

# Options

A quarterly newsletter of Anixter Center



**INSIDE:**  
Important  
progress at  
Ferst School.  
Page 5

Spring 2005

Volume XX No. 4

## Anixter Center and Northwestern create insightful partnership

*Medical students visit programs and learn valuable lessons  
about distinctive health care needs of people with disabilities*

About one in five Americans has a disability and one in 10 has a severe disability. As a result of these disabilities — whether they be physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, sensory disabilities or mental illness — these individuals face particular medical challenges in the health care system. Other Americans, “special populations” such as the frail elderly, homeless, terminally ill and uninsured, confront their own difficulties when seeking medical care.

In a growing recognition of these complex needs, “Patient, Physician and Society/Vulnerable Groups,” a course offering at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine in Chicago, helps medical students better prepare for “real world” health care. During the second year of the four-year curriculum, students visit a wide range of community health care environments, including nursing homes, homeless shelters and free clinics. Feinberg School of Medicine partners with several organizations in this effort including Anixter Center, which assists more than 5,000 people with disabilities in the Chicago area to live and work successfully in the community.



While visiting the New Focus Program, Northwestern University medical students learn how expressive movement contributes to the brain-injury rehabilitation process.

With 70 programs in 35 locations throughout Chicago, Anixter Center provides an avenue for students to gain first-hand insights by observing innovative programs like Addiction Recovery of the Deaf, an intensive outpatient and inpatient substance abuse program for people who are deaf. This month, 35 Northwestern students participated with eight Anixter Center programs, including: the Adult Community Transition Program, Addiction Recovery of the Deaf, JobWorks, National Lekotek Center, New Focus, Outpatient Substance Abuse, Chicago Hearing Society and Stuart G. Ferst School. Students also toured Anixter Center’s largest location at 2032 North Clybourn Avenue.

“The component of ‘Patient, Physician and Society/Vulnerable Groups’ that involves visits to

community programs enables students to develop empathy with a wide variety of people seeking health care in a variety of settings,” says Dr. Kathy Neely, a Northwestern University internist. “It also helps doctors in training to develop a more humane

*Please see Students, Page 3*

# Yacht club buoys Janitorial Services

Rusty Bergner appreciates the scenic setting of his job at Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club.

"It's got a nice view," Rusty says. "You look out the window and you can see downtown. Wow!"

Rusty, who is deaf, has a degree in hotel management from Southern Illinois University. He worked in the hospitality industry for 14 years before he was laid off in early 2004. He soon joined Anixter Center's Janitorial Services and now is a crew leader at the State of Illinois building at 160 North LaSalle. He added his caretaking position at the yacht club seven months ago. There he helps prepare for parties, brunches and other special events. "The setting up and cleaning reminds me of the



hospitality business," Rusty says.

Janitorial Services provides vocational training and supported employment to individuals with disabilities. It has dozens of for-profit and nonprofit customers throughout Chicago. Laura Kurz, a board member at the club, recommended Anixter Center when she heard the club was considering its Janitorial Services. Laura is co-owner of Argus Services, which supplies background checks for Anixter Center employees.

"I've received several positive comments from the rear commodore about Rusty," says Ana Presentado, director of Anixter Center Janitorial Services.

Rusty is getting the club ready as peak boating season nears. He is



Rusty Bergner began working at Chicago Corinthian Yacht Club at Montrose Harbor in 2004.

hopeful of advancing his career through his Janitorial Services position, but until then he'll enjoy the view.

## Philanthropy Update

**In support of Anixter Center programs and services**  
Omron Foundation

**In support of Anixter Center programs for children**  
The Northern Trust Company

**In support of Chicago Hearing Society's Youth Program**  
The Julius Frankel Foundation

**In support of National Lekotek Center programs and services**  
The Donald P. & Byrd M. Kelly Foundation  
The Grover Hermann Foundation  
The Hurvis Family Foundation  
Kenilworth United Fund  
The Patrick & Anna M. Cudahy Fund

Your contribution to Anixter Center will benefit people with disabilities.



Please visit [www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org)  
or call (773) 973-7900, ext. 226, voice,  
(773) 973-2180, TTY.

Shop with a purpose.

amazon.com.

Link to Amazon.com – and its partners – through [www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org).  
A portion of your purchase will benefit Anixter Center's services for people with disabilities.

# Mark Hajduch

Mark Hajduch, president of Polyform Products Company, has been an Anixter Center board member since 2002. Mark is a member of the board's Finance and Resource Development Committees. Mark has been a member of the Golf Outing Committee the past two years, and he and Polyform have been sponsors of the event. This year's Lester Anixter Memorial Golf Outing is June 28 at The Glen Club.



## How did you become acquainted with Anixter Center?

Jack Ehrlich and I were partners together at [accounting firm] Crowe Chizek and Company. Jack Ehrlich's office was next to mine, and Jack is a dear friend. Jack has had a long relationship with the Anixter family and with Anixter Center. Jack introduced me to Anixter Center.

## What is Polyform Products?

Polyform is the manufacturer and distributor of Sculpey clay, which is used by artists and crafters. It can be found at most craft and art supply stores like Michael's and Hobby Lobby and at discount stores like Target and Wal-Mart. Polyform was a client of

mine while at Crowe Chizek and its owner, Chuck Steinmann, was a friend. When he passed away in 2002, his wife, Denice, asked me to work for her.

## Do you have a personal stake in issues affecting people with disabilities?

Chuck died from complications of cancer and was a quadriplegic the last year of his life. Everyone at Polyform is familiar with the complications to one's life that come with disability.

## What is most satisfying about being an Anixter Center board member?

It's fascinating. There are a tremendous number of challenges out there that make it interesting. And if I can make a difference, that's great.

## Do you lend particular expertise?

I do know quite a bit about finance, but I am involved on a support basis with the art therapy program and with Lekotek. Polyform has donated Sculpey products and partnered with Lekotek to provide information regarding use of our clay by persons with special needs on our Web site. I also visited an art therapy session at Anixter Center with an artist from our office.

## Why did you get involved with the golf outing?

I like to golf. And I've been to many a golf outing.

*Please contact Jan Walch at (773) 973-7900, ext. 238 for more information about the golf outing. For more on Sculpey and children with special needs, visit [www.sculpey.com](http://www.sculpey.com).*

---

## Students, from Page 1

response while focusing on broader issues such as human values, ethics and health policy."

From the perspective of the agencies hosting the medical students, the forums provide a welcome and, in many cases, overdue, opportunity to introduce developing physicians to the realities and wide-ranging needs of the millions of Americans with pressing medical issues who may never seek care in so-called "traditional locations," such as academic medical centers or neighborhood doctors' offices.

Everyone who participated in the project at Anixter Center spoke highly of their participation. Sandra Matthews, manager, Outpatient Substance Abuse,

transformed her student visitation into an interactive session in which students helped individuals to identify the consequences of their substance abuse and asked them questions about their experiences.

"The people we serve also shared their feelings about having the Northwestern students participate in the session, and all of the feedback was excellent," said Sandra.

"The sooner that medical students can encounter people with disabilities in a learning environment," for example, says Anixter Center President and CEO Allan I. Bergman, "the better prepared they'll be when they encounter people with disabilities in their later careers."

# Event, art project focus on brain injury

Anixter Center's New Focus Program offers individuals an opportunity to reclaim their lives after sustaining brain injuries. March was National Brain Injury Awareness Month, and the theme of this year's campaign from the Brain Injury Association of America was "Living with Brain Injury." On March 25, New Focus hosted a brain injury awareness event at 2032 North Clybourn Avenue. Staff and individuals in other Anixter Center programs visited to learn more about brain injuries and hear personal stories. Activities included games, computerized cognitive retraining demonstrations and dance/movement therapy techniques for neurological re-patterning. Sandy Roberts, who sustained a traumatic brain injury in 2004, introduced the "Label the Lobe" game. Participants were challenged and reminded of the importance of humor as they located these areas of the brain while blindfolded.

A recent art project served as a powerful metaphor of the healing process for 20 individuals with brain injuries who collaborated on a paper mosaic titled "Seasons of Our Minds." After eight months of



"Seasons of Our Minds"



Sandy Roberts

patience and persistence, people rehabilitating at New Focus, along with six staff members, recently completed the unique wall art. "Participants here are engaged in a reintegration process and putting the pieces of their lives back together," says New Focus Manager Lisa Goldman. "The mosaic is symbolic and serves as a metaphor for their life experience."

Starting in April 2004, individuals spent 45 minutes each week working on a section of the mosaic, which depicts the four seasons within an outline of the brain. The project addressed: fine motor skills; cognitive skills including memory and concentration; creative self-expression; and socialization.

## Lekotek turns 25

The National Lekotek Center recently celebrated a quarter-century of fun and games at its 25th Birthday Bash at Catalyst Ranch, one of Chicago's most unusual and colorful party venues. The 135 guests who gathered on March 4 enjoyed a buffet supper, danced to the music of the Gold Coast Ensemble and raised more than \$34,000 to benefit kids with special needs through Anixter Center's newest division.

A high point of the evening was a video of a basketball game in which Molly Bourke, manager of the New Trier women's basketball team and one of Lekotek's earliest clients, played with the team and



From left, Jennifer Merlin, chair of the Lekotek Advisory Board and an Anixter Center board member, Diana Nielander, director of the National Lekotek Center and former directors Helen Hilken and Beth Boosalis Davis celebrated Lekotek's 25th anniversary at Catalyst Ranch.

made a basket. A beaming Molly attended the birthday party with her parents, Robert and Peggy Bourke.

State Senator Jeffrey Schoenberg was honored with Lekotek's Commitment to Excellence Award for his advocacy efforts to sustain state funding for Lekotek's Illinois

affiliates. Also honored were retiring Lekotek board members Robert Bourke, Howard Kain, Daniel McKay and William Nelson.

Beth Boosalis Davis and Helen Hilken, former Lekotek executive directors, helped National Lekotek Director Diana Nielander and Advisory Board Chair Jennifer Merlin blow out the candles on the birthday cake. Party guests could also take the "Lekotek Challenge" for a hands-on experience of what it's like for a child with a disability to try to play with conventional toys and toys adapted to meet special needs.

The 25th Birthday Bash was organized by a committee including Colette Donnelly, Sherry Frey, Margie Kempff, Amanda Kempler, Sue Sell and Betsy Uzzell.

From the mailbag

## Parents share praise

The parents of a student at Anixter Center's Stuart G. Ferst School wrote the following letter to Tricia Klein, a certified special educator at the school. Matthew Pritchett, 8, has autism. Ferst School provides educational and therapeutic services to students with physical, cognitive and emotional challenges.

Dear Trish:

We'd like to thank you for being such a nice and effective teacher for Matthew. Although he's only attended Stuart Ferst School for a short time, we feel it has been a very positive experience for him, and we've already seen him make gains - which are something we haven't seen in the past several years at the various schools he has attended.



Matthew Pritchett and Tricia Klein

Thanks to your efforts, as well as those of the great support staff working with Matthew, we have seen improvement in the following areas:

- willingness to attend school (in spite of the long ride)
- improved handwriting skills
- singing songs (He sings quite a few at home that we know he has learned at school.)
- recognizing and saying some of his colors
- cleaning up: bringing dishes to the sink and throwing garbage away
- toothbrushing

Again, we had not seen marked improvement in years. In addition to your effectiveness, we are impressed by how friendly and caring everyone is at the school. We felt welcomed from the start. This is something we have not experienced much in the past, either. Many thanks to you and everyone there for the great job you do every day! You are all special people!

Sincerely,  
Tom and Lori Pritchett

## CHS shares information on victim rights

Thirty people gathered at 2032 North Clybourn Avenue on April 12 for Victim Rights Awareness Night, sponsored by Chicago Hearing Society (CHS), a division of Anixter Center. Victim Rights Awareness Night coincided with National Crime Victims Rights Week. Speakers included Jamie Frankic-Birkett of the Illinois Attorney General's Crime Victim Compensation Office; Howard Rosenblum of Equip for Equality, an attorney who is deaf; Patti Koras, a deaf rape victim advocate; Michele Cunningham, victim assistance counselor at CHS; and Jennifer Hart, domestic violence counselor at CHS. The presenters discussed the role of advocates and sign language interpreters after a crime or abuse has taken place. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires police departments and hospitals to provide interpreters for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing. Jennifer added that domestic abuse is not always physical and can include threats, intimidation and other controlling behaviors.

"This type of training is absolutely essential both for people who are deaf and for the many professionals who work with them," says Jill Sahakian, director of CHS. "Many deaf people don't have access to the avenues of information that are available to the general population about what to do if they become victims of a crime."

*For more information, please contact Michele Cunningham at [mcunningham@anixter.org](mailto:mcunningham@anixter.org).*



## Newborn hearing highlighted

Illinois' first-ever Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Day was held at the James R. Thompson Center on April 5. Gov. Rod Blagojevich proclaimed April 5 Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Day in Illinois. Speakers included Dr. Scott A. Berkowitz (above), senior policy development advisor to Gov. Blagojevich. The event was sponsored by CHOICES for Parents, a coalition that promotes the health and development of children with newly identified hearing loss. Chicago Hearing Society, a division of Anixter Center, is a founding member organization of CHOICES for Parents.

## Options • Vol. XX • No. 4 • Spring 2005

The mission of the Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is to assist people with disabilities to live and work successfully in the community. Anixter Center is a leading provider of high-quality vocational, residential and educational options, substance abuse prevention and treatment, and health care. Anixter Center is an advocate for the rights of people with disabilities to be full and equal members of the community.

### Editorial Offices

Development Department  
6610 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL 60626-4062

To make a donation or gift-in-kind, or to request information, call: (773) 973-7900, ext. 226;  
(773) 973-2180 TTY  
[www.anixter.org](http://www.anixter.org)

Allan I. Bergman, President and CEO

### Editors

Betsy Storm, Mary Kozil and Bob Dolgan

The Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center is a nonprofit charitable organization with various programs accredited and/or licensed by one or more of the following: CARF, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Department of Human Services. Anixter Center is a member of the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. Anixter Center is a designated Helen Keller Center Affiliate.

*Assisting people with  
disabilities to live and  
work successfully in  
the community*

6610 N. Clark St. Chicago, IL 60626-4062

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



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Chicago, IL  
Permit No. 6098