



Kids Disability Awareness Day 2006

A group of Anixter Center program participants and children enjoy activities at Kids Disability Awareness Day at 2032 N. Clybourn on June 19, 2006. Twenty children took part in the celebration and more than 30 people volunteered. Kids Disability Awareness Day aims to provide educational activities that promote disability awareness among children as well as allow staff to share their workplace environment with their family. Some of the activities the children took part in were: computer testing for literacy; a health awareness course; an interactive Lekotek toy demonstration and a sign language class. Anixter Center program participants also painted pine boxes that were distributed to volunteers in addition to doing arts and crafts with the children. A second Kids Disability Awareness Day took place at Stuart G. Ferst School on July 19th, 2006.

Options • Vol. XXIII • Number 5 • Summer 2006

The mission of the Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is to assist people with disabilities to live and work successfully in the community. Anixter Center is a leading provider of high-quality vocational, residential and educational options, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and health care. Anixter Center is an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities to be full and equal members of the community.

Editorial Offices

Development Department

6610 North Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60626-4062

To make a donation or gift-in-kind, or to request information, call: (773) 973-7900, ext. 226; (773) 973-2180 TTY • www.anixter.org

Allan I. Bergman, President and CEO

Editors: Betsy Storm, Mary Kozil and Aricka Flowers

Anixter Center is a nonprofit charitable organization with various programs accredited and/or licensed by one or more of the following: CARF (The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities); the Illinois State Board of Education; the Illinois Department of Human Services; the Illinois Alcohol and Drug Dependence Association; and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Anixter Center is a member of: the American Association on Mental Retardation; the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities; the Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities; TASH, a non-profit organization whose mission is "Equity, Equality and Social Justice for people with disabilities; and the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago. Anixter Center also is a designated Helen Keller National Center Affiliate.

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ACT Parlor Party celebrates successes

The recent Parlor Party hosted by Anixter Center's Adult Community Transition (ACT) Program was the third event of its kind over the past five years. This year, the event was hosted at the Ryerson Conservation Area in Deerfield. The choice of venue illustrated the resounding success of the event: Previously, it was held at the family home of an ACT participant.

The growing attendance enhances camaraderie among those involved in the ACT Program while accomplishing an important goal, increasing awareness of and involvement with ACT. "We were pleased with support from community businesses as well as raffle sales from parents and families," explains Jack Creagh, director of suburban employment services. "Parents of the young people in ACT introduced the idea of the Parlor Party to supplement financial support for the program, which is largely funded by the state. The event also mobilizes a larger number of parents and families. Parents want to engage supporters socially while sharing information



Noah Bronfeld and his mother Ellen Garber Bronfeld at the ACT Parlor Party about the political advocacy that must be undertaken for ACT to survive and prosper."

More than \$8,000 was raised at the party. Allocation of the money will be decided by the Parent Advisory Group and other families involved in the program. Past funds from the event have covered a variety of expenses, such as specialized staffing and improvement and enhancement of the ACT site in Highland Park.

More than 70 people attended the event, including Sen. Susan Garrett (D-29) and Reps. Karen May (D-58) and Elaine Nekritz (D-57). Legislative support is key to ACT's

success. "We've benefited from legislative support since ACT's inception, primarily thanks to the Parent Advocacy Group," says Jack. "Every senator and representative associated with our program participants has visited ACT and met the young people and observed firsthand what has been accomplished. Rep. May has been instrumental in obtaining additional funding that has enabled ACT to double in size recently and now serve about 20 participants."

Newly appointed Anixter Center Board Member Ellen Garber Bronfeld is a founder of the Parent Advocacy Group. She describes ACT as "wildly successful." Ellen explains, "There was a void in the system prior to the founding of ACT. There were no community-based programs to help individuals with certain kinds of disabilities make successful transitions to the community after high school. "Employment is a chief component of this program and also the most challenging one," adds Ellen. "It will be addressed through customized employment." (See story on page 2.)

Roberta Bachmann Lewis Factory Program receives kudos for commitment to youth

The Roberta Bachmann Lewis Factory Program recently was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for its continued dedication to Cook County's Jumpstart Program. Jumpstart is a specialized unit of the Juvenile Court of Cook County. The 10-week program provides an intensive academic focus including rigorous GED preparation for 16-18 year-old students who have dropped out of school and experienced delinquency.

After completion of Jumpstart, students are then often referred to the Factory Program and similar programs by Cook County probation officers. These juvenile justice specialists say they recommend the Factory program because of its structured environment, low

ratio of staff to students and vocational component.

"Tamara Bills, manager of the Factory Program and Wayne Smith, who supervises the work floor at the Factory Program, are highly committed to their work with Jumpstart," says Andrew Fernandez, Director of Vocational Services at Anixter Center.

The Factory Program combines high school education, counseling, paid work and job placement services for students who are referred through the juvenile justice system. Of the students who complete the program, 92% do not return to the juvenile justice system.

Chicago Hearing Society to celebrate 90th anniversary in November

Chicago Hearing Society, a division of Anixter Center, will host a cocktail reception and dinner on November 9, 2006 to celebrate its 90th anniversary. The event will take place at Maggiano's Little Italy at 111 West Grand Ave. in Chicago. The cocktail reception, limited to 50 guests, will be held from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Dinner, accommodating 300, will follow from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Gallaudet University President I. King Jordan, the first deaf president of the historic university for students who are deaf, located in Washington, D.C., will be the guest of honor. Tickets for the cocktail reception and dinner must be purchased in advance. Contact Jill Sahakian, director, Chicago Hearing Society, at (773)248-9121 ext. 307, for information about sponsorship opportunities. Online registration is available at www.chicagohearingociety.org, or call (773) 248-9121 for more information.



Anixter Center and its program participants took part in three celebrations and/or disability-related events in July, including: AccessChicago, a display of products and services for people with disabilities; the 16th Anniversary Celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act, "Access to Independence"; and the 3rd annual Disability Pride Parade. The parade ascended to a new level of visibility this year, with a larger number of participants and spectators than in years past. Approximately 30 Anixter Center program participants and more than a dozen staff and their friends and family members joined in the parade, which traveled through the Chicago Loop neighborhood and concluded with a celebration at Daley Plaza.

Create a lasting legacy

A bequest in your will to Anixter Center is a wonderful way to ensure that you will continue to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. A bequest allows you to carry forward the values that give meaning to your life and to leave a legacy for those who follow you. The benefits of making a bequest include deferral of your gift until after your lifetime, exemption from federal estate taxes and the freedom to change the gift at any point during your lifetime.

To make a gift or to learn more about bequests or beneficiary designations on life insurance or retirement income policies, please contact Nancy Trueblood, Director of Major Gifts and Planned Giving, at (773) 973-7900, ext. 249, or ntrueblood@anixter.org. If you have already made a bequest to Anixter Center, please let us know so that we may thank you for your generosity. If you would prefer to remain anonymous, your gift will be kept completely confidential.

____ I/We have remembered Anixter Center in our will/trust.
I/We are pleased to join the Legacy Society.

____ I/We have remembered Anixter Center in our will/trust.
I/We are pleased to join the Legacy Society. I/We wish to remain anonymous. Please do not place my/our name in publications.

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Send to: Nancy Trueblood, Anixter Center, 6610 N. Clark St.,
Chicago, IL 60626 or ntrueblood@anixter.org.

Your contribution to Anixter Center will benefit people with disabilities.

Please visit www.anixter.org
or call (773) 973-7900, ext. 226, voice, (773) 973-2180, TTY.

Anixter Center duo wins state literacy award

Each year the Illinois Secretary of State and the Illinois Press Association hand out *Spotlight on Achievement and Service awards* in recognition of exceptional accomplishments by literacy students and in honor of the fine contributions made by volunteer tutors.

This year, Michael Bassett, an Anixter Center Literacy student, received a *Spotlight on Achievement* award and his tutor, Sara Baum, an Anixter Center volunteer, won the *Spotlight on Service* award. As part of the prize, Bassett was given \$200 by the Illinois Press Association, a plaque, a bag of books, a personalized Illinois Blue book and a six-month subscription to his local daily newspaper. Baum received similar prizes, except that her \$200 award was donated to Anixter Center in support of our Adult Literacy services.

Bassett also took part in Anixter Center's Literacy Showcase in May. The yearly showcase allows adult learners to read stories, poems or other material they have written to an audience of family, friends, program mates and Anixter Center staff.

According to Gwynne Kizer, Literacy Coordinator, program participants take great care in preparing for the event: "The students get very excited about the



Michael Bassett signing a story he wrote for this year's literacy showcase

showcase," says Gwynne. "I started working for Anixter Center exactly a month before the showcase and the students were already talking about it and getting ready by working with their tutors. They were really proud and excited to be able to share what they are doing in front of people."

The Literacy Program is a project made possible by a grant awarded by the Illinois State Library (ISL), a Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, using state funds designated for literacy.

Save the Date for Anixter Center's Award-winning Breakfast!

Date: Tuesday, October 24
Time: 8 - 10 a.m.
Where: Mid-America Club
200 E. Randolph St.
Chicago, IL 60601

For more information on Anixter Center's 27th Annual Awards Celebration, please contact Jan Walch at (773) 973-7900 ext. 238 or jwalch@anixter.org



Philanthropic Grants Update

Grants from corporations and foundations are critical to Anixter Center's ability to serve and support more than 5,000 individuals with disabilities – and their families – each year. Here, according to the program or division funded, is a list of institutions that recently provided grants in support of our work. We thank them for their support.

Chicago Hearing Society

Kraft Employee Fund, Chicago

CALOR

Unity in Chicago

Ferst School, Evanston Home and Avondale Homes

Patrick and Anna M. Cudahy Fund

National Lekotek Center

The Chicago Community Trust

Otto W. Lehmann Foundation

Toys "R" Us, Inc.

Customized employment changes lives

Anixter Center Employment Services is one of fifteen agencies in the United States taking part in a customized employment program called Training and Technical Assistance for Providers, or T-TAP. The Department of Labor program takes an innovative approach to job development and placement by focusing more on the consumer than the employer, especially in the earlier stages of the process.

“Customized employment provides a very different environment compared to more traditional offerings,” explains Anixter Center’s Ruth Gray, T-TAP employment counselor. “We work on finding the right job for program participants based on their interests. The more typical situation is one in which pre-defined job openings are available, and then we try to fit prospective employees into those slots; customized employment is a more consumer-centered concept.”

Many candidates for customized employment were previously considered unemployable for a



Donell Hall worked at Anixter Center’s Canteen before starting his job at AutoZone

variety of reasons.

Anixter Center consumers are very responsive to customized employment. Currently, 12 individuals – from Anixter Businesses, Alternatives for the Developmentally Disabled, the Adult Community Transition Program and Community Resources and Support – are in various stages of the placement process. Donell Hall is the first Anixter Center consumer to be placed through customized employment. His interest in repairing classic cars makes him a natural for his new employment

with AutoZone. Donnell is working about 18 hours a week at the AutoZone location in Rogers Park.

Donell is excited about the opportunities provided to him by Anixter Center. *In his own words*, here’s what Donell writes. “Anixter has built my confidence up to do the impossible and given me a second chance to start over,” explains Donell. “I have discovered to be patient and to have hope concerning a grim outlook. Anixter has helped me realize no one is going to give you something for free. I always do my very best, and it really pays off. I feel capable and reassured that the decisions I will make in the working world will aid all.”

Donell’s success will likely prompt even more interest in customized employment. Gray says she will incorporate a T-TAP orientation for incoming Anixter Center program participants to help them better understand the employment process and shape their decisions about whether they should commit to the process.

Anixter Center board of directors welcomes new board members

In May 2006, the following individuals joined the Anixter Center Board of Directors: Kathy Beiser, Ellen Garber Bronfeld, Hillary Ebach and Dan Sabol. At the same time, Marymargaret Sharp-Pucci, Ph.D, was elected chair of the Board, Janet Anixter became the new executive vice chair, and Lawrence Krema assumed the role of board secretary. The board of directors also expressed gratitude to retiring board members.

Welcome

Introducing our funders

The Searle Funds at the Chicago Community Trust recently awarded \$50,000 in social venture funding to the National Lekotek Center, the Anixter Center program that serves children with disabilities and their families. The grant from the Trust, the Midwest’s largest community foundation, will help fund AblePlay, a one-of-a-kind toy rating system and web site (www.ableplay.org for consumers; www.ableplayrating.org for toy manufacturers) that assists parents, relatives, teachers, and rehabilitation professionals in selecting the best toys for children with special needs. Anixter Center is grateful to the Searle Funds at the Trust, and encourages **Options** readers to visit the AblePlay Web site for recommendations for toys for children with disabilities.

Options

A quarterly newsletter of Anixter Center



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service helps
Anixter customer
find job
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Anixter Center raises \$200,000 at “Play a Round for the Kids” golf outing

The third annual Lester J. Anixter Memorial Golf Outing, “Play a Round for the Kids,” took place at The Glen Club in Glenview on June 13. Approximately 120 golfers participated in the event, raising more than \$200,000 for Anixter Center, a substantial increase over last year. Proceeds from the event will benefit children with disabilities receiving services through Anixter Center’s 70-plus programs, including: CALOR, which offers a variety of services in Chicago’s Latino community, particularly for individuals impacted by HIV/AIDS; Chicago Hearing Society; the National Lekotek Center, which provides direct services, support and information to children with special needs and their families in resource and play centers that are found worldwide; and Stuart G. Ferst School.

Anixter Center board member Joel Schaidler chaired the event for the second consecutive year. While speaking to attendees, Schaidler particularly thanked the L & R Anixter Foundation, lead sponsor for the event. In her remarks, Chicago resident Midge Anixter, an Anixter Center board member and the widow of Lester J. Anixter, agency benefactor, said, “Lester

would have been thrilled to know how successful the golf outing is in raising money for Anixter Center!”



Photos counterclockwise: The L & R Anixter Foundation was the lead sponsor for Anixter Center’s “Play a Round for the Kids.” Pictured here are Executive Vice Chair of the Anixter Center Board of Directors Janet Anixter and Foundation Board members Edward Anixter; Steven Anixter; JoAnn Silva and Jack Ehrlich.

Anixter Center Board member Joel Schaidler (left), with Anixter Center president and CEO Allan I. Bergman, chaired the golf event for the second consecutive year.

Ellen Walsdorf, Sally Acker, Karen Kizer and Sherry Petska show off their winnings. Karen Kizer is a former Chair of Anixter Center’s Board of Directors.

During his remarks, Allan I. Bergman, president and CEO of Anixter Center, mentioned one particular disability-related issue facing Chicagoans and the nation – the alarming increase in individuals with autism. “According to expert sources,” said Bergman, “one of every 166 children today is born with autism.” Anixter Center provides services and supports for

children and adults with autism, among other disabilities.

Among the prizewinners at the outing were: first-place team, Larry Elbaum, Mike Gibson, and Dave Stang; the second-place team, Wally Adamczyk, Tom Mcgrath, Jack Tamplin; and in third place, Tim Bean, Peter Silberman, Terry Shively, and Ken Turro.