In This Issue

Awareness:
- CARF Accreditation
- Mass Bankers Association. & Southbridge Savings Bank Presents $5000.00 Donation
- Advocacy
- On the Air Waves
- Legislative Reception
- Employment Appreciation
- Sandwich & Social
- Join the Governmental Affairs
- Capital Insider Newsletter
- “Yes You Can” - Hoyt Donation
- Caring Force
- Engage in the Community
- Good Neighbor Energy Fund
- Solar Energy- Viridian
- First Hand Experience
- The Real Friends Project
- Pro Infirmis- Because Who is Perfect?
- Legislative Breakfast CoHF

Fundraising Events:
- Country for a Cause
- All Aboard The Arc
- Bake Sale- Voc
- Yard Sale- Voc
- Cook Out- QRDH & WSDH

What’s New In Their Shoes?
- Dances
- Family Support Trips
- Southbridge Day Hab
- Quinebaug River Day Hab
- West Street Day Hab
- Vocational Department
- Special “O”

Featured CoHF Business:
- Style Imperatives Gift Cards
- Inquiry Systems

Three Year Accreditation by CARF
by: Cindy Howard

The Center of Hope Foundation, Inc., a human services organization serving people with disabilities in a 64 town area since 1956, is pleased and proud to announce that it has earned another Three-Year Accreditation from CARF, the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. The CARF surveyors found that after rating the agency on 722 points, they recognized that the organization has strengths in many areas, including “dedicated and enthusiastic board and staff members. Many staff members have been with the organization for many years and this level of commitment results in stability, reliability and knowledge that has served them very well.”

Some other quotes from their 18 page report include “The agency is well known and recognized in the community, and named the ‘Business of the Year’ by the 11 town Chamber of Commerce, nominated by people who have seen the kindness and patience seen towards participants in community settings. They have a very active legislative advocacy. Staff members are eager to accept new ideas. The organization has caring, compassionate and highly competent staff members, extensive non-traditional hours of programming and inclusion of other family and community members. The Center has developed numerous volunteer and work opportunities and business concepts that offer the participants a wide variety of choices and programs.”

In case you didn’t notice it in the previous paragraph... the Center has also received the Business of the Year award from the Central Mass South Chamber of Commerce, a much appreciated recognition as we work towards supporting people in their communities through involvement in all aspects of our community settings, including work, volunteerism and recreation. We are grateful for the acknowledgement of the business community for the work we do, as well as appreciative of the many staff, families, board members, funding sources and friends who make it all possible. Thank You!
Attention Self Advocacy Coordinators, Self-Advocates and Allies (collaboration of emails)

The West Region Self Advocacy Conference Planning Committee (WRSACPC) is planning the 11th Annual Self Advocacy Conference to be held at Westfield State University on Saturday, May 3rd from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. This is an annual event in our Region that draws self advocates from across the State. This year’s Theme is: Self Advocacy- “My Thoughts, My Feelings, My Story!” We want to reflect on the past, present and future of Self Advocates and their experiences.

Building Bridges Self-Advocacy Group
First Tuesday of every month from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Dinner is provided.

SANDALS Self-Advocacy Group
Second Tuesday of every month from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Pizza and refreshments are served.

Rainbow Group Self-Advocacy Group
Third Tuesday of every month from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Advocacy
Meets at CoHDH, 1 North Street, Southbridge, MA. Monthly dues of $3.00 is required at each meeting or $25.00 annually. Limited transportation services provided.

Center of Hope Foundation Presents

DOORS OPEN: 6:30 P.M.
DINNER SERVED: 7 P.M.
SHOW STARTS: 8 P.M.

Country For A Cause
Mychael David & Susan Jayne
Performing With Help Wanted Bond
Saturday, March 22, 2014
Point Breeze Restaurant
114 Point Breeze Rd, Webster

$35.00 per person for Family Support Transportation, Staff, Dinner and Concert
* If signing up for Family Support, RSVP must be by Thursday March 20, 2014
* Drop off will be at CoHDH at 6 p.m., and pick up will be at CoHDH 11 p.m.
$20.00 per person includes Dinner & Concert
$15.00 per person Concert Only

RSVP is a must to secure a dinner. Contact Pauline 508-764-4085.
Admission at the door is permitted, but cannot guarantee a dinner.
*All checks are payable to the Center of Hope

All Proceeds Benefit People with Disabilities Participating in Special Olympics

Gift Cards

Show a little Love Style Imperatives

Center of Hope Foundation Presents

Doors Open: 6:30 P.M.
Dinner Served: 7 P.M.
Show Starts: 8 P.M.

Country For A Cause
Mychael David & Susan Jayne
Performing With Help Wanted Bond
Saturday, March 22, 2014
Point Breeze Restaurant
114 Point Breeze Rd, Webster

$35.00 per person for Family Support Transportation, Staff, Dinner and Concert
* If signing up for Family Support, RSVP must be by Thursday March 20, 2014
* Drop off will be at CoHDH at 6 p.m., and pick up will be at CoHDH 11 p.m.
$20.00 per person includes Dinner & Concert
$15.00 per person Concert Only

RSVP is a must to secure a dinner. Contact Pauline 508-764-4085.
Admission at the door is permitted, but cannot guarantee a dinner.
*All checks are payable to the Center of Hope

All Proceeds Benefit People with Disabilities Participating in Special Olympics

Advocacy
Meets at CoHDH, 1 North Street, Southbridge, MA. Monthly dues of $3.00 is required at each meeting or $25.00 annually. Limited transportation services provided.

Building Bridges Self-Advocacy Group
First Tuesday of every month from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. Dinner is provided.

SANDALS Self-Advocacy Group
Second Tuesday of every month from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Pizza and refreshments are served.

Rainbow Group Self-Advocacy Group
Third Tuesday of every month from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Attention Self Advocacy Coordinators, Self-Advocates and Allies
(collaboration of emails)

The West Region Self Advocacy Conference Planning Committee (WRSACPC) is planning the 11th Annual Self Advocacy Conference to be held at Westfield State University on Saturday, May 3rd from 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. This is an annual event in our Region that draws self advocates from across the State. This year’s Theme is: Self Advocacy- “My Thoughts, My Feelings, My Story!” We want to reflect on the past, present and future of Self Advocates and their experiences.
All Aboard The Arc!

Wednesday, May 7, 2014

“We the future depends on what you do today.” - Mahatma Gandhi

Join with others across Massachusetts in focusing public attention on the abilities and needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. All Aboard the Arc! is a statewide awareness campaign and pledge event in which anyone can participate—individuals, families, community members, local leaders, supporters of The Arc, students, and employee groups.

You can participate in so many ways. Create, join or donate to a team. If you choose to create or join a team, it helps to set a fundraising goal. Solicit pledges from your families, friends, coworkers and community members to reach your goal. By raising more than $300.00 you get an opportunity to win an Apple iPad (More details about this opportunity are on the event website.) It’s that simple! Once you join our human rights movement, you will be able to share the rewards of knowing that you have helped our self-advocates on their journey to reach their dreams.

The rally and entertainment program, which celebrates the achievements and contributions of our self-advocates, will be held right in Boston’s Common, across from the State House. This year we are so excited to invite back our favorite Canadian Singer - Song Writer Justin Hines.

The Center of Hope will be having a Local Rally at 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. on the morning of the event. Location TBA. Transportation details for those interested in attending will be announced as the event nears. We would love to see everyones support at the All Aboard The Arc, Boston rally. We are all meant to shine.
Arc Mass 36th Annual Legislative Reception

CoHF was one of many who attended The Arc Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council’s 36th Annual Legislative Reception at the State House on March 5, 2014. Evelyn Hausslein provided the keynote talk for the event which was titled, “Making Our Future Happen: Feeling Safe, Included and Free.” In the process of sharing two stories about her son and his growth, she captured the theme while highlighting positive policies that could advance the lives of persons with disabilities.

Representative Brian Dempsey and Senator Jen Flanagan were recognized with legislators of the year awards. Speaker Robert DeLeo and Senate President Therese Murray enhanced the event by leading the presentation for the awardees.

Brian Leary served again as emcee keeping the program on schedule. EOHHS Assistant Secretary of Disability Policy and Programs’ Rosalie Edes shared greetings on behalf of Governor Patrick. Frank Sally, President of The Arc provided welcoming remarks while Julie Fitzpatrick, Chair of the MDDC ended the program with the “Call to Action”.

After the event the Center participated by hand delivering the event details and budget requests to legislators. This gave the Center and others an opportunity to speak directly to the legislators and invite them to the Legislative Breakfast coming up on April 7, 2014. See back cover for more information.

On the Air Waves

CoHF now gives a “Live Shout Out” on WESO 970 AM radio every week from 8 - 9 a.m. on Tuesdays. We have been reaching out to our business partnerships and have scheduled opportunities for them to share information about their business and their relationship with CoHF.

The past few weeks we have had some wonderful guests to our radio program. Recently our very own President of the Board, Linda Cournoyer reminisced on the challenges of reinvigorating the agency. How exciting it is to realize how far we have come as an agency! Lisa Brodeur, author of A Mother’s Journey, shared her family’s life experiences after a tragic accident changed their lives forever. Matt Lefevre, Senior Developmental Specialist of the Center’s West Street Day Hab shared the goals for this upcoming year for West Street, as well as explained the differences between our four day hab programs. Additional guests included Kristin Galant from the Worcester Sharks supporting the Center at the January 25, 2014 Sharks game, Paul Poirier, a Viridian Representative explaining the benefits of solar energy options by partnering with Viridian and long time supporters of the CoHF- Southbridge Savings Bank Representatives Ron Cooper and Bonnie Losavio.

This is a way to help educate the community on what is new with the Center and those whom we serve. Don’t worry if you missed us live. You can catch up by following the “On the Air Waves” link on the Center’s website. If you would like to be a part of the show please contact Jennifer Valois at 508-764-4085.

Host: Dick Vaughn (Left), CoH Rep: Jennifer Valois (right), Program Guest: Nancy Moore (Middle)
Sandwich & Social- June 10, 2014

Join the Center of Hope for a Sandwich and Social on **Tuesday, June 10, 2014 at 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.** Have a sneak peek, behind the scenes of our many small businesses. See how integration plays an integral role in the structure of our businesses, providing opportunities in growth and meaningful work to people with disabilities. Our agency is proud of the continual collaborations and advancements of business partnerships and independent business ventures that give opportunities to educate, train and employ people with disabilities. If you are interested in joining us please _RSVP to Pauline at 508-764-4085_.

Employment Appreciation- Save the Date

If you have employed someone from our agency, used our services in one of our fourteen small businesses or have contributed towards our employment of people with disabilities, _We Appreciate You!_.

Please join us in an **Appreciation Breakfast on Tuesday, May 20th at the Southbridge Hotel and Conference Center** at 8 am for breakfast and a thank you. We will also show you what the Center of Hope is up to these days and in the future. You will also have a networking opportunity and may set up a table with your promotional materials to allow others in the room to know who you are. _If you are interested in participating (no cost) please contact Jvalois@thecenterofhope.org or call Jennifer Valois at 508-764-4085._

---

**CoHF Small business- Direct Mail Marketing**

With state of the art equipment from Bell & Howell, Champion, and Secap, Inquiry Systems can provide your business cost-effective Direct Mail Marketing Campaigns.

Direct mail offers personalization, format flexibility (post cards, brochures, newsletters, etc.), and your success is measurable through targeted lists and tangible results. Recent reports from Direct Marketing Associations conclude that direct mail is stronger than ever.

Did you know... 75% of consumers still strongly prefer regular mail and perceive it as NON-INTRUSIVE, descriptive and persuasive. 50% of businesses plan to increase sales and generate new prospects through increasing their direct mail volume.

Come to Inquiry Systems for:

- Mailing Lists
- NCOA (change of address updating)
- Folding
- Packet Assembly
- Inserting
- Inkjet Addressing
- Pre Sorting
- Tabbing/Wafer Sealing
- Bulk Mailing

---

Grab your customer’s attention by driving them to your website, store, service or cause with Direct Mail Marketing Campaigns from Inquiry Systems. Save money and take advantage of our postal discounts with as few as 200 mail pieces.

**www.inquirysystems.com**
Join the Governmental Affairs Committee

The Arc of Mass is looking for people who are seriously interested in doing advocacy work by joining the Governmental Affairs Committee of The Arc (GAC). On the first Monday of the month from 10 - 11:30 a.m., members will meet at 217 South Street, Waltham to discuss the issues involving people with disabilities. It will be important for members to familiarize themselves with current and upcoming politicians, and being willing to make periodic phone calls, e-mails and letters, as well as participate in visits to Legislative Offices and the State House.

GAC has developed and compiled advocacy tools to assist individuals in effectively advocating for the interests of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. You will be able to download your own Legislative Advocacy Kit, which explains the basics of legislative advocacy, including an overview of the budget process and the legislative calendar; tips and instructions for communicating with your legislators; sample communications and testimony; and other useful information.

The Arc’s Action Center will also allow you to send pre-written emails to your legislators on issues of concern to people with disabilities and their families.

Also GAC needs your story. Your testimony of your life story helps give our elected officials a personal take on the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

The Center of Hope can also provide you and / or your group with legislative training to get you started. If interested contact: Cindy Howard, choward@thecenterofhope.org - 508-764-4085 or Beth Rutledge, rutledge@arcmass.org - 781-891-6270, ext. 101

Communication from the last meeting

Governor’s Budget vs Arc Requests:

Supporting Families and providing resources to keep them together:
- **Family Support** (5920-3000) was asking for an additional 8M to support three thousand new families and provide additional support to one thousand current families, and received 2.5M.
- **DESE/DDS** (5948-0012 and 7061-0012) sought an additional 2M to restore the program to 2009 funding level and assist 193 families awaiting service, and received 0M.
- **Autism Division** (5920-3010) wanted an additional 3M to fund expansion for both the Children’s waiver and the Autism Support Centers and received 0M.

Promoting Work and Self-Sufficiency:
- **DDS Day and Employment Services** (5920-2025) was seeking 20.1M to cover both the new employment blueprint (11M) and turning 22 annualization funding for 629 students (9M) and received 5.3M.
- **Transportation** (5911-2000) sought an additional 5.8M to cover the cost of more routes to job sites and received 2.8M.

Support Successful Lives in the Community:
- **Community Residential** (5920-2000) requested an additional 148M to cover the annual cost of the Chapter 257 residential rate increase (the first increase in 25 years) plus the annual rate for those who turned 22 last year. The rate increase is a major step forward to ensure a more stable and effective workforce. The account received 148M.
- **Turning 22** (5920-5000) sought an additional 15.2M to cover the 804 students graduating from high schools this year. Roughly 200 students will receive residential services and the remaining money will cover employment, day support, transportation and in-home support. This account received 6.5M.
Reach out to your Senator and Representative Now! Disability Supports and Services Budget at Stake

House and Senate members are now giving their priorities for next year’s state budget to the House or Senate Chair of Ways and Means. Now is the time to act if you care about increasing or improving opportunities for people with disabilities. We need you to email your legislators and reinforce your concern through calls or visits. The message to legislators covers services affecting children and adults – it includes the line items for: Family Support; the Autism Division; the DESE/DDS intensive family supports program for school aged children; Employment services; Transportation; Turning 22; and Residential services.

It is important to personalize your email with a few lines about how the service supports you or a statement of what you need, such as the sentence below. Also if your legislator is Rep. Brian Dempsey or Sen. Stephen Brewer, please revise the email and ask him to directly support the priorities since they are the respective chairs of the Ways and Means Committees.

“My name is …. and I’m writing to you about services at the Department of Developmental Services on behalf of (my child, brother, friend, etc.)” Your message will make a big difference for these services.

Capital Insider Newsletter (collaboration of emails)

Autism - Local Police Departments Can Access Funds to Pay for Voluntary Tracking Devices For Kids With Autism

The Department of Justice has announced that local police departments can access funds to pay for voluntary tracking devices for kids with autism. Funds are available to law enforcement agencies, not directly to families of individuals with autism. These agencies can request grant money to pay for tracking devices and to provide education and training related to the issue of wandering.

Education - Budget Cuts Impact Educational Services for Students with Disabilities

Last year, sequestration cut over $2 billion from general education and over $600 million from special education budgets. Without Congressional action, there will be additional cuts next year. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and National Coalition of Personnel Shortages in Special Education & Related Services surveyed 1000 special education teachers and administrators representing every state asking them about the impact budget cuts have had on their ability to provide educational services to students with disabilities. Over ninety percent of respondents said their school district had been adversely impacted by budget cuts over the last year. Eighty-two percent of respondents said that the cuts resulted in too few personnel to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their districts. Seventy-eight percent said the cuts have resulted in higher case loads and sixty-one percent in increased class sizes. One-third reported layoffs of support personnel and teachers. Check out CEC’s infographic. (http://www.cec.sped.org/~/media/Images/Policy/BudgetInfo.jpg)

Social Security – Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act of 2014 Introduced

Last week, Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) and six co-sponsors introduced the Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act of 2014 (H.R. 4090). The legislation seeks to improve the Social Security Administration’s ability to fight fraud, prevent errors, and protect the Social Security Trust Fund by providing new targeted funding and increased penalties in cases of fraud. The Arc strongly supports efforts to protect and expand the effectiveness of the Social Security system and to ensure adequate funding of the Social Security Administration’s administrative work, including efforts to ensure proper payments.
social. Through the years, the Hoyt family has been instrumental in the betterment of services for people with disabilities. They have set the bar by saying “Yes, You can!” and have opened the eyes of people to the vast possibilities people with disabilities may have with a little bit of help from others. Although the Hoyt family is no stranger to the Center of Hope and the programs provided, they were interested in hearing and seeing the latest endeavors in business growth, vocational integration, program development and community involvement.

Team Hoyt New England has been an active participant at the Center’s Gobble, Gobble, Road Race. Team Hoyt has designed a road race chair in collaboration with Michael DiDonato, of Southbridge Tool & Manufacturing. Together they have partnered with the Center of Hope’s subsidiary, Noress Corporation, for the packaging of the race chairs. After the tour, the event participants gathered together to share insights and much to the Center of Hope’s surprise, witness the generosity of the Team Hoyt Foundation - New England. Rick Hoyt asked to say a few words, and through his computer software spoke these words... “On behalf of the Team Hoyt Foundation, we would like to present the Center of Hope Foundation with a check for $15,000.”

Cindy Howard, Director of Operations, asked if there was a particular program they would like the Center to disperse this gift to. Collectively the Hoyt family agreed CoHF could make that decision based on need and what would serve the agency the best. Considerations on how to best use this generous donation are being discussed.

CoHF would like to extend their greatest appreciation to Team Hoyt Foundation-New England for their continual support and participation and most generous donation. Together, “Yes WE Can” strive for better care, education and development of opportunities for people with disabilities. Thank you once again.

The Caring Force (collaboration of emails)

We need to make this a historic year in how we invest in our human services and we have great news for the New Year, we did it again! More than 1,500 emails were sent to the Administration urging them to give human service workers a modest pay increase through the release of the $11.5 million Salary Reserve. This wouldn’t have been possible without your support and we would like to thank those who packed the State House with a standing-room-only crowd of hundreds of Caring Force members who spoke out for human service programs and workers during our rally and lobby day. You’ve shown time and again that when we work together, we get results together. Step by step, we’re making sure that human service programs and workers get the support they deserve.

Committee on Ways & Means held several regional hearings on the budget. We expect the House to issue its budget proposal in April and the Senate to issue its budget proposal in May. Because of you, we’re going into the next phase of the budget process stronger than ever with members fired up and ready to be heard.

To help celebrate this victory and build on this momentum of more than 15,000 members, please forward this to your friends, family, and co-workers, and ask them to join us by signing up at http://TheCaringForce.org/Join. Also save the date! April 8, 2014 Annual State House Rally & Lobby Day!

Thanks for all that you do, The Caring Force Team | www.thecaringforce.org
Engage In the Community*

Massachusetts Down Syndrome Annual Conference:

This conference will be held in **Worcester on March 22, 2014** and is perfect for self-advocates, parents, grandparents, siblings, educators, and other professionals. Learn from regional and national experts on a spectrum of topics related to Down syndrome.

This year’s theme is “Champions”

- **General Session:** Parents, family member and professionals will learn how to help individuals with Down syndrome acquire the necessary skills to lead fuller, healthier, more independent lives.
- **Young Adults:** Young adults with Down syndrome network and share experiences, strengthen self-advocacy skills, and learn about the importance of leading a healthy life and building meaningful relationships.
- **Brothers & Sisters:** Siblings of people with Down syndrome will hear how other brothers and sisters deal with the joys and challenges of being a sibling and the importance of advocacy.
- **Education:** Educators and parents will learn best practices for educating students with Down syndrome in an inclusive classroom, as well as the benefits of inclusion for all learners.

For more information visit the **Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress or call 781-221-0024.**

Easter Seals Massachusetts - Youth Leadership Network: Worcester*

The Network is a great place for young adults with disabilities between the ages of 14 to 26 to increase their independence by learning how to develop a personal leadership plan, along with working to spread disability awareness and help decrease bullying through the **Don’t disABILITY** campaign. It is also an opportunity to build friendships and receive mentorship from others in the disability community.

This group **meets every 2nd Saturday of the Month at 484 Main Street, 6th Floor, Worcester, MA from 1 - 3 p.m.** There are no membership fees but the request of pre registration helps with notifications if meetings must be relocated or canceled due to weather. For more information **contact Desi at 617-226-2855 or email dforte@eastersealsma.org.**

**March 8 theme:** Getting Around  
**April 12 theme:** Spending Money  
**May 10 theme:** Working

* **Center of Hope Foundation (CoHF)** is not responsible for any listed events, contents, or changes in content, times, dates, fees, or speakers. Please check with event host to verify details. **CoHF does not endorse** any event, listing or product on this site, and all content is for information purposes only.

Autism Insurance and Mass Health Connector - Time Sensitive Information*

Mass Health, and many employer sponsored insurance policies, are not subject to the autism insurance law known as ARICA. There is currently an **Open Enrollment period, through March 31, 2014,** to purchase private insurance policies through the Health Connector “the Connector”. Policies purchased through the Connector are subject to ARICA, and provide access to medically-necessary autism treatments, including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy.

This can be especially helpful for people who need to access treatments covered under ARICA, but whose insurance is not subject to the law. **To read more detailed information on how to proceed, check out this link,** it provides details and instructions for obtaining coverage:

The Massachusetts Good Neighbor Energy Fund (MGNEF) is available to any Massachusetts resident who, because of temporary financial difficulty, cannot meet a month’s energy expense and is not eligible for state or federal energy assistance.

Income for either the prior twelve months or the past month (times 12 months for a total annual figure) must fall between 60 and 80 percent of the state’s median income levels. For more information on proposed income eligibility guidelines for 2013-2014 are as follows check out:

www.magoodneighbor.org/assistance.html

The Fund opened on Monday, February 3, 2014. You may apply by directly contacting your local Salvation Army Service Center. For more information about eligibility criteria and where to apply, please call:

1-800-334-3047 (serving area codes 508, 617, 781 and 978) or 1-800-262-1320 (serving area code 413).

Solar energy gives you the chance to significantly lower your monthly energy bill (something every one of us can appreciate) and the opportunity to make a meaningful positive impact on the environment. The truth is, moving away from fossil fuels such as oil and coal and moving toward clean, renewable energy is one of the single biggest things you can do as an individual to make a difference. Viridian and SolarCity make solar power as simple, accessible and reliable as can be.

- **Free installation.** You don’t pay for the solar panels or installation, you simply pay for the solar power you produce each month.
- **The security and savings of locked-in low rates.** Utility rates have increased over time, but whether you lease or have a PPA with SolarCity, you will enjoy price certainty (and the chance for significant savings) for a full 20 years.
- **Generate your own energy and help the environment.**
- **Worry-free maintenance.** The included premium service package means repairs and replacements are included at no cost for the life of your solar agreement.
- **Monitoring you can trust.** SolarGuard** will constantly monitor your system’s performance. If a problem does arise, service crews will be automatically notified and dispatched to get you back online. (Internet connection required)
- **Energy you can count on.** As long as the sun is shining, solar panels are a reliable source of clean energy. In fact, you receive credit for any excess energy you generate during the day but don’t immediately use.
- **A seamless whole-home solution.** When paired with Viridian’s affordable green electricity, the power you don’t produce from your solar panels can still come from cleaner, healthier sources.

Contact the Center of Hope for help in setting up your solar consultation today and join more than a million Americans who know solar’s the way to go.

---

* A solar power system is customized for your home, so pricing and savings vary based on location, system size, government rebates and local utility rates. Savings on your total electricity costs is not guaranteed. Financing terms vary by location and are not available in all areas. SolarCity Corporation will repair or replace broken warranted components. AZ ROC 243771/RDC 245450/RDC277498, CA LIC#888104, CO ECR#241, CT HIC 0632778/ELC 0125305, DC #711012486/EC232585, HI CT-29770, MA HIC 168572, MD, MHIC 128948, NJ NJHIC#13VH06160600/34EB01732700, OR CB180498/CS62/PB1102, PA HICPA077343, TX TECL27056, WA SOLARC*91901/SOLARC*90597. Viridian is a licensed retail energy provider and certified reseller for SolarCity and is not a solar installer or provider.
First Hand Experience
By: Kevin Ryder

Recently I’d been researching having solar panels installed on my house and called one company who told me that my roof was facing the wrong way and another said I had too many trees, which was odd since I don’t have any trees hanging over my house. Then I found out that they used real estate sites to look at my house from above. The only problem was those site pictures were years old and didn’t show the house as it is today.

I was talking with Mark Carron about installing solar and he told me that Virdian Energy, who is in partnership with CoHF, works with a solar company. I spoke with someone from Virdian who told me that they would contact the solar company and they would call me back. Within a half hour I received a call from David Deluca at Solar City. David explained the whole process to me with no pressure to buy. I gathered my electric usage and cost for the past year and he put together a proposal and we reviewed it together over the computer. It showed the location of the panels and he told me what the costs would be. He explained the savings and what it would cost me. I locked in to a plan where my electricity cost would not go up for twenty years.

The paperwork was done electronically. They ran a credit check and within 10 minutes we were signing the documents electronically. Now I am waiting for the physical site inspection of my house. If all goes well I’ll be saving money and not worrying about my electric bill for the next twenty years.

The Real Friends Project

Video Contest Announcement:

The Arc of Massachusetts is seeking stories of friendships between people with and without disabilities in video form. All submissions will become the property of The Arc of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services. Videos will be exhibited on websites and social media platforms in an effort to continually inspire and educate the public about the importance of these friendships.

Produce a short video (1 to 5 minutes), which focuses on a friendship between people with and without disabilities along with respect and equality for people with disabilities. Entries must be uploaded to an online video hosting website such as YouTube or Vimeo and set to public view. You will need to create a free account on one of these sites in order to upload your video. Follow the upload guidelines on the site in regard to the video format and size.

Winners will be determined 50%-50% by the general public via Facebook and by the subcommittee at The Arc. Submissions will be posted on The Arc of Massachusetts Facebook page from March 25th to April 8th. Votes will be cast by the amount of Likes each post receives. Winning videos will be announced on April 15th.

The Top 5 videos will be shown at The Real Friends Project’s “Power of Friendship” symposium on June 18, 2014. Recognition and prizes will be given to those winning videographers.

- 1st Place Winner: $150
- 2nd Place Winner: $75
- 3 Runners Up: Honorable Mention

Submissions must include a signed release form giving permission for the video images and content to be used by The Arc. Release forms are available. All entries must be submitted via email by March 25, 2014 to young@arcmass.org

Please include:
* Subject line: Real Friends Video Contest
* Your name, contact information, and a brief description of your video
* A link to your video
* The signed release form

If you have any questions, please contact Marisa Young at young@arcmass.org. (The Real Friends Project is a partnership between The Arc of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services)
Pro Infirmis—Because who is perfect?
(content and pictures are from the Pro Infirmis about us description on you tube page and http://beautifuldecay.com/2013/12/06/pro-infirmis-raises-body-diversity-awareness-with-disabled-mannequins/)

Pro Infirmis, a European advocacy organization for the disabled, has created a series of mannequins to provide those reflections in the image-obsessed world of retail.

The project’s call to action is: “Because who is perfect? Get closer.” And indeed, who is? The redesigned mannequins depict people with scoliosis, brittle bone disease and missing limbs. The figures are life-sized, three-dimensional representations of radio host and film critic Alex Oberholzer, Miss Handicap 2010 Jasmine Rechsteiner, athlete Urs Kolly, actor Erwin Aljukić and blogger Nadja Schmid.

Director Alain Gsponer has captured the campaign as a short film and can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8umFV69fNg, which documents the process, is deeply moving, particularly when the models encounter their mannequins for the first time. The works were displayed for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities in shop windows on Zurich’s main street, Bahnhofstrasse. And once they had been polished to the perfected shine of a mannequin and posed in the windows, the disabilities almost disappear. Jasmine Rechsteiner’s curved spine, in particular, creates a stunning silhouette that would be envied by high-end fashion models, and a young girl is shown trying to achieve the same pose after seeing the mannequin.

“We often go chasing after ideals instead of accepting life in all its diversity. Pro Infirmis strives especially for the acceptance of disability and the inclusion of people with disabilities,” says Mark Zumbühl, a member of the Pro Infirmis Executive Board, in describing the campaign. It’s an important lesson, not only that people come in all shapes and sizes, but that all those shapes and sizes can be beautiful.

What’s New in Their Shoes?
(All content is given from Program heads & event/company websites)

Winter Wonderland

On Sunday, January 19, 2014 Annie’s Country Kitchen supplied a delicious dinner at the Eagles Club for the Dance that benefited the Jane Baron Memorial Scholarship Fund. This fund offers financial help to program members who would like to engage in community activities but cannot do so without the assistance of this fund. Thank you to the Baron Family, Annie’s Country Kitchen and the Eagles for lending the function space. Also a huge thank you to everyone who helped make this dance a success, over $1200.00 was raised.

Snowball Semi-Formal

On Sunday, February 16, 2014 everyone dressed in their Sunday best at the Annual Semi-Formal Snowball Dance located at LaSalle Hall, 444 Main Street, Southbridge, MA from 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Annie’s Country Kitchen provided another wonderful dinner and Village Photo & Portrait Studio offered formal pictures from 3 - 4 p.m. for purchase.
**March Dance Party- CANCELED**

**Family Support Trips**

(*content from websites*)

**Nomads Adventure South Windsor, Ct - March 29, 2014 - Cost: $55.00***

Imagine a place back dropped in the mythical lost civilization of ancient Mayan Ruins, ... and then add laser tag, black light mini-golf, and a multiple belay climbing wall, bowling lanes and bumper cars, 10 inflatable bounce houses and that’s not the end of it! Video, arcade games, billiard tables, indoor basketball ... I am already tired just thinking about it! So rest up the night before so you can have a blast. Bring extra money for the arcade. Everyone will leave at 9 a.m. and return at 5 p.m. Price includes ticket to the park and lunch.

**Sky Zone, Westborough MA - Monday April 7, 2014 - Cost: $30.00***

Imagine a seemingly endless sea of trampolines, all connected to form one massive trampoline surface. Now, imagine that surface enclosed with angled trampolines that allow you to literally bounce off the walls! The first Monday of each month Sky Zone opens for our jumpers with special needs. They will dial down the noise, increase the staff ratio and limit the capacity for the enjoyment of our special guests. A signed waiver is required for all who participate. Meet at CoHF at 3 pm (program members can stay after program). We will jump for an hour and stop for dinner on the way home. Price includes jump fee and dinner. Pickup at the CoHF at 7:30 pm.

**Disney on Ice, Worcester, MA - Thursday April 24, 2014 - Cost: $30.00**

Come see Disney on ice present “Princesses and Hero’s”. We will be meeting at the CoHF at 4:30 pm (program members may stay after program). We will head to dinner at Papa Gino’s and then off to the show! We will return to the COHF for pick up at 10:00 pm. Price includes dinner and ticket to show.

**Movies & Shopping @ Blackstone - Saturday May 10, 2014 - Cost: $30.00**

Shopping, Lunch and movies, who could ask for more? Come hang out with your friends while enjoying a day to shop at the Blackstone Valley Shops, have lunch at Red Robin and see a movie. Meeting at the CoHF at 9 am and returning at 4:30 pm. Price includes movie tickets and lunch.

**Mystic Aquarium, Mystic, CT - Saturday May 31, 2014 - Cost: $55.00**

Come with us as we explore all the exhibits at the Mystic Aquarium. Roll up your sleeves, reach in and touch rays, get a little wet and laugh while the penguins dance. Lunch will be purchased at the food court. We will be meeting at CoHF at 9 am and returning at 4 pm for pick up. Price includes entrance fee, 3D movie and lunch.

**Center of Hope Day Hab**

The purpose of Social Skills as a topic in our program curriculum is to assist members in verbalizing their thoughts, experiences, and life stories comfortably. “Chat Pack Story” cards offer conversation topics that are appropriate for social settings and allows for the speaker to express themselves by telling a story. One example may be to share a story about a dessert so delectable they will never forget it. This type of suggestion allows creativity by using descriptive words and reinforces positive reflection. A clear expression of ones needs and wants are key to successfully engaging with others and within the community.
**Southbridge Day Hab**

The winter weather has made traveling difficult for many, so programs were creative with indoor activities for the holidays. In the month of February SDH created Valentines and special decorations for the Valentine’s Day party. March is also a time where SDH looks forward to the St. Patrick’s Day party. On March 11 SDH will be having a nutritionist named Kathrine Page coming from Harrington Hospital to talk to everyone about healthy foods. Mardi Gras was also not forgotten about; everyone celebrated by wearing purple, green, and gold, and adorned with long beads. Roger H. gave everyone a special treat by playing the drums. For the month of April, Programs will be painting eggs for Capen Hill. Other activities will be going out the Auburn Malls and bowling.

Also on the **second Thursday of every month**, we welcome back Debbie to offer therapeutic massages. If you are interested in an appointment, please speak to your program coordinator.

---

**Quinebaug River Day Hab & West Street Day Hab**

Cook outs are in the planning stages for both QRDH and WSDH. Stay tuned for program dates.

---

**West Street Day Hab**

A new daily schedule of shorter training periods, recommended by CARF, will help accommodate individuals with shorter attention spans. We will be splitting our schedule blocks into four shorter sessions. For example our 9:30 – 10:30 am nutrition class will now be two sessions of fifteen minutes broken up with gross motor time.

**EXAMPLE:**
- 9:30 – 9:45 Nutrition
- 9:45 – 10:00 Gross Motor
- 10:00 – 10:15 Nutrition
- 10:15-10:30 Gross Motor/Transition

We hope that breaking up the trainings with exercise will increase attention/engagement, provide energy discharge, and be a positive reinforcement for individuals to attend trainings since our participants love to exercise. This will occur for every block in the current schedule and all the same trainings will be offered.

---

**Vocational Department - Employment Supports**

The Vocational Department will be supporting the fundraising efforts of All Aboard The Arc! by hosting a Bake sale again on April 4th in the cafeteria during break/lunch times.

---

**Job Club**

Members meet the **third Monday of the month**. Members need to be employed at a Center based work site or a community based site. Oftentimes there are planned events such as game night, movie night, and a big final outing in June. The **cost is $5.00** for each meeting. **Dinner is provided** and **limited transportation is available**.

If you would like more information please contact Ken LaHue - Vocational Department.

---

**Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast**

The Voc Dept is hosting a **Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast** on **Saturday, April 12, 2014 from 10 am - 12 pm** at the CoHFDH. There will be no transportation provided for this event and an **RSVP to your invitation is required** on or before **April 9, 2014** by calling 508-764-4085. **Certificates of appreciation will be presented following breakfast.**
Special “O”

The start of March madness happened the weekend of March 8 - 9th. It was a “ball” of a time for the Special “O” basketball teams participating in the State tournaments. The events were held over four sites in Worcester county: Assumption College, Clark University, North High School and Bancroft School. Teams received the “Best Western Royal Plaza” treatment by staying overnight in Marlborough and the Holiday Inn Express in Auburn, just a “dribble” and “lay up” away to several of the game locations. The Ducks, Bulldogs, and Grizzlies received a bronze medal, while the Spiders and Tigers placed fourth. Everyone had fun after a long weekend of basketball!!

A new season is upon us. Final date for Summer Games Athlete Registration is: March 30th! Sign up now!
Contact Ryan Thompson at 508-764-4085 or rthompson@thecenterofhope.org. All Athletes must have a current physical on file four weeks before the sport’s qualifying games and are encouraged to participate in any fundraiser activities that occur during the sport’s season.

Track and Field: held on Tuesdays, from 10 - 12 beginning on April 8th.
Power Lifting: held Friday afternoons from 1-2 pm at the YMCA in Southbridge.
Volleyball: held on March 27th, April 2 - 3rd.
Softball: held Tuesday afternoons. Tryouts: May 27th & June 3rd.
Fishing: first week in June at Westville Dam. Quabbin Reservoir: August 9 - 10th

***Final Date for Registration for Softball and Fishing is: June 6th!

Sharks Support The Arc- Center of Hope Foundation!

The crowd was wild on Saturday night, January 25, 2014. Over 9,000 people filled the seats at the DCU Center in Worcester to watch rivals Worcester Sharks and Providence Bruins play at 7 p.m. CoHF was pleased to have an opportunity to display Center of Hope literature and advocate on behalf of our agency and those we serve. Highlights included the ceremonial puck drop with the local Boy Scouts and leading the Worcester Sharks players out onto the ice in a “High Five” welcome to open the second period. The Center of Hope’s logo was also featured on 3000 bobble heads of #21 Freddie Hamilton given out at the game. The agency showcased an agency short video of our programs and small businesses on the big screen before the game.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by the “Chuck a Puck” table and Price Chopper “Chuck a Puck” shopping cart. It was a HUGE success! The ice was littered with over 1400 pucks trying to win the Price Chopper cash prize of $200.00 and an autographed Freddie Hamilton bobble head. The proceeds raised through the “Chuck a Puck” will benefit unfunded programs offered at CoHF. The Center would also like to thank our forever friend, Justin Hines (singer/songwriter from Canada), for the use of his song “Come Around” from the 2011 album “Days to Recall” in our agency video. Justin Hines will be back on May 7, 2014 as The Arc’s “All Aboard The Arc” event’s entertainer held in Boston, MA supporting inclusion for people with disabilities.

CoHF would like to once again thank all of our supporting family, friends, and business partnerships for the ongoing fundraising and positive advocacy for people with disabilities.
Center of Hope Foundation, Inc.,
Citizens Advisory Board of South Valley DDS,
Central Mass Providers Present

Legislative Breakfast Keynote Speaker Secretary John Polanowicz
Secretary of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

Please join us on Monday, April 7, 2014

College of the Holy Cross, Worcester
Hogan Campus Center

8 a.m. Registration
Complimentary Breakfast

RSVP:
508-764-4085 - Pauline
jvalois@thecenterofhope.org

Senator Elizabeth Warren will make video remarks
All Gubernatorial Candidates are invited

Topics include:
Keeping Families Together
Promoting Work and Self-Sufficiency
Living in the Community

Secretary Polanowicz oversees 15 state agencies in this role, serving in the Cabinet of Governor Patrick. He is an experienced health care leader, using his expertise to help Massachusetts increase our already nation-leading access to care, while also tackling the issue of costs. John’s compassion and thoughtfulness makes him a strong advocate for our veterans, families and individuals with disabilities across the Commonwealth. He brings expertise working in a cutting-edge community health care system, serving tens of thousands of patients and families.

Prior to his appointment, Polanowicz served as president of Steward/St. Elizabeth’s Medical Center in Brighton and President & CEO of UMass Memorial/Marlborough Hospital, as well as led a financial turnaround that resulted in five straight years of positive financial results while serving as president and chief executive officer at Marlborough Hospital. He is a graduate of West Point and a former U.S. Army Blackhawk Assault Helicopter company commander. He holds an MBA from Stanford University and resides in Northborough with his wife Kathleen.