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# ◆ Brain Waves ◆

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Volume 23 Issue 3

The Community Skills Program® Newsletter

Fall 2007

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## New Developments for Community Skills Program

Community Skills Program is very pleased to announce that it is now an approved provider for the Pennsylvania Department of Health's Head Injury Program. We are looking forward to assisting the individuals referred to us to attain their goals. Our service delivery area currently includes the following counties: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, and York. We are in the process of recruiting additional staff; if you know a certified brain injury specialist (or someone eligible for certification) who is seeking employment in any of these counties, please refer them to us. You may also suggest they access [www.communityskillsprogram.com](http://www.communityskillsprogram.com), our website, and click on "Job Opportunities."

Community Skills Program, which has had a *Letter of Understanding* (i.e., vendor agreement) with the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) for more than a decade, is also pleased to announce that it has a new *Letter of Understanding*, to serve (upon authorization by OVR) customers of the Allentown, Norristown, Philadelphia, Reading and York OVR District Offices. Our *Letter of Understanding* includes some small group activities as well as one-to-one services.

For information on the services we can provide through the Head Injury Program or the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, please contact Sally Kneipp, Ph.D., LPC, LRC, CRC, ABVE, our director, at (610) 376-3380 or (215) 735-7603. She can also be reached by facsimile at (610) 376-3392

or by e-mail at [SAKneipp@aol.com](mailto:SAKneipp@aol.com). For the time being, Dr. Kneipp will be responding to information requests and matters regarding referrals, with assistance from Kathleen Meade, B.S., MT-BC, CBIS, client services liaison, in the Berks County area and west of Berks County.

To be able to attend to family matters requiring more time than she could give in the very time-intensive program coordinator position, Carol Bardsley, M.A., CPCRT, CBIS has relinquished her responsibilities as program coordinator in Pennsylvania. We are appreciative of, and grateful for, Carol's contributions to Community Skills Program and the brain injury community while in her role of program coordinator and we respect her decision to make more time for important family matters. We are very glad that she is continuing with Community Skills Program in the capacity of a neurorehabilitation specialist. She will be assisting Dr. Kneipp with vocational evaluations as well.

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## Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Abner, Danielle C., Danielle S., Dia, Douglas, Kathleen, Keith, Martin, Robert, Sheila, and William—and our new administrative support staff—Agnes (Aggie) Adesso, office assistant, and Suzanne (Suzy) Timins, secretary.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. As usual, in each issue we mention some of them; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *Brain Waves*.

- Jim P. began training to take the exam to get his commercial driver's license (CDL); he passed the written component of the exam and is practicing to take the driving portion of the exam.
- Steven volunteers at Frelinghuysen Arboretum; in September, he weeded and planted flower beds in addition to his usual task of watering.
- Cara has been attending free lectures at New York University, and also planned a going away party for a co-worker in September.
- Ginny goes to her gym on a regular basis and recently purchased a global positioning system (GPS) so she can resume bike-riding with more confidence.
- Dan is now employed part-time in the bakery department at Wegmans (grocery store).
- Manuel has begun playing soccer again, with a group of friends; he also continues to go to the library once a week to borrow CDs.

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## Update continued (from page 1)

- Retha is enjoying working on a needlepoint project that she selected at a craft store.
- Lori independently maintains her schedule of household management tasks while providing childcare for her six-month-old son and a neighbor's two-year-old son.
- Lorine made a presentation on the "Dogwood" at her garden club meeting, which she attends every other Wednesday.
- Howard B. and a friend went on a cruise to Bermuda in early September; he enjoyed himself very much.
- Monika has been keeping her finance transaction log up-to-date, and is making automatic bill payments and performing other computer tasks.
- With her mother's assistance, Kara has been preparing simple meals. Kara and her neurorehabilitation specialist have been developing a meal guide that lists quick and easy food items that Kara can prepare independently.
- Robyn volunteers two days per week in the laundry department at a retirement home. She also plans to volunteer as a teacher's helper at a local elementary school.
- José continues to plan, initiate and follow through with household projects; he recently installed hardwood flooring in his home.
- Tara has been consistently paying her bills on time, using an online bank account that she set up with the help of her neurorehabilitation specialist.
- Beth works part-time as a customer service associate at Genaurdi's Markets.
- Kim is working part-time at T.J. Maxx and is doing very well.
- Will is making great progress with his therapeutic horseback riding lessons; he no longer requires the instructor to hold the reins for him and lead the horse.
- Elizabeth volunteers in the gift shop of a rehabilitation center, and recently started volunteering in the recreation department there as well.
- Julie works part-time (approximately 30 hours per week) in the deli department at Wegmans.
- Howard M. uses his compensatory strategies effectively to help him remember his day-to-day tasks and activities. His four primary strategies are a daily organizer, a medication box, a pill organizer, and the calendar/alarm on his cellphone.
- Ari continues to work part-time at PETCO; he is hoping to increase his hours to full-time after he receives training on the cash register.
- Kirk is working on a project for next year's *Creativity Expo*. (Turn to page 6 to see Kirk's model pickup truck, which he displayed at this year's *Creativity Expo*.)
- Bruce planned for and successfully attended a five-day event for horse traders, in Lexington, KY.
- On September 17, 2007, Nina Geier, M.S., M.P.T., PT, ATC, CBIS, program coordinator in New Jersey, participated in the golf outing/event, *David's Drive*, held at Lederach Golf Club in Harleysville, PA. Named in honor of David Strauss, Ph.D. (who died on July 10, 2005), *David's Drive* was the inaugural fundraising event for the Council on Brain Injury (CoBI), a recently formed, not-for-profit organization supported by ReMed. One hundred twenty-six golfers participated in *David's Drive*. The event raised more than \$15,000, to be used to fund education related to brain injury, conduct and support research for more effective treatment, and advocate for improved services. Plans for the 2008 *David's Drive* are already underway.
- On September 19, 2007, Ms. Geier attended the 2007 JMA Foundation Town Hall Meeting on "Veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury: Is America Meeting their Needs? A National Debate," in Washington, DC.
- Ms. Geier also attended the Joint Annual Conference of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine and the American Society for Neurorehabilitation, October 3-7, 2007. She attended the events of the Brain Injury - Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group, including the Chautauqua on Sports Concussions. She participated in the meeting of the Cognitive Rehabilitation Task Force and chaired the meeting of the Task Force on Community-based Treatment.
- On October 24, 2007, the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc. (BIANJ) presented Ms. Geier and the other members of the Conference Committee with the Silvio O. Conte Award, an award that is presented to an individual or group for an outstanding record of contributions that further the public awareness and education goals of the BIANJ through work at the state and/or local level.

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## Upcoming Event

The 2008 Williamsburg Conference, *Rehabilitation of the Adult and Child with Brain Injury: Practical Solutions to Real World Problems*, sponsored by Brain Injury Services, Inc. and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU Traumatic Brain Injury Model System), will be held Thursday and Friday, June 5-6, 2008 at the Williamsburg Hospitality House in Williamsburg, VA. It is anticipated that the registration forms will be mailed in March of 2008, so keep an eye out for them. Call Linda at (703) 451-8881 if you have any questions.

## Spotlight: Phil Greenspun



*Spotlight: Phil Greenspun*

**Spotlight:** Tell us a little about yourself.

**Phil:** My name is Phil Greenspun. I grew up in the Logan section of Philadelphia, PA. I am 69 years old. I know I've lived that many years, but I feel younger in my heart.

I graduated from Philadelphia's Central High School. This in itself was an achievement because, even though Central is a public school, you have to pass an admission test to get in. I graduated from Temple University in 1960; I earned a bachelor's degree in business administration. I was in ROTC and, a year after I graduated, I received my commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army. I served on active duty for two years; most of it was at Fort Ord in California. I was discharged from active duty as a captain and served in the Army Reserves for six more years.

I worked in retail management with Wanamaker's before and after my active military duty. A friend from college called me and said he thought I would be a good fit for a young company that had done mostly catalog sales but was trying to expand its retail business. At the time, almost nobody had heard of Spencer Gifts (now called Spencer's) but, in the over 30 years I

was there, it grew to the point where there's a Spencer's in many malls across the country. I served as director of store planning and construction for the company. I didn't decide what was sold, but I decided how every store in the company displayed and merchandised all the items. Working for Spencer's meant that we had to move from Philadelphia to the Atlantic City area.

**Spotlight:** What about your family life?

**Phil:** I met Marlene when we were 14 or 15 years old. We married in 1960 in Philadelphia. She moved to Fort Ord (California) with me, then back to Philadelphia, and then to Margate, New Jersey a few years later. We had two great sons, David and Bobbie. Marlene passed away in 1999. I was devastated, but I was touched by the support I had from all the wonderful people around me, and I was humbled that more than 600 people paid their respects at her funeral. When the time was right, a long-time friend of mine introduced me to his daughter, Linda. Linda and her daughter, Molly, moved in with me, but soon after that things changed again.

**Spotlight:** What do you mean?

**Phil:** I don't recall it, but I'm told I said I didn't feel well and I was taken to the emergency room on March 30, 2002. I'm told I had a stroke and was in a coma or a coma-like state for about six months. I was eventually transferred to Seashore Gardens Living Center, a skilled nursing facility, because it was thought I wasn't going to get much better. But I did start to respond more to people around me, and I was transferred to Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation, where I remember working very hard at getting better. I had a marvelous physiatrist there, Jacinth Reid-Artist, M.D., and she's still my doctor today. She recommended Community Skills Program when I was discharged to my home.

**Spotlight:** What else do you remember about the process?

**Phil:** Through it all, Linda was there for me. I can't thank her enough, and I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for Linda's love and commitment. She helped me through everything. Linda and I married on July 1, 2003, after I returned home.

**Spotlight:** How did your stroke affect your abilities?

**Phil:** I can't drive. I was in diapers at one point. It was difficult for me to think. I couldn't remember things from one day to the next. I couldn't plan how to spend my time. I also had a lot of problems with language. I had trouble knowing what to say, and I wasn't able to write properly. I was physically weak. And I had trouble getting along with people. This has been very difficult for me in many ways, as you can imagine.

**Spotlight:** Have things gotten better?

**Phil:** I feel great now. I feel blessed. I thank God for every morning that I wake up. I've worked hard over the past few years. I'm not sure that my memory has improved, but now I have some tools that help me keep track of my life and help me compensate for the fact that I don't remember things as well as I used to.

**Spotlight:** These tools are called compensatory strategies. What kinds of compensatory strategies do you use?

**Phil:** Eric Share, B.S., CBIS, my Community Skills Program neuro-rehabilitation specialist, helped me set up several of them. I spend a lot of time and effort writing in my diary (Phil's chosen term for a daily journal) so I can remember what I've done every day. It helps me remember the places I've been and the phone calls I've made. I've been blessed with friends and relatives and, during and

*(continued on page 4)*

## Spotlight continued (from page 3)

after any conversation with them, I write about it in my diary. It helps me keep track of my life. I also have an appointment book to remind myself of my future plans. I keep myself very busy, and my appointment book helps me know where I'll be and what I'll be doing each day.

**Spotlight:** What kind of activities are you busy with?

**Phil:** Eric Share and my wife Linda suggested I volunteer to read to pre-school children at our local Jewish Community Center (JCC). I wasn't sure about it before I tried it, but now it is a joy in my life. I read to one of the classes of four-year-olds every Monday morning, and it makes me feel very fulfilled.

Before my stroke, I co-founded and named "Stay Focused," a photography club. I still go to monthly meetings and serve as an officer—I coordinate the process where one person presents and talks about his/her photography at each meeting. I have also been involved with Beth El Synagogue for over 40 years, and I still serve on the board of directors. I also serve on my city's Design Review Committee; we have one meeting most months, and we consider and vote on whether or not construction and remodeling plans comply with the city code.

I take karate classes every Monday night. I work out at the JCC gym at least two times every week. I enjoy visiting with friends and family. I keep very busy, and I feel very fulfilled.

**Spotlight:** Earlier, you said you don't drive. How do you get everywhere you want to go?

**Phil:** I get some rides from friends and family members, but for the most part I arrange rides with New Jersey Transit Access Link and with the Margate Senior Citizens' Bus, which we call the Margate bus. Eric Share helped hook

me up with these services. He provided me with reservation forms that I fill out before calling to make ride reservations, and he helped train me how to make the telephone calls to make the reservations and how to plan my time to fit everything in. We used to work on that a lot, but now I do it completely on my own. I can get just about anywhere now on my own. I can't just jump in my car and go, so I can't be spontaneous anymore. I'm forced to plan at least one day in advance, if not more.

After my stroke, planning was very difficult for me, but now I do it constantly. After my stroke, I also used to think that, if I had one event written in my appointment book, I had no room to do anything else that day, but Eric set me straight with that. Now I keep myself busy and I feel very fulfilled with all the things I do.

**Spotlight:** You talk about your strong feelings for family, friends and community. Do you have any other passions?

**Phil:** I used to be a runner. I ran two marathons in my life and, before my stroke, I ran on the Ventnor and Atlantic City boardwalk every day. I can't run like I used to but, after physical therapy and a lot of hard work, I occasionally walk (and run a little bit) about three miles—sometimes alone and sometimes with good friends.

Also, I very much enjoy photography. I have always had a passion for photography. I had several public showings of my photography before my stroke, and I have had several since then. I am in the process of fulfilling one of my life goals. I am self-publishing a book of my own photography, which is slated to be ready in November 2007. I never thought I would reach this point of having a book of my photography. *[Editor's Note: See two of Phil's photographs—one below and one on page 7.]*

**Spotlight:** Do you have any words of advice for others recovering from a brain injury?

**Phil:** One message I want to say loud and clear: Never never never give up. I know from experience that sometimes life can be very difficult and frustrating. You feel like you can't quite get things right. But you need to keep trying. I am humbled by all the support I've received from Linda, from dear family members and friends, and from the medical community. I've come a long way, and I'm not done yet.

*[Editor's Note: Many thanks to the staff at Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation in Pomona, NJ for the fine rehabilitation treatment provided to Phil, and to his wife, Linda, for her endless support and caring.]*



One's of Phil's photographs, entitled "Monterey Bay."

## Staff Members of Community Skills Program Volunteer, Too

As part of their clients' treatment plans, Community Skills Program staff often encourage clients to volunteer as a way to get involved in their communities and to add purpose and structure to their day-to-day activities. Many staff members at Community Skills Program also volunteer for various community organizations and events. We would like to acknowledge one of our staff members who has recently been volunteering her time and talents for a very worthwhile cause.

On September 16, 2007, Lisa Millward, B.S., full-time secretary, ran the **Philadelphia Distance Run Half-Marathon** (that's 13.1 miles) to benefit The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Lisa ran in honor of Rick Dittus (her "patient hero") and raised over \$3,500 for The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This was the 30<sup>th</sup> year for this event, sponsored by Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia, PA.



Lisa with her "patient hero," Rick.



Rick and Lisa on the morning of the run.

Lisa enjoyed participating in the run so much that she registered and trained for, and then ran in, the full **Philadelphia Marathon** (26.2 miles) on November 18<sup>th</sup>, also benefiting The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This year's **Philadelphia Marathon**, sanctioned by USA Track & Field, was the largest ever in Philadelphia, with over 16,000 participants. It was a damp and rainy day, but there was plenty of enthusiasm for the event nonetheless. Lisa ran the full marathon in four and one-half hours. Congratulations, Lisa!

In-between her runs, Lisa also recently participated in a walk to benefit The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. That event, called "Light the Night," was held on October 20<sup>th</sup> at Gring's Mill Recreation Area in Reading, PA. We are very proud of, and impressed by, Lisa's abilities and commitment to this worthwhile cause.

If you wish to find out more about The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, call (800) 955-4572 or check out their website, [www.leukemia-lymphoma.org](http://www.leukemia-lymphoma.org).

## Tips On... Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center

Located on a 12-acre farm in Tewksbury Township, Oldwick, New Jersey, Somerset Hills Handicapped Riding Center (SHHRC) has been providing therapeutic horseback riding lessons to individuals with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities for over 30 years. SHHRC is accredited by the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA). SHHRC is a not-for-profit, registered charitable organization that is funded primarily by individual donations.

Therapeutic riding provides participants with the opportunity to learn horsemanship skills through adaptive horseback riding lessons in a group format. Riders are assisted by a horse leader and sidewalker volunteers when necessary. All instructors must undergo training and certification through NARHA. Weekly lessons are held in Winter, Spring and Fall. Summer day camps are offered in June and July each year.

Here is what one client of Community Skills Program had to say about SHHRC:

*My name is Kirk Kaszyk and I have been riding at SHHRC for five years. I enjoy riding the horses because it improves me in many ways. You work on muscles that you don't realize you have. That is good for you. I really enjoy riding on the trails. It works on my balance and posture. I appreciate all the volunteers because they make me laugh so that it is a pleasure to get my exercise. I enjoy riding because I used to own two ponies, Lovey and Scooter. They were good pets but riding them was wild. I enjoy riding because I know it helps me.*

For more information about SHHRC, call (908) 439-9636 or visit their website at [www.shhrc.org](http://www.shhrc.org).

## Creativity Corner

### Kirk's "Kreation"



Kirk Kaszyk (client of Community Skills Program) proudly sits with his wooden model of a pickup truck that he worked on over the last year, with the assistance of his neurorehabilitation specialist, Phillip Brandt, B.A., CBIS. Kirk displayed his truck model at this year's *Creativity Expo*. (Please see the adjacent article on the *4th Annual Creativity Expo*.)



Kirk thought of everything! There are door handles, exhaust pipes, bumpers, an antenna, steps to the truck cab, a toolbox in the truck bed, and Kirk in the driver's seat. There are even working headlights!

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Creativity Expo a Success!

Over 200 people visited the Raritan Valley Community College Student Art Gallery in North Branch, New Jersey, where this year's *Creativity Expo* was held, for the fourth consecutive year. The *Creativity Expo* is dedicated to exhibiting the artwork of persons with acquired or traumatic brain injuries. Artwork from 35 artists was exhibited during the Expo, which ran from the opening day on Saturday, July 14, 2007 through Wednesday, July 25, 2007. There were many different mediums, including painting, jewelry, photography, sculpture, ceramics, prose and poetry, videos, crochet, and more. Many pieces of artwork were sold during the 10 days the show was open. Remarkable growth was seen in the artists who have been committed to their craft and shown their work at the Expo for several years.

The *Creativity Expo*, founded and coordinated by Vince Diorio, is a non profit event designed to encourage the artistic development of persons with brain injuries. Anyone interested in presenting their artwork is provided with space in the art gallery, which is donated to the Expo at no cost. Mr. Diorio, who has a background in art and clinical work with persons with brain injuries, saw an unmet need for opportunities for expression in the brain injury community and, thus, founded the *Creativity Expo*. He is now seeking funding to expand the Expo to include workshops for persons with brain injuries, to explore their craft and potential and to develop multiple venue presentations. He is also seeking musicians to add to the arts menu for next year. For more information, go to [www.geocities.com/braininjuryartsnj](http://www.geocities.com/braininjuryartsnj) or contact Mr. Diorio by telephone at (609) 397-1048 or (800) 374-0071, ext. 220, or via e-mail at [vincentd54@msn.com](mailto:vincentd54@msn.com). The *2008 Creativity Expo* is already in the works!

# Winter Storm

by Phil Greenspun



Turn to page 3 to read the Spotlight article on Phil Greenspun and see another photograph by Phil on page 4. (See this photo in color on our website, [www.communityskillsprogram.com](http://www.communityskillsprogram.com).)

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