



# SNSC

## Special Needs Support Center


Quarterly Newsletter  
Fall 2009

*We help families of children with special needs meet their unique challenges  
Carrying on the Legacy - Now and into the Future*

### Our Programs

Educational advocacy  
Parent to parent connections  
Educational series and workshops  
Nathan Hall Library  
Happenings –  
Social and recreational opportunities for teens and young adults  
Connections –  
Big Sibs, Sibshop, & Medical Buddies  
Respite Child Care

### Kids on the Block

Puppet troupe  
STAR   
Supporting adolescents with chronic physical health conditions  
ASPIRE Playgroup

### Our Money comes from People like you!

Annual Giving Campaign  
Other private and community foundations

**PATHWAYS**  
of the River Valley



Upper Valley United Way  
Government Grants

**Our thanks to you all.**

## In Memory of Barbara Whitman

This edition of the SNSC newsletter is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Barbara Whitman, a faithful Kids on the Block puppeteer for the last 18 years. Her untimely death - she was only 80 years of age - in a car wreck in October has left a major gap in the volunteer pool of the Upper Valley as she was involved in so many organizations and good works.

In addition to KOB these included Listen community dinners, docent at the Montshire Museum, numerous committees in her Sacred Heart Church of Lebanon, the UV Household Hazardous Waste Committee, leader of hikes for the Green Mountain Club, volunteer usher for events at Dartmouth and the Lebanon Opera House, etc. etc.

As her husband, Bill MacDonald, put it, Barbara was **the original Energizer bunny**. With KOB Barbara was a creative puppeteer who performed a large number of the skits. She will be greatly missed by all who knew and admired her dedication to others, especially the SNSC and KOB family.

## President's Corner

*By Pete Bleyler*

The Board and AGC Committee and office staff worked hard on getting the Annual Giving Campaign (AGC) already for this year's campaign. The AGC is a critically important component of SNSC's financial sustainability.

**Almost 30% of our revenue budget comes from individual donations to the AGC.**

Letters to our friends and supporters, asking for a donation to SNSC, were mailed on November 4. We are hopeful that our supporters will be as

generous as last year, and that we gain additional contributors this year. All of this will be necessary if we are to attain our goal of \$52,000. If you have already given – Thank you very much. If you have not yet done so – there is still time!

**On Friday, February 26, we will have a “fun-raising” as well as a “fund-raising” dinner at the Simon Pearce restaurant.**

A similar dinner was held last February as a kick-off to our year-long celebration of SNSC's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We expect the upcoming event to be as much fun and delicious as last year's. Please mark your calendars and save the date.

## **The SNSC Team** **Board of Directors**

Pete Bleyler, **President**

Ann Bracken, MD, **Vice-Pres.**

Julie Wellman, **Secretary**

Frank Klymn, **Treasurer**

Elizabeth Barker

Laurie Emanuele

David Harris

Barbara Mellert

Dick Nordgren, MD

Miriam Osofsky, Ph.D.

Ann Reynolds,  
PsyD

Kathy Westwood

## **Staff**

Philip Eller  
**Executive Director**

Pam Blair  
**Programs Coordinator**

Leah Abrahamsen,  
**STAR Coordinator**

Nancy Tantillo  
**Admin. Assistant**

Bill Lamb,  
**Newsletter Editor**

Vasilios Georgitsis  
**Webmaster**  
**NH/VT Computer**

Murray Ngoima  
Sylvia Dow  
**ART LAB Facilitators**

Amanda Miranoff  
Anna Hart  
**ASPIRE Facilitators**

## **Reunion Picnic**

As part of the SNSC 30th Anniversary Celebrations, a Reunion Picnic was held on Saturday, September 19th, at the CCBA Pavilion in Lebanon. Over 70 people, some "old-timers" and many newer members of SNSC family attended this event with great food provided by SNSC and cooked by staff.



It was great to have two of the three past UVSG/SNSC Executive Directors in attendance - Geraldine North and Maryellen Sullivan.



A number of other parents involved in the early days also attended.

A magician entertained the crowd and the Raffle drawing was held, after lots of food and games.

**The fellowship of the UVSG/ SNSC family members was energizing and inspirational.**

A list of the Raffle winners can be found on our website. Thanks to everyone who bought a ticker. We wish you all could have been winners.

# Executive Director's Corner

By Philip Eller

All the SNSC programs are off to a running start this fall. The **ART LAB**, with two sessions per week, has more than 30 participants continuing to develop their artistic skills.

Eleven students have taken the **Education Class on Health and Safety** taught by Sylvia Dow at Lebanon College, and four young people participated in the Theater course at Northern Stage.

The **Connections Program** that uses Dartmouth College students as mentors continues with Pam working on recruiting several new Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

**Happenings** has had three well-attended events so far. The Reunion Picnic drew a large number of our current **Happenings** participants (about 50 of the 70 or so that attended the event). 20 came to the Apple Picking at River View Farm in September. More than 70 dressed in costumes for the annual Halloween Dance held on October 30th.



Rachel Banley - Bill and Ed Lawrence  
At Happenings Halloween Dance

## The Respite Child Care Program

continues to serve ten or so families of children this fall, but with reduced funds for respite providers, mainly due to cutbacks in the state Incentive Funds grant to accommodate the financial crunch affecting all state programs. In response to this situation the Board authorized a change in focus for RCCP to only serve new families that have a child with a special need in contrast to the historical practice of serving any and all families.

## Educational Advocacy

continues to represent a major service need that SNSC meets. Pam is picking up more of this demand now that she has had the extensive PIC training. Referrals are coming from all parts of the Upper Valley for this unique and valuable

service.

A new and exciting program this fall is the **ASPIRE** play group for children ages 4 to 7 years who have autism. ASPIRE (Assisting Special People with Recreation & Education) is the result of the initiative of Amanda Marinoff, a Dartmouth College student who last spring approached SNSC with her dream of using trained Dartmouth College students to run a weekly play group for this special group of young children with extensive needs for social and recreational experiences.

Amanda recruited Kirsten Murphy of ARCH (Autism Resources for Community and Home) to help her in the design of the program and in training volunteers, as well as obtaining Tucker Foundation support in this effort.

SNSC provided a contact for Amanda with Anna Hart, who teaches a group of young elementary students at Ottauquechee School with the autism diagnosis.

SNSC also did an information and recruitment effort last May to school staff and to parents for participants in the play group. The Hampshire



Julie Tantillo and Eric Ward  
At Happenings Halloween Dance

Cooperative Preschool on Lyme Road in Hanover provides free space for the program. Amanda recruited a large number of Dartmouth students to help with the play group and they were trained by Amanda, Anna, and Kirsten, and then the program was launched with an initial group of 7 children. It has been going great since then.

Feedback from parents is overwhelmingly positive and plans for additional play and social experiences is being planned for the new year, as well as a parent support group to be led by Kirsten at the same time as the play group.

A separate play group for siblings will also be organized in order to make the time possible for the parents to participate in their group. ASPIRE is another example of SNSC responding to the needs of families and direction of parents in combination with interested volunteers in the Upper Valley.



*Mikayla Schramm shows tree-climbing mastery at Hulbert Outdoor Center*

## STAR Update

*By Leah Abrahamsen,  
Coordinator*

STAR has gotten off to a great start for the 2009-10 program year. Over the summer, families gathered for the first STAR Summer Picnic at Storrs Pond in August. Several families, the mentor coordinators and I gathered for barbecue, games and socializing.

### ***Kick-off was held on October 7***

after an illness-related postponement of the original date. We welcomed 2 new participants and a new mentor at the Kick-off, which was held at the Upper Valley Events Center in Norwich. We also welcomed Pam Blair of SNSC as the new parent group facilitator. Her participation and tremendous help with the set-up and food preparation was just what we needed to start the year off right!

**October was the annual Retreat** at the Hulbert Outdoor Center in its new time-slot in the fall instead of the spring. We welcomed one more new teen participant to the group at the retreat. The morning was spent on the Ropes course, and some repeat participants achieved personal bests. For others, it was their first time participating, and they too conquered great heights! (even Leah!)

After a delicious lunch provided by the Center, the afternoon was spent doing fun team-building games



*Rebekah Rheahme shows high-wire courage at Hulbert Outdoor Center*

and activities. The weather was beautiful, and we all had a great time getting to know each other a bit more and spending some fun time together.

Just before Halloween, the mentors hosted several STAR teens for a pumpkin decorating/movie night on the Dartmouth campus.

Despite a few cancellations due to illness, fun was had by all. In fact, the gathering ended up being a girls' night out of sorts for the mentors and teens that were able to attend – a welcome occurrence.

Though much has happened already this year, our *first* regular Dinner Meeting will be held Thursday, November 19 from 6 – 8pm in the Fahey-McLane lounge on the Dartmouth campus. We look forward to a fun and engaging year of STAR events - making new friends, learning new things and supporting one another.

## History of UVSG/ SNSC - The Philip Eller Years

*The final installment of our history as described by the four executive directors during the first 30 years.*

It was with a great amount of respect and sense of deep responsibility that I took over the reins of then UVSG from Maryellen in March 2006. Soon, Pam Blair was hired as the part time Connections and Respite Coordinator.

In September, Lori Shipulski was hired as our contracted bookkeeper to replace (really an impossibility) Nancy Archibald who had held that position for 17 years! To add to these changes and challenges, the Board in that fall voted, after several years of extensive discussion and receiving input from families and professionals,

made "the leap" to change our name from Upper Valley Support Group to Special Needs Support Center.

The main rationale for this major change was that we as an organization had grown beyond the initial mission of "support group" into one of multi-services and programs - and a name to better reflect this expanded mission was needed to convey this reality.

The public relations and education effort to spread the word of our new name provided the stimulus and opportunity to expand our public image and awareness.



### **A Great Xmas Present For Friends & Relatives**

ART LAB Pictures &  
Note Cards for sale.

Go to [www.sns-c-uv.org](http://www.sns-c-uv.org)  
for more information.

Pictures - \$60 each.

Note Cards - \$20 for a  
set of 20 art works



*Geraldine North, Philip Eller and Maryellen Sullivan - 3 of the 4 SNSC Executive Directors had time to reflect back at the 30-year Reunion Picnic. Bev Parry was not able to attend*

**As an agency that mostly operates "under the radar" of public awareness** (until a family needs us!), we were sensitive to our need and responsibility to expand our public image to professionals and families so that "when we are needed by a family of a child with a special need" we will receive that first call from the parent or relative.

Even though Executive Directors changed in 2006, the mission and programs of UVSG/ SNSC continued on - Family Support Services, Kids on the Block, Parent to Parent of NH, Community Partners, Respite Child Care Program, as well as the Partners in Health program.

My vision of an expanded awareness, focus, and involvement of SNSC throughout the whole Upper Valley, including the Vermont side of the river, was supported by the hard-working, dedicated, and creative Board of Directors that had been assembled under the leadership of Toni LaMonica.

**As a result, expanded contacts with professionals and agencies in Vermont, and most recently increased numbers of grants submitted to Vermont funding sources have expanded our support as well as number of parents and family members from that side of the river.**

During my short tenure significant changes have been made in the developmental disabilities care system in the Upper Valley. United Developmental Disabilities (UDS), that had been one of our major collaborators as well as funding streams, was mandated to merge with the similar DD area agency in Claremont - resulting in new agency, PathWays of the River Valley, that now serves lower Grafton County and Sullivan County.

While our strong collaboration has continued with PathWays, our financial support from that source has been cut more than in half. SNSC has responded by increased efforts to secure funding from other types of sources. These have included increased numbers of grant applications to foundations, and especially in an expanded Annual Giving Campaign (AGC) to individuals and businesses in the Upper Valley.

Under the inspired and very hard working leadership of first Toni LaMonica and now Pete Bleyler (as Board Chair), in combination with the huge efforts of the Board of Directors and the AGC Committee, the AGC grew from about \$10,000 three years ago to almost \$52,000 last year.

**The AGC has become a significant source for financial sustenance for SNSC.**

This is especially important in these financial times when cutbacks have been seen in state and federal agencies

as well as reduced funds available from charitable foundations. As financial planners tell investors, is diversify - and SNSC is definitely following this advice as to funding sources. This diversification will continue to be a cornerstone for our financial stability.

Upon my assuming the role of Executive Director, the Board accepted the need for increased responsibilities in certain areas in order to assist in the work of SNSC.

**An expanded and revitalized Committee structure accompanied the constitutional changes made with the change of names.**

**The Finance/Audit Committee** filled in the extensive gap in my limited business and accounting skills.

**The Special Events Committee** stepped up to the plate with planning and running of the Wine Tasting Event (now in its third year at the Officer's lovely home in Hanover), the Dinner at Simon Pearce Restaurant, hosting the SNSC annual meetings, etc.

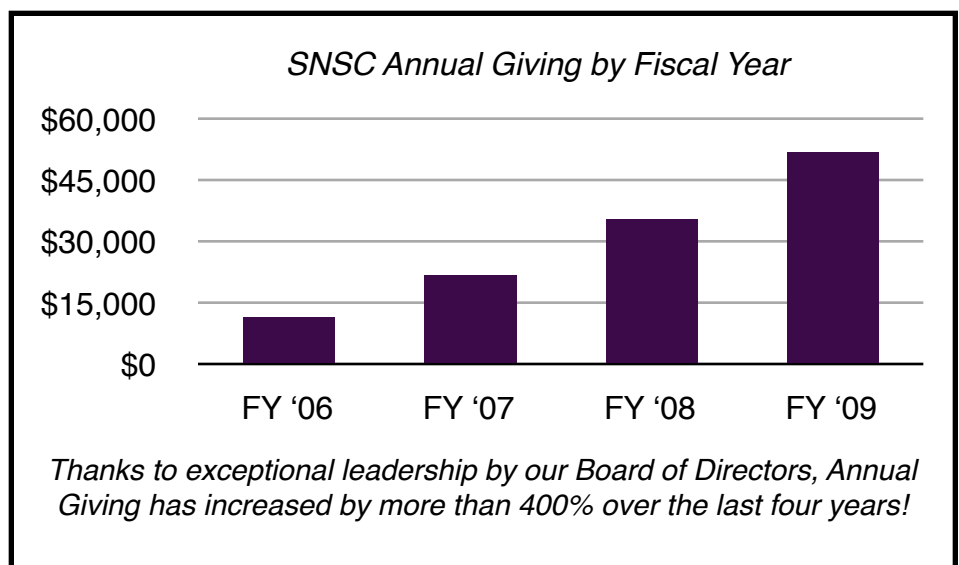
**The Programs Committee** had primary responsibilities for the

Comprehensive Programs Evaluation that took place in 2008-09 - and looked at the efficacy of all our programs and identified areas for future program/service development. The Grants Committee has given support and direction to our increased grant applications to foundations.

**The Annual Giving Campaign Committee**, now under the Development Committee, spearheaded the amazingly successful increase in donations from individuals and businesses in the Upper Valley. Without this dedicated work of the Board and Committee members the productiveness and success of the operation of SNSC would not be possible.

**All these "behind the scenes" efforts make possible the front line work of our great staff.**

These include Pam Blair, our Community Partners and Respite Coordinator, and Nancy Tantillo, our part time Administrative Assistant since 2000, and in June 2008 Leah Abrahamsen, as the part time STAR Coordinator. For several years SNSC had acted as the fiscal agent for the STAR program and when it looked like it might discontinue its work with



***Through the hard work of many SNSC families, students, staff and community the Eller years have brought some very positive changes.***

- ★ Our name was changed to Special Needs Support Center (SNSC) to better reflect what we do.
- ★ We added comprehensive program evaluation.
- ★ STAR (Steps Towards Adult Responsibility) joined together with SNSC.
- ★ ASPIRE (Assisting Special People with Recreation & Education) was added as a new program.

- ★ Weekly education classes have been added at Lebanon College.
- ★ The ART Lab - the Incredible Creative Art Group - was started at AVA Gallery.
- ★ The Simon Pearce Dinner and Fall Wine Tasting Event were added. Their live music and camaraderie enhance our fun(d) raising efforts.
- ★ Happenings now schedules 12 - 14 events per year.
- ★ Educational Advocacy has expanded by 75%.

teenagers who have chronic health conditions the Board decided, after careful study and consideration to "take it under the SNSC umbrella."

***The STAR program proved to be a natural fit for SNSC and Leah has done a wonderful job carrying on the STAR traditions.***

With the move to full time status in 2007 Pam took on more coordination role for our **Community Partners programs**, including leadership of the Happenings program, a social/recreational opportunity for older teens and young adults, that was expanded to a monthly activity. Also, Pam has been trained as an Educational Advocate and has taken on more of this valuable work with parents.

As if all these tasks were not enough, Pam also is our resident computer guru and carries out responsibilities in this area including the Annual Giving Campaign. Pam has truly become an indispensable SNSC staff member.

***In the last few years SNSC has begun to expand its services that directly serve the grown-up children of the parents who have been part of***

us for the past 25 to 30 years. This has meant expansion of our Community Partners programs, like Happenings and Sibshops.

In the spring of 2008 we responded to a need identified by one of our parents, Sylvia Dow, for continued learning and self-growth experiences for young people who had aged out of the school system. With her energy and leadership and SNSC's support work, two new and valuable programs were begun: the ART LAB and Education Classes.

***The ART LAB is a weekly art activity offered in collaboration with AVA Gallery and its art educator, Murray Ngoima.***

This fall the ART LAB has grown to 38 participants and two different weekly sessions. Displays of these artists' creative work have been held at the Pathways offices in Lebanon and the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center, to rave reviews and response from the public.

The other activity suggested and led by Sylvia is the **Education Classes**, 8 weekly sessions held at Lebanon College, on a variety of topics that

meet the students desire and need for continuing education.

And SNSC has collaborated now with Northern Stage Theater in drama classes for some of our young people as well as the River Valley Club with dance classes. Mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter is information about SNSC's latest program that meets a need identified by parents and our professional colleagues - the ASPIRE weekly play group for children ages 4-7 who have autism.

During 2009 SNSC celebrated its 30th anniversary of serving parents and families of children with all types of special needs. All year we have had events celebrating this important milestone. We have been reminded of the immense vision and dedication of the parents in our early years and the hard working and dedicated staff (especially the Executive Directors) that have carried out the programs that were conceived and suggested by parents.

***We look to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead as SNSC "carries on the legacy - now and into the future."***



# SNSC

## Special Needs Support Center

12 Flynn Street  
Lebanon, NH 03766

NON-PROFIT  
ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 58  
WRJ, VT 05001

*30 years of service  
Carrying on the Legacy –  
now and into the future*

# Special Needs Support Center Calendar of Events

*For full details (time, place, etc.) check the Calendar at [www.SNSC-uv.org](http://www.SNSC-uv.org)*

*Please Contact Pam to include future events.*

### Main Office

603-448-6311

[P2PNH@valley.net](mailto:P2PNH@valley.net)

### Parent to Parent

800-698-5465

### Respite Child Care

603-448-1268

[respitecare@valley.net](mailto:respitecare@valley.net)

### STAR

603-448-6310

[starprogram@earthlink.net](mailto:starprogram@earthlink.net)

### WEB Sites

[www.sns-c-uv.org](http://www.sns-c-uv.org)

[www.p2pnh.org](http://www.p2pnh.org)

Month	Dates	Event
December	2/9/16	ART LAB Wed. 9:30 - 11:00
	3/10/17	ART LAB Thurs. 3:30 - 5:00
	5	Sibshop 10 - 1
	12	Happenings Seasonal Crafts 1 - 3
January	20/27	ART LAB Wed. 9:30 - 11:00
	21/28	ART LAB Thurs. 3:30 - 5:00
	18/25	Ed Class Mon. 3 - 4:30
	11/18/25	Yoga Mon. 4 - 5
	14	STAR Thurs. Dinner Group
	15	Happenings Karaoke 7 - 9
	16/23	ASPIRE Sat. 1 - 3
	12	Board Tues. 6 - 8
February	3/10/17/24	ART LAB Wed. 9:30
	4/11/18/25	ART LAB Thurs. 3:30
	1/8/15/22	Ed Class Mon. 3 - 4:30
	1/18/15	Yoga Mon. 4
	14	STAR Dinner Group Thurs.
	12	Happenings – Valentine's Dance 7 - 9 p.m.
	6/13/20/27	ASPIRE Sat. 1 - 3
	6	Sibshop Sat. 10 - 1
	9	Board Tues. 6 - 8
	26	Simon Pearce Dinner Fri.

*Helping families of children with special needs to meet their unique challenges*