

Jim Conlon: Spurwink's 2008 Humanitarian of the Year



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Spurwink is pleased to announce that Jim Conlon has been selected as the 2008 Humanitarian of the Year. He will be honored at the annual dinner and award ceremony on November 15 at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks.

Since 2005, Jim Conlon has served as President and CEO of Bangor Savings Bank, Maine's largest independent bank. A 30 year veteran of banking, Jim understands the importance of a vibrant economy. Providing leadership in the community, he has been actively involved with a wide variety of non-profit organizations throughout his career.

Currently, Jim serves as a Director of Maine Economic Research Institute (MERI), a member of the Executive Committee of Maine Association of Community Banks, a member of the ABA Mutual Institutions Council, a member of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, treasurer of the Eastern Maine Musical Association Board, and a Corporator of the Phillips-Strickland House. Prior community involvements include: serving as Vice Chair

of the Finance Authority of Maine; Chair of Acadia Hospital Corporation and Acadia Healthcare; Board President and Director of Community Health & Counseling Services, Inc.; Treasurer and Director for Maine Technology Institute; Vice Chairman and Director for John Baptist High School; Director of Eastern Maine Healthcare; and Director of Bangor Target Area Development.

"Jim Conlon is truly deserving of this recognition," stated Dawn Stiles, President of Spurwink Services. "Since 1987, Spurwink has been celebrating organizations and individuals throughout the state of Maine who are committed to improving the lives of others. Jim Conlon certainly is one of those individuals. We are very pleased to honor him as the 2008 Humanitarian of the Year."

Under Jim's leadership, Bangor Savings Bank has continued its longstanding commitment to giving back to the communities it serves. Together the Bank and its Foundation invest more than a million dollars per year into the community in the form of nonprofit sponsorships, grants and partnership initiatives. ■

Spurwink

Leadership Message

Spurwink Announces a New Regional Evidence Based Model

The start of our new fiscal year on July 1 brings significant changes to Spurwink Services. With the closure of the Spurwink Treatment, Evaluation and Diagnostic Clinic in Portland, we will no longer provide psychiatric services for children. However, our other outpatient services – the Child Abuse Program on Bishop Street in Portland and the Portland Help Center on Congress Street in Portland will remain in operation. We will also continue to provide autism evaluation and diagnostic services and attachment evaluations.

A new program, Alternative Response, will begin operation on July 1. This program is designed for at-risk families who have been reported to the Department of Health and Human Services with allegations of child abuse or neglect that is considered of low to moderate severity. (More on this new program on page 8.)

Spurwink Services will also roll out a new model of services on July 1. The Evidence Based Community Practices Division brings a regional approach to the provision of community-based services for children and families. Spurwink has traditionally followed a structure of independent programs consisting of Case Management, Functional Family Therapy, Public School Counseling, Juvenile Risk Reduction Case Management and Maine Caring Families. With this new model, these programs will be rolled into three regional service areas with central coordinators in York/Cumberland Counties, Lewiston and Augusta.

While Spurwink will continue to provide high quality, evidence-based services, this new division brings a major shift in the way these services are delivered. Regional Coordinators will be responsible for ensuring information and expertise is shared between the three distinct regions. Families will benefit from a consistent approach and focus. As Cynthia Dodge, Director of Clinical Services explains, this new division “will make it easier for families to get the right service at the right time and in the right amount.”

Eventually, the Evidence Based Community Practices Division will allow families to obtain services at Spurwink through one point of entry. There they will find a variety of services and experienced professionals from a broad range of disciplines in their own community. Consistency will be provided by our dedication to best practice guidelines and a commitment to the Spurwink values of respect for individual strengths and needs and unconditional positive regard.

Dawn Stiles, LCSW, President of Spurwink Services
Mike Higgins, M.A., President, Spurwink Institute
Kathi Wall, Executive Director, Augusta Boys & Girls Club for Teens

Bill Brillant Hosts Special Development Event

Bill Brillant, Customer Service Manager at Downeast Energy and Building Supply, and a member of Spurwink’s Development Committee, hosted a gathering of friends at his home in Brunswick in May. John Fenton, Spurwink Services’ Senior Program Director, talked with guests about the agency’s work with children and adolescents at the Brunswick Staff Secure Program. President Dawn Stiles was also in attendance to speak about Spurwink Services’ mission and vision, as well as future opportunities and challenges. The event gave guests an opportunity to learn more about Spurwink’s important work in their own community. In the year ahead, the Spurwink Development Committee will be organizing similar events in other communities Spurwink serves throughout the state. For more information, contact the Spurwink Development Office at 688-4652 or giving@spurwink.org. ■

Spurwink OTs Participate in University Study

Occupational Therapists employed with Spurwink Services were asked to assist in a research project conducted by the OT Department of the University of Illinois. The University developed a Child Occupational Self Assessment (COSA) and requested Spurwink’s help in ensuring the screening tool was applicable and reliable for children with mental health disorders and developmental disabilities.

Whenever it was deemed appropriate for a client’s abilities and needs, the COSA was implemented by Spurwink OTs at the time of an initial screening.

“Our Occupational Therapists were happy to be able to participate in this data collection,” said Mary Thornton-Vogel, Senior Occupational Therapist at Spurwink Services. “It will help to support evidence-based practice in our OT Department. If the COSA is found to be a psychometrically sound and appropriate assessment for use in Spurwink, then further determination can be made regarding the assessment’s ability to provide more targeted OT goals. This would result in more efficient and effective intervention.”

Upon completion of the researcher’s dissertation, results of the data will be released in an article in July/August 2008. ■

A Profile of Success

Therapeutic Couple Receives National Recognition

At a time in their lives when friends are enjoying retirement, Joyce and Mahlon Willis have pursued a second career together – as a Therapeutic Couple for Spurwink Services in Portland. For the past 15 years, the Willises have dedicated their lives to working with adults with developmental disabilities.

Recently, the couple was recognized for their commitment and compassion with the presentation of the Maine Direct Support Professionals of the Year Award. The award was presented last month at a national conference in New Orleans by ANCOR - the American Network of Community Options and Resources.

Direct Support Professionals, who are often referred to as caregivers, personal assistants, or homecare aides, provide daily supports to millions of Americans with disabilities. At Spurwink, direct support is provided by both individuals and therapeutic couples who live in the homes with clients, providing consistency, structure and a safe, caring environment.

Spurwink's Therapeutic Couple model requires an extraordinary level of commitment, given the live-in requirement and the necessity to be available nearly round-the-clock.

Joyce and Mahlon Willis are one of 50 couples who are currently employed at Spurwink Services.

The Willises were recognized by ANCOR not only for their long-term commitment and care of the adults in their home, but for their ability to significantly change one young man's life – a Spurwink client who had autism and faced many behavioral and medical challenges. This young man's complex



Mahlon and Joyce Willis

medical condition required that a person sit with him, sometimes for hours at a time, to cue him to breath. If one was not relentless in this approach, his medical condition would be aggravated, which would then precipitate a behavioral regression. Through years of constant vigilance by Joyce and Mahlon Willis, the client's cyclical actions were interrupted and he eventually developed into an individual who could communicate, make choices, express joy and displeasure, smile, live in a family setting, and go out into the community.

"Joyce and Mahlon are compassionate, nurturing, loving and humble people who are truly deserving of national recognition," said Sue Murphy, Spurwink Senior Program Director. "When they came to Spurwink they had no real experience in the developmental disabilities field, but they had a very strong foundation - they were committed to each other, they wanted to use their strengths as a couple and work together, and they wanted to help others. They have done this and done it well, and for 15 long years have given of themselves unto others, and have deeply enriched the quality of life for the individuals they have supported." ■

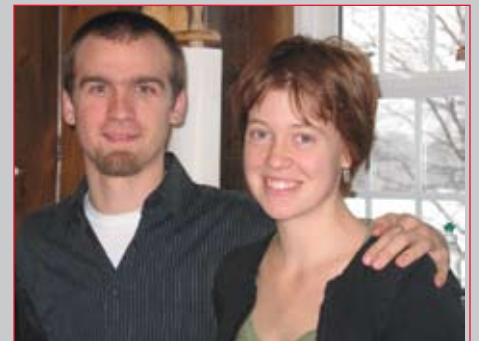
Couple Focus of Portland Press Herald Cover Story

Kara Estey and Zeb Ellis were the focus of a May 12, 2008 cover story in the Portland Press Herald. The two have been employed as a Therapeutic Couple for Spurwink Services for the past two years. They live in a home in Westbrook with three adult clients and were praised in the article titled, "Parental Influence, House Parents Bring Family Feel to Spurwink Agency Homes."

The couple model is important to Spurwink's residential programs because they provide great stability to individuals with mental illness and/or developmental disabilities. In addition to having a strong desire to make a difference for others, couples like Kara and Zeb find the position attractive because they get the opportunity to work together.

"Working together has been the biggest blessing," Kara said. "There are so many challenges. It's great to have someone like Zeb to bounce ideas off of."

Despite the challenges, Zeb agrees he and Kara have made it work. "We have found a way to set it up so that it works well for all of us, and it can be easy to get caught up in those routines," he explained. "But taking a step back from those routines helps us see our accomplishments."



Spurwink is very fortunate to have very special couples, like Kara and Zeb, who truly go the distance for those we serve.

Spurwink Services

Helping a Family Find Their Strengths



Deborah Cole, Functional Family Therapist, with Joe and Jennifer Allen.

Joe was an out of control teen and as a result, his family was falling apart. His behavior had become so erratic and violent, that his family feared not only for Joe's safety, but for the safety of those around him. A hospitalization followed by a school

suspension in spring 2007, led the Allen family to seek out the services of Deborah Cole, LCPC, a clinician with Spurwink's Functional Family Therapy Program (or FFT).

At the time, Joseph was an angry and defiant young man. "He was talking so disrespectfully that I would escalate to his level very quickly," said Jennifer Allen, Joe's mom. "We had no relationship with Joe. As a family, we were lost."

Using FFT's alliance-based strategies, Deb Cole engaged the entire Allen family in the therapy process. "With FFT, we work on building balanced relationships within a family," Deb explained. "As a non-judgmental participant, I helped the Allens find hope and build the skills they needed to problem solve."

Together, Deb and the Allen family laid out everyone's concerns, explored solutions that they could all accept and set small specific attainable goals. "Deb helped us respond to Joe's behavior rather than react," Jennifer said. "She gave us the tools we needed so we could talk to one another again. Deb brought us into a safe place and treated us with respect."

As things started to shift, the Allens found a new way to be a family together. "It was very rewarding to also see Joseph coming around and becoming less resistant," Deb said.

Jennifer added: "Joe could see the effort we were making. Deb was able to bring us out of crisis. I felt more secure and able to go home and do things in a different way."

Using the strengths found in relationships, the Allen family was able to get back to a place of well-being. As a result, this family is stronger than ever before. "When everything was falling apart, Deb helped us put it all back together again," Jennifer said.

Deb attributes much of the progress to the tremendous work done by the entire family. "The Allens were so open and willing to hang in there," she said. "I appreciate their commitment." ■

"I Built a Boat!"

What happens when a group of Spurwink students come together to build a boat? They get to work!

"We really look forward to Wednesdays when the Spurwink group comes in," said Margaret Mountcastle, Assistant Boat Builder with the Compass Project in Portland. "They are a great boat-building team!"

From January through May, students from Spurwink schools in Portland and South Portland spent one day a week at the Compass Project workshop. As part of a program for at-risk youth, they learned job and life skills along with the power of teamwork.

Despite their own personal challenges, these students demonstrated tremendous focus, perseverance, hands-on skills and an ability to work together. They impressed both their Spurwink teachers and social workers as well as the boat-building staff at the Compass Project.

"This has been an amazing process to watch," said Michele Flagg, LMSW-CC, a Spurwink Generalist. "Our students really are exceptional. They have been able to focus on the work, adhere to safety issues and have naturally mentored one another."

As the Echo Bay Dory Skiff began to take shape, the students grew increasingly excited about the project. "Their enthusiasm and pride really shows – and rubs off on us," said Margaret from Compass Project. While preparing to leave the workshop one afternoon, one student stepped back and exclaimed, "I built a boat!" Another expressed: "In all my life I never thought I would build a boat!"

Throughout the 7-week process, the students engaged in group exercises and planned activities such as journaling to help them reflect on the project and the skills they were learning in the process. By the time the boat was launched on June 6, they were fully aware of what it means to build a boat

Continued next page



Spurwink Services

Music For All

Spurwink Services has received national recognition for creating a model music program for youth with special needs in Maine. The National Association for Music Education (MENC) recently published a book, "Model Music Programs" which highlights programs throughout the country that offer "replicable ways of organizing and maintaining high-quality music education." Spurwink's music program, under the direction of music teacher, Jeff Shaw, is featured in Chapter Three of the publication, titled, "Music for All." MENC cites Spurwink's commitment to meet each child's potential and limitations.

As music teacher, Shaw teaches at two of Spurwink's special purpose schools - the Roosevelt School in South Portland and the Cummings School in Portland. Both the Roosevelt and Cummings Schools serve children who have been unsuccessful in the public school system due to severe emotional, behavioral and developmental challenges.

Five years ago, many of these students had never participated in a music class or had instruction on an instrument. When Jeff was hired, he faced the challenge of creating Spurwink's first formal music program that would be accessible, fulfilling and enjoyable to a very diverse student population.

"I knew our approach would have to be as unique as the children themselves," Shaw stated. "While the focus of a traditional music program is on areas such as performance and theory, our program at Spurwink is grounded in creativity and fostering positive musical experiences for our students."

Since the music program's inception, children for whom musical training was quite foreign are now eager to play a variety of instruments and sing and participate in annual school-wide talent shows. ■



Susan Kimball interviews Cameron, a music student and base player.

Jeff Shaw's music classes at Spurwink have led to the development of two rock and roll bands comprised of students and staff. Spurwink students, Sean, Kyle and Cameron, are joined by Ed Techs, Renee DeCamillis and Tom Pickett.



Spurwink Music Program Featured on WCSH6 Newscast

A news feature about the Spurwink Music Program recently aired on WCSH 6. Susan Kimball, WCSH 6 Reporter, visited the Roosevelt School to videotape a lesson and interview Jeff Shaw, music teacher, along with several students.

"I Built a Boat" continued from page 4

as part of a team. They had also experienced several things that their project leaders hope will help them stay in school and become better citizens – valuable skills, self-confidence and the joy of success.

For more information about the Compass Project, visit www.compassproject.org. ■



Derek marks screw holes on the boat.



Josh uses a spokeshave to chamfer a seat for the boat.

Spurwink Institute

New England Summer Wraparound Institute

On July 16 – 18, the Behavioral Health Sciences Institute (BHSI) is presenting the New England Summer Wraparound Institute (NESWI) on the campus of the University of Maine at Augusta. The event promises to be a multi-faceted learning experience for professionals working with individuals facing complex situations all over New England.

Participants in NESWI will have the unique opportunity to learn about the phases, activities, and principles of High-Fidelity Wrap-around and can choose from three training workshops: Coaching for High Fidelity Wraparound, Mobilizing A High-Fidelity Wraparound Community, and Wraparound Facilitator & Family Support Partner Alliance.

In the latter workshop, "participants will explore the various roles of a Family Support Partner and engage in discussions involving the strengths and challenges of the person in that role," explained Torrey Harrison, BHSI Director. A key element in this workshop will be the successful incorporation of a Family Support Partner into an agency.

Harrison asserts that NESWI is a logical extension of the work that BHSI is doing. "In looking at what our mission is - to provide innovative curricula and training to advance workforce development - we recognize that Wraparound is a proven process that yields positive outcomes for individuals and state agencies."

Harrison is also involved in the National Wraparound Initiative

Advisory Group which further bolsters what BHSI brings to NEWSI. "Participation in this group supports us having conversations with national experts in the field," she explained. "The long term goal for BHSI is to develop standardized training and to develop a New England consortium that utilizes standardized training and has a credentialing capacity."

NEWSI's keynote presenter will be Dennis Saleebey, DSW, Professor Emeritus of Social Welfare at the School of Social Welfare, University of Kansas. Saleebey is nationally recognized for his work in the development of a strengths-based approach to social work practice. He has written many articles and is author of the book, "The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice."

"Strengths-based work is a cornerstone to the wraparound process and Dennis has been a leader in the field," Harrison said.

Additional presenters include: Chris Cook, Al Haynes, Dave Simpson, Marjorie Withers, Tonya Labbe and Michael Mitchell. Speaker and scholarship funds are sponsored by the Maine Health Access Foundation. Morning refreshments and breaks are sponsored by TD Banknorth Insurance Agency, Inc.

NEWSI is for any professionals who are interested in learning about and using the Wraparound process within their organization. To receive a brochure and registration form, e-mail info@bhsi.net or call (207) 688-4589. Registration materials will also be available on-line at www.bhsi.net. ■

Spurwink's 13th Annual Northern New England Conference on Child Maltreatment September 11th and 12th 2008 Wyndham Portland Airport Hotel South Portland, Maine

The Child Abuse Program is proud to once again present this annual conference. This year's conference will focus on child abuse prevention with particular emphasis on Shaken Baby Prevention. Speakers will include:

Mark Dias, MD, a pediatric neurosurgeon from Penn State University and Hershey Medical Center who has developed the only evidence based Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) prevention program in the United States, first in upstate New York and now in Western Pennsylvania. Dr. Dias and his nursing colleague will describe their work with SBS in general and specifically with prevention.

Ron Barr, MD and Marilyn Barr from the National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome will speak about their many years of work on SBS. Ron has developed the Period of PURPLE Crying Video for SBS education and Marilyn has been the executive director of the National Center since its inception.

Jan Clarkin from the Maine Children's Trust will host a panel on child abuse prevention in Maine.

Dr. Mark Publicker will speak on peri-natal substance use and drug affected babies.

Dr. David Prichard from UNH will speak on vicarious traumatization - how working with trauma affects providers.

Dr. Meg DeWitt from the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will talk about preventable child death in Maine.

For more information or to be placed on our mailing list:

Contact the Spurwink Training Department at 774-2891 or Jane Spencer-Sears jspensears@spurwink.org.

Spurwink's Augusta Boys and Girls Club for Teens

What's Happening...



- Breakdance competition was part of our long winter. It was held at South Portland High School in March, and our team, The Self Destruct Crew, participated (see photo). Also in March, the Breakdance Coach and Program Coordinator, Jesse Patkus, took the team to a

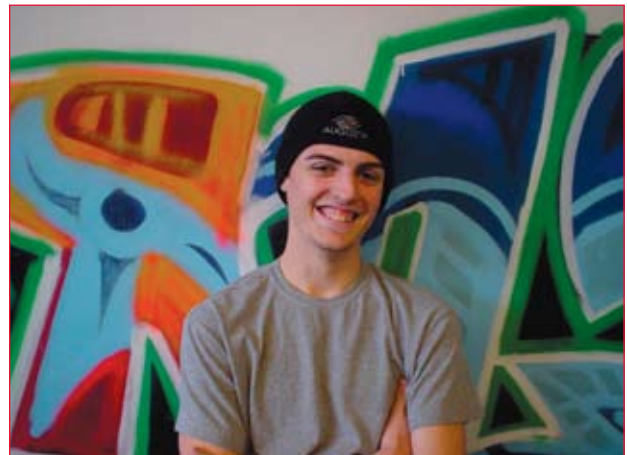
Talent Show in Skowhegan where they did us proud. Chizzle Whizzle, an annual Variety show at Cony High School was a place where Chris Scott, one of the Self Destruct Crew showed his talents by breakdancing and singing, although not at the same time!

- The Art Program continues with progress on the Gallery for Young Artists that extends into the hallway of the Augusta Boys & Girls Club for Teens. Our major art teachers, Cindy McInerney and her son, Chris (a great fantasy artist) have inspired our teens to create some very unusual art. Take a look at the photo of "shutter-bugs" that came into being during the long winter days in Augusta.

- Kathi Wall, the Executive Director, graduated from a three-year Robert Wood Johnson Executive Nurse Fellowship in April, and will continue as an active alumna. She is throwing her hat in the ring to represent Maine on the alumnae board in 2009-2010. Also in April, she accepted a scholarship from the Great Bay Foundation to attend a week-long seminar in Adaptive Leadership at the Wentworth-By-The-Sea in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. "All of this will be very useful as Spurwink and Capital Kids move forward together into new endeavors," Kathi said.

- Levi Lamoreau, is the Augusta Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year for 2008. This means he has been with the club for over two years and has given service to the club in a variety of ways. He is a member of the Self Destruct Crew, helps to keep the teen center looking clean and inviting, and is often available for volunteer efforts on behalf of the club. Congratulations to Levi of Augusta!

- Grants - A 21st Century Community Learning Center grant was awarded to the Augusta BGClub and the Augusta School District to jointly provide after school programming in grades K-12 beginning this fall. The amount over five years will be close to \$1.2 million. In addition, the club has earned a \$10,000 grant from the Tony Hawk Foundation to initiate fundraising towards a new, concrete, regional skatepark to be built at Williams Park in Augusta. Toebee Parkhurst, a professional skateboarder from Augusta, has assisted with the concept design and development of the skatepark. The model will go to the Augusta City Council for approval in July 2008. ■



Levi Lamoreau



Augusta Boys & Girls Club for Teens
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A New Spurwink Program for At-Risk Families

Spurwink Services was recently awarded a contract by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to implement the Alternative Response Program (ARP) in York and Cumberland Counties. Effective July 1, this program will provide community-based intervention services to families who have been reported to DHHS with allegations of child abuse and/or neglect that is considered to be of low to moderate severity. ARP focuses on the family's strengths and needs with the goal of ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of the children.

"There are a variety of reasons a family may be referred to Child Protective Services," explains Cynthia Dodge, Ph.D., Spurwink's Director of Clinical Services. "These can include mental health and/or substance abuse problems, domestic violence, financial issues and divorce. Our goal will be to assist families by providing a safety assessment, facilitating the development of a family plan, referring them to resources in the community and providing financial assistance for short-term emergency or critical needs."

ARP will be part of the Evidence Based Community Practices Division, a new regional approach to service delivery at Spurwink. (See Leadership Message on page 2.) The Regional Coordinator for York and Cumberland Counties will be Amy Cohan, LCSW, the former Director of Spurwink's Treatment, Evaluation and Diagnostic Clinic in Portland and the Public School Counseling Program.

Newsletter Editor: Donna Murphy, Director of Communications
Graphic Design: Elizabeth Margolis-Pineo

Southern Maine Autism Fair
Saturday, March 28, 2009
Wyndham Portland Airport Hotel
South Portland, Maine

Spurwink Services and Pine Tree Society are partnering to present a Southern Maine Autism Fair for families and educators. The day-long event will offer experts on a wide variety of topics, from social skills and family life strategies to educational needs.

"This event is designed to provide the opportunity for families with a child or adult with autism to network and find support and information," said Donna Murphy, Spurwink's Director of Communications. "Most importantly, we want parents to find the help and hope they need to maintain a healthy, happy family life."

The Autism Fair will include over 25 exhibitors, break-out sessions, product demonstrations and time to meet other parents and share experiences.

Admission to the event is free. For more information, contact Donna Murphy at 871-1200 or dmurphy@spurwink.org.

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