

Maine Personal Assistance Services Association News

Volume 2, Number 3

April 2003

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! STATEMENT – “GOOD, JUST THE WAY IT IS”

The Association met for the fourth time on Saturday, March 22, 2003 in room 106 of hospitable Lewiston-Auburn college of USM. We had a very productive work session. The work group for Maine PASA



On the picture: Elise Scala, Project Coordinator during brainstorming session.

finalized its mission statement:

The Maine personal Assistance Services Association is a coalition of people employed to provide assistance to persons with disabilities. Maine PASA is organized to empower workers, to build opportunities, to respect human dignity and to improve the quality of our jobs.

The mission statement guided the discussion of other Association ideas and plans. The work group decided to focus Association objectives on building the capacity of workers and their work and to keep the membership open to anybody who supports the mission statement and is willing to

contribute to Maine PASA's goals. Group members came up with a long list of possible activities to form a coalition, empower workers, respect the dignity of self and others, and to improve the quality of direct care jobs.

Recently the Association represented direct care workers' interests at legislative sessions in Augusta (see Trish Richards report on page 2). Maine PASA is a working member of the Direct Care Worker Coalition and attends meetings in Augusta. The Association members are scheduling site visits to meet with executives and governing boards of home care agencies and long-term

care institutions.

The work group members are encouraged by these accomplishments and the feedback from others, and are charting an ambitious plan for strengthening and growing Maine PASA. Public relations, recognition and outreach activities are among the top

priorities of the group at this time. Plans for May include printing a brochure and arranging newspaper and radio press to help build awareness and community support. Ideas for a Maine PASA logo are being reviewed. The next Association meeting will be held on Saturday, April 19, 9:30 am – 1:00pm at Lewiston Auburn College.

~ QUOTE OF THE MONTH ~

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

~Leo Buscaglia

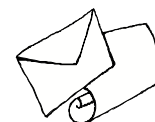
Page 2: Improving Quality of Jobs Important long-term care legislature updates

Page 3: Respecting Human Dignity “Next Door” - a real life story that speaks to the value of PCA work and workers

Page 4: Empowering Workers “Dear PASA...” – introducing a new_column.

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US

Are you are a C.N.A., PCA, HHA, or BS? Do you provide direct support or care for a person with a disability? Call for information about Maine PASA 1-800-268-6612, TTY (207) 228-8440. Or e-mail Project Coordinator, Elise Scala: scala@usm.maine.edu



Improving Quality of Jobs

Maine PASA member Trish Richard reports:

Our state legislators have been kept busy listening to many stakeholders in the health care field concerned with the numerous budget cuts. The bad news is as far as I can see the cutters and no-new tax guys are winning at the expense of the field. It makes me feel like a stubborn weed, the more they cut the tougher we have to grow. We already have strong alliances with knowledgeable agencies who share our goal to have our work validated. It doesn't appear that there will be any wage increase bringing parity

of pay into the direct care field any time soon. Benefits won't be provided to any greater degree than they are now. **LD 1090** gives us the opportunity to change that. A carry over is somewhat better than a dismissal in that we still have a chance to prove to legislators we want this bill implemented. All of us won't directly benefit from this one, however; it's one step to parity in pay and work validation for all of us. If each and every one of us at least picks up the phone, e-mails or snail mails our

legislatures and just tell them "I want your support of LD1090", our voices will be heard as one and that'll be quite loud, don't you think? Pass this on to as many co-workers, friends, and relatives as you know. Remember the legislators are supposed to represent the needs of the people and we are people. Here's to our voices that have been softly persistent for years, being heard as one, a concise and considerably louder voice.

Maine PASA member Julie M. reports from Augusta:

I attended the public hearing for **LD1258**, assigned to the taxation committee. The bill addresses issues of standards for direct health care workers. It proposes that any individual, other than a consumer-directed personal care assistant, providing direct patient health care for a home health care entity is certified as a certified nursing assistant as defined under Title 32, section 2102, subsection 8 within the first 4 months of employment. Attached to the bill was a proposal for an increase in sales tax on soda, to help fund training. Dave Lamoine read the bill for its sponsor, Rep. Perry, who had withdrawn her support for this bill. Susan Rovillard, representing the Personal

Care Assistance Network, a provider group, spoke against passage of this bill. She stated in her testimony that a survey of service consumers showed that 9 out of 10 consumers felt the assistants aiding them had adequate knowledge for the job. She also stated the Maine residents appreciate the services, 'as is,' and recommended the bill ought not to pass. Kathleen Taggart, from "Bridges", representing the Home Care Alliance, also spoke against this bill. In her testimony she stated this bill would hinder the agencies providing the services, that many of the consumers are able to handle their own health care, and that it would create staffing shortages. She also advised that the PCA

training has been increased from 40 to 50 hours (each agency provides their own state certified training), PCAs will be able to use the first 20 hours of this training towards CNA certification.

There was no response when asked if there was any testimony in favor of the bill. It was moved to work session, and unanimously opposed.

Many other bills are being reviewed by the State legislature this year. To learn more about bills, hearing schedules, and to find helpful directions on how to submit legislation check the Maine government website: <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/siteguide/>

Check page 4 to find out how to make your voice heard in Augusta.

“Next Door”

Input sought by Diane N., PCA, MainePASA member

Ten years ago I moved next door to my parents, now next-door means in the woods on a quiet dirt road! My sister lived within walking distance and I was in a comfortable relationship thinking life is great when we discovered a big change in my mother. Little did I know that this change would not only affect my parent’s life but mine as well.

My mother had Alzheimer’s disease and needed constant care. Dad said, “No nursing home, Mom would stay in the home we built together.”

My sister had moved out of town and my relationship took a back seat. I started going over to take care of Mom and Dad every night



and during weekends. I could see my Dad was getting very tired and told him we should

talk to the doctor about getting some help.

My mother was getting worse and was quite a handful to take care of, however he still insisted she stay at home. We finally found a PCA to come in on a regular basis and she took really good care of my Mom. I

“No nursing home. Mom would stay in the home we built together.”

could see my Dad was doing better when I came home to find him working in his shop while our PCA was in the house caring for my Mother!

Dad had become comfortable enough to leave Mom for a while and get some well deserved time for himself. This of course helped ease my mind knowing my Dad and Mom were in good hands.

Mom passed away 4 years ago and I still go next door every night to take care of my Dad. Although he still gets around I have noticed some changes.

We play cards every night before dinner, I call it my “check in” time. It gives me a chance to really listen to him and make sure he is doing ok.

We have had the opportunity to get to know each other once again which is a blessing for me.

I often wondered if I might be enabling him or treating him like he was a child. I really needed to do some soul searching. I signed up for a PCA class to see if I was doing the right things for my Dad. My PCA class put my mind at rest about my caring for Dad. It really opened my eyes to what I will need to do when

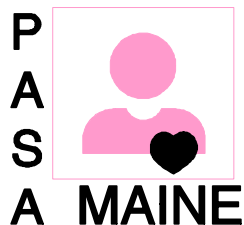
the time comes. Becoming a certified PCA was something I needed to do for myself. I want to make sure he gets the same chance my Mom got, to stay in the home that he and my mother built. I also have a network of Caregivers now that will help me when I need the help.

I know Dad will leave me one day. But till that day happens, I know he is happy and that makes me happy.

As for my personal life, to be honest I really don’t think about it, my family knows this is my life and they are “OK” with that! I have the rest of my life to do MY thing, till then I will continue to go next door!!!

~J~

Empowering Workers



INTRODUCING A NEW COLUMN...

Dear READERS,

We are creating a resource column for our direct care and personal assistance co-workers. It will be titled "Dear PASA". Questions can be e-mailed or regular mailed to us. We encourage our readers to identify

topics of interest and to make recommendations for this new feature.

We will do our best to locate information sources. Every other month

we will feature one or more questions/concerns from a worker. We will follow-up with outcome results when available and respond confidentially when requested. While we can't guarantee answers for all problems we can at least connect workers with more "know how". The purpose of this newsletter feature is to empower direct care and personal assistance workers with information, resources and contact with co-workers.

Live, Love & Laugh a Lot

Your Sister in Direct Care - Trish Richard

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HOW TO MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD: COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

You want to contact your representative, but don't know where to start? Remember, your opinion is VERY IMPORTANT! Do not hesitate to contact your legislator! There are many ways to do so. Personal visits are valuable. Letters are

extremely effective. Personal postcards, phone calls, and e-mail work. Be sure to tell your legislator why you support or oppose a measure. Please include your name and address so the legislator can respond.

To find your legislators: log on to <http://www.maine.gov/portal/government/legislature.html>

To reach your Representative:

House of Representatives,
2 State House Station,
Augusta, Maine 04333-0002
1-800-423-2900, TTY 207-287-4469

To reach your Senator:

Senate of Maine,
3 State House Station,
Augusta, Maine 04333-0003
1-800-423-6900, TTY 207-287-1583

SPRING TIPS: RELIEVING STRESS

Maine PASA member, Julie, a C.N.A. with many years of experience

One of the quickest most effective ways of relieving stress is by breathing. The great thing about breathing for stress relief is it costs nothing, requires no equipment other than our body, and can be done anywhere.

1. Notice where your shoulders are, shrug them, then relax them.
2. Get in a comfortable seated or standing position, with your spine straight, take a deep breath into the abdomen, through the nose. Visualize a balloon filling with air.
3. Next continue the inhale to now expand the ribcage with air.
4. Now inhale to expand the chest all the way to the upper chest, like a balloon. Then reverse the procedure by exhaling out first from the chest, then the ribcage, then the abdomen. Pulling in on the abdominal muscles at the end of the exhale, getting out all the air. Then reverse the process by breathing in again.
5. Note how your body feels now.