

Grants, Contracts and Donations Spur Continued Growth at PLAN/NJ

GRANTS

Thanks to continuous support from the following foundations, we are able to provide free education, consultations and direct services to families in need. Thank you to the **IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey** for supporting PLAN/NJ's clients with life planning, guardianship, and representative payee services. We are also grateful to the **New Jersey State Bar Foundation** (which funds this newsletter) and **The Westfield Service League**. Their support enables PLAN/NJ to provide free life planning seminars for families caring for individuals with disabilities throughout the state. **The Fred C. Rummel Foundation** has been a longstanding supporter of our organization, enabling us to provide guardianship, home visit monitoring and representative payee services for families without the means to pay for these essential services. PLAN/NJ recently received a grant from **The Karma**

Foundation to assist in the purchase of a company vehicle to transport clients.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

We are grateful for the following individuals who recently provided donations to PLAN/NJ:

Elizabeth Dahme
(in honor of Katherine Mackay)
Deron Siddons
(in honor of Collin Siddons)
Swartz & Co., LLC
Constance Watkins
Leonard D. Furman

NEW PROGRAM: Family Support and Prevention Services

For the past six years Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey (PLAN/NJ) has been providing individualized case management to families exiting the

New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). The program — PLAN/MAPS (Monitoring, Advocacy and Prevention Services) — provides families caring for children with disabilities with the support and services they need to help prevent a return to DYFS. To date, PLAN/NJ has assisted 660 families in this program. Due to the program's success, the New Jersey Division of Children and Families recently provided PLAN/NJ with a contract to support families currently in DYFS. The Family Support and Prevention Services (FSP) program provides intensive case management and family support services to address issues impacting the immediate well-being of these families. Our goals are to work with families to resolve any concerns that may impact the health, welfare and safety of their children. We actively work with the families to provide resources, solve problems and provide advocacy in obtaining services that families need to live well.

Advocate For Individuals With Disabilities Receives Presidential Accolades

Mark M., a future life planning client of Planned Lifetime Assistance Network of New Jersey, (PLAN/NJ), is more than a fountain of knowledge. He is a geyser. He can recite where he and his family vacationed since he was a toddler, where they stopped along the way and exactly what attractions they visited. He knows facts about science, how complex machines operate and astronomy. With such a strong love of knowledge and books, it is no surprise that his favorite store is Barnes and Noble. He also volunteers at the Ringwood Library cataloguing books. "Mark reserved so many books from the library that we lost track," explains his mom, Ruth. "He is now limited to six at a time."

Mark taught himself to read at a very young age. Diagnosed with autism and Asperger's Syndrome, he attended The Forum School in Northern New Jersey at a time when few schools were available for children with these disorders and very little information was known. Now 52, Mark lives with roommates in a group home within a short drive of his parents' house. He attends a day program at Bergen County Special Services - Paramus Rehab that he thoroughly enjoys. "He hates to miss a day," his mom adds. It is at



Mark M.

this program where Mark focused his efforts on educating individuals with disabilities about their right to vote in political elections. "Mark knew that

people with disabilities had a right to register to vote, but thought they might be misinformed or denied accommodations to do so," says Roberta Rana, RN, MSN, program nurse at Paramus Rehab. Ms. Rana, who spearheads the annual health fair, helped Mark create an educational poster for the event. Their poster also commemorated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans With Disabilities Act and included signatures of all program attendees. Roberta was so impressed with his work that she mailed the poster to former President Bush. The program received a huge surprise when they received a letter from the former President acknowledging Mark's efforts, saying that "thoughtful gestures like yours, 20 years after signing the Americans With Disabilities Act, are icing on the cake." The icing on the cake for Mark was not only the fact that he received a letter from the former President but that he also learned that photos from their health fair were displayed at The George Bush Presidential Library in Texas.

"The health fair is such a wonderful undertaking and it has mushroomed over the past five years," explains Mark's mom. "More importantly, Mark is so proud of his memory."