

What's Inside!

Summer Work Skills	1
Family Committee	2
Keeping Your Computer Safe	2

Summer Work Skills

This summer The Aspire Center for Learning (CFL) offered its extended school year program "Summer Work Skills." This year the program included 22 students, between the ages of 15 and 21, from across the WNY region. The goal of the Summer Work Skills program is to help prepare students for life after school. Throughout the six weeks, students had the opportunity to maintain academic skills in addition to building work skills at a job site.



Each morning of the program is dedicated to working on academic and career skills. Students then intern for approximately two hours at one of seven job locations. At the work sites, the Special Education teachers and Direct Support Professionals provide job training and coaching. The afternoon is spent focusing on IEP objectives, jobs around the school, life skills, social skills, and career exploration.

This summer's job sites included: Chili's Restaurant, Anderson's (Union Road and Main Street locations), Gold's Gym, the Millennium Hotel, the Aspire day care, and Tops Market. While at work students gained experience with following multi-step directions, hand/eye coordination, fine and gross motor skills, using cleaning supplies, sorting, counting, supervising children, communicating with peers and supervisors, and job etiquette.

Here are just a few of this year's success stories:

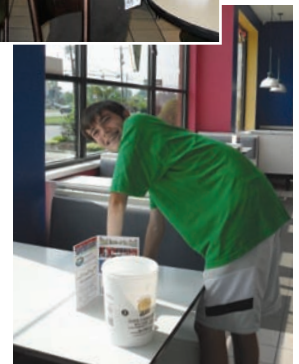
Jonathan Roesser, a new member to Summer Work Skills, brought hard work and enthusiasm to both the classroom and his work site at Chili's Restaurant. Jonathan carried a positive attitude with all that he did, which proved influential to those around him.

As a returning student, Ryan Proctor has shown tremendous growth at the workplace over the past few summers. Ryan has demonstrated both focus and independence at this year's job placement at Anderson's.



Sabrina Schuster has been in the program for the past few summers. Through her hard work and initiative, Sabrina has showed us that she is a true team player who takes pride in her work.

During the last week of the program, students planned and prepared for a family luncheon and awards ceremony to celebrate their accomplishments. Students gave speeches about their experiences to friends and families, while the teachers and staff gave an award to each student acknowledging his/her growth and achievements.



For more information, contact Sarah Maciejewski, Education Supervisor at 716-505-5700 ext. 53044 or smaciejewski@aspirewny.org. ●

Top: Sabrina Schuster
Bottom: Ryan Proctor

Aspire of Western New York

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Aspire's Mission:

Aspire's mission is to help children and adults with developmental disabilities, cerebral palsy, and conditions with similar personal and family effects live their lives to the fullest in keeping with their informed choices.

Aspire
of WNY

Turning Disabilities
Into Capabilities

Family Committee Serves as “Family Voice” In Light of State Economic Crisis

The Developmental Disabilities Alliance of WNY (DDAWNY) formed a Family Committee as “an urgent wake up call for families of individuals with developmental disabilities” over a year ago. The Family Committee has been meeting ever since. Momentum for the development of this “family voice” has been driven, in part, by New York State’s fiscal crisis. Prior to this current situation, the state agency that is charged with oversight, the Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), had, along with not for profit agencies, helped to grow and develop a system that was community-based and generally responsive to the diverse needs and desires of those with developmental disabilities and their families. These needs include homes in the community, work force readiness, in-home habilitation, respite, residential habilitation, and Medicaid Service Coordination, among others. The objectives of the OPWDD include helping individuals enjoy a richer quality of life, be safe, live as independently as possible and be productive citizens.



Max Donatelli

Unfortunately, when the fiscal crisis hit, funding shortages have had a profound effect on the development of new housing opportunities and have forced substantial cut backs on services. The predicament will likely worsen unless action by families can help reverse the downward spiral.

The DDAWNY Family Committee was formed to help organize a thoughtful and effective response to this current reality. The committee includes parents, siblings, grandparents, concerned friends, agency advocates, and self-advocates. The Family Committee exists to gather critical information, inform, and provide strong advocacy based on facts.

According to Max Donatelli, Chair of the Family Committee, our goals are to:

- ✎ Inform family members about the rights, protections, services and living opportunities available to their loved one with developmental disabilities
- ✎ Help family members become effective advocates
- ✎ Develop a strong WNY voice for families

- ✎ Help the public gain awareness of the value that our loved ones contribute to the community

The Family Committee meets on the third Tuesday of every month at Aspire of WNY, 7 Community Drive, Cheektowaga from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. For more information and/or to join now, please send your name and contact information to maxjoy@roadrunner.com or call 646-3187. ●

Keeping Your Computer Safe

Threats such as viruses, spyware, worms and Trojans seem to be attacking our computers more and more these days. All you need is a live connection to the Internet through cable, DSL or FIOS and you open your computer up to the threat of infection.

Spyware is the most likely – and potentially most harmful – threat. Some types of spyware collect the characters you type in order to access financial and other sensitive information on your computer.

Keeping a good anti-virus/anti-spyware program installed and up to date on your home computer is essential. It is not advisable, however, to have two different anti-virus programs installed on the same computer. The programs tend to fight with each other and slow the computer down. More is not better in terms of virus protection!

Once you have found a good anti-virus/anti-spyware protection program, you need to keep your subscription up to date. New viruses and forms of spyware are being created everyday and the only way to stay protected is to keep your protection program updated. Another good rule to follow: always install the latest Microsoft updates. Many of these updates are meant to fix security issues in your computer’s operating system and will help keep your computer running smoothly.

For more information about anti-virus/anti-spyware programs, contact Technology Today at 836-7232 (Buffalo) or 743-8372 (Tonawanda). ●



Calling All Comments, Suggestions & Ideas!

If you have any comments, suggestions or a subject you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter, please contact Paula Kerber at 716.836.7235 or email paula.kerber@aspirewny.org.



Go Green

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