
◆ Brain Waves ◆

Volume 21 Issue 4

The Community Skills Program® Newsletter

Winter 2005-2006

Once More with Feeling... Contented or Ambitious?

All members of the Vocational Adjustment Group (that meets every Tuesday evening in Philadelphia, PA) are workers. Four are in paid employment and one is in a work trial situation. Based on her performance, the individual in the work trial has been recommended for employment by her supervisor to the governing board of their organization. In a recent session, members of the Vocational Adjustment Group were asked to think about their work situation and share what they feel about it. They were asked, "Is contented a good way to be? Why or why not?" To help them collect their thoughts before answering, they were told to think of ambitious to mean striving for advancement toward higher pay, or even fame, and contentment to mean having no desire for anything else.

Howard said, "I am ambitious about myself, but I want to see how well I can maintain my current job status. I'm happy where I am, and will keep working hard. Maybe I can pull up to the next level, to have something self-rewarding. I will do the best I can now and, if a possibility for advancement comes up, I'll see what happens. There are possibilities for advancement from time to time, maybe a prep cook who peels and cuts things, but also cooks some things." (Howard is a kitchen worker at the DoubleTree Hotel, responsible for specific cleaning duties. He has won "Employee of the Month" and "Employee of the Year" commendations in the past, and currently is a nominee for "Employee of the Month.") Howard said, "I was told by the chef that I am next in line to move

up." Sam and others congratulated Howard, but Sam also suggested that he consider preparing some of his meals at home, to practice cooking. (Howard frequently eats at his workplace or at restaurants.)

Rick, who is a part-time visitor experience facilitator at the Please Touch Museum, said, "I'm content. I have learned what I need to do on my job, and I'm trained to do other jobs to fill in for other people if necessary. There are different positions for more pay, but I am not interested, because of my deficits. I am content to stay in my job in my department where, for example, reading is not a heavy requirement, but it would be in a desk job. I can't work full-time. I need a lot of sleep. Sometimes I can't get out of bed until late afternoon. I'm washed out some days."

Rick has made a remarkable adjustment to his present situation, considering his work history prior to his brain injury when he was on track for advancement in a lead role for other workers in an

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Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Adam, Aurelio, Bernadette, Corinne, Corry, Denise, Jack, James L., Julie, Mark, Robert S., Robert W., Stephen, Valencia and Virginia D.—and also to our new neurorehabilitation specialist—Jeneile Beahm, M.S.W.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. Some of them follow; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *Brain Waves*.

- Steven was named "Knight of the Year 2004-2005" by the Knights of Columbus (St. Jude Council #9913) at their annual dinner on January 22, 2006. Steven also recently completed a college course on Comparative Religions.
- Kristin continues to volunteer two days a week at a day care center and go to the gym to exercise three days per week.
- Kathryn works as a lactation consultant one day a week and volunteers in a midwifery office one day a week.
- Terry is maintaining a busy catering business. He works 10 to 12 hours a day during the week and works on the weekends as necessary.
- David H. was hired as a part-time dishwasher at ManorCare. Congratulations, David!
- Robyn is working part-time at a dairy, volunteering in a kindergarten class and in a first grade class, and taking an aqua-cise class at the YMCA.
- Andy continues to work as a part-time deli associate at Cabela's.

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Once More with Feeling... continued (from page 1)

automobile agency where he was a service advisor. Asked about his comeback from being knocked off track in his career plan, he responded, "It is still hard, and though I have that chunk in the middle of my history, I have gratitude for where I am now. At first I couldn't do anything, but now I'm rational mentally. Some days I'm not productive—it's still a battle—but I enjoy recreation with an old friend, going to movies, and shooting pool with another person."

Stewart said, "I am contented. Okay right now. Yoga is important because of stress, tension in any part of the body—relaxation puts you at ease with yourself. Yoga prompts other things, he said, such as reading books and taking walks. I love to cook, catch ball with my mother on Sundays, read different authors about Yoga and get different opinions of the same things." (Stewart is a mail clerk at the United States Attorneys General Office.)

Jennifer has been recommended to become a part-time mail clerk and file clerk at an off-campus medical services office of a local university hospital. She said, "I'm ambitious in the process of getting paid for work that I really like. It's a big thing for Jen to get paid."

Sam is an electrician at Tastykake. He said, "I'm ambitious and want to achieve more, different things about the work I do in my field, and money. That's what I'm striving for. I need to know more about trouble-shooting. I need to read more at home. I have books, but the hours I work (night shift) are a problem—I never get enough sleep. I'm striving, but I'm not there yet. I want to get there with legitimacy."

Update... continued (from page 1)

- Adam attends Opportunity Project and also volunteers two days a week at The Children's Institute.
- Ginny volunteers at her church, assisting with the after-school program and with fundraising events, and helping maintain the church grounds. She also volunteers as a big sister through Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and recently was involved in a fundraiser called the New Jersey Ride Against AIDS.
- Michael B. has begun a work trial/situational assessment as a rehabilitation aide in the physical therapy department at a nursing home.
- Matthew continues to be employed as a dining room maintenance worker for McDonald's.
- Rafael bought and moved into his own mobile home. He is also taking English classes at an adult education center.
- Daniel D. is volunteering at a local church, and his supervisor reports that his work performance is always at or above the expected level.
- Corry is working part-time as a business services representative for a health services company.
- Mary and her fiancé have moved into a new apartment in the New Jersey shore area.
- Robert R. is doing well on his new, full-time job as a billing coordinator. He is managing his schedule well, using the calendar feature of his *Microsoft Outlook* software on his computer.
- Rami is taking a printmaking and silkscreen class at a local community college and also has two work-study positions.
- Jannine has been providing massage therapy services and hopes to increase her clientele.

- Danielle went with some friends on a trip to Ireland over the holidays in December, and is now taking a college course in case management.
- Elizabeth has maintained her job as a dishwasher at the International House of Pancakes (IHOP) and learned to take the public bus there.
- Patrick T. is performing quite well on his job at Giant Food Stores.
- Christina was successful in having an article published in a local magazine.
- Raymond was offered and accepted a part-time food service assistant position at a nursing home.
- Samantha is volunteering as an activities aide at a community center. She calls out bingo numbers and helps set up for lunch.
- Rick took a vacation trip to California to visit his mother.
- Pat W. was offered and accepted full-time employment as a treatment foster care coordinator.
- Megan Margolis, M.S., neurorehabilitation specialist for Community Skills Program (in southern New Jersey), gave birth to twin baby girls, Alexis Victoria and Kierstin Nadine, on February 14th (Valentine's Day). Congratulations to Megan and her husband, Brian!
- Cindy Kurtz, secretary in our Wyomissing, PA office, became a grandmother for the first time. Her grandson, Conor, was born on March 13th. Congratulations, Cindy!
- Several staff members attended *The 2nd Federal Interagency Conference on Traumatic Brain Injury: Integrating Models of Research and Service Delivery*, March 9-11, 2006, in Bethesda, MD. Afterwards, our director (Sally Kneipp, Ph.D.) and our program coordinator for New Jersey (Nina Geier, M.S., M.P.T.) participated in the mid-year meeting of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine's Brain Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group, March 11-12, 2006.

Spotlight: Ami Profeta



Spotlight: Ami Profeta

Spotlight: Please tell us about yourself.

Ami: Hi. My name is Ami Profeta. I am 28 years old. I have a great personality. In 1996, I graduated from Widener Memorial School in Philadelphia, PA. I attended Community College of Philadelphia and took basic education courses. In 1997, I attended the MBF Center in Norristown, PA, to study computers, business and professional training. In 1998, I attended the Augmentative Communication and Empowerment Supports at Temple University, which helped me learn to use a computer-based communication device. From 1999 to 2002, I again attended Community College of Philadelphia, this time studying computer information systems.

I have experience in website design, using **Microsoft FrontPage**. I worked for my father's company, Dave's Best Limousine Service, in Philadelphia, PA, and designed the website for the company. From March to August 2003, I designed a website for the Shout Organization in Pittsburgh, PA.

From November 2003 to the present, I have been serving as the chairperson of Accessibility Issues for the Beth Sholom Congregation in Elkins Park, PA. I also host my own website on the

internet; the address is <http://mywebpages.comcast.net/amiprofeta/index2.htm>.

Spotlight: Tell us about your living situation.

Ami: I share my house with my dad. I reside in Elkins Park, PA.

Spotlight: Tell us about your family.

Ami: My mom and dad are divorced and my mom lives about seven minutes away, in Cheltenham, PA. My father owns his own limousine service and my mother works for Blackrock. I have a sister, Rachel, who is a student and lives in West Philadelphia, PA, on her own; and a brother, Benjamin, who is also a student and lives with my mother in Cheltenham, PA.

Spotlight: Is your family supportive of you?

Ami: Yes.

Spotlight: In what ways?

Ami: My mom and dad have been supportive of me receiving rehabilitation/job coaching from Community Skills Program. I have spastic quadriplegia and dysarthria secondary to congenital cerebral palsy, which means I have to use a power wheelchair to get around because I cannot walk. I use an augmentative speech device to communicate because it is difficult for me to speak clearly, and I need assistance for daily living skills. Cerebral palsy means I have a brain injury from the time I was born, not from a car accident.

Spotlight: Tell us more about your background/training.

Ami: I went to the MBF Center for clerical, business and computer training. I had an internship as a component of the program. I learned skills, but didn't have the appropriate behavior skills. I went to Community

College of Philadelphia to take additional courses, such as English and **Microsoft** applications such as **Word**, **Excel**, and two website design courses.

Spotlight: When and how did you get involved with Community Skills Program?

Ami: Donna Sparacino from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) referred me to Community Skills Program. I met with Mr. Osher [Ami is referring to Jason Osher, B.A., former neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program who is now pursuing a doctoral degree] on March 1, 2004 and he did an intake interview with me. I am appreciative and grateful to my OVR counselor, Donna Sparacino, for giving me a chance to work with a job coach.

Spotlight: How has Community Skills Program staff helped you?

Ami: My counselor has helped motivate me and organize my job-finding campaign. I now have two part-time jobs. Both jobs, the internship and office assistant, require many skills, both professional and social, that I have come to understand and am able to apply to a competitive job. They [Community Skills Program] helped me to rewrite my resume. I worked with Kevin on decreasing my impulsive behavior. [Ami is referring to Kevin Wright, M.S., LPC, his neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program who conducted this interview.]

Spotlight: Where are you employed?

Ami: At AlliedBarton Security Services, and I am a liaison intern for the AAC-RERC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication - Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center) at Temple University. On October 14, 2005, I began working as

Spotlight... continued (from page 2)

an office assistant nine hours a week at AlliedBarton Security Services. My immediate supervisor is Bill Ciliberti, who is director of training for the Northeast coast, which includes Philadelphia to New York. He is responsible for new employee training, along with a variety of advanced courses for the security officers.

Spotlight: What are your job duties at AlliedBarton?

Ami: I am responsible for entering various data into the security guards' personnel files. This includes test scores for the Security Officer Basic Course (SOBC), which is the initial qualifying test for newly-hired security guards, Master Security Officer (MSO), levels two and three, which are promotions for the security guards, On-the-Job Training (OJT) check sheets, and annual evaluation/pay raise information for each security guard. My supervisor for the annual evaluation/pay raise information is Patrice O'Rourke, human resource assistant.

Spotlight: Tell us about your internship for the AAC-RERC.

Ami: I began the internship on May 1, 2005, and it will last for one year. My duties are to read scientific studies in the area of augmentative communication that are being researched by a group of partners (the 10 individuals from around the country who carry out the Center's activities), find appropriate studies to summarize, and post those summaries on the Augmentative Communication On-Line Users Group (ACOLUG) listserv for anyone who has an interest in augmentative and alternative communication research. This internship will train me to become the AAC-RERC liaison.

Spotlight: What do you like about working?

Ami: I enjoy being productive with my time. I like socializing with my co-workers.

Spotlight: How do you spend your time outside of work?

Ami: I am on the Accessibility Committee at my synagogue. I made my first debut in *The Sound of Music*

production last year at my synagogue. I was also in *The Wizard of Oz* in February 2006.

Spotlight: What are your future goals?

Ami: My hope is to get a full-time job at some point in the future.

Spotlight: Do you have any words of wisdom to share with others?

Ami: You need to have patience when finding a job. You must also be able to communicate with your co-workers.

Spotlight: Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Ami: This was the announcement written in the AlliedBarton Security Services' internal newsletter, *In The News*, when I started my job:

"Welcome Ami Profeta! Ami has joined the AlliedBarton team as an office assistant at 1760 Market Street. Ami will be inputting test scores for the Training Department as well as inputting performance evals for Human Resources. Ami will be working part-time, Monday thru Wednesday from 10 am to 1 pm."



Ami is pictured here on the left, working on his computer. To his right is Kevin Wright, M.S., LPC, his neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program.

[Editor's Note: Many thanks to the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (especially Ami's rehabilitation counselor, Donna Sparacino) for support of Ami's rehabilitation efforts. This support has been crucial to his successful outcome. More information on AAC-RERC, where Ami interns, can be found online at WWW.AAC-RERC.COM, by writing to AAC-RERC, Duke University Medical Center, Division of Speech Pathology and Audiology, DUMC 3888, Durham, NC 27710, or calling (919) 681-9983.]

Some Safety Tips When Walking

Now that the cold winter temperatures are fading and warmer weather is on the way, some of us are thinking about spending more time outdoors. And taking a walk is a great way to do that. Walking helps reduce stress, burn fat, and speed up your metabolism, and is easy on your joints. Walking is convenient, inexpensive, and is the exercise most recommended by physicians. So, when you are ready to go outside and go for a walk, here are some tips to help keep you safe:

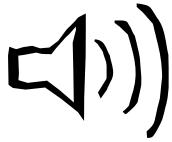
- * Be seen! Wear light or bright colors so that you can be easily seen. If you are walking at dusk or at night, wear reflective items and carry a flashlight.
- * Stay in well-lighted areas, away from alleys, bushes and entryways.
- * Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- * Wear sturdy walking or running shoes, and use a cane if it has been recommended for you.
- * Avoid walking alone. Ask a friend or a family member to join you.
- * Use paths and sidewalks whenever available. If you must walk on or near a road, remember to walk facing oncoming traffic.
- * Be aware of your surroundings, and people around you.
- * Don't hitchhike, and only accept rides from people you know well.
- * If a driver stops to ask directions, do not get close enough to the vehicle that the driver could harm you in any way.
- * If a car appears to be following you, turn and walk in the opposite direction.
- * Stop and look for traffic in all directions before crossing the street. Look left, right, and left again. Allow plenty of time to cross any street.
- * Plan routes without hazardous crossings.
- * Carry a whistle and use it if you feel you are in danger.
- * If you are in trouble, attract help in any way you can. Yell, call for help, or shout "FIRE."

“Walking” Word Scramble

Now that you have read our article on walking safety tips, try to complete the sentences below by unscrambling the scrambled up words. If you need a little help, read through the article again; all the scrambled words can be found somewhere in the article. Once you have unscrambled all the words, turn to page 7 for the answers. Good luck, and happy walking!

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Walking boosts your A T O B L E S M I M.
_____ | 8) Carry a G H A T H L I F L S at night.
_____ |
| 2) Walking is easy on the S T I J O N.
_____ | 9) Walk with a N E F R I D.
_____ |
| 3) K L I W G A N is a great outdoor activity.
_____ | 10) Use S L E D I K W A S if available.
_____ |
| 4) Walking reduces R E S S T S.
_____ | 11) Never T H E I K H I C H !
_____ |
| 5) Walking is P I N E S V E E N I X.
_____ | 12) Exercise most recommended by N A P H I C I S Y S.
_____ |
| 6) Walking is also N E T V O C E N I N.
_____ | 13) Wear E C R I V L E E F T items at night.
_____ |
| 7) Carry a S W E L T H I.
_____ | 14) Be R E A W A !
_____ |

Turn to page 7 for the answers.



Announcing...



BrainWaves is now online!

Until now, ***BrainWaves*** was available only by mail. Now, by simply accessing the Community Skills Program website at www.communityskillsprogram.com, you can:

- ▶ View ***BrainWaves*** directly on your computer.
- ▶ Print your own copy or multiple copies.
- ▶ See our “spotlighted” person ***in color*** and view other pictures featured in the newsletter ***in color***.
- ▶ Download and save the newsletter to your computer for future reference.
- ▶ E-mail it as an attachment to a friend.
- ▶ Quickly access hyperlinks to other websites mentioned in the newsletter.
- ▶ Access back issues, beginning with our Fall 2005 issue.

Don't worry! You will still continue to receive your copy of ***BrainWaves*** in the mail. As always, ***BrainWaves*** is, and will continue to be, ***free of charge***. But now you will have many more options. Don't just take our word for it—check it out at www.communityskillsprogram.com.

Free Tax Assistance for Persons with Disabilities and Elderly Persons

April 17th is just around the corner, and we all know what that means—this year income tax returns are due to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on that date. So, if you haven't started preparing the information needed to file your tax return, now might be a good time to do so.

The IRS sponsors volunteer assistance programs and offers help to taxpayers in many community locations, such as libraries, schools, neighborhood centers, and shopping malls. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) offers free tax help by trained volunteers for people with low to moderate incomes and/or disabilities. Many of the VITA sites also offer free electronic filing.

Another program, Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), offers free tax assistance to individuals age 60 years or older with low to moderate incomes. Trained volunteers provide free tax counseling and basic income tax return preparation for senior citizens in many convenient community locations.

To find out more information about these two programs or to locate a VITA/TCE site, you can contact your local IRS office or call the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040 or the American Association of Retired Professionals (AARP) at 1-888-227-7669. You can also access the IRS website at www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc101.html for more information.

Upcoming Events

- The Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc. (BIANJ) will be holding its 25th annual seminar, entitled ***Brain Injury: Creating Opportunities Through Winning Strategies***, on May 17 and 18, 2006 at the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel and Conference Center in Eatontown, NJ. Former NASCAR Winston Cup driver Ernie Irvan will share his personal story of how multiple brain injuries changed the course of his racing career. Other featured speakers are Keith Cicerone, Ph.D., director of neuropsychology and clinical director of the cognitive rehabilitation department at JFK-Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in Edison, NJ, and Susan H. Connors, president and chief executive officer of the Brain Injury Association of America. Workshop topics include: Family Issues, Pain Management, The Business of Brain Injury, Returning to Work After Brain Injury, Substance Abuse and TBI, Psychiatric Disorders and TBI, Hope in the Rehabilitation Setting, and many more. The overall objective of the seminar is to identify opportunities and strategies for supporting, advocating, and working with persons affected by brain injury, by providing information related to vocational issues, behavioral and psychological interventions, medical challenges, advocacy programs, and social challenges.

You can register for the seminar and/or obtain more information online at www.bianj.org or by calling (732) 738-1002.

- The 6th Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Inc. (BIAPA) will be held on June 25 and 26, 2006 at the Wyndham Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, PA. More details will be available in the coming months online at www.biapa.org or by calling (717) 657-3601.

Tips On...Lifeline

Lifeline is a personal response service offering prompt assistance in case of an emergency, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Lifeline allows peace of mind, knowing that help is always available at the push of a button.

Here's how it works... If you need help, push the Personal Help Button (worn around your neck or wrist). The Lifeline Response Center is automatically dialed. Trained associates who have instant access to your complete profile will contact you immediately to see what help you need. Even if you can't answer, Lifeline sends help right away. The associate will follow up to ensure that help arrived and that you're being cared for.

For more information about Lifeline, you can call toll-free at 1-800-LIFELINE (1-800-543-3546, ext. 3050) or access their website at www.lifelinesystems.com/info.

Solution: "Walking" Word Scramble

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1) Metabolism | 6) Convenient | 11) Hitchhike |
| 2) Joints | 7) Whistle | 12) Physicians |
| 3) Walking | 8) Flashlight | 13) Reflective |
| 4) Stress | 9) Friend | 14) Aware |
| 5) Inexpensive | 10) Sidewalks | |

Published Quarterly by
Community Skills Program®

BrainWaves is a joint project of the clients and staff of the Community Skills Program® of Counseling and Rehabilitation, Inc.

Editor: Sally Kneipp, Ph.D., LPC, LRC
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BrainWaves is free of charge. It is available by mail or online by accessing our website at www.communityskillsprogram.com.

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