Inaugural ANCOR Education and Cultural Tour Breaks New Ground

The ANCOR International Committee sponsored its first international tour in late April 2007. ANCOR members Barbara Pilarcik, The Association for Community Living, Massachusetts; Bob Bartles, Kreider Services, Illinois; Diane Beastrom, Koinonia Homes, Ohio; Cindy Haworth, Human Service Connections, Illinois; Dawna Teeguarden, Rise, Utah; and ANCOR staffer Jerri McCandless participated in a 10-day educational and cultural tour to Romania and Moldova, culminating in a two-day optional visit to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Strangers at the outset, these ANCOR members became close-knit colleagues by tour’s end.

Beginning in Bucharest, Romania, the country’s capital, participants were warmly welcomed by local host Motivation Romania, headed by CEO Christian Ispas. Motivation Romania is an ANCOR international member, and Ispas had attended several ANCOR conferences in the U.S.

The Moldovan portion of the trip was hosted by Speranta Center, headed by Director Lucia Gavrilita. Speranta Center is also an ANCOR international member, and Lucia has attended the several ANCOR Management Practices.

It was a life-changing experience...so informative and so much to take in! The program work we saw was inspirational.

ANCOR travelers in Bragadiru, Romania were (L-R) Dawna Teeguarden, Diane Beastrom, Jerri McCandless, Cindy Haworth, Bob Bartles and Barbara Pilarcik.
The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) was founded in 1970 to provide national advocacy, resources, services and networking opportunities to providers of private supports and services. LINKS provides a nexus for the exchange of information, ideas and opinions among key stakeholders.

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ANCOR CALENDAR  
2007

August 4  
Webinar: Technology Planning  
Ted Groves, CARF Surveyor

September 9-11  
ANCOR’s Government Activities Seminar  
Washington Court Hotel, Washington, DC  
(Committee Meetings scheduled for Sat., 9/8)

2008

April 13-15  
2008 Management Practices Conference  
Sheraton Hotel, New Orleans

New professional development trainings have been added!  
For an updated list of ANCOR’s Professional Development Calendar, go to  
http://www.ancor.org/conferences/EventsListingPage.cfm

Cover Photo

Leah Schaefer, The Arc of East Central Iowa, and Jared.

Leah is considered a godsend by the families of the people she supports. Just as the picture portrays, she becomes one of the family. Leah received ANCOR’s DSP of the Year Award for the State of Iowa.
The Workforce Development Imperative

I recently completed the third session of a three-session leadership and sector skills academy sponsored by the Aspen Institute. Along with 23 other students from across the U.S., we shared experience and expertise on labor sectors development and visited several sector development programs in Chicago and Seattle. Many of the sector programs we visited, and those led by Academy students, focused on low income worker populations and incumbent workers. While sector initiatives are growing rapidly across the U.S., WIA and TANFF funding has continued to decrease, driving the need for more focused and creative sector workforce development.

Common components of the programs we studied included accelerated learning, adult learning, and clearly articulated career pathways that incorporated apprenticeship and credentialing programs. Without exception, apprenticeship and credentialing were integral to all of the sector programs we visited and discussed. And, all were built through extensive community partnerships and collaborations that were clear in communicating their benefit to the community at large and in advancing systems change.

We heard from leaders again and again about the critical importance of crafting messaging for public policy change that was perceptively framed, concise and clear. “It’s not what you change that was perceptively framed, crafting messaging for public policy again about the critical importance of in advancing systems change. Benefit to the community at large and were clear in communicating their partnerships and collaborations that built through extensive community we visited and discussed. And, all were integral to all of the sector programs we studied. And, all were built through extensive community partnerships and collaborations that were clear in communicating their benefit to the community at large and in advancing systems change.

We heard from leaders again and again about the critical importance of crafting messaging for public policy change that was perceptively framed, concise and clear. “It’s not what you say, but what they [policy-makers] can hear,” said one astute sector leader.

We were exposed to a range of strategies for public education and advocacy activities to influence or support policy. I was certainly reassured by the fact that many of the strategies we’ve incorporated into the ANCOR National Advocacy Campaign align well with those that have achieved the best results in other sector policy initiatives.

Of greatest interest and import to me, however, was how the most successful programs evolved. They began with strong leadership from employers to create broader partnerships and collaborations, which in turn drove advocacy and changes in public policy, which provided resources for new programs and expanded partnerships that returned results and better performance to employers. The key was leadership on the part of employers in addressing workforce needs and challenges.

The Aspen Institute experience benefit to ANCOR and its members will not end with my graduation as a Murano Fellow. Six fellows who lead health care sector initiatives, including myself, have formed a networking group. We plan to stay in touch on a regular basis. As we continue work on sector development in the area of long-term supports and services, we will be sharing information, ideas, insights and progress on our individual projects and programs.

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Call for Entries!

The ANCOR Foundation is putting out a call for entries for its annual Community Builder Awards. Begun in 2004, this national recognition effort highlights exemplary and praiseworthy initiatives and programs that create community inclusivity and meaningful opportunities for people with disabilities.

With the CBA, the ANCOR Foundation shines the spotlight on individuals, organizations and/or programs that display outstanding achievements in three key areas:

- Creating a method or program that serves as a model for others in creating community inclusion
- Recognizing individuals and organizations dedicated to creating opportunities for inclusion for people with disabilities
- Rewarding individuals and organizations that partner with civic organizations, educational institutions, employers or volunteers to create a community of inclusion

Distinguished providers, representatives of affiliated organizations and educators experienced in building communities of inclusion are encouraged to submit applications for professional acknowledgment in the following two categories: Service Provider and Community Member.


Recipients of the 2008 Community Builder Awards win a trip to the April 13-15th ANCOR Management Practices Conference in New Orleans where they’ll be invited to share their exemplary practices with the provider community.

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July/August 2007

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Last month, I chronicled a brief history of Medicaid and the origin of the waiver program. This large Great Society program was created in 1965 to fill gaps left by the private insurance market. The changes that have happened in this program over the past forty plus years have included a broadened scope of beneficiaries and services. In the past few years, it has been used as a vehicle by states to approach a universal health care system, something not envisioned by Lyndon Johnson in 1965.

The Medicaid program is considered by most to be a health care program for the poor; just what it started out to be. However, it is also the major funding source for long-term care services for the elderly and the only real funding source of services for people with disabilities.

With over 300 waivers in existence across all 50 states, Medicaid’s impact is far reaching. Many efforts are underway across the states and in the federal government to control Medicaid’s growth. Could it be that the current system of band-aiding a program that was not designed for people with disabilities should be ended? Is it time for a major overhaul?

Although Medicaid and its waiver programs have funded and encouraged the rapid growth of community-based alternatives for people with intellectual disabilities, the now 40-plus-year program is in need of change. The changes we’re seeing now are fueled by economics, and not by a thoughtful consideration of stakeholders and their needs. I would argue that it is time to replace Medicaid with a program that is designed for the 21st century needs of people with disabilities and the organizations offering supports and services.

I believe the current waiver program has three major flaws. Unlike the ICF/MR program, there is no uniform set of service standards. Though admittedly asking for federal standards is a double-edged sword, many of us go back to a time when we desired federal standards as a way to improve the lives of people we care about. The horrors of the institutions aren’t that far away, and neither are the horrors that confront us in some community-based programs that are driven by the desire to cut corners and save money.

From the inception of the program, room and board costs were disallowed. This is because the original concept envisioned a program for in-home support services to the elderly, obviating the need for nursing home care. No one ever envisioned the impact on people with disabilities, whose main source of income is SSI.

Many states worked around this prohibition or ignored it completely. With tightening purse strings, however, the cost of room and board is becoming a bigger issue. The alternative funding sources just aren’t there; especially in rural areas. And, when they are, they come at the cost of duplicated administrative services. The booming housing market has driven rental prices out of reach of the SSI check, never mind the cost of specialized living environments to meet the needs of the severely challenged.

The mixed bag of waiver services across states has led to the current direct work force crisis. There are no standards for pay; leaving most states with the option to control costs through low salaries and the belief that there is an endless supply of low-end wage earners. The crisis is real; and states are in a bind because the cost of raising salaries is a budget buster.

I envision a system that is radically different. Let’s eliminate the ICF/MR program and the waiver program for people with intellectual disabilities and replace it with a single funding source. Let’s take this program out of Medicaid completely, so we no longer get lost in the health care issues surrounding Medicaid. Let’s federalize the program, much like Medicare, eliminating the cost sharing with states. We could design a standard or regional rate (daily and hourly); cover room and board services, fix the wage issue and address the issue of standards.

This last one can be done in a creative fashion by marrying the standards to the size of the program, rather than a funding stream. Large environments would continue to meet program and facility standards, smaller programs would meet only federal program standards and state facility-based licensing standards. Single person programs would meet some minimum program standards.

The system then would be poised to continue downsizing and maintaining basic safeguards without changing programs; and individuals would have a wide range of choices with a portable funding source.

It is dangerous and perhaps scary to advocate for or to think about such radical changes. It is indeed easy to rest back and look at the good things that have happened because of the waiver program. However, I think we all can see the glory days of wild expansion by using and abusing the waiver are probably coming to an end. We need to be ready to offer an alternative. I would like to challenge those who read this piece to think of their own alternatives and ideas. Send them to me at jfmhomes@aol.com.

Given the crisis in recruitment and retention that we are all facing, I sincerely hope to see you all, with your DSPs this September 9-11 in Washington. We need to make our presence felt. Perhaps we can continue this discussion of a transition from Medicaid to the creation of a new system there!
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New Housing Report Shows Widening Gap In Housing Opportunities

The Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. (TAC) of Boston, Massachusetts and the Washington, DC-based Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Housing Task Force released a new report in June—Priced Out in 2006: The Housing Crisis for People with Disabilities. The report examines the affordability of efficiency and one-bedroom housing units for people with disabilities in all 50 states and within each of the 2,703 distinct housing market areas of the country defined by the Federal government.

Across the United States in 2006, people with disabilities with the lowest incomes faced a housing affordability crisis as rents for moderately priced studio and one-bedroom apartments were above their entire monthly income for the first time. The study compares the SSI monthly income of people with serious and long-term disabilities in all 50 states and within each of the 2,703 distinct housing market areas of the country defined by the Federal government.

The report examines the affordability of efficiency and one-bedroom housing units for people with disabilities to local U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Fair Market Rents for modestly priced rental units in 2006.

Key Findings

- Rents for modest one-bedroom units were equal to 113.1 percent of monthly SSI payments, and studio/efficiency rents were 100.1 percent of SSI during 2006.
- The national average rent for a one-bedroom unit climbed to $715 per month and the studio/efficiency unit rent to $633 per month in 2006—both higher than the entire monthly income of people with disabilities who rely on the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.
- During the past eight years one-bedroom rents rose 64 percent compared to SSI—from 69 percent to 113.1 percent of SSI. During that time, SSI income dropped 26 percent compared to the one-person median income.
- In 2006, the annual income of a single individual receiving SSI payments was $7,584—equal to 18.2 percent of the national median income for a one-person household and 25 percent below the federal poverty level.

Using Priced Out to Make a Difference

In this edition of Priced Out, CCD and TAC call on the federal government to commit to a multi-year plan to create a minimum of 150,000 new federal rent subsidies for people with disabilities with the lowest incomes—by providing 10,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers and 5,000 new Section 811 rent subsidies each year for the next ten years, the most vulnerable people with disabilities could live successful lives in the community.

ANCOR members can use the data in Priced Out to show why people with disabilities need to be considered in the development of housing policy.

See Report page 8

NAC Central: Blackjack! 21 New Co-Sponsors and Key Events Ahead

It takes sacrifice to realize a victory. In the public policy arena, that sacrifice can take many forms—time, energy or resources—and ANCOR’s National Advocacy Campaign (NAC) is fortunate that many ANCOR members and supporters share in the commitment to creating a more stable, consistent direct support workforce.

The proof is in the numbers. ANCOR members are generously funding the NAC and they are working to secure new legislative champions—21 new members of Congress have co-sponsored H.R. 1279, the Direct Support Professionals Fairness and Security Act of 2007, in the last month, giving the legislation 61 co-sponsors as of this writing!

While 21 is a great blackjack hand, it also represents the National Advocacy Campaign’s best month ever! Securing 21 new co-sponsors in a single month is a small victory we deserve to celebrate as we pursue our broader goals. It is also a victory that warrants recognition. The NAC Steering Committee thanks all the ANCOR members and supporters who sacrificed to secure these new co-sponsors and offers a special thank you to New York advocates who helped land four, or nearly 20%, of these new co-sponsors. Thank you New York!

The success we’ve experienced in the past month underscore some key lessons. First, persistence pays off. Advocates had to contact most of these new co-sponsors more than once, but they eventually won their support. That’s what it takes.

Second, Congressional Recesses are critical. Fifteen new co-sponsors joined H.R. 1279 right after the July Recess—clear evidence that there is no substitute for face-to-face contact when your member of Congress is home.

Finally, this success reminds us of the exceptional opportunity before us. Twenty-one new co-sponsors in a month once seemed unreachable, but now the power of our network and message puts loftier numbers within our reach. Why not a month with 25 or 30 new co-sponsors? August and September opportunities present a unique chance for the NAC to take its efforts to a new level.

Can we count on you to make the sacrifice?

August Recess

The August Congressional Recess begins August 6. As the July Recess success proves, you simply cannot afford to miss this month-long opportunity to educate your U.S. Representative on H.R. 1279 and the direct support workforce crisis! Contact your U.S. Representative’s office today to arrange an August meet-
Imagine my delight when I, a compliance director at a small ICFMR in rural Kentucky, was asked to represent ANCOR at the Annual ICF/MR Surveyor Focused Training; a three day, national conference for surveyors. I couldn’t say yes fast enough when my boss asked me if I would be interested in attending. Not only would I be getting to take a trip to Nashville, Tennessee, I would also be sitting with and talking to CMS surveyors from across the U.S. It was a compliance officer’s dream come true!

There were approximately 139 participants in attendance, with 33 states represented and nine regional representatives. Five participants were introduced as providers, including me, and representatives from the Department of Justice were also present. We were provided with a participant manual that included copies of all PowerPoint presentations and handouts that we could share for future trainings and a brand new set of regulations.

We were assigned seats at tables, ensuring that we had the opportunity to work with people from different states and regions. The tables were set up as mock survey teams that would be working together for the remainder of the training.

The agenda covered being a team leader; components of a good deficiency citation and a thorough investigation; Immediate Jeopardy. CMS representatives reviewed the role of the survey team leader and individual team members. They stressed that in order for a survey team to work well together, they must have a solid understanding of the regulations; identify and investigate problems; listen to other members of the team; and come to a consensus about their findings.

Over the next two days, the teams focused on investigations, complaints, Immediate Jeopardy and survey protocol. We reviewed several scenarios of abuse and neglect. Our team objective was to determine which tag(s) or citation(s) best fit the situation, taking into consideration whether or not Immediate Jeopardy was indicated. We discussed challenges in developing good deficiency citations, i.e., are they well written, comprehensible, etc., and then presented our findings to the conference participants at the end of each exercise.

When Immediate Jeopardy is indicated was repeatedly emphasized: Has there been actual harm? Is the harm or potential harm likely to occur in the near future? If immediate action is not taken and is there culpability, did the facility have knowledge of the situation? These factors must be considered to ensure the safety of the clients being served.

An integral part of determining whether or not Immediate Jeopardy is substantiated is the facility’s investigation process. Was the investigation thorough? Were all involved parties interviewed? Is the documentation clear and concise? According to the ICF/MR regulations, “The facility must develop and implement written policies and procedures that prohibit mistreatment, neglect or abuse of the client” (Appendix J-48 W149). The provider’s ability to clearly present what occurred carries significant weight in determining whether or not they were deficient in practice.

I was impressed by the fact that the presenters emphasized looking very closely at the clients being served, not just the facilities they reside in. They stressed the importance of looking at all aspects of the individual person’s life to determine if there are deficiencies in practice. Dianne Smith, CMS ICF/MR team leader, did an exception presentation on this issue, using personal experiences that stressed the need to look at the whole picture of the person being served, not just surface issues.

While this conference was designed as a training opportunity for CMS employees, I found it to be an extremely valuable experience as a provider of supports and services. I always considered myself to be fairly familiar with the federal ICF/MR regulations, but I walked away from this conference amazed at how much I learned in such a short period of time. If your agency is presented with the opportunity to participate in this training in future, I strongly recommend taking it. I’m grateful our agency did.

I'm grateful our agency did.

It is clear that the Federal government, as well as state and local government, Public Housing Agencies, and affordable housing providers must do much more to reverse the decline in housing opportunities which occurred for the millions of people with disabilities who rely on SSI benefits. More funding must be made available, and state and local officials must be held accountable for their responsibility to distribute a fair share of government housing assistance to people with disabilities based on need.

For more information on housing issues, visit ANCOR’s website or contact Jessica Sadowsky (jsadowsky@ancor.org).
General’s Call to Action to Improve the Campaign to Implement the Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Improve the Health and Wellness of People with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched a new campaign in partnership with the Office of the Surgeon General and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The campaign is focused on improving the health and wellness of people with disabilities.

The campaign aims to increase awareness among people with disabilities, their families, and the community about the challenges they face and the importance of supporting them. Key goals include:

- Increasing accessible health care and services for people with disabilities
- Increasing awareness among people with disabilities about their rights and options
- Increasing knowledge among health care professionals about the needs of people with disabilities
- Increasing understanding nationwide about the challenges faced by people with disabilities

The campaign is available online at www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/disabilities/.

The Call to Action describes the particular challenges to health and well-being faced by persons of all ages with disabilities. It identifies four goals that, together, can help people with disabilities experience full, rewarding and healthy lives as contributing members of their communities:

- Increase understanding nationwide so that people with disabilities can lead long, healthy and productive lives.
- Increase knowledge among health care professionals and provide them with tools to screen, diagnose and treat the whole person with a disability with dignity.
- Increase awareness among people with disabilities of the steps they can take to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Increase accessible health care and support services to promote independence for people with disabilities.

Organizations are urged to join this effort as a member of the National Coalition to Implement the Call to Action, of which ANCOR is a part. Contact Dr. Margaret Giannini, director of the Office on Disability, at margaret.giannini@hhs.gov; 202-401-5844.

Florida ARF
Sun Shines on “Rainy Day” Rally

Terry Farmer, President and CEO

The Florida ARF is a statewide, professional industry association that provides advocacy information to individuals with disabilities and the community agencies that serve them.

On the eve of the 2007 legislative session, we were faced with a mounting crisis, and we needed our members to act. Florida policymakers were proposing up to $150 million in cuts to critical and necessary services for thousands of Floridians with mental retardation, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism and other developmental disabilities.

The reason: management decisions at the Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities resulted in a gaping deficit in the Developmental Disabilities Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waiver.

Our lobbying team was working hard to impress upon policymakers the dire consequences of the proposed cuts. Soon, however, became obvious we had to offer solutions and send a powerful, unified message to the Governor and the entire Florida Legislature on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.

With help from Herrle Communications Group, a public relations and issues management firm, we quickly coordinated a public relations campaign with other key advocacy groups – ARC of Florida, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Family Care Council, Florida Association of Support Coordinators, and the Autism Society of Florida.

We planned a media event to call on the Governor and the Legislature to appropriate at least $75 million from the state’s so-called “Rainy Day” fund to secure matching federal funds that would cover the deficit and avoid mandated service cuts in the HCBS Waiver.

Days before lawmakers made final budget decisions, we coordinated a rally in front of the state capitol building that attracted more than 600 people with developmental disabilities, their families, advocates, supporters and community service providers. All were carrying signs and umbrellas to drive home the message to policymakers that “Rainy Day” funds could cover the deficit and prevent drastic service cuts.

The “Rainy Day” rally proved effective, as Governor Charlie Crist made an unannounced appearance before the crowd, as well as a stream of lawmakers, who declared their support for our cause. The event also generated heavy statewide media coverage that featured families and individuals with developmental disabilities whose services were on the chopping block.

The good news is the “Rainy Day” rally helped to convince the Florida Legislature to put more money in the budget to cover the deficit in the HCBS Waiver. At the same time, lawmakers did implement some cost containment measures that will reduce and limit certain service options.

In the end, this campaign was a success. It increased awareness of the developmental disabilities community and proved that advocates working together can resolve a crisis with effective public relations, a strong unified message and grassroots support.

Terry Farmer is the President and CEO of Florida ARF and can be reached at tfarmer@floridaarf.org.
Community Life℠ LENS Fall 2007 Conference

Come be part of a unique community learning experience and go outside the meeting room into real and virtual space. Groups will explore the web and go out into the community to learn about quality of life, community data, making collective decisions from different perspectives, and developing a strategic community focus. Under the guidance of CQL’s expert facilitators and community representatives, discover how to extend the information gathering process to your own situations and the lives of people in your organization.

A lens is a channel through which something can be seen or understood; it is used to concentrate light on a subject. It brings things into focus.

During this conference, you will learn the skills to:

- Define various perspectives on the meaning of “community”
- Use different learning styles and experiences to gather and analyze data about quality and Community Life℠
- Reframe your thinking to look at the community surrounding your own organization
- Identify the Community Life℠ and Social Capital data most important to your community and to your organization
- Strategize how to use the data to impact your organizational planning efforts
- Identify how to build partnerships for your organization within your community
- Actualize the Community Life℠ measures
- Plan and undertake strategic initiatives to enhance quality of Community Life℠

For more information on the Community Life℠ LENS Fall 2007 Conference, contact Melanie Fender at 410.583.0060 or mfender@thecouncil.org or register online at http://www.thecouncil.org/conferences/featured/

We can bring the Community Life℠ LENS to your organization or community. Contact:
Tammi Odom, Associate Vice President of CQL Services
TDom@thecouncil.org
443.415.7563
In October, ANCOR will join with providers of employment and vocational supports in celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEM). “Workers with Disabilities: Talent for a Winning Team!” is the official 2007 theme for NDEM, designated by the Labor Department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and observed nationwide.

**History**

Congress enacted a law in 1945 declaring the first week in October of each year “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the word “physically” was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

**Start Planning for Events and Activities Early**

NDEM is a time not only to acknowledge the struggle people with disabilities endure to obtain employment, but also to celebrate the strides made by those who have overcome the many barriers to employment. It is also an opportunity to recognize employers, who have hired people with disabilities and are tapping into new sources of creativity in this existing, rich source of loyal employees. It’s not too early to start planning for events and activities that recognize employment accomplishments and draw attention to the 70 percent of unemployed people with severe disabilities—a huge untapped portion of the labor force.

**Activities to Recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month:**

- Employer recognition events
- Share successes with the media
- Identify employers who hire people with disabilities to the media
- Host events highlighting employers and individuals
- Meet with and form partnerships with local workforce investment boards and one stop centers
- Work with your governor’s office to issue a proclamation

See Get Ready page 12

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Blackjack, from page 7

...ing and watch for an ANCOR Action Alert on the things you can do in August to get your Representative’s attention.

DSPs to DC

The NAC is working hard to give America’s direct support workforce a voice. But no one can communicate the challenges facing this essential workforce better than the Direct Support Professionals themselves. To that end, ANCOR is organizing a special DSPs to DC event in conjunction with its 2007 Governmental Activities Seminar (GAS). This September 10th and 11th GAS special feature has no registration fee and is open to DSPs, as well as families and self-advocates, who want to show their support for their DSPs. ANCOR members will be responsible for all travel and lodging costs for participating DSPs and the event itinerary includes:

* Attend customized DSP training sessions on Monday afternoon, September 10 at The Washington Court Hotel.
* Special evening reception (with GAS registrants) on Monday evening, at The Washington Court Hotel, featuring entertainment by The Capitol Steps.
* Attend a morning briefing on Tuesday, September 11th at the Holiday Inn on the Hill.
* Box lunches and a joint pre-Hill session and DSP recognition with ANCOR Seminar attendees Tuesday morning, September 11th at the Washington Court Hotel.
* Attend RALLY on Capitol Hill at noon, September 11th.
* Participate in Hill visits the afternoon of Tuesday, September 11th.

To get more information on the DSPs to DC event and lodging options or to register your DSPs, please view the GAS registration form at www.ANCOR.org, http://www.ancor.org/conferences/2007_GAS_Brochure.pdf.

ANCOR is committed to bringing a minimum of 100 DSPs to Washington, DC for this important event and there are many reasons for ANCOR members to participate—raising awareness on the issue, raising your organization’s profile on Capitol Hill, building good will with your workforce, internal and external promotional opportunities, etc. Whether you send one DSP or 20 to Washington, it will Make a Difference in telling the story of the workforce crisis. You simply cannot afford to leave your DSPs at home! Register your DSPs today!

If you have any questions about the DSPs to DC event or any NAC activity, please contact our advocacy consultant, Daryn Demeritt, ddemeritt@fieldgoals.net.

Get Ready, from page 11

ANCOR appreciates all of your efforts to expand opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. Watch for more NDEM activity ideas in future LINKS, WICs, and www.ancor.org. Please share any NDEM activities or ideas your agency or state association is sponsoring with Jessica Sadowsky at jsadowsky@ancor.org.

Education, from page 1

...including a visit to Motivation’s rustic mountain camp for people with disabilities and Keystone’s Tudora village project in Moldova.

Participants were impressed with the in-roads ANCOR international members in Romania and Moldova have made in providing foster care and community-based supports and services to people with disabilities and socially vulnerable children.

They also experienced the continuing challenge of deinstitutionalization through visits to government-operated facilities and orphanages.

All-in-all, member participants were inspired by the people they met and programs they observed, gaining an appreciation for and understanding of the challenges still facing these countries and the NGOs providing community-based supports and services. As a result, several participants have since joined the ANCOR International Committee in order to remain involved and strengthen their affiliation with ANCOR international members.

ANCOR is planning two tours in 2008-09. One, prospectively to northern Russia, and a second to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. An African tour is anticipated in late 2009 or 2010. Details will follow as they are available.

Special thanks to Motivation Romania, Mosaic, Speranta Center and Keystone Human Services for their assistance and support in making this tour possible.

If you are interested in a future international tour or in getting more involved in ANCOR’s international efforts, contact Jerri McCandless at ANCOR jmccandless@ ancor.org. Opportunities for staff exchanges and international support donations are available.
Criteria for Unpaid Sleep Time for Employees Who Reside on the Premises for an Extended Period of Time

Joni Fritz, Labor Standards Specialist

This is the third in a series of articles (see April & June ‘07 LINKS) developed in response to questions regarding the circumstances under which employees need not be paid for sleep time. In previous articles, we discussed criteria applied to employees who are on duty for periods of 24-hours or more and for those who make the employer’s residence their “permanent” residence. There is a third category which enables agencies to hire people who need not be paid for sleep time.

Residing on the employer’s premises “for an extended period of time”

To reduce staff turnover, agencies began employing people who would work at a group living arrangement several days a week rather than on a permanent basis. In 1988, the U.S. Department of Labor developed an enforcement policy that permitted this method of staffing and established rules regarding its use if agencies desired to avoid paying for a sleep period of up to eight hours.

These employees must agree in advance of employment to these conditions and be free to come and go as they please during any unpaid free period in the middle of the day. The key to this policy is that the employees must sleep in private quarters in a homelike environment and be compensated for a minimum of 8 hours in each of 5 consecutive 24-hour periods (totaling 120 hours) in each workweek.

The phrase “private quarters” means that the employees may not share a bedroom with another employee or with someone served by the group living arrangement. They must be able to leave personal possessions in the room when they are not staying in the home. The term “private quarters” is not meant to imply that the employees must have a private bathroom dedicated to their use alone, but they must be able to lock the door when using the bathroom.

The phrase “homelike environment” means that this policy does not apply to larger institutional settings, but is restricted to staff who work in group homes and apartments.

Any 24-hour period can be used and it may begin and/or end with a period of uncompensated free time.

An example of a staffing pattern that meets these criteria is an employee who begins working at 5 p.m. Sunday and is on duty and compensated for the period from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. The employee is then on duty from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and again from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday; and Friday from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. He or she sleeps on the premises from Sunday through Thursday nights. Each day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., this employee is free to come and go and use the time for personal purposes.

Another staffing pattern that conforms to this enforcement policy is an employee who works Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., sleeping at the home Monday through Thursday or Friday nights. The period from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day is for personal use.

These staffing patterns demonstrate the basic minimum requirement. In the real world, employees generally must be on duty for more hours each day. This means that overtime pay is required when the hours total more than 40 in a work week.

Our next column in this series will discuss how to staff homes on weekends when using these types of staffing patterns during the week.

ANCOR WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS!

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bfullbright@marbridge.org

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How to boost employee morale, reduce turnover and enhance your benefits package.

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Technological Efficiencies

Greg Wellem

Imagine! sets forth a bold, strategic plan to incorporate technology to best support individuals with disabilities where and when they need it.

Headquartered in Colorado, Imagine! is a not-for-profit organization that provides services to people of all ages with cognitive, developmental, physical and health-related needs. Like many human service organizations, in the past few years we have found ourselves facing a growing demand for our services at the same time that the funding and resources needed to provide those services have become increasingly scarce. This has required imaginative and forward thinking on the part of our staff and board, and together we have worked to create a strategic plan focused on creating new, innovative and efficient service delivery models. Technology has played a key role in this plan.

Imagine! has a well-established history of using technology to improve our service delivery. Over the years, we’ve adopted systems to improve management of information, including document imaging, complete CRM applications, online training and a variety of web-based software solutions. The primary goal of these efforts has been to increase efficiency by having information immediately available, anywhere and at any time. Ultimately, this led to the development of our MedSupport software, an online system that automates nursing and direct service professional tasks.

We have also worked hard to integrate more assistive technology into our programs. Partnering with the Coleman Institute on a variety of research applications has helped us to look at cutting edge programs. One of the most successful results of this partnership involves three young men who use speech communication devices and wheelchairs. They live together in a modified house and can control much of their environment through their communication devices. They can call their families, operate media devices and appliances within the house, and call for on-site assistance. Remote access helps managers monitor the home offsite and to conference call with the consumers as necessary. This has allowed us to significantly reduce staffing costs while at the same time improving service delivery.

We are also using technology to create efficiencies for families. An example can...
LifeQuest Meets Needs through Two Parallel Systems

For over 15 years, ANCOR member LifeQuest has provided family support services in South Dakota; the first in the state to do so. It has continued to build relationships with key stakeholders, including the state, families, providers and legislators, to help them understand what supports LifeQuest can provide to individuals and families in a helpful and inviting way.

One area that has proven especially fruitful for LifeQuest relates to the South Dakota self-direction initiatives. Beginning with a budget of approximately $25,000, family support services has grown into a $1.2 million dollar business for the organization. Today, LifeQuest serves as an agency of choice, provider and fiscal agent, for over 400 families in South Dakota.

Family support services have been a separate function within the agency since its beginning, alongside traditional provider services. However, as the young children of active and informed parents begin to age, the industry may well see an increasing blending of services.

There are six key ingredients that have made LifeQuest family support services successful.

- Ensure that service provision is a collaborative process involving state and local agencies
- Assure cooperative and careful supervision of service coordinators working in concert with state representatives
- Be flexible so that families and service coordinators have greater latitude in determining what they need and want
- Establish a “whatever it takes” culture within your organization to meeting consumers’ needs
- Establish general guidelines with the state and providers so all participants understand their roles in the process
- Assure that there are service coordinators available to meet regularly with the family

Overall, LifeQuest has one consistent theme: collaboration. At every step of the process, we have been involved with key stakeholders—whether through a family support council, working with consumers or providers or interacting with policymakers.

See LifeQuest page 17

In a recent survey, members rated Al Condeluci’s Advocacy for Change the #1 ANCOR publication!

Hear what providers are saying about Advocacy for Change:

“One of the easiest and most helpful guides in the field of advocacy. I highly recommend it to my clients’ families.”

“A wonderful resource that can serve as a template for change in every community.”

“Dr. Condeluci’s practical suggestions ensure that grassroots leaders ask the important questions before they begin advocating. By grappling with the issues up front, grassroots leaders are more likely to be effective. Condeluci knows that. And now others can, too.”

Take advantage of this must-have resource!

With this manual, you will:

- Learn the key themes underpinning successful advocacy
- Find a step by step guide to achieve your goals
- Discover how to avoid common advocacy pitfalls


Copies of Advocacy for Change are available at $25.00 for members. Please contact ANCOR Foundation at 703-535-7850 x115 to discuss the special-discounted rate for multiple purchases. Online registration forms are available at https://www.ancor.org/foundation/publication.cfm.

Advocacy for Change is a publication of ANCOR Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to build the commitment and capacity of providers and communities to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.
Technology, from page 15

be seen in a recently created pilot program for parents of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Instead of going through a case manager or a resource coordinator, families use a web store to select services. The web store displays the family’s allocation, approved service providers and the rates of those providers. The page also provides links so families can access more information about any provider. Allowing families to use a self-direction model in choosing their services not only has significantly reduced administrative costs, it has also resulted in an increase in customer satisfaction among the families enrolled in the program.

Unfortunately, there is not a single, comprehensive technological solution that incorporates all aspects of the multifaceted business of providing services and supports to individuals with developmental and cognitive disabilities. The various computing platforms are complicated and getting data to integrate is not always easy. Imagine!’s staff and board have dedicated themselves to pursuing a wide-ranging approach to utilizing technology in our service delivery efforts. As part of this goal, Imagine! will break ground on our new SmartHome within the next year. The SmartHome will incorporate cutting edge technologies to enhance the quality of life of consumers, augment the effectiveness of staff as caregivers, and provide cost and energy savings for Imagine!. Technology will allow the SmartHome to:

• Sense, store and transmit health and activity information using real-time digital technologies.
• Detect behavioral cues that indicate changes to an individual’s physical condition.
• Enhance residents’ social networks and independence through improved communications and mobility.
• Regulate ambient conditions in the environment to fit residents’ needs.

Using technology to create cost efficiencies and savings will soon be the norm in the field of human services. The time is now for organizations to include new technologies in their strategic and long term planning.

LifeQuest, from page 16

engaging community groups. LifeQuest has continued to partner with any and all who are receptive.

Effectively harnessing technology to support self-directed services has also helped the organization tremendously. Now, families and providers can easily view the support plan and input data and comments. There is less time spent on completing paperwork and more time on supporting the individual.

The role of service coordinators is critical in delivering effective family support services. From establishing resource binders to continually emphasizing ways to connect with the community and building natural supports, the service coordinators are the lynchpin of this system, helping to create excellent customer satisfaction and increased demand in this service area.

While family support services have continued to grow, LifeQuest has maintained its more traditional services, and so continues to run two systems simultaneously. To better explain the increased complexity of the organization, LifeQuest has developed a menu of services to market. No longer reliant on referrals from schools or institutions, the organization has taken a proactive step toward positioning itself in a competitive marketplace. Providers will no longer be providing services as a package deal; it’s all about a menu of choices. We need to understand that and continue to evolve.

For the future, providers must be more aware of what is happening in self-directed services. Many are already doing a lot in this area and simply need to keep going. There will be a place for providers at the table in the future. To stay in the game, though, we have to change how we view the work we do, not change why we do what we do.

AUTHOR LINK Daryl Kilstrom is the Executive Director of LifeQuest, an organization supporting over 700 customers throughout South Dakota. Daryl can be reached at dklstrom@lifequestsd.com

To view the menu of services LifeQuest has developed go online to http://www.ancor.org/pe/Life_Quest_Menu.doc.

POSITION AVAILABLE

State of Ohio Developmental Center Superintendent/CEO

The Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities has immediate openings for the position of Superintendent/CEO at various locations throughout the state. The Superintendent/CEO serves as a change agent in a leadership and administrative capacity, responsible for the total operations of ICFMR developmental centers, departments, residential homes, physical plant, and program areas.

Qualifications:

• Graduate degree in hospital administration or related field (e.g. management science, public administration)

Experience and/or training equivalent to:

• 3 years in mental health or mental retardation and developmental disabilities programs or related field
• 2 years budgeting
• 2 years management
• 2 years supervision
• 1 year public relations
• 1 year state operated services operations and methods of state governmental experience

NOTE: a combination of related education and/or experience may be substituted for the qualifications as listed.

Annual Salary: Negotiable

Submit resume to:
Department of MR/DD
Alicia Conley, Personnel Manager
30 E. Broad Street, 13th Floor
Columbus Ohio 43215-3414
Email: Alicia.Conley@dmr.state.oh.us

The State of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of Services

AUTHOR LINK Greg Wellems is the Innovations Director at Imagine! He can be reached at gwellems@imaginecolorado.org.

ANCOR—Providers offering quality supports to people with disabilities.—www.ancor.org

July/August 2007
ANCOR is pleased to announce a partnership with BCS Recycling Specialists that helps member agencies, ANCOR and the environment! By adopting the "Recycle with ANCOR" program, members and their affiliates earn money from recycling Inkjet cartridges, cell phones, PDAs and laptops.

Since 1988, BCS Recycling Specialists has been working with large businesses and non-profits to recycle hazardous electronic waste. BCS has a streamlined collection process that makes recycling easy. Each participant receives collection boxes adorned with their agency logo and a label that says, "Proud Member of ANCOR." You earn by encouraging everyone you know to recycle their Inkjet cartridges, cell phones, and PDAs in your agency boxes. Laptops are not collected in the boxes. Instead, simply request prepaid mailing labels from BCS.

Check [www.ancor.org](http://www.ancor.org) for more information on Recycle with ANCOR. Or, to order boxes, contact BCS directly at 1-888-656-4104. Be sure to tell them you’re an ANCOR member. You’ll be able to see and learn more about the services offered by BCS at their exhibit booth at the ANCOR Governmental Activities Seminar Sept 9-11 in Washington, D.C. Register for their drawing to win a laptop computer.

**Connect with ANCOR on Flickr**

To help put a face on the ANCOR community, the association recently established a group on Flickr, a free photo-sharing website. You’re invited to use this group site to post pictures of your events, programs, staff members, etc. The upcoming Governmental Activities Seminar (September 9-11) presents the perfect opportunity to build this ANCOR Flickr community. All attendees are encouraged to take photographs of their experiences at GAS. When you get home, make a personal Flickr account and upload these photos. Next add them to the ANCOR Photo Pool at [http://www.flickr.com/groups/417579@N23/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/417579@N23/). You can also view ANCOR’s photos of GAS and past events at [http://www.flickr.com/photos/ancor/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ancor/).

To learn more about Flickr visit [http://www.flickr.com/tour/](http://www.flickr.com/tour/).
What is Big Sky?

The Big Sky project was conceived in April 2004 in realization that the goals that led to both the deinstitutionalization movement and the passage of the ADA have not been fully realized. The fact that there is a long way to go before individuals with disabilities are fully integrated into all aspects of society motivated United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) to jump start a far-reaching dialogue about how people with disabilities can become fully integrated in society and live life without limits.

It’s anticipated that Big Sky will be a catalyst for galvanizing a national effort to create a new vision of the future for people with disabilities, raising public awareness about the serious challenges that remain for people with disabilities, while at the same time developing strategies, initiatives, programs and public policy to address them.

Achievements

To date, Big Sky accomplishments include distribution of a DVD “focus group in a box” to affiliates and other organizations to encourage discussions around the opportunities and obstacles facing people with disabilities; and the creation of a custom forecast map designed by the Institute for the Future (IFTF) that identifies future forces that are likely to have major impact on individuals with disabilities over the next decade.

In November 2006, UCP convened the Thought Leaders Workshop to provide a select number of nationally recognized leaders/visionaries with the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with the IFTF leadership team about trends that may have significant impact on individuals with disabilities over the next decade.

In February 2007, UCP convened two sessions: the Big Sky Project Custom Forecast Map Spokesperson Training, which provided a very select number of national leaders with the training and resources needed to understand, interpret and effectively communicate the implications of the custom forecast map on individuals with disabilities to their staff, colleagues, members, elected officials and other appropriate constituencies; and the Straw Person Visioning Session in Omaha, Nebraska, which jump started the development of a new vision of the future for people with disabilities, based on current realities and the findings from the custom forecast map.

At the Big Sky Project National Visioning Sessions and 2007 UCP Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida,
ANCOR's Pietrangelo Graduates from Aspen Institute

ANCOR CEO Renee Pietrangelo is among the 19 graduates of the Aspen Institute Leadership and Sector Skills Academy. The year-long program included a series of leadership workshops developed by the Aspen Institute that exposed Pietrangelo and fellow participants to some of the country’s best thinking, as well as concrete examples of successful programs and employer partnerships in sectoral employment development.

YAI Recognized for Entrepreneurial Excellence in Social Enterprise

ANCOR member YAI/National Institute for People with Disabilities Network announced that Dr. Joel M. Levy and Dr. Philip H. Levy received the Ernst & Young Metropolitan New York area Entrepreneur Of The Year® 2007 Award in the social entrepreneur category. The award recognizes outstanding entrepreneurs who are building and leading dynamic, growing businesses, according to Ernst & Young. “This award is the product of a positive partnership for human dignity,” said Dr. Philip H. Levy, president of the YAI/NIPD Network. “We are grateful to our consumers and their families, our staff, Board of Trustees, friends in government and in the corporate sector, and to the supporters who help us promote the spirit of entrepreneurship throughout our organization.”

Debbie Zubke, Wisconsin

I am celebrating my 31st year at Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services, Inc., this month! Upon graduation from college, I was looking for a temporary job while I looked to start my teaching career. My first job offer was from Bethesda as a direct care worker, and its the people I supported in that position who are the reason I am still working at Bethesda today. Over these 31 years, I have held a progression of management positions. As of July 1, 2007, I became the Northern Division Operating Officer and now oversee programs from Oregon to New Jersey. I believe that involvement in ANCOR is extremely important to Bethesda and the people we provide supports to. Working together with ANCOR members on issues such as funding, creating true choices for people and health care gives us a larger, uniform voice. The opportunity to come together, impact public policy and advocate at a national level gives us all a better chance to have a positive impact on the lives of people we serve.

Bethesda's mission for over 100 years has been to provide Christ-centered services to people with developmental disabilities. ANCOR’s commitment to people with developmental disabilities makes it a perfect fit with our organization.

UCP, from page 19

April 12-14, conference participants had the opportunity for in-depth review and discussion of future forces that are likely to have major impacts on individuals with disabilities. Keynote speaker Dr. Bob Johansen of IFTF highlighted the waves of change that will shape our world over the next decade and discussed how people with disabilities might use these future trends and their abilities to explore and engage the world in meaningful ways. Big Sky convened three visioning sessions during the conference that provided participants with an opportunity to identify key elements that should be included in a new vision of the future for individuals with disabilities. After much deliberation and discussion, the following key elements were identified:

- Believable hope
- Navigating the world across generations
- Universal access
- Agile/potent networks
- Meaningful employment
- Community, not government

Next Steps

While UCP is the spark, Big Sky is too large for any one organization to own. Success will come with the participation and support of a broad coalition of individuals, groups, and organizations. Those partnerships must include the public, private, and non-profit sectors. ANCOR CEO Renee Pietrangelo attended the Thought Leaders Workshop, spokesperson training, and the UCP Annual Conference, and will be sharing more about the Big Sky Project with ANCOR members and leaders.

Together, all of us will create a fresh strategic view of our nation, our times and the possibilities tomorrow holds. Let’s begin today to imagine a world where “can’t” does not exist and you could go wherever your dreams led; a world where disability is a characteristic, not a definition of who you are; and where there is no charity, only investment in people, vision and values.

All of the Big Sky proceedings and discussions from Orlando and Omaha are available on the Big Sky Project Visioning Sessions Website, courtesy of Alegent Health. Everyone is encouraged to visit the Web page to discover how to become involved in this once in a lifetime opportunity. For more information about Big Sky, visit www.ucp.org/ucp_general.cfm/1/16243.

Rep Profile

UCP, from page 19

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When states began downsizing institutions, service providers became responsible for providing housing as well as services for the people they served. Correspondingly, most states established an ICF/MR provider reimbursement system intended to cover both. We all know that today’s waiver system has changed that, with only services being reimbursed. Nationally, there is great inconsistency in how states deal with the issues of housing and room and board costs. At the same time, housing costs have soared. The consequences for both service providers and people served have been enormous, and the need for new strategic housing models is urgent.

SSI, the primary income source for many people with developmental disabilities, seals its recipients into the bottom-most income levels. Priced Out in 2006, the latest in a series of reports by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc., and the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Housing Task Force, shows that the average income for an individual with disabilities is only 18.2 percent of the median one-person household income in the U.S., making people with disabilities among the poorest of the poor. Likewise, the report finds the average rent for a modest one-bedroom unit is higher than the entire monthly income of an SSI recipient—113.1 percent, to be exact.

Many of today’s waiver programs were designed in the 1980s and 90s. In 1998, when the first housing report was completed, average rents took 69 percent of monthly disability income. Compared to today’s figures, 69 percent sounds good. But remember, federal guidelines for housing affordability set 30 percent as the target for housing expenses, and in 1998 that 69 percent was considered “an acute and escalating housing crisis.” Service providers and advocates now are perilously balancing the scales between available resources and stable, quality housing for the people they serve.

Now what?

To their credit, some state governments have become aware of this and are proactively seeking housing solutions. But most states either have not fully recognized the problem or they grasp the predicament, but do not know where to start on a solution. What can service providers do to help their states, themselves and the people

See Challenges page 22
they serve wade out of the quagmire? Service providers must encourage state leaders to take responsibility for designing a comprehensive system of affordable, accessible and sustainable housing for citizens with disabilities. This new model needs to involve all stakeholders in building a bridge between the disability and affordable housing communities, using the following simple goals to organize and drive their efforts:

- **Increase the availability of affordable housing.** States must find a way to provide rent subsidies or capital housing funds for people with disabilities that close the gap. In the highest cost communities, both may be required. There are many federal and state-based affordable housing funding programs. However, most are very competitive and are geared toward multi-family (institutional) projects. Even if funds are successfully obtained, projects require years to complete and consumer choice is not part of the program design. This means that within affordable housing programs, states must earmark “set-aside” funds for special-needs populations, allow funds to be used in small-community scattered sites, and tailor guidelines to allow for consumer choice.

- **Make housing more physically accessible.** As recently as the past two months, we have become aware of individuals who must crawl to their bathrooms because the hallways in their homes are not wide enough for their wheelchairs. Housing subsidy programs must provide money to fit or retrofit housing with wheelchair ramps, special bathroom fittings and other kinds of mobility assists needed by people with disabilities.

- **Make use of design and technology for cost efficiency.** Technologies are available that can increase safety and improve cost inefficiencies. Home designs can have a direct impact on service staff costs. Green technologies can improve both utility costs and living comfort. Other available technologies can assist lifting, automate communications and improve safety. Would you like to receive a text message when, let’s say, a person served’s stove has been left on too long? All these technologies are available today.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, “This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.” As we move to secure more affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities, we must travel more decidedly in that direction.

---

**REFERENCE**

**AUTHOR LINK**
Tim Vogel is president and CEO of Scioto, a national housing service that works with providers, states and advocates to deliver housing solutions for people with disabilities. Vogel can be reached at 614/889-5191 or at tvogel@scioto.com. Learn more about Scioto at www.scioto.com.
MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

Member Highlight is designed to recognize and showcase ANCOR member agency achievements and significant community and other initiatives of note. Our goal is to feature an ANCOR member in each issue of LINKS, so please forward your highlight story to Denise Patton-Pace at dpattonpace@ancor.org. Our July/August highlight member is Miami Cerebral Palsy Residential Services, Inc. under the leadership of Executive Director Marta Morin.

DSP Certification a Must at MCPRS

Miami Cerebral Palsy Residential Services, Inc., in Miami, rigorously and successfully embraced the Registered Direct Support Professionals program and has 69 Registered DSPs to prove it! Approximately sixty more are in the process of obtaining registration; and in the coming months, thirty more will be working toward registration eligibility. For MCPRS, this is the first step of a three-part series in the credentialing and certification standards for its employees.

MCPRS adopted the DSP certification as its primary vehicle for direct support professionals to grow, mature, and establish a reputation in the state of Florida. Added to this, MCPRS recognizes the need of every individual to not only develop professionally, but also economically and the NADSP certification provides a means to achieve this goal.

Training sessions familiarize employees with the certification program Code of Ethics and a copy is given to each and every employee. In addition, the certification program is incorporated into pre-service orientation sessions. Every existing DSP employee, as well as all newly-hired DSP employees, are aware of and expected to sign and commit to the Code. Both the College of Frontline Supervision and College of Direct Support programs are utilized by MCPRS. The College of Frontline Supervision prepares supervisory staff to become mentors to their DSP staff in new and meaningful ways.

MCPRS Executive Director Marta Morin says, “We are proud of our agency’s commitment and the interest, efforts and commitment made by our direct support staff. We are committed to investing in our staff and their careers as DSP’s. We want to ensure that staff brings a full set of ethical skills standards to the job of DSP by providing formal training and utilizing the College of Direct Support as one of our educational vehicles. We look forward to this process with energy and enthusiasm.”
ANCOR Mission:
To inform, educate and network service providers to safeguard, develop, grow and extend their capacity to support the choices of people with disabilities.

ANCOR Vision:
Advancing excellence in supports and services ~ Leading the way to communities of choice.