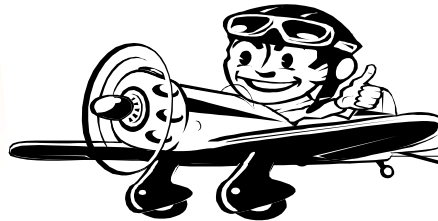


Birt Newsletter



Fall 2010

New School Year Hello, Welcome back & Goodbye

The start of the new school year has come and with it brings changes.

At the end of summer school we said goodbye to 3 teachers. First we said goodbye to Seth who was the lead teacher during the summer. For the six weeks he was here he lead and organized a curriculum around Latin America. We also said goodbye to Diane who taught English during the summer and during the previous school year. She helped out, substituted, and helped with paper-work. She will still be in the building working where she is needed including our unit. Lastly we say goodbye to Fred, our History

teacher. He has been part of our community for quite some time not only as a teacher but also as a floor staff. He brought a lot of technology to our school and taught students and staff how to use it to their advantage. He will be missed by all the Scrabble players on the unit

We welcomed back Jenn as our English teacher. She worked last year as the lead teacher and English teacher but took the summer off. This year she will not be the lead teacher, instead focusing on teaching her class.

We have a new lead teacher, Marnie, who will



School is back in session!

be our lead teacher and history teacher.

So this years teachers are as following; Jenn: English, Steph: Science, Nick: Math, and Marnie: History and Lead teacher.

Hopefully we are off to a new positive school year.

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"Making Connections" MEET and greet

On October 18th, UMASS Connections is going to be hosting a Meet and Greet Event. All parents, guardians, family members, and other significant people that residents would like to come are invited. All must be over 18 years old.

There will be a light dinner. Staff that will be attending include administration, clinicians, teachers, nurses, and floor staff. The guests will be able to talk to the staff and learn more about the unit. This is a chance for families to meet the

people that work with their children. It also gives them a chance to see what a day here is like and learn about the people residents see and work with on a daily basis.

WEEKLY GROUPS

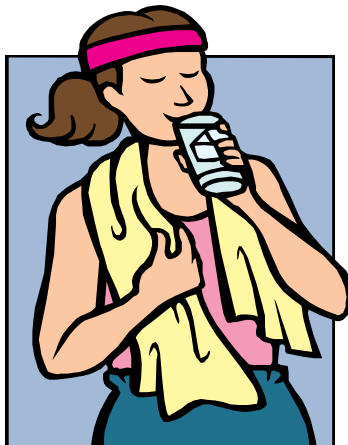
- **Monday:**
2:30 Volunteer Group
5:45 Money Management Group
- **Tuesday:**
2:40 Coping Skills Group
3:25 Social Skills Group
6:00 Gardening Group
- **Wednesday:**
2:30 Community Support Group
3:00 Bible Study
- **Thursday:**
2:00 Community Meeting
3:40 Yoga Group
- **Friday:**
1:45 Teamworks
3:25 Community Support Group

“In it to win it” Health challenge

UMASS Connections is having a Health Challenge to promote healthier eating choices and exercise. Each participant will earn stars which will be shown on the poster in the Community Room. Stars will be given for the following accomplishments; completing 30 minutes of exercise, choosing a healthier food or drink, completing 10 minutes on the bike or treadmill, and meeting with their nurse to talk about healthy food choices. Examples of choosing a healthier food or drink is having fruit or veggies over other unhealthy snacks like cookies, chips, or candy. Also you can choose water over juice and eating rec-

ommended amounts of food from all parts of the food pyramid. Each resident is partnered with their advocate to support them. Residents can also seek help from

other staff. The Challenge was originally planned to end September 15th, but has been extended to September 30th. As an incentive all participants will receive a water bottle at the end. The top



three residents with the most stars will receive prizes. First place will receive Name Brand Shoes. Second place will receive an iPod/MP3 player. Third Place will receive a CD.

Fundraiser for haiti

During Summer School the students learned about Latin America and decided to have a fundraiser to help a country in need that they had learned about. Students had a vote on which country they would like to help.

The votes were counted and it was decided that we were going to donate our money to Haiti. Haiti was recently hit with

a devastating earthquake. The earthquake hit near Port Au Prince and registered as a 7.7 on the Richter Scale. The earthquake took many lives and destroyed many cities. Unfortunately Haiti

was not prepared for a disaster as severe as the earthquake was. They were in desperate need of food, water, and

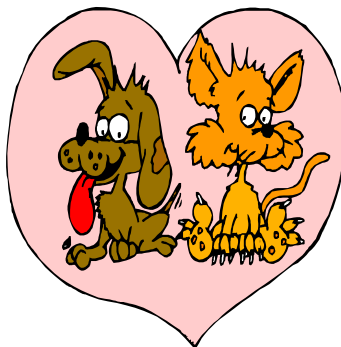
other supplies. Students made bracelets, necklaces, toe rings, tee-shirts, and baked goods. The fundraiser was held on August 10th. Students worked in shifts selling the items. The residents raised over \$300 which was much higher than their goal. The money was given to the American Red Cross to help relief efforts in Haiti.

“The residents raised over \$300 dollars which was much higher than their goal”



Baypath HUMANE SOCIETY

Every Monday residents can volunteer at Baypath Humane Society, an animal shelter. But, now more than ever they need our help. They need money donations due to the medical conditions of 3 of their dogs. All three of the dogs need surgery. One dog, Alejandro, has severe hip dysphasia and needs surgery on



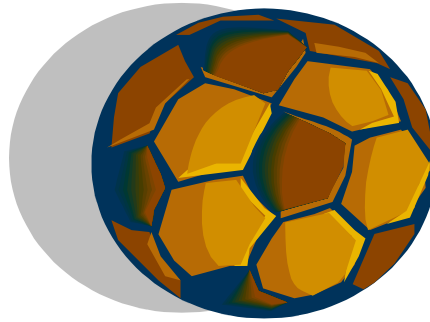
both legs. Another dog Manny, a husky/Collie mix, needs to have eye surgery. Lastly Jelly Bean's spay scar opened up and needed emergency surgery. If you would like to help and support this good cause you can visit the shelter or call the shelter at (508) 435-6938. They are also always accepting new volunteers! Get your family members to become a volunteer and do it together!

Rehabilitation fun!

At UMASS Connections, the Rehabilitation Department offers many fun activities and groups that get residents moving! Some activities are on-grounds while others are off-grounds. On-ground activities that are provided weekly include a Yoga Group and Gardening Group. Residents must sign up for yoga in advance because only three residents can go at one time to accommodate the other adolescent programs. Come try it out and increase your flexibility and learn to relax. Gardening is a summer and fall group. Tasks include watering and weeding our garden plot.

There is a variety of off-grounds activities offered. Once a week, Rehab Staff take residents to the bank. There residents will learn money management

by opening accounts, withdrawing or depositing money, and cashing checks. Every Friday there is Teamworks! Teamworks is a cross-programming sports/exercise Group where we meet kids from other units play sports, games and exercise. During the winter months we go to an



Teamworks offers an indoor soccer field

indoor soccer field and play soccer, kickball, or flag football. During the summer months we go outside and play wiffle ball, kickball, or go

Once a month Bancroft Massage School comes and residents can get a chair massage. Chair massages are great to calm anxiety and relieve muscle tension!

Rehabilitation Staff also run groups on the unit to increase daily living skills. Coping Skills Group is held on Tuesdays and helps us deal with our emotions in a positive way. Social Skills Group is also held on Tuesdays where we learn how to appropriately interact with others.

Autumn is here!

Autumn is here and the unit is looking for fun fall activities. At community meeting there were several suggestions. Some of the ideas that were talked about was apple picking and a hayride. Another was a haunted house. Some residents

want to climb Mt. Wachusett. Others wanted to do the giant cornfield maze. The unit still has zoo passes and we would have to go soon before it gets too cold.



"Autumn is here and the unit is looking for fun fall activities"



Clinical Director's Notes

The youth continue to make progress at Connections. We had three discharges during the month of August and one in September which was exciting. We also have other youth who are preparing for discharge..

YOUTH INVOLVED IN HIRING PROCESS

At Connections there is a hiring process that includes residents. The possible clinicians first are interviewed by administration and staff. If they make it through the first interview, residents are allowed to interview them for the second interview. Residents can ask any appropriate questions such as why they want the job, their previous experience, their likes and dislikes, the

style of therapy they like to use, and any other questions residents might have. This gives residents a chance to learn about the person. After residents can tell staff what they think about the person and whether they like or dislike the possible clinician. This gives residents a say in who may be their future therapist.



Rick, LICSW has been hired and will be starting Tuesday, 10/5/2010!

Shakut, RN has been hired and will be starting Monday, 10/18/2010!

FLU FACTS: From the Nursing Staff

Flu seasons are unpredictable in a number of ways. Although they happen every year, the severity and length depend on many factors. Flu activity usually peaks in January & February and may last as long as May. Last year, the H1N1 or "swine flu" virus caused the first influenza pandemic (global outbreak disease caused by a new flu virus) in more than 40 years.

It's likely that H1N1 will continue to spread in the 2010 flu season as well. So, this year's flu vaccine, which will be offered to all UMass Connections residents & employees free of charge, will include vaccine for H1N1 along with two other flu vaccine strains combined into one vaccine formulation.

Remember, be aware of Common Flu Symptoms:

- Fever (above 100.6)
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Body Aches
- Diarrhea & Vomiting (more common in children)

Having symptoms does not always mean you have the flu. Many illnesses are similar, like the common cold.



How can you protect yourself?

- Get yourself vaccinated!
- Stay away from sick people
- Washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs
- If you have the flu, stay home from work or school to avoid spreading influenza to others!

Source: www.CDC.gov



POETRY CORNER: DIAMANTES!



NIGHT,
DARK, BLACK
SLEEPING, HUNTING, DREAMING
STARS, MOON, SUN, LIGHT
PLAYING, KITING, TANNING
BRIGHT, SUNNY
DAY
BY: DAVONGIE

PAIN
SCARS, EMPTINESS
CRYING, HURTING, HATING
BURDEN, SORROW, FRIENDS, JOY
SMILING, LAUGHING, LOVING
SMILE, LAUGHTER
HAPPINESS
BY: ERIKA

CAT
PURRING, MEOWING, EATING
YARN, TUNA, BALL, OUTSIDE
BARKING, RUNNING, PLAYING
HAIRY, PLAYFUL
DOG
BY: ERIN