

THE ADVOCATE'S VOICE

FALL 2010

REACHING OVER 8,000 READERS

A Publication
of the Queens
Council On
Developmental
Disabilities

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Albany: The Budget and What it Means to Us

By John F. DeBiase

Co-Chair Legislative Committee,
Associate Executive Director, ANIBIC

When March came and went without the Legislature enacting the Governor's budget, I don't believe that any of us anticipated that June would come and go and we would be into the Fourth of July recess without a budget. Finally, after all of the fussin' and fightin' we had a budget in the first week of August. It was almost as suspenseful as waiting for the white smoke to rise from the Sistine chapel chimney announcing the election of a new pope.

The final budget mirrors the budget extender passed in mid-June, which enacted the proposed budget cuts of 4% for Day Hab., 3.5% for supervised IRA, and a \$5million reduction in new development. Although the trend for the current fiscal year remained intact, is it possible that a mid-year correction such as took place last November could eradicate that as well? We have reached a critical juncture; additional cuts will impact services. It is time to dig-in and say, "This is it!"

So what do we do?

Letterwriting campaign—letters should be personal that are personal (not copies where you fill-in the blanks). In them, you should explain to your member of the Assembly and your Senator that you are a constituent, state your address, and that you are writing to ask that s/he not support budget cuts to services explaining:

- That services are critical
- The successes achieved would not exist except for the funding of these services
- The devastating effect that cuts will have on quality of life
- The people employed in direct support will become unemployment statistics.

Voter registration—we have accomplished many great things through the

current system. It is now our responsibility to let them know that WE VOTE! And, that we will support those who support our programs. Who is the "we"?

- Individuals receiving services
- Family members
- Other natural supports – family friends, etc.
- Direct Support Professionals
- Other staff

Visits to district offices—especially during this summer when the legislators will be down in their districts running for re-election. This a crucial time for them and a turning point for us. At candidate events don't be afraid to ask the question: "Would you support legislation restoring the cuts made to OMRDD (OPWDD) services?" It is a time when no sitting member or opposition candidate wants to say publically that s/he will ignore members of his/her constituency who are developmentally disabled, nor would any want to read it in a local paper.

We (Queens Council on DD, NYSACRA and IAC Advocacy Efforts) must support any efforts to overturn these cuts. Whether these include a trip to Albany, writing or calling your representatives, or visiting district offices, your participation is vital to success. Don't expect or hope that someone else will do it for you. It was advocacy by parents and individuals with disabilities who forced the policy changes and resulting legislation from which we benefit today. Demands for reversal of cuts must also come from you. When staff members plea the case for services it appears that they are pleading for their jobs. However, when participants in various programs and their families go before members of the legislature, the case they make cannot help but strike a nerve for they are talking about their lives and the lives of loved ones who are directly affected.

Continued on page 5

OMRDD Commissioner Resigns

In her farewell message dated July 1, 2010, Commissioner Diana Ritter wrote, in part.

“I have accepted a position with the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority, (MTA) as Managing Director, an unexpected opportunity that will allow me to take what I have learned, both from leading OMRDD and from previous positions, to support Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jay H. Walder in his vision for excellence in customer service and efficient operations throughout all of the MTA.

During my administration here at OMRDD, we in partnership, have met extraordinary challenges in really tough times. We have weathered storm after storm and yet, have accomplished so much. Each and every one of you has been a part of the team that has built a foundation and an infrastructure that will continue to move toward this agency’s mission, vision, values and guiding principles far into the future.

This agency will not be diminished by my leaving or by any other single departure - it can never be diminished. We have, together, substantially changed the dialogue and the language around developmental disabilities by embracing our slogan of “Putting People First” and have moved toward a more person-centered, customized system of supports and services. We have made it clear that “Putting People First” not only included the people we serve, but also the amazing and dedicated workforce who support and

serve them.

OMRDD is a national benchmark of excellence in service to individuals and families. This agency’s comprehensive system of supports and services is one of the best in the country if not the world. I have all of you to thank for that, because we did it together.

In addition, we, along with the unanimous support of the New York State Legislature, sent a historically significant and very strong message that New York State values the dignity of individuals with developmental disabilities with the passage of the Governor’s Program Bill to change OMRDD’s name to the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, (OPWDD). This new name is significant on so many levels. I am proud to have been a part of this historical change and look forward to this being signed into law soon.

Executive Deputy Commissioner Max Chmura will be taking over as Acting Commissioner in my stead. He has done an extraordinary job and I value his strength, values, vision and energy.

The people in leadership at this agency might change, but OMRDD’s mission is a mission with passion and that will never change, because that is who we are. I have been pleased to have the opportunity to serve the State and the people with developmental disabilities and their families.” ■



Historical Legislation Change

Governor David Paterson officially signed OMRDD’s name change into law on July 16, 2010—it is now New York State Office of People With Developmental Disabilities, (OPWDD)

This historic Legislation not only removes the words Mental Retardation from the name of the agency, but also from state statute and regulations, excluding clinical references. The new name, was chosen in March, 2010 by consensus of representative stakeholders. It eliminates the stigmatizing language which was part of the agency’s name and instead reflects this office; its guiding principle of “Putting People First.” It is consistent with People First language law enacted in 2007 which mandates that in statutory language we place the emphasis



where it should be—on the people we serve not the disability. ■

First Annual Art Exhibit for P.S. 811

By Alice Anasa

Art teacher

I would like to introduce myself. I am the Art teacher at PS 811 Q and I run the Art program here at the school where I work with every student in the building. All of our students have multiple, cognitive or physical disabilities. I began this program three years ago when I was hired; the school had no formal art program prior to that. I incorporate the Blueprint of Visual Arts into my curriculum. We study artists and art styles from multicultural backgrounds from the past and the present.

Some of our favorite activities include celebrating multicultural events throughout the year. In art class we make artworks or props for the events. For example we made a 20 foot long dragon for our annual Lunar New Year parade. Our art activities and parades have been featured on the cover of The Little Neck Ledger six times in the last three years. Most recently we held our first annual Art Gallery Exhibit, in order to showcase the students' artwork and raise money for our Art Program. Needless to say, it was a success. We were able to raise over \$1,000 which will help fund art supplies for various art projects.

As a result of our first Art Gallery Exhibit we will soon be displaying our students' artwork at the Queens Center Mall Visitors Center, located on the first floor (across from Applebee's Restaurant.) This was facilitated by the Queens Borough President's Office, the honorable Helen Marshall and Michelle Stoddart, Director of Marketing and Tourism.

Our students love art and it is a way for them to express themselves while learning a variety of meaningful skills. Many of our students are unable to read, write or verbalize but they can articulate their feel-

ings and thoughts through their artwork. I have seen development over the years, the artwork gets more advanced as my students achieve greater heights, thus their self-confidence increases.

The students' artwork will also be displayed at "LP & Co. Hair Salon" on Union Turnpike at 188 St. Every year the owner, Larry Mottola, and his wife Anna (along with their staff who volunteer their time) close the salon to their regular clients in order to provide service exclusively to our students, and other persons with disabilities. They provide free haircuts, styling and manicures during the holiday season. "The Holiday Haircut Party", is one of our biggest events. Students and their parents look forward to this event. Larry and Anna have graciously and generously been opening their doors to our students for over twenty years. Each year it seems to get more difficult due to the tough economic times in which we live. Because of people like Larry and Anna (and their wonderful elves), it is possible to bring a smile to a child's face and even a tear to a parents' eyes.

Salon clients give generously as well. They purchase raffles that help cover the cost of the beautiful gifts that are provided to all of the participants. The Marine Corps also contribute by donating their time and gifts. Santa Claus even stops by along with the cartoon character Dora to entertain the kids.

This year there was live music provided by Matthew Kennedy, one of our students, who continues to freelance there. Please stop by the salon if you are in the area and purchase our students' artwork, starting in October. You are also welcome to visit our school to see the many art displays.

PS 811 Q -The Marathon School
61-25 Marathon Parkway
Little Neck, NY 11362

Board Of Visitors Seeks Members

The Board of Visitors is a group of community individuals who independently review the services of the Bernard Fineson DDSO. This is a registered organization under New York State law. Individuals who are interested in becoming members are referred to the State Senate for approval.

The Board of Visitors members visit the state operated programs (on-site and in the community) including the residences and Day Habilitation programs. They present their written reports at Board meetings with the Director, deputies and other related staff where they discuss the reports, share ideas

and gain information about this DDSO functioning. Meetings are held about every other month.

It should be noted that many of the adults receiving these services no longer have parents or family members. The Board Members can be considered as additional eyes and ears on behalf of the people with special needs.

Please consider applying for becoming a member of the Board of Visitors. It is an interesting and important responsibility. For further information or application please call Beverly Berger at 718-224-4066. ■

Queens Council On Developmental Disabilities

Who Are We?

The Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities is an organization comprised of parents and family members, representatives of agencies which serve individuals with developmental disabilities, professional persons and advocates.

The mission of the Queens Council is to advise, inform, pioneer, and identify needs and problems in the provision of supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families, and to work toward their resolution.

The meetings of the Council and its committees provide forums for discussion about issues which impact people with developmental disabilities, their families and on the service systems.

WHO ARE THE INDIVIDUALS WE SERVE?

The purpose of the Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities is to assist and advocate for children and adults who live in Queens and who have a diagnosis of developmental disabilities which occurred before age 22. The disabilities include, but are not limited to, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, neurological impairments and learning disabilities. The Council is equally concerned with the families of those individuals. The work of the Council often leads to positive changes in the service systems.

QUEENS COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Council meets at a different location each month. While most meetings are scheduled for mornings from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., there are also special meetings held on evenings and on Saturday.

The meetings highlight announcements of service or program opportunities available from agencies at that time and special activities of interest from the Council, its subcommittees or outside organizations. Guest speakers bring current matters to the attention of the attendees. Questions are always welcome. The meetings provide opportunities to network.

People who attend a Council meeting for the first time may initially feel overwhelmed or confused, but after attending a few meetings, everything falls into place. Parents are never charged a fee. Agencies are required to pay membership dues.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Committees meet at different locations, either monthly or bimonthly. Each committee is co-chaired by a service provider agency staff person and a parent. Everyone is free to attend any committee meeting of interest and may join a committee as a regular member. Committee participants discuss pertinent information, issues and concerns and learn about current mat-

ters and new ideas. Various conferences are planned by some of the relevant committees.

COMMITTEES

AGING: Issues confronting individuals with developmental disabilities who are aging are examined. Attention is also given to families and provider agencies.

Anne Marie Russo (718) 767-4150

Ana Magalee, Parent Co-Chairperson (718) 736-8696, Ext. 106

Yolanda Gross, FECS, 212-366-8148

MSC/CASE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE is a resource for case managers (service coordinators). Representatives from family's provider agencies, state and city officials address specific issues. The committee acts as a liaison among families, case managers and the Queens council.

Karline Dambreville, Director of Family Support Services, AABR, (718) 321-3800, Ext. 229

Philip Wagner, Parent, Co-Chairperson
Toni Martinez, YAI/ NIPD, 212-273-6609

CHILDREN'S SERVICES: A forum is provided for parents and providers who identify needs and find solutions through presentations and discussions regarding the education and care of children, ages birth to twenty-one.

Lisa Veglia, Deputy Executive Director, QSAC, (212) 244-5560, Ext. 2017

Dianne Catrano, Educational Director, Heartshare, (718) 441-5333, Ext. 1401

Nina Roberto, Parent Co-Chairperson, (718) 846-6606

DAY SERVICES: The committee's goal is to ensure that quality day programs and services are provided. An important function is to arrange for Department of Education graduates to transition to appropriate adult day services. The meetings also act as a forum to

share innovative ideas and discuss emerging issues.

Josephine Davide, Assistant Director Day Services, QCP, (718) 380-3000, ext 363

FAMILY SUPPORT: Information is shared about programs and services and available vacancies. Guest speakers are invited.

Elva Grimes, Parent Co-Chairperson

Linda Renyi, Admissions, Coordinator, Life's WORC, 516-741-9000, ext 271

Annette Spallino, Social Worker, AHRC-NYC, 212-780-2592

HEALTH CARE: This group considers the health care needs of individuals and issues of agencies which provide health care and clinical services.

Lisa Orbegoso, Clinic Liaison, YAI/NIPD, (718) 793-2182 Ext. 201

PUBLIC INFORMATION: The Public Information Committee coordinates educating the general public regarding the achievements and challenges of people with developmental disabilities and their families through print, broadcast and electronic media. The committee is responsible for publishing the Council newsletter. "The Advocate's Voice", the qcdd website and planning Council events and conferences.

James Magalee, Executive Director, Queens parent Resource Center, 718-736-8690, ext 104

Patricia Finnegan-Knapp, Supervisor Geriatric Services, QCP, 718-380-3000, ext 355

Brien Cummings, Coordinator of Residential Services, YAI/NIPD, 212-273-6100, ext 2528

Beverly Berger, Parent Co-Chairperson

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES: The meetings are designed to be helpful to families who are considering placement of their family member, as well as for people whose members are already in a residential setting and have questions or concerns. Family members share experiences and the committee engages in problem solving. Regulations that govern the operation of residences are explained. Discussions are held about how parents can best advocate for consumers.

Robert S. Nugent, Associate Director Residential Services, AHRC, (212) 780- 2506

David Casquarelli, Parent Co-Chairperson

John MaGowen, YAI/NIPD,

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE: The legislative Committee coordinates educating elected officials regarding the achievements and challenges of people with developmental disabilities. It guides the advocacy efforts of the Council to elected officials and others in government who influence legislation and funding

of programs for people with developmental disabilities.

John DeBiase, Associate Executive Director, ANIBIC, (347) 594-2124

Doug Triebel, IRI

More About The Council:

The Queens Council maintains close relationships with New York City and New York State governmental bodies in order to advocate for the individuals supported by them as well as working as partners with them to expand and improve services. These agencies include:

- NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.
- Queens Developmental Disabilities Services Office of OMRDD.
- The New York State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD)
- NYCRO, the Regional Office of OMRDD.
- Department of Education, New York City.
- The Borough President's Advisory Council for person's with Disabilities, which includes representatives and advocates supporting people with physical, mental health and developmental disabilities.

IMPORTANT AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND TERMS

THE QUEENS COUNCIL ON FAMILY SUPPORT: The Queens Consumer Council on Family Support has been renamed the Queens Family Support Service Advisory Council. This Council, not to be confused with the Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities, is comprised only of individuals with developmental disabilities, parents and family members. It functions under the aegis of Bernard Fineson DDSO and meets at the new administration building. Parents and individuals with disabilities meet to discuss current matters, issues and personal concerns, programs and services in an open setting with other parents and participants. The meetings provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and considering suggestions and options for resolving problems. To learn how other parents and consumers have dealt with them successfully. Beverly Berger, Acting Chairperson, (718) 224-4066.

Albany

Continued from page 1

We cannot permit the slow undoing of all that we have stood together to achieve for more than 30 years. It is unacceptable for this system to continue to deliver anything less than superlative services, and to continue to foster dignity and a respectable quality of life to those whom we so proudly support. ■

The Fourth Annual Students' Award Celebration

On Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at 6:00p.m. Queens Borough President Helen Marshall's Advisory Council for Person's with Disabilities held it's 4th Annual Students' Awards Celebration. The themes for the awards were "How can I make the world a better place?" and "Who am I?" Some students drew pictures while others wrote poems.

This was an evening where parents and Department of Education Principals, teachers, Transition Coordinators and Parent Coordinators proudly watched as students received their award. Pictures were taken with family members, school representatives and Borough President Helen Marshall.

The awardees are named by categories. "How can I make the world a better place?",

Kayla Taylor, PS 215Q; Alberto Medina, PS 75Q; Jonathan Osario, PS 811Q; Luis Duran, P 72Q;. "Who am I?", Dominique Letang, PS 811Q; Phillis Karmas, PS 811Q; Justin Rodriquez, PS 75Q; Gerald Grant, PS 811; Terrance Carter, PS 811Q; Shameek Fisher, PS 75Q and Jaquan Furlow, PS 75Q.

Borough President Marshall introduced Mr. Charles Hope, Chairperson for the Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities as well as members of the Council who were present for the ceremony. Mrs. Marshall shared with guests many projects accomplished through the



advisory Council. Ms. Penny Ryan, principal, of PS 811, spoke briefly congratulating students on their beautiful artwork/poetry and wishing them success in their endeavors.

As the evening ended there were many smiles on the faces of the students, family members and school representatives. It was a day that I am sure the awardees will not forget. The artwork and poems created by the students are on display at Borough Hall.

The Borough President's Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities meets at the Borough Hall Room 213 every third Tuesday of the month from 2 to 4 p.m. ■

**FREE
CONFERENCE
FOR FAMILIES**

SAVE THE DATE!

Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities Presents:

The Family Support Conference Bridge to Fulfillment

Friday, November 12, 2010

LaGuardia East Sheraton

135-20 39th Avenue, Flushing, NY

Conference will include Workshops in various topics and a Resource Fair

Assistance Available To Help Families:

Access Medicaid and /or SSI Benefits

Schedule appointments for Psychological & Psychosocial Evaluations

Obtain Medicaid Service Coordination & Explore Adult Day Service options

For Information about the Conference please contact:

Patty Finnegan-Knapp: 718-380-3000 Ext 355/ pfinnegan@queenscp.org

James Magalee: 718-736-8690 Ext 104/ james.magalee@qprc.net

**GET
SMART!
GET
CONNECTED!**

Then, Now and Forever

So, here we are today
and, looking back,
I do not know
how I survived.

Anxiety. When will he talk?
He seems to understand.
His words are garbled.

My son learned to talk
and talk and talk and talk:
In his head and out of his mouth.
He'll say, "Excuse me" and go on to interrupt.
He has yet to incorporate the social grace
of inhibiting himself.
He also knows curse words. How did he pick them up?

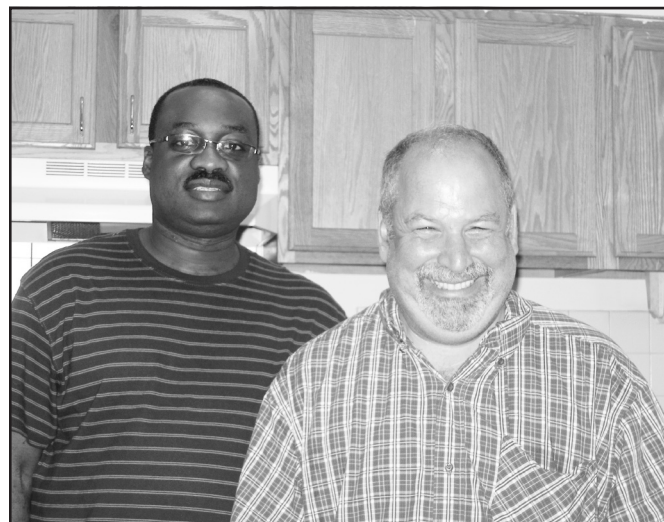
His inner moter pushes him
to run, run, run, bumping into walls.
So unaware of where his body
is in space. Never a sense of danger
as he climbs up the slide so quickly.

So many doctors. So many diagnoses
back then in the 1950's
"He'll grow out of it." "Put him away."
One doctor, a psychiatrist no less,
called him "a defective" in a tone of disgust.
That doctor was surprised
at my yelling onslaught:
"Defective! He's a person. He's my son
and I love him!"

My son is friendly and caring:
"I'll pray for you." "Feel better." "Have a nice day."
He has ideas. He tells me, "It's my life. It's my decision!"
He lives with a gusto that engenders
constant "Slow down", "Wait your turn."
He enjoys and is joyful.

He is 55 years old and we did survive.
He's my son.
He's a person
and I love him.

Beverly Berger, Parent



*Mitchell Berger with Akinwande Odaseme, Resident
Manager, ANIBIC, Levitte Residence*

*Free Evaluations and Parent Training
for Queens Residents without Medicaid Coverage*

Several agencies offers free psychological and psychosocial evaluations for Queens residents with developmental disabilities who do not have Medicaid.

Free in-home intensive parent training is also available for parents living in Queens who have a developmental disability.

In addition, participating families are given training and behavior management instruction as well as case management and advocacy services.

Program Requirements

- Children and adults who are residents of Queens County require proof of identity (i.e., birth certificate, valid passport, driver’s license or non-drivers ID).
- Applicants must be accompanied by a responsible adult for all scheduled appointments.

Completed evaluations will be sent to the family. Agency contacts are as follows:

AHRC	Cathy Shannon	212.229.3250
	Clara Cordon	212.780.2387
PSCH	Michelle Cash	718-777-5243 ext. 210
NYSID	Elizabeth Sunshine	718-494-6457
QCP	Joanna Barberii	718.380.3000 ext. 269
YAI		212.273.6182 and 1.866.2.YAILINK - toll free
CP Association	Roni Zarbiv	718-447-0200, ext 236

THE ADVOCATE’S VOICE

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If you are interested in more information about articles in this newsletter, please visit: www.qcdd.org



If you wish to become a contributor, please contact either:

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BEVERLY BERGER, EDITOR, (718) 224-4066

QCDD Elections Results

On June 9th, 2010 the Queens Council on DD had their last meeting for the year at the Samuel Field YM-YWHA, in Little Neck, Queens. At this meeting election of officers were held. The following officers were elected.

- Chairperson Raymond DeNatale
- Vice-Chairperson Marianne Ardito
- Parent, Vice-Chairperson . . . Elva Grimes
- Secretary Marieta Austin
- Treasurer Marisa Fojas

Thanks to the Nominating Committee:
Brien Cummings and Aeon Clark.