



Ralph Ardito, Sr. and Keith Richardson, Knights of Columbus Abnaki Council



Rob and Carl Johanson, Goranson's Farm

Friends of the Children's Center

As the Children's Center enters its 45th year of serving the children of central Maine, we pause to reflect on the depth and breadth of community support that makes our very existence possible.

Annually, the Board of Directors of the Center celebrates individuals and organizations that have been especially supportive of the mission of the Center.

Recognized in December as "Friends of the Children's Center" for 2010 were:

Nancy Shuman – for her personal interest in and com-



Nancy and Charles Shuman visiting Circle Time with Executive Director Jonathan Leach and Director of Early Education Jane Brennan

passion for the families being served by the Center.

Knights of Columbus, Abnaki Council – who annually gift the Center with the proceeds from their holiday Tootsie Roll fundraiser.

Goranson's Farm – who partnered with the children of the Center to provide wholesome, healthy food for our meal programs, and provided wonderful learning and discovery experiences for the children during their fieldtrips to the farm.

It does take the caring and concern of the entire community to raise our children – and in return, investments in early education and family support are investments in the future of our community.

Many thanks to our Friends of the Children's Center; and deepest gratitude to ALL of our supporters, for all you do!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Jason & Alex (cont'd)	2
Children's Champions	2
Children's Center Video	2
Learnings	3
Skowhegan	3
Save the Date!	4

Jason & Alexandria



"You need to be willing to let people help you out with stuff." When you're raised to be self-sufficient, and grew up knowing - and getting through - hard times, sometimes asking for help is the last thing you think of. And it doesn't feel easy. But when it's about your children, and what's best for

them, well that was a whole different story for Jason, Jr.'s and Alexandria's dad, Jason.

Dad remembers, "I guess he was about 16 months old when I recognized some behaviors that prompted me to get my son evaluated."

When the diagnosis came back placing Jason on the autism spectrum, "It was heart-wrenching for his mom. It was really hard to deal with." Jason says he just felt relieved to know for sure. Within three months, Jason, Jr. was enrolled at the Children's Center.

"Since he's been here, he's a whole different person. He's

growing in self-confidence, and is definitely more outgoing. Jason (now five) has prospered – the one-on-one attention has been great for him."



It was harder for Dad to acknowledge that they needed to take their daughter, Alex, to get evaluated - "we just didn't believe it could happen to us twice."

"I can still dream of a great future for my kids - no dreams have been lost."

Jason and Alex

"Before, Alex was so shy and held back - she would cry and hide with new people. Now, she's a little firecracker: she's blossomed so much; she's trying new things all the time." Dad doesn't try to hide the pride in his voice, talking about his kids.

"It helps so much to read the daily reports from the Center; it's so great to see their activities and the goals they

are accomplishing every day. If we had kept the kids at home instead of coming here to the Center, there's no way they'd be where they're at today."

"Next year, we hope it's the kindergarten at Winthrop for Jason, Jr."

"I can still dream of a great future for my kids. Thanks to the Center, no dreams have been lost."

"I have a friend whose daughter has just been diagnosed [on the autism spectrum]. It

felt good to be able to be there for her, for her to talk about it with someone who 'gets' it, and helping her through it."

Dad pauses and smiles. "That's what the Children's Center is about - we are a community of support for families with young children. And these days, everyone raising kids, we need all the support we can get!"



Children's Champions

Staff at the Children's Center recently presented our "Children's Champions" awards to Bob Robinson and Mike Peacock, drivers for KVCAP and Bill Gordon Transportation, respectively.

Presenting the awards, Amber Stubbs noted: "Transportation is a vital part of a child's day and success at the Children's Center. When their day is thrown off due to poor trans-

portation, their performance suffers.

"Among the drivers that we have, two stand out above the rest: Bob Robinson and Mike Peacock. These two men are well respected and well liked by each of the staff members here.

They care about the children that they transport to and from school.

"When entering the lobby and spotting Mike or Bob, you are

bound to see a smile and get a friendly greeting. The children LOVE them and look forward to being picked up by them. Even for the children who can not say so, you can see it 'written' all over their faces."

So to Bob and Mike, a great big THANK YOU!



Children's Center Video

Sometimes words just don't seem enough to describe what it is we do at the Children's Center, and what the programs and services we offer mean to the families here.

We are happy to announce that we now have a video to help introduce the Center and convey a sense of the impact that our programs and services can have on a child and his family.

You can find the video on our website: www.ChildrensCenterAugusta.com

We also link to it on our Facebook Page (have you "liked" us?) Find us on Facebook as Children's Center - Augusta, Maine.



Learnings

When I was a boy growing up in Blue Hill, we lived on the side of Green's Hill. I think about that house every winter. It was a small, shingled saltbox with a great view of Blue Hill Bay (I certainly couldn't afford to live there now!) and, like all of the roads leading out of Blue Hill village, Green's Hill was pretty steep. It was a great hill to ride down on a bike but not so much fun pedaling up.

I think about it every winter because it also had a great view of cars slipping off the road during every snow-storm. I learned a lot of valuable lessons growing up in a small town in Maine, like:

No matter who sees you doing something you're not



supposed to be doing, they know your dad. And, if you see someone stuck in the ditch, you go and help push them out.

I pushed a lot of cars out of the ditch. That meant stopping whatever I was doing, putting on my winter gear, trudging outside, and working up a healthy sweat until that person went on their way. And that rule also applied when you were out driving, I learned. You never passed by someone in trouble if you could stop to help.

I think that lesson applies to what we do at the Center every day. We see kids that need a little push to get them going in the right direction. Or, sometimes, a bigger push, with lots of hands. And when we see someone who needs help, we stop what we're doing and put on our coats and dig in our heels.

Many of you reading this are like that, too. A big thank you to everyone who helped us help others by giving in response to our annual appeal. And if you haven't yet, it's not too late!

Are you going to drive by, or stop to help push?

Jonathan



"I learned a lot of valuable lessons in small town Maine..."

Children's Center In Skowhegan

The Children's Center, well known in the Augusta area for its high quality early intervention services and family support for the past 45 years, continues to expand its services in Skowhegan.

Located at Miss Kelly's Learning Loft at 48 South Factory Street, the Children's Center offers the

following services to young children with special needs and their families:

- Targeted case management
- In-home rehabilitative community support
- Parent and caregiver education


These services are available for all families of children with

special needs or identified risk factors.

If you know families of young children who could benefit from Children's Center services in Skowhegan, please contact:

Heather Washburn at
626-3497, extension 253.

Current Board Members:



President
Dana Hamilton

Vice President
Cristina Evers

Treasurer
Patsy Garside Crockett

Secretary
Kim Mackenzie

Warren Bartlett
Christine Bartlett
Elisa Paylor
Paige Cummings
Angela Harvey
Don Lemieux

Children's Center
1 Alden Avenue
Augusta, Maine 04330

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 26, 2011

10th Annual Chili Chowder Challenge

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Augusta Armory

Tickets: \$10 individuals, \$25 families



The hottest ticket in town !

~To get your tickets in advance, call the Center at 626-3497~

Tickets are also sold at the door.

Sponsorships and Auction Item Donations Welcome!

Please contact Elizabeth at the Children's Center: 626-3497 ext. 130