

# CONNECTIONS

Summer 2005

Including Persons with Mental Illness and Disabilities

## Preparing Students with Disabilities for College

by Dorothy Wells

Beginning college is a time of major change for any student, and a disability brings additional challenges. Awareness of and preparation for what lies ahead will smooth this transition, and increase a student's chances for academic success.

### Learn about how college students are served.

There are significant differences between high school services and college services for students with disabilities. Colleges have a responsibility to respond when students inform the appropriate department of their needs, supported by documentation of the disability.

**Develop self-advocacy skills.** As students enter college, they have significant new responsibilities to advocate for themselves. They will need to self-identify to the department responsible for serving students with disabilities. On most campuses, they will also need to inform faculty of their needs.

**Enhance study skills.** College presents a new learning environment, in which students take more responsibility. Students should develop skills to organize study materials, manage time, set priorities, track assignment deadlines, and break major projects into steps. They should also develop note taking skills if possible or plan for some appropriate accommodation, such as a tape recorder.

## In This Issue:

- Preparing Students with Disabilities for College
- The *Dialogue* Continues
- Oasis Retreat and Upcoming Events
- Financial Updates
- ADNet Founders Honored
- ADNet at MHA
- Recommended Resources

**Cultivate independent living skills.** For those students who select a residential institution, college begins their first independent living experience. New responsibilities include getting up on time for classes, doing laundry, managing finances, unlocking residence hall doors, cleaning residence hall rooms, and dealing with community businesses.

**Build personal care assistance management skills.** At most colleges, students who need assistance with dressing, bathing, grooming, and other personal care will need to make arrangements with a home health agency, or hire their own attendants. Depending on how care is provided, students may also need to gain skills in selecting, training, and managing pay for

*(Continued on page 2)*

## The Dialogue Continues

*New Name, New Look, Same Great Resource!*

Welcome to *Connections*! ADNet's newsletter has a new name, a new look, and a new format! Former readers of *Dialogue* (and before that, *Dialogue on Disabilities*) will appreciate the clean new look with a consistent four-page format. Starting in 2006, we hope to re-institute a quarterly publishing schedule.

*Connections* is forward-looking in its approach. In addition to the appeal to our faithful *Dialogue* readers, we hope that a new generation of families and many more church leaders will come on board. Our goal is

to build a vital national network that encourages the inclusion of all persons into the life of the community, regardless of their disabilities or illnesses.

Persons with mental illness and disabilities of all kinds have unique gifts to offer local congregations and the broader church. We also know that there are many challenges as well. This newsletter facilitates ADNet's mission of equipping individuals, families, and congregations to meet these challenges and eliminate

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Financial Updates

Thanks to generous contributors, ADNet is nearing its goal of raising \$10,000 to receive a matching grant from Mennonite Mutual Aid (MMA). This is a significant portion of ADNet's annual budget of just under \$42,000.

In April, ADNet received notice of the receipt of grant of \$2500 from the Schowalter Foundation of Newton, Kansas for building the capacity of ADNet. These funds will enable ADNet staff and volunteers to attend national functions like Mennonite Health Assembly and the Charlotte 2005 Mennonite Church USA assembly. It will also provide seed money for travel to speak in churches.

Hearty thanks to MMA, Schowalter Foundation, and our many faithful givers. ADNet is a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, meaning that all gifts are tax deductible as provided for by law.

### WAYS TO GIVE

- Give online through **JustGive**. Just click on a JustGive logo at [www.adnetonline.org](http://www.adnetonline.org)
- Would you like to space out your giving in monthly or quarterly installments? **Direct Giving** allows donors to fill out a single form and have funds automatically transferred either monthly or quarterly from your checking or savings account.
- How about **Legacy Giving**? Mennonite Foundation has a number of ideas. See your MMA representative or the ADNet Online website.
- **Donate** a vehicle to ADNet! Call or write for details.

*(Preparing Students with Disabilities for College)*

attendants.

**Connect with Vocational Rehabilitation.** Assistance may be available through Vocational Rehabilitation, a federal/state program whose purpose is to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and integration into society.

**Obtain assistive technology.** A wide array of technology is currently available to assist students with disabilities. Specialized hardware and software can allow computer access, or use of the computer as a tool to compensate for the disability. Students should identify and become proficient in adaptive technology that allows them to complete academic work in the most independent and efficient method possible.

**Choose a college and connect with the department for services for students with disabilities.**

**Provide current disability documentation.** Information needed generally includes a diagnosis from an appropriate professional, and information about the specific limitations related to the disability, with a particular focus on their needs as a student.

In conclusion, higher education can be both challenging and rewarding for many students with disabilities. It takes special planning and extra effort on the part of both the student and parents to make sure there is every opportunity for success.

A fuller version of this article along with a listing of sources and resources is available on ADNet's website at [www.adnetonline.org](http://www.adnetonline.org)

*Dorothy Wells is a Rehabilitation Counselor who has served students with disabilities in both community college and 4-year residential college settings. She currently serves as Director of Disability Services at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, North Carolina.*

## Oasis Retreat

Family members of persons with mental illness met on April 15-16 for the annual Oasis Retreat. Sponsored by the Oasis support group with the support of Oaklawn Center, the Retreat met again at the Oaklawn Hospital facility in Goshen, Indiana.

This year's speaker was Robert Shreiner, newly appointed chaplain and Pastoral Care Coordinator at Oaklawn. Shreiner's presentations focused on the theme of hope in the midst of the challenging circumstances faced by family members. He encouraged participants to personal growth as they move through five typical phases of coping to eventual "thriving."

A local couple also spoke on relating to a sibling with chronic mental illness.

Families within driving distance of Goshen are invited to join Oasis for monthly meetings. Contact the ADNet office for contact information.

## Upcoming Events

These are the retreats known to the ADNet staff, sponsored by Anabaptist-related organizations and/or held at Mennonite retreat centers. Please inform us of additional listings.

- Retreat for Families, Friends and Persons with Disabilities, July 27-31, 2005 Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania. Theme: "Shepherd Me, O God." Speakers: Roy and Connie Bender; Inclusive Worship Leader - Dave Gullman. Information: Phone 1-800-839-1021. Email [info@laurelville.org](mailto:info@laurelville.org)
- Joy for the Journey, August 13-15, 2005 at Spruce Lake Retreat, Canadensis, Pennsylvania. Speakers: Dr. & Mrs. Teague. Music: The Franz Family. Information: Phone: 1-800-822-7505. Email [info@sprucelake.org](mailto:info@sprucelake.org).

*(The Dialogue Continues)*

the unnecessary barriers in the church and community. *Connections* is a communications tool to help us encourage and support each other and challenge the church to live up to the fullness of what it means to be the body of Christ.

We know that the readers of *Connections* have many different interests and needs. Therefore, articles will be shorter, with a greater variety of themes. Some articles, like the one in this issue on preparing young adults with disabilities for college, will be condensed versions of longer articles. The full text of the article can be accessed quickly and easily by going to ADNet Online, ADNet's website, or by requesting a hard copy via phone or postal mail. In addition, ADNet Online will be updated with additional resources on most topics that are treated in *Connections*.

The changes in the newsletter also include a new ADNet logo. This new logo will be phased in alongside the old logo; as new materials need to be printed, it will replace the old logo altogether. This logo highlights the

themes of mutual support and outreach under the cross of Christ.

We invite your response on this new chapter in ADNet's communications with you. We also encourage you to pass along *Our New Logo*:

your copy of *Connections* to family members and friends.

Encourage them to contact us and get on our mailing list. Thank you for taking time to send your feedback, information, updates, and new contacts to us.



## Connect With Us

*We welcome your questions/comments.*

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## ADNet Founders Honored

Four founding members of ADNet were honored at a special ADNet Board dinner on February 25. All four were a part of ADNet's original Executive Committee which guided the organization until a national Board could be appointed. Each one made a significant contribution of time and talents to the beginning of ADNet and have now moved on to other pursuits.

The four honored:

*Cindy Warner Baker* contributed significantly through her broad experience and her writing skills. She continues to be a consultant for ADNet while taking care of family needs and working part-time in youth ministry at Berkey Avenue Mennonite Fellowship.

*Joyce Pankratz* did initial design work on ADNet's brochure and newsletter, all while working full-time at Mennonite Mission Network. At the end of March, she and her family moved to Kansas where she is now the director of Camp Mennoscah.

*Sherry Wenger* contributed her organizational skills and her experience as a nurse and parent. She helped



## Board Recognizes Four Founding Members

create and lead a number of workshops. In March, she returned to her profession of nursing. She continues weekly contact with the ADNet office and her husband, Curt, continues as volunteer bookkeeper.

*Sheila Stopher Yoder* provided extensive wisdom, knowledge, and continuity, having served as the disabilities consultant at Mennonite Mutual Aid. At the beginning of the 2004-05 school year, she stepped up her teaching load at Goshen College as an Assistant Professor of American Sign Language. She also continues to coordinate Anabaptist Deaf Ministries.

*Paul Leichty* was the fifth member of the original founding group and now serves as ADNet's Director. Other current ADTeam members are Mary Graber and Phyllis Smith.

*Picture: ADNet Board and current ADTeam members honored the founders of ADNet. Front row (Board), left to right are John Heyerly, Jim Smith, Wilfred Martens, and Karen Bender (behind Wilfred). The original five Executive Committee (ADTeam) members are flanked by Mary Graber (left) and Phyllis Smith (right). The five are (left to right) Sherry Wenger, Cindy Warner Baker, Paul Leichty (current ADNet Director), Joyce Pankratz, and Sheila Stopher Yoder.*

*Support groups in other areas of the country are invited to submit their news for these pages as well.*

*Write to [adnet@adnetonline.org](mailto:adnet@adnetonline.org) or P.O. Box 959, Goshen, IN 46517.*



Supporting families and equipping the church for inclusive communities. ADNet provides: Resources • ADNet Online • Regional Support Groups • Accessibility Surveys

## ADNet at MHA

## Report on the Annual Gathering

**M**ennonite Health Assembly (MHA) is an annual gathering of health care and related social service providers affiliated with Mennonite Church USA, the Mennonite Brethren Church, and the Brethren in Christ Church.

This year's gathering in Orlando, Florida, March 10-13 featured the theme, "Thriving in Adverse

Conditions: Mission Possible." ADNet's display was in a very visible location. ADNet also sponsored a workshop presented by Paul Leichty and Sherry Wenger entitled "Empowering Families in Crisis: Strategies for Mission Possible." ADNet members also met with the Healthcare Access Commission, the Disability Service Providers, and the Mennonite Nurses Association.

### Recommended Resources:

Rachel Simon. *Riding the Bus with My Sister: A True Life Journey*, Paperback by Plume Books, 2003. Rachel Simon's story of riding the bus with her sister, "Cool Beth," is an authentic and moving journey of self-discovery through intense interaction with the world of a person with developmental disabilities. It was recently adapted into a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie which aired on CBS on May 1.

Paul Pearsall. *The Beethoven Factor: The New Positive Psychology of Hardiness, Happiness, Healing and Hope*. Hampton Roads Publishing Co., 2003. Recommended and used by Bob Shreiner at the Oasis Retreat, Pearsall picks up on the deafness of one of the most famous classical composers to illustrate how one can thrive in the midst of adversity.

*Connections* is published three times a year by ADNet. Paul D. Leichty, Network Director and Editor. ADTeam Members: Mary Graber and Phyllis Smith. Editorial assistance by Cindy Warner Baker. Layout by Sties Design. The mission of the Anabaptist Disabilities Network (ADNet) is to provide encouragement and resources to congregations, families, and persons with disabilities as they identify and embrace their God-given gifts and abilities in ministry to each other and to the larger church. (Note: Following the example set by the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ADNet definition of "disability" is broad-based and includes, among others, physical, learning, sensory, and cognitive disabilities and mental illnesses.)



# ADNET

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