



# The Bridge

Connecting individuals with disabilities and their families with resources, support and information



## Special Announcement



Paul J. Shew, who has been Executive Director of The Advocacy Center for thirteen years, will retire.

Shew announced that he will step down on July 5, 2013. The Board of Directors has appointed Allyn Stelljes, Director of Program Development, to serve as Interim Executive Director.

Shew has worked at The Advocacy Center since 1984, first as an Advocate, then serving as Director of Advocacy Services for six years before being appointed Executive Director in early 2000. Since that time, the center has grown from 17 to 49 employees to increase the impact of its mission both in western New York and across the state.

## What's Inside...

**Summer Workshops at The Advocacy Center** Page 3

**Newbie Notes** Page 6

## UPFRONT & PERSONAL:

### Interview with Paul Shew, Executive Director of The Advocacy Center

#### What was the first job or experience that led you to your current position?

My job interview to become an advocate here set the stage it seems even though I did not know it at the time. The interviewer asked me: "What would you do if you won a million dollars in the lottery?" I quickly replied: "I would start up my own advocacy organization." That was how strongly I felt about advocacy work and if it meant starting my own business to do it, I would. That interview led to 14 years of direct advocacy work here and after a few years in a mid-level management position, I seized the opportunity to be the Executive Director when the job came open in 2000.

#### What are the various "hats" you wear as Executive Director of The Advocacy Center?

When I won the "lottery" I'm not sure I realized how many hats there would be, and yet that is what keeps the job interesting, too. Planner, leader, coach, problem-solver, fundraiser, support to the Board of Directors, advocate and connector for the organization with various community stakeholders, and whatever else needs to be done when there is no one else to do it. While not in the job description, being tall and handy means maintenance work occasionally; actually, it's not a bad way to get a mental break.

#### Tell us your favorite part of this job.

Without question; those times when I am able to provide coaching and support to a member of our team so that they can be successful.

*continued on page 4*

# Celebration of Champions

An Evening of Art and Music to Benefit The Advocacy Center

See Page 3 for Details

**October 5, 2013 7:00pm -11:00pm**  
**The Center at High Falls,**  
**60 Brown's Race, Rochester, NY 14614**

# The Advocacy Center Upcoming Events & Workshops

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR ALL WORKSHOPS

## Parents & Family Members

Learn skills for the Special Education Process. Advocate for your own child and other families, too!

## Lay Advocacy ~

**A five session series in Allegany County**

**July 13 – August 17, 2013,  
9:45am – 2:45 pm**

Jones Memorial Hospital  
Walchli Education Room, 191  
North Main Street,  
Wellsville, NY 14895

Sponsored by The Advocacy Center,  
the Parent Network of WNY,  
and Allegany Arc

The Advocacy Center announces a free, five session training for parents of children with disabilities. Priority will be given to parents whose children have developmental disabilities. If there are openings available we will open it up to parents whose children have other disabilities.

**Dates of classes: 7/13/13,  
7/27/13, 8/3/13, 8/10/13, 8/17/13**

Participants are selected through an application process. For more information or to request an application, call Linda Chadderdon at 585- 546-1700 X225 or 800-650-4967 ext. 225 or email [chadderdon@advocacycenter.com](mailto:chadderdon@advocacycenter.com)

## We are currently seeking nominations for the 2013

# Community Awards

*Do you know someone who stands out in service and commitment to people with disabilities? Or maybe a self-advocate whose work and life direction you admire? The Advocacy Center now accepts nominations for Community Awards year-round. Award winners are honored at our annual fundraising event. Don't miss the opportunity to honor a special parent, teacher, community member, or self-advocate!*

The Advocacy Center Community Awards honor individuals and organizations who are creating positive change in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Community Award recipients embody The Advocacy Center's vision, creating a world that works for everyone.

## Award Descriptions

**Community Impact Award:** An individual or organization who creates inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities

**Education Award:** A devoted individual in the field of education whose extraordinary efforts empower students with disabilities to succeed

**Founders Award:** A parent or family member of an individual with a disability who exemplifies our founders' commitment through their efforts to improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities

**Self Advocacy Award:** An individual with a disability who leads the direction of his or her daily life through advocacy, personal choice, and responsibility

**Youth Award:** An individual, age 21 or younger, whose efforts make a positive difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities

**For a nomination form, please visit our website:**

**<http://www.advocacycenter.com/community-awards> or contact  
Rick Wright: [wright@advocacycenter.com](mailto:wright@advocacycenter.com) or (585) 546-1700.**

**Deadline for nominations is August 16, 2013.**



Sponsored by  
The Advocacy Center

## Pathways to Graduation - A Webinar

**September 17, 2013 • 12:00pm- 1:30 pm**

**Webinar - an online event - connect via your computer**

Learn what "pathways to graduation" are available for students with disabilities in New York State. What does each diploma, credential, and certificate offer for a student's future? What is the difference between a local diploma, a Regents diploma, a Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential, and a Regents Certificate of Work Readiness? This workshop will help you and your student make informed decisions regarding school, placement, and services. For further information, please contact Pam Merkle, (585)546-1700 ext 237 or [merkle@advocacycenter.com](mailto:merkle@advocacycenter.com)

## FREE ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS

*For parents, care givers, school nurses and others working with children with disabilities*

**Sponsored by**

**Wayne County Public Health**  
Wayne County Public Health, 1519  
Nye Road, Lyons, NY 14489

### Supporting Children with Behavioral Disorders

**September 18, 2013**  
**10:00am – 12:00 pm**

Functional behavioral assessments and positive behavioral supports, rather than punishment, are essential to the success of students with behavioral disabilities. This presentation will also include a discussion of executive dysfunction, social skills deficits, and sensory integration deficits, which are common to many disabilities. Participants will receive suggestions for positive behavioral strategies to use with students who exhibit challenging behaviors.

### Communication: Effective Strategies

**September 26, 2013**  
**10am – noon**

Communication is key to effective partnerships. Participants in this workshop will identify barriers to good communication through hands on exercises. They will learn techniques to remove the barriers which will, in turn, lead to the development of effective teams.

**Pre-registration is required.**  
**To register, call Wayne County Public Health at (315) 946-5749 or 1-800-724-1170.**

A \$10 gas card will be given to Wayne County residents who attend. Light refreshments will be provided.

# *Save the Date* *Celebration of* **Champions**

**An Evening of Art and Music to Benefit The Advocacy Center**

**October 5, 2013 7:00pm - 11:00pm**

**The Center at High Falls**

**60 Brown's Race, Rochester, NY 14614**

### **Fun with a Purpose**

The Advocacy Center's annual fundraising event has a new look and theme this year: **Celebration of Champions** will shine the spotlight on community award winners.

Guests will be inspired by our award winners and treated to an evening of music, celebrity guests, and views of the gorgeous High Falls district. What a great opportunity to celebrate and to mingle – all in support of the work The Advocacy Center does with and for people who have disabilities and their families.

#### **Highlights include:**

- Presentation of our annual **Community Awards** (See page two for details)
- Emcee **Jennifer Johnson** of 13WHAM-TV
- Special guest **Coach Jim Johnson**
- Music courtesy of the **Mambo Kings**
- Silent auction
- Wine pull



### **Sponsorship Opportunities**

Are you and your company willing to sponsor the **Celebration of Champions**? Sponsors of this event can connect with hundreds of guests influential in Rochester's disability, philanthropy, and business circles. See "**Sponsor Levels & Benefits**" on our event webpage for more information about ways we recognize and support our sponsors as they support our event.

### **Purchasing Tickets**

Tickets will go on sale in August on our website.  
**<http://www.advocacycenter.com/2013-celebration-of-champions>**  
**If you have questions, please contact Seneca Brashear at 585-546-1700 ext 265 or [brashear@advocacycenter.com](mailto:brashear@advocacycenter.com).**

**We look forward to another great event and to celebrating with you!**



# Is there an Advocate in the House? Advocacy is...



Hearing “no” again and again, and still pursuing a goal for my child.  
*Maria Schaertel, Editor of The Bridge*



Advocacy is being PROACTIVE, not reactive!  
*Linda Chadderdon, Parent Coordinator/Special Ed Advocate*



Advocacy: Effectively, efficiently and respectfully delivering ones expectations to others in order to promote positive change.  
*Jean Tydings, Advocate & Parent Coordinator*



Advocacy is a state of mind where there are no constant solutions but always possibilities!  
*Kathy Kerr, Advocate*



Advocacy is listening to your gut message of what is right for your child.  
*Colleen Brown, Advocate and Presenter*



Demonstrating in a collaborative manner that the person in need HAS a problem, not IS the problem.  
*Kathy Giordano, Advocate Education Specialist, Tourette Syndrome Association*



Advocacy is assertively pursuing your wants and needs.  
*Rick Wright, Accounting Clerk*



Advocacy is having the skills, knowledge, tools, and confidence to create positive change.  
*Jackie Yingling, NYS Partners in Policymaking Training Coordinator*



Advocacy: Supporting self and others through informed choices with the use of information/data, proactive strategies, understanding of process and collaboration to get a meaningful outcome.  
*Julie Buick, Advocate and Trainer*



Advocacy is the courage to stand up for what you believe in.  
*Pam Merkle, Coordinator of Information Technology*



Advocacy is speaking out, and finding alternative ways to come to an understanding.  
*Maritza Cubi, Bilingual Parent Education Specialist*

## UPFRONT & PERSONAL: Interview with Paul Shew *continued from page 1*

### What is one of the most memorable experiences you have had here?

I am going to cheat and say: every experience as an advocate! There is nothing like the honor of having a person share with me their often intimate fears and dreams, whether big or small, simple or complex, common or uncommon, and then to be able to provide as much understanding and support as I could through part of their journey.

I can say that one visual image will always be with me. It is the image of a late middle-aged mother struggling to hold her 18 year old daughter as she lay across her lap in their home. Her daughter was considered to have profound, multiple disabilities and unable to speak words. Some saw this as a reason to limit her services. Not that many years ago, she would have been institutionalized and forgotten. And yet when her pet dog “kissed” her on the face that day, she responded with obvious joy, through her vocalizations and facial expression. Her mother would do anything to make sure her daughter had the best quality of life possible, in spite of those who did not see the value. That pure humanness and value that I saw that day is present in all of us I believe, even when it is difficult to see. And it is even there regardless of obvious outward appearances, behavior or abilities. It is because of that truth for me, that I believe

everyone deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. That memory will help ensure I never sway from that belief. It is why I believe in our organization’s vision of creating a world that works for everyone.

### M: What will you do in your retirement?

My wife Paula and I will do lots of traveling in and out of the country. Panama is the first stop. Photography, hiking, biking and staying physically healthy are priorities. After a break, I can imagine any number of activities related to direct services to children, people with disabilities, the elderly, and public policy work.

### M: Would you like to share any other thoughts about your time at The Advocacy Center?

Another truth that I have discovered is that The Advocacy Center is made up of the thousands of people we have served, the hundreds of volunteers, exceptionally passionate, skilled and dedicated staff, supporters from the government and private sector, compassionate community members, and individual supporters who help us realize our mission. And it takes everyone to help create a world that works for everyone.

## Newbie Notes By Maria Schaertel



*For those who are new to parenting a child with a disability*

My husband, Dave, has been converting our old videos into DVDs. So for the last few weeks, I have been catching glimpses of all the seasons of our lives with children, stepping in and out of our family's past.

One event that caught my attention was Nick's baptism day. There was Nick at two months old: bright and expressive eyes, soft baby skin, tilting his head toward family voices, lots of brown hair flowing around, kicking away from the silky outfit my sister dressed him in. He was beautiful! Well, that's the way I perceive baby Nicholas today.

But I didn't perceive Nick as he was that day. I was looking through a filter of fear, which distorted everything. The diagnosis of Down syndrome changed my perception. Sure, I saw a baby boy, but I was so focused on finding differences in his appearance and behavior, that I couldn't see what was right in front of me and so apparent to me today: a beautiful, amazing, baby boy.

Luckily, I had family members and friends whose perception was not distorted back then, who reminded me on a daily basis, that this baby was Nicholas first, a member of our family first, a person first. They did not deny his disability; they just shifted it to the background because they were so busy enjoying him and getting to know him. Well, within a few months, Nick won me over and taught me to respect his personality and to give him a chance to show me who he was, rather than project my fears onto him. Thanks, Nick.

Whenever I slip back into doubt and fear, Nick himself, or a family member, friend, or co-worker, or fellow parent, will remind me to broaden my perspective.

How do you see your child? Do you recognize your own attitude and perceptions toward him or her? If you need some help seeing positive traits and possibilities, you might call on a friend or family member to help "try on some new glasses" until your vision is adjusted.

## From the Editor



Change. A whole lot of change going on this year for me. My children are officially adults now. Through the years, we have seen a whole lot of crying and whining; falling down, getting back up; learning hard life lessons about commitment and sacrifice; the consequences of making good and bad choices; the importance of developing skills and confidence; learning to make friends, learning to let go....

....And the kids have experienced their own growing pains too.

\*\*\*\*\*

A big change for Paul Shew, our director, here at The Advocacy Center. Paul announced his retirement, effective July 5, 2013. Paul has been at the helm for 13 years. Something I have always appreciated about Paul is his communication style, which is low key and quiet. Whether we are celebrating accomplishments or dealing with challenging circumstances, Paul keeps an even keel, presenting information in a thoughtful, detailed, and positive manner.

Thank you, and good luck Paul. Enjoy your retirement!

\*\*\*\*\*

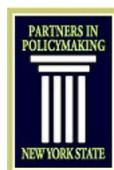
Enjoy the summer months. I hope you can take a break from the hard work of advocating and just enjoy your families this summer!

Contact me at [schaertel@advocacycenter.com](mailto:schaertel@advocacycenter.com) or (585) 546-1700, ext. 271.

*Maria Schaertel*

## Partners In Policymaking News

Members of the NYS Partners in Policymaking® 2013 class attended an in-person session in Albany on June 7 & 8. This session was based on Creating Vision and Building Community, with presenters Ann Kurz, Kathy McCarthy-Proulx, and Al Condeluci. The session is one of 8 modules presented over an 8 month period. Most sessions take place in an interactive on-line format, concluding with wrap-up webinars each month. Class members will also meet in person in regional settings in the Fall of 2013 for culminating activities including delivering testimony and graduation. The goal of the leadership training program is to provide individuals and families with the tools to partner with legislators and policymakers to create systems change. For more information about NYS Partners in Policymaking®, go to [www.nyspip.org](http://www.nyspip.org)





**THE  
ADVOCACY CENTER**  
Putting People First

THE BRIDGE  
The Advocacy Center  
590 South Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620

Non-Profit  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
Rochester, NY  
Permit No. 139

## Business Owners, We Need Your Support!!

**Interested in Underwriting The Bridge?**



We reach over 5,000 subscribers per quarter. Contact Maria Schaertel, Editor, [Schaertel@advocacycenter.com](mailto:Schaertel@advocacycenter.com) or (585) 546-1700, ext. 271.

Be a part of The Advocacy Center's efforts to educate and inform our community about disabilities!

This newsletter is published by The Advocacy Center  
590 South Avenue Rochester, NY 14620  
(585) 546-1700 1-800-650-4967  
[www.advocacycenter.com](http://www.advocacycenter.com)

Funding is partially provided by a Family Support Services Grant by the OPWDD (Office for People With Developmental Disabilities) and by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Publication within this journal of articles and information should not be considered an endorsement by The Advocacy Center and/or the funders.

EDITOR: Maria Schaertel  
EXEC. DIRECTOR: Paul Shew  
DESIGN & PRINT: Sarah Stein

This issue underwritten by



**James C. Traylor, ChFC, ChSNC**  
Special Care Planner, Financial Services Professional  
[http://financialarchitectsupstate.com/james\\_traylor](http://financialarchitectsupstate.com/james_traylor)



**the Marketplace**

To place an ad in *The Bridge*, please contact Maria Schaertel at (585) 546-1700, ext. 271 or [schaertel@advocacycenter.com](mailto:schaertel@advocacycenter.com).