

CSS Express

A Newsletter of Community Support Services, Inc.

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Update on the Return Diversion Program

The Return Diversion program, funded through the Office of Children Youth and Families, has provided wrap-around services since 1993 to children returned from out of state residential placements or diverted from placement in out of state programs. CSS has provided summer camps, in-home support services, residential services, community instruction, behavior management consultation and other individualized services to over 70 children during the past eight years. Many of the children with significant developmental disabilities continue to receive services through this program until age 21. The DDA continues similar services with adult funding, and these individuals successfully live and work in our community.

Since OCYF restated the eligibility criteria and enforced a two year limit on services last summer, no new children have been referred to the return and diversion program. Unless the new eligibility criteria is changed and the two year limit removed, no children with significant developmental disabilities in Montgomery County will be able to access and benefit from this program in the future.

The return diversion issue has received some attention from state legislators. Senator Van Hollen sponsored SB69 which will create a source of funds for OCYF which could be used for children at risk of residential placement. The bill enables the state to access additional federal dollars without spending any additional state funds. Several families told legislators their stories of not being able to access the support services their children with developmental disabilities needed in order to live safely in their homes and community. These families had to endure years of their children engaging in seriously dangerous behavior and multiple hospitalizations. Ultimately, these families had to give up custody of their children in order to access services. The only child who was doing well had been referred to the return diversion program in Montgomery County three years ago. He has progressed, attends school and lives in his home

Return Diversion, Cont'd pg. 3, Col. 2

Progress on Comprint Court

Construction will begin in late March, 2002. After many weeks of intense consultation with CSS staff, Steven Karr, AIA has completed a well thought out set of plans for the renovation of our new support center. CSS has signed a contract with Coakley Williams Construction to complete the renovation work. We are expecting to occupy the building by September of this year.

The building is designed as a home base for individuals supported by CSS in community based programs. The center will provide space for classes, recreational programs, vocational training, job development activities, professional consultation, an augmentative communication library, staff training, interdisciplinary team meetings and administrative offices. The building is easily accessible and within walking distance to shopping and public transportation.



A view of the new CSS building before construction starts

Staff Anniversaries

We would like to honor staff members who have recently celebrated anniversaries with CSS. It is the caring and commitment of our staff that allow us to provide quality services to the people we support.

December

Joyce Buah	5 years	FT
Monica Velez	3 years	PT
Rawle Tucker	2 years	SUB
Oneil Galega	2 years	FT
Victor Akoko	1 year	PT

January

Fasil Temesgen	7 years	FT
Mark Evans	3 years	PT
Benson Salami	2 years	FT
Albertine Dennis	2 years	FT
Matthew Dixon	1 year	FT
Hazlyn Orr	1 year	FT
Margaret Serry-Kamal	1 year	FT
Michael Che	1 year	PT

February

Wayne Gregory	7 years	FT
Florence Tamasang	3 years	FT
Kevin Conroy	3 years	FT
Girma Senay	3 years	FT
Jemima Darbouze	2 years	PT
Amy Semanek	2 years	FT
Florence Lee	2 years	FT

FT = Full Time
PT = Part Time
SUB = Substitute

Mark Your Calendars

*Spring Break
Day Camp
April 2-5*

CSS Picnic - June 1

*Adult Vacation
to Ocean City
June 8-15*

Employment Spotlight

This Employment Spotlight is dedicated to Laura Schramm and Truong Tong, who work at Plan 3, Inc. in the administrative office. Truong and Laura participate in the CSS Supported Employment Program and receive continuous job coaching support at Plan 3.

Plan 3 is a progressive insurance company that provides businesses with new and innovative insurance packages. The plan, developed and trademarked by Dennis Kelly, owner, is unique because it provides businesses and employees with rewards for good health, while not penalizing for illness. Plan 3, Inc. is located in Rockville and manages all aspects of their clients benefits operations.

Truong has worked at Plan 3, Inc. since March 2001. His duties include sorting mail, making new folders, typing labels and adhering them to folders and data entry. When asked what Truong enjoys most about his job at Plan 3, he states that he loves working on the computer, working with nice co-workers and most of all getting PAID!

Laura has worked at Plan 3 since Feb-

ruary 2001. Her duties include sorting mail, making new hire folders, typing labels for the folders and filing. When asked what Laura likes best about her job, she responded that she likes the responsibility she has and sorting the mail.

Plan 3 has a relaxed environment where Truong and Laura have developed great relationships with their co-workers. Everyone eats lunch together and all participate in many different topics of conversation.

Truong and Laura continue to maintain positive work attitudes and complete assigned tasks with appropriate productivity and accuracy. Truong and Laura are definitely an integral part of this team.



Truong likes working on the computer

Staff Spotlight on Marissa Schiller

Marissa Schiller is employed with CSS as a Residential Instructional Associate. She has been with us since June, 2001 and works with two individuals (Nancy & Thea) at our Thomas Farm alternative living unit.

Marissa was born in Long Island, New York. Her family was originally from Maryland, and currently live in Florida. She has a brother who also lives in this area.

Marissa's mom was a Special Education teacher, which is how Marissa became exposed/interested in this field. Her father was in the US Navy, so Marissa and her family traveled across the United States and abroad.

Her favorite country to visit through her father's work was Italy. Additionally, while growing up, Marissa and her family bred and showed Siberian Huskies.

Currently Marissa is attending Montgomery College in a Social Work/Mental

Health Technician program. She will be transferring to UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus) at Shady Grove in Spring 2003.

Marissa enjoys skiing, and she spends a lot of time with her brother and his three children. Marissa has volunteered at the Children's Inn at NIH. She also volunteers at the Stepping Stone Shelter in Rockville, helping provide food and support to individuals staying there. Marissa also speaks on victim impact panels for MADD. Prior to coming to CSS, Marissa worked as a nanny for a family with disabled children.

Marissa finds that she gets a great deal of satisfaction out of seeing Nancy and Thea independently initiate their day to day activities. She loves working with the ladies, and her involvement at CSS. Marissa equates her success as an individual to helping others.

We Wish to Thank our Many Contributors

Monetary:

Lisa & Daniel Paro
Luis & Lizabet Lopez, Jr.
Daniel Hanley
Michael Crilley
Casey & Katherine McCormick
Alfred and Angela Altimont
Mark & Celestine Richardson
Kevin Kane
Ned Dolan Memorial
Charles & Robin Hanley, III
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Katherine Fones
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R.V. Viswanathan
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Gifts In Kind:

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Lucinda Adams
Kenyatta Thompson
Celestine Riggio
Ardell Hillard
Old Country Buffet
Mark Leemon
Maryland Motors

Volunteers:

Robin Gold
Rose Hernandez
David Erwin
Ken Mehrling
Justin Lambert
Katy Karenert
Tammy Bloomer
Bennett & Linda Lentzher
Denise George
Natosha Ezerski

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

We sincerely regret any omissions or errors.

CSS Behavioral Services

CSS has recently hired behavior specialist, Jonathan Dalton. Jonathan will be working closely with the Lakeview, Lowfield, Dalton, and Bayridge teams. Additionally, he will be providing behavioral support to some individuals who receive day services.

CSS provides comprehensive services that assist individuals in gaining the skills and behaviors necessary to achieve their self-directed life goals.

An individual's psychological needs are addressed through a comprehensive behavior management plan which uses a positive approach to teach appropriate skills and behaviors.

The plan is developed by the psychologist Dr. Ron Belcher with input from the interdisciplinary team. Targeted behaviors are monitored through data collection, analysis and review.

An individual's social well-being and relationships with others are fostered through regularly scheduled and supervised activities in the home, school, job site and community at large.

Each service is designed based on the strengths and needs of the individual with

the goal of promoting optimal independence in all facets of life.

The psychological services are monitored regularly for effectiveness. Behavior Specialists make recommendations based on direct observations in natural settings and staff input.

This information is shared with appropriate members of the individual's team so that the services can be tailored to the individual. Behavioral programs are continuously monitored through this process by Jonathan and other behavior specialists.

Jonathan Dalton received his undergraduate degree in psychology at Villanova University in Pennsylvania. He received his Masters Degree in Psychology from Catholic University and is currently working on his PhD in Clinical Psychology from Fordham University in New York.

Jonathan is getting married in September, 2002. He resides in Olney, MD and likes sports and going to the gym. Jonathan also volunteers as a tutor for the Literacy Council in Washington, DC. We welcome Jonathan to CSS!

Return Diversion, cont'd from pg. 1, col. 2

community in an alternative living unit operated by CSS. He is at risk of losing his community based services July 1, 2002.

Children currently receiving services through the return diversion program are being transferred back to their "lead agency," effective July 1, 2002. The lead agencies, typically MCPS or Child Welfare, do not have a funding mechanism to pay for community based wrap around services.

OCYF has stated that an interim fund will pay for "gaps" in service. Montgomery County is still providing information to OCYF to determine which services will continue. Families and providers have not been notified how the interim fund will be administered or which services will be continued by the lead agencies.

CSS Express

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Funding for CSS programs is provided by the Developmental Disabilities Administration of the Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Montgomery County. Individuals served pay fees for assistance provided on the basis of their income. Additional financial support is sought from local governments, federal programs, private funding sources, donations and contributions.

We welcome your interest, time and financial support. Please call or write us for more information.

CSS Express is edited by Katy Engels. The next due date for submission of CSS Express materials will be May 15, 2002.

On the Home Front

Arrowhead

Kerry Mehailescu is looking forward to celebrating his upcoming birthday with a skating party. **David Gano** has found a job at Bugaboo Creek Restaurant prepping tables and rolling silverware. **Derric Diggs**, along with his friend and co-worker Shan, attended the Houston's company holiday party held at the Double Tree Hotel in Rockville. **David Goodman** has been joining these fellows for activities. Everyone is having a great time and enjoys each others company.

Bay Ridge

Matija Rinn loves working and keeping busy. That's what makes delivering pizza delivery flyers so perfect. **Stephen Sesney** moved into Bay Ridge in the beginning of January with the help of his parents. He and Matija get along well and Stephen tells his family how much he likes his new home.

Bazzelton

Shan Mandisodza enjoyed an extended visit home with his family over the holidays. **Michael Bosco** had a "ball" at a bowling party put on by his employer Fresh Fields. These roommates get along great and Michael calls Shan "Pappee" which is very affectionate.

Centerway

Damon Boggs and **Jamie Zargham** got a special Christmas gift from their neighbor. The neighbor gave their front yard a make-over! It was mowed, mulched and landscaped, and now it looks great! Thanks!

Churchill Ridge

Greg Sullivan and **Sup Hu** are having so much fun learning new moves at their Wednesday night dance class. They love to come home and show off the new steps they learned.

Crystal Rock

Shannon Dooley and **Julie Ricketson** really enjoyed pottery class and made Christmas gifts for their families. They cannot wait for class to start again.

Dalton

Johnathan Chaustit is enjoying his home at Dalton. He likes to spend his days outside doing activities and quiet evenings at home.

Fountain Hill

Dave Sarin continues to improve his daily living skills with staff guidance. **Antwan Lumpkin** enjoys sweeping the kitchen floor and dusting his bedroom. These fellas take pride in a clean home.

Lakeview

Anna Moy designed the logo for the CSS website. She is busy planning a big party in March to celebrate her 25th birthday.

Lowfield

Tim Kane's matchbox car collection is becoming quite large. His favorite is the Postal Truck. He likes that one because it looks like the truck that brings the mail. **Rob Hoyt** loves his new job at Target. He tells us that the employee discount is what he likes best.



Andy Bozarth is all smiles about the new improvements to his home

Marston

Joe Gray and **Andy Bozarth** are loving the renovations to their house. They enjoy coming home after one of their many activities to such beautiful and functional surroundings.

Middlebrook

If you ask **Richard Linthicum** about his holidays, he will be more than happy to tell you all about the wonderful Christmas dinner he had, right down to the delicious mince pie. **Ben Krause** recently began a job at Papa John's Pizza. Some jobs definitely have their perks.



Our very own Ben Krause was Santa himself at the CSS Holiday Party

Normandie

Brian Hustvedt and **Daniel Graham** have intensified their exercise routines at the YMCA. Their hard work is paying off. They will be in great shape for the Ocean City trip in June. **James Burke** continues to accompany Brian and Daniel on fun community activities. They all enjoy hanging out together.

Patton Ridge

Jason Healy hopes spring comes early this year because he is looking forward to getting outside and starting to do yard work. **Joey Cilman** is making a splash in the swimming class he attends on Tuesdays and Thursdays.



Joey Cilman and Jason Healy are a dynamic duo at Patton Ridge

Quail Valley

George Kenton and **Chris Turner** continue to make the most out of living together. These gentlemen now sit together at the dinner table. This is a big step for these solitary minded people.

Ridgecrest

Larry Bloemker continues to enjoy working on his computer everyday. He also finds time to keep his housemate and staff entertained with his musical talents on his keyboard and harpsichord.

Mitch Lassen continues to do an outstanding job rolling silverware at Carrabba's Restaurant. He really enjoys it. In his spare time, he loves to put together puzzles with his staff.

Sandpiper

Simon Diamond had a surprise visit from his parents over the holidays. They have been living in the United Kingdom since their work transfer. Simon was very excited to see them. As always, **John Simkins** has fun at mid-week lunches and dinners with his family.

Sandy Lake

Fred Chao loves the home cooked meals his mother comes to the house to make. She sometimes even stays over night for an extended visit.

Chuck Fitzgerald continues to enjoy his weekends at home with his family and attending church. On Thursday evenings he likes singing and clapping at Noteables, but his favorite part is strumming the guitar.

Thomas Farm

Thea Lane and **Nancy Arnoux** are busy, busy, busy. Both ladies have been enjoying swim classes, cooking classes and exercise classes. Catch up with them when you can.

Treyford

There have been some staff changes at Treyford recently, but **Lisa Leeney** and **Latria Swedenberg** are adapting nicely and get along quite well with the new staff.

Waters Landing

Jeanette Wedge and **Iris Carroll** won the grand prize for the Holiday Door Decoration Contest! Good work ladies!



Kevin Ho cools off with some refreshments at the CSS Holiday Party

Welbeck

Jeffrey Gallun and **Kevin Ho** are both music lovers. Jeffrey looks forward to purchasing a new CD each week. If you see Kevin dancing while listening to his discman, you can bet he is listening to N'Sync.



Jeffrey Gallun listens to the tunes being spun by the DJ at the CSS Holiday Party



Latria Swedenberg looks lovely all dressed up for the CSS Holiday Party

Day Employment Support

Andrew Roth maintains his data entry job at G Street Fabrics. You should see him type!

Laura Schramm and **Truong Tong** are celebrating their one year anniversary working at Plan 3, Inc. in Rockville.

Goli Karimi is taking a keyboarding class at Montgomery College and continues to work at Target on the weekends. During the week, she visits the elderly at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington.

Michelle Wilhelm continues to become more independent at her job washing dishes at KinderCare in Germantown.

Jamie Griffin is excited about the acting classes he is taking at the Bethesda Academy of Performing Arts. He continues to work at the Corner Bakery as well as volunteer at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington.

James Sweetney continues to work delivering Gazette newspapers and pizza delivery flyers. He enjoys a variety of community recreation activities and art therapy. He has bravely undergone numerous medical tests, but fortunately nothing serious was found to be wrong.

Community Instruction

John Racanelli has started baking muffins for the canteen at the Grafton School. The canteen is also a good place to practice counting money.

Min Woo Nam is performing a variety of jobs at Grafton School. As well as, delivering the Gazette newspapers and volunteering at the Best Kept Secrets store.

'Twas the Season to Celebrate!!!

'Twas the season to eat lots of great tasting food and to party! That's exactly what we did this holiday season. This year Sandpiper hosted our annual Thanksgiving Day dinner for those individuals who remained with us over the holiday.

Not only did we have a lot of things to be thankful for, but also we were blessed to have Natasha Covington, of Thomas Farm prepare such a delicious, home cooked meal. When we say home cooked, we mean home cooked. Every dish she prepared was home made from scratch, from the macaroni and cheese down to the delicious desserts.

Everyone enjoyed participating in arts and crafts, spending time with friends and of course, eating. We also give special thanks to all of the volunteers who helped cook, serve and clean up.

Our annual staff holiday party, which was held at the Magic Cue in Germantown, was a huge success. This was the largest turnout we have had in years.

It was wonderful seeing everyone get together and have such a blast. With the

food, drinks, games and good company (not to mention our generous gift checks, THANKS), a fun time was had by all!!!

Next up was our annual holiday party for all our program participants, at the Germantown Community Center.

This party was truly live!! The DJ was spinning some hot tunes that everyone could get down to. We extend a special thank you to William Riggio for helping everyone to get moving and grooving.

We also had a surprise visit from Santa. He took time out of his busy schedule to drop by and pass out gifts. Thanks Santa.

Santa made it just in time to taste all the great food we had that night. The night finished with dessert and more dancing.

Everyone had a terrific time and we give special thanks to Jim Richards, Alicia Glassman, Amy Semanek, Susie Wilfred and Kristina Gorman for all of your help in making the party a success.

Once again, Sandpiper was kind enough to host Christmas dinner. We had another delicious meal, this time prepared

by our own Associate Director, Tammie Snyder. This was a day for Tammie to flex her culinary skills by preparing a traditional Christmas dinner with all the trimmings.

While she and our wonderful volunteers were cooking up some goodies in the kitchen, all of the individuals who remained with us for the holiday enjoyed making arts and craft projects with their staff.

Finally, we round out the holiday season with not one, but two New Year's Eve parties. Arrowhead and Lucinda Adams hosted one of the parties. All of the Gaithersburg houses joined Kerry, Derric David, and Shelly in celebrating the end of 2001 and preparing for 2002.

The second party was held across town, hosted by Bayridge and Kristina Gorman. Matija was kind enough to open up his new home so all of the Germantown houses could celebrate the new year together.

At each party, everyone had a great time reminiscing over the highs and lows of 2001 and eagerly awaiting all the great things to come in 2002. Happy New Year!!!

Door Decorating Contest

For the past two years, the individuals in the CSS program have turned on their creative juices and have participated in a holiday door-decorating contest. The contest winners are those who decorate their home's front doors with the most amount of individual input and hand made decorations. This year almost every CSS house chose to participate in the contest and the doors were all fabulous!

Mitch and Larry of Ridgecrest turned their front door into a fireplace, complete with stockings hung with care. Anna of Lakeview created an elegant snowman with handmade ornaments and photos of her staff and family.

Greg and Sup of Churchill made clay ornaments with cookie cutters to hang on their door. Jeffrey and Kevin of Welbeck incorporated decorations from several dif-



A volunteer assists John Simkins in making a Thanksgiving craft



Nancy Arnoux and Kerry Mehaillescu have a ball dancing at the CSS Holiday Party

ferent holidays and seasonal decorations for a very festive look.

Day Employment participants also got into the holiday spirit by decorating our administrative office doors wishing all peace, love and prosperity for the new year.

The first prizewinners of the 2001 winter door-decorating contest went to Jeanette

and Iris from Waters Landing for their artistic and creative hand made decorations. They decorated two doors and used the artwork that they had designed themselves in their art therapy classes.

Both doors were colorful, creative, fun and unique and they received the first prize nominations from all of the judges!

Happenings with the Children's Program

The CSS *Winter Camp* served 25 children from December 26-December 28. The children enjoyed six hours per day of activities including swimming, arts and crafts, games in the gym, bowling, music, and cooking activities.

Staff provided individualized instruction and supervision to the children during the activities. Each child decorated a 2002 calendar as a gift for his/her family.

The CSS *After School Program* serves 30 children throughout the week. The weather has cooperated very nicely this winter, and the schedule has continued to include outdoor as well as indoor activities. The children have also participated in arts and crafts projects with holiday themes.

The children have continued to participate in a variety of community activities including gymnastics, swimming, art, sports, parks, playgrounds, cooking, and bowling.

Spotlight on Art

Art activities are a regular part of the children's after school program and the adult program. Samantha Feigenbaum provides instruction, ideas and materials three times per week to small groups of children and adults.

Samantha received a B.A. degree in art with a minor in special education and has fifteen years of experience working with children with special needs.

She has introduced participants to a wide variety of colors, textures and sensory materials. Participants have worked with clay, tissue paper, tile, potpourri, etc. They have made and decorated ornaments, boxes, necklaces, cups, frames, and more.

Some individuals, who had shown very little interest initially, now engage in the project for several minutes at a time. Other participants are excited when they see Samantha and eager to find out what the project will be that day.

The CSS *Saturday Program* continues to be popular with children and parents. Thirty five children participate regularly in each six-week session. Children enjoy community activities in small groups during the six-hour program. The mild weather allowed us to continue many outdoor activities this winter including trips to the zoo, Great Falls and regional parks.

Love to Pasha

*We are thinking of you
and your family every day.
We wish for a quick and full
recovery.*



Samantha works closely with the children and their staff during art therapy

George Kenton started attending art sessions with great reluctance. He refused to come in the room and grabbed at the instructor. He now comes in the room and stays for up to twenty minutes. He sometimes smiles and giggles.

He recently used clay to make a heart with flowers inside and made it into a necklace. He allowed the instructor to physically assist him to shape the clay. He indicates the color he wants by pointing or taking the marker himself.

Andy Bozarth started by participating for only a few seconds. He now will stay for two projects. He put together a snowman book with colored tissue paper. He rolled up squares of tissue paper into balls and

glued it to the book.

Albert Hammond worked for twenty minutes to decorate a box at Christmas time. He glued on sequins, shiny strings and other colored pieces of tile. The variety of small colorful objects available to him to glue to his box seemed to interest and please him.

Emily Hartung regularly greets the art teacher with great excitement. She works on the project and then likes to stay and watch other children complete their projects.

She will often help other children in the group after she is finished with her own work. She is very independent in her work and seems proud of her completed projects.

JCC Classes

Many of the clients at CSS are benefiting from at least one of the many classes offered for individuals with special needs at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington located in Rockville.

The JCC Special Needs Department offers a variety of classes that enhance independent living skills for adults with developmental disabilities.

Some of the classes get the body moving, such as Dance to the Music where participants learn fun and exciting dance steps, including some of the latest line dances. Adaptive Fitness offers a great workout. Individuals stretch and warm up before joining group activities such as basketball, volleyball, floor hockey and aerobic fitness.

A favorite among many CSS participants is the cooking class. This class is designed for adults who have various levels of experience in the kitchen. Participants learn to create low cost dishes that they can then prepare in their own homes. Curriculum includes using the newspaper to find specials and coupons and preparation of selected recipes each week.

Attending these classes has enhanced the lives of many of CSS participants. The JCC provides this and other excellent programs that are available to CSS and the public.

Tips for Staying Healthy in the Winter

Colds:

Colds occur throughout the year, but are most common in the late winter and early spring. The common cold is caused by any of over 200 viruses. The symptoms of a cold are runny nose, red eyes, sneezing, sore throat, cough, headache and general body aches. A cold usually lasts one to two weeks.

To help prevent a cold eat well, ensure adequate fluid intake (8 glasses of water a day is recommended), get plenty of sleep and exercise. This will keep your body healthy and help to build up your resistance. Wash your hands often, especially when you are around people who have colds. Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection. Also, keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.

There is no cure for the common cold and treatment consists of relieving symptoms. If you have a cold, it is important to get extra rest. Drink plenty of liquids. Hot tea and chicken soup may help to relieve congestion. Use disposable tissues instead of handkerchiefs. This will help to reduce the spread of the virus. There are many over-the-counter preparations to help treat cold symptoms. It is important to follow the directions and to use caution when purchasing remedies that combine drugs to treat multiple cold symptoms. Treat each symptom separately.

A cold can sometimes lead to a more serious problem such as bacterial infections of the ear or sinuses, bronchitis or pneumonia. If you suspect a bacterial infection, it is important to visit your doctor for diagnosis and antibiotic treatment. Symptoms of a bacterial infection may include persistent fever, nasal discharge or mucous that changes from clear to colored (yellow, green or gray), lingering cough, ear or sinus pain, and cold symptoms that last more than two weeks.

Dry Skin:

Dry, itchy, flaky skin is a common problem this time of year. Dry indoor air is a common cause in the winter due to low humidity and indoor heat. Excessive bathing with hot water and strong soap can make dry skin worse. Hot water tends to strip the skin of its natural oils, which help to hold in moisture. Avoid strong deodorant soaps and limit the use of perfume. Use a non-perfumed body lotion after bathing to help seal in moisture. Avoid scratching, which damages the skin. A humidifier in your home or bedroom may also help.

Wish List for CSS Homes and Children's Program

Household Items - (New or in Good Condition) Glasses, Plates, Bowls, Silverware, Pots and Pans, Bakeware, Picture Frames, Towels and Wash Cloths, Sheet Sets, Blankets, etc., Art, Small Power Tools, Color TVs, VCRs, VHS Movies, Outdoor Plants, Flower Pots, and Bird Baths.

Recreational Supplies - (New or in Good Condition) Arts and Crafts Supplies, Basketballs, Soccer Balls, Board Games and Puzzles (complete with all pieces), Bicycles of all sizes, Tricycles, Roller Skates, Trampoline, Pool Table, etc.

Music - Tapes or CDs of Children's Songs or Other Type of Music, Portable CD Players, Tape Players, Hand Held Instruments such as Bells, etc.

Tickets - Tickets to Shows, Local Plays, Concerts, Sporting Events, Movies, etc.

Vacation Spots - Vacation home for one week during the summer at a location no more than 4 hours drive from Rockville. Individuals in the CSS Residential Program have gone on a vacation every year. CSS usually rents homes which accommodates four to eight individuals and staff. CSS covers staff and food costs. Service Coordination is no longer able to help individuals who cannot afford a vacation.

If you have any of these or other items you would like to donate to CSS, please contact our office. A letter of receipt for your donation will be given upon request. Thank you to everyone who has donated items in the past. These items really help to make our clients lives better.

The Group Home Rehabilitation Program

Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development has a program that assists extremely low income families and individuals with loans to renovate and repair their homes. Many of the individuals in the CSS residential program have benefited from this, as fifteen of our twenty-two homes have received rehabilitation loans through the program.

The County sponsored program is run by Mr. Alan Hepler, Senior Planner. With his support and assistance, Mr. Hepler has enabled CSS to not only make necessary repairs and renovations for general household upkeep, but has also provided funds for innovative solutions for several specific individual's needs.

One of our most recent and exciting projects has just been completed at our house on Marston Lane. Through the loan program, CSS was able to hire Michael Alexander, of Sargent and Associates, to renovate this property to accommodate the behavioral and physical needs of Andy, one of the residents at Marston Lane.

Michael Alexander was able to incorporate staff suggestions to adapt Andy's home, providing him with a safer, more comfortable and more accessible place to live. Andy and his roommate now enjoy a handicapped accessible bathroom with grab bars, a shower seat and a floor drain. Also reinforcement was added to the dry-wall in most rooms to reduce damage and noise. The reinforcement was added in a beautifully decorative fashion. In addition to helping with behavioral issues, it has added an elegant touch to the home.

In addition to the Marston Lane project, CSS has been able to modify bedrooms and common areas to soundproof the floors and walls to accommodate individual needs of persons who live in condominiums and town-homes that have common shared walls, floors and ceilings.

Autism Waiver

Approximately 25 children have been approved for the autism waiver in Montgomery County. The state has applied for additional waiver slots and additional children are expected to be approved soon.

Children with a diagnosis of autism, who are "at risk of institutional placement" and who have no financial assets in their names, may be eligible for autism waiver services in the community.

Montgomery County Public Schools has recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the state. The autism waiver enables the school system to bill medicaid for 50% of the cost of services the children are receiving through the school defined as day habilitation.

Each child has a service plan developed as part of the eligibility process which may include other services in the home and community. The waiver may enable the children to receive additional services such as after school or in home support services. However, it is unclear at this time where the funds for the 50% match for these services will come from.

MCPS is working with Health and Human Services staff to develop a mechanism to purchase additional services for these children. CSS plans to become a provider of autism waiver funded services.

If you have a child under the age of 21 and want more information, please contact Stan Saratkin at 301-279-3445.

DDA Funded Services

DDA has begun to process funding service plans for individuals in need of residential, supported employment, family and individual services, etc. Individuals in need of services have been on hold since the fall due to funding shortages this year.

CSS is expecting one individual to be approved for residential placement on April 1, 2002. He has been waiting since November.

Additionally, one individual is expected to be approved for supported employment services, and four children are expected to be approved for Family and Individual Support Services this spring.

DDA has approved a 1.5% cost of living increase for next fiscal year. The conversion of the CSS supported employment program to the rate system has been completed and will take effect July 1, 2002.

DDA has recinded the policy to reduce funding to agencies based on client absence days. CSS has not been notified of any alternate budget cuts this year.

Thanks to the ongoing advocacy efforts of many family members and the improved economic projections for Maryland, opportunities for people with developmental disabilities are looking up.

NoteAbles Music Group

NoteAbles is a very special music group offered through Potomac Community Resources (PCR). Working in cooperation with PCR a class was formed for ten CSS clients. This music group is designed for individuals with high levels of need to experience the fun and joy of making music.

CSS staff accompany the individuals to each session and offer hand-over-hand assistance in playing the instruments and keeping the beat along with the songs. The staff support is tailored to each individual to encourage independence. The staff join in and model the desired participation. This adds to the individual's enjoyment.

The NoteAbles group is lead by music therapist Marilyn Joy Leeseberg. She offers a combination of patience and encouragement that enable the participants to feel comfortable and make the most out of each NoteAbles class.



Jamie enjoys playing music with the NoteAbles

She provides consistency in the songs the group sings along with and performs, as well as variety in the different instruments to play during each session. The instruments range from simple shakers and bells to drums and strumming instruments.

The participants are offered a choice of instruments and use different ones throughout the session. They learn the feel of each instrument and experience the

unique sound each one makes. Singing and clapping along are also encouraged.

There has been much improvement in the skills of the participants since the group started. For example, Joe now claps along with the music. Iris knows how to play every instrument and acts at the group leader. Dave smiles as he uses a shaker along with a song. Antwan loves clapping along so much, that he continues to clap even after returning home, and Fred helps out at the end of class by picking up all the instruments and returning them to their proper baskets.

Thursday evenings are a fun time that the members of the NoteAbles group look forward to and get great pleasure from.

The NoteAbles are Iris Carroll, Joe Gray, Damon Boggs, Jamie Zargham, Antwan Lumpkin, Dave Sarin, Simon Diamond, John Simkins, Fred Chao, and Chuck Fitzgerald.

Community Support Services

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