



Community Connections

Holiday Edition ~ 2009

Executive Director's Update

by Elaine Cale

While I could use this forum to discuss the state of the economy and its effects on our children and families and on us as a non-profit, I choose not to at this time. The story is basically the same for everyone – we are constantly challenged to do more with less! In the spirit of the holiday season, I prefer to share some “good news” as a sign of hope.

In the last newsletter, I spoke of my early experience with my own “community connections.” While growing up in Machias, I reaped the benefits of a strong community and my many connections – often while just sitting at someone’s kitchen table, talking over a cup of tea.

Since our last “talk”... our agency experienced firsthand, the benefit of a strong community. We are especially grateful to the members of Harwood Lodge in Machias, who selected the Washington County Children’s Program to benefit from a matching grant program for community betterment projects through the Grand Lodge of Maine. The end result was pleasantly overwhelming!

The benefit supper and raffle fundraiser sponsored by the Masons was an example of what can be accomplished when the community pulls together for a good cause – several area businesses faxed event flyers along with their daily specials; flyers were attached to pizza boxes; information spread quickly across the internet; area businesses and individuals donated 100 items for the Chinese-style raffle; employees from in-town businesses stopped by to purchase raffle tickets; the Eastern Star ladies made

pies; the Masons, WCCP staff and Board brought casseroles and salads; teens worked to satisfy a community service requirement; young family members eagerly helped with drawing the raffle tickets; an experienced “pie cutter” from church suppers didn’t hesitate when asked to come and cut our pies; an impromptu pie auction took off when a past Rotary president stepped in as auctioneer; the winner of the 50/50 raffle gave back his winnings; the banquet room was set up to serve over 100 people and that was not enough. As one of our Board members described it – “the room was filled with an atmosphere of generosity” – with \$500 in matching funds, a total of \$3,600 was raised to support our programs.

Increasing community awareness and building relationships has been a part of our agency’s work plan and a priority of mine since becoming Director over a year ago. Parents report that the services provided by WCCP helps them and their child with special needs live happier lives. Our services are essential for those living in Washington and Hancock counties – you can help us “build our community” by letting others know about our program. We welcome opportunities to tell “our story” – please contact our office if you or a group you are involved with, would like to learn more about the work that we do.

Until next time... *Elaine*

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Editor's Note

by Jen Wood

We have had wonderful feedback from the last newsletter. Thank you for the supportive comments and conversations since writing about our family journey with my son Cody and getting him a placement in residential care. I'm glad that sharing my perspective was helpful to others.

(Previous newsletter can be viewed online~
<http://www.wccp.net/docs/newsletter/wccp-newsletter-winter-2009.pdf>).

There are several things that have been happening at WCCP since we last "chatted." We've been busy!

- In June, the 26th Special Family Weekend (SFW), where families of children with special needs from around Maine joined at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) for a weekend of respite, education, and connectedness with families facing the same joys and challenges. WCCP is a big part of making SFW happen by helping with planning and attending as family participants and child care helpers.
- In August, WCCP sponsored Machias Wild Blueberry Festival children's activities. Hundreds of children took part in the Children's Parade through Machias, followed by Children's Entertainment by the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers at UMM's Performing Arts Center.
- Also, in August, our annual Family Pizza Picnics for WCCP families were held in Marshfield and in Ellsworth. A great time for families and WCCP staff to socialize in a relaxed environment with yummy food!

- In September, Developmental Therapy groups began in Marshfield, Harrington, along with the addition of a new group at the Princeton Elementary School.
- In October, WCCP's Sonja Ramsdell worked with the Downeast Community of Practice Planning Committee to bring Eric Herlan to UMM's "Harvest of Ideas" workshops. 140 teachers and other professionals attended this workshop about Special Education Law and interpretation.
- This fall, the Oral Health Program received a grant from Maine Health Access Foundation. This grant will fund computer equipment and software to track children seen on the "Tooth Ferry" mobile dental unit.
- In November, the Harwood Lodge Masons sponsored a very successful and well-attended benefit supper & raffle for WCCP. It was amazing! (see Executive Director's update pg. 1)

Please remember to check out our website, www.wccp.net. We're also on Facebook now ~ www.Facebook.com/childrensprogram. Soon, you'll be able to donate to WCCP from your Facebook page, as a cause. Currently, donations can be made on our [wccp.net](http://www.wccp.net) site, using your PayPal account. Updates on both sites are happening weekly now, as a way to stay in touch with our "Friends of WCCP"! Hope you are all doing well,



In Loving Memory of Vicki L. Snowdeal

6/19/59 – 4/28/09

We were all so blessed to have known Vicki as a co-worker and a dear friend. She was gifted with the children whose lives she touched. She had an unbelievably calm, caring and compassionate presence. She exuded kindness. Vicki worked for WCCP for several years and we miss her every day.

Thank you to those who gave to WCCP in her memory. These contributions will be used to purchase an item that reminds us of her and how special she was.

Grow With Us

Creating Routines with Your Baby

submitted by: Sonja Ramsdell, Family Resource Coordinator

Adapted from: *Zero to Three*

For grown-ups, routines are not always our idea of fun, like doing chores. But they can be comforting, like sipping coffee each morning or reading a book before bed. For babies and toddlers, there's no such thing as a boring routine.

For babies and toddlers, their daily routines – like mealtime, naptime, drop-off/pick-up at child care, bath time, and bedtime – happen at about the same time and in the same way each day. These routines can help them learn what's happening next and make them feel safe and secure.

Here are some ways you can use daily routines to support your child's healthy development:

- **To support their growing social skills.** Hellos and goodbyes, playtime, and mealtime are routine times that build relationships with others. They can learn skills like talking, taking turns, sharing, learning to wait, and helping others.
- **To soothe your baby.** Naptime is a perfect example of a routine that helps to relax baby after an active morning. This time can include reading a book, snuggling, and/or singing.

- **To support the development of self-control. Routines can be helpful for teaching children to wait.** Sometimes, waiting is hard to learn! Try singing out “*milk is coming, milk is coming*” every time you get his bottle ready. Over time this teaches him that these words mean I'll get fed soon and you'll take care of me.
- **To nurture yourself.** Parenting has its stressful moments. Finding a way to continue a routine from your pre-kid life can help keep you and your partner close. Take time for an evening out or doing an activity you enjoy.

Keep in mind that there will be times when your baby's routines will be “off”, like during trips. Try to plan ahead by bringing along something familiar like a bib, spoon, or favorite stuffed animal.

Remember to be flexible with your baby's routine and compromise when necessary.

Contact Sonja at WCCP for more information about our Grow With Us program, and how you can join with your young child(ren) under age 5.

~ Donations ~

(since our last newsletter, but not including Fall '09 donations)

Thank you to our donors, listed below, who gave to benefit the children and families served by the Washington County Children's Program. Our apologies if we failed to list anyone. A more complete list of donors can be found on our website, www.wccp.net/funders.php.

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*207-255-3426, 1-800-545-0873, visit our website **www.wccp.net**, or email wccp@wccp.net.*

Special Family Weekend:

June 18, 19 & 20, 2010 at University of Maine at Machias. For more information, contact Lillian Leighton 565-1030, yayamoma@gmail.com.

Upcoming events will now be posted on our website at wccp.net/news.php.

Question? What should I do with my prescriptions that are outdated or that I no longer take?

Answer: Rite Aid is offering a free program to help dispose of unused prescriptions. Packets with detailed instructions are available at the pharmacy of your local Rite Aid store.

WCCP Honors Janet Weston, Past Director & Board Member

On Friday, August 14th, the Washington County Children's Program (WCCP) honored Janet Weston, as the Grand Marshal of the annual Children's Parade during the Machias Wild Blueberry Festival. Janet was one of the early directors of the 34-year old agency. Janet served as director for 10 years in the 1980's, and helped to strengthen the foundation of the agency's mission of helping children and families build on their successes.

Janet was a member of the Washington County Children's Program's board for 12 years, including board president. For over 20 years, Janet was the coordinator for child care activities during Special Family Weekend, an educational and respite event for families and their children with special needs.

"Throughout her career, Janet did everything within her power to see that children received the best possible services. WCCP staff had the pleasure to work with Janet in her role as special education director, to

coordinate services to benefit mutual children," says Elaine Cale, WCCP's Executive Director.

Janet led the Children's Parade with her infectious smile. Cindy Rossi chauffeured her through Machias in her bright yellow Jeep. "Janet has a way of making people around her comfortable," says Jen Wood. "This year's parade attendance was incredible and hundreds of children made their way from Broadway to Center Street." Following the parade, Janet was whisked to the University of Maine at Machias' Performing Arts Center where Cale presented her with a certificate and WCCP t-shirt. Children and families then enjoyed the Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers show, "The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow," also sponsored by WCCP.

In regards to retirement, Janet says, "I have no plans." She's enjoying spending time with her family, sleeping, reading, gardening, and sailing. "I'm doing what I've always wanted to do, but never had the time to do."

Community Connections . . .

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**"While we try to
teach our children
all about life, our
children teach us
what life is all
about." ~ Anonymous**

Putting a Healthy Smile on a Child's Face

adapted from Down East Community Hospital's *Good Medicine* newsletter, Summer 2009

Severe dental disease among children in Washington County is very common and it poses many risks to their growth and development, with children in low-income families as well as those with disabilities being most at risk. Almost 15% of preschool children in our area have Early Childhood Caries (baby bottle tooth decay).

When the disease spreads in small children, extensive restorative dental work is required. Sitting in a dentist's chair is challenging enough, but when very small children require hours of dental work, specialized "hospital sedation dentistry" is required.

The Down East Community Hospital (DECH) in Machias is now offering Pediatric Sedation Dentistry. Dr. Daniel Wood, DMD is generously donating one day a month to provide sedation dentistry in the hospital's operating room to children in most need. To access the hospital sedation care, children must be seen by Dr. Wood (853-6001), who will determine if the child is a candidate for hospital care.

Dr. Wood is joined by Tiffany Hildebrand, his dental assistant. As part of DECH's community benefit program, the hospital is providing the operating room and is covering the dental assistant's salary. The community, the Maine Health Access Foundation and the Northeast Delta Dental Foundation have joined us to help make this project possible.

Before DECH's program began, families were traveling to the Bangor and Portland areas to access care. Most of these providers see a limited number of MaineCare patients, or don't accept MaineCare patients at all. Children in severe dental pain sometimes have to wait months for treatment and many times the distance and costs involved are overwhelming barriers. We are happy to support the DECH's Pediatric Sedation Dentistry Program, bringing new hope to families of children in need of this service!