



# THE GUILD NEWS

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PROTESTANT GUILD FOR HUMAN SERVICES, INC. • WINTER 2006

## “Good Habits for Life” The Learning Center – Wellness Education Program Funded by a Grant from Zurich US Foundation

In early September 2005, we received the good news that Zurich US Foundation had funded our grant proposal for a creative health and wellness program for The Learning Center in the amount of \$35,000. Last year, Zurich funded our successful staff-training program, “*Positive Behavior Support*.” Innovative programming like “*Positive Behavior Support*” and the newly funded “*Good Habits for Life*” would not be possible without Zurich’s generous support. Grant funding allows The Learning Center to expand our staff training and design specialized curriculum to benefit our students.

“*Good Habits for Life*” will include development of a nutrition curriculum, classroom and residential training with a dietitian/nutritionist on meal planning, and student

cooking classroom instruction. The exercise component will include Project Adventure challenge physical education programming, therapeutic horseback riding, and relaxation therapies including Yoga instruction, Creative Movement/Dance instruction, and Compassionate Touch/ therapeutic massage. All of these programs are currently underway and we will report on them in future issues.

Zurich US Foundation began its charitable efforts in 1988; it is the charitable foundation of Zurich, an international insurance-based financial services provider with offices in 50 countries and 57,000 employees worldwide. The Foundation supports children’s charities throughout the U.S. as well as post-secondary education in communities where Zurich is located.

## FOCUS ON LEARNING

### Schedules Keep Students on Track for Success

Our students’ days are chock-full of activities – Math, English, and Science classes; Play and Movement Groups; Skill Acquisition Programs; field trips and outings; and jobs. Their schedules provide a roadmap to guide them through the day, structuring their time while providing regular checkpoints to record

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Students gain valuable on-the-job training at Something’s Brewin’, our in-house coffee-shop. Jobs like these appear on schedules.

## Tuition Assistance At Work

The Protestant Guild provides tuition assistance for staff to pursue continuing education and professional development. Here is a list of The Learning Center staff and schools/programs they are attending.

Kate Clark  
*Employment Services*  
Simmons College  
Master’s/Social Work

Sharon DiGrigoli  
*Education Coordinator*  
Lesley University  
Master’s/SPED

David Eckelkamp  
*Expressive Therapist*  
Lesley University  
Master’s/Expressive Therapy

Colleen Ives  
*Certified Teacher*  
Boston College  
Master’s/Education  
Moderate Special Needs

Marie Rénee Morpeau-Dascy  
*Residential Manager*  
Springfield College  
Master’s/Human Services

Jason Moss  
*Crisis Intervention Specialist*  
Lesley University  
B.A./English

Sylvester Nsama  
*Teacher Assistant*  
Northcentral University  
Ph.D./Behavioral Medicine

Charles C. Wills  
*Director of Residential Services*  
Simmons College  
M.S. Ed./Behavioral Ed. (graduated)  
Board Certified Behavioral Analyst

Nakeya Watson  
*Behavioral Coordinator*  
Boston University  
B.A./Psychology (graduated)

## The Protestant Guild for Human Services, Inc.

*The Guild News* is a publication of The Protestant Guild for Human Services, Inc., and its educational program, The Learning Center, a Massachusetts GL 766 non-profit private school serving developmentally disabled students ages 6–22 years.

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Laura and Andy go over “to-go” orders for the busy morning shift at The Learning Center’s Something’s Brewin’ Café.

## Students Show Community How Independence Works

Everyone remembers how great it felt to earn their first paycheck. The Learning Center’s Employment Services Department prepares students to go to work by providing on-the-job support, social skills training, and individual career counseling. Community Employment Partners make this hands-on experience possible.

Our goal is to promote students’ overall independence. Employment Services staff work with students to teach them job search and interview skills. Onsite job coaching facilitates job training along with teaching students the skills necessary to become integrated members of the community workforce.

The Learning Center students work at a number of area employers,

providing services for mailing projects, food service, clerical work, and outdoor maintenance. Over the past ten years, our employment staff has developed valuable working relationships with area employers who become our Community Employment Partners.

We’d like to express our gratitude to those employers who provide these valuable work experiences to our students: **Rebecca’s Café, Aramark Food Services, Waverley Oaks Athletic Club, D’Angelo sandwich shop, Ruby Tuesday restaurant, Bertucci’s Brick Oven Ristorante, Watertown Back Care, Avery Manor Nursing Home, Shaw’s Supermarket, Stop & Shop, and our newest partner, Watertown Savings Bank.** Thanks for working with us!

## On Track for Success

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their accomplishments. When students know what to expect, they set themselves up for success.

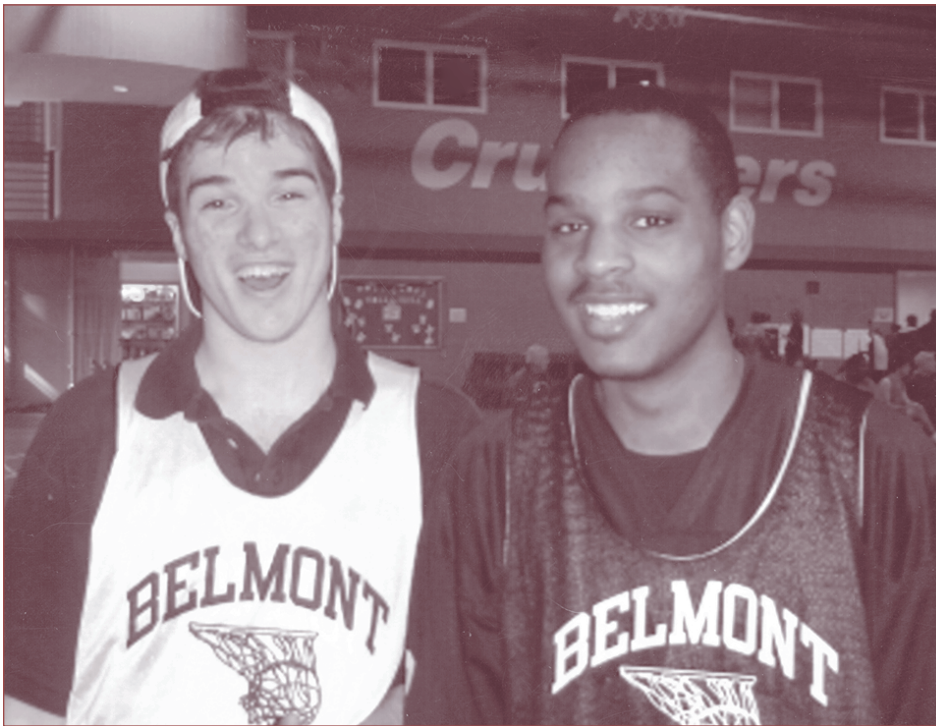
“My schedule helps me stay on track and stay focused,” says Learning Center student Eric. “It helps me know where I have to be and when I have to be there.”

Each student begins the day by completing his or her schedule, with assistance if needed. It may be a written grid, a Day Planner, or a picture schedule for students who are nonverbal.

Before an activity begins, students refer back to their schedules to prepare themselves, which can result in less problematic behavior. During the activity, students earn

## No Matter the Season, Special Olympics Is a Winning Event

The Learning Center students enjoy participating in Special Olympics programs offered throughout the year, most recently Nov. 6 at Governor Dummer Academy. Four students medaled (Gold and Bronze) on teams sponsored by the Belmont Recreation Department. Students are energized by the athletic competition, skill building, and socialization – which in turn build lasting friendships and memories for all.



Michael and Philippe take a break from practice for Special Olympics at Belmont Recreation Department's Belmont S.P.O.R.T.S. program.



Looking Forward to Spring: Students and staff celebrate at annual Prom night, held in the spring at the Lexington Elks Club.

## On Track for Success

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points or tokens for exhibiting appropriate behavior – noted with a star next to each schedule item.

When a student receives a designated amount of points or tokens, he or she may later trade them in for an item or activity of their choice, such as a canteen or vending machine snack, a videogame or puzzle, or an off-campus activity like bowling. Upon activity completion, students are directed back to their schedules to prepare for the next structured activity.

“Schedules give students control of their day,” says Behavioral Coordinator Nakeya Watson. “It lessens anxiety for students who have difficulty transitioning. And it helps students develop routine and serves as a guide. Behavior-wise, it keeps them on track and gives them a sense of accomplishment. They enjoy seeing the fun activities scheduled and they look forward to them.”

Scheduling provides the structure students need to be successful academically, behaviorally, socially, and in all aspects of their daily lives.

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To learn more about our car donation program, please visit our  
 website at: [www.protestantguild.org](http://www.protestantguild.org)  
 or call **781.893.6000.**  
\*Restrictions may apply

## How You Can Help

You can make a difference in our students' lives by supporting our work at The Guild. Join others who are helping children and adults who are developmentally disabled reach their greatest possible independence. Here are some ideas for giving:



- Make a **gift** of cash, stock, or personal property.
- Leave a **legacy** by remembering The Protestant Guild for Human Services, Inc., in your will.
- Create an **endowed fund** supporting a special program.
- Donate through your employer's **matching gift** program or payroll deduction program. You might double or triple your contribution to The Guild!

- Honor a loved one with a **memorial or tribute** gift for birthdays, weddings, graduations, and other important events.
- Support our Annual Christmas Stocking Project with a **donation** to ensure this important Outreach Program continues to provide joy to area seniors during the holidays.

**For more information on any of these opportunities, please call Pamela McGrath at 781.893.6000 x 227, or visit [www.protestantguild.org](http://www.protestantguild.org) Thank you!**

## Save the Date

9th Annual Guild Golf Tournament, Stow Acres Country Club, **Thursday, June 1, 2006.**



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for Human Services, Inc.

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