

# Family Support Newsletter

www.communitybridgesnh.org

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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JUNE, 2009

## Welcome to the ~ FAMILY SUPPORT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

1<sup>st</sup> Edition – June 2009

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*Dear Families and Friends of Community Bridges,*

If you are receiving this newsletter those words are for you. Welcome to the first newsletter of the Family Support Council of Community Bridges. We are beginning this new form of communication among families and individuals experiencing disability because we all need to work together and help each other to achieve the best lives possible for our family members. At this time when everyone is being asked to do more with less we need to support each other in every way possible. To do this, we must connect to each other in many ways. We hope this newsletter and some of the things that the Family Support Council is doing will help us to do just that: encourage us to get to know each other so that we may work and play together for the benefit of us all.

You will be able to learn how we propose to do this in articles in this newsletter. Look for information on the first Family Support Council-sponsored picnic, the creation of a directory of families served by Community Bridges, and the development of activities in the five focal areas represented by members of the Family Support Council. Currently, our Family Support Council has seven members from different parts of the Community Bridges area of service.

We have also just filled the new position of Community Connector to work with us on our goal of greater community inclusion throughout the region for individuals with disabilities. This is an exciting step for us and we look forward to the energy and knowledge that Terri brings to the job.

We plan to distribute our newsletter quarterly so that we may keep you informed of all we are doing, but, more importantly, to involve you in our efforts. We are always looking for people with an interest in helping us in ways large and small, either as members of the Council or as volunteers on committees or short-term projects. The more we work together, the more we can do. So, consider this an invitation to join us; read our newsletter and help us make it yours, contribute articles, questions and suggestions to our newsletter, work with us on our projects and help us in the goal that drives us all, greater inclusion and success for individuals with disabilities in their homes, schools, workplaces, and communities.

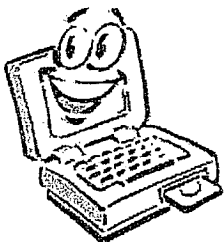
Our focus is on COMMUNICATION! We need YOU to make that possible!

Written by Sandra LeBeau  
Family Support Council Co-chair

## Website Resources

Community Bridges  
New Hampshire Camp Directors Association  
New Hampshire Special Olympics  
American Camp Association of New England  
NH Family Voices *(check out their lending library)*  
Institute on Disability/UCED – UNH

[www.communitybridgesnh.org](http://www.communitybridgesnh.org)  
[www.nhcamps.org](http://www.nhcamps.org)  
[www.sonh.org](http://www.sonh.org)  
[www.acane-camping.org](http://www.acane-camping.org)  
[www.nhfv.org](http://www.nhfv.org)  
[www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu)



*Please share websites with us that are/have been helpful to you.*

*Each quarter we would like to feature a family member from our region that has overcome life's challenges and lives life to its fullest. This quarter we would like to introduce you to Dee LeBeau, daughter of Family Support Council Member, Sandra LeBeau.*



*Dee LeBeau*

***“Moving to New Hampshire”***

What is it like to move at the age of twenty-five to a new state and a new town where you didn't go to school and where you know no one? How do you find a job, make friends and become part of an unfamiliar community? These were the challenges that faced Dee LeBeau in the summer of 2000 when she moved with her parents to New London, a place where she had spent a brief two weeks every summer since her birth but about which she knew very little except as a “summer person.” One of Dee's first steps was to get a part-time job at a local assisted care facility. (She had worked for over four years in the laundry of a large nursing home back in Pa., her home state.) At the same time, she signed up with Community Bridges in order to find out what assistance she might be able to access to help her achieve some of her other goals. Through them, she and her family learned what was available in New Hampshire to help Dee make plans for her future, what social groups and activities might be of interest to her, and most importantly, to get some help in connecting with her local community. Today some eight and a half years later, Dee volunteers at her local library and works once a week at the local food bank. She volunteers also at the assisted care facility where she got her first job. She left there some time ago for a better paying job making salads at the McDonald's in Warner where she has worked for the past seven years. She has also just started another part-time position at the New London Inn to which she can walk from home. Because of the initiative of one of her companions from Community Bridges, Dee has recently begun to strengthen her reading skills enormously. Through the combined efforts of her parents and the assistance of Community Bridges, Dee is now happily involved in her home community, attends dance classes, movies at the library, goes to camp one week each summer, and has made contact with self-advocacy and social groups. All of which help her find the friendships she was looking for when she came to New London.

**Answering the Who, What, Where, When, and Why Questions of the Family Support Council**

**Written by Sondra Brake**  
*Family Support Council Co-chair*

Every area agency in New Hampshire has a Family Support Council (FSC). Family Support Councils exist to bring the voices of individuals and their families to the agency plans and as an additional avenue of support – families supporting families.

The Council is comprised of volunteers, family members just like you, who meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of every month, Tuesday or Wednesday evenings, from 6-8 PM at the Whitney Road office. Additionally, we meet for a strategic planning session, on a Saturday, every six months. During the redesignation process last fall, we learned many families were seeking improved communication. Our initiatives this year include the creation of a family directory, creating five focal support networks, and increased participation in the Family Support Council. Presently we lack representation from family members involved with Early Supports and Services. With your assistance on either the Council or as a volunteer who can take on a specific task, we can provide more support to families. Please contact either Sondra or Sandra to offer your services.

Thank you for considering supporting other families. It's through supporting one another that we carry on. In the words of Jerry Greenfield, “If you support the community, they will support you.”

**We are currently seeking:**

**Volunteer Position/Task & Commitment of Time**

Council Members

*16 events/meetings per year*

Newsletter Team

*2-4 hours per quarter*

Focal Area Representative

*4-6 hours per quarter*

Parent Directory Team

*3-6 months organizing, data entry*

Volunteer Coordinator

*As needed*

Task Volunteers

*As needed for a one-time tasks*

**2009 Family Support Council  
Members**

Name	Town
Sondra Brake Co-chair 927-4746 brakefam@tds.net	North Sutton
Sandra LeBeau Co-chair 526-7444 melebeau@comcast.net	New London
Holly Humphrey	Franklin
Alice Young	Pittsfield
Sue Talbot	Concord
Kim Rooney	Hillsboro
Pam Bartlett	Loudon

**Welcome  
Terri Warren**

**to Community Bridges**

**Written by Sondra Brake**  
*Family Support Council Co-chair*

*Community Bridges mission is as follows:*

"Community Bridges will advance the integration, growth, and interdependence of people with developmental disabilities within their home communities and be a leader in the delivery of and advocacy for innovative supports to individuals and their families."

In support of the agency, individuals, and their families, the Family Support Council welcomes Terri Warren in the position of Community Connector. Terri comes to us with a wealth of experience in strategic planning, program management, and most importantly, community development.

Terri is seeking opportunities to educate the Merrimack County community about the Family Support Council, their mission, and activities, supporting one of our goals to eliminate preconceived notions and stereotypes about persons with disabilities. Additionally, Terri will be working with families in the five focal areas to create educational and social activities for families and individuals.

Living in New Hampshire for the past 10 years, Terri enjoys officiating softball and basketball, watching the women's NCAA basketball tournament, volunteering on a variety of boards and committees, and listening to some good folk music while hanging out with her dog, Rielly. She looks forward to working with "my colleagues as they work in the communities and with the council with the activities that we do out in the communities that we serve."

Please feel free to contact Terri directly at 226-3212 ext. 269 or [twarren@communitybridgesnh.org](mailto:twarren@communitybridgesnh.org) with thoughts and ideas for your area.

**Upcoming Calendar  
Events**

- June 24 Family Support Council Meeting  
6 PM
- July 15 Family Support Council Meeting  
6 PM
- Sept. 26 Picnic at Bear Brook State Park  
Noon - 5 PM

*Quarterly Quote...*

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

~ Anne Frank

## 2009 Family Support Conference

New Hampshire families and professionals joined together on May 1, 2 & 3, at the beautiful Mount Washington Hotel for the *2009 Family Support Conference*. If you were unable to attend, make sure to mark your calendar for next year! There are so many reasons for you and your family to attend. First, the hotel is magnificent! The staff was so friendly and accommodating, you are made to feel like royalty. The food is wonderful, with so many choices – no one would go hungry. The conference draws people from around our state. It is a wonderful place to meet people with common interests and concerns. The conference allows us opportunity to share in each other's joys, challenges, and struggles in our lives.

Second, there are workshops offered on a variety of topics for all different age groups and subject matter. The common areas held the Exhibitor tables. These consisted of businesses and services available in our state. A TECH had an Exploration Center filled with assistive technology giving viewers the opportunity to try, allowing the opportunity to find just the right product. The conference also keeps in mind all members of the family. SIBSHOP was held all day on Saturday. The group focuses on siblings of children with disabilities. It's a great way for our young people to make connections and be able to talk to each other about their challenges growing up in a family whose dynamics can be different from some of their other friends.

Last but not least, the conference offers evening activities for all to relax and enjoy the people around them. This was a wonderful opportunity to make connections and build lasting friendships.

Mark your calendars and please come join us next year!



**Written by Kim Rooney**  
*Family Support Council Member*

**COMMUNITY  
BRIDGES**

**Working Together to Support People with Disabilities**

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Concord, NH 03301

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