

March Is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

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Detroit-Wayne County
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Detroit, MI 48201

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Ted Chipps, Editor

Persons Points of View



--An E-Mail Bulletin from Customer Services reflecting what Consumers are doing and saying as well as news from the Agency

Who is Assisting Who?

Dearborn ARC Helps the Homeless

Every Monday members of the Dearborn/Dearborn Heights ARC—an organization providing advocacy and services for people with mental retardation, other developmental disabilities and their families--trek from the suburbs to Detroit's inner city to help at the All Saints Church Soup Kitchen. David Drauss, a Person with a developmental disability, loves to come down and help out in the kitchen. "It's my chance to help others," he says with a smile. "I come here every week with

my friends."

Lisa Nygord, Executive Director of the Dearborn /Dearborn Heights Arc explains that the program's main focus is community inclusion. "Mondays mean working in a soup kitchen. Wednesdays entail volunteering at the Dearborn Animal Shelter," she says. "Our goal is to identify and increase the choices of Persons with developmental disabilities. We want to improve opportunities to establish friendships and social relationships."



David Drauss, a Person with a developmental disability, looks forward to working with his friends Mondays at the All Saints Church Soup Kitchen.

When not participating in outside activities, program members focus on community planning, games and leisure, music and motion and sensory stimulation. The Dearborn/ Dearborn

Heights ARC is a member of the Community Living Services Network.

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For Persons College Bound

Mentors/Tutors Can Spell Success

Fourteen Persons with post-secondary education goals are refreshing their academic, social, and coping skills in actual classroom settings. Since January 21, these college and trade schools bound individuals are attending the Person Centered Network (PCN) Supported Education Program.

Trained mentors attend classes at local college campuses with their students. They aid them with their work while in the classroom. The teachers also conduct follow-up sessions with their pupils in the clubhouses. The tutors prepare their Consumer learners to explore, and successfully pursue their post-secondary education.

Frank Verdejo, Program Manager, said the project teaches a combination of learning and coping



The first graduating class of Person tutors proudly displays their diplomas. They completed 16 sessions for a total of 36 class hours of training. Front Row (L to R): Frank Verdejo, PCN-Supported Education Team Leader, Lisa, Michael, and Margo, Program Assistant. Top Row (L to R): D’Juan, Lynn, and Robert.

skills including how to manage symptoms of their illness and minimize their medication side effects. “A Person coping with mental illness has frequently been at a distinct disadvantage at the secondary school and training level,” he observed. “Often the illness itself emerges during the years that one is most likely to pursue higher

education. That’s why this is such an important program.” The course focuses on methods to improve concentration, memory, comprehension, test and note taking, and time management. Individuals are taught coping techniques that help them maintain their motivation, handle stress, develop assertiveness, and build

self-esteem. The course stretches over a 28-week period. Persons belonging to the PCN Network are eligible to participate in the program. For further information, call Frank Verdejo, Team Leader, at 313-928-1387.