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Stone Belt Celebrates the 20th Anniversary of the ADA.

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Stone Belt, DeVane win local community fundraising event.

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Budget Crunch
Six stories illustrate the variety of ways recent state budget cuts are impacting Stone Belt’s programming and clients.

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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.

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Twenty years ago this July, sweeping legislative reforms were passed at the national level to empower citizens of our country who have disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was the world’s first comprehensive declaration of equality for individuals with disabilities. It was a collaborative effort of Democrats, Republicans, the legislative and the executive branches, federal and state agencies, and people with and without disabilities.

When President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act in the presence of 3,000 people on the White House lawn on July 26, 1990, he created America’s commitment to full and equal opportunity for all of its citizens. The President’s emphatic directive on that day — “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down” — vividly encapsulated the simple yet long overdue message of the ADA. That millions of Americans with disabilities are full-fledged citizens and as such are entitled to legal protections that ensure them both equal opportunity and equal access to the mainstream of American life.

When President George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act in front of 3,000 people on the White House lawn on July 26, 1990, the event represented a historical benchmark and a milestone in America’s commitment to full and equal opportunity for all of its citizens.

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Today, under the ADA, at least one percent of the total seats must be established for wheelchair users and dispersed throughout the facility; they must provide a companion seat adjacent to such wheelchair (or in the case of fixed seating) that allows occupants with disabilities to enter, leave, and move freely; they must ensure that accessible seats are located near exits; accessible seating must be located near all concession stands, restrooms, automatic teller machines (ATMs), and other amenities.

In 2008, the ADA was amended in order to broaden the coverage of individuals with disabilities that had been narrowed by several Supreme Court decisions. The Amendment focuses on the discrimination at issue, rather than the individual’s disability. Language in the preamble was changed to emphasize that Congress intended to cover a broad range of persons with disabilities.

In the employment arena, a number of companies have found that hiring people with disabilities has helped improve the company’s performance. Many have indicated that they do not hire individuals with disabilities for altruistic reasons but rather in order to strengthen their workforce and the families of their employees.

“We are fortunate to have employers who understand that hiring individuals with disabilities makes good business sense, as well as helping individuals achieve independence and inclusion in the community and contribute to the workforce and economy,” said Daniel Grooman, Director of Employment Services for the City of Bloomington, who employs seven Stone Belt clients. “Many recognize that an individual’s skills and abilities define him or her as a good employee and asset to the organization.”

Bloomington has repeatedly been recognized as an accessible community. In 2008, the City was one of nine national finalists in the Accessible American Contest sponsored by the National Organization on Disability. The City’s Access for Community Accessibility (A4C) is an outreach effort to the public. The group’s primary priority is to educate community businesses and organizations about disabilities. They also offer services including a free review ofBlueprints and other planning documents for projects in the city. The work was used in the expansion of the Monroe County Public Library and the remodeling of the Indiana University Auditorium. Recently, City officials directed federal stimulus dollars to ensure community-wide accessible ramps to meet the requirements of the ADA.

As the ADA moves forward into its next 20 years, several new advocacy issues have emerged including the hot topic of visitability and accessibility in places of worship. Look to a future issue of Touchstone to explore these topics further. There is always work more to be done.

The ADA has made a difference in the lives of so many, but there are millions who still face barriers stemming from people’s attitudes. These barriers were constructed over generations, and it will take continued vigilance and dedication to remove them. Let us all work together to make our communities more inclusive, an effort that will enrich all of our lives. In the words of President George H.W. Bush on that July 26, 1990, “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.”
The power of positivity

Stone Belt South region clients in Disability & Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), Mallor, Clendening, Grodner & Bohrer; Don & Carol Anne Hossler; Betty Underwood; United Way Anonymous (1).

At the group’s first meeting on February 18 an election was held to select officers. The results are:

Mike McCleary, Treasurer and Robbie Huber Leslie Green

led Holloway on a emerging leaders is taking their cues from the large and highly successful Monroe County Self-Advocates. Both groups participate in local and state activities to learn how to speak for themselves and to advocate for others who are unable to do so.

While we cope with budget adversity, we also remain forward-facing and challenge ourselves to change. We support The Arc of Indiana’s Building Pathways to Empowerment campaign. Through this campaign we will help others to see ways to provide people with needed assistance and support. The pathway to self-advocacy is long and the arc can seem distant but the rewards are innumerable.

The Stone Belt board has demonstrated tremendous support to the organization in these turbulent times. Though space is limited occasionally board members have taken the initiative to meet and be involved in crucial issues. One board member, Doug Boes, has demonstrated leadership by volunteering his time to ensure the organization can remain in control of our resources and in order to create a better tomorrow for all.

IU Women’s Basketball Coach, visited Stone Belt’s Central Region on August 31 to speak to students and staff. Coach Legette-Jack also had another connection to Stone Belt in May when she joined Stone Belt Community Engagement Director Amy Jackson and two other local women as a recipient of the 2010 Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce’s Women Excel Bloomington Award. Stone Belt congratulates all the award winners, especially Amy who is responsible for facilitating the building of relationships between Stone Belt in the community. Her responsibilities include fund development, marketing, public relations and the coordination of Stone Belt’s service learning and volunteer programs.

To learn more about other award winners, or to learn how you can help, please visit Stone Belt’s website at www.stonebelt.org.

Stone Belt, Directors Dancing With the Celebrities

The yarn-a-thon was held March 3 at the LaSalle Hotel to support the local and national stone belt network through the sale of yarn. Stone Belt thanks all the attendees for their support.

In Dancing with the Celebrities, Stone Belt’s fundraising program included dance performances by four professionals, five non-profit organizations and two Stone Belt clients. The non-profit organizations that participated were: The Indianapolis Zoo, Animal Adventure, Pathways to Empowerment, The Bloomington Community Choir and The Bloomington Community Fund. The five non-profit organizations that participated were: The Arc of Monroe County, The Bloomington Community Choir, Camelot Enterprise, Children with Cancer and Bloomington Children’s Choir.

Dancing with the Celebrities was a great success for Stone Belt and the non-profit organizations involved. The event raised over $60,000 for Stone Belt’s service learning and volunteer programs.

Donate Online

Did you know that Stone Belt now offers an easy and convenient way to give online? Log on to www.stonebelt.org to make your gift today.

All gifts and individual donations reach their full potential.

Stakeholder... Have you Considered... Donating Online?

If you would like to receive our newsletter or request it in an accessible format contact Communications Manager Cheryl Paul at 812-332-2168, ext. 261 / cpaul@stonebelt.org.

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The past few months have been challenging, and so we have needed to bear these thoughts in mind. This issue of our newsletter features strong and positive stories about the clients, staff, and volunteers who are dedicated to our mission of improving the lives of people with disabilities.

The news is not all bad. We have bounced back from the December fire in Columbus. Our programs are back in full swing in the temporary United Way offices in the Cummins building.

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As a result of the recent State Budget, Stone Belt’s Community Employment programs have seen an increase in requests for employment assistance. Before the budget cuts, Stone Belt’s Employment Services were a program which provided job training or assistance at no cost to businesses. Several key changes have been made available by the following services:

- **Residential Services**
  - Home choices and limiting staff support hours, two things that are directly connected to their quality of life.
  - Work Experiences, a program which provided job trials at businesses, now has time limits on the support given which causes a need for more support. Unfortunately a problem that will likely increase.
  - Pre-Vocational services will no longer be authorized and alternative services will need to be chosen to replace them.
  - Budgetary reductions like this impact the arts. Budget cuts from the State of Indiana have had a direct impact on opportunities for lifelong learning. Stone Belt Arts has had a thriving arts program for many years, encompassing art instruction, development, exploration, community collaboration, and the production of art pieces for sale. The program has been challenged to live within the budget and new parameters.

- **Lifelong Learning**
  - Lifelong learning clients have been impacted greatly. One of the key components to the success of Stone Belt Arts has been the individual responsibility of the Business Development Director, the individual responsible for facilitating art production, sales, marketing and exhibits. Because of the necessary elimination of the Business Development position, Carolyn Abbitt and her artist peers will now unfortunately have far fewer opportunities to display their beautiful creations and share their artistic talents with the community.

- **Staffing**
  - Staff reductions are impacting Stone Belt’s residential clients by influencing their level of support and their ability to stay connected to what and who is important to them.
  - Budget cuts will also impact Stone Belt’s work force and provide a greater work load for the remaining staff. The only other option is to consider whether home time should be able to be increased or to continue serving individuals at a lower level. We have submitted an interest in these changes to the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver to provide the needed supports.

In summary, the current state of funding is impacting Stone Belt’s services by reducing the number of available staff and the time limits on the support given which causes a need for more support. Unfortunately a problem that will likely increase.

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Milestones adds new program, wins awards

Psychology Today Award

Milestones Therapiasts Dr. Mindy Whale and Dr. Lin Kottmann recently received the award for Outstanding Community Internship for their work with the students of the College Internship Program (CIP) at the Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). This program provides a challenging, post-graduate academic, internship and independent experience for young adults with Anxiety’s difficulties and learning disabilities.

Milestones Play Therapists

Milestones has been awarded the 2010 Indiana Association of Play Therapists’ (IAPT) Vivian Thompson Award for outstanding play therapy services. The award was presented during the group’s 33rd annual membership luncheon in Carmel, Indiana.

Special congratulations to Milestones Play Therapists Dr. Mindy Whale, Beske Falls, Lynda Ransburg and Claudia Domink for their superb clinical work and their continued efforts to increase their education, improve their skills and obtain official play therapist certification.

The Vivian Thompson Award is given to individuals or organizations that have made outstanding contributions in the field of play therapy over a period of at least 5 years. This award is named in recognition of an extraordinary play therapist, social worker and supervisor. Milestones Director Sue Ann Galda has been involved in the world of play therapy for 3 years while she was studying for her degree in Family Therapy.

Dr. Whale received the award on behalf of team members, Jody Corbin, Milestone Director, 812-555-3557, ext. 101, or visit the Milestones website on www.milestonesinc.org.

CRICKET REA

Operational Excellence

Cricket, a 15-year veteran of Stone Belt, has been selected for recognition as the 2010 Stone Belt Employee Award Winner. She serves our agency as a front line staff member. This year, she was a key player in assisting with the restructure of our agency.

KATE FLOREKI

Community Outreach

A native of Miami Beach, Kate was a Client Support Coordinator in the South Region. She is responsible for all Stone Belt group homes and day programs and works out of the fourth floor office in Indianapolis. Kate is the driving force in helping staff and clients engage in their community on a regular basis.

STEVE WAREMAN

Community Outreach

Steve is an active veteran of Stone Belt is a Client Support Coordinator in the South Region. He is responsible for all Stone Belt group homes and day programs and works out of the fourth floor office in Indianapolis. Kate is the driving force in helping staff and clients engage in their community on a regular basis.

ROSE DECKSTON

Positive Outcomes

Rose, a recent graduate of Stone Belt, has been working in the Transportation Services. Rose has seen an opportunity to work with Stone Belt that she has been excited about since she was a child.

DAVID FURR

Resource Efficiency

David, a 15-year veteran of Stone Belt, has been working in the Finance Division. In his role as Manager, he is responsible for the allocation of financial resources.

employee recognition

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Five Stone Belt employees were honored with 2010 awards for excellence: Rick Rosta, Manager of NAP, 2009 Employee of the Year; Fred Reid, CIO; Barbara Johnson, Executive Director; and Sue Ann Galda, Clinical Director. Each recipient was honored at an awards ceremony in the fall.

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