

touchstone

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



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

I AM YOU Performance

For three nights in a row, people packed into the theater seats of the Bloomington Playwrights Project for the fifth running of I AM YOU.

I AM YOU is a series of personal performances produced by Stone Belt clients and staff. Client participants spend numerous hours of hard work rehearsing their stories and vignettes. These vignettes relate their own experiences with a range of topics, including friendship, family, work, love, facing challenges, and the evolution of their own growth and success.

Throughout this year's performances, participants used musical and acting techniques to perform their impactful stories. From a beautiful rendition of "Somewhere over the Rainbow," to an emotional story relating to the challenges and presumptions of others, many of those in attendance for this year's event were touched by what they heard. "This was my first I AM YOU performance, and I was really blown away by the stories. I laughed; I was wowed; and I even cried a bit," said new Director of Development, Derek Richey. It seems everyone in the audience experienced a range of emotions: from hope and humor, to frustration, and even sadness.

"I think the opportunity for Stone Belt clients to really express themselves and share their story was really empowering for them, and it was powerful for the community to come out and see it," says Carmen Levasseur, Supported Group Living Director, who served as the 2016 I AM YOU Director.

Each vignette was an entity of its own. While some preferred singing and music, others told stories about their lives. Tasia Tanier-Gesner had the opportunity to be the featured artist this year's I AM YOU. She showcased works from her personal collection in the lobby during intermission. Audience members gathered around the table to view her artwork. "I wasn't nervous to show my artwork; I really liked it," said Tasia. "It was nice to get so many compliments on my stuff."

The smiles on the cast and crew's faces before and after the show clearly showed how happy everyone was to be a part of something so special. "I AM YOU is one of the most significant and creative ways that Stone Belt has found to empower clients to show the community who they are and what they believe," says Stone Belt CEO, Leslie Green. 2018 will feature the next round of performances.

Happy New (Fiscal) Year!

Well, it is the start of a new fiscal year for Stone Belt, and as usual we have plenty for which to be excited about as well as several challenges that keep us committed to advocating for positive changes. Altogether, we feel it will be a positive year for the clients we serve and will hopefully afford us the opportunity to serve the burgeoning numbers of people that are requesting services from Stone Belt.

Our Lifelong Learning programs are adding clients monthly and the Employment Program is serving new people at a record pace. However, meeting all requests for services, especially in our Supported Living program, are hampered by workforce shortages. This illustrates our need to keep up our strong advocacy efforts for funding that would enable us to boost the wages for our employees that

provide these high demand services. We've made some improvements in this area, but much remains to be done to compete in the tight job market in which we operate.

We are excited to be joining in partnership with Centerstone for the Skills Development program. These mental health services, offered in homes, schools, and in the community, can help people learn coping skills to deal with a variety of emotions and stressors. We anticipate growth in this Milestones program.

We are working on behind-the-scenes improvements in our infrastructure to increase our efficiency and effectiveness. We also will be putting more technology in the hands of the clients to facilitate their learning and increased independence. Our staff development

efforts will continue to be focused on our front line supervisors and on the direct support professionals. Their increased knowledge and skills will have a direct positive impact on client outcomes.

Be sure to keep up to date with all news and activities at Stone Belt with the launch of our newly designed website at www.stonebelt.org. We will be bringing you more fresh content on issues of importance to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including how you can get involved and make a difference in our advocacy efforts. We need our voices joined to push for positive changes in funding and other important legislative issues. Our social media sites are also very active, so check us out on Facebook and Twitter, [@StoneBeltArc](https://twitter.com/StoneBeltArc). Submit your ideas for posts and articles to



info@stonebelt.org. We love sharing your stories of success!

As always, thank you for your ongoing support of Stone Belt. As we move into the new fiscal year, it is great knowing we have so many that care about our programs, that support our efforts, and that cheer along with us when individual and program goals are accomplished.

Have a Great Summer,

Leslie Green

EMPLOYEE FEATURE

Supervisors Receive Leadership Training

For the past eight months, several of Stone Belt's residential supervisors have been participating in a course aimed at teaching management skills. The course was funded by the Jack Hopkins fund, awarded by the City of Bloomington, and was done in coordination with LIFE Designs. Supervisors and their teacher, Christine Urbanowski, met once a month for three and a half hour sessions each. Christine is an active instructor at Ivy Tech Bloomington whose teaching mainly focuses on leadership and communications courses.

Stone Belt wanted to provide more formalized training for their supervisors and leaders. The purpose of this program was to provide employees the resources to grow as leaders. The program is based on leadership skills that have been proven to be effective. Christine tailors each course she teaches to the organization that is attending. Before the classes began, Christine visited one of Stone Belt's homes to get a better feel for the kind of environment in which these supervisors typically work.

She had the supervisors evaluate themselves to get a good understanding of what type of supervisors they are. "In order to be a supervisor that's effective, you have to be aware of your strengths and areas of your behavior that are more challenging," says Christine.

Another goal of the course was to give Stone Belt supervisors an opportunity to



share their experiences and problem solve some of the struggles that they often face. Erin Meyers, a Site Supervisor in the Supported Living Program, was one of the staff members that participated in the training. She found the course very helpful, and appreciated the time dedicated to discussing challenges. "It was nice to be with people we work with, and get to know them better," Erin says, "We shared struggles that we faced in our jobs and worked through them together."

Topics covered in this course included best communications practices for good results, tools of management, and skills to resolve conflicts. "It brought some of the best practices of management to our awareness," Erin says. The last class of the course served as a review of all the concepts covered, and included a discussion of how to apply them to their daily activities. Training sessions such as these are great resources for improving our organization's overall effectiveness.



MILESTONES

CLINICAL & HEALTH RESOURCES

a division of Stone Belt | milestonesclinic.org

PROGRAMMING

Healthy Relationships Classes

This past semester, Milestones therapist, Mary McKinney, along with interns from the Indiana University Psychology department, successfully provided individuals with disabilities lessons on relationships, such as: expanding social networks by learning initiated friendships; exploring dating opportunities; and understanding basic concepts of interpersonal interactions. These lessons were developed seven years ago and are a part of a series of educational groups for adult individuals with developmental disabilities called Healthy Relationships Classes.

The program is modeled after the Healthy Relationships Classes that Middle Way House presents in local high schools, although this version is adapted for a population with a lower reading ability and a need for interactive, individual learning. There are three different sessions that each focus on different topics having to do with relationships. Mary says, "I allow people to re-attend any class that they want. It helps them practice having healthy relationships within the group. Respect, privacy, confidentiality, and accepting feelings are values that we always try to implement in the class."

The classes strongly utilize concrete, visual, and interactive techniques to inform individuals about topics such as private and public places, preventing abuse and exploitation on the Internet, and how to deal with bullying behavior. A participant in these classes, Kelly Draus, comments on how helpful they have been, "They helped me by teaching me I can ask someone to go out and do things. I learned that I can ask people. So I am not scared to ask people to do things anymore. I was scared at first, and I learned that I can speak up." The Arc of Indiana recognized this Healthy Relationships program with the 2013 Innovation Award.

This past session of Healthy Relationships Classes was initiated with the collaboration of Planned Parenthood of Indiana Sexual Health Educator, Leslie Montgomery. This series focused on sexual education to individuals with developmental disabilities who are planning to be involved in dating and romantic relationships. Mike Berry was another participant in the class. He says, "We talked about relationships and friendships, safe Internet use, and conflict resolution, amongst other things. I have learned a lot about conflict resolution here."

PROGRAMMING

New Partnership with Centerstone

This past May, Milestones began a new partnership with Centerstone in order to continue to provide individuals with their quality Skills Development services. The Skills Development program at Milestones is a part of the Medicaid Rehabilitation Option which means it must be done through a community mental health center like Centerstone. This program aims to teach children and adults that have mental impairments the skills to improve daily functioning.

"I'm excited because Centerstone has a good clinical focus. Our program is going to benefit from their clinical support," says Jennifer Hammond, Skills Development Coordinator.

Milestones staff are excited for this transition, because Centerstone has a large local presence in Bloomington, Bedford, and Columbus, which is where most of Milestones and Stone Belt clients reside. "I have high expectations," says Jennifer, "Once this transition is over, the plan is to grow the program with Centerstone since they have locations in many of the areas that we serve."



CENTERSTONE



STAFF NEWS

Therapist Invited to Teach at IU

Debra Mishler, licensed therapist at Milestones, has been invited to teach an undergraduate Psychology course at Indiana University this upcoming fall semester. She has 17 years of experience treating children, adolescents, and families with psychotherapy in outpatient clinics. Her primary specialty is doing psychotherapy with evidence-based programs, which have been shown to be highly effective in treating externalizing disorders such as ADHD and internalizing disorders like Social Anxiety or phobias. "I'm a little bit nervous, but mostly excited because I think it's going to be a great opportunity for these students to shine and put their best foot forward," says Deb.

For this undergraduate service learning course, students will work a few hours per week at Head Start. Their work will be guided by the Incredible Years program series, developed by Dr. Webster-Stratton meant to help children learn to manage difficult behavior.

The program teaches students the skills for giving attention that increases children's motivation to comply, persist, and develop a sense of self-value. Each student will be assigned three children to observe and work with. "We hope that these students will develop these skills, and be role models for parents and teachers on how to best deal with these types of behaviors," says Deb.

Carla Mann: From Artist to Illustrator

Stone Belt artist, Carla Mann, has been offered a very special opportunity; to have her artwork featured as illustrations in a new children's book. Jim and Mary Kenny, parents of Stone Belt's Director of Community Employment Bitta DeWees, are writing a children's book named "Little Lost Monkey." The story follows a young monkey named Chipper who loses his parents and goes on some perilous adventures through the jungle before being adopted by a family of chimpanzees. It's a "foster to adopt" story, which Jim and Mary are fully experienced in, having fostered and adopted children of their own.

"Our book is different than other foster books," says Jim, "The monkey starts out being scared, but he isn't victimized. He is empowered. It's an encouraging book that tells children they have a part to play in their lives, instead of spotlighting therapists, counselors, or social workers. This is a book for kids."

The Kenny's decided to have a Stone Belt client illustrate their book after attending a play at the Bloomington Playwrights Project. Stone Belt has a display of several clients' artwork in the lobby. Mary describes the lobby, "We were surrounded by art from Stone Belt, and we were just overwhelmed. It was all new and original. We felt this feeling of joy that was overpowering and beautiful."



Around thirteen Stone Belt clients submitted sketches to the Kenny's, hoping to be chosen as the illustrator. They eventually chose Carla after reviewing her artwork with Karen Holtzclaw, the Stone Belt art studio director. "We selected Carla, as she had the most engaging, innocent, and fresh pictures," says Jim, "They were not like anything I'd seen before. They were even different and better than I had imagined."

This is a first for Carla, whose art has been featured before in other materials such as the Stone Belt Calendar. "I've never done anything like this before, and I'm glad I get to do it," says Carla, "I'm excited about it." Carla's drawings bring Chipper and the Kenny's story to life, and she hopes to illustrate more books in the future.

LEADERSHIP

Welcome new Board Members!

Stone Belt is pleased to announce the election of four new outstanding board directors to serve along with returning Director Don Hossler as the Class of 2020.

Mike Horvath (pictured left) is the retired Director of Special Education for MCCSC. He has been involved in inclusion and education of people with disabilities throughout his career, beginning as a special education teacher. Among other things, Mike will bring this knowledge and commitment to Stone Belt's efforts for achieving best practice in our programs and evaluating our effectiveness.

Michael Melby (pictured middle) is the Regional Director of Pharmacy at Indiana University Health South Region and learned about the opportunity to support Stone Belt from the Hospital's outreach efforts. He is also the CEO of Health LINC, of which Stone Belt is a participating provider. Michael's knowledge and expertise will be of great benefit to our clinical and health programs.



Hal Turner (pictured right) is the Bloomington District Office Director for Ninth District US House of Representative Todd Young. Hal has long been a friend and advocate for Stone Belt. He has an impressive collection of Stone Belt client art, and participates in many of our events and activities. His federal, as well as local public policy experience will bring vital energy to our outreach and advocacy efforts.

Cindy Elliott (not pictured) will share a board position with Patrick Robbins to represent the Lawrence County Area. Cindy has been on the board of The Arc of Lawrence County for several years. She and her family, the owners of Elliott Stone in Bedford, are long-term supporters of the programs offered by Stone Belt at the LARC Center.

THANK YOU DONORS

Stone Belt extends appreciation to our generous donors from March 1, 2016 to the end of our fiscal year, June 30, 2016! We are grateful for their continued support. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of this listing. If you think there has been an omission, please accept our apology and contact Jana Surigao at (812) 332-2168, ext. 269 or jsurigao@stonebelt.org.

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WHY I GIVE

Smithville Charitable Foundation

Stone Belt programs supported in part through a grant from the Smithville Charitable Foundation.



Darby McCarty, Smithville Charitable Foundation CEO / Chairwoman of Board, and Marissa Nielson, Interim Director, presenting a gift to Stone Belt staff and clients.

"The Smithville Charitable Foundation is proud to support the work of Stone Belt Arc. The people behind Stone Belt Arc are incredible. The dedication and commitment to those in our community with differing abilities is great to behold.

As a charitable foundation, we believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and have a sense of self-worth. It is not easy for people with differing abilities to adjust to the world around them, but Stone Belt Arc is there for them. The staff are the drivers behind the success of this organization, and they are heroes.

Again it is a privilege to support Stone Belt Arc, and the amazing work done every day. Thank you for what you do to make this a better community for all."

- Cullen McCarty, Executive Vice President of Smithville Communications

Complete the enclosed giving envelope and drop it in the mail with your donation, or visit stonebelt.org to donate online.

NEW STAFF

Welcome, Derek Richey!

Stone Belt is excited to welcome Derek Richey as our new Development Director! Beginning in late March, Derek is now the head of our agency's development efforts.

Derek has a strong background in development and marketing and is very excited to be joining our team. Before coming to Stone Belt, he worked as a marketing and brand consultant, and worked on several projects including the Indy Eleven professional soccer team, and authoring the local history book, "Bloomington Then and Now" which documents the changes in the Bloomington landscape over the last 100 years. He loves learning and talking about history, which is demonstrated by his book and his past profession as a high school English and History teacher.

His background in nonprofit work comes from the nearly 15 years he spent as Director of Professional Services and Outreach at the Hope Foundation, an educational foundation. Derek is happy to be at a nonprofit again. Derek says that he wakes up in the morning feeling good that he works at a place that not only supports individuals with disabilities, but effectively advocates for them as well.

EVENTS

Aging & Disabilities Candidates Forum

Mark your calendars now for the Aging and Disabilities Candidates Forum on August 29. Offered in partnership with Area 10 Agency on Aging, LIFE Designs, Mental Health America and NAMI Greater Bloomington Area, we are inviting all of the Monroe County Candidates for Indiana General Assembly. The event is set to be held at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church beginning at 6:30 p.m. Watch for more information in your mail and on our Facebook and Twitter pages!

August 29, 6:30 p.m.
Sherwood Oaks
Christian Church
2700 E. Rogers Rd.
Bloomington, IN



UPCOMING EVENTS

PROJECT SEARCH CELEBRATION

July 26, 4:30 to 6 p.m.
Ivy Tech Bloomington
Shreve Hall
200 Daniels Way
Bloomington, IN

STONE BELT ANNUAL CELEBRATION

September 26, 6 p.m.
Bloomington Convention Center
302 S. College Ave.
Bloomington, IN



Stone Belt

If you would like to receive our publications, please contact Jana Surigao at jsurigao@stonebelt.org.

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