

## CONNECTIONS

### Welcome from Our Executive Director, André Coates

Dear Individuals, Families,  
and Providers,

Welcome to Maryland Community Connection! It is my great pleasure to introduce the services that Maryland Community Connection (MCC) provides to people with disabilities, their families, employers, service providers, and other community members. MCC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed in 2001 dedicated to assisting individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve a greater degree of social and economic independence. Annually, staff and volunteers work diligently to ensure the success of this organization.

It is no secret that people with developmental disabilities face many challenges in their quest to live healthy, productive lives. Maryland Community Connection seeks to ensure that

individuals with developmental disabilities and family members are provided with meaningful information and appropriate strategies about available options, community supports, and plans for accessing each service. Maryland Community Connection seeks to increase the health and safety of individuals through quality services through planning, intake, and assessments to obtain the individual's preferences and desires.

On June 6, 2005, MCC was officially licensed for Supported Employment (SE), Individual Support Services (ISS), and Community Supported Living Arrangements (CSLA) from the Developmental Disabilities Administration. In July of 2005, MCC was given deemed status by the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) to provide Supported Employment services to DORS participants.

MCC will begin expanding our programs by providing services to both DDA and DORS participants.

As MCC's Executive Director, I come to you with over twenty years of experience in the Developmental Disabilities field. This experience has allowed me as the leader of MCC to set priorities when it comes to supporting individuals with disabilities:

- Help individuals with disabilities achieve their goals (and possibly even exceed) their potential
- Create more career opportunities for individuals with disabilities to gain professional development and training

One of the great things about MCC is that it allows you to be part of something that is much larger than yourself. MCC is dedicated to supporting and celebrat-

*(Continued on page 2)*

#### Inside this issue:

<i>Governor's TY Initiative</i>	2
<i>MD APSE</i>	3
<i>Donations</i>	4
<i>Bowie Baysox</i>	4
<i>Washington Wizards &amp; Mystics</i>	4

One of the great things about MCC is that it allows you to be part of something that is much larger than yourself.



*(Continued from page 1)*

ing the achievements of individuals with disabilities. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to those who have worked long hours to bring this organization to life. I am especially proud of the work we have accomplished to date. We will be depending on the continued professional and experienced service of our

staff as we face the challenges in the coming years in meeting the growing needs of our community.

As we grow, many will be amazed at the variety, creativity, ambition, and effectiveness of the services we provide. It is strength of the MCC staff to know our community needs and how best to meet those needs.

We look forward to working together to make MCC future even brighter.

Sincerely,

*André Coates*

Executive Director

## 2006 Graduating Seniors Governor's Transition Youth Initiative



Maryland Students that will be graduating from Special Education Programs in 2006 should be preparing to transition to adult services. Students with developmental disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education through the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years of age, through the Maryland State Department of Education.

After a student leaves the school system, adult services are not automatically provided. All graduating seniors with developmental disabilities should be seeking adult services

through the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) under the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTI).

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GOVERNOR'S TRANSITIONING YOUTH INITIATIVE

The Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative (GTI) was designed in 1989 to demonstrate that people with the most severe disabilities can work and contribute to Maryland's future after leaving school.

Through the Initiative, the DDA has been able to fund supported employment and other day services for over 4,500 eligible students exiting school, many of whom are successfully employed in their communities today.

One of the goals of the Initiative was to create collaborative interagency efforts between various state and local agencies to ensure a seamless transition from school to adult life. Local schools integrate practical job skills training into the curriculum; develop

*(Continued on page 3)*



*(Continued from page 2)*

individual transition plans; and by no later than the spring prior to the student's last year of school, refer student's to the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS).

At that time, DORS will assist the student and family in applying for DDA services; assist with placing the student in available summer employment programs before the last year in school; and consult with the student and family regarding appropriate adult supported employment providers.

When notified by DDA that the student is eligible for DDA supported employment

services, the DORS counselor refers the student to the selected provider and often purchases job coaching and related employment services while the student is still in the education setting. The DDA provides the funding for long-term support of the eligible student after he/she exits school.

GTYSI Services Available through the DDA Supported Employment Services are community-based services that provide the supports necessary for individuals to obtain and maintain work in the community. Supports may include job skills training, job development, vocational assessment, and ongoing job coaching support. Day Services are facility-based services that

provide vocational assessment, job training, work skills training, social and other skills training.

For more information, request, the "Transitioning Youth Handbook: Navigating the Developmental Disabilities Administration Service System 2004" from your teacher or download a copy from our web site at [www.marylandcommunityconnection.org](http://www.marylandcommunityconnection.org)

## **MD APSE Job Development Network**

Agencies providing employment supports to individuals with disabilities in Prince George's County and the surrounding metro area joined forces on July 8, 2005 for its meeting of the Maryland Association for Person in Supported Employment (APSE) Job Development Network. The Job Development Network was initiated by area agencies to share staffing resources in order to innovate best practices, expand business partnerships, and melt job development efforts.

The ultimate goal of this inter-agency collaboration is to connect more individuals with employment opportunities that match their individual interests and skills.

The MD APSE Job Development Network encourages all agencies that provide employment supports to participate.

The MD APSE Job Development Network next meeting is Tuesday, September 20, 2005 at 10:00am-12:00pm at

Montgomery Works One Stop Center, 11002 Veirs Mill Road, Suite 100, Wheaton, Maryland 20902.

For more information about Maryland APSE Job Development Network contact:

André Coates, Chairperson

Phone: 301-583-0358

Fax: 301-583-0359

Email:

[acoates@marylandcommunityconnection.org](mailto:acoates@marylandcommunityconnection.org)





Maryland Community Connection  
6490 Landover Road  
Suite A9  
Landover, Maryland 20785

Phone (301) 583-0358  
Fax (301) 583-0359

Email: [info@marylandcommunityconnection.org](mailto:info@marylandcommunityconnection.org)  
[www.marylandcommunityconnection.org](http://www.marylandcommunityconnection.org)

Employment Services for  
Individuals with Disabilities

#### Donations

MCC wants to give special thanks to **Donna Richardson** for her generous donation of depends, ensure, and other personal care items. Mrs. Richardson made this donation in the memory of her son, **Zawdie Proctor**.

MCC will accept all donations in good condition.

To make a donation to MCC, please contact us  
(301) 583-0358 or visit our website:

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

## Maryland Community Connection and Bowie Baysox Baseball

MCC participants enjoyed watching the Bowie Baysox live minor league baseball games at Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland. MCC participants were able to meet players and obtain autographs from their favorite players.

MCC has made going to the ball park a family event. MCC distributed free tickets to individuals with disabilities and their family members. Participants and families expressed great appreciation for the wholesome fun enjoyed at the games.



## Washington Mystics and Wizards Hoop It Up for Maryland Community Connection

MCC participants are sports fans that enjoyed their opportunity to watch live Mystic and Wizards games. Participants were happy to see their favorite players, men and women in action at the MCI Center in Washington, DC.

Participants were extremely excited to cheer both teams in their hunt for the playoffs. While the Wizards were successful in their quest, the participants hope next year the Mystics will be as well, with the continued support of MCC individuals at the games.