



# SNSC

## Special Needs Support Center

Quarterly Newsletter  
Summer 2016

*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
- Social Thinking Group
- Autism Parent Support Group

### Our Money Comes From

- People like you!**
- Annual Giving Campaign
- Other Private and Community Foundations



### President's Corner

Ahhh, finally spring is here! The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing and people are walking around with smiles on their faces!

The big news at SNSC is that we have hired a new Executive Director! As Philip retires, Havah Armstrong-Walther will take over as Executive Director in July. It has taken us a year, with many resumes read and interviews and meetings held, and we are so pleased with the appointment of Havah to this position. We think we have found just the right person to follow Philip and continue the important work of SNSC in the helping of people with special needs and their families in the Upper Valley. Havah has many years of experience both as family member/caregiver and as a volunteer and a professional in the work with this special population. Please join us on June 14th for our annual meeting to meet Havah, ask questions, and also to give thanks to Philip for his many years of service and leadership at SNSC.

In other news, we had a great Mother's Day Raffle fundraiser, with three people winning wonderful prizes. Many thanks to the businesses who donated! Please continue to give them your business whenever possible – von Bargen's Jewelry, My Brigadeiro chocolates, Safflowers in Enfield, and the River Valley Club. Thank you again!

On Father's Day we will be the recipients of a 50/50 raffle at the Upper Valley Nighthawks baseball game at Maxfield Sports Complex in Hartford, VT. This is a new team for our area and they are donating the proceeds from the raffle at each of their games to a local non-profit, so let's support them as they are supporting us! The game is on Sunday afternoon, June 19th, at 5pm. Tickets are only \$5 for adults, free for those under 18! Bring your family and friends for a great evening, and for a great cause!

Hope to see you at the annual meeting, and at the baseball game



Barbara van Hoff  
President, SNSC Board of Directors

**Our Thanks to You All!**

**The SNSC Team  
Board of Directors**

**Year 2015-2016**

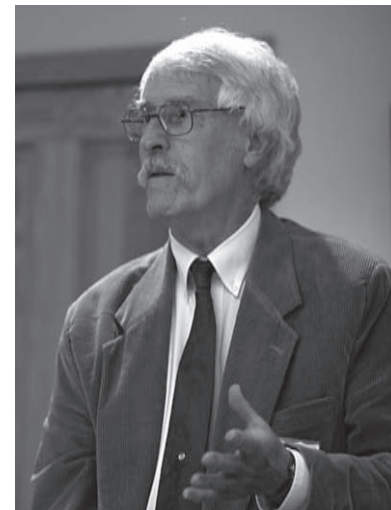
Barbara van Hoff, President  
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**Staff**

Philip Eller  
**Executive Director**  
Pam Blair  
**Programs Coordinator**  
Nicki Thrall  
**Administrative Assistant**  
Vasilios Georgitsis  
Webmaster  
**NH/VT Computer**  
Chisel & Brand  
**Web Design**  
Murray Ngioma  
Sylvia Dow  
Josh Yunger  
**ART LAB Facilitators**  
Debra Campbell  
Carolina Alvarez-Correa  
Esther Wu  
**ASPIRE Coordinators**  
Theresa Hunnewell  
Christian Ledesma  
**Social Thinking Facilitators**

**Executive Director's Corner**

All of the SNSC services and programs were operating in fine fashion this spring. The *Community Partners* programs, led by Pam, have been providing essential services to the community. Eight *Connections* matches continued. *STAR* held monthly meetings except for the final 'graduation' event that had to be cancelled because of schedule conflicts. The *ART LAB* started its 12-week spring term with 46 artists. The *Happenings* program had its usual Ladies Luncheon in April with 50 attendees and its Spring Semi-Formal Dance in May, attended by 88 people. The *ASPIRE* playgroups held their regular Saturday schedule and the swim group was held on Fridays. Our new Consulting Coordinator for *ASPIRE*, Debra Campbell, began connecting with the Dartmouth student volunteers providing them invaluable consultation, modeling, and training – Welcome aboard Debra. Additionally, the *Social Cognition Group* for junior high students on the autism spectrum really began to develop positive relationships under the direction of Theresa Hunnewell, assisted by Christian Ledesma, volunteer Dartmouth psychology student.



The *Family Support Services* have also been busy. *Educational Advocacy* saw the attendance of dozens of school meetings, many contacts with parents and school staff, and almost 20 new referrals for this unique service. We have also received several dozen *Information & Referral* contacts from all over the Upper Valley, both states, and even out-of-state about a wide variety of issues and concerns. The *Respite Child Care Program*, with dwindling funds, continued to serve 3 or 4 families. *Enhanced Family Support* received 6 new referrals for this 10-12 hours of direct service by Elena Burch of SD Associates. The *Parent Support Group* for autism continued its special support to 4-5 parents under the leadership of Pam. Finally, Nicki worked diligently and creatively behind the scene, keeping up our website and Facebook postings.

**Upper Valley Nighthawks**  
*v.s.*  
**Valley Blue Sox**

at the Maxfield Sports Complex in Hartford, VT  
**Sunday afternoon, June 19th, at 5pm.**

Tickets are only \$5 for adults, free for those under 18!  
Bring your family and friends for a great evening, and  
for a great cause!

50/50 Raffle to support SNSC!

**Let's cheer on our local team!!**

## Greetings From Our New Director



I am both excited and humbled to be replacing Philip Eller as the Executive Director of SNSC. Philip has been a stalwart foundation block in *Educational Advocacy* and the special needs community and was, in fact, a beacon of light to my own family. It will be an honor to pick up where he leaves off and continue his strong strong representation to our community. I inherit a powerhouse team at SNSC and I believe that together we will meet the challenges in advocacy and community building.

I am looking forward to hearing from all of you, our greater SNSC family. I am excited for this next year and encourage anyone with questions to speak with me. Please stop in, join us at an event, say hello, ask questions, give feedback-- after all, we are here for *you*.

-- Havah  
havah@sns-c-uv.org

## Happenings Spring Dance



## **SNSC Leadership Transition**

After 15 years working for SNC, (since January 2, 2001) including 10 as the Executive Director, I will be retiring from full time work as of June 30th. See Barb's details about the new Executive Director in her President's Corner.

After a 50 year career that has included focuses in social work, education, psychology, psychiatry, agency leadership, and community development, working for SNSC has been an especially rewarding opportunity for me as it has given me the chance to utilize all the professional skills and experiences gleaned in my first 35 years of social service positions. My career has been one primarily as a generalist social worker, and working with SNSC has given me the chance to synthesize and apply all of my interests and capabilities in a productive and meaningful endeavor.

To address the litany of 'accomplishments' traditional in such a farewell, I would mention the following as most notable and worthy of personal satisfaction:

1. Participating in the name change from the Upper Valley Support Group to Special Needs Support Center – an action already in process by the Board when I took over the Executive Directorship in March 2006 from Maryellen Sullivan;
2. The creation of the *ART LAB* and the *Education Classes* in cooperation and hard work of Sylvia Dow in 2008;
3. Facilitating the merging of the *STAR* program with SNSC in 2008;
4. Facilitating the merging of the *ARCH* program with SNSC in 2010;
5. The expansion of the *Educational Advocacy* service and reaching the wider Upper Valley in coverage;
6. The expansion of many of our programs and services with more emphasis and work on the Vermont side of the river;
7. Supporting and facilitating the creation of *ASPIRE* playgroups for kids on the autism spectrum in 2010 with a Dartmouth College student;
8. In the administrative area, facilitating and helping with: the growth of the AGC, expanded number of grant approvals, regular newsletters and initiation of the annual report, the contract with ARIS Solutions for our bookkeeping work, the SNSC website (with help and expertise of many others), and fine tuning of other management systems at SNSC;
9. Facilitating the transfer of the *Parent to Parent of NH* program (which I was initially hired to lead) to the NH Family Ties program now housed in Community Bridges in Concord, and
10. Participating in all the SNSC involvement – in one way or another – with the Early Childhood Mental Health Network, the VT Autism Task Force, the VT Special Education Advocates Coalition, the Special Needs Alliance of the Upper Valley, the Spark Community Center, the early development work with parents, especially Sylvia Dow, that led years later to the creation of Visions for Creative Housing Solutions, and NH Family Ties.

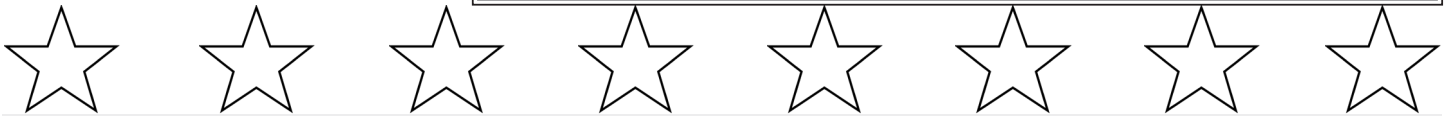
Through these 10 years as Executive Director, Pam Blair has been my constant companion, supporter, listening ear, friendly critic, colleague, and hardworking staffer to whom I owe eternal appreciation and gratitude. She has been a quiet, efficient take-care-of-details coordinator whom SNSC and I have relied on for all the leadership of the community programs, as well as our IT leadership. In the last couple of years, Nicki Thrall has become our invaluable administrative assistant who has taken on increased professional responsibilities in managing our databases, the AGC, the website and Facebook, and production of fundraising and events materials, many of the relations with parents and professionals, etc. It is with a great sense of confidence that I leave the future operations of SNSC by them to the new Executive Director.

Finally, it has been a special and unique privilege and honor for me to work these 15 years with the many, many wonderful, dedicated, and hard working folk of SNSC – all the hundreds of parents, the dozens of volunteers, the many professional colleagues, and especially the many Board and committee members who have been so enlightened and committed to the mission of SNSC – that of advocating for and providing services and programs for people (children and adults) with any kind of special need – and to their parents and families in the wider Upper Valley. SNSC is a unique and valuable organization and it has been a most rewarding opportunity to work with each and every one of you. Thanx Mucho!!!

At SNSC,  
we rely on  
community  
support in  
all sorts of  
ways.

Our thanks go out to Liberty Mutual Insurance and their *Serve With Liberty* program, which sent three very capable volunteers from their Dover and Keene offices to help us clean out the basement.

Thanks Ted, Mike and Luke!!



**Thank you to everyone who participated in our Mother's Day Raffle, this year! Congratulations to our winners:**



Kaye St. Louis wearing the necklace and earring set by Kelim, donated by Von Bargaen's

First Prize - Kaye St. Louis  
Second Prize - Dawn Read  
Third Prize - Mindy Schorr

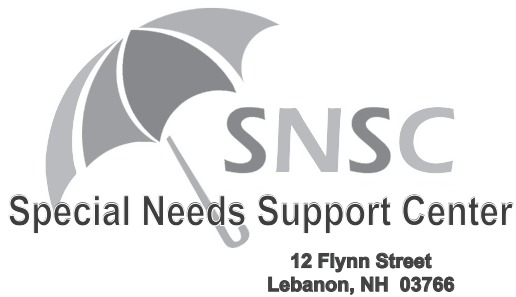
(Not shown, Mindy with her certificates for a bouquet from Safflowers and brunch for four.)



Phil with Dawn Read and her prizes from My Brigadeiro and the River Valley Club



**...and a big "Thank You" to Von Bargaen's, the River Valley Club and Safflowers!  
You've helped us make three moms very happy this year.**



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*Main Office*

www.snsc-uv.org  
603-448-6311  
Phil@snsc-uv.org

*Happenings & ART LAB*

603-448-1268  
Pam@snsc-uv.org

*STAR*

603-448-1268  
STAR@snsc-uv.org

# SNSC Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 14th

6pm-7:30pm

**in the Mayer Room at the Howe Library**

*All are welcome! Please join us as we celebrate Philip's service at SNSC and welcome our new Executive Director, Havah Armstrong-Walther. Light refreshment will be provided. We will also be voting in new board members.*

## 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)