

I. Editorial

A Message from AHRC's President: Dr. Mel Gertner

I have begun my tenure as AHRC's President in times of enormous change. These times have presented me with the opportunity to reaffirm my commitment to AHRC and to the field of developmental disabilities.

I have been a member of the AHRC Board of Directors for over twenty years. The AHRC Board of Directors is comprised of people, the vast majority of who are blood relatives of individuals with disabilities. Additionally, I have worked in this and related areas for decades. As a physician I have devoted my professional career to working with children in the inner city, children most often from families of limited resources who were patients of a City Hospital. I am committed to the idea that we as a society must care for our most vulnerable citizens in a way that is respectful and helps them live lives that are worthwhile.

This has always been AHRC's credo. And in these challenging times where what we do as an organization is being attacked by many different forces, we will continue to operate according to this belief and make every effort to ensure that the society we live in does not forget its responsibility to all its citizens.

A Message from AHRC's New Executive Director: Lorrie Henderson, Ph.D., MBA, LCSW

Change large or small, can often produce feelings of anxiety and fear in people anticipating the changes. The new 1115 Waiver in New York State will without question be a tremendous change for AHRC New York City and the field of developmental disabilities. It is foremost on the minds of many AHRC families, staff, members and the Board of Directors and will be for the foreseeable future. And I would like to attempt to diminish the feelings of anxiety and fear a bit.

Although there are many unknowns regarding how this new system (called the 1115 Waiver) will work once it is implemented, what is clear to me after learning about AHRC New York City and its history is that no matter what changes are coming down the pipeline, this organization will find ways to meet the coming challenges and will learn to thrive in the new environment. I have experience working with managed care in multiple states that will help in this new arena.

In my time as Executive Director of this organization, I have witnessed an unwavering commitment to the individuals served that is at the core of all members of the AHRC community. This commitment is quite impressive and should not be underestimated. This commitment has clearly propelled the organization through many changes in the last sixty years. And it will continue to do so in the years to come.

II. Legislative Updates

[Chronicle 25, Feature 1115 Waiver]

The 1115 Waiver - the New Way Services and Supports will be Developed in New York State: How We Got Here and What We Really Need to Do Build a Stronger System for People with Developmental Disabilities

Note: This article is NOT about the nuts and bolts of the 1115 Waiver. It is about the situation we currently find ourselves in, how we got here, and what we need to do ensure that the people we are committed to serve continue to have the lives to which they are entitled.

Shirley Berenstein, AHRC Director of Public Information

Some History

Over the last more than thirty years, since the closing of the infamous Willowbrook State School, New York State OPWDD (then called OMRDD) -- working in partnership with families, individuals served and providers -- built a system of services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities that has surpassed any other system in the nation in its breadth and scope.

It was Medicaid (the federal, until now open-ended "entitlement" program which was established to assist states in the provision of health care and related services --selected by each state-- to be provided to eligible needy persons) that in the 1970's became the funding source for community residential development in New York beginning with ICF/MR's. A decade later when Congress enacted the Home and Community-Based Medicaid Waiver program, becoming aware of substantial changes in how Medicaid dollars could be used to fund community-based services and truly allow the field to further the movement away from institutional care, New York State OPWDD became extremely adept at using the Medicaid program to create an array of long-term community services to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. When establishing its Medicaid program New York State opted to not only provide the Mandated Services required for participation in the federal program, but also opted to offer Optional State Medicaid Services to all eligible Medicaid recipients. And New York State was willing and had the capacity to supply a high percentage of the requisite matching funds, 50% (as compared to the 30 – 40% match of most states.)

Deficit reduction packages in the 1990's (all without major cuts in funding for programs serving low-income families and people with disabilities) changed the country's fiscal situation from one of large deficits through the mid-90's to one of large surpluses in the late 90's. But there was a downturn in the early 2000's with the country again facing enormous deficits and deficit reduction efforts that this time focused on so-called entitlement spending, which included Medicaid. When President Obama took the reins two years ago, the economy was mired in astronomical deficits, relentlessly rising general health care costs, and states around the nation complaining of the enormous growth in Medicaid that was strangling their economies. The writing was on the wall as regards the changes in the Medicaid program that would be forthcoming.

Over the last twenty-five years, New York State OPWDD brought in sufficient Medicaid dollars through its developmental disabilities programs to fund the vast array of services for this population currently in existence, and to additionally add funds to the state's general coffers. This has been a known fact for a long time, as has been the fact that people with developmental disabilities represent a relatively small percentage of Medicaid enrollees but use a large percentage of Medicaid dollars in New York. Nevertheless last year's Poughkeepsie Journal Articles enumerating exactly how the federal Medicaid funds for individuals with developmental disabilities in New York were calculated -- even though the federal Center on Medicaid Services (CMS) was aware of and had agreed on the formula -- motivated a re-examination of New York State's Medicaid situation.

The 1115 Waiver in New York State: How to Manage Care and Manage Costs?

At the current time, just like the federal economy, the New York State economy is in dire straits. Many other states struggling to deliver services and manage costs in this weak economy are, as is New York in its new 1115 Waiver, looking at managed care models as the new way to fund long-term services.

New York State's OPWDD describes the 1115 Waiver as a way to make a good system even better with efficient financial resource distribution based on need and person centered care, greater access, choice, and flexibility. Although New York's 1115 Waiver may be able to deliver on these offerings, the Waiver is ultimately and **above all else about cutting costs and doing so through a managed care system using a model that includes all services in its capitation rate.** It is important to truly understand that the perceived potential for savings is the key factor for instituting the new system. It is important in order to understand what is about to ensue and in order to truly protect the interests of people with developmental disabilities.

New York State and the states now entering the world of managed care for long term services are actually entering uncharted territory. The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured issued a report last month (October 2011) entitled "Examining Medicaid Managed Long-Term Service and Support (MLTSS) Programs: Key Issues to Consider," (www.kff.org/medicaid/8243.cfm). The report states that, "Relatively few states currently use capitated models to manage care for the elderly or individuals with disabilities, the populations most likely to require long-term service and supports (LTSS). Research to date indicates that relative to fee-for-service programs, MLTSS programs reduce the use of institutional services and increase access to home and community-based services, but there is little definitive evidence about whether the model saves money or how it affects outcomes for consumers."

The Kaiser Commission report suggests that if MLTSS programs are to be successful, "... it is essential for states to have time, expertise, and financial resources to consult with stakeholders, shape programs, attend to administrative details, clarify expectations and monitor program operations so that they can strike the right balance between managing care and managing costs." Although there has been some commentary suggesting that New York State's OPWDD is moving too quickly to really examine impact, they do appear to be trying to do what is enumerated above. Nevertheless many serious questions still remain and will undoubtedly be answered as we move forward. Hopefully needed direction will be arrived at through a process that will not only give lip-service to, but will truly include, input from the consumers who will be the recipients of LTSS and input from the community-based provider organizations that have earned consumer trust over the years and understand their strengths and needs.

Advocacy: What We Really Need to Do to Build a Stronger System for People with Developmental Disabilities

There is without question a need to reform our system. In these economic times where many families must tighten their belts and make difficult choices to survive; organizations that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities must do the same. But we are entering a new world and the fiscal environment that currently exists will place a great deal of pressure on us to serve more people for less money. We must make sure that the implementation of the new Waiver system ensures choice, individualized services and the rights of the people we are committed to serve, as well as appropriate oversight. We must make sure the new system is not hijacked by the powerful demands of savings, reduced expenses and efficiencies thus creating a system of service deficiencies.

In 1994, Clarence Sundram, currently Special Advisor to the Governor for Vulnerable Populations, then Chairman of the NYS Commission on the Quality of Care addressed the NYSARC Annual Conference with a keynote speech entitled, "The Challenge of Quality in Changing Times." This writer had the honor of editing that poignant address for a print version of the AHRC New York City Chronicle in 1995. Many of the lessons that Mr. Sundram wrote about in that piece that outlined the tension between conscience and convenience in the development and implementation of social policy through the history of our field, also apply to the challenges of today.

He ended his keynote with the following: "The real lesson that one draws from history is that the job of advocacy is never done. The same persistence and the same vigilance that NYSARC demonstrated since its inception [then] 45 years ago and through the dark days of Willowbrook are still needed. In some ways the job of advocacy is more difficult. The evil we are fighting is not the stark horror of Willowbrook that could easily galvanize even the most stone-hearted person. The risks are more subtle ones of complacency, isolation, neglect and abandonment, and they are sometimes camouflaged with words like 'choice' and 'empowerment' which communicate values with which most of us agree. Parents and advocates must remain alert enough and astute enough to look past the words to the underlying reality of the quality of life for the people we are concerned about."

The families of AHRC New York City, the city chapter of NYSARC Inc. must keep watching government and hold the feet of the powers that be to the fire as regards their promise to "build a stronger system for people with developmental disabilities". That is what families have done in the 62 years that NYSARC has been in existence and what they must continue to do.

Resources: NYSARC Inc. Blog on Waiver

<http://blog.nysarc.org/category/1115-waiver/>

OPWDD Website

www.opwdd.ny.gov/507plan/images/waiver_507_comprehensive_plan.pdf

III. AHRC Highlight:

Our Own Everyday Heroes

In celebration of **National Direct Support Professionals Week**, (*September 11-17th*), we highlight one of AHRC's important initiatives, *Everyday Heroes*, which recognizes the contributions of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). *Everyday Heroes* supports DSPs as leaders and as mentors of other DSPs, and it deepens their commitment and contribution to the evolution of people from "consumers" to citizens who are valued members of the community, who lead successful and fulfilling lives.

AHRC's *Everyday Heroes* initiative began in October 2010. It was a collaborative effort between AHRC's **Department of Individualized Supports, Department of Organizational and Employee Development, and Adult Day Services Department**. Nine Direct Support Professionals from four AHRC day programs; **Cyril Weinberg ADC, Joseph T. Weingold ADC, Anthony Fisher ADC, and Day Habilitation without Walls**, volunteered for this initiative. Each of these employees demonstrated an endless commitment to the individuals supported through AHRC programs, as demonstrated by their affinity for innovation and hard work.

Participating in the *Everyday Heroes* program allows DSPs and their mentors the opportunity to truly get to know a select individual that is supported. They engage in a process of discovery, learning and action. This process of discovery, learning and action enables us to find interesting ways of incorporating individuals into the community on their journey to citizenship.

Everyday Heroes learn about themselves and their partners; learn to listen to people with their heart; learn to build alliances with families; learn to nurture relationships with community members; learn to have high expectations, and to celebrate and to share their lives. Our *Heroes* learned to ask themselves four simple questions every time that they met with their partner or mentor: *What struck me the most? What surprised me? What touched me? Is any follow-up needed?* Keeping these questions in mind enabled them to take the "heroes journey" from personal inquiry to public action.

To celebrate and share the Adult Day Service project's success, AHRC New York City held a luncheon to showcase the connections that developed from the team's commitment to one another in their newfound relationships. Along with the AHRC staff, friends, family, and partners, gathered in the Penthouse at AHRC's **Maiden Lane** offices, for a day of presentations by all involved. *Everyday Heroes*, with their partners and their mentors presented videos and PowerPoint presentations, and performed dances to share their stories. **Melinda Lim**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Gifts of the Hands*" with **Shafai Neveille**, *partner*, and **Inna Grinshpun**, *mentor*. **Eric Martinez**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Music is My Life and I Gotta Keep on Dancing!*" with **Kathleen Keyes**, *partner*, and **Laura Cucinotta**, *mentor*. **Flavio Nardelli**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Sonic and Me*" with **Jonathan Negron**, *partner*, and **Yelena Akbasheva**, *mentor*. **Igbala Omeragic**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Man About Town*" with **Eric Boris**, *partner*, and **Maria Sin**, *mentor*. **Barbara Pioro**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Opening Doors*" with **Lorraine Lohen**, *partner*, and **Marcela Casteneda**, *mentor*. **Sara Ward**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*The Art in Me*" with **Yaritza Velazquez**, *partner*, and **Rebecca Brown**, *mentor*. **Bernice Watson**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Beautiful Inside and Out*" with **Shaun Mitchell**, *partner*, and **Patrica Wells**, *mentor*. **Sandra Uzhca**, *Everyday Hero*, presented "*Bookworming*" with **Paul Neidert**, *partner*, and **Polina Shevchuck**, *mentor*.

In late Spring 2011, a second cohort of *Everyday Heroes* began their journey. The group included 10 DSPs from six AHRC Day Habilitation Programs. The training curriculum consisted of Person-Centered Planning, Community Building, PowerPoint, Storytelling, and a six-month course in public speaking from Toastmasters International.

"The aim of Everyday Heroes is to help people to learn to do their work even better than they do now, by taking a journey with a person who has a developmental disability.... Everyday Heroes builds on the idea that our courage, creativity, wisdom, knowledge and commitment make the difference, when we meet the

hearts and minds of people we support,” says **Carole Gothelf**, Director of AHRC’s Individualized Supports.

“Exploring their shared passions was the highlight of the experience for me,” says **Eric Martinez**, *Everyday Hero*, noting that there was an initial struggle to find common ground faced by him and his partner, **Kathleen Keyes**. Together they used their shared love of music and performance to produce a video, which can be viewed [here](#). True to the project’s purpose, though he first felt worlds apart from Kathleen, *Everyday Heroes* has allowed Eric to enter Kathleen’s life. “*I realized that we actually were very similar*,” he said.

The *Everyday Heroes*’ initiative is coordinated by **Jennifer Teich**, Residential Coordinator of Individualized Supports, **Steve Williams**, Employee Relations Manager, and **Rebecca Brown**, Community Support Supervisor, under the shared leadership of **Katerina Chatzistyli**, Associate Director of Adult Day Services, and **Carole Gothelf**, Director of Individualized Supports.

IV. Programs, Services and Supports

AHRC Launches Its Referral and Information Center or “RIC”

AHRC’s Referral and Information Center (also known as “**RIC**”) was launched in August 2011. This new resource simplifies the ways by which the agency introduces individuals and families to its programs and offers one central resource for all information to be provided to families and professionals.

RIC staff will be the starting point of contact for individuals interested in AHRC programs. When families or professionals reach out directly to programs of departments, they will be welcomed to AHRC and then transferred to the RIC for the initial referral and information processing. Based on an individual’s needs and interests, RIC staff will introduce families and professionals referring individuals to the full array of services that AHRC has to offer to new individuals, as well as to those already being served who seek additional services.

This will provide families, professionals and AHRC staff with:

- one resource for information regarding AHRC services and supports
- one contact number for all referrals
- a simplified application process: basic information (ex: demographics, service needs, evaluations) will only be requested once and shared between appropriate departments
- expert knowledge of services available throughout AHRC, not only those services known to individual departments

AHRC’s RIC staff include: **Luis Martinez**, **Hernan Amorini**, **Nudedrose Guirand**, **Carmen Arlequin**, **Onome Edemirukaye**, and **Raquel Almonte**. Having all been with the agency for several years, some more than a decade, each member of the RIC is knowledgeable about the array of programs and services offered by AHRC NYC, and able to assist parents/caretakers and individuals in the with efficiency and professionalism.

The Main RIC Phone Numbers are **212-780-4491** and **4493**. There is a recorded announcement when staff are unavailable to answer calls. Referrals can also be sent to referrals@ahrcnyc.org.

Alzheimer’s Dementia Training and Memory Books

To better understand the diagnosis of Alzheimer’s dementia and management in elderly adults with developmental disabilities, the interdisciplinary team, including all *Direct Support Professionals* at AHRC’s **Hirsch Individualized Residential Alternative (IRA)**, recently participated in a pilot training project.

Coordinated by **Marcia Richman**, *Healthcare Coordinator* for AHRC’s Residential Department, **Benjamin Drew**, *Individualized Service Coordinator*, and **Regina Kroepfl**, *Nurse Coordinator*, led interactive sessions at Hirsch IRA. The trainings spanned several days over the course of a month.

The team first presented an introductory discussion about Alzheimer’s dementia, giving participants’ knowledge of the disease processes and manifestations at various stages. They reviewed best practices and were given pointers to be used when supporting individuals on a day-to-day basis. Staff participated in brainstorming ways to stay calm, to maintain patience, and to remain flexible when difficult situations arise.

Memory Books, introduced on the second day of the project, are living documents, designed to be continually updated to record people's lives and to profile their changing needs. A pair of *Direct Support Professionals* was teamed with one of the residents to compile pictures, family statements, awards, and other items. The information and images portrayed each person's heritage, family background, and preferred activities during times in their lives when they were more active. Each individual's particular likes and dislikes, their preferences when receiving supports, and their unique personality traits were included in the recorded information.

Three weeks into project, the team met to review the completed *Memory Books*. Each individual now has a comprehensive book that presents an in-depth and personal portrait of their life. The Direct Support Professionals have reported that Hirsch IRA residents are already benefitting from the *Memory Books*. The DSPs who participated in the project have noted their own renewed sense of pride in their support responsibilities. The project provided the DSPs with an opportunity to connect and to work more closely with the individuals who they serve.

During the course of this project, one of the Hirsch IRA residents became ill. In order for his needs to be managed, the resident might require movement to another residence. If that is the case, his personal *Memory Book* will follow him, allowing future caregivers to support his needs with his personal history in mind.

The team at Hirsch IRA did an amazing job of assisting the individuals in the creation of the *Memory Books*. With help from family members and other professionals, the team put in a great deal of effort and time to creatively include the artwork, achievement certificates, newspaper clippings, photos, stories, and anecdotes, to properly represent the personalities and cultures of the individuals who participated in the project.

The Hirsch team is enthusiastic about continuing this project. These 'living resources' will be available for the residents to reflect on their own lives, and will serve as a resource for others to learn more about the people profiled within the books themselves.

Vantage Point Program Offers Staff a New Perspective

Vantage Point is the name of a training program used by some departments of AHRC NYC, in which new employees spend their first work day gaining perspective on what a person with disabilities faces in everyday situations. Staff participating in the training program might wear blindfolds to experience the feeling of sight impairment, or they might spend the day in wheelchair, to experience obstacles encountered by people with mobility impairments. Although it is not possible for a person without a disability to really *know* what it feels like to live with a disability, the program allows new staff to experience some of the feelings and obstacles encountered on a daily basis, by persons with disabilities. The program prepares new staff in the Adult Day Services Department and in the Residential Department to work with individuals participating in various AHRC programs.

Elvira Sinelikova, who has worked as a *Community Support Professional* at AHRC's Adult Day Services facility, the **Joseph T. Weingold Center** since 1998, runs the Vantage Point program in her facility. Vantage Point Program trainee, **Yacoubou Amadou**, (a *Sub*, who was recently hired to work at the **Anthony Fisher Adult Day Center** in Manhattan,) was a participant in one of the groups that meet daily to discuss various topics including social relationships, pedestrian skills, problem solving, appropriate social behavior in the community, and life goals. After his arrival at Weingold Center in the morning, Yacoubou was asked to sit in a wheelchair, and to conduct all of his activities for the day while remaining seated, in order to gain some perspective on what it is like to have a mobility impairment.

"It was a great program. They put me in a wheelchair, we went out in the community. Later in the day, we did a lot of work, packing supplies into boxes," said Yacoubou, describing the day's activities. When asked how he felt when the group walked through the local neighborhood, Yacoubou added, *"When*

people saw me and I was in a wheelchair, I noticed the way they looked at me, and I wondered about their impression."

As the day ended, Yocoubou joined **Yelena Akbasheva**, *Program Supervisor* and **Laura Cucinotta**, *Social Work Supervisor*, for a coordinator-trainee debriefing, where he identified some of the emotions and obstacles that he experienced while participating in the Vantage Point program.

On November 4, 2011, eight newly-hired Direct Support Professionals attended **Vantage Point Training** at AHRC NYC's Maiden Lane offices, conducted by **Keith Turpin**, *Residential Training Director*. This training had the same aim as the training at the Joseph T. Weingold Center, however; this training included perspectives on sight impairment. Residential Department staff hired to provide services at **Tenafly IRA, Fresh Meadow Lane IRA, Hirsch IRA, Gus Jacobs Residence, and 58th Avenue IRA** were asked to pair off for a trust exercise in which one member of each pair wore a blindfold, to approximate the condition of being blind.

As he introduced the group to the upcoming exercise, which would include a partner-guided walk through the local community, as well as a feeding exercise, Keith emphasized the importance of safety, saying, *"Take this very seriously. This is not a time for joking. You are completely responsible for the safety of your partner, as you will be responsible for the individuals who we serve."* After the trainees were partnered for the exercise, one trainee per pair put on their blindfold, and the group was led into the elevator, out of the building, and into a chilly downtown Manhattan.

As soon as the group reached the sidewalk, one of the trainees noted that the weather was cold and uncomfortable. *"Our individuals go out on cold days,"* answered Keith. *"They go out in the rain and the snow, so we will do this exercise, regardless of the weather, unless there is a blizzard outside."* Those who wore blindfolds had been instructed to only answer their partners' questions using the words, "Yes," and "No," as many individuals the trainees will be serving may have a limited capacity to communicate verbally. In order to ensure the safety of all trainees during the exercise, the group was accompanied by two AHRC staff, who made the trainees aware of crosswalks and parking garage entrances. Halfway through the walking tour, the paired trainees were asked to switch their roles, so that everyone could experience the feelings a person with sight impairment might encounter while traveling.

Upon returning to the Maiden Lane offices, the trainees took part in a feeding training exercise. As with the community walking exercise, the trainees were partnered, one wearing a blindfold, and the other playing the role of the feeder. *"I'm scared!"* cried one of the DSP trainees, as she moved her blindfold into position, covering her eyes. Keith provided the group with doughnuts, and (unbeknownst to the blindfolded eaters,) asked the feeders to rush while feeding. Because the eaters in the exercise could only communicate using "yes" or "no," some found it difficult to eat with comfort. *"That felt horrible!"* said one DSP, during a de-briefing that followed the exercise. *"It wasn't a good feeling. I didn't even want to open my mouth!"* added another DSP.

"Do you see what it's like to put your trust in a stranger?" Keith asked the group. *"It is important to ask questions when providing care, but understand that some may not be capable of answering clearly,"* said Keith.

"It showed me that you have to have a good rapport with that person you support, because you're going to be their eyes and ears," added one trainee. *"That was a very rewarding experience."*

Although the Vantage Point Training prepares new staff to think about the day to day obstacles that those who they serve face each day, it is not possible for a person who does not live with a disability to truly understand what it feels like to live with a disability. When the Vantage Point Training exercises end, those who participate are allowed to stand from the wheelchair, or to take off their blindfold. The exercise of navigating each day's obstacles does not end for those who live with disabilities, but the Vantage Point

Program prepares support staff to be mindful of these needs, and the importance of their responsibilities as they assume Direct Support roles within AHRC departments.

What's in a Name? – Joseph T. Weingold

The **Joseph T Weingold Adult Day Center** is named after a man who played a vital role in the development and growth of AHRC. As a parent of a child with developmental disabilities, Joseph, (*also known as Jerry to his friends*), advocated for the rights of people with disabilities for more than 40 years.

Joseph practiced law from 1929 until 1950, when he became the first Executive Director of AHRC New York City. In 1973, he led demonstrations in front of the Governor's New York City office, and lobbied extensively in the State Legislature for improved conditions for people with disabilities. He was one of the architects of the lawsuit that culminated in the Consent Decree that led to the closing of the State Developmental Center at Willowbrook on Staten Island. He also helped to design neighborhood residences for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, as a drafter of the New York State Guardianship Law, he paved the way for the development of a protective advocacy system of guardianship for children and adults with disabilities.

Following his death in 1987 at the age of 83, **Governor, Mario M. Cuomo**, sent a personal letter of condolence to Joseph's wife, Barbara. "*Reflecting on Jerry's achievements over his lifetime, I cannot fathom where we would be today in our State in the field of mental retardation and developmental disabilities had it not been for Jerry Weingold,*" wrote Governor Cuomo. "*Through his great love for his son, Jerry challenged the establishment, joining with other parents, energizing them, inspiring them, leading them in the great struggle to carve out the rightful place in society for their children... You can take deep satisfaction and, I hope comfort, in knowing that Jerry's legacy has affected not only the generations he spanned, but all the generations to come.*"

"Catching a Dream," a Collaboration between Pace University and AHRC Middle High School

In the fall of 2007, a partnership was formed between **AHRC New York City** and **Pace University**. Initiated by **Dr. James Lawler**, Associate Professor at Pace University's Seidenberg School of Computer Science and Information Systems, and **AHRC Board Member, Dr. Marilyn Jaffe-Ruiz**, the partnership offered an opportunity for Pace University students to collaborate with individuals receiving services through AHRC NYC's **Adult Day Services Department** while participating in *Community Service-Learning Projects*. Service-learning is a method by which young people learn and develop through active participation, in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet the needs of their communities. These service experiences are integrated into the students' academic curriculum, and include student-prepared written accounts of their real-life community-based projects. This continuing partnership has included a technology project to improve ADS departmental operations, as well as Person-Centered Planning projects in which Pace students were partnered with individuals from **Evelyn and Walter Redfield Center**, **Betty Pender New York League Program**, **Dean O'Hare Adult Day Center**, and **Stephen B Seigel Adult Day Center**, to collaborate in a variety of activities, such as music and art expression, cooking, drama, sports, photography, horticulture, and travel training. The success of this partnership has prompted an expansion of the collaboration between the agency and Pace University, which is called "**Catching a Dream**."

"**Catching a Dream**," Dr. Jim Lawler's expanded initiative for community engagement, partners Pace University students with students attending **AHRC Middle High School**, in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, New York. While earlier initiatives have focused on the engagement of Pace students with young adults and

senior citizens with disabilities in AHRC NYC's Adult Day Services programs, the current initiative focuses on person-centered planning and technology-based projects, as Pace students mentor to the students of the Middle High School. *"These are individuals who can go to community college, if not a college, and transition through a university where the community college has a partnership with the university. I feel that they could also be in disciplines of science and technology as well, as a long-term goal,"* says Dr. Lawler.

Under the partnership, the Middle High School students, (learning under the instruction of **Martyn Jones**, *Technology Trainer*,) gain skills that will be helpful to them as they transition from high school into the adult world, such as resume-building, general use of the computer and computer applications. *"Since the students have begun working in this program, I've seen big improvements in their computer skills and in their social interactions,"* says Martyn. *"They even tell their friends about the program when we return to the school. They've been very enthusiastic!"*

Describing her experiences, **Hope Garfield**, a Pace University student participating in the program as a *Student Mentor*, says, *"In this program, I am working with high school students and helping them create a PowerPoint visual resume. The slides include information regarding their biography, family, hobbies, and most importantly, their career interests. It is highly important for them to promote their vocational skills so that they could have greater opportunities to seek and obtain jobs. Their motivation to learn how to use various computer programs and their significant progress in the acquisition of computer skills contributed to my further understanding, appreciation of, and sensitivity toward individuals with disabilities."*

The "Catching a Dream" collaboration began in October 2010, and included 17 students from the Middle High School. On May 4, 2011, AHRC Middle High School students participating in the partnership program presented their own person-centered plans to their fellow students and to the staff at the Middle High School, using mini-movies that they created in partnership with the students from Pace. These 17 students continue to grow through the partnership, during two-hour sessions which are held at Pace University each Tuesday. According to **Jim Mara**, *Principal of AHRC Middle High School*, 7 more students joined the partnership in the fall of 2011, each attending weekly sessions, held on Fridays.

In October, **Chris Muccioli**, *Director of Education* and Dr. Lawler presented an overview of the "Catching a Dream" partnership at the **62nd Annual NYSARC Convention** in Albany, New York. Their presentation noted the productivity, feelings of self-confidence, and community involvement that both the Pace and AHRC Middle High School students have gained through this partnership.

MechoShade Systems Inc. and AHRC NYC's Joseph T. Weingold Adult Day Center Continue Mutually Beneficial Business Relationship

AHRC New York City has had an ongoing relationship with **MechoShade Systems**, an energy efficient solar shading company, located in Long Island City, Queens. For over 12 years, individuals participating in Adult Day Services Vocational Services, Work Readiness programs, and Day Habilitation programs at AHRC's **Joseph T. Weingold Adult Day Center** have worked closely with MechoShade Systems and AHRC staff, in a model business environment.

"MechoShade Systems has offices in Long Island City, New York, and in Phoenix, Arizona, with sales and distribution throughout the continental United States, Canada, Asia, and Europe. Their headquarters are in Long Island City and AHRC has had a relationship with them through Adult Day Services' Vocational Services," says **Peter Tomasi**, Assistant Director of Vocational Services for AHRC NYC. *"We began by assembling brackets for some of their products when they here in New York City."*

The relationship began at a time when all of MechoShade Systems' manufacturing was conducted in Long Island City. At that time, individuals served at Joseph T. Weingold Adult Day Center would assemble brackets for the company's products. *"They moved their manufacturing to New Jersey and*

Arizona, and we began to assist them in assembling their promotional and marketing materials,” adds Peter. “We have welcomed part of their sample distribution operation into our workshop area at Joseph T. Weingold Adult Day Center. MechoShade Systems Inc, has employed four individuals through our ESEMP program to work directly at their Long Island City headquarters.” These four individuals now do piece work directly alongside MechoShade employees.

MechoShade Systems Inc. also employs two individuals from AHRC NYC, as *Porters*. This year, two additional individuals with developmental disabilities were hired to complete clerical and data entry projects in the company’s marketing department. All four of these positions were custom-tailored to the unique support needs, strengths and talents of each worker. They are all excelling in their new roles.

Additionally, MechoShade has been very charitable, donating goods and services to AHRC’s Adult Day Services facilities for quite some time. The company has supplied many helpful products to the Joseph T. Weingold Adult Day Center, including used office furniture and warehouse equipment. Improvements to the center’s infrastructure including floor mats and new lighting were also donated by MechoShade Systems Inc. Window shades and shade brackets used at AHRC’s newest ADS facilities, **Stephen B. Siegel Adult Day Center** and **Wendy M. Siegel Adult Day Center**, were donated as well, with AHRC NYC paying only for the labor costs for the installations. “*I think this company, a family owned business, should be recognized for the generous contribution it has made to AHRC’s Adult Day Center facilities. Our main contacts have been Mr. Joel Burman, the Founder, and Mr. Jan Burman, his son, and the President of the company. The uniqueness of the MechoShade Systems/AHRC story is about the depth and breadth of the mutually beneficial relationship,*” says Peter.

Employment and Business Services Department Receives Contracts for Out of School Youth

AHRC NYC’s **Employment and Business Services** (EBS) department was recently awarded three *Out of School Youth Contracts* from the **Department of Youth & Community Development**, (DYCD). These contracts, (*which serve a blend of disabled and non-disabled youth, ages 18 through 21,*) began in July, 2010 and will run through June, 2013.

The Queens EBS program was awarded with a contract in Janitorial training, and the Brooklyn EBS program was awarded a Janitorial contract, as well as a Food Service Training contract. Students recently attended classroom training in basic skills and work readiness, with a hands-on internship in their field of training.

Employment and Business Services internships for Janitorial Services include: **Long Island College Hospital, Brooklyn Hospital,** and **New York Queens Hospital,** Employment and Business Services internships for Food Services include: **Pace University, NY Stock Exchange,** and **NY Mercantile Exchange.** Job Placement occurs upon completion of the training.

October: National Employment for People with Disabilities Awareness Month

In October, AHRC NYC celebrated National Employment for People with Disabilities Awareness Month. In 2010, the AHRC New York City Employment & Business Services (EBS), the largest supported employment program in New York State, worked with over 109 employers to assist in the employment of more than 496 individuals.

One example is **Yvette Valerio**, who was making minimum wage, working as a *Messenger* and living in a shelter with her two children in early 2009. At that time began to search for employment that would make her more economically self-sufficient.

"I learned about the program from a friend who had attended, back in 1997. I've been with AHRC ever since," says Yvette of her first encounter with AHRC NYC's Employment and Business Services. *"Before working, I did a two week training program, and then volunteered at Bellevue Hospital for a couple of months."* When she interviewed with **Lighthouse/ Peir Sixty**, it was not clear if Yvette would be successful, due to personal hurdles she had to overcome; however, after several weeks it was apparent that Yvette had the drive to be more independent. Not only did Yvette's employment at Lighthouse/Peir sixty allow her to be more independent, but eventually, Yvette was promoted to a full-time *Housekeeper* position. Along with a salary raise, Yvette received full medical benefits.

When asked about her goals for the future, Yvette adds, *"I'm hoping to work with handicapped kids and one day to own my own cleaning business."*

On October 26, 2011, Yvette was honored in Albany, New York at the annual OPWDD *Works for Me* employer recognition event. The event recognizes selected businesses for their commitment to workforce diversity, and celebrates the partnership between employers and valued employees with developmental disabilities. Yvette was joined by her son, as well as the AHRC's *Director of Employment and Business Services*, **Steve Towler**.

Music Program Grows at Esther Ashkenas Central Park Early Learning Center

Children attending AHRC NYC's **Esther Ashkenas Central Park Early Learning Center** in Manhattan know that learning can be fun. One example of having fun while learning can be found within the school's Music Room, where for the past year, *Music Therapist*, **Carin Beam**, has been using music as a means to teach children skills including rhythm and dancing, transportation, and organization.

Along with her trusty sidekick, Mr. Elephant, (a fabric elephant-shaped box containing a tambourine, piano, jingle bells, drums, and sometimes a guitar,) Carin leads the students in singing and musical instrument activities for 30 minutes of each instruction day. *"They love the guitar! They all strum, but I like to switch it up so they get some variation,"* says Carin.

Carin has her degree in Music Therapy, and will soon be a Board Certified Music Therapist. She has been teaching music since the age of 17, and started teaching children professionally four years ago. After months of practice, songs -- including *This Old Man, The Itsy Bitsy Spider, The ABC Song, Bah Bah Black Sheep, I've Been Workin' on the Railroad, Goodbye Friends, and Clean Up, Clean Up* -- ring familiar to the ears of the children, and it is that familiarity, says Carin, that helps the children to grow. *"They really like the familiar songs but I try to include others sometimes,"* says Carin. *"You get around kids and everything else melts away. It puts you in perspective. You have to be in a good mood. You're automatically in a good mood when you come in here,"* says Carin.

"Regardless of their functional level, all the children enjoy the movement and tactile experiences during music time," said **Chris Pecoraro**, *Teacher*, in speaking about benefits of the program.

One favorite band for the children is The Beatles. Carin often uses songs from the well-known band to augment her instruction, occasionally changing some of the words to topics that the children can learn from. *"We did a lesson on transportation, using the Beatles song, 'Ticket to Ride,' but added to it so the kids could relate; You need a ticket to ride, on the bus!"* sings Carin.

Impressed by the positive impact that Carin's work has made on the children, *School Principal*, **Beth Rosenthal**, held an afternoon fundraising event on Sunday, September 18, 2011 at Drome Restaurant in

the East Village, to benefit the school's music program. *"Entertainment included a great Beatles tribute band, and drew attendance from 70 to 80 families. The kids danced and food was served. It was a good opportunity for families to connect,"* says Beth. Proceeds from the event will help to expand the school's music program from two sessions per week to three.

When asked about the success of the recent fundraiser, Carin said, *"I'm a huge advocate for what we do as Therapists, and adding a third day of music class each week is so exciting! We're going to get to do a little more one on one, with a small group."*

Info about the school and their programs:

Esther Ashkenas (Central Park) Early Learning Center

Specializing in Services to Children with Developmental Delays Including Autism and Those Who Are Medically Fragile, also Offering Inclusionary Classes

Received the Early Childhood Program Award by the New York State Education Department Office of School Improvement and Community Services New York City

- Preschool for children with developmental delays and children who are medically fragile and non-ambulatory ages 3-5
- Special and inclusionary classes with typically developing children in need of child care
- Special classes for children 3-5 years of age with autism
- Bilingual services available

Click [here](#) to view more information about AHRC NYC's schools serving children from ages 3 to 5.

V. Happenings

Young Adult with Autism Throws First Pitch at Mets Game Thanks to EmblemHealth

Anthony Giangiobbbe, 20, an avid New York Mets fan with autism and one of the original six children who attended AHRC's early intervention programs when he was a young child, threw out the first pitch at a Mets-Marlins game on August 31st at **Citi Field** thanks to [EmblemHealth](#), which provides health care coverage through its companies **Group Health Incorporated** (GHI) and **HIP Health Plan of New York** (HIP).

Mr. Giangio

bbbe, who lives with his family in Middle Village, NY, was accompanied by his parents **Rose** and **Daniel Giangio**bbbe, his sister **Sara Giangio**bbbe, **Christina Muccioli**, *Director of AHRC NYC's Educational Services*, and **James Mara**, *Principal of [AHRC Middle/High School](#)* in Brooklyn.

"Everyone loves Anthony," says Christina, adding that Anthony's heartwarming story was featured in a 2010 AHRC fundraising appeal. *"Anthony was one of the original preschoolers at AHRC and has been with us since the age of three. Over the years he's grown and thrived alongside his peers, and has become a real inspiration for families with autistic children."*

"Anthony was beyond thrilled when he found out he'd be throwing the first pitch at a Mets game," says his mother, Rose, adding that Anthony's favorite Mets players are *Pitcher **Jason Bay**, Infielder, **David Wright**, and Outfielder, **Jason Istringhausen***. *"He wanted to tell everyone and got ready by practicing throwing pitches with his Dad."*

According to Ms. Giangio

bbbe, Anthony has many interests. In addition to baseball, Anthony loves football, NASCAR, golf, cooking shows, singing, and all kinds of music, ranging from **The Beatles** to **Frank Sinatra**. Anthony recently saw **Paul McCartney** at Citi Field, and is the go-to guy when the family needs the name of any artist on the radio.

Ms. Giangio

bbbe says things were very different when Anthony was first diagnosed with autism. *"At the age of three, Anthony was severely autistic and very impaired,"* says Rose. *"He didn't sleep, wouldn't leave the house, had no eye contact, and did not speak. It was very difficult, and we never could have imagined that we would feel so blessed today by how far he's come. Thanks to the program at AHRC, we saw a miracle unfold. He's become a totally different person with many interests, enthusiasms and a sense of humor."*

This summer, Mr. Giangio

bbbe sang at Anthony's graduation from **AHRC Middle/High School**. There, he participated in numerous internships and volunteer programs, including helping at a senior center, where Anthony prepared and distributed food trays. Anthony has also volunteered at **Maimonides Medical Center**; **Meals on Wheels**; and at an after school program through **Life's WORC**, where he volunteered at a local pharmacy.

This fall, Anthony entered AHRC's **Day Hab Without Walls** program in Queens, in which participating individuals volunteer in their local communities. Through a process known as *person-centered planning*, Anthony is seen as the truly unique person he is, and as a consequence his hopes and dreams, and those of his family are taken into account to create a productive, *personal life plan*.

"Anthony is like Forest Gump," says his father Daniel. *"He's always in the right place at the right time. Wonderful things always happen to him. He had a rough start but now there's a light at the end of the tunnel, and I feel privileged to have him as my son."*

This is the 11th consecutive year that EmblemHealth has passed along the honor of throwing the first pitch at a Mets game to a deserving New Yorker. It is part of the company's ongoing commitment to encourage health and fitness, and to give back to the communities it serves.

“Anthony Giangioffe is living proof that it’s possible to thrive and contribute when facing a difficult challenge,” says **Frank Branchini**, *President and COO of EmblemHealth. “He is an inspiration and a role model, and we are delighted to make this Mets fan’s dream come true.”*

AHRC New York City's 2011-2012 Family Education Series Continues

Each year, AHRC NYC offers a series of workshops, created to inform families of people with developmental disabilities, of their options as they navigate the sometimes difficult process of obtaining services.

This year's series commenced on October 5, 2011 with the workshop entitled, *The Residential Continuum: Residential Options Ranging from the Most Supported Living Environments to the Most Independent*. The workshop enabled family members to ask important questions as they plan for transitions in life.

The Family Education Series will continue through early June 2012, and will cover a variety of topics, including:

- Common causes of challenging behaviors in people with developmental disabilities,
- Word Sign,
- Changes to the IEP,
- End of life care for individuals with developmental disabilities,
- Toilet training methods,
- The 1115 Waiver
- Guardianship, and
- Promoting positive health.

To access a complete schedule of upcoming workshops, click [here](#).

17th Annual Golf Classic

The **17th Annual AHRC Golf Classic**, presented by the *Feil family* and *Burke Supply*, was held June 27 at the **Glen Oaks Club** in Old Westbury, New York. *Aragon LLC* was a corporate sponsor of the event. **Mitchell Bloomberg**, a principal of *International Lights, Inc.*, was the Chair for the 17th consecutive year.

The day included brunch and 18 holes of golf with contests such as the “*closest to the pin*,” lunch, held on the golf course, a cocktail reception and an awards dinner and raffle. The event raised approximately \$365,000 for AHRC New York City’s programs and services.

The AHRC NYC Foundation’s “*Reaching Out Award*,” which each year honors a person in an AHRC program who has met the challenges of having a disability and has made progress toward becoming an independent and included member of the community, was presented to **Rodney Weston**.

Rodney takes part in AHRC's Employment and Business Services program. Since 1999, Rodney has worked as a stock clerk at Walgreens in Queens. During his 11 years of employment, Rodney has become a dedicated worker who takes initiative and is proud of his job.

AHRC NYC's *Director of Employment and Business Services* department, **Steve Towler**, spoke about the EBS programs, including [ShredAbility](#), a new company AHRC has created, which puts people with disabilities to work destroying confidential documents for businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Raffle prizes included a 52-inch plasma television; a day of golf at Garden City Country Club, Engineers, Westchester Hills and other golf clubs; and Yankees, Mets, and Knicks game tickets.

All golfers received a registration gift and a prize, from the pro shop. The winner of a post-tournament putting contest received a week's vacation for two at the Bitter End Yacht Club in Virgin Gorda.

Finding a Voice through Technology

"I lived in Pakistan until I was 15. I never went to school when I was in Pakistan because there are no schools in Pakistan for people with disabilities. I couldn't stand up or walk. I couldn't close my mouth. My family carried me everywhere I went. I did not have a wheelchair." These are the words of **Adil Sanai**, who attends the Adult Day Services department's **Joseph T. Weingold Center**, in Sunnyside, New York. Adil was born with cerebral palsy, a condition which caused his mouth to remain open, making it impossible for him to speak, and which caused Adil to have severe mobility impairments when he was young.

Adil and his family immigrated to the United States in 1999. After arriving, Adil underwent multiple surgeries. *"When I came to the United States I received medical help,"* says Adil. *"I had surgery on both my legs and mouth. I was very determined to have a better life in the United States, so I exercised a lot and work really hard to get better."* Even though Adil's surgeries have enabled him to close his mouth, he still experiences speech limitations, but thanks to the use of an **Assistive Technology Device** called *Chat PC*, Adil can be heard out-loud. When Adil has something to say, he types it into his hand-held device. The device uses predictive technology, which provides Adil with words to choose from, as he enters each letter of a new word into the device. After Adil has typed a sentence into the *Chat PC*, he presses another button which reads the sentence out-loud, facilitating his communication. He can also save his entries for future use, and make modifications when needed. *"I can make changes on the device by myself,"* adds Adil. The *Chat PC* is small enough to be worn in a small pouch at Adil's waist, and he carries it with him everywhere, using it to communicate with his friends, family, colleagues, and supervisors. Adil continues to work on his verbal skills with his *Speech Therapist*, **Lorraine Cohen**, M.S., CCC-SLP. Lorraine is also an *Assistive Technology Specialist*, and is knowledgeable about the *Chat PC* device that Adil has used for the past two years.

Today Adil works in quality control at Joseph T. Weingold Center, overseeing the end of the facility's production line. Adil is also part of AHRC's *Enhanced Supported Employment Program (E-SEMP)*, and has a position as a *Merchandise Floor Associate* at Marshalls Clothing store, in Queens, NY. Some of Adil's job responsibilities at Marshalls include sorting clothing according to size, tagging and preparing items for display, removing damaged items, and notifying his supervisor. *"My device has helped me to get a job and talk to my boss,"* says Adil.

Karen Deckman, *Assistive Technology Specialist*, is the New York area representative for the [Salttillo Corporation](#), a company which specializes in providing helpful solutions for people with adaptive living needs, and the manufacturer of the communication device Adil uses every day. Karen viewed Adil's video "[Finding a Voice Through Technology](#)" on YouTube last year. The video, produced by Adil and **Eric Martinez**, *Community Support Professional*, documents Adil's use of his assistive technology device, as he completes his job duties. Submitted to the International Society for Augmentative and Alternative

Communication, (ISAAC,) to raise awareness of assistive technology device users around the world, the video gained Karen's attention. Karen routinely shows the video to high school students who use *Alternative and Augmentative Communication* devices, and to their parents, to encourage them to set the bar high for what is possible.

Shortly after seeing the video, Karen contacted Adil, and invited him to become the official brand ambassador for Saltillo Corporation. From November 2nd through the 5th, Adil and his father joined the Saltillo team at the **Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference** in Chicago. Adil worked in the Saltillo booth along with Karen, meeting and greeting visitors. *"I am very happy that I am a member of the Saltillo family now,"* adds Adil, expressing his gratefulness to Karen and other members of Saltillo for the opportunity. Karen believes Adil is the perfect role model for others who use adaptive technologies.

Outside of work, Adil celebrates his heritage. *"I am a Muslim,"* says Adil. *"I pray five times a day. I leave work program at 12:30 on Fridays to go to Mosque."*

Adil also participates in the Achilles Running Group, for exercise and to be a part of his community. *"My dream came true,"* says Adil. *"I was able to finish the Achilles Hope and Possibility 5 mile run in June of 2011. For a person who was not able to walk and run, I think this is a dream come true."*

Adil wishes to thank his family and his AHRC support team including, **Michael Kaplan**, *Facility Manager*, **Munni Gurung**, *Program Psychologist*, **Maria Hubbard**, *ESEMP Job Coach*, **Eric Martinez**, *Community Support Professional* and his *Speech Language Pathologist and Assistive Technology Specialist*, **Lorraine Cohen**, M.S., CCC-SLP. *"Thank you, Lorraine for helping me get the device,"* says Adil. *"It is my new voice."*

AHRC New York City congratulates Adil in his inspiring accomplishments. To learn more about Adil's story, read [this article](#), recently posted on [disability.gov](#).

AHRC Middle High School Student Runs the New York City Marathon

Nicole Appel is a student attending AHRC Middle High School. Nicole will be graduating in June 2012, at the age of 20, but in the meantime, Nicole has had another goal, that of completing the November 6, 2011 New York City Marathon. Nicole has been training for the event for some time, but first took up running after a chance meeting she and her father had while walking on their local running trail. Nicole met **Sue Gamez** and **Vince**, who work with a Long Island-based non-profit organization called [Rolling Thunder](#), which is dedicated to providing challenged individuals with the opportunity to successfully participate in all levels of mainstream running, walking or wheelchair racing year round.

Since she began running, Nicole's weight has lowered from 218 pounds down to 165 pounds, and she is now in great physical condition. She is engrossed with her participation in the marathon, and in her running clubs. *"She's been able to socialize with all sorts of groups. I would love for other parents to avail themselves of these opportunities,"* adds Nicole's father, **Steve Appel**. *"This is an absolutely wonderful way for her to participate in her community, to be welcomed into new groups, and to disavow any prejudices that may be coming from people who are outside of her experiences."*

Nicole and other people who live with developmental disorders that include language barriers have a deep interest in participation and involvement with the community. *"Because running requires no verbal skills, it's a great equalizer, and provides an opportunity for a variety of people to participate,"* says Steve.

In addition to her involvement with [Achilles International](#), which sponsored her run in the marathon, Nicole also runs with a Queens-based group called the [Alley Pond Striders](#), which provides her with the opportunity to socialize with others who share her interests. *"My favorite club is the Alley Pond Striders because I love the people,"* says Nicole.

After joining the group, Nicole asked for the names of all of the *Striders*, and then she returned home, where she commenced the drawing of portraits for all 60 members of the running group. *"It's been absolutely wonderful for my daughter to participate in these programs. There are all kinds of possibilities for parents to help their kids to get involved in running,"* says Steve.

Running organizations working with people with developmental disabilities:

[Achilles International](#) in Manhattan

[Rolling Thunder](#) on Long Island

[Alley Pond Striders](#) in Queens

NYSARC Convention Hosts an Art Exhibit with Works by Alberto Muneton

In late October, 2011, **Alberto Muneton** of the Adult Day Service department's **Betty Pendler New York League** attended the **62nd Annual NYSARC Convention** in Albany to participate in the Art exhibit including six of his paintings.

The exhibit was arranged by **Yuliya Khripunkova**, *Transition Developer* and **Darinka Vlahek**, *Director of Curriculum Development - Community Inclusion Initiative* for AHRC NYC's Adult Day Services department, as a means for Alberto to share his talents.

Alberto's work is further supported by *Art Consultant*, **Catherine Rosamond**, who describes Alberto's process. *"Alberto often tries out new ideas by completing multiple drafts, before embarking on a larger painting on canvas. Some of these preliminary sketches are worthy of displaying on their own. For the past few years, Alberto has been painting architecture, particularly cathedrals and famous iconic monuments like the Taj Mahal. Although the subjects he chooses to depict have evolved over the years, some common threads can be found throughout his collection: the use of brilliant colors, bold lines and a sense of playfulness that can only be created by a happy individual."*

"I've always been an artist my whole life," says Alberto, as he sketches his latest piece of artwork, a sketch of the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim shrine located in Jerusalem. Alberto is happy for the opportunity to show his work at the recent NYSARC Convention, and continues to create new sketches and paintings. When asked about his other projects in-progress, Alberto reports, *"I've been painting the Catholic Church."*

For Alberto and others who participate in art projects initiated by the Adult Day Services department, public art exhibits provide community participation and ways to share their work with others.

NYSARC Inc. Hodgson/Jacobs Law Award

Randi Rosenstein was this year's recipient of the **NYSARC Inc. Hodgson/Jacobs Law Award**, which was presented at the **62nd Annual NYSARC Convention** on Friday, October 21, 2011. In addition to overseeing legal services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families at AHRC NYC, Randi supervises the AHRC corporate guardianship program, which has oversight over the care of almost thirty individuals. Randi frequently presents to professionals and families about guardianship and future planning matters. AHRC NYC congratulates Randi for this honor, and thanks her for her good work!

VI. Accessing Information and Services

Dads to Dads

Dads to Dads is a support group for the father's of children of all ages, with special needs including all disabilities. The group provides an opportunity for fathers to hear the stories of other fathers and to participate in events with and without their children, such as Major League Baseball games, bowling, soccer, and picnics. Quarterly forums provide a means to share strategies and information, in a supportive environment. For more information, contact:

Paul H. Hutchinson, Ed.D.
AHRC New York City
Advocacy Associate
83 Maiden Lane 7th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10038
212-780-2792
212-777-3370 (fax)
paul.hutchinson@ahrcnyc.org