

# ADVOCACY IN ACTION NEWS

Volume I, Issue IV

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## ARE YOU READY?

We all have a role in being safe and helping others stay safe. To help self advocates better understand what they can do to prepare for an emergency we asked the Red Cross to offer some emergency preparedness tips for People First at our November meeting. Every one received a backpack bag with some initial supplies to start their own "stay safe bag".

Emergency preparedness is one of those things that we **should do** but most of us have not. Many families have not yet taken the steps needed to prepare for emergencies including getting an emergency supply kit, making a family emergency plan and learning more about different emergencies and their appropriate responses. When special considerations come into play, it is doubly important to have a plan in place. As families, individuals with disabilities and those that advocate on their behalf, the New Year brings an opportunity to **do something**.



### WHAT STEPS DO WE NEED TO TAKE?

#### Get a kit of emergency supplies

Get ready now. Have water and non perishable food for at least three days  
Keep at least a week supply of extra medications and keep some cash readily at hand.  
Pet food and extra water and supplies for your pet or service animal

#### Make a written plan

Have a family communication plan, create a plan to get to someplace safe and  
Know the plans in place at your work, school and your local neighborhood

#### Be informed about what might happen

Learn information sources locally and nationally like [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) and 1-800-BE-READY (1.800.237.3239)

#### Get involved in preparing your community

Contact CMR education and training coordinator Shane Scott at 216.622.0755 to speak with your local community or group to ensure that they are prepared for you.

This Holiday Season give yourself the gift of peace of mind and 'get ready'. CMR gives workshops on many subjects (including Emergency Preparedness) and partners with other organizations to ensure the information needed gets to those who need it most.



1331 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
Phone: 216-622-0755  
Fax: 216-622-0752

Email: [cmr-clev@cmr-cleveland.org](mailto:cmr-clev@cmr-cleveland.org)  
Website: [cmr-cleveland.org](http://cmr-cleveland.org)

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# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:



## Dear Friends

What an amazing year. We are grateful for many things this year, most especially the people that have had a positive impact on the lives of those we serve. We started this year in the usual way, doing what we always do helping individuals and families access the supports and services they need and are entitled to.

We continue to assist parents of school age children addressing educational, medical and behavioral concerns. We also continue to encourage and promote adults to work, live and be part of their community. The individual problem solving has always allowed us to keep our hands on the pulse of what is happening in people's lives. When we can see and know we have made someone's life a little easier because we were there for him or her, this brings us joy and makes our advocacy effective.

We piloted our Partners in Policymaking program and had a prestigious group of speakers and participants that have already begun to make a significant impact in public policy. They have joined state and local advisory boards, succeeded in securing budget appropriations to ensure building accessibility, held educational workshops for parents and educators and been asked to advise the Social Security Administration on how to improve the work incentives program. Not bad for their first six months!

Our annual Baker walk and expo was on one of the most beautiful warm sunny weather days we have had in a long time and enjoyed by everyone that came out that day. The Making Choices Opening Doors sessions really made things easier for a few dozen families with the most difficult decision they will ever make, where my loved one will live after I am gone.

The wonderful things that we accomplished in our first half of the year were just the beginning of what made this an especially amazing year. We did something new. We held our inaugural Legacy Luncheon establishing the Ben M. Bonanno Excellence in Advocacy award. This year's award was presented posthumously to Ed and Fannie Baker for their work in the grassroots movement of parents that started CMR, New Avenues to Independence and other programs and services now enjoyed by thousands in Greater Cleveland and Israel. An anonymous donor created the Ben M. Bonanno Camp Scholarship fund that will benefit children and families for years to come to attend summer camp programs. Over fifty youngsters were awarded scholarships this year.

Special thanks to all the volunteers and donors who supported our third annual Casino Night. This event helped generate additional revenue so that we can continue our advocacy work.

December is the height of our annual appeal campaign. This is a time when you can make a difference. Your donation will ensure that we can continue our advocacy on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens. Our Board, volunteers and staff are passionate people that believe in the value of the lives of people with disabilities and it shows. Thank you for allowing us to offer advice and advocacy for your loved one and thank you for giving your time, talent and resources to people that are dedicated to making a difference.

*Cindy Norwood*  
*Executive Director*

## TOOLS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

The Center for Mental Retardation is a member of the Tools for Today and Tomorrow Steering Committee, a partnership of Greater Cleveland organizations that was formed to address strategies for connecting families who have children with special needs to resources and support. Due to the success of two previously held conferences (in 2004 and 2005) the program has been expanded and will include

- 1) quarterly educational workshops for families in 2007
- 2) development of a community calendar showing the many educational opportunities in Cuyahoga County that various organizations offer to families
- 3) continuation of the Tools for Today and Tomorrow conference, which will be held every other year, with the next one occurring in 2008.

Contact Linda Kresnye, Program Manager at 216-229-5757, Ext. 126 or [lkresnye@rmhcleveland.org](mailto:lkresnye@rmhcleveland.org) if you would like to be placed on the Tools mailing list for future updates.

## 9TH ANNUAL RECREATION FAIR

Visit and talk to representatives from camps and organizations, browse information tables, and watch demonstrations. Pick up your free copy of the "2007 Summer Recreation Directory" booklet Applications for the Ben M. Bonanno Camp scholarships will be available at the Fair

Saturday February 24, 2007  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
St. Michael's Woodside Party Center  
5025 East Mill Rd  
Broadview Heights, OH 44147  
Cost: Free / Registration required  
Refreshments provided

# CMR THANKS ITS GENEROUS DONORS

*The Center for Mental Retardation wishes to express its gratitude to the following supporters for their generous donations from July through November, 2006. If your name is incorrect or inadvertently omitted, please contact us so our records can be corrected.*

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## LEGACY LUNCHEON HIGHLIGHTS

*Photos by George Shuba*



*Guests attending the Legacy Luncheon; Judge Dick Ambrose, County Commissioner Jimmy Dimora and Bishop Roger Gries*



*Mike Grady presents to Ben Bonanno the Excellence in Advocacy Award*



*Karen Baker receives award from Dick Russ*



*Legacy Luncheon Sponsor attendees Brian Cappelli, Mark Hicks, Dan Waldeck, Dave Lockman, Patrick Saccogna, Paul Thoma*

# CENTER FOR MENTAL RETARDATION

1331 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44115  
Phone: 216-622-0755  
Fax: 216-622-0752  
Email: [cmr-clev@cmr-cleveland.org](mailto:cmr-clev@cmr-cleveland.org)  
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## DISABILITY SUMMIT 2007

Meaningful information will be presented to support transitioning students from one service system to the next through social changes and community engagement. This Disability Summit is being offered in collaboration with CSESC, East Shore SERRC, and the Ohio Developmental Disability Council.

### Friday, March 30, 2007 – The Great Transition

**Presenter:** Candee Basford, author and artist of We Dance Together  
Dan Wilkins, Founder of Nth Degree  
9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.  
St. Michael's Woodside  
5025 E Mills Road, Broadview Hts., 44147

Cost: \$15.00, includes luncheon, materials & Professional Development Units (PDUs).

Registration: Mail completed registration, along with your check or purchase order number to:

**Cuyahoga Special Education Service Center,**  
5811 Canal Road, Valley View, OH 44125  
Fax: 216-524-2885 or call 216-524-2770~ATTN: Sherrie

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Parents

#### Participate in Your Child's IEP

This workshop will teach you how to be an equal member of your child's IEP team.

Plan now to attend either the morning or evening workshop on one of the following Wednesday dates.

January 24th, 2007  
February 21st, 2007  
March 21st, 2007

The **morning** session will be at the CMR new location from 10 A.M. – 12 P.M.  
1331 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio

The **evening** session will be at the Independence Civic Center from 6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.  
6363 Selig Boulevard  
Independence, Ohio  
Cost: Free / Registration required  
Refreshments provided

## SELF ADVOCATES

### Skill Building Workshops

#### Make the most of your money

This workshop teaches you the skills to successfully manage your money, save and pay your bills

Thursday March 22, 2007

This **daytime** session will be at the Independence Civic Center from 10:30 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.  
6363 Selig Boulevard  
Independence, Ohio  
Cost: Free / Registration required  
Light Lunch provided

## PEOPLE FIRST OF CUYAHOGA COUNTY REGIONAL CONFERENCE \*

February 23 and 24, 2007  
Embassy Suites  
5300 Rocksidewoods  
Independence, Ohio

\* Registration and detailed information will be available January 3