

Spurwink Honors Peter Vigue, A Passionate Leader and Mentor



Peter Vigue, 2007 Humanitarian of the Year, receives his award from Bill Ryan, last year's recipient.

On Saturday, November 17, business leaders, friends and family gathered to celebrate Peter Vigue, President and CEO of The Cianbro Companies, as he received the Spurwink 2007 Humanitarian of the Year Award. Nearly 500 people attended this year's Humanitarian of the Year Dinner at the Portland Marriott at Sable Oaks, where former Governor Angus King served as Master of Ceremonies. Guests traveled far and wide from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, and Wisconsin.

Presented annually since 1987, the Humanitarian of the Year Award recognizes individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to enrich the lives of others. The dinner and award ceremony also serve as Spurwink's primary fundraising event. Contributions in honor of Peter Vigue and in support of Spurwink totaled more than \$300,000 this year.

As CEO of one of the East Coast's largest civil and heavy industrial construction and construction services companies, Vigue is

well known for his business acumen and his strong commitment to people. His belief that we all share responsibility for improving the economy, providing educational opportunities, and achieving a safe and healthy lifestyle is reflected in the leadership he has provided at the national, state and local level.

During the Humanitarian event, Vigue was commended by several former Humanitarians – Mike McNamara (1999), Joe and Carol Wishcamper (2004), George Campbell (2005) and Bill Ryan (2006) – and was praised by his co-workers and colleagues. Alan Burton, Vice President at Cianbro, acknowledged his highly respected boss: "Pete Vigue is a passionate leader of Cianbro. He truly believes in the team concept and what people can accomplish together."

Peter "Andi" Vigue, the honoree's son, spoke on behalf of the Vigue family, congratulating his father on his well-deserved recognition and thanking him for the strong example he has set for his children and family. Andi Vigue also recognized the "voice behind the curtain:" his mother, Carole.

Bill Ryan, the 2006 Humanitarian of the Year, presented Vigue with this year's award. "It is easy to understand why Pete Vigue has been selected by Spurwink as the Humanitarian of the Year," Ryan stated. "His leadership in business, in his personal life and in his community certainly indicates his concern for the welfare and happiness of others." ■

Spurwink

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Our Commitment to Community Mental Health

Leadership Message

Spurwink has become a significant part of the mental health network in Maine, with nearly 50 years of experience, three subsidiaries, 850 employees and more than 20 programs providing education, prevention, technology and social services. However, our experience, size and the depth of our services have not made us immune from the budget cuts in community mental health.

To address these challenges, we have done what we always do – we continually look ahead with thoughtful planning and creative thinking. We have met the current tide of budget reductions proactively. We have streamlined services and reduced overhead to the very best of our ability. Our administrative costs are at a remarkably low 7.9 percent.

Areas in which we have achieved savings include: insurances, facility management and maintenance, purchasing and consolidation of services. Over the past year and a half, we have reduced our reliance on Medicaid and have diversified our funding mix. We will continue to relentlessly pursue excellence, even in these times of severe economic downturn.

Our commitment to those we serve has not wavered. We will continue to explore alternative sources of revenue, work with state administrators to find real solutions and educate our legislators on the critical role community mental health services play in the lives of so many Maine families.

Access to community-based mental health is a central component of quality, affordable health-care. Without it, children, adults and families would surely suffer.

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

An Advocate for Children:

Laura Blaisdell, M.D., Spurwink Services Board of Directors

Despite her busy career as resident in Pediatrics at Maine Medical Center, Dr. Laura Blaisdell was eager to join the Spurwink Services Board of Directors last year, primarily out of concern for the needs of low-income children and families. Dr. Blaisdell sees many children who are served through MaineCare, at both the Pediatric Clinic at Maine Medical Center and Emergency Services for children who are in crisis.



Dr. Laura Blaisdell

“My interest and professional volunteerism with Spurwink stems from a deep value of children, combined with the tremendous need I see in my clinics every day,” Laura said. “I am committed to caring not only for the physical health of children, but to advocate for all aspects of their well-being. Spurwink offers a holistic approach to mental health care and treatment that addresses the many different challenges children may face. I want to help ensure that these kinds of programs remain viable, particularly for low-income families.”

Laura believes that more children and families are falling through the cracks due to decreases in public funding. “We are seeing more children diagnosed with autism than ever before, children with developmental delays and behavioral issues, and more depression in teens. Families are finding it hard to cope, and at the same time there aren’t services to follow them.”

As a pediatrician, Laura recognizes the need for support services for low-income families – and the outcomes if those services aren’t available.

“Any of us who work with children understand their vulnerability to their environment and how it impacts their physical and emotional well-being,” she explained. “Children are our ultimate investment. When we help children to set down healthy patterns whether it be in eating, in emotional well-being or in positive lasting relationships, we are providing them with the skills they need to become productive and happy adults.”

Upon completion of her residency, Laura intends to dovetail clinical practice with her passion for pediatric research, policy and advocacy. “It’s very difficult to find providers who will take on kids with mental disabilities and provide the kind of care that Spurwink does,” she said. “I would like to create research that can better inform policy and advocate the merits and successes of places like Spurwink so that the services we provide will be available to children and families in the future.” ■

A Profile of Success

Jacob Maschhoff

The success of Jacob Maschhoff while in residential treatment at Spurwink Services was one of the highlights of the program at this year's Humanitarian of the Year Event. Jacob and his parents, Frank and Gladys, received a standing ovation after sharing their poignant story with the audience.

Nearly two years ago, Frank and Gladys Maschhoff were at wit's end. Their son, Jacob, was refusing to go to school and seldom left his room. "Jacob was extremely manipulative and would threaten to hurt us," Frank recalled. "When things didn't go his way, he could cause quite a bit of damage to the house." The local police were frequent visitors to the Maschhoff house during that time.

Jacob's parents fought to find an alternative for their son that would address his behavioral issues while meeting his educational needs which were challenged by a significant learning disability. They found hope when Jacob was finally evaluated by a psychologist and referred to Spurwink Services.

For the next 14 months, Jacob resided at Spurwink's Residential and Day Treat-



Jacob Maschhoff was joined at the podium by his parents Gladys and Frank.

ment Program in Casco. "It was definitely tough at first," Jacob said. "I had to earn the respect of the staff. There were times when I missed home so much that I wanted to run away."

Jacob was a client of Spurwink Generalist, Bill Messer, who recalled the tremendous work Jacob did while in treatment. "The frequency of school truancy and Jacob's limited problem-solving skills were primary catalysts to the family conflicts that were existing at home," Bill said. "We provided educational treatment while he and his parents also engaged in clinical family work. Jake began to understand his individual learning style, how to get what he needed and how to ask for help."

"Jake also used our milieu therapy to his benefit," Bill explained. "He built positive relationships with his teachers and residential staff."

Perhaps most importantly, Jacob became genuinely interested in creating change in his life and in building a healthy relationship with his mom and dad. Bill observed this dramatic shift: "Jake's relationship with his parents improved greatly, he was attending school on a regular basis, engaging in family activities and having higher regard for himself and his future."

When Jacob arrived at Spurwink Services, he couldn't envision himself graduating from high school. When he returned home to his old high school, he had a new focus - receiving his diploma.

Jacob credits Spurwink staff with helping him turn his life around. "I like every one of them," he said. "They always knew if something was wrong. There was always someone there to talk to."

Today, Jacob is back at home with his parents and family life is far more peaceful than it once was. A high school junior who once hated school, Jacob is on the honor roll and was selected "Student of the Month" last fall.

Speaking to the Humanitarian Dinner guests, Frank Maschhoff recognized the importance of Spurwink's individualized care and treatment: "They look at the entire person - education, behavior, social skills, safety, recreation. Spurwink has a proven track record of getting positive results and they have the best group of dedicated professionals who can be found anywhere in New England, perhaps the nation." ■



Jacob poses with US Senator Susan Collins.



Former Maine Governor Angus King applauded Jacob's accomplishments.

Spurwink Services

Going the distance for individuals with autism

For children with autism, early intervention during the preschool years has proven to produce significant benefits and improvements. Spurwink's Therapeutic Preschool resides in a bright, beautiful space within the First Parish Congregational Church in Saco. Two of the Preschool's three classrooms are for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Julien Holmes

Julien Holmes began attending Spurwink Services' Therapeutic Preschool in Saco after he was diagnosed with autism in 2006. His mother, Judi, reports that now at age four, Julien has gone from having "very little vocabulary to being a chatty little boy."



Julien shares some one-on-one time with Sheri Sastre, Program Coordinator of the Therapeutic Preschool.

The Therapeutic Preschool resembles a typical preschool in a number of ways with circle time, social games, theme projects and field trips. But as Julien's parents have discovered, the preschool offers something that is invaluable – one-on-one support.

"Our individualized approach makes it possible for children to succeed," said Sheri Sastre, Program

Coordinator. "This is particularly meaningful for those children who have been unsuccessful in other programs."

Judi Holmes also appreciates the knowledgeable staff and monthly parent meetings. "There is always someone available to answer our questions," she explained. "At the parent meetings, we get to meet other parents and can set up play-dates with kids who are at the same level as Julien."

The preschool staff helps families develop skills and strategies that they can apply at home. "It's a collaborative process of fine-tuning with families and therapists as we go," Sheri said.

For children like Julien who have a disorder on the autism spectrum, the Therapeutic Preschool offers a nurturing environment, a program tailored to individual needs and the opportunity to flourish.

"We learn so much from each child who comes through the preschool," Sheri said. "Each child's unique accomplishments are cause for celebration." ■

There are times when a public school is unable to meet the needs of a student, particularly when significant behavioral problems arise in a child with a developmental disorder such as autism. These children and adolescents benefit greatly by small group instruction, specialized curriculum and the therapeutic environment found at a Spurwink Services Day Treatment Program.

Jenna St. Laurent

For nearly five years, Jenna St. Laurent was able to attend public school in her hometown of Sanford. She had been diagnosed with autism and had significant language delays, but her local school met her needs with help from a consultation team at Spurwink Services.

But as time went on and Jenna grew older, her needs became more complex. Behavioral problems and aggression made it impossible for Jenna's school to address her educational needs while maintaining her safety and the safety of those around her. In 2003, at the age of 10, Jenna moved to the Roosevelt School in South Portland, one of seven day treatment programs operated by Spurwink Services. Jenna has been a student at the Roosevelt School ever since.

Luke Domareki is the Spurwink Ed Tech who works most closely with Jenna. The two spend most of the school day working one-on-one in a small classroom. They communicate in a variety of ways that includes spoken word reinforced through the use of a white board, picture boards and some signing. Jenna thrives on routine and structure and Luke is there to guide her through her day as she works on verbalization and social and living skills. Over time, Jenna has



Luke Domareki, a Spurwink Ed Tech, reads a book to Jenna.

learned how to express her needs and convey her feelings in appropriate ways.

Several times a week, Luke and Jenna travel out into the

Spurwink Services

Going the distance for individuals with autism

community, learning daily living skills such as how to order food at a fast food restaurant, shop for groceries or mail a letter. Back at school, Jenna is able to join her classmates for specific group activities like art, music or cooking.

"Jenna has made significant gains in her behavior and in life skills," said Tara Burgess, Jenna's mother.

School and home stay in close contact through the use of a notebook that travels back and forth with Jenna. "I love the daily communication from the school about how her day went," Tara said.

In the year ahead, Jenna may transition to the Spurwink day treatment program in Portland which is geared to students at the high school level. This will allow Jenna to further develop the independent living skills she needs in order to move into adulthood.

At either school, Jenna's parents are secure in knowing their daughter will continue to receive a customized education plan within a therapeutic environment designed to help Jenna reach her full potential.

"Having Jenna at the Spurwink has been a wonderful experience for our whole family," Tara said. ■

Debbie enjoys the independence of living in the community, while sharing a safe and caring home. She poses with Liz Naber, one of her caregivers, and Liz's daughter, Penelope.



Spurwink Services has over 25 years of experience providing support to adults with autism and other developmental disorders. Through Day Services programming and Residential Services, adult consumers are offered individual choice, person-centered planning and milieu therapy.

Debbie Harrison

When Debbie Harrison was about two years old, her mother began to suspect something was wrong. Vicky Harrison took her daughter to doctor after doctor, but they all said the same thing – Debbie was mentally retarded. It wasn't until Vicky read the book, "A Child Called Noah," that she learned about autism, a developmental disorder that was very rare at the time. When she brought Debbie to the doctors and said, "I think Debbie has autism, what do you think?" she began to get answers.

Debbie spent most of her school years at a Spurwink day treatment program where she received the individualized support and treatment that has been the hallmark of Spurwink's services. Her parents appreciated the assistance and encouragement they received as a family as well, from parent support groups to help in taking Debbie to the doctor's office. "Spurwink was always there," Vicky said. "We really felt we weren't all alone anymore."

In 1987, when Debbie was 17 years old, she moved into a Spurwink community-based home. The transition allowed her to lead a

more independent adult life in a home with a therapeutic couple and several other consumers.

Today, Debbie is a pleasant

37-year-old woman who has a full life. She lives in a cheerful home in downtown Portland with her caregivers, Liz and Josh, their baby Penelope, and two dogs. Paul also lives in the home and is a friend as well as a fellow consumer – he and Debbie have been in Spurwink programs together for over 20 years.

Debbie has limited verbal capabilities, but despite her complex disability, her days are filled with activity. During the week, she gets up each morning and attends Spurwink Day Services in North Yarmouth. There, Debbie and her fellow consumers engage in work like shredding paper for a recycling business.

"Payday is Debbie's favorite," reports Liz Naber, her caregiver. "She gets to pick out her favorite snacks at the store."

When Debbie returns home from Day Services, she takes time out alone in her room to decompress (a coping skill she has learned). The remainder of the day is no different than that of any other family – there are chores, grocery shopping, meal preparation, walking the dogs, watching television. Debbie also enjoys singing to her favorite music from the 1980's or doing latch-hooking.

Debbie goes home to visit her parents one week-end a month and on holidays. As they have grown older and less able to provide the structure and consistency that Debbie needs, her parents value what Liz Naber and Josh Howarth have to offer. "Liz and Josh are young and active," Vicky explained. "Debbie seems to worship them. She has lost weight and takes greater interest in her hair, clothing and how she looks."

There is no doubt that the enriching experience of living with a young, robust family has served Debbie well. ■

Spurwink Institute

News From Behavioral Health Sciences Institute (BHSI)



New England Summer Wraparound Institute

The staff of BHSI is currently planning a New England Summer Wraparound Institute (NESWI), scheduled for July 16 -18 at The University of Maine at Augusta. The keynote speaker is noted psychologist, Dr. Dennis Saleebey, author of Strength-Based Perception in Social Work. NESWI will offer three workshops that will give providers of High Fidelity Wraparound Services the foundational tools for success and will include participants from all over New England.

Early Intervention Specialist Training

BHSI has also been preparing an Early Intervention Specialist (EIS) Training for the Community Caring Collaborative (CCC) which is based in Machias and serves Washington County. The Collaborative is a group of community members, agencies, providers and educational facilities that have come together to create a seamless system-of-care for Washington County's high-risk infant population. The collaborative includes family members, family groups, health care facilities, tribal agencies, social service agencies, early intervention programs, child care services, substance abuse treatment agencies, state agencies, higher education and primary and secondary schools, and caring community members. The EIS training contains 11 modules on areas including self-care, adverse childhood experience/trauma, utilizing natural supports, the needs of infants who have been exposed to substances, and dynamics of parenting.

New BHSI Staff

Torrey Harrison, Director of Behavioral Health Sciences Institute, is pleased to introduce three new members of the BHSI team: Dave Kinsella, Bob Carroll and Andrea Norwood.

David Kinsella, LMSW-cc, Projects Manager

David brings with him a Master of Social Work degree and several years of experience as a clinician with Sweetser's Cumberland County Crisis Response. He has also worked as a Case Manager for Youth Alternatives and as a clinician for the Providence Service Corporation's Intensive In-Home Services. In his role as Projects Manager, David oversees many of BHSI's daily operations as well as contracts with the Department of Health & Human Services, Children's Behavioral Health Services and Adult Developmental Services. David is also involved in the development of external trainings offered by BHSI Professional Development.

Bob Carroll, LMSW-cc, Training Specialist for Professional Development

Bob Carroll has over 12 years of experience in the social service field in Maine. His background includes positions as a School Based Clinician at Windham's Real School, a Group Facilitator at the Kids First Center and an Outreach Program Director at New Beginnings, Inc. In his role as Training Specialist at BHSI, Bob has taken over the trainings previously offered by the Spurwink Institute's Training & Continuing Education division which has been folded into BHSI's professional development area. These trainings include such offerings as Positive Behavioral Support, Child Development and Bullying & Teasing. Bob is also working with the BHSI team on the development of additional trainings to complement the Professional Development training menu.

Andrea Norwood, Administrative Support

Andrea had previously worked for the ALLTech division of Spurwink Institute and is happy to be back at Pineland in her new role with BHSI.



Torrey Harrison, BHSI Director

The BHSI team is committed to providing innovative curricula and training to advance workforce development. ■

Humanitarian Sponsors

Spurwink extends our heartfelt appreciation to the generous sponsors of this year's Humanitarian of the Year Dinner. On behalf of the children, adults and families we serve, thank you!

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Spurwink's Augusta Boys and Girls Club for Teens

Wintertime at the Teen Center



The Augusta Boys and Girls Club for Teens (ABGClub for Teens) has been spending the winter months making use of contributions from members of the Board of Directors and local community members.

Dr. Roy Miller, a physician at Sheepscot Valley Health Center and a member of the Board of Directors of ABGClub for Teens, generously donated a Nintendo Wii that has become a favorite of the teens. Tennis, baseball, boxing, and bowling are the preferred sports for this winter's group of teenagers. The games are played on a wide screen television donated by Mr. Roger Katz, Mayor of Augusta. The same wide screen is used for Friday afternoon movies.

Dr. Miller also gave the center an elliptical trainer that will be put to use as more focus is placed on nutritious snacks and physical activities. "Like so many youth groups, we continually work on increasing awareness about healthy lifestyles and prevention of childhood obesity," said Kathi Wall, Executive Director, Capital Kids.

Another donation Dr. Miller made last year, a keyboard and Fruti Loops computer program, remains a popular tool for composing music and burning it onto a CD.

The Elks Club of Augusta made a generous donation to provide the teen center with a popcorn machine, air hockey table, digital video camera, hot dog machine, card gaming table and a football game. The Elks were very obliging in helping to locate these items – including doing the shopping themselves. "Our most recent trappings are bean bag chairs used for homework and 'hanging out,'" Kathi reported.

Local art teachers, Cindy McInerney and Sarah Barnum, provided many free hours of instruction in the arts for members of the teen center. Instruction has included pottery and glazing classes, painting in acrylics and fabric and paper art projects. Thanks to Chris McInerney, the center has recently added cartooning classes on Friday afternoons.

Jesse Patkus, Program Coordinator, has a growing group of young people engaged in breakdancing. A statewide competition held in November 2007 at the Buker Gymnasium in Augusta highlighted 40 competitors from throughout the state and had an audience of more than 100 spectators and guests. Chris Scott and Guido Hernandez of Augusta walked away with first place awards in a breath-taking display of flips, twirls and incredible footwork!

At the Hodgkins Middle School site, students have been engaged in bowling, an art club, guitar lessons, and most recently, Lego Robotics instruction.

"We are very grateful to our generous supporters who have helped make these activities possible," Kathi stated. "These days there are many things going on for adolescents in Augusta at our two after-school sites. Our goal is to keep adding instructors and activities until no one can say 'there's nothing to do in Augusta!'" ■



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Pam Sperry

Pam Sperry, M.Ed., joined Spurwink Services as Director of Educational Services in October 2007. A resident of Newcastle, Pam previously served as principal at South Bristol Elementary School and also as Superintendent of School Union 74. She spent the past year as an Educational Consultant for KIDS Consortium in Auburn.



Pam has lived in Maine most of her life, attending graduate school at the University of Maine. She began her career in special education until she eventually moved into the mainstream classroom. "I knew that if I wanted to continue to ask classroom teachers to do things differently on behalf of children with disabilities, I had to walk in their shoes for a time." Pam loved her time as a classroom teacher.

Pam oversees the seven day treatment programs (special purpose schools) operated by Spurwink Services in Portland, South Portland, Casco, Brunswick, Auburn, Chelsea, Cornville and the tutorial program at Spring Harbor Hospital. This year, these educational programs will serve 300 children ages 5–20.

"I'm an advocate for children in every realm – school, family and community," Pam said. "Children deserve to be in an environment that maximizes their potential so they can be all they were meant to be." ■

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

Spurwink Students Build a Boat!

Ten students from Spurwink Services' day treatment programs in Portland and South Portland are currently participating in the Compass Project, a local boat-building program for students in middle and high school. The students will build a 12-foot Bevin's skiff from start to finish in seven weeks. In the process, they will learn how to use their hands and solve problems, develop teamwork and communication skills, learn life skills that can help them stay in school and become better citizens and become empowered and self-confident learners. The boat launching and outcomes of this project will be featured in the next issue of the Spurwink newsletter. For more information about the Compass Project, visit www.compassproject.org. ■



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