

# FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS



**August 2011**

## **Beaverbrook STEP, Inc.**

Enriched Lives.....

Enlightened Communities

125 Walnut Street

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[www.beaverbrookstep.org](http://www.beaverbrookstep.org)

A private, non-profit corporation dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities in Belmont, Waltham, Watertown, Brighton, Brookline & surrounding communities.



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[www.funandfriendsconnection.com](http://www.funandfriendsconnection.com)

August 2011

Dear Beaverbrook STEP friends and family members,

It's been a great summer at Beaverbrook STEP with lots of vacations and outdoor activities. Our Community (self-) Advocates Board (CAB) will be sailing away on a fabulous cruise to Bermuda later this month (see page 2). The Fun & Friends Connection has also held 2 exciting social events this summer, the last one being a Beaverbrook STEP-sponsored, Hawaii-themed, beach ball dancing extravaganza at the Hellenic Center. If you are looking for new activities and the latest event listings check out [www.funandfriendsconnection.com](http://www.funandfriendsconnection.com).

**AN INVITATION: Please come to a terrific, combined Community Social Event for our self-advocates & our Family Support Group. STEP individuals & family members will enjoy a great BBQ in the large yard of one of our homes located at 265 Grove St in Waltham on Tuesday, Sept 13, 2011 from 5pm to 8pm. MARK THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR! Please drop by! Enjoy food catered by Firefly's!!! (Flyer is enclosed – rsvp to Phyllis.)**

I'm also pleased to report that a new library is being established at our main office to house information of interest for individuals, family members, guardians and staff. The library currently includes resources, articles and books from STEP's Elder Enhancement Project, a 2 year project funded by the Marshall Home Foundation of Watertown, MA. For a complete list of new library materials check out page 2 of the enclosed "Advocacy Update."

The library also has publications on "Design Thinking" a fresh approach to foster creative thinking for organizations in order to inspire new solutions for social innovation. STEP will be using this concept to assist us with developing better home environments for individuals served, particularly in the realm of designing additional barrier free living as our population ages. This concept and goal has formed the basis of our Fall Foundation and Grant Initiatives.

The Governor signed the new State FY 2012 Budget in July. Because there are no additional federal dollars available to States this year, the disability budget has been cut, generally in the area of Medicaid allocations. DDS Respite and the In-Home Family Support budget have also been cut. At this time Beaverbrook STEP has not received any FY 2012 budget cuts and continues to be level funded.

Sincerely,

Ginny Connolly

Executive Director



## Out of the Shadows...into the Light

The Arc U.S. recently conducted a groundbreaking survey of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) called the Family and Individual Needs for Disability Supports survey (FINDS). The report issued by Arc U. S. reveals that there are many urgent unmet support needs which keep individuals "in the shadows of our society." These needs are more acute for those without government or private funding.

The FINDS survey focused on education, housing, employment and other support needs of people with I/DD and their families. More than 5,287 family respondents participated in the survey, with 95% representing parents, siblings, children, grandparents or other relatives. Areas of concern reported by respondents included:

- The majority of students with I/DD were not fully included in their schools and school services were declining.
- High levels of unemployment (85%) were reported along with decreases in employment services and job supports.
- More than 40% of family caregivers reported unmet needs for their family member.
- More than 20% of respondents reported that their family member had no source of income.
- Overall, 62% of respondents experienced decreases in services and nearly a third were waiting for government funded services, most for over 5 years.
- The report concludes with a broad call-to-action outline for individuals, family members and other advocates. Read the full report on the Resources Page at the Arc U.S. website (<http://www.thearc.org>).



## *THE 2011 BERMUDA CRUISE*

Forty-five (45) happy members of STEP's Community Advocates Board and support staff are leaving on a fabulous cruise to the wonderful island of Bermuda. They set sail from Boston harbor on the Norwegian Dawn Cruise Ship on Friday, August 19, 2011 and arrive in Bermuda at Kings Wharf Port for 3 lovely days before returning to Boston on Friday, August 26th. The week includes lots of exploration and activities including pools, beaches, shows, restaurants and casinos. Many thanks to the CAB members and the CAB support team! Such great fun!!

