A Look Back at 2012

During the last few weeks we have been compiling data for our federal funder that provides money to provide the free services not funded by Medicaid, such as information and referral, housing advocacy, benefits advisement, advocacy and peer counseling. Most days I am troubled by all the needs in our county and spend many hours with our staff and leaders in our community trying to make Oswego County a better place to live. So it is good sometimes to look at the things that were accomplished.

Our staff provided information to over 1200 individuals who called the agency in addition to the 658 consumers enrolled in ARISE services. Many of you have seen or heard our public service announcements and it seems that more people are familiar with ARISE.

As we conclude 2012, we can look back at the most successful ramp building season we ever had—with over 30 projects completed. Operation Northern Comfort joined the two church groups and other volunteers as builders. None of this would have been possible without the financial support from United Way, National Grid, Entergy, and Raby’s as well as the support from many of you who attended our fundraiser and sent in donations.

Our programs that serve individuals with developmental disabilities saw an increase in the number of individuals enrolled in service coordination, community habilitation and in-home respite. Two new programs were added: one-on-one assistance at day camp, and family advocacy and peer counseling for individuals with autism.

A big change was the enrollment of the first group of consumers in our consumer-directed personal assistance program into managed care coordination, which went well. 2013 will bring more changes and we are ready to work together to provide support.

Happy New Year,
Sabine
Happy New Year!

We would like to congratulate Lee Walquist, who recently got married, and became Mrs. Lee Sullivan!

ACCES-VR is really Working!

ACCES-VR (Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation) is an agency in the New York State Education Department that has helped many individuals with disabilities find and keep employment. You may know the agency from it's previous acronym: VESID.

Over the past year, ACCES-VR has helped over 900 people in Central New York (including 80 in Oswego County) succeed in careers ranging from customer service to information technology. Services to help eligible individuals reach their employment goals may include but are not limited to: job coaching, employment counseling, advocacy, and financial assistance with training, equipment, and work uniforms.

If you or someone you know has a barrier to employment and is interested in applying, please contact (315) 428-4180 to register for an information session or to receive an application.
My name is Missy Hull, a Medicaid Service Coordinator here at ARISE in Pulaski. I have been a MSC since April 2011. I have three children that I am proud of for many reasons. My daughter Alyshia is 15 years old and has a learning disability. I can write an article for you explaining my experience as a parent with a child with a learning disability; however, I am not going to share anything with you that you all haven’t felt in the past. I asked my daughter Alyshia to share a few thoughts and feelings on what her typical school day is.

“Sometimes school is my favorite place to be, but can quickly turn into a place I am the most afraid. School has never been the easiest thing for me. I sit there in class wondering if I am the only one with this problem or if there is someone in class with the same problem. When I am in class and don’t understand what the teacher is talking about I wonder if I am the only one in the room who doesn’t understand. It is not the greatest feeling in the world.

“Sometimes when my teachers hand back my papers with the words “Lazy!” or “Did you even try?” makes me feel like I am not good enough to be in that classroom. It is hard to convince myself I am confident and I can do anything when a teacher tells me “This is common sense I don’t understand why you don’t get it.” I don’t want to say anything to my parents because they will want to meet with my teachers and it will only make matters worse.

“When I am taking a test I worry about being the last person done. I think about “Will my classmates notice I was the last to finish?” I have a choice of having a separate location for my tests; however, being the only one being pulled out of the classroom makes me feel like I am not smart enough to stay in the classroom for a test. I start to think “Will my classmates think the teacher is helping me with my test?”

“My learning disability is part of my life but it is not my whole world. I have learned to accept the fact I will always struggle in Math and Science; however, when I become frustrated I escape to my journal and write. I enjoy writing and know this is something I am good at. I have filled numerous journals with my thoughts and feelings I have during the day. I have made writing as one of my goals in life.

In the past I wanted to publish a children’s book and I did. I have written and self-published 2 children’s books, “Butterfly Fly Away” and “My Bus Ride Home”. My next goal was to self publish a novel, and I did it. I wrote a book titled “A Thousand Miles”. I have been able to get my book in the school library and working on trying to get my novel into the Public Library.”

As parents we encourage our children to work on the areas they struggle in but emphasize the areas they are strong in. We support Alyshia with her book writing and encourage her to use her creativity in many ways. After publishing her novel, “A Thousand Miles” we have seen her advocate for herself in school and the community. She approached her school librarian about putting her book into the library for students in her school to read. Alyshia has also approached the Mexico Public Library about having her book there too. We hope to see her self confidence grow as she continues to write more books. (Alyshia has self published three books using the website www.Lulu.com/publish.)

Alyshia posed with one of the books that she has published.
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Winter Storm Emergency Preparedness

Living in Oswego County makes it extremely important to plan ahead for cold weather every winter. Take time to think about these suggestions that are listed below, and prepare a winter weather plan.

**Winter Survival Kit**

Keep several days’ supply of these items:

- Food that needs no cooking or refrigeration, such as bread, crackers, cereal, canned foods and dried fruits. Remember baby food and formula if you have young children.
- Water stored in clean containers, or purchases bottled water, incase your water pipes freeze and rupture.
- Medicines that any family member may need.

If your area is prone to long periods of cold temperatures, or if your home is isolated, stock additional amounts of food, water, and medicine.

**Emergency Supplies List**

Blankets
Matches
Multipurpose, dry-chemical fire extinguisher
First aid kit
Flashlight with extra batteries
Battery powered radio
Non-electric can opener
Snow shovel
Rock salt
Diapers
Hearing aid batteries
Medications