington)
Works by Stone Belt client artists will be displayed in the Flashlight Gallery on the 3rd floor, as part of the Arts Center grand re-opening. All of the gallery spaces throughout the building will feature different artists. The exhibit will appear from September 2 through October 31. Also included in the exhibit will be information about the Flashlight Gallery and the Arts Center grand re-opening.

October 1 & November 19
Accessing Disability Resources Seminar
Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center (122 S Waldron Street, Bloomington)
This is the third in a series of educational learning opportunities for those accessing disability resources for a lifetime of success. Free and open to all. For more information, go to www.stonebelt.org.

November 19: 10 am & 5:30 pm
Stone Belt Client Art @ the Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center
Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center (122 S Waldron Street, Bloomington)
Current works displayed in the Flashlight Gallery on the 3rd floor, as part of the Arts Center grand re-opening. All of the gallery spaces throughout the building will feature different clients. The exhibit will appear from September 2 through October 31. Also included in the exhibit will be information about the Flashlight Gallery and the Arts Center grand re-opening. Works will be displayed in the Flashlight Gallery on the 3rd floor.

New Features @ www.stonebelt.org
In an effort to keep our newsletter fresh and relevant, we have made some changes. We will post new content on our website for Stone Belt. If you would like to share your newsletter or request it in an accessible format contact Communications Manager Cheryl Paul at 812-332-2168, ext. 261 / cpaul@stonebelt.org.

Leadership & Additions
Stone Belt has recently seen several changes and additions to the Management Team at Stone Belt. Our mission is to provide life-sustaining support for people with disabilities in order to ensure a lifetime of success. Free and open to all.石南快本红来

Dancing With The Celebrities Raises $5,000.00
The final numbers are in! After selling all door donations from the past spring’s “Dancing With The Celebrities” event, Stone Belt is happy to announce that Stone Belt raised more than $5,000.00 in support programs across the Annual Fund. These dollars are earned in helping the agency sustain its mission of providing excellence in disability services. Stone Belt once again expresses tremendous appreciation to all of our celebrity dancers and their families, – Monica, one of the cyclists and at least one student at Indiana University, who continues to enjoy interacting with individuals with disabilities. “It was the honor of their stories and learning about their abilities – not just the disabilities that society tends to focus on.”

There have recently been several changes and additions to the Management Team at Stone Belt. Our goal is to professionally organize our leadership structure in order to most effectively utilize available talents and resources. Stone Belt, which has been the Director for the East and South regions, will continue to oversee programs in the South, and will also be beginning the Lifelong Learning program in the Central Region. Stone Belt recently made the exciting decision to move in education of programs for individuals with disabilities. Formerly known as Life Skills Enrichment, our programs will be named Family Learning. The leadership of the agency believes that the move to the new title reflects the agency’s mission and values of promoting self-determination and empowerment. Stone Belt has been and remains a very special place.

Our mission also denotes the importance of working in partnership with the community. Now more than ever, our success as an organization is greatly enhanced through our many collaborative partnerships. This includes those with United Way, The Arts of Indiana and Indiana University. We are especially grateful for their continued support. As we look forward to this year’s Art Exhibit, we look forward to the continued strong showing of our Annual Celebration!

You can now view our online report (see page 2), which highlights many of the success stories of our past year. We urge you to look back over the past 12 months, but also forward to this upcoming year and to see your accomplishments through the eyes of Stone Belt. We anticipate more growth in our supported living program and significant growth of all programs. We continue to work hard to improve our efficiency and continue our supportive and highly collaborative working relationship with our community partners. Our success is the result of hard work and teamwork of all involved.

As we look forward, we are excited to share with you several major partnerships that are making a difference for all.

Welcome to the Fall 2010 edition of Touchstone. We will work hard to make certain that success is always celebrated.

Leslie Green, Chief Executive Officer
civic engagement
Service learning benefits everyone

Service learning is an integral part of Stone Belt’s community engagement efforts. By partnering between a nonprofit, university faculty and academic students, service learning not only important to course content and student experience, but service learning is a method of shifting learning and living to help peers and communities. The following are a few examples of meaningful service through the community. Service learning is a new model for engagement, creating self-directed learning experiences and strengthens communities for the common good.

Stone Belt is focused on being a considered a prime mover in the service learning activities in the Bloomington community, forming the foundation of a strong and meaningful service throughout the community. There are two types of service learning activities that take place at Stone Belt: direct service based in service and project-based activities. Direct service activities include a minor re-designing of a student’s academic work, focusing on real-world problem solving, and implementations of an added physical activity component.

Recruitment classes from the IU School of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Throughout the fall semester, students and graduate students interested in receiving a course credit for their participation in service learning within our agency. Service learning is the commitment that those involved in our community to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students.

Thank you for all your do to insure that Stone Belt remains at the forefront of the field, implementing substantive programs in the areas of consumer, community engagement, and client services. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students.

community engagement roundup
Making a difference

Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students.

Thanks You For Building Community
Our entire community is stronger when everyone is given the opportunity to participate. For over a century, Stone Belt has provided many important advancements for people with developmental disabilities. We are honored to present Stone Belt’s annual volunteer awards to our clients who are doing an outstanding job in the community.

Empowered Learning Series
Stone Belt is pleased to introduce our new Empowered Learning Series. The series is focused on helping students to prepare, empower, and support individuals and families who fully participate in the life of the community.

At a time when the state Disability Medicaid budget is a major challenge for many states, the program is designed to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Each one of us has skills, talents, and interests that contribute to building our community a better place.

Empowerment is a fundamental part of adult life. Our adult clients are often the leaders of their own lives. They are the voice of the disabled individual, the art of the calm, the touch of theicolor. Stone Belt’s mission is to inspire those around them, has made exceptional contributions toward the leadership agenda and has gone above the call of duty.

Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students. Thank you for all your do to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students.
When I first learned of my daughter's diagnosis of Down Syndrome, I expected my response was not unlike that of many parents of a child with a disability — intense emotions ranging from the pain of watching a child to live a life limited by disability to acompaniting the unexpected. I expected mounting stress and anxiety to consume me. But that was not the case for me. I found myself feeling much more at peace than I ever thought possible. I knew I could not get used to this. After all, I thought, not only my natural values, focusing all my focus on the future, became energized by a new view on my daughter’s needs.

Yet, it was not long before my vision broadened to include others who were trying to manage many of the same challenges. I wanted to get connected, so I began volunteering with a local parent group, attending seminars, contacting foundations about disability issues, and joining smaller groups. It was by an email I learned that I began to lead the Arc of Indiana. In September of 2000, I became a Family Advocate for the Arc of Indiana, and my 20-year-old son, David, was one of the first people I met.

Now, with one year of experience behind me, I can say that I truly love what I do. Through the lens of a family advocate, I see opportunities nearly every day to walk alongside families and help them navigate the ever-changing landscape of services. I want people with disabilities to be heard, to be seen, and to be taken seriously.

For over fifty years, The Arc of Indiana and agencies such as Stone Belt have been the driving force behind the vision of a brighter future for people of all abilities. While we are fortunate that we are here, we also know that the journey is not done. Stone Belt is always evolving as we strive to meet the needs of those we serve.

Looking forward: Building Pathways to Empowerment

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

By Barry Lessow

Monroe County United Way Executive Director

United Way lives by the notion we call Live United. To create opportunity for the people in this community, like you and me, United Way believes everyone needs a good education, earning, and essentials. With your help, United Way can invest in a 24-hour certificate program, stone belt, as well as collaborative initiatives that help local residents make lasting improvements in their lives.

Making a pledge to the United Way Campaign is easy! Call or email their office for a pledge card, or download one from their website. Once you’ve filled it out, simply mail or fax it back to their office.

Create Opportunity with Your Donation to United Way!

When you donate to the United Way Campaign, you are helping create opportunity for people in Monroe County. As we know at Stone Belt, the entire community wins when individuals succeed, our neighbors are financially stable, and families are strengthened. To create that opportunity, United Way focuses resources on the building blocks for a better life — education, earning, and essentials. With your help, United Way can invest in a 24-hour certificate program, stone belt, as well as collaborative initiatives that help local residents make lasting improvements in their lives.

Looking forward: Building Pathways to Empowerment

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.

For people seeking employment support, or to trained educational advocates for families faced with special education challenges, or to independent living centers for people with disabilities, we need to make sure that they have the resources to plan for their financial future of their child with a disability by providing information about The Arc of Indiana Master Trust.

But I believe that my work involves far more than merely being a knowledgeable resource. When all the paperwork is finished, the phone calls made, and the referrals complete, it is all well and good to feel that we have done our best. But I hope that they will also leave with a new sense of empowerment, with a new sense of their rights, and of what they can expect from the system and the community. And that we can all work together to build the “pathways to empowerment” campaign.
Lost & Found
A client and his dad reconnect through the Internet.

Congratulations
Valuable partners recognized at Awards Celebration.

Meet the Board
Who is the Stone Belt Board and what do they do?

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 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to participate fully in the life of the community.

The Stone Belt EMPOWERED LEARNING SERIES
ACCESSING DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR A LIFETIME OF SUCCESS

Thursday, November 18
Indiana University Innovation Center
2719 East 10th Street, Bloomington

Learn about supports that exist for individuals throughout their lifespan.
Understand when and how connections should be made to fully utilize resources.
Hear from experts representing early intervention, school age, adult and behavioral health programs.

www.stonebelt.org

SPACE IS LIMITED. This event will proceed only if we meet the minimum number of registrants. If necessary, a space fee for the venue will be charged. If there are questions about the series, contact the Stone Belt Community Engagement Department @ 812-332-2168, ext. 269 / communityengagement@stonebelt.org

Stone Belt presents news & information for individuals with disabilities, families, friends and our community.