

PICK-UP SERVICE



The Easter Seals Pick-Up Service has, for the past nine years, benefited from a relationship with Savers Thrift Stores. Easter Seals offers a pick-up service to communities for used clothing and household goods, selling the goods collected to Savers for just under \$9 for each bag or box picked up. The income generated from the sale of these goods has been used to support programs when other income sources were in short supply, to allow for development of new programs such as TrailBlazers and Asperger's camp sessions and Self-Employment Services, and to provide a solid and stable base of funding for the agency. Over the nine years of history with Savers, Easter Seals has realized nearly \$1 million in net profits – profits that directly benefit our programs for people with disabilities.

Now Easter Seals will be enjoying expanded opportunities as a result of this partnership. Savers will be adding new stores in Madison and Appleton and will be relocating the store in Eau Claire to provide more space. This will allow Easter Seals to sell a much larger quantity of donated goods to Savers and, as a result, generate increased funds for our services. Please join us in welcoming the new Savers stores. The second Madison Savers store will be at the former site of Cost Plus World Market, in the West Towne Mall area near Best Buy. The store is scheduled to open March 15. The Eau Claire store will be moving to its new location on Mall Drive and opening in late April. The new Appleton store will be at the site of the old Ben Franklin store on Mall Road and is scheduled to open on May 3.

Visit the new and existing stores in your area and be sure to contact us if you have goods that you would like to donate to Easter Seals. Your support for the Easter Seals Pick-Up Service will help Easter Seals to continue providing vital services for children and adults with disabilities in every part of Wisconsin.

Do you have gently used clothing or household goods to donate?
Contact one of our Pick-Up Service offices!

MADISON OFFICE

156 Owen Road
 Madison, WI 53716
 Toll free: 877.208.5109
 dcenter@wi.easterseals.com

EAU CLAIRE OFFICE

1737 Westgate Road
 Eau Claire, WI 54703
 Toll free: 866.526.3439
 ecdc@wi.easterseals.com

APPLETON OFFICE

926 S. Van Dyke Road, Suite B
 Grand Chute, WI 54914
 Toll free: 888.203.3380
 fvdc@wi.easterseals.com

Easter Seals Wisconsin

101 Nob Hill Rd., Suite 301
 Madison, WI 53713
 www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com
Creating solutions, changing lives.

Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 136
 Madison, WI

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Network News is published by Easter Seals Wisconsin
 101 Nob Hill Rd., Suite 301; Madison, Wisconsin 53713

Network News

The newsletter of Easter Seals Wisconsin • Winter/Spring 2007

• Services for children and adults with disabilities in Wisconsin •

Inside

Easter Seals News	2-3
Donor Profile	3
Event Highlights	4
Upcoming Events	5
Our Ambassadors - FARM Program	6
FARM Program	8
Self-Employment Services	9
Disability HelpLine	9
Camp Wawbeek	10
Respite Camp	11
Pick-Up Service	12

Printing of the Network News is donated in part by Coakley-Tech Madison, Wisconsin

'GRACE'S MOM' TO KEYNOTE EASTER SEALS RECOGNITION DINNER

Easter Seals Wisconsin is honored to announce that Shannon Kenitz, Executive Director of the International Hyperbarics Association (IHA), will be the keynote speaker at the 2007 Easter Seals Recognition Dinner, which will be held on May 10th at Nakoma Golf Club in Madison.

Shannon has appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *The Montel Williams Show*, sharing the story of her daughter Grace.

In 2000, Grace, who was 1½ at the time, was diagnosed with a rare

mitochondrial disorder, a condition that starves brain cells of oxygen. Grace was blind, did not walk or crawl and was unable to communicate in any way. Medical professionals from around the country repeatedly told Shannon that there was nothing that could be done to help her daughter and that Grace would probably not live past her second birthday.

Not willing to simply sit back and wait for her daughter to die, Shannon began researching Grace's disorder in the hope of finding some sort of treatment that might be of help. The idea of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), which greatly increases the amount of oxygen entering the body during time spent in a pressurized chamber, intrigued Shannon, and after looking into the therapy more fully, she began taking Grace to receive treatments.

People with a wide spectrum of conditions can benefit from this non-invasive therapy, and happily, Grace is one of them. Not long after treatments began, Grace began to emerge from the "vegetative" state doctors said she would be in for the rest of her life. Her vision returned and eventually she began to walk. Today, Grace, now 7, attends school, is managing without harsh medications, and, accompanied by her sister Lily, attended Easter Seals Respite Camp for the first time in June of 2006. Shannon believes that HBOT is the reason behind her daughter's miraculous turnaround.

Shannon will share her experience and insight with fellow Easter Seals supporters at the Recognition Dinner. Following dinner and the keynote speech, an awards ceremony will take place, which will honor the individuals and organizations that have given such positive and generous support to Easter Seals over the years. Tickets for the event will be available soon at www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com.



Shannon Kenitz's daughters, Grace (left) and Lily at the Wisconsin Elks/Easter Seals Wisconsin Respite Camp.

NEW BOARD MEMBER PROFILES



LIZ HENRY, from Dane, Wisconsin brings an extensive background in agriculture and marketing to her new position as a member of the Easter Seals Wisconsin Board of Directors. Henry's professional career in agriculture began with the 'long but delightful' year she spent promoting Wisconsin agriculture nationally and internationally as Alice in Dairyland. Over the next 20 years, she worked with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, American Breeders Service, Kraft Foods/Oscar Mayer and Badger Agvest. Currently, Liz serves as Associate Director of Renk Agribusiness Institute at the University of Wisconsin. She and her husband Joe have two sons and raise 2000 acres of seed corn and seed soybeans in south central Wisconsin.



CRAIG RADDATZ received a business administration degree from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1987, where he was also a four year letter winner and co-captain of the football team. He began his career with Lehman Brothers in New York and Chicago. In 1995, Mr. Raddatz returned to the University of Wisconsin – Madison for his master's degree in Real Estate Appraisal and Investment Analysis. He joined Fiduciary Real Estate in 1996 where he has direct responsibility for management of over \$35 million in development revenue that will come to fruition over the next seven years. Fiduciary Real Estate also owns and manages over 4,200 apartment homes in 20 different apartment communities in the Madison, Milwaukee and Green Bay areas. Craig is married to Mary, his wife of 15 years, and they are blessed with three children: Claire, Kyle and Jake. The family lives in Mequon, Wisconsin.

New Board Member **ELLY PICK** will be profiled in the next newsletter.

IN FOND MEMORY



Easter Seals mourns the passing of long-time friend and supporter **Arlene Mulder**. Born in Osseo, Arlene contracted polio shortly after high school graduation and spent 16 months at Sister Kenney Institute and Swedish Rehab Hospital in Minneapolis. Like many others who survived polio, the disease left Arlene with lifelong disabilities. Arlene was very active in the Easter Seals Kenosha County Service Unit, serving on the Campership Committee and as Unit Chairperson, and she was a motivated and successful volunteer fundraiser for both local and statewide Easter Seals initiatives. In 1993, Arlene and her husband Bob received the Kenosha Easter Seals Golden Award for their work in the Kenosha area. That same year, Arlene also received the Personal Achievement Award from Easter Seals Wisconsin. Arlene's giving spirit and her dedication to Easter Seals will be greatly missed.

- ADMINISTRATION**
Christine Fessler, President/CEO
cfessler@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 116
Nance Roepke, Executive Vice President
nroepke@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 117
Nanc Howard, Executive Assistant
nhoward@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 115
Emily Colwin, Receptionist/Office Assistant
ecolwin@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 101
- MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**
Brian Schuetz, Director
bschuetz@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 107
- FINANCE**
Melisaa Goke, Director
mgoke@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 119
Amy Gallagher, Staff Accountant
agallagher@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 118
- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**
Ken Saville, Vice President
ksaville@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 108
Elisabeth Marx, Manager
emarx@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 120
- CLIENT ASSISTANCE**
Jill Gretzinger, Coordinator, Outagamie Co. Disability HelpLine
jgretzinger@wi.easterseals.com · 920.832.0344
- CAMP AND RESPITE PROGRAMS**
Kelly Housman, Director of Camp & Respite Services
khousman@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 111
Valerie Croissant, Respite Coordinator
respitel@wi.easterseals.com · 608.254.2502
Melissa Drake, Camp Wawbeek Coordinator
mdrake@wi.easterseals.com · 608.254.2502
Aurora Holder, Program Assistant
aholder@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 124
- FARM & VOCATIONAL SERVICES**
Paul Leverenz, Vice President
pleverenz@wi.easterseals.com · 920.898.9224
Holly Allen, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist
hallen@wi.easterseals.com · 920.884.0005
T. Ellenbecker, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist
tellenbecker@wi.easterseals.com · 715.842.3411
Bruce Whitmore, Rural Rehabilitation Specialist
bwhitmore@wi.easterseals.com · 920.675.0570
Julie Jensen, Self-Employment Services Specialist
jjensen@wi.easterseals.com · 920.431.0843
Judith Guttman, Technical Assistant
jguttman@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 125
Melba Brown, Technical Assistant
mbrown@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 106
- DEVELOPMENT**
Terri Spring, Director/Southern Wisconsin
tspring@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 109
Brenda Thompson, Director/Northwestern Wisconsin
brendat@ecol.net · 715.834.9452
Karen Ziemke, Director/Northeastern Wisconsin
kziemke@wi.easterseals.com · 920.886.3615
Mary Statz, Development & Marketing Assistant
mstatz@wi.easterseals.com · 608.277.8288 x 103
- DONATION CENTERS & PICK-UP SERVICES**
Jo Warren, Director
jwarren@wi.easterseals.com · 608.257.7780
Amy Clements, Madison Office Manager
aclements@wi.easterseals.com · 608.257.7780
Julie Jirikowic, Appleton Office Manager
jjirikowic@wi.easterseals.com · 888.203.3380

CAMPS BENEFIT CAMPERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Flying down a zip-line... canoeing... camping under the stars... cooking over an open fire ... becoming more independent. Many parents and caregivers of children with disabilities feel that these things are not possible for their loved one. But all of these things can (and do!) happen every year at Easter Seals camps.

Thousands of children and adults with mild to severe disabilities attend camp every year; every year, those campers grow as people, benefiting from new experiences. Parents and caregivers naturally worry about their loved one's ability to cope away from home and about turning his or her care over to camp staff. But most often, caregivers will discover that the camp experience is not only good for the camper, but will be of benefit to themselves and the rest of their family as well.

BENEFITS FOR CAMPERS

Camps for people with disabilities allow the camper to have a place where they fit in. "When I'm at Camp Wawbeek, my disability just melts away," says Ashley, who has been attending Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek for 10 years. "The people there don't really care what disability you have. Instead, you are accepted for who you are."

Camp is a unique environment that allows a camper to experience things that parents may not have the expertise, time, supplies, financial resources or energy to provide. In addition, according to a study by the American Camp Association (ACA), campers also experience significant growth in areas of self-esteem, independence, friendship skills, social comfort, peer relationships, adventure and exploration, and environmental awareness.

BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES

Caring for a loved one with a disability can be very draining on the entire family. Some parents and caregivers find it hard to admit they need the break they will experience while their loved one is away at camp. But the 'time off' from caregiving often helps families recharge and strengthen the relationship between spouses and between parents and their other children. Knowing that a camp session is coming up can also help caregivers get through the inevitable stressful moments, and the rejuvenation experienced while the loved one is at camp can help reduce future stresses.

FEELING COMFORTABLE WITH YOUR CHOICE OF CAMP

Easter Seals Wisconsin understands the fears and uncertainties that can plague parents and caregivers as they make the decision to send their child to camp and as they choose the best camp for their child. The first trip to camp can be a nerve-racking experience and minimizing the worries of parent and campers alike is very important to us. We encourage potential camp families to contact us about the suitability of Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp for your camper, and to arrange a visit while camp is in session so that you can see first-hand the interactions that staff have with the campers, the programming, the level of camper engagement in activities and our facilities.

We are also happy to connect you to other campers and their parents who are willing to talk with you about their experiences with Easter Seals camps.



Contact Kelly Housman at 1.800.422.2324 ext. 111 to learn more about Easter Seals Camps and to arrange visits.

CAMP WAWBEEK

CAMP WAWBEEK CONTINUES GROWTH TO SERVE ADDITIONAL POPULATIONS

Easter Seals Wisconsin is proud to introduce a new program for children ages 7-13 with ADHD. The weekend program will be held at Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek in Wisconsin Dells, February 16-18, 2007.

A child with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may have difficulty controlling his or her behavior and/or paying attention. The Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control estimates 4.4 million youth ages 4-17 have been diagnosed with ADHD by a healthcare professional, and as of 2003, 2.5 million youth ages 4-17 are receiving medical treatment for the disorder. In 2003, 7.8% of school-aged children were reported as having an ADHD diagnosis.

Easter Seals experienced staff will focus on the unique social and emotional needs of this population. The ADHD weekend will be filled with activities that promote positive social interactions, increase independence and improve self esteem. The low camper-to-staff ratio of 2:1 ensures the campers' well-being while they are busy and on the go. Activities will range from sledding, swimming and a low ropes course to games, activities and programs that focus on teamwork and self-awareness.

The ADHD weekend will be held February 16-18 at Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek in Wisconsin Dells. For more information, or to register, visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com, or call 1.800.422.2324.

WINTER TRAILBLAZERS



During a summer Trailblazer session, a camper enjoys a visit from the Wisconsin Dells firefighters.

Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek in Wisconsin Dells will hold a Winter Trailblazers session this year for teens and adults ages 16-40 who have a mild to moderate cognitive delay and no physical disabilities. The Trailblazers session will be March 23-25, 2007.

During the weekend session, campers take a break from their usual winter routine and enjoy the outdoors and comfortable camp accommodations. Campers will enjoy sledding, building snowmen and snowball fights, and will warm up indoors with accessible sports, cooking and other indoor activities. Best of all, they'll have the opportunity to make new friends!

Trained Easter Seals counselors and a registered nurse are on hand to ensure the safety and well-being of campers during this fun weekend. For more information or an application, please visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com, or call 1.800.422.2324.

WINTER/SPRING 2007

Upcoming Camp & Respite Sessions

CAMP WAWBEEK

Teen Weekend

February 2 - 4, 2007

ADHD Weekend

February 16 - 18, 2007

Sci-Camp Weekend

March 16 - 18, 2007

Trailblazers Weekend

March 23 - 25, 2007

RESPITE CAMP

SPRING RESPITE WEEKENDS

February 9 - 11, 2007

March 2 - 4, 2007

March 23 - 25, 2007

April 13 - 15, 2007

May 4 - 6, 2007

SPRING SPECIALTY SESSIONS:

Spotlight on Siblings

April 13 - 15, 2007

Break Away Respite (Trego, WI)

April 20 - 22, 2007

Siblings are welcome at all sessions on a space available basis.

For more
information and for
summer schedules,
visit:

www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com

Call 1.800.422.2324
to Register
or download your
application online.

EASTER SEALS NEWS

LONG-TIME EASTER SEALS EMPLOYEE RETIRES



Sue Ebert

After 23 years of service, Sue Ebert, Director of Finance for Easter Seals Wisconsin, has announced her retirement.

Sue joined the Easter Seals staff in October of 1983 to coordinate the Neighbor to Neighbor program. She led the statewide fundraiser through its most successful years, working with telephone recruiters, volunteers and banks across Wisconsin. "It was a seasonal job when I first started," says Sue, "which was perfect for me because my sons, Brian and Greg, were young then and I was able to spend a lot of time with them." Before long, Sue moved into the Accounting Department where she handled the bookkeeping aspects of the Wisconsin Craftsman program and then became the general Accounting Assistant. In August of 2002, she was promoted to Director of Finance.

Sue's retirement came a little earlier than she originally planned, as the lingering effects from surgery to remove a non-malignant brain tumor made it clear to her that the job she loved would probably be too stressful for her now. "I have an 'invisible disability'," Sue says, adding that her many years of working with people with disabilities through Easter Seals has really helped her to understand the medical condition. "So, after giving it a lot of thought and talking things over with my husband, Jerry, and my family, I decided that taking an early retirement was best for me." She plans to continue her involvement with Easter Seals by volunteering at various events.

"Not only has Sue been very hardworking and dedicated to Easter Seals, she has a wonderful sense of humor," says Easter Seals CEO Christine Fessler. "The entire staff will miss seeing her in the office every day, but we're happy for her and glad she will still be a part of the Easter Seals family as a volunteer. She has made a significant and lasting contribution to the organization."

DONOR PROFILE

TOM & MARGIE BERTRAM

When they toured Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp in the summer of 2006, it was the first time Tom and Margie Bertram were able to really see first-hand the work they've been supporting since the early 1990's.

"It was such a moving and enlightening experience," says Margie. "And it reinforced our faith in people and in their goodness. We'd been invited to visit camp several times, but always had a conflict. We're so glad we finally took the time to come down."

The Bertrams, who live in Appleton, began to support Easter Seals through PJ's Collectibles in Green Bay when the Enesco Corporation, a PJ's supplier, was doing a matching gift program for Easter Seals. Jim Ferris from PJ's asked the Bertrams to contribute, telling them about Easter Seals Camp Wawbeek. They've generously supported Easter Seals ever since.

"When we were touring camp, I was so touched by how hard everyone worked, how the counselors were determined to meet the needs of every single child – not only for the child him or herself, but to make certain that the child's parents are able to take a break and relax, knowing their child is safe and having fun."

The Bertrams both work in their family business, Bertram Dental Lab, which they own along with Tom's brother, who married Margie's sister. Two of their children, Joseph and Sara, also work there, and they have another daughter, Kerry as well. In 1981, the Bertrams had a fourth child, Andrew, who died within weeks of his birth. "Andrew had multiple disabilities," Margie says, "and I think he's our inspiration for choosing to support Easter Seals."

Married for 34 years, Tom & Margie enjoy their children and their grandson, Jonathon Andrew, who was born in April, 2006.



Tom and Margie Bertram

CENTURY 21 AFFILIATED CAR RAFFLE A SUCCESS

The 3rd Annual Century 21 Affiliated Car Raffle for Easter Seals was another resounding success, raising over \$37,000 to support Easter Seals programs.

The raffle, which gives purchasers of \$20 raffle tickets the opportunity to win a new car, was the brainchild of Bill Kessler, Century 21 Affiliated President. In the past three years, the raffle has raised more than \$100,00 for Easter Seals. Nationally, Century 21 is the largest corporate sponsor of Easter Seals, having raised more than *86 million dollars* for state affiliates since 1979.

Before the drawing, held November 21st, 2006 in Madison, Century 21 Affiliated provided a picnic lunch with entertainment from members of the UW Marching Band. This year's lucky winner of the 2007 Honda Civic EX from Zimbrick Honda of Madison was Pam Anderson of Dodgeville.

Easter Seals Wisconsin would like to thank Bill Kessler and all the Century 21 Affiliated agents and staff who sold tickets. Our special thanks go to top salesman Gerald Needham, who alone sold nearly \$5,000 worth of tickets.



Century 21 Affiliated President Bill Kessler chats with Easter Seals Wisconsin ambassador Megan Skaar of Poynette about her enthusiastic love of Camp Wawbeek.

FALL FUN FEST ATTRACTS RECORD CROWD

Nearly 100 people gathered for an afternoon of fun and fellowship at the Eagle's Club in Hallie, Wisconsin on November 4th, 2006. The afternoon of raffles and games raised approximately \$8,300 to support Easter Seals programs and services. Easter Seals thanks the following sponsors: Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwich Shop, McDonough Manufacturing, Foundation Builders, Mega Pick N' Save, Kell Container, Jeatran and Associates, John Basche of Eau Claire Realty and Marshfield Clinic.

AUTUMN WEEKEND AT CAMP WAWBEEK RAISES NEARLY \$12,000!

A weekend of fun and food raised \$11,900 to support Easter Seals Wisconsin programs. On September 30, 2006, runners and walkers gathered at Camp Wawbeek for the 7th Annual Fall Sprawl, a 10K/5K Run/Walk that attracted about 100 participants.

The following morning, 200 guests enjoyed all the pancakes and sausage they could eat at the 14th Annual Pancake Breakfast, which was followed by entertainment from the Canepa School of Dance.

Easter Seals extends its thanks to the more than 50 volunteers comprised of people from the Wilmot High School Key Club, Lake Mason Lions Club, First Weber Group - Wisconsin Dells, the Wisconsin Badger Corps and past Camp Wawbeek and Respite Camp staff, who made the back-to-back events run smoothly.

Easter Seals supporters gear up for participation in the annual Fall Sprawl.



TIME WARNER HOLDS IN- HOUSE AUCTION FOR EASTER SEALS

A big "Thank You!" to the Time Warner Cable employees of Northeast Wisconsin for holding an in-house silent auction for Easter Seals. After a one day display of the items, the auction was posted on Time Warner's internal website, allowing employees to bid daily. The auction wrapped up on December 8th. With over 30 generously donated items & certificates from area businesses, Time Warner raised just over \$3,000.

NEW PROGRAM CONTINUES RAPID GROWTH

In August of 2005, Easter Seals Wisconsin created Self-Employment Services to help adults with disabilities develop new businesses. The demand has been impressive: in its first thirteen months of operation, the program had ninety-one requests for service. Self-Employment Specialist Julie Jensen has worked on thirty-one assessments, seventeen feasibility studies and seven business plans. Six businesses have begun operation and several more will start soon. Of these, about 75% are from clients in rural communities.

"The incredible growth we've experienced really proves the need for this type of service," says Paul Leverenz, Vice President of FARM and Vocational Services for Easter Seals Wisconsin. "We're excited to see businesses starting up, and are hoping to expand the program into more areas of the state."

Currently, Self-Employment Services, which specializes in helping clients from rural areas, is available in the Fox Valley area, and is looking for qualified specialists to help the program continue to grow. Candidates who have experience in the areas of vocational services, self-employment issues and working with people with disabilities are invited to contact Easter Seals for more information about becoming a part of the Self-Employment Services team.



Artist Jon Wos has been named the Easter Seals Ambassador for Self-Employment Services. To learn more about Jon, whose art was featured in the Summer/Fall 2006 issue of the Network News, see his profile at www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com or visit his website at www.wosart.com

DISABILITY HELPLINE

PARENTS-4-PARENTS GROUP PROVIDES WELCOME SUPPORT

Support groups can mean different things to different people. For some parents and caregivers in the Fox Valley area, the Parents-4-Parents group gives them the opportunity to meet once or twice a month and talk about topics that not all parents are familiar with or understand. These topics might include sharing information about which bath chair works best for their child, how to make the most of the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) experience, how to deal with extended family members who seem afraid of their children and gift suggestions for a child who loves music but can't use his or her hands.

Responding to numerous requests, in 2002 Easter Seals Disability HelpLine of Outagamie County Wisconsin and Cerebral Palsy of Mideast Wisconsin joined together to create a support group for parents and caregivers of children with disabilities in the Fox Valley area. Since then, Parents-4-Parents has met once or twice a month during the school year to lend one another support and has also gathered for a number of social events, including picnics and attending events at the local performing arts center.

"There is no sense of anxiety when I go," says Lori Osero. "I'm totally comfortable because people support each other and don't judge each other. I have become so close to some of the others I feel like they are my family. I can share issues with them and they understand!" Brenda Prindle of Little Chute agrees. "I look forward to and treasure the time I get each month to spend with others who understand some of the frustrations and joys of being a parent to a child with complicated medical issues. Many months it is my only opportunity to get out and I really look forward to it."

"The meetings are very informal," notes Jill Gretzinger, Coordinator of Easter Seals' Disability HelpLine and one of the founders of the group. "The topics we discuss each month are based on what is happening in the lives of those who attend. All parents and caregivers are welcome."

Contact Jill at 920.832.0344 for more information. Childcare is available for monthly meetings by reservation.

EASTER SEALS BOARD OF DIRECTORS VISITS FARM

On November 17, 2006, members of the Easter Seals Board of Directors were able to get an up-close-and-personal look at how the agency's FARM Program benefits farmers with disabilities. The Board traveled to Cross Plains to the 500-acre farm of Gerry and Lisa Krantz, who are long-time friends of Easter Seals. In 1984, Gerry's right arm was severed, and although doctors were able to reattach it, the injury, combined with arthritis had made daily farm chores too physically demanding for him. Gerry and Lisa were referred to Easter Seals, and have been working with Paul Leverenz, Vice President of FARM and Vocational Services for Easter Seals Wisconsin, for the past 12 years.

Board members and members of the Easter Seals staff toured the farm in 3 groups, visiting the milking barn, the machine shop, and the young stock area. Everyone was able to see how different equipment modifications – from a specially-equipped Bobcat skid loader to small hand tool attachments – helped Gerry continue to farm. Because of these innovative efforts, the Krantz family has become an example of the FARM Program's impact.

Easter Seals President and CEO, Christine Fessler, who attended the tour, commented: "It was so wonderful to see the Board members get a firsthand look at how the FARM Program truly changes lives. Our Board has always had such strong support for this program, and it's great that they were finally able to see how the combined efforts of Wisconsin's farmers and Easter Seals specialists are making such a difference in people's lives."

Right: Dr. Ronald T. Schuler, Director of AgrAbility of Wisconsin, explains some of the modifications made at the Krantz farm.



Below: Farm operator Gerry Krantz (seated) and Easter Seals Vice President of FARM and Vocational Services Paul Leverenz, demonstrate the modified skid steer that makes it easier for Gerry to feed his livestock.



Wines around the **World**

February 20, 2007 • Nakoma Golf Club • Madison

International wines and world class food await guests as they 'tour the world' at beautiful Nakoma Golf Club for Easter Seals 5th Annual Wines Around the World. Come celebrate Mardi Gras in style! Visit www.EasterSealsWisconsin.com or call Terri Spring at 608.277.8288 ext. 109 to make your reservations.

DIAMONDS & CHOCOLATE

Purchase a half pound of assorted Vande Walle's chocolates for \$10 and receive a raffle ticket giving you a chance to win a pair of one carat total weight diamond earrings, a diamond pendant or one of 50 silver charms – all from Helein Jewelers. The drawing will be held on February 14th, making this the perfect Valentine's Day gift! Call Karen Ziemke at 920.886.3615 to purchase or for more information.



**WAUSAU
DANCE
&
RAFFLE**



WAUSAU DANCE & RAFFLE

March 17, 2007 • Schmidt's Ballroom • Wausau

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at the Wausau Dance & Raffle! An afternoon of games, raffles and fun starts at 2:00 pm for \$50 raffle ticket purchasers, and everyone is welcome at the dance (featuring the country band Southwind), which follows at 7:00 pm. Contact Brenda Thompson at 715.834.9452 for tickets or more information.

CASINO NIGHT & RAFFLE

February 3, 2007 • The Red Mouse • Pine Bluff

Sponsored by the Dane County Council of Snowmobile Clubs, Casino Night & Raffle is open to the purchasers of \$20 raffle tickets. The fun begins at 4:00 pm with food and a silent auction, followed by casino games at 6:00 pm and music at 9:00 pm. Contact Terri Spring at 608.277.8288 ext. 109 for information.

FULL SERVICE FOR EASTER SEALS

Date TBA • Stama's Mobile Station • Medford

Century 21 Dairyland Realty North in Medford employees and their families pump gas and wash windows at Stama's Mobile Station in Medford in exchange for a donation to Easter Seals. Contact Brenda Thompson at 715.834.9452 for information.

OUR AMBASSADORS - FARM PROGRAM



Jim and 'the College Dropout', Sharkey

James Cornett and wife Barb's first rate dairy has an excellent milk production average – 28,200 pounds per cow – but building to that success wasn't without problems.

The same year that they lost their barn to a fire that also killed some of their stock, Jim was diagnosed with a rare degenerative muscle disorder call Pompe's Disease. Although he was born with the condition, a diagnosis didn't come until symptoms appeared when he was in his early 30s. "It affects every muscle in the body," Jim says. "It's difficult to walk and get up out of a chair and I can only climb stairs stiff-legged or on all fours." Jim could no longer climb silos or do much of the heavy work around the farm. What bothered him most, though, was his inability to get on and off tractors or other machinery safely. "Because so much of what I do on the farm is tied up with machinery, this made getting the work done really hard."

"Retiring from farming and living off disability compensation checks and income from the sale of our property was not the example we wanted to set for our children," says Barb.

So Jim began looking for ways to modify his equipment in order to make things easier. He put a small lift on one of his tractors and on the haybine. Although Jim had heard of the

FARM Program, it wasn't until one of his sons spoke to a rep at a farm show that the Cornettes got in touch with Easter Seals. Through Easter Seals' help, the Cornettes had chair lifts put on three larger tractors, and got a Polaris Ranger to get around in the yard. Jim urges farmers who are having difficulties to contact Easter Seals. "There's a lot they can do to help you out, and they're nice to work with."

James and Barb have three sons, Paul, Tom & Ryan, who also work on the farm. Jim enjoys reading – mostly antique tractor and implement books – and attending farm shows and thresheries.

The two hip replacements dairy farmer **William Haase** has undergone, and the lingering problems from an accident that crushed his foot, were making milking, climbing silos, and getting on and off machinery difficult and painful. Most days it was a challenge just to get all the animals on his Somerset-area farm cared for.

But Bill wasn't ready to give up farming, and wanted to keep the operation strong for his sons, two of whom wanted to farm into the future. In order to do that, he knew some changes needed to be made.

Switching to bunker feed storage and building a parlor for milking were the first steps; big projects that took several years to plan and build. The Easter Seals FARM Program worked with the Haase family, helping them address their immediate needs in a way that would see them through the completion of the building projects. After that, Easter Seals helped William prioritize and address needs that would remain once the milking parlor and upgraded feeding system were in use.

"The FARM Program staff has been great to work with!" says Bill. "Without their help, it would have been very difficult to continue to farm."



Bill and his wife Opal have five children: Jered, Jason, Matt, Mike and Amanda.

Mary Housner and her husband, Gary, run Bo-Irish Farms outside of Elroy, Wisconsin. Feeding the cows required Mary to bend down and lift heavy loads. Because of the pain caused by fibromyalgia, Mary had trouble doing the chores, and more work ultimately fell into Gary's hands, aggravating his own back problems.

The family's banker told her about AgrAbility of Wisconsin and she was encouraged to contact the program to find out what help and advice they might be able to provide. After speaking to AgrAbility staff, Housner met with a Rural Rehabilitation Specialist from the Easter Seals FARM Program. The specialist visited the farm several times to walk through the operation with Housner, and suggested installing a TMR mixer and using new grain and silage carts to make feeding easier and to reduce the strain on Mary's back.

After the adaptations were made, the Housners met with a counselor from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, which provided financial assistance for the equipment. "I pinch myself every time I come out here because I can't believe it really did happen; they really came through for me" Mary says. Thanks to the changes made to the farm operation, Mary is confident that she will be farming well into the future.

Mary and Gary, who have five children (Brian, Beckie, Shannon, Sarah and Amanda) and six grandchildren, also raise Newfoundlands.



"Sometimes," says **Gary Lechleitner**, "your life can change in the blink of an eye." In January of 2003, his did.

On that cold morning, Gary, a dairy producer who farms near Edgar, Wisconsin, was just finishing chores, getting the manure spread before cleaning up to go into town with his wife, Connie, for breakfast. Leaning over to scrape a spot of manure from a front corner of the spreader, a damp spot on his pocket touched the rotating PTO shaft, freezing. That was all it took. The unshielded shaft grabbed hold, Gary's left arm became completely entangled in it, and in an instant, he was fighting to keep his neck from being pulled in.



Gary could see that his arm was severed above the elbow, and desperate to keep from dying, he braced his knee up against the spreader and tried pulling himself out of the shaft. Instead, the shaft pulled all his clothes off. "There I stood naked in the middle of the field. All I had on was the collar from my coveralls which was pulled tight around my neck," Gary remembers. "I was praying for the strength to live long enough for someone to rescue me." Gary's prayers were answered when his neighbor's brother saw him waving and drove out into the field to see what was happening.

Doctors were able to reattach the severed arm, but even after a dozen surgeries, Gary still had no use of his left hand and was so heavily medicated that his doctors were wary of him working around animals. A neighbor familiar with the Easter Seals FARM Program suggested that the Lechleitners contact Easter Seals to find out if they could get some help.

"The FARM Program made life better, plain and simple." Gary says. "Things run smoother and there's less manual labor. If it wasn't for Easter Seals," he adds, "I would not be farming today."

Gary and Connie have four children, Kelby, Cedric, Kia and Xavier and one dog, Blackjack.