

VINFEN voice



FROM | THE PRESIDENT

On June 30, Vinfen finished its Fiscal Year 2005 in sound financial shape and in good standing with our funders, individuals served and their families, and staff. Some of our FY05 highlights include: the successful passage of a direct care Salary Reserve bill, receiving the Negley President's Award for Risk Management from the Mental Health Risk Retention Group, hosting several program tours for state legislators, and holding a Legislative Issues Forum at the State House for more than 30 legislators and their staff.

In FY05, we also partnered with trade organizations and other providers to develop four FY06 legislative bills for increasing funding for direct care staff, establishing an insurance assistance program for direct care workers, creating a school loan forgiveness program for direct care staff, and increasing access to education and tuition remission programs for human services employees.

We are hopeful that Governor Romney shares the same compassion and understanding that Vinfen has for individuals with disabilities and the dedicated human services workforce and fully-funds the four bills that we have been working on for the last several months. Those whom we serve deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Lamson

Direct Care Workforce Initiative: Vinfen offers jobs to first graduates



Graduates who completed the 10-week pre-employment training and partners of the Metro Boston Human Services/Direct Care Workforce Initiative join for a group photo at Goodwill headquarters in Boston on June 10.

Last June, the first group of 10 students completed the Direct Care Workforce pre-employment training program and received job offers at various Vinfen locations. Newly graduated Helen Brown now works as a residential counselor at Vinfen's Pleasant St. program in Dorchester, Mass. "I am so glad that this door opened for me," says Brown, "because I have a passion for helping people and making a difference in the lives of others." Jennifer Dutra, who is the training instructor for the pre-employment program at Goodwill, salutes the

initiative. "It was a wonderful experience," she recalls, "everyone bonded as co-workers, and I think they will do well on the job." Launched in 2004, this Metro Boston Human Services/Direct Care Workforce Initiative is designed to answer the critical need for qualified workers in the human services field. "Vinfen has more than 100 vacancies for direct care workers but is typically unable to hire the majority of all applicants due to low literacy, math, and English language skills," says President Gary W. Lamson. "With this outstanding program, adults who would normally not have a chance for employment can get a rewarding job in human services while organizations like ours can build teams with motivated trained professionals."

Funded through the Commonwealth's BayStateWorks Initiative, with support from the Legislature and the Department of Workforce Development, the project consists of two specific training programs: a 10-week pre-employment training and a 26-week incumbent worker program aimed at facilitating career growth for direct care professionals. Both were developed by a partnership comprised of Vinfen Corporation, Goodwill, Boston Career Link, Metro North Regional Employment Board, Boston Private Industry Council (PIC), Bunker Hill Community College, WorkSource Partners, and Boston Housing Authority. "There are a lot of variables to make a training program successful, but first and foremost the management staff has to lead and support the initiative. We work with management teams across many workforce programs and in terms of leadership and support, this program is off the charts!" says Neil Silverston, president of WorkSource Partners. "Our team has been incredibly impressed by the commitment to individual growth from the people running your programs. They made it happen." Three more groups of 10 are expected to complete the pre-employment training program and Vinfen is committed to hiring every graduate.

A W A R D S

Anne Fracht honored by the ARC of Mass., the State Senate and the House of Representatives

Congratulations to Anne Fracht, chairperson for the Metro region Massachusetts Advocates Standing Strong (M.A.S.S) and Vinfen employee, who was presented with the 2005 Leadership and Commitment to Self-advocacy Award by the Department of Mental Retardation (DMR) Commissioner Gerald Morrissey. Every year, the ARC of Massachusetts' Distinguished Citizen Awards ceremony honors individuals, groups or organizations who make a significant contribution or demonstrate long-term commitment to people with developmental disabilities. Fracht also received Senate and House citations.



Anne Fracht (second from the left) receiving the ARC of Mass. award from DMR Commissioner Morrissey on her left, and House and Senate citations from (l to r) Rep. Honan and Sen. Tolman at the ARC Distinguished Citizens Ceremony hosted at the State House in Boston last May.

Vinfen Receives Award for its College Recruitment Video

In May, Vinfen won a First Place Lamplighter Award in the Recruitment Video category from the New England Society of Healthcare Communications (NESHCo). The award recognizes how Vinfen uses its recruitment video to highlight the rewards of human services professions.

It was presented to Vinfen's Public Affairs Director Christopher Smalley during NESHCo's Spring Conference held in Providence, R.I. "During production, my goal was to accurately portray to job candidates how a career in human services can truly transform their personal and professional life and the lives of individuals with disabilities," says Smalley. Vinfen's recruitment video is being used at job fairs and college career centers. The video also airs this summer on various community cable TV stations throughout the South Shore.

To view the video, please go to Vinfen's web site at <http://www.vinfen.org> and click on the "Corporate Video" section on the homepage.

SPOTLIGHTS

DAVID GLEASON, A VOICE IN CAPE COD THAT INSPIRES MANY

"Addictions are medical diseases, not crimes. Anyone who works in the field of recovery will tell you that detox services need to be available when individuals ask for help and that funding has to be increased," urged David Gleason in his letter published in the *Boston Herald* last May. Gleason, a substance abuse counselor with Vinfen's Homeless Outreach team in the Cape Cod area, is a passionate advocate. He never misses an opportunity to speak up for the least fortunate among us, and was named Hometown Hero by WBZ-TV in 2003. "It's hard to believe that there are homeless people living under rowboats right on the beach in Provincetown," says David. Engaging people and building bridges within communities is at the core of his mission. He works with shelters, brings individuals to Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or to social services providers, and participates in rally walks. But his favorite tool for advocating is his pen. When asked about his first letter to an editor, David remembers his time at the Pine Street Inn in the late 80s, the budget cutbacks, and policy changes of the time. "I was proud of the work we were doing and felt a strong need for us to communicate our message." He has been writing to newspapers ever since, either to challenge or to compliment authorities. "As a taxpayer and a voter, I feel that I have to be active and make my voice heard."

Vinfen runs 40 housing programs in the Cape area with eight professionals providing services for up to 125 homeless individuals who have a dual diagnosis of mental illness and substance abuse. "Our goal is to show people that surviving is worth it and that staying sober is essential," says David. Talking about being a substance abuse counselor, he insists that it is more challenging than ever. "OxyContin was unheard of 20 years ago. Now, people take it once, twice, and they're hooked! On top of that, stays in detox are too brief." But despite many difficulties, more than 300 chronically homeless people have been placed by the program since its inception in 1995. "Making a difference in the tattered lives of others when there are so many challenges and so few means can be very difficult and frustrating," says David, "but many individuals turn their lives around and become productive citizens." One of them is Scott Campbell.



Individual served Scott Campbell, right, talks about recovery with Cape Cod substance abuse counselor David Gleason.

Scott first met David in 1999. Before that, there were many bumps in the road for Scott. His parents, who only rented their home, died when he was a teenager. Becoming homeless, he got into trouble, started drinking, and ended up in prison where he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. After several stays in shelters, Scott managed to get temporary housing with the help of Vinfen. Recently, he learned that he may get a Section 8 rental subsidy. "I want the same thing as every American, a 'home sweet home'."

Every day in recovery is a challenge. Scott regularly meets with his counselor and therapist and goes to an AA meeting almost every morning. In addition, he is a member of a day program where he participates in several activities including advocacy, proudly recalling several trips to the State House. But securing his own apartment will be the cornerstone in Scott's recovery. Because, as David emphasizes, "Homeless people want a place to call home. Shelters are necessary, but my experience is the longer you stay in one, the sicker you get, physically, mentally, and spiritually."

September is Recovery Month and events will be organized throughout the country. Among them, the *18th Cape Cod Symposium on Addictive Disorders*, sponsored by The Association for Addiction Professionals, will be held in Hyannis from September 29 to October 2. David will be there. He will also send a letter to the editors of local newspapers. What will you do?



SCCAT uses a team approach to help children cope with emotional distress. At the Fifield School in Dorchester (l to r) fourth grade teacher Ms. Connille, Principal Craig Lankhorst, and SCCAT Program Director Alexis Silver consult with SCCAT clinician Alicia Perkins regarding a student who has been showing signs of depression. © Stu Rosner Photography

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

BMC ACCESS PROJECT AT VINFEN DUDLEY INN HONORED BY THE DMH

The Boston Medical Center Access Project, a collaborative project which includes Vinfen's Dudley Inn residence, received the Department of Mental Health (DMH) Treatment Distinguished Service Award. "This award recognizes the program's innovation in treatment and research through the creation of the Dudley Inn, an eight-bed medically enhanced safe-haven shelter, and its significant impact on the lives of people with mental illness" says Elizabeth Childs, MD, DMH commissioner.

EXPLORING CHANNEL 5 STUDIOS

Beginning last February, individuals served and staff have enjoyed tours of the WCVB-TV Channel 5 studios in Needham, Mass. They were able to see first-hand how a TV station operates. "We all had a great time and even got to watch part of the Midday newscast from inside the on-air studio," said Rehabilitation Specialist Kristen Woodbury of Vinfen's Bridge St. program. Channel 5 Tours are regularly scheduled and new channels to visit include WHDH-TV 7 and WBZ-TV 4 in Boston.



(l to r) Individuals Dan Garcia, Developmental Specialist Arthur Chanley, Vinny Dimodica, Bill Leman, Margaret Cram, Program Director Suzanne Thomson, and Mario Pacitto, all from the Community Support Services Day Hab program, at Channel 5 studios in Needham, Mass. on June 28.

TALL SHIP FORMIDABLE CRUISES

For the second summer in a row, more than 150 individuals served and staff participated in four cruises compliments of the Tall Ship Formidable and its owner Keating Willcox. "I'm truly blessed to be able to offer our Boston harbor cruises to individuals served," says Wilcox. "It's an honor to bring a little sunlight into their lives and I thank Vinfen's staff for their superb work." Vinfen is grateful to Keating and his crew for providing this great opportunity to individuals served.



On June 22, Peter Nickerson from Vinfen's Brookline Village Program enjoyed a sunny afternoon cruise aboard the Tall Ship Formidable.

SCCAT, PROVIDING SUPPORT TO BOSTON'S CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS SINCE 1986

School is out for the summer, but Vinfen's School Community Consultation and Treatment (SCCAT) program is busy gearing up for the start of the 2005-2006 school year. This past year, SCCAT served more than 500 children and their families in 35 Boston public schools, including more than 30 children at the Emily A. Fifield Elementary School in Dorchester. The Fifield students come from some of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in Boston, where children face a broad range of challenges including family trauma and sudden deaths due to illness or violence. The effects of these difficulties are then felt in the classroom, causing deficits in learning and concentration. This is where SCCAT comes in.

SCCAT clinicians provide individual counseling services and work in close partnership with the principal, teachers, and parents to support each child's overall development. According to Fifield's Principal Craig Lankhorst, "The people from SCCAT have become an integral part of the school community. They provide a place for children to discuss their issues. You can just see how happy the children are when they meet with the counselors. We can attest that there have been dramatic changes in children's behavior and academic performance since SCCAT began here." Clinicians served approximately 10 percent of the student body in individual counseling this past school year, but as Lankhorst underlines, their presence is felt throughout the school and has benefited every student. In addition to individual counseling, SCCAT provides consultation to teachers, Second Step conflict resolution and violence prevention programs in the classroom, as well as family outreach. But most importantly, SCCAT makes it possible for teachers to focus on teaching and for children to concentrate on learning.

Noticing difficulties, emotional disturbances?

Here are some warning signs:

1. Social peer situations:

Is your child withdrawn or rejected by other children? Does your child pretend to be physically ill when confronted with a social situation?

2. Aggressive behavior:

Does your child bully others or initiate fights? Is your child violent toward objects, including toys? Is your child self-destructive?

3. Depression/anxiety:

Does your child look depressed or uninterested? Does your child show excessive fear, easy frustration, or anxiety when doing certain activities?

And remember to **always work with the school team:** ask your child's teacher if problems have occurred in the classroom and what you can do to help at home.



milestones

2005 EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION LUNCHEON

Vinfen's 15th Annual Employee Recognition Luncheon took place in May at the Westin Copley Place in Boston and drew a record attendance of nearly 700 employees. The annual luncheon represents an opportunity for Vinfen to celebrate and give thanks to its extraordinary workforce. This year's guest speaker, Senate President Robert E. Travaglini, addressed a message of support to Vinfen employees and all Massachusetts human services. He was also presented with a Friend of Vinfen Award recognizing his support in helping Vinfen to enrich the lives of people with disabilities. Again, thanks to all the attendees and to the organization committee headed by Lori Nelson, loss prevention manager at the Human Resources department, and congratulations to the 2005 Award recipients.



Program Director **Suzy Graham**, who manages several psychiatric rehabilitation residences, received the Board of Directors Scholarship Award. She was selected based on her outstanding service and her commitment to furthering her education. Graham is currently enrolled at Framingham State College where she is completing a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology. Created in 2004 by Vinfen's Board of Directors, the \$3,500 scholarship is awarded each year to an employee whose significant achievements at Vinfen demonstrate career potential.



Program Director for the Cambridge/Somerville area **Lisa Laudani** received the Tony Zipple Leadership & Lifelong Learning Award. The \$500 award is presented to the Vinfen employee who best personifies the qualities that characterized Zipple's leadership: an inquisitive and open mind, a commitment to life-long learning, a talent for guiding and

supporting others, the capacity to appreciate differences and develop consensus, and the resolve that the people Vinfen serves can realize their potential.



Alicia Gillis, who works at the Day Development and Transition Center (DDTC-South) program in Weymouth, Mass., received the Alberts Foundation Scholarship Award. The \$500 scholarship is awarded each year to a manager or a direct care staff member of Vinfen's Mental Retardation Division for outstanding caring and commitment to improving the quality of services provided to individuals with developmental disabilities.



Assistant Program Director **Lisa Eison**, who oversees four programs in the Plymouth area, received the Rob Kiley Scholarship Award. The \$500 scholarship is named after the late Rob Kiley, whose time at Vinfen revealed a unique individual who personified dedication and humanity. While excelling in her position, Eison is also working toward a Master's degree at Framingham State College.



Jim Murphy, who recently retired from his position at Vinfen's Cape Cod Homeless Outreach team, received the Special Recognition Award for Outstanding Advocacy. Since he joined in 1998, Murphy had been a vital member of the Cape team, a strong advocate for the homeless, and a valued mentor for program staff. "It is a rare opportunity to work with someone like Jim Murphy. I often wondered where his energy came from," remembers Kelly Shuler, program director for Vinfen's Cape Supported Services.

The *Vinfen Voice* is published quarterly by Vinfen's Public Affairs Department. Letters to the editor should be addressed by e-mail to Sophie Beauvais at beauvais@vinfen.org.

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