

MISSION STATEMENT

Alliance for the Physically Disabled (APD), Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to creating accessible and affordable housing opportunities with full-time personal assistance services for adults with severe physical disabilities.

“Life Comes At You Fast At Merica House” by Fred Day

A prominent insurance company based one of its recent advertising campaigns on the slogan, “life comes at you fast.” I have long felt that the slogan aptly describes the Merica House experience.

Life really does come at you fast at Merica House. Six months into my term as APD president, I walked into Merica House one Sunday morning and immediately became involved in a small dispute between Sean and his good friend Deirdre. I never really understood the nature of the dispute. All I know is that Sean, speaking through his talking computer, was asking me to prepare divorce papers, a task that I do with some regularity in my work.

Sean’s talking computer is a marvel but, as with all such devices, it sometimes introduces inaccuracies when translating Sean’s thoughts. In this instance, when Sean asked me to prepare the divorce papers, the computer translation came out as “de-horse papers.” I told Sean that I would be happy to prepare the “de-horse papers.”

The error was providential. Sean, Deirdre, and the aides on duty all got a good laugh out of the translation. The dispute quickly faded to the background, all but forgotten amid the laughter.

I thought often of the “de-horse papers” as I worked my way through my two years as APD president. There were times when life at Merica House seemed to come too fast. There were meetings with Fairfax County officials to attend, a long list of email messages to answer, monthly board meetings to conduct, grant requests to review, and performance evaluations to write. There were times when I wished the pace would slow down. At times, I wanted to find a way to “de-horse” myself from the day-to-day demands of serving as APD president.

I learned, however, that the key to being APD president--and the key to dealing with the day-to-day demands--was to focus on the rewards inherent in the position. The rewards of serving as APD president were both abundant and readily visible. The rewards came from seeing residents Maureen and Cathy joyfully bundle up in the middle of winter in preparation for their Sunday trips to Our Lady Queen of Peace Church. The rewards came from seeing LaRue’s passion as he worked to find a way to improve the life of the residents; from learning of a particularly interesting college course that Matthew was taking; from seeing the beaming smile on Sean’s face when his computer would introduce yet another amusing error; from hearing the satisfaction in Sharita’s voice as she told of attending a productive and interesting workshop; and from sensing Deirdre’s noticeable disappointment when she would relate the details of the Washington Wizards’ most recent loss.

Life at Merica House is pretty normal. It comes at you fast. So do the rewards.

Fred Day



APD has a new President

The APD welcomes and thanks John Renfro for accepting the role of president of The Alliance for the Physically Disabled. Our readers will hear about his vision and plans in the next newsletter. Welcome aboard, John.

OUR THANKS

The APD wishes to thank the following patrons for their generosity in supporting Merica House since July 1, 2010

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mr. & Mrs. Gary Atkinson | Lt. Col. & Mrs. James Loop |
| Mr. James Cunningham | Ms. Mary Mallozzi |
| Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Dolan | Mr. William Marquardt |
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Who Said Marco Polo ?

Last August, friends, family and some residents of Merica House joined together with club members of the Handicapped Encounter Christ aka HECERS at the Providence Recreational Center in Fairfax for a pool party. A great time was enjoyed by all on one of those steamy hot summer days. It is hard to remember that hot summer weather after the harsh winter we have experienced. We thank all our volunteers who helped and we look forward to another pool party.



From left to right -Matt Brooker from HEC and APD member Don Jahn

Sean Wawrzaszek

My best friend Tim is coming at the end of April or beginning of May. We are going to a hotel to celebrate my birthday.

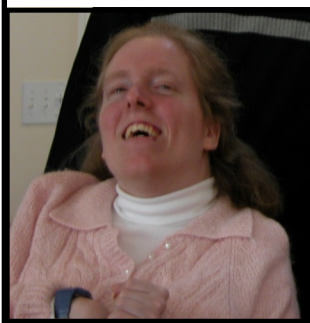
On June 20 I'm going to camp for two weeks. I'm going to swim lots this summer. Anyone who would like to help me to go swimming please contact Orlando at 703-671-7991.

**SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN**

****** Merica House is having a *Spring Open House* - - May 19, 2011 from 7:00 to 9:00 PM. Come and see all our recent home improvements and meet our residents, board, friends and family. Please RSVP to Orlando Fowlis at 703-671-991 or by email at apdsuper1@cox.net. ******

Deirdre Shields

From 1992 to 1996, I went to Perkins School for the Blind. I enjoyed it very, very much. I had lots of different classes. One of the classes I enjoyed the most was my music class. Matt Dane was a teacher who taught music and he liked birds a lot. As a graduation present, one of my aides gave me a birdhouse, which is now outside on the patio at Merica House. It says, "Dee's Bird Motel," on the bottom of it. Good memories for me.



On a weekly basis, I schedule everybody's trips for Metro-Access. On Sundays, I go to church. Sean goes to church every other Sunday, so I schedule his trip for him, too. Tuesdays and Thursdays Cathy and Maureen go to SPARC, which stands for Special Persons' Adaptive Resource Club.

I enjoy helping everybody out, and scheduling everybody's trips.

Maureen Shields

I enjoyed five fun filled days at home over the Christmas holiday. We opened presents and had our festive Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve since my sister, Jennifer, her husband Mark and my nephew Major were returning home to Atlanta on Christmas Day.

Andrew and his girlfriend Astrid also were home to celebrate with us. They stayed through the Christmas snow storm.

After a long snowy winter in Falls Church I am now working on my application to attend Camp Hebron again this summer. I look forward to seeing my friends, boating and fishing on the lake, arts and crafts and our talent shows and dances.

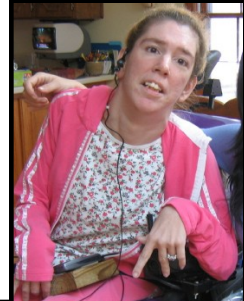
I continue to go to my SPARC program twice week and we are working on some community projects. I am so glad I have that program to go to each week

**"My Cruise" By Cathy Parr**

This fall I was fortunate in being able to go on a surprise cruise with my mother, my aunt and a friend. We spent a week traveling from Baltimore to Port Canaveral and then to the Bahamas and back.

The Carnival ship we were on was very accommodating for wheelchair travelers. I got to experience things I've never done before like going to a foreign country, visiting SeaWorld, and playing in the casino.

I even ran into some friends from home. Watching the sea go by from our deck was very peaceful and relaxing. I would definitely do it again, and I'm already saving my pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters so I can go again.

**Merica House Has a Financial Need**

APD is embarking on an ambitious fundraising campaign this year. Donations have been down and residents' income has been frozen for a few years, yet the costs of running Merica House have been climbing. APD has set a goal to raise \$10,000 this year. Please consider a financial donation to Merica House using PayPal on our web site THEAPD.ORG

Donate



Maureen and Deidre Shields and Cathy Parr watched, listened and chatted with potential volunteers as people came up to inspect the Merica House table on March 10 from 10 to noon at the Crossroads Baptist Church. The church was one of several sponsors of the annual Ventures into Volunteering Fair designed to attract seniors to check out various volunteering options. Fairfax County Division of Adult and Aging Services and Department of Family Services, Volunteer Fairfax and AARP were other principal sponsors.



As many as 100 volunteers, mostly senior citizens were expected to attend. Merica House is looking for volunteers who can visit our residents, read to them, update Facebook, etc., information that went into the welcome kit given to potential volunteers as they entered the fair.

The table was decked out with a red tablecloth lent by an adjoining display group. The banner Kathy Shields provided hung across the front of the table. On the table, we displayed picture displays and a frame showing recent pictures of residents. In addition to our three residents, Sunny Parr, Lynne Myhre and I attended the fair and talked with potential volunteers. We also gave out brochures, business cards and copies of the newsletter.

All three of our residents won door prizes, a friend from church recognized our residents, and our volunteer sign-up list is short, but we have one nonetheless. The residents came home exhausted but exhilarated.

The APD Board Welcomes Barbara Fulton

Barbara Fulton has joined APD as a part-time accountant. Barbara has 35 years of experience in small-business and non-profit accounting. The success of Barbara's clients is the best measure of her capability. Barbara has numerous clients for whom she's worked a dozen years or more. Barbara has real-world experience in every aspect of bookkeeping including payroll, financial reporting, taxes and day-to-day accounting practices. Her experience will ensure APD meets and exceeds the accounting demands of today as well as tomorrow's challenges.

Barbara will work together with Treasurer Mitch Opalski and Bookkeeper Mary Stapchuck to maintain the financial books and records of APD. She will be instrumental in preparing for the annual audit. We welcome Barbara on board and look forward to her contributions to our on-going success!



Look What's Cook'n - Thanks to the Civitan Club of Tyson's & The Civitan Foundation



In March, 2010, APD was the recipient of a grant from the Civitan Club of Tyson's that was used to renovate a working kitchen at Merica House. This was truly a most generous gift from the Civitan, since in 2009 they had approved a grant to renovate the large eat in kitchen at Merica House. The work started in July and by Sept. 1, 2010 our residents had a beautiful modern kitchen thanks to the Civitan Club. The pictures show the result of the remodeling project that includes new: lighting, cabinets, counter tops, tile floor, microwave, and a new counter top eating area.

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Credits and Acknowledgements

We would like to recognize the following organizations and churches that continue to make Merica House possible:

- America's Charities
- Annandale Rotary Foundation, Inc
- Civitan Club of Tyson's
- Fairfax County Consolidated Funding Pool
- Fairfax Host Lions Club Charities, Inc.
- Falls Church Garden Club
- Lions Club of Annandale
- Lions Club of Falls Church
- Monticello Council of Republican Women
- Our Lady Queen of Peace
- St James Catholic Church
- United Way

Executive Board Members

- President:** John Renfro
Vice President: Fran Rensbarger
V. P. Fund Raising &
Recruitment Betty Wawrzaszek
Treasurer Mitch Opalski
Secretaries Sunny Parr / Fred Day

We are on the WEB at: www.theapd.org
E-mail: apdsuper1@cox.net

Phone: (703) 671-7991
Fax: (703) 671-7991 (call first before sending FAX)



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3705 S. George Mason Dr.
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Alliance for the Physically Disabled is a registered 501© (3) non-profit organization.

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