

VINFEN VOICE



FROM | THE PRESIDENT

Throughout the month of March, Vinfen proudly hosted several residential and day program Open Houses for neighbors, friends, legislators, and state and local officials in celebration of Developmental Disabilities Month. I personally had the pleasure to meet many of the guests who toured our programs, and individuals served and employees. The dedication of our direct care staff reminded me of why I entered the human services profession more than 30 years ago—caring, compassion, and concern for individuals with disabilities.

At each Open House, guests were introduced to Vinfen's diverse programs that are making a positive impact in their communities and in the lives of those Vinfen serves. The Open Houses also allowed us to forge new relationships as we continue to look for innovative ways to provide quality services and supports to those most in need.

In the next few months, members of Vinfen's Executive Team and I will be conducting town meetings to discuss with employees issues and concerns. We look forward to these meetings and developing an ongoing dialogue with our dedicated staff.

Sincerely,

Gary W. Lamson

A Call to Action by Dr. Ken Duckworth, Vinfen's new Medical Director

Currently Medical Director for the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI), a role that he will keep on a part-time basis, Ken Duckworth, MD, recently joined Vinfen as Medical Director. He brings with him a life-long commitment to individuals with psychiatric and developmental disabilities, as well as a tremendous breadth and scope of clinical knowledge and field experience. Highlights of his outstanding career include State Medical Director and Acting Commissioner for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and several clinical positions. Board certified in adult, child and adolescent, and forensic psychiatry, Duckworth practices as an outreach psychiatrist for Westbridge Community Services in Cambridge, Mass. He also teaches psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Boston University School of Public Health. A recipient of several national awards such as NAMI's *Irwin Celebration Recovery Award*, Duckworth is a "natural" spokesperson who publicly takes a stand on psychiatric health issues or stigma in the media. Today, he shares his vision and experience with the *Vinfen Voice*.



"The basic value of trying to support individuals to live independently is of great interest to me and this is what Vinfen stands for," says Duckworth.

What compelled you to pursue a career in psychiatry? Psychiatric illness runs in my family, so I guess I come by this work honestly. I think many people who work in human services have been touched by psychiatric illness or disabilities in some way, and that is certainly true for me. Because it has affected people that I love and care about, it is easier for me to see that you can be a good person with a tough illness.

What attracted you to Vinfen? Becoming Vinfen's Medical Director is a great opportunity for me to practice different aspects of my profession and to work for an organization that provides critical services to individuals and families. My major interest is in community mental health and rehabilitation, and Vinfen is an industry leader with a wide-array of programs that fall within my areas of interest. Being an outreach psychiatrist at Westbridge, I have seen firsthand that if people's care is integrated, as it is in the assertive community treatment model, they have a better chance at recovering. So, I really want to develop this model, promote clubhouses, and get people out of hospitals. And this is what Vinfen stands for, providing all the different rehabilitative and recovery-oriented programs. Last but not least, I share a nice history with Vinfen. While working at the Massachusetts Mental Health Center, I had the opportunity to connect with many people served and staff from Webster House, Webster II, and Operations.

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March Open Houses: Snapshots



March 8 - Chairman Kokoros (center) of the Braintree Board of Selectmen with Assistant Program Director Michelle McCauley (left), Director of Service Maria Joseph, and individual served Joe M., at the South Shore Day Hab program.

March 22 - Weymouth City Councilor Leary (right) with Vinfen's President and CEO Gary Lamson at the Forest Street Residence program.

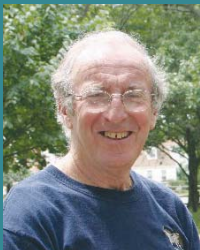


March 25 - Larchmont Street Residence Site Manager Dawn Reed (left) with Constituent Coordinator to State Rep. Marie St. Fleur Donna Young at the Open House celebrating the completion of HUD-funded renovations.

March 30 - Individual served Stanley P. at the Hewlett Street Residence program with friend Judy Leon, owner of *Travel by Judy* in Roslindale Square.



PROFILE: Jim Murphy, An Outstanding Advocate for the Homeless



A heartfelt thanks to Jim Murphy of Vinfen's Cape Homeless Outreach Team who recently retired—for the second time—at age 70! After retiring as an Area Director for the Massachusetts Department of Social Services in 1997, Jim moved to Cape Cod and quickly became a homeless outreach advocate for Vinfen. During his tenure at Vinfen, Jim has helped countless individuals find a place to live and obtain deeply needed services. Additionally, he provided a sense of hope that someone was there to help people in need.

What Jim gave to the Cape Homeless Outreach Program is immeasurable, and his fellow co-workers and those he served will miss his warmth and compassion.

SPOTLIGHTS

FOR MENTAL RETARDATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH, THINK ABILITY FIRST!

During March, Vinfen hosted a series of Open Houses in six of its Mental Retardation Services Division programs. Marking the Awareness Month and also celebrating the completion of several renovations funded through U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants, families and individuals served met with public and elected officials, as well as employees from Vinfen. Among the attendees were Chairman Charles Kokoros of the Braintree Board of Selectmen at the South Shore Day Hab program, Rockland Town Administrator Bradley Plante at the Rockland Day Hab program, and Weymouth City Councilor Paul J. Leary at the Forest Street Residence program.

An Open House highlight was the Employment Training Center (ETC) celebration on March 11 in Brighton, Mass. State Sen. Steven Tolman, State Rep. Kevin Honan, Mayor Menino's Brighton Neighborhood Liaison Paul Holloway, and City Councilor Jerry McDermott, joined more than 30 individuals served, business leaders, and staff to reaffirm their commitment to advocating for individuals with disabilities. "We are very proud to have Vinfen here in the community. The services you provide are exemplary, and help us to support the rights of people with developmental disabilities, so that they can have a chance to live a meaningful life," said Sen. Tolman. Brian H., an individual served at ETC for three years, warmly thanked the program staff, saying that without all the help and training he received, he could not have had the full-time job he now has at Shaw's Supermarket.



Rep. Honan presents a House of Representative's Citation to ETC's Program Director Jennifer Straub.

Employing individuals with disabilities via ETC: a win-win situation

ETC integrates individuals with cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities such as autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) into the community and workforce by providing vocational training and enhancing social skills. Successfully relocated last January from Watertown, ETC serves 44 individuals and is primarily funded by the Department of Mental Retardation. Numerous local businesses, such as New Balance and SuperFitness, support ETC by employing individuals served. "These businesses appreciate the work we do and help us for the right reasons. They hire individuals with disabilities because they know that they are capable of doing the job and can be relied on," emphasizes Program Director Jennifer Straub. "It is also a way for them to give others a chance. Every day, our partners help us prove that individuals with disabilities have just as many abilities as others; they just need some extra assistance to lead independent and satisfying lives." As Paul Secon, maintenance director, certified trainer, and certified chef at SuperFitness in Watertown says, "It is really a win-win situation. We are getting the job done, and we are helping people on the way."

Early diagnosis and therapy, keys to treating disabilities

According to the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR), Developmental Disabilities (DD) affect 3 out of 100 Americans. DD refers to a diverse group of severe



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

A DREAM COME TRUE THANKS TO THE BOSTON CELTICS!

Last February, the Celtics kindly agreed to provide Vinfen with complimentary tickets for a selection of home games. Since then, 270 individuals and staff were able to enjoy three Celtics games at the FleetCenter, which represents a donation of more than \$10,000. "Many individuals served by Vinfen are very touched by this opportunity; it represents another path of fulfillment in their lives," says Residential Counselor Peter Osazuwa, of the Wilmington Residence Program. Special thanks to the Celtics for their support!

MOE ARMSTRONG WINS POETRY AWARD

Vinfen's Director of Consumer and Family Affairs Moe Armstrong, MBA, MA, received the *Inspirational Personal Experience Award* from the Veterans Administration (VA) Connecticut. The poem combines memories about being with the VA and a "thank you" note for their help. It is now in competition for a national prize at the 2005 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival (NVCAF) to be held in Denver, Colo., this October.

VINFEN RECEIVES \$30,000 GRANT FOR ARTS PROGRAM

The InnerView Therapeutic Arts Program provides Hancock Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation Center residents in Dorchester with a creative avenue through art, introduces them to healthy methods of expression and coping, and fosters positive relationships with peers. "Art is a forceful means toward positive self-expression and the Department of Public Health grant enables our residents to participate in a creative activity while increasing their self-esteem," says Hancock Center Administrator George Gougian.

MAYOR COHEN, OF NEWTON, MA, ACKNOWLEDGES VINFEN

Among other agencies, Newton's Mayor David B. Cohen publicly acknowledged Vinfen's achievement in receiving the McKinney grant for one of its residential program located in Brookline at a press conference last February. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awards these grants annually through a national application process to help homeless or formerly homeless people.

Individual served Michael M. with Assistant Program Director Shauni Turner of the Skyview Road Residence program during the Forest Street Residence Open House on March 22. Individuals Paul G. and Grace H. are in the background.

chronic conditions that are due to mental and/or physical impairments and can begin anytime during development up to 22 years of age. People with disabilities show significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors, such as functional skills like mobility; conceptual skills like reading; and social skills like community integration. Today, with early intervention and appropriate training and support, people with disabilities can lead satisfying independent lives. Unfortunately, awareness within the general public is very low compared with the strong stigma associated to disabilities. "Two individuals work five days a week at New Balance, two others have been part of the Episcopal Divinity School staff since 2001," says Straub. These are only some of our success stories. "People with disabilities are no different from anyone else in that they have the right to be treated with dignity, pursue empowered meaningful lives, and be given opportunities to reach their full potential," says Director of Service for Vinfen's Mental Retardation Services Division Michael Bloom, MA, MS.

VINFEN WINS NEGLEY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN RISK MANAGEMENT FOR THE THIRD TIME IN FOUR YEARS

Presented annually by the Mental Health Risk Retention Group (MHRRG) to providers who demonstrate excellence in risk management practices, the 2005 Negley President's Award recognized Vinfen for the third time in four years. Director of Quality Madeline Becker received the award on behalf of Vinfen during the National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare's Annual Meeting in San Francisco, Calif., last March. In addition, Vinfen received a \$15,000 grant, and its risk management program will be used as a national model for developing risk management programs in other community mental health agencies. "Over the years, Vinfen's staff has contributed continuously to the development of high standards of care and accountability both within New England and nationwide," says Chairman Gil Aliber, MHRRG.

Negley Award grants to fund innovative nutrition project

The 2005 grant was added to the previous two President's Awards for a total of \$45,000. It will help finance the continuation of an innovative nutrition project designed to educate individuals served and staff on how to make healthy nutrition choices. The nutrition project includes the development of the "Tasty & Healthy!" teaching cookbook funded by a Hoffman-LaRoche grant. The cookbook is based on the *New American Plate*, which recommends moderate portion sizes and a diet rich in vegetables and fruits. In the project's next phase, an evidence-based research study will be implemented in a selection of Vinfen programs to assess the impact of a healthy diet on individuals with disabilities.

calendar



JOIN VINFEN'S STIGMA STOMPERS FOR THE NAMI WALK

The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill will hold its 2005 Walk for the Mind of America on **Saturday, May 14**. The objective is to increase public awareness about mental illness, fight stigma, and raise money for programs. To walk for a good cause, join Vinfen's Stigma Stompers at 9 a.m. for check-in at the Artisan Park, Soldier's Field Road in Brighton, along the Charles River. The walk starts at 11 a.m.

VARIETY SHOW: AN EXHIBITION OF UNEXPECTED CONNECTIONS AT THE WEBSTER HOUSE ART GALLERY

Artists from Vinfen's Webster House will showcase new pieces of artwork from **April 28 through July 31**. Webster House is a psychiatric day rehabilitation program. For more information, please call (617) 739-5461.

< Details of *Timothy 2*, acrylic on canvas by Wilma Pauline Coates

Hours: Mon/Fri. 10 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.
20 Webster Place
Brookline Village, MA 02445



TASTE OF GATEWAY: A GROUP ART EXHIBITION

The current exhibit, which runs **through May 14**, presents colorful and exotic paintings, drawings, and sculptures by many of the Gateway artists. The exhibit will culminate in the popular fun(d)raiser *Taste of Gateway* on May 14, featuring wine-tasting, live jazz, and a catered buffet. Tickets for the fundraiser are \$50 or \$100 to receive a piece of artwork from the show. For more information, please call (617) 734-1577 ext. 21.

< Details of *Penguins*, watercolor by Rosanne McNulty

Hours: Mon/Fri. 9 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. / Sat. noon - 5 p.m.
62 Harvard Street
Brookline Village, MA 02445



FIVE GATEWAY ARTISTS AT THE BERENBERG GALLERY

Artists C. Anderson, Y. Arshad, L. Edmiston, R. Swike, and J. Turutz are part of the exhibit *Autism to Asperger's: The Artistic Phenomenon*, running from **May 4 through June 18** at Boston's Berenberg Gallery (4 Clarendon Street).

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A CALL TO ACTION BY DR KEN DUCKWORTH

How do you envision this position and do you expect any challenges? The nature of human services is inherently challenging. This is clearly not an over-funded field, and people who have major mental illnesses have major needs as well as capabilities. Unfortunately, some people have received pragmatic care, and others have had real trouble finding or receiving the right treatment. So, my goal is twofold: figure out how to integrate people's care whenever possible, and support a change in the whole mental health culture into more recovery, rehabilitation, and orientation. The idea is to promote a culture where people can develop a body that works, and say, "I am at risk because of this -- for instance schizophrenia -- therefore I should get involved and take care of myself, go to a nutritionist or start walking." If you look at all the evidence-based practices that are coming out, some are very applicable to the work that we need to do. And some of them we will probably develop on our own.

Do you have a message for individuals served and their families, and all of us at Vinfen? There is an old Hebrew expression saying "You are not required to complete the task, but neither can you put it down." I think it is a beautiful metaphor for this field. At some basic level, advocate for more resources! Do not be passive, vote and participate in the political process, get involved in your communities, and do not give up. This is fundamental, whether you are an individual served, a family member or a provider. There are opportunities to do things better, and you have to take them. It is really true in my clinical work, in my systems' work, and in my policy jobs. There are always moments when you can actually make a difference, with a person or a program.

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.

vinfen
helping to transform lives

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