



***WeCAHR Mission Statement: WeCAHR is an advocacy organization. We advocate for the civil and human rights of people with disabilities. We work to create and promote personal success, independence and community involvement for children and adults with disabilities.***

## **WeCAHR Annual Report 2008-2009**

### ***WeCAHR Officers and Board of Directors***

**Steve Reichenbach**  
*President*  
**Marjorie Blansfield**  
*Vice President*  
**Isabel Kaplan**  
*Secretary*  
**Teresa Costa**  
*Treasurer*

### ***Directors:***

James A. Allen  
Pamela Arturi  
Anthony DiPerrio, Esq.  
Laura Heneghan  
Quentin Hughes III  
Rosemary O'Malley  
Dr. Linda Porto  
Joseph Tarshis

### ***WeCAHR Staff***

**Shirley Ricart**  
*Executive Director*

### ***Advocates:***

Jeanne Braude-Magi  
Dale Brown  
Linda Rietschel  
Lisa Marciano

**Martha Burr**  
*Executive Assistant*

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### ***Dear Members and Friends,***

We are close to closing another successful year of WeCAHR services.

I am the new Executive Director of WeCAHR and am honored and delighted to bring to you this year's annual report. The 2008-2009 service year has consisted of successful transitions and increased efforts to reach members of the Greater Danbury community and Housatonic Valley.

Throughout the report you will notice WeCAHR has continued to uphold its mission in helping individuals with disabilities live independent, successful and healthy lives within their community. We have been diligently following our strategic plan, which encapsulates a greater effort to become more visible agents in the community and to broaden scope of services.

As members of WeCAHR we want you encourage others to learn more about WeCAHR services. We are here to be the voice of parents/guardians of disabled children and adults. Our process is transparent; we practice a unified approach with parent, provider and WeCAHR advocate to help parents navigate systems. We combine efforts with agencies to ensure that ALL individuals with disabilities know and understand services that will help them to live a healthy and balanced life within their community.

We thank you for your continued support of WeCAHR and encourage you to come in and visit our office to learn more about our impact in the community or simply call with any questions or concerns. Enjoy the upcoming holiday season!

All the best,

Shirley Ricart, MS

### ***Community Advocacy***

***WeCAHR serves the towns of:*** Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield and Sherman. During the Fiscal Year 2009 we provided our services to 478 individuals. Our FY08-09 data shows advocates attended a total of 319 meetings on behalf of families of children with disabilities. WeCAHR represented adult clients at 203 Interdisciplinary Team Meetings and 564 meetings pertaining to program/service modification, emergency parent and provider requests and team meetings for adults. We provided 478 clients with 12,043 units of service. WeCAHR also provided 5059 units of Information and Referral to calls received where cases were not opened. Given the economic climate, the number of inquiries related to homelessness has increased as have caseloads. One main area of focus in Fiscal Year 08-09 has been homeless prevention. WeCAHR advocates dedicated over 300 hours to assisting families obtain resources to secure their places of residency, transitional housing, and home ownership. We project given present experience there will be a need to serve many more clients. We look forward to continued success in helping our clients in this area. We will continue to join efforts with entities in the Greater Danbury Community to ensure client needs are met.

### ***WeCAHR Programs***

#### ***Parent Training***

WeCAHR holds an "Understanding Special Education" [USE] Training twice a year, for parents that have children with disabilities. The class is facilitated by a credentialed Educator or Trainer, including Lisa Marciano, WeCAHR Advocate. They trained over 60 parents this past year. Funding was provided by Union Savings Bank.

#### ***Dream Homes Community Center***

This program is a collaboration between WeCAHR, ARC [Association of Religious Communities] and The Housing Authority of Danbury. This is a single point of entry for individuals who are homeless, need help with rental stability or first time home ownership. We continued to work with clients to prevent homelessness as well as find placement for individuals that were displaced.

#### ***Southbury Training School***

WeCAHR advocates for the residents of STS under a grant provided by the CT Office of Protection and Advocacy. WeCAHR Advocates, Jeanne Braude-Magi and Dale Brown provide advocacy at STS. They attend meetings, visit day programs and cottages to ensure that the residents are doing well.

**Parent to Parent:** This program matches parents of newborns or recently diagnosed children with disabilities to veteran or trained parents who have children with similar disabilities. We made 15 parent matches this year. We receive funding from St. Stephens Church in Ridgefield for this program.

**People First:** WeCAHR is involved with 2 local chapters of People 1<sup>st</sup>. Jeanne Braude-Magi is advisor for the *STS Chapter* that meets weekly. This is the oldest chapter in the state. Our *Danbury Chapter* is led by Pamela Arturi. They meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month. *CT People 1<sup>st</sup>*, with Laura Hastillo as interim advisor, meets every other month with Board of Director meetings on the alternate months.

**Data Summary 2008-2008**

301 children served

177 adults served

**Autism Spectrum: 98**

**Developmentally Delayed 163;**

**ADD/ADHD:97; Social Emotional [under Age 21]56, Psychiatrically Labeled [over 22]: 48**

**Advocacy Issues Included: Abuse and Neglect: 27; Financial Entitlements; 66; Employment: 43; Problems with State Agencies: 115; Personal Care Attendants/Essential Services: 48.**

**Advocacy Intervention:** This past year advocates attended **138** [Placement Team Meetings] and **179** other child specific meetings. The advocates attended **203** Interdisciplinary meetings for adults and **564** meetings pertaining to program/service modification, emergency parent and provider requests and team meetings for adults.

**Living Arrangements: Supported Living: 56 Group Homes: 37; Public Institution: 49; Living with parents, family member or caregiver: 323.** We also provided our services to 11 individuals who were **homeless** or in **jeopardy of becoming homeless**.

**Information and Referral:** WeCAHR provided information, advice and referral to **5059 units of information to individuals and families**.

**Fund Development Activities:**

**Membership Breakfast:** Our annual breakfast was a success with 250 people attending. Our sincere thanks go to Board Members under the leadership of Rosemary O'Malley, who chaired the Breakfast Committee. We would like to give a special thanks to Lynn Taborsak for her many hours

of volunteering. Board members and staff secured tables and Silent Auction items.

**WeCAHR Night at the Theater:** The WeCAHR Night at the Theater held at Brookfield Playhouse was a great accomplishment! With over 80 attendees, along with contributors, donors and sponsors, WeCAHR raised over \$4,400. A warm thanks to Union Savings Bank, Newtown Savings Bank, and Fairfield County Bank.

Additional fundraising activities included our annual Holiday Letter and our Membership letter.

**Municipal, State of CT and United Ways providing funds to WeCAHR:**

City of Danbury, Brookfield, Newtown, Ridgefield, and the CT Office of Protection and Advocacy. The United Way of Western CT and the United Way of Southern Litchfield County.

**Advocacy Champion Donors for 08-09:**

Mr. James A. Allen, Mrs. Laura Bell, Mrs. Beverly Bennett-Schadler, Mr. & Mrs. James Blansfield, Mrs. Barbara Bonacci, Ms. Jean N. Bowen, Ms. Jeanne Braude-Magi, Mr. & Mrs. Dale W. Brown, Ms. Bonnie Burr, Ms. Martha Burr, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Clair, Mr. & Mrs. William Calderara, Ms. Jeannie DeFrance, Mr. and Mrs. William Deleaney, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony DiPerrio, Ms. Barbara Edmond, Ms. Carol Elder, Ms. Joyce Emmett, Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Fanning, Mr. & Mrs. Mark Ferrandino, Ms. Marilyn Glen, Dr. & Mrs. Alvin Goldman, Mr. Kevin Haney, Ms. Carolyn Heagle, Mr. & Mrs. James Heneghan, Ms. Deanne Hobson, Ms. Barbara Henry, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman, Roxbury, Mrs. Richard Jennings, Dr. Michael Johnson, PhD., Mr. Daniel Jowdy, Mr. & Mrs. Barry Kaplan, Ms. Ann Kelleher, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Kelley, Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Kerns, Mr. Stan Kosloski, Dr. Terrance Macy, Mr. Joseph Kreitz, Ms. Diane Lambertson, Mr. & Mrs. George Langer, Ms. Ellen Luongo, Mr. Paul Lux, Esq., Sen. Michael McLauhlan, Ms. Catherine Mulberry, Ms. Katherine Olson, Mr. & Mrs. Edward O'Malley, Ms. Laurie Pastor, Ms. Becky Petro, Ms. L. Irene Pierce, Ms. Carol Polverari, Dr. Linda Porto, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Raposa, Mrs. Elizabeth Redington, Mr. Stephen Reichenbach, Mr. John A. Roesch, Councilman Thomas Saadi, Mrs. Anne Marie Satkowsky, Mr. & Mrs. Gary Schenzer, Mr. David Shaw, Esq., Chad Sinanian, Mr. & Mrs. James Smeaton, Mr. Robert Sol, Ms. Jennifer Soran, Dr. & Mrs. Richard Stracks, Mrs. Lynn Taborsak, Mr. Joseph Tarshis, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Tedesco, Ms. Babette Thorson, Mr. & Mrs. George Tomka, Ms. Elvira Vitols, Mr. David Warde, Mr. Frank Weber and Mr. Robert Wolfe.

***Special Gifts to WeCAHR:*** Ability Beyond Disability, Almost Home, Arnell DaPonte & Co., Bakewell & Mulhare, BKM Floor Covering, Bob's Discount Furniture, Buck Foundation, Cartus Corp., Ceres Foundation, Comprehensive Planning Assoc., Danbury Orthopedic Assoc., Education Connection, Fairfield County Bank, First Congregational Church of Danbury, Green Chimney Children's Services, Levine Automotive Services, Mittlell Oil, Co., New Milford Septic Service, Newtown Rotary Club, Newtown Savings Bank, Norbert E. Mitchell Oil Co., Peoples Bank, Inc. R.J. Reby & Co., Rings End, Bethel Inc., Taunton Press, Savings Bank of Danbury,

St. James Church of Danbury, St. Stephens Church of Ridgefield, Taunton Press, The News Times, Union Savings Bank, Vespucci Lodge, Wadsworth Lewis Trust and Webster Bank.

***Upcoming for 2010***  
***The launch of the New Website***  
***Annual Breakfast March 25, 2010***

***WeCAHR wishes to extend a gracious thanks to all those who supported our Fund Development Activities this past year.***

### **Making an Impact- Sharing A Few of Our Many Success Stories**

One out of the many individuals we have serviced includes a young man in his early twenties who has been homeless since the age of 18. At birth he was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and has severe physical limitations. Not knowing how to handle the situation, his mother placed him in foster care. After being adopted at the age of 8, he became a victim of sexual abuse at the hands of his adoptive parents' biological son. The abuse continued until he reached adolescence and put an end to it. After undergoing therapy for depression, he was encouraged to share the history of abuse with his parents and his greatest fear was realized; he was put out of his home. Since then, this client has lived in transitional housing, on the streets and has rented rooms for a month at a time. Because of his physical limitations, the client has spent an exurbanite amount of his monthly disability income toward temporary living arrangements to avoid living in a shelter for fear of being victimized again.

Through WeCAHR's advocacy, this client has started a whole new life and to realize his goals. With WeCAHR's assistance, this client has applied to all of the programs that he is eligible for with the Housing Authority of the City of Danbury, he has acquired medical coverage, and his application to a specific residency of interest was approved. He is now a permanent Danbury resident. He is also employed and living a healthy, happy, and independent life within the Danbury Community.