




# SNSC

## Special Needs Support Center

Quarterly Newsletter  
Fall 2015

*To help children and adults with any type of special need, and their families, meet their unique challenges through advocacy and program support.*

### Our Programs

- Educational Advocacy
- Parent to Parent Connections
- Educational Series and Workshops
- Nathan Hall Library
- Happenings - Social and Recreational Opportunities for Teens and Young Adults
- Connections - SIBS
- LifeLongLearning Program - ART LAB and Education Classes
- STAR  Supporting adolescents with chronic physical health conditions
- ASPIRE Playgroups
- Enhanced Family Support
- Respite Child Care

### Our Money Comes From

#### People like you!

- Annual Giving Campaign
- Other Private and Community Foundations



#### Our Thanks to You All!

### President's Corner

Wow, looking out the window I wonder why anyone would want to live anywhere else! Fall in New England – simply beautiful!

These past few months we have been gearing up for fall activities and fundraisers. Hopefully you have all received the announcement for the November 1st, Delicious Art – ART LAB exhibit with wine, chocolate and cheese tasting at AVA Gallery. It will be from 3 – 5pm and tickets are \$25. Please plan on coming out for a Sunday afternoon of good art and delicious tastings! Call the office for your tickets.

Coming up very soon ... so soon that it might already be over with by the time you get this mailing ... is the Blue Lip Golf Tournament. Organized by Tim and Codie Rockwood, it will be on Saturday, October 24th, and will include good (cold) golf, and lots of good food!

Also, the letters are getting ready to go out for our Annual Giving Campaign. We have completely revamped them, thanks so much to Vince Mennona, Pam Blair and Nicki Thrall, and we are excited to see what you think of them! Please be sure to give us your feedback (along with your donation!).

And lastly, we are still working on the search for a new Executive Director. We have put the ads out, and have actually received a number of good resumes. If you, or someone you know, is interested in the position, please call the office and they will give you an email address to send your resume to. We will be working our way through them over the next few weeks and will certainly let you know when any decision is made.

Enjoy this season!



Barbara van Hoff  
President, SNSC Board of Director

### STAR Program Update

The first STAR Program Dinner Meeting of the 2015-16 academic year was held on Thursday, September 30. A number of new teens have joined the program, but we can still accept new referrals. Parents or providers may call 603-448-1268 for more information or email Pam@sns-c-uv.org.

**The SNSC Team  
Board of Directors**

**Year 2015-2016**

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Vasilios Georgitsis  
Webmaster  
**NH/VT Computer**  
Murray Ngioma  
Sylvia Dow  
**ART LAB Facilitators**  
Erin Rockwood  
Carolina Alvarez-Correa  
Esther Wu  
**ASPIRE Coordinators**

**Executive Director's Corner**

Summer time at SNSC brings a different set of tasks for staff that includes final data compilation and report writing for the variety of programs and services – all of which results in the SNSC FY'15 Annual Report distributed in August and posted on our website. In the 'change of pace' in the summer, a number of grants were written and submitted that, if approved will provide much of the needed financial support for this year at SNSC. Staff were also heavily involved, in between occasional vacation days, in planning for the start up of programs and services in September.



After a wonderful summer of rest, the many programs of SNSC got under way in September. *Happenings* had its annual Apple Picking at Riverview Farm all who attended enjoyed the fun, food, and fellowship on a beautiful early fall day. Pam is working closely with staff and volunteers at the Spark Community Center to coordinate programs and schedule of *Happenings* events with theirs. The *ART LAB* got in its first five weeks of art classes at AVA Gallery with 41 artists attending. See information in Upcoming Events on page 5 this newsletter for details of their new Art Show to be held at AVA on October 28th.

The *ASPIRE* playgroups got in one Saturday in September after the return of the Dartmouth College student volunteers. Erin Rockwood has been hired as the new Consulting Coordinator for *ASPIRE* and is working closely with Pam and the volunteers. Philip is working to create a much-needed Social Thinking group for junior high aged students on the autism spectrum. Pam was also busy with the recruitment of new mentors for the *Connections* big siblings program. She also held a meeting of the *STAR* mentors and began plans for the first *STAR* meeting of teens, parents, and mentors on September 30. She has been busy in August and September contacting local school staff in the recruitment effort for new teens for *STAR* group.

*Educational Advocacy* continued but with a surge in September of new referrals and increased work with parents and schools on behalf of students requiring special education services. The *Enhanced Family Support* for parents of children on the autism spectrum is working with 4 or 5 families this late summer/fall. This summer, Barbara Hall, who volunteers as the Nathan Hall Library librarian processed three boxes of books donated to the library, and Nicki entered data of them into the Library World page of our website, where you can search for this cache that includes a lot of books about autism. Check out this page when you can.

**Recruitment of new SNSC Executive Director**

After almost ten years as Executive Director, and a total of 15 years with SNSC, Philip Eller will be retiring from this fulltime position sometime in 2016. Since June the Board has been working hard in preparation for this major transition. Extensive work has been done on creating a job description, plans made for the recruitment process and screening of applicants, and other related details. If you know someone who would be a good candidate have them send a cover letter and resume to info@sns-c-uv.org If a suitable candidate can be found that person could start this position as early as January 2016. See Barbara van Hoff's President's Corner article for more information about all this. Philip plans to continue doing some *Educational Advocacy* work as a volunteer.

## Visions Open House

August 23, a beautiful late summer Sunday afternoon, saw an estimated 180 people attend the Open House of Visions for Creative Housing Solutions at the old Dow family farm in Enfield near the lakes. A project, ten years in development, now provides three levels of housing and support for adults with various special needs – independent apartments, supervised apartment, and more intensive care apartment in the main house. Nine residents now are safely and happily housed in this specialized setting, with openings for two more in the near future. For full details and history about Visions check out their website at [www.visionsnh.org](http://www.visionsnh.org) and also their Facebook page. Visions offers a housing option for adults with challenging needs that is not otherwise available in the Upper Valley as a selection for their families. It meets a long-term,



Visions Creative Housing Solutions Open House

life-long opportunity for a supported living environment and enhances the independence and life skills for people who often would have to live with their parents or family members, and it offers parents great peace of mind to know their child will have a home of their own after they (the parents) are no longer able to care for him or her. This new 'home of their own' is created by the many socializing and skill building opportunities with the other individuals housed at Visions, as their fellow participants become 'family.'

Speakers at the Open House included Sylvia Dow, who along with her husband Dave, gave their farm to Visions, Sylvia's brother, John Kluge who talked about the history of the property where he and Sylvia grew up, a representative from the office of NH Senator Kelly Ayotte who congratulated the many people involved in the creation of this valuable resource, and Philip Eller who talked about Family Power. This speech is included in full in this newsletter at the suggestion of several parents who attended the Open House. SNSC was instrumental in facilitating the group of parents ten years ago that came together to consider housing options for their adult children in the future. This is where and when the vision of Visions was born.

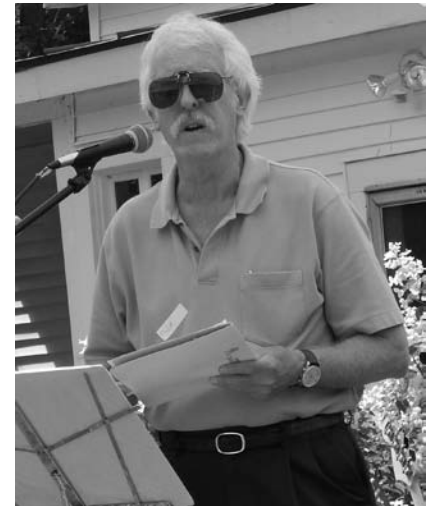
## Special Needs Coalition of the Upper Valley

Pam and I have also involved this summer and fall in the development of the Special Needs Coalition (SNC), a group of six organizations that serve an overlapping population of people with special needs. The Coalition includes Spark Community Center, Zack's Place, High Horses, Global Campuses, Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, and SNSC. The goal is to coordinate and collaborate in our programs and schedules in order not to duplicate efforts, while at the same time offering options and choices of activities for this population. Collaboration in public education about disabilities and differing abilities, communication about resources, and possible joint fund raising and grant writing efforts are also goals for SNC. A brochure for SNC is being created, utilizing Nick's great computer design skills, and will be soon available. A SNC website is also being created, by Ted Bergeron, a volunteer who created the original SNSC website. In about a month or two, you can check out [www.snc-uv.org](http://www.snc-uv.org) for more information about this new coalition.



## **Family Power!**

From a speech given by Philip Eller at the grand opening of Visions for Creative Housing Solutions in Enfield on August 23, 2015.



It begins with a DREAM.

A dream about what your child is going to be like, look like, what they will do - and how they will provide you with biological immortality. All expecting parents have such a dream – a preconceived idea of what it will be like to be a parent to their dream child. But once the child arrives ALL parents have to make adjustments to their Dream – because that child that comes out has their own life to live, their own agenda. As Khalil Gibran in *The Prophet* articulates it so well:

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

For parents who have a child with a special need or disability, acceptance of this understanding is most important to have. These parents – YOU – even more than other parents are especially aware that you travel on a life journey that was not expected. You have experienced the reality that Emily Perl Kingsley expressed in her essay, “Welcome to Holland” and Cathy Holland followed with, “Celebrating Holland – I’m Home” that you dream during the pregnancy time of Going to Italy – the perfect destination, but when your plane touches down the steward says, “Welcome to Holland” and you begin to experience the disappointments, the frustrations, the challenges of arriving at an unplanned destination. And life changes forever – for everyone in the family – as you learn to live in a different country – one with its challenges Yes, but one also full of its own riches and beauty and amazing insights, its unique joys, highpoints, and special accomplishments. And you develop very, very soon your role as an advocate for your child’s wellbeing and their rightful place in this world.

You develop very soon the feeling of the ‘protective’ mother lion (and hopefully human father lion) that fights for their cub’s rights and fair opportunities in their growing life. From your Dream you must then develop a Vision – a practical plan for implementing the Dream. Today we

celebrate the Vision that Sylvia and Dave Dow have implemented - with lots of toil and frustrations but ultimate success – Visions for Creative Housing Solutions. From this reality and background the family support movement was developed, and has grown and transformed the world as we know it, and gives – indeed, demands – dignity and rights and opportunities and inclusion for ALL children, for all people of our nation and the world. In New Hampshire this parent power/family support power has been seen especially in the developmental disabilities world. When the Laconia State School was finally closed in 1991 - largely because of the advocacy and the social and political power of families - this advocacy movement then demanded of NH legislators that all the necessary supports systems and resources would be created in their home communities for their newly released children. It has been and still is the advocacy and power of such parents that has led the way for this ‘new world’ – one of inclusion and equal opportunity. And parents such as the Dows and many of you here today have taken the initiative and led the way in creating appropriate resources for your children with differing abilities. You have instructed, directed, and insisted that the state government respond to the special needs of your special children.

The political power of families in the development disabilities community is unique in their influence and effectiveness in New Hampshire. In spite of the usual intransigence of the state bureaucracy and the legislative process you and your larger families have time and time again in the 25 years since the closing of Laconia State risen to the challenge and successfully advocated for resources and programs and services that your special children need – and deserve.

Time after time, year after year, when the NH legislative proposed cutting or limiting funding of services for people with developmental disabilities, it has been the families that have risen up and come together to advocate for their children. And though you have not always achieved 100 percent of your goals, you usually have been mostly successful, and proven to be a force to be reckoned with by the powers that be. So – I say to you today – continue the long fight, the eternal journey of being ferocious advocates for your special child.



A New Year of ART LAB

Happenings Pizza & Bingo

## Upcoming Special Events for SNSC

For more information and details about all these events check out our website or give us a call.

### **Saturday, October 24 – Blue Lip Golf Tournament**

To be held at the Crown Point Golf Course in Springfield VT, the Blue Lip is for ‘inveterate’ golfers. This annual fund raiser for SNSC is completely organized and run by Tim and Codie Rockwood.

### **Wednesday, October 28 – ART LAB Art Display Opening**

To be held in the library at the AVA Gallery

### **Sunday, November 1 – Delicious Art: ART LAB show with Wine, Cheese, & Chocolate Tasting**

Held at the AVA Gallery in Lebanon , Delicious Art is great time of fun, food, and fellowship. The *ART LAB* display will be available for viewing and also the South Studio where some *ART LAB* work will be for sale.

### **The SNSC Annual Giving Campaign (AGC)**

Our major fundraising appeal will be mailed early in November to individuals and businesses. Please look for your letter in the mail.



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*Main Office*

www.sns-c-uv.org  
603-448-6311  
Phil@sns-c-uv.org

*STAR*

603-448-1268  
STAR@sns-c-uv.org

*Happenings*

603-448-1268  
Pam@sns-c-uv.org

**Don't Forget the Happenings Halloween Dance, October 30th at the Upper Valley Senior Center from 7-9pm**



Happenings Apple Picking at Riverview Farm

**Calendar of Events**

Please see our website Calendar page for up-to-date information on events for:

- Happenings*
- ART LAB*
- ASPIRE*
- Education Classes*
- STAR*
- and other programs*

You can also find us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/SNSCUV](http://www.facebook.com/SNSCUV)