

# THE HAPPENING



Renee Uitto, CLS/OC Citizens' Advisory Committee Chairperson

**FEBRUARY 2013**

CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

## I CAN DO IT – YOU CAN TOO!

By Adam Liard



Hi my name is Adam Laird and my parents have always told me that I can do anything that I set my mind to. Now that I've learned about Self-Determination, I have a better understanding of what they meant.

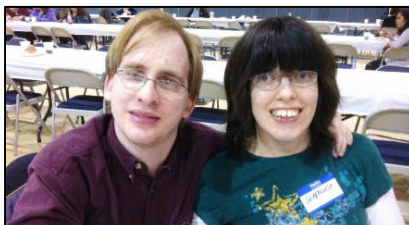
Self-Determination lets me live my life my way. I first became involved with Community Living Services and Self-Determination about six years ago when a friend of mine, who also has disabilities, moved into his own apartment. I saw how much he enjoyed living on his own and that made me realize that I could have the same experience in the future.



"You have the power to live your life on your terms and no one can stop you from living the life you have always dreamed of."  
- Adam Liard

My support circle has always encouraged me to not let my disability stand in the way of my dreams. A VERY important member of my support circle is my girlfriend Stephanie. Her entire life has been about living independently and sharing her story as an inspiration to others. When Stephanie inspired

me to make a career out of sharing my story, I knew I would have to take some steps to do well; I took SpeechCraft classes to work on my public speaking skills, I worked with my Independent Support Coordinator to develop my first Power Point presentation, and I did research and started marketing myself as a motivational speaker on topics such as Person-Centered Planning, Self-Determination, and Self-Advocacy.



Adam with his girlfriend, Stephanie Jackson

Over the last six months, I have spoken in many different venues, including locally at the Oakland County Self-Determination Conference, at CLS as part of their quarterly Self-Determination training series, in Lansing at the state-wide Waiver Conference, and in Sturgis at the GT Financial staff meeting. These have been paid speaking engagements and I have been very proud to contribute to these events and be able to share information about Self-Determination. My main goal in public speaking is to let people know that they have the power to live their lives on their terms, and that they shouldn't let challenges stop them from living the life that they have always dreamed of.



"Adam is an all around great guy. His great sense of humor and contagious laughter make him a joy to be around. Adam's compassion, combined with his advocacy skills, makes him an excellent public speaker. He speaks from the heart and it shows in his presentations. Adam has inspired me, and many others, to create a life worth living."

- Melanie Martin, Independent Supports Coordination

I also like to promote empowerment and self advocacy; meaning, that you can advocate for what you want in your life. If someone says you can't accomplish something, I encourage you to prove them wrong. Start your own business. Go back to school and get a degree. Get a place of your own. It may be difficult, and there may be challenges to overcome, but please know that you CAN make your dreams a reality!

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Rules for Happiness:  
something to do,  
someone to love,  
something to hope for."*

— Immanuel Kant

# THE 2013 KICK OFF PARTY – WHAT A FUN NIGHT!!!

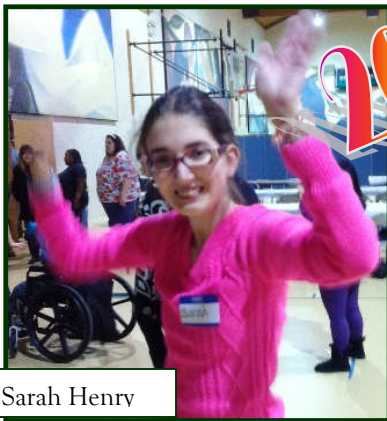
The CLS/OC Holiday Party was once again a huge success! With over 300 people in attendance, this year's holiday party beat last year's attendance and was our biggest party to date!!! Everyone had fun eating pizza, socializing with friends, and boogying down on the dance floor. "Dazzle Do Time" DJ service once again dazzled the party goers with fun music selections; the dance floor was packed! The night quickly came to an end and we are now looking forward to another great new year. Thank you to everyone who attended, we hope to see you at the next CLS/OC event.



Pat Christian, Cassie Morse, Latrice Grey, and Morgan Freed



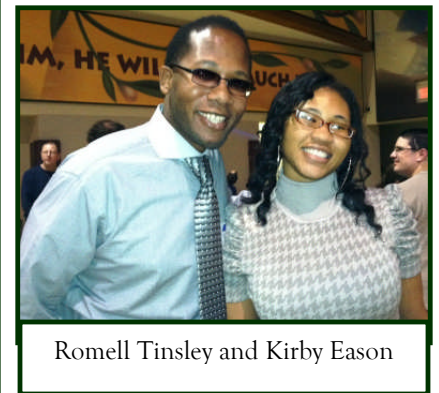
Steve Bean and Marc Thomas



Sarah Henry



Tom Dettloff, Annette Downey, and Jim Diegel



Romell Tinsley and Kirby Eason

## THANK YOU!!

A special thanks goes out to the Holiday Shores Lions Club and the Busch Family for their generous donation of \$300 toward the food served at our holiday party! Melvin Busch is supported by CLS/OC and is a member of the Holiday Shores Lions Club. He will personally deliver the special thank you sign that our appreciative guests signed.



Melvin Busch



## LADY GAGA'S BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION

BORN THIS WAY FOUNDATION  
· EMPOWERING YOUTH · INSPIRING BRAVERY ·

The Born This Way Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2011 by Lady Gaga and her mother Cynthia Germanotta. Established at Harvard University and named after Gaga's second studio album *Born This Way*, the foundation aims to inspire youth and build better communities. The foundation was created to “foster a more accepting society,

where differences are embraced and individuality is celebrated. The Foundation is dedicated to creating a safe community that helps connect young people with the skills and opportunities they need to build a kinder, braver world.” The foundation has partnered with John D & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the California Endowment and The Berkman Center at Harvard to focus on youth empowerment and issues like self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, mentoring, career development, and advocacy.

The Born This Way Foundation is also on wheels! Lady Gaga's upcoming tour dates will be accompanied by the Born Brave Bus Tour. The Born Brave Bus Tour will tailgate prior to each performance as a mobile extension of the Born This Way Foundation. Lady Gaga has teamed up with a number of mental health agencies to give young fans a chance to connect with resources. The bus tour will offer information about anti-bullying, suicide prevention services, and resources for mental health services.



Youth between the ages of 13 to 25 can hang out, participate in creative and interactive activities, meet resources in your community, and bond with other youth, who are ready to make a difference and start building a kinder, braver world. You do not need a concert ticket to participate in the bus tour. The Born Brave Bus Tour will be at the Place of Auburn Hills on February 16, 2013, 4:00-7:30pm. You can pre-register for the bus tour at their website.

If you would like to learn more about the foundation and to pre-register for the bus tour, go to the foundation's website at [www.bornthiswayfoundation.org](http://www.bornthiswayfoundation.org).

## GET INVOLVED!

### JOIN A POLITICAL CLUB *By Jim Head*



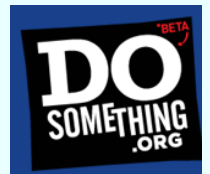
Do you think election season is over with the President's re-election in November? Not a chance! There are other elections going on around you (including City Councils), and there are lots of ways you can get more involved in politics. How? The political parties have local clubs and you could join up! State representatives, senators, and county officials participate in the clubs and with the club members when they can. You could attend the meetings and events as a member to ask questions and be an advocate for Self-Determination and people with disabilities living, working, and volunteering in their local communities. Once you get involved in political clubs, you have no idea who you might meet or where it might lead.

**Get Off The Bench  
And Into The Game**



### DOSOMETHING.ORG

Dosomething.org is a non-profit organization that encourages teenagers to, well, do something. The site provides young people with a multitude of ways to “rock a cause” that they care about. They provide guidance and information to inspire and assist young people in taking action to improve their communities. They hook teens up with charities and volunteer opportunities in their area that fit their needs, while inspiring, empowering, and celebrating teenagers to recognize the need to take action, do something, and believe in their ability to get it done. The website provides weekly mini-grants to fund projects to encourage teenagers' creativity and leadership.



There are a lot of causes you can get involved in; choose what means the most to you, or start your own cause. You can check out opportunities for scholarships, participate in a national campaign, get tons of interesting info and news, join a club or learn how to start your own, plus more by checking out [www.dosomething.org](http://www.dosomething.org).

## PROJECT SEARCH



Project SEARCH is a School Transition to Work Program that provides employment and educational opportunities to individuals with disabilities. The

Project SEARCH model focuses on providing opportunities for individuals with disabilities to gain marketable and transferable skills.

Project SEARCH is a one-year, school transition program that provides training and education that leads to employment. The cornerstone of this program is total immersion in a large business. Five days a week, students report to the host business, learn employability skills in the classroom, and develop works skills while working in three different rotations in the hospital.

A certified special education teacher and job coaches work with the students and the hospital's staff. The teacher and job coaches make sure the students are productive workers in the hospital's departments. The ultimate goal upon program completion is for the students to utilize their internship skills for gainful employment.

There are over 200 Project SEARCH sites across the United States and Europe. In Oakland County there are two sites, Beaumont Health Systems-Troy Campus and Henry Ford West Bloomfield.

Students that apply to the program are accepted through a selection committee process. For more information contact Kay Carpenter, Project SEARCH Instructor/Henry Ford, at 2480882-0030 or [carpenterk@westbloomfield.k12.mi.us](mailto:carpenterk@westbloomfield.k12.mi.us). For information on the Troy-Beaumont site, contact Sheila Gannon at 248-823-2828 or [sgannon2@trov.k12.mi.us](mailto:sgannon2@trov.k12.mi.us).

## COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES SPECIAL AIRING ON CBS



Families facing the challenge of caring for others often do not know where to turn. *Support At Home* is a 30-minute special that can help. Learn about home and community-based services for people with disabilities, seniors, and veterans so they may receive the support they need to remain in their own homes and communities.

On **Saturday, January 26, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.**, a commercial-free, educational program will air on CBS. This 30-minute special will dive deep into questions on how to care for your loved one at home. It will also reveal how caregivers are finding unique and creative ways to provide care.

See how people are living lives of freedom and independence and find out where resources and services can be found for veterans, seniors, and people with disabilities.

"We want people to know they are not alone," said CLS President and CEO, James Dehem. "There are resources available so people can live their lives the way they want, with dignity and respect, in their own home and community."

This educational video features exclusive interviews with prominent local leaders. Michigan Governor Rick Snyder describes some of the challenges he and his family experienced when his parents needed care to remain in their home. Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson discusses his recovery from a life altering car accident forcing him to rely on others for daily living activities. Michigan State Senator Debbie Stabenow discusses why she believes caring for people in their own homes provides better life outcomes and cost less.

"CLS has shown me there are a lot of resources available," said Disability Advocate Andre Robinson, who is featured in the video. "I have the choice of living on my own, in my Detroit community, and I have the help I need to live my life the way I want. You can't put a price tag on that. It's priceless."

Mark your calendar for "**Support at Home**," airing on CBS WWJ-TV-62 on Saturday, January 26th at 7:00 p.m.



**COMMUNITY**  
*Living* SERVICES  
**Oakland County Division**  
642 E. Nine Mile Road  
Ferndale, MI 48220  
Phone: 248-547-2668

# BE A STRONG ADVOCATE

By Renee Uitto



To advocate is to speak up for, or to write in favor of, a recommended action.

When you want to advocate for something, you need to know the action or policy you want to change and define your goals at the start so that you can promote your effort and invite people to join you. Once you identify the people you want to help you, you can create a message you want to deliver and the audience you want to deliver it to.

When advocating, it is very important to share your personal story. A good example is if you depend on Medicaid funding for your supports and for you to live independently. If the Medicaid funding you count on is in jeopardy, you will want to share your personal story and how such cuts directly affect your ability to live in the community. I travel to Lansing frequently to share my story with Budget Appropriation Committees. I tell why the Medicaid dollars are so important to me and others like me. When you tell legislators the impact their decisions have on your life, it catches people's attention, highlights potential problems that need to be addressed, demonstrates real life consequences, and helps your audience understand the issues you are advocating for better.

## **CLS/OC CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE SEEKS VICE CHAIRPERSON-** *By Renee Uitto*

The CLS Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is seeking a Vice Chairperson. The CAC meets four times per year and discusses events that are happening at CLS/OC, and reviews enrollment numbers and trends, satisfaction survey feedback, and potential policy or procedural changes. If you are interested in being the Vice Chair, please attend the next CAC meeting on Monday, January 28<sup>th</sup> from 2:00-4:00pm at the CLS/OC office.

## **COMMUNITY HOUSING NETWORK NEEDS MEMBERS-**

*By Renee Uitto*

Community Housing Network is looking for new members for their Citizen's Advisory Committee. They meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 570 Kirks Blvd in Troy. For more information, call Kim Rosario at CHN at 248-928-0111 ext. 1352.

# B.E.S.T. - BEGIN ENDING STIGMA TODAY



The Begin Ending Stigma Today (BEST) effort is a collaborative endeavor between the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority and its provider network, including Community Living Services, to assure we are promoting a stigma free culture within our buildings, the services we provide, and in our local communities. A Pledge has been developed and signed by each agency Executive Director and Board Chair to demonstrate our commitment to this BEST initiative. A CLS/OC staff and Independent Support Coordinator assessment was completed and a confidential survey was put out in our lobby and distributed asking people receiving services about any stigma they've experienced.

As a system supporting individuals with disabilities, we all want to ensure that the services we provide are stigma free. The survey is the first step in giving us an opportunity to examine the views and ideas of those we are so honored to serve. Each month over the next year, each agency will implement various BEST tasks and topics of discussion. Topics thus far have included:

- It Starts With Me,
- Stigma - How Does It Feel,
- Language Is Important, and
- Life Stories.

Please watch for further updates related to our Begin Ending Stigma Today (BEST) efforts. If you have feedback or suggestions, please feel free to contact our CLS Intake Manager, Steve Bean, or Peer Support Mentor, David Taylor, at 248-547-2668.

## **ANNUAL COMMUNITY SYSTEM SATISFACTION SURVEY**



OCCMHA contracts with MCET (Michigan Consumer Evaluation Team) to conduct various surveys on their behalf. MCET will be doing the annual Community System Satisfaction Survey in February and March. For the past several years, OCCMHA has asked MCET to conduct face to face surveys for persons with developmental disabilities. This means MCET may call you to set an appointment to meet with them, either in the community or at your home, to conduct the survey. If you have questions about this survey you can contact OCCMHA at (800) 341-2003.

**INTERESTED IN CHEERLEADING?** One of our Independent Support Coordinators, Jen Kacin, has been working with the Rochester Avon Recreation Authority (RARA) to offer cheerleading classes beginning this June. Jen has already started meeting with the Cheerleading Coach and they are seeking input/ideas from the people we serve related to potential venues in which the cheerleading squad could perform and potential advocacy and empowerment messages that could be shared through group cheers. If you have ideas or an interest in learning more about this cheerleading opportunity as it develops, you can contact Jen Kacin by email at [kacinpoint@yahoo.com](mailto:kacinpoint@yahoo.com).



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**DONATING BLOOD AT CLS/OC** is a great way to give back and save lives. On January 31, 2013, from 10am-4pm, Community Living Services-Oakland County Division will be hosting a Blood Drive at our Ferndale office, 642 E. Nine Mile Road. Everyone that donates will receive a Dunkin Donuts coupon for a free donut! *If you are interested in donating on January 31, 2013, call Colleen at 248-547-2668 to reserve your time slot.* If you would like to learn more about giving blood, visit the Red Cross website at <http://www.redcrossblood.org/>.



### THE POWER OF HOPE: Hope Givers, Hope Receivers, and Hope Stealers



This training session will take place on April 17<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:30am, at Community Living Services-Oakland County Division, 642 E. Nine Mile Road, in Ferndale. At this class, you will learn the double-edged strategy of how to grasp a hold of Hope when you don't have it, and how to keep it when you do! Sherri "the Hope Master" will show you why you must become a Hope Receiver and exactly how to become one; how to become a Hope Giver and how it helps you and others; and what a Hope Stealer is and why you don't want to become one. Please register by April 17, 2013, by calling Debbie Wisser at (248) 858-0929 or at [RegisterMe@occmha.org](mailto:RegisterMe@occmha.org).

**SELF-DETERMINATION TRAINING** will take place on March 8, 2013 1:00-3:00pm at the CLS/OC office, 642 E. Nine Mile Road. At this Self-Determination Training you will hear how people are making great things happen in their lives by self-directing their supports and services through Person-Centered Planning and the use of individual budgets. The implementation of Self-Determination, individual budgets, and options for creative income generation will be explored. If you would like to attend this upbeat training session, please register by calling Diana Kaszyca at 248-547-2668.



### "MOVING FORWARD" PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST/PEER MENTOR TRAINING

Training is now available for persons who are interested in potentially working as a peer support specialist/peer mentor in Oakland County. The "Moving Forward" training is a 17-hour training for individuals receiving services who have an interest in potentially working as a Peer Support Specialist/Peer Mentor. This is open to persons with developmental disabilities or mental illness. The training topics include: Role of a Peer Support Specialist, Using Your Story as a Tool, Listening and Communication, Gentle Teaching, and others. This training is one day a week for five weeks. You must attend each of the five training days. All trainings will be held at MORC, 1270 Doris Road in Auburn Hills. The winter session has already begun but there are two more sessions that you can join!



- ◆ **Spring Session**—March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1, 9:00am-12:30pm
- ◆ **Fall Session**—September 13, 20, 27 and October 4, 11, 9:00am-12:30pm

For more information or to sign up for the training, contact Sherri Rushman at 248-975-9531.

### SPEECHCRAFT CLASS

Sign up for this great eight week class and increase your confidence speaking in front of a group or in public. Learn in a small group setting how to effectively "tell your story" and "wow" the audience with your speeches, while having fun! The classes take place every Tuesday, 1:30-3:30pm at the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority office, 2011 Executive Hills Blvd in Auburn Hills. The next Speechcraft Session is March 5-April 23. For more information and to register for a class, contact Sherri Rushman at 248-975-9531.



## The Art Experience



The Art Experience, Inc. is a non-profit community art studio in Pontiac that provides creative and therapeutic art experiences to a diverse community. The Art Experience is located at 175 S. Saginaw St., #9 in Pontiac. Below, you will find some of the workshops that The Art Experience offers. For more information and to register, call 248-706-3304 or visit their website at [www.theartexperience.org](http://www.theartexperience.org).

**Acrylic Painting Workshop** – A fun workshop for those with little or no painting experience. The emphasis will be enjoyment in painting and finding confidence and inspiration to begin or continue through development of basic painting skills. Learn the basics of painting a snowy landscape, step-by-step. All materials provided. Pre-registration required one week prior to class. The workshop dates are: January 28<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00pm, February 22<sup>nd</sup> 3:30-5:30pm, and March 28<sup>th</sup> 6:00-8:00pm. Contact The Art Experience for the cost of this workshop.

**Miniature Keepsake Box Workshop** – Use 2"x2" miniature canvases to make a keepsake box for that special someone...you. Bring a 1"x1" photo and/or a trinket or charm that you would like to include. This workshop will take place on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 3:30-4:40pm, for ages 12 and up. The cost for this workshop is \$15. You must register by 1:00pm on the same day.

**Open Studio**—Drop in and make some art! Choose from a selection of fine art materials including painting, drawing, collage, found-object sculpture, or your own. All ages as appropriate; must be able to work independently (or with assistance from parent/guardian/support staff). Call ahead for seating availability. Open Studio takes place Tuesday–Friday 12:30-3:30pm, Friday evening 6:30-9:00pm, Saturday 1:00-3:00pm. \$5 includes most materials.

## THINGS TO DO IN YOUR COMMUNITY

**Fire & Ice Fest** will begin on **January 25th** and will go through the 27th in Downtown Rochester. The Fire & Ice Fest is a winter festival unlike any other in the Metro Detroit area; the highlights of the event include a fireworks display, an ice sculpture show, dog sledding, a tubing hill, ice skating, trolley rides, plus more. For more information go to [www.downtownrochestermi.com/events/fireandice/](http://www.downtownrochestermi.com/events/fireandice/).

**Winterfest** will take place on **February 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 4:00pm at Marshbank Park, 2805 Hiller Road in West Bloomfield. There will be fun activities planned to entice you to spend a few hours outdoors, despite the winter's chill. This year they will have ice carvers from Oakland Community College, fun contests including a cardboard box sled races, a family snowman building contest (bring snowman accessories), frozen pie eating, and more. Plus, there will be sled dogs and reindeer on site. This event is weather dependent. Entry Fee: \$5 per car. For more information visit the website at [www.WestBloomfieldParks.org](http://www.WestBloomfieldParks.org).



**The Chocolate Extravaganza** in Chelsea will be a sweet event to check out on **February 9<sup>th</sup>** from 10:00am-5:00pm. Visit downtown Chelsea and indulge in all things chocolate. Shop, eat, and "experience" chocolate. Over 30 different businesses throughout Chelsea will offer chocolate tasting, sales on chocolate-themed merchandise, and family fun activities. For more information, call 734-475-3539.



Community Living Services  
Oakland County Division  
642 E. Nine Mile Road  
Ferndale, MI 48220  
Phone: 248-547-2668

### Our Mission

Is to assist and advocate for each person to have the supports they want and need:

- To exercise control and authority over their lives
- To live a life of freedom, opportunity and relationships as family, friends and neighbors
- To share in full community citizenship and membership.

**Congratulations to the Oakland County Community Mental Health Authority for 50 years of supporting individuals with disabilities and mental health concerns to live a life of freedom based on the principles of Self-Determination.**



*Because living in a home of your own and controlling your own front door is important to ALL people.*



