



# Caring Connections

Newsletter  
Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2006



## **ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EXPO!**

This year's event was bigger and better!! Over a hundred exhibitors attended the 2006 World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo. You can see who was there by viewing this link:

<http://expo.caringcommunities.org/exhibitors.php>

We want to thank everyone who told people you knew, love, or worked with, about our World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo. This was the largest cross disabilities event in the region and we had something for everyone!

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## **Imagine the Possibilities**

An exciting and extremely successful addition to the Expo this year was the IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES AUTISM DAY on Sunday, May 21st.

Pathfinders for Autism, the sponsoring organization, worked with Caring Communities to plan this incredible day which highlighted an autism pavilion of support resources. This pavilion targeted autism-related augmentative communication/assistive technology exhibitors, hosted nationally acclaimed autism related speakers and more! To learn more about Pathfinders for Autism go to their website: <http://www.pathfindersforautism.org/>

The impressive group of speakers included Wolf Dunaway, Dr. Peter Gerhardt, Dr. Craig Newschaffer, Larry Lipsitz, and Julie Rusyniak. Thanks so much for Pathfinders for Autism and the wonderful speakers!!

## **Gubernatorial Candidates Forum at the Expo**

The Gubernatorial Candidates Forum, sponsored by the Maryland Disabilities Forum was held at the Expo on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. The candidates addressed the audience with their respective platforms on disability issues. After the Forum, the Statewide Independent Living Council in partnership with the Maryland Commission on Disabilities hosted a "Listening Post". The "Listening Post" provided an opportunity for constituents to speak with Commissioners about their issues living with a disability in Maryland. The information gathered is just the first step in a process for the Maryland Commission on

Disabilities to start the planning process for the next State Plan. There will be other "Listening Posts" around the State throughout May and June.

### **More Great Features**

The Mid-Atlantic Coalition For Supporting Parents with Cognitive Challenges and Their Families held a conference on the 2nd Floor of the Vista Room (adjacent to the expo floor), on Friday, May 19, 2006 from 9:00am - 4:00pm. The Mid-Atlantic Coalition facilitates community partnerships, offers networking and educational opportunities; and, promotes advocacy, on-going systems change, and best practices designed to increase the viability and capacity of all families.

Important National and Statewide meetings were hosted such as: Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA), Best Buddies, ADAPT, The Mid-Atlantic Coalition for Supported Parenting, Parents' Place-MSDE/Parent Meeting, Maryland CILS and MASH.

### **A BIG EXPO THANK YOU!**

Caring Communities thanks the many vendors for the services they provided. Services included: MTA offered free, round-trip, continuous shuttle services from the Timonium Light Rail Stop to the door of the Expo, Sign Language interpreters were available from Visual Language Interpreters, Home Helpers offered assistance to attendees as requested, artists and authors within the disabilities community displayed their wonderful work and sold their creations and signed autographs.

Bobby Mathews of Choice Marketing and Sales who offered free wheelchair rentals and free wheel repair services! Thank you, Bobby for donating your time, parts and labor to bring this service back to the Expo once more.

The Red Cross of Central Maryland educated the audience about disaster relief and emergency preparedness.

Entertainers, celebrities, special guests, mascots, strolling entertainers, face painters and carnival games were offered for the children and more!

We also thank our sponsors: Pathfinders for Autism, MSDE-Division of Special Ed/Early Intervention, Developmental Disabilities Council, Choice Marketing and Sales, Home Helpers, United Healthcare, Visual Language Interpreters, Ride-Away, Amerigroup, Disability Associates, Kelmar & Associates, Friends of the Family, Media Partners and Friends of the Expo!

### **Mark Your Calendar**

Please mark your calendar for the next WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES DISABILITIES EXPO. It will be held again on Preakness Weekend in 2007, at the Maryland State Fairgrounds.

For information, contact Caring Communities at 1-866-227-4644 or click on <http://www.caringcommunities.org/>

Click on this link for the new World of Possibilities Expo movie. Enjoy!  
<http://www.caringcommunities.org/images/wofp.mov>

If it won't play, you may not have QuickTime movie player. It is a free download <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/win.html> Just click on the link, enter your e-mail and click "free download now". You will then be able to view our slide show and movies/shows on other sites.

Hope to see you there again next year!



**WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES**  
**DISABILITIES EXPO**  
**COMING TO DC**

**World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo within the ABC7 Family Health & Caregiver Expo!**  
**Washington Convention Center**  
**July 29th-30th, 2006**

**Caring Communities World of Possibilities Disabilities Expo is Partnering with ABC7 and the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) to enhance The Family Health & Caregiver Expo**

This unique event, FREE to the community, was the first of its kind in the country and drew over 10,000 attendees last year.

It provides an excellent opportunity to learn about the many products, services and resources available to caregivers in the community. Expo exhibitors include community pharmacies, financial services, hospice, home remodeling, auto conversion, food and nutrition services and a host of other services to assist caregivers, individuals with disabilities, education and health professionals.

**FREE Admission & Health Screenings!**  
**As an exhibitor in the World of Possibilities Disabilities Pavilion your exhibit package includes:**

- **10' x 10' carpeted, piped and draped booth**
- **skirted table and 2 chairs**
- **free electrical connections**
- **listing with free link from our website to yours on [www.caringcommunities.org](http://www.caringcommunities.org)**

Special Reduced Price for World of Possibilities Disabilities Pavilion. Booth space is limited! Special nonprofit price is available.

**To secure booth space, email Mona Freedman [mona@caringcommunities.org](mailto:mona@caringcommunities.org) or call 1-866-227-4644. For a booth space application and floor plan, sign up now for best location.**



**ABOUT CARING COMMUNITIES**

Caring Communities is a small, yet growing, 501(c)3 non-profit organization based in Eldersburg, Maryland, which began in February of 1997 when a group of parents of children who had disabilities met to address the need for comprehensive respite care services and the lack of trained respite care providers in Maryland. Based on their personal experiences and frustrations, the group resolved to establish a statewide resource dedicated to promoting the ability of families who have children with disabilities to have a “break”, or respite, from the day-to-day responsibilities of raising such a child.

The ad hoc group specified that this new organization must be family centered and serve all parents regardless of the nature of a child’s disability and with sensitivity to race, culture or ethnic background. They agreed that it must be parent-directed in that a majority of its board members and employees must themselves be parents of children who have disabilities. A Board of Directors was formed, articles of incorporation were developed and the process to receive non-profit status was completed. The founding date for Caring Communities, Inc. was February 12, 1998. Since that time, funding to train respite care providers and to provide respite-related family support services in most counties in the state of Maryland was received through grants/related activities.

Caring Communities has now grown into a well-known and widely respected service organization offering disability-related activities and events for thousands within the entire disabilities community in MD, DC and Virginia. Our events and services include: the **World of Possibilities Expos** in MD and other areas, the largest

disabilities expos in the Mid-Atlantic Region, the **Caring Kit**, the **Caring Network** and local respite care trainings. Our publications include the **World of Possibilities Lifestyle Disabilities Magazines** (published twice a year/Baltimore-Washington edition) and the **About Our Family** respite care workbook.

Caring Communities is an impassioned organization, with a staff whole-heartedly dedicated to seeing that all people, no matter what their ability, may have access to all that life has to offer. Each employee and volunteer brings unique personal and professional perspective and insight.

### **Caring Communities' Mission**

To offer disability-related training, education, publications, and events to benefit children and adults with disabilities, their families and caregivers, as well as healthcare and education professionals. Our efforts will enhance the quality of life regardless of the nature or severity of the disability; empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency and independent living and; promote inclusion to enjoy full participation in society.

Mona Freedman RN is the Executive Director and founder of Caring Communities. She is the parent of twin daughters, one of which has a developmental disability. She has over 20 years of professional and personal experience working to improve the lives of people with disabilities and their families.



Mona and Andrea at a Special Olympics Tournament

### **NEW TRAINING AVAILABLE!**

This Program is great for Disability Professionals, Family Support Providers, Parent Leaders, Agencies, Individual Families, Home School Families and Entrepreneurs' interested in training teens to provide support for families of disabled individuals.

### **Caring Teens Program:**

The best respite care training/disability education teens will ever have! **Caring Teens** program will train teens to care for children with disabilities and become respite care providers.

**Caring Teens** is an interactive and comprehensive hands-on training program designed for students aged 14 and up who would like to learn about and provide respite care for children who have mild to moderate disabilities. Training topics include: the role and responsibility of the respite care provider, disability information and awareness, communication issues, behavior management, safety, seizures, assistive/adaptive equipment and much, much more! This 12-hour program prepares teen respite care providers to offer first-rate care for children who have disabilities and special needs.

Upon completion of the **Caring Teens** Program, a certificate is awarded. Teenagers will be ready to offer respite care to families of children who need a break from the sometimes overwhelming challenges of raising a child with disabilities.

The **Caring Teens** program includes an easy to follow curriculum, all overheads and handouts, training tapes, practice activities, the five "*About Our Family*" respite care workbooks and a certificate. Cost is \$350. Contact Mona Freedman, RN at 1.866.227.4644 or [mona@caringcommunities.org](mailto:mona@caringcommunities.org) to order.

# Andies Candies



## SWEET SUCCESS!

**Andies Candies, a store in Eldersburg, Maryland is owned by Andrea Freedman who recently turned twenty years old. She won a Junior Achievement Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award last spring.** The award is quite an achievement for any student with or without challenges and has never been offered to a student with a developmental disability. Check out the link to the video that they made after her award was presented to her. She hopes that the video can be used in ways to inspire others.

This video is streamed and posted on Junior Achievement's online Entrepreneur Center <http://studentcenter.ja.org.aspx/PlanBusiness/VideoRoom.aspx>

This wonderful story began last spring when Andrea's special education teacher handed her an application to fill out. Writing has always been difficult for Andrea, but she was persistent and with her parents' help she completed the application and wrote her essay. It took days to complete.

Well, imagine everyone's surprise when she won a Jr. Achievement award!! The award included a

monetary prize of \$1,000.00! She received \$700 for her business and \$300 for her High School. Competition was steep; applications and essays came from 10 counties in Maryland and 2 counties in West Virginia.

Andrea's business, Andies Candies is located inside Bridal Elegance in Eldersburg, MD. The following is a link to Andrea's website <http://www.andiescandies.com/>



## YOUR SPRING CLEANING CAN HELP US AT EBAY/MISSION FISH

Spring is upon us. Now is the time to do the annual spring clean up. We can help by providing you a way to get rid of your junk, earn some money, donate some money and really feel good about yourself!

The Mission Fish giving option through eBay's, Giving Works allows Caring Communities to raise funds from both local members of the community and interested individuals anywhere in the world. You, the eBay seller, select the percentage you want to directly support Caring Communities.

Help people with disabilities be all they can be and experience the joy of helping others by giving generously and selling your items on eBay this spring and all year-long.

It takes only minutes to register, then designate Caring Communities as the recipient charity.

To learn more, go to: <http://givingworks.ebay.com/sell/>

**INTERNET SEARCH HELPS CARING COMMUNITIES**

<http://www.goodsearch.com/>

This is a search engine that raises money for charities like Caring Communities. Simply go to the website, select Caring Communities (Eldersburg) and start surfing. We estimate that each search will generate approximately \$0.01 for our organization.

Please tell everyone you know to use this search engine. We figure 1,000 supporters searching twice a day would reap an estimated \$7,300 per year. The sky is the limit, though - the more people search, the more we will earn!

So, please make this search engine your home page and start searching!

**WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES MAGAZINE  
Baltimore-Washington Edition**

Serving the Disabilities Community  
Caring Communities introduces the freshest, most exciting disabilities magazine anywhere. Reaching over 80,000 readers a year, a great complement to our World of Possibilities Expos!

World of Possibilities magazine offers:  
Informative content including local issues and disability-related features, disability-related equipment, products and goods for children and adults, their families and service providers

Features such as health, employment, technology, education, sports, travel, universal design, mental health, accessibility (parks/restaurants-rating), diversity, humor, transportation/mobility, housing, women's health, respite, self advocacy, self determination, inclusion, waivers, legislation, agency highlights, sibling issues, transition, safety and more!!

Visually exciting, user-friendly format

Editorial contributors include individuals with disabilities, family members, industry experts and service providers

Glossy, full color, professional appearance  
Inexpensive vendor listings and very affordable advertising rates, making this the most comprehensive guide of its kind! Published twice annually in the Summer and Winter

FREE distribution to: Hundreds of locations and thousands of homes, directly mailed to the extensive address lists managed by Caring Communities, and distributed at the World of Possibilities Expos in Maryland and Virginia

Thousands of copies will be distributed through non profit organizations and agencies, conferences and local disability events throughout the region attended by individuals with disabilities, their families, healthcare and education professionals

Thousands of copies will be distributed in public places such as centers for independent living, rehab facilities, schools, hospitals, libraries, clinics, and doctor's offices

World of Possibilities magazine will be published using Milestone Media Group, a leader in designing family-friendly publications. For additional information, to submit an article or request a media kit contact Caring Communities at 1-866-227-4644 or click on <http://www.caringcommunities.org/>



## MORE UPCOMING EVENTS

**BLACK TIE GALA**  
**World of Possibilities Prom!!**  
**Save the Date 4/21/07**



Your magical evening will include:  
Cocktail Hour  
Three-Course Plated Dinner  
2 Complimentary Premium Drinks  
Cash Bar  
Dancing to a Live Band  
Silent Auction  
50-50 Raffle  
Prom Photos  
Prom King/Queen  
Limousine Giveaway  
Casino Games and much more!

Only \$85 per person  
Tickets are Limited  
10% OFF Tables of 10  
A portion of the ticket is tax deductible

## DON'T MISS THIS!!

A poster for a 'Caring Communities Charity Fundraiser NO LIMIT Texas Hold'em Tournament'. The background is black with a hand holding a King of Hearts and a Queen of Hearts. Text includes: 'Caring Communities Charity Fundraiser', 'NO LIMIT Texas Hold'em Tournament', 'A WORLD CLASS EVENT!', 'Sunday, August 27, 2006', 'at the Marriott BWI Airport', 'Doors open at 11:00 am', 'Cards turn at 12:00 noon', 'Caring Communities: A non-profit 501 (c)3 organization serving the disabilities community with education, training and resources.', 'Must be 21 or older', 'Mona Freedman RN, Caring Communities, 1015 Gleneagle Court, Eldersburg, Maryland 21784', 'Tournament Structure: Initial Donation of \$200 gets you: 2,000 chips, buffet lunch, overnight special rate, 2 premium drinks; Additional Donation of \$150 (over those only if from 12:00-3:00) gets you: completely out, 1,000 chips, tournament table, Caring Communities gift pack, 1 premium drink; Prizes: (All prizes will be donated) 1st place prize: A Seat at the World Series of Poker! (valued at \$16,000); Everyone at the final table of 10 will be awarded a prize; Timetable: Registration at 11:00am, Introduction at 11:45am, Cards turn at 12:00pm, Buffet lunch served from 11:00am-12 noon, Buffet dinner served at 5pm', 'For more information including complete rules and prize list go to: www.CaringCommunities.org • 1.866.227.4644', and 'Prize values based upon 2007 attendees and will be adjusted accordingly if participation is lower.' There is also a 'Caring Communities' logo with a heart and a house icon.

This newsletter was created by Sandy Bearden and Caring Communities. To add articles or information contact Mona Freedman at 1-866-227-4644 or [mona@caringcommunities.org](mailto:mona@caringcommunities.org)

To unsubscribe, send an email with unsubscribe in the subject line and send to [mona@caringcommunities.org](mailto:mona@caringcommunities.org)

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