**Where Reality is Respect,
Appreciation, and Fulfillment**

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR ANNUAL FALL BENEFIT OF OCTOBER 2, 2016

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

In preparation for my speech today, I was going through the various forms of information that receive, both as President, and as the parent and guardian of an attendee of RRAF. It struck me that there is little information that is given to me as President, that is not also given to you as parents and guardians. And, for the families and friends attending today, look at what is at every place - the latest issue of the RRAF newsletter.

We are given information about the day-to-day operations of RRAF. This can be in the form of this newsletter, quarterly reports, and quite frequently updates whenever things change or information must be passed on to us.

We are given information about the formal regulations and how it impacts us as an agency - and as individuals. This includes service coordination agencies, the Illinois Department of Human Services, and federal mandates and regulations. Also, through Marilyn's travels as a CARF surveyor, we are given information about agencies from other states and how their methods of operations might or might not have an impact on RRAF.

We are also given information about fundraising, including the donations from gracious organizations as the Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, the jewelry sales, and the Fall Benefit.

I want you to understand, that while my son, Dennis, attended other programs - very little information from these organizations was given to me. While we did receive information that would immediately or directly impact Dennis or us as a family we were not given information that was so in-depth and complete about the agency.

So, I was flabbergasted when just after Dennis started at RRAF, we routinely received information telling David and I just about everything going on at RRAF. There is just one person that we must give our gratitude for this, and that is, of course, Marilyn Flanagan.

Marilyn's openness, insight, and knowledge are so greatly appreciated. She is honest with us as to the good and positive events that impact RRAF, along with helping us to understand and accept the potentially bad. She helps us understand pending changes the must happen - whether we like it or not.

Thank you, Sally Mullan

FROM THE BOARD:

IN HONOR OF LONGTIME DEDICATION AND SERVICE

October 2, 2016

A Lapertosa Award is being presented today to a man who has been a vital component in the growth and continued success of RRAF.

Tom Flanagan has been an officer and part of the Board of Directors for more than twenty years. His steady, calm demeanor, and talent for a humorous aside at just the appropriate moment, has made him a much appreciated compatriot.

Tom is a man of service. As a young man he was a reserve officer in the United States Navy. He is also a lawyer. He also has a varied background in business, having been legal counsel for a food distribution company, the CNW railroad, and for an organization advising charitable non-profit entities.

We are so lucky at RRAF that Tom Flanagan volunteered to bring that wide ranging experience to the Board of RRAF. Now, I would guess that his marriage to Marilyn Flanagan had a bit to do with all of this. But, as my old granddad often said, "you don't look a gift horse in the mouth".

In recognition of the countless hours you have spent working on behalf of our children who love this program, we recognize you, and thank you, by presenting you with this Lapertosa Award.

By Roger Davis

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board of Directors has changed. We said good-bye to Tom Flanagan, who has helped guide us through the years. Your counsel and legal knowledge has served RRAF well. The entire RRAF community is indebted to you for all you've done.

As I came to the board, and then became President, you gave me well-guided support made sure that I understood "what was what" in the complex world of regulations in which RRAF exists. I was relieved to know, thank goodness, that while you stepped down from the board, you are still our legal counsel.

We have now welcomed to the Board, Jessica Vandermeir. Jessica brings a fresh perspective. And we will all learn from her, as she has a young son with learning disabilities.

By Sally Mullan

THE MOVE TO "OUTCOMES"

The service planning process for the state will be transitioning into a method of Performance Measures and Desired Outcomes for those we serve. The intention is to have all team members focused on the long-term desires of those we serve. The state has defined its priorities in this process to be:

- That individuals served will be healthy and safe,
- That individuals served will have real relationships with family and friends,
- That individuals who want to work will have paying jobs,
- That individuals will make decisions about their lives, and
- That individuals will have opportunities to contribute to their communities.

Individuals and families will be asked to define these more clearly and broadly in each service planning team meeting process going forward into 2017 and beyond.

Advocacy at Work

By: Hannah Thompson, as presented during our
Annual Fall Benefit, October 2, 2016

It’s such an honor to be here. Being asked back to speak is humbling and unbelievable! Marilyn and Tom, I feel like our meeting was a divine intervention. God really wanted me to see the blessings of RRAF, and I hope God can use me this afternoon for His glory.

So, last time I was here, I didn’t have a job. I was on the Federal Communication Commission’s Disability Advisory Committee and I am proud to say that’s still true. I am actually applying for a second term and I hope to God that I get a second chance to serve people with disabilities on such a great platform. I’ve received so much from other people who fought for the rights of people with disabilities that I feel called to serve and give back.

The additional service I now do is on behalf of the Dystonia Medical Research Foundation. My official title is the Advocacy Intern. What does that mean? One of my duties is to write letters to the members of the Foundation to ask them to go to their congressional representatives and tell their story. As we all know, it is a tumultuous political season. In fact, I might be Skyping in next year because I will move to Canada if a certain candidate wins, but hopefully, we will elect our first female president and I won’t have to move to Canada. But seriously, there is power in going to congressional representatives and telling them how funding impacts the lives of millions. I myself have Cerebral Palsy, which affects my ability to walk and talk. I also have Dystonia. Dystonia is the term used to describe uncontrollable and sometimes painful muscle spasms caused by incorrect signals from the brain. For me, it simply means I cannot stop moving. You can probably understand why I would want a cure. Although the pay for my internship is minimal, I have a job after a year of searching. I’ve been the Advocacy Intern for three months now and it’s going great. Along with urging people to go to their local representatives, I do a lot of research noone else has the time to do. I’m really happy and I wholeheartedly believe that I am positioning myself to be successful in my career as an advocate for people with disabilities. I hope one day to have the respect in this career that Marilyn has and so richly deserves.

Now that you are caught up on my life, let’s discuss what really matters, which is RRAF. This organization is a cornerstone of so many people’s lives. I know for many of you sitting here it is a life saver. RRAF may help you with its Home Based Support, which is a program tailored to help adults with developmental disabilities live in their natural family home. Or, you may benefit from the Developmental Training program, in which individuals learn life skills at the RRAF facility.

This life-changing organization is not easy to fund. Think about what your own office needs. Offices need a lot of supplies, but add on two crucial services for individuals with disabilities, and then think about the people needed to provide those services. The people who work at this facility must be angels. And the funding it takes to keep this critical service organization staffed and running needs to keep coming in, day after day, week after week, month after month. If this organization were to stop, these individuals who RRAF serves—where would they go? I don’t know. I don’t want to imagine what would become of them. This program gives those with intellectual disabilities a purpose. For a whole year after graduating from college, I woke up without feeling a sense of purpose. It is the worst feeling in the world. I don’t want the individuals RRAF serves ever to feel the way I felt. Needless to say, funding RRAF is critical!

Marilyn and Tom, thank you for fighting the good fight and taking action to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Your work changes lives, and like I said, I hope after a few decades of service I will have the admiration that you have earned. It has been an honor to speak this afternoon. God bless and have a great time!

THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO DONATED RAFFLE PRIZES TO OUR ANNUAL FALL BENEFIT CELEBRATION

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Angelo's Ristorante, Elmhurst
Anyway's, Oakbrook Terrace
Barone's of Glen Ellyn
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Gail Williams
Wishbone, Chicago (West Loop)
Zanie's Comedy Nite Club, Chicago
Zio Tony's, Addison
-and-
Families and Friends of RRAF

CHANGES ON THE HORIZON !!

Illinois is working its way through the long list of requirements needed to renew its contract with the federal government for Medicaid waiver services for folks with developmental disabilities (now known as intellectual disabilities). Some of the changes that we are expecting - or know of - at this time include:

- Home Based Support (HBS) Service Facilitation services will no longer be a mandated service after July 1, 2017.
- Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agencies must begin completing service plans for all Waiver participants by July 1, 2017.
- Individuals and guardians can now select an Independent Service Coordination agency for their Individualized Service and Support Advocacy (ISSA) services.
- It is the hope that at least two Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agencies per geographic area will be available so that individuals may have a choice of vendor.

To keep yourself up-to-date on future changes (or revisions to the changes noted above) keep this web link handy: http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=87196. It links to the state's DDD Scoop page - the every other week on-line newsletter from the director of the DD (Developmental Disabilities) department, Greg Fenton.

UNRESTRICTED CONTRIBUTIONS: July through September, 2016

IN MEMORY

Genie Baker
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Where Reality is Respect, Appreciation, and Fulfillment

Newsletter, October 2016

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