



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

Volume 3, Number 1

February/March 2004

## **“Our Stories” Coming Soon: Maine PASA Welcomes Jocelyn Barrett**

In the last Maine PASA newsletter, we put out a call for stories. We hope to use these stories as a way of recognizing workers and demonstrating the value of their work. We are very pleased to announce that Maine PASA has started work on this project. Please welcome Jocelyn Barrett, Project Specialist for the Maine PASA Oral History Project.

Jocelyn will be working with Maine PASA members to complete a project for her degree. She will also contribute to the Maine PASA website and newsletter. Jocelyn has worked as a Dietary Aid and PCA while in school, and has the insights of growing up in a household supported by her mother's works as a CNA and home health caregiver. Once this was done, she was able to start her interviews. She is using the Feminist Oral History model, which uses a spoken story or conversation as the basis for the written story.

Please come to the member meetings on February 28th, March 13th or March 27th to meet Jocelyn. You may also contact her by calling the toll-free Maine PASA line, (800) 268-6612, or e-mailing her at [jocelynbarrett@hotmail.com](mailto:jocelynbarrett@hotmail.com).

*“I believe that everyone has a story to tell, and that there is someone, somewhere, who will connect to it and learn from it – but how many people ever get a chance in their busy lives to sit down and write their own story? Most people, even if they could, don't think that their experience is 'important' enough to tell. I am an oral historian because I believe that best and most important stories are the ones that might not get written for these very reasons. I feel privileged to be able to help people bring their stories into the open, to share with others so everyone can benefit and learn from them.”*



## **Upcoming Meetings**

**February 28th, 10:00a-12:00p**

University of Southern Maine  
Portland Campus Center

**March 13th, 10:00a-12:00p**

Women, Work and Community  
University of Maine-Augusta Campus Center

**March 27th, 10:00a-12:00p**

OHI Training Center in Brewer  
242 State Street, Twin City Plaza

### ***Members and interested guests invited!***

For exact locations and directions,  
call the Maine PASA toll-free numbers:  
voice: (800) 268-6612  
TTY: (800) 809-4501

## **Maine PASA Updates**

### ***Strategic Plan Proposed***

Maine PASA's development over the last two years has been funded through a federal grant (U.S. Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Real Choices Systems Change Grant, to the Maine Department of Human Services, Bureau of Medical Services, in partnership with the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine). A strategic plan has been proposed for Maine PASA to become a non-profit organization and to hold meetings to invite member involvement.

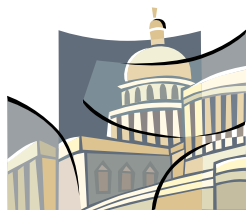
### ***Maine PASA Board***

The first step to becoming a non-profit organization is to form a board of directors. Maine PASA founding members will be joined by support members with expertise in organizational development and advocacy to oversee the development of by-laws and the Maine PASA operations and to complete the state application for non-profit and tax exempt status.

## In The News

### **Maine Legislature decisions have an impact on workers**

The Maine Legislature is making budget decisions and reviewing bills on issues that will have an impact on service providers, service recipients and workers in every sector of long term care. Some recent actions include:



- **The 2004 budget shortfall** of \$109 million Medicaid services was resolved through a number of funding reductions. The anticipated shortage of \$113-125 million for the next fiscal year 2004-2005 will necessitate more difficult decisions.
- **LD 1753:** An Act to Ensure the Quality and Safety in the Delivery of Personal Care Services. The bill to require personal care agencies to conduct criminal background checks on PCAs and other unlicensed assistive personnel before hiring was amended and passed.
- **LD 1791:** The bill to restore funding the certain nursing facilities and residential care facilities. Decision on the bill has been referred to the Appropriations Committee. Support for passage would restore cost of living adjustments and reimbursement reductions made in 2003.
- **LD 1090:** The bill to promote recruitment and retention of direct care workers in long term care was presented in a public hearing in January. This bill had the support but not the funding requested which would have supported a wage floor, or minimum, of \$8.35/hour for direct healthcare workers. The Resolve supports a sustained effort by the Direct Care Worker Coalition to review the wage and workforce issues. The Coalition will report to the Joint Standing Committee of the Legislation for Health and Human Services on January 15, 2005.

### **Personal Assistants Select MSEA-SEIU as their Union**

On January 5, MSEA-SEIU (Maine State Employees Association-Service Employees International Union) became the certified bargaining agent for over 1,000 Personal Assistants in Maine.

“The decision by Personal Assistants to choose MSEA-SEIU as their Union will help bring economic justice to a profession whose workers historically have earned low wages and been denied benefits even though they are paid with public funds... MSEA-SEIU members, friends and staff worked closely with both Personal Assistants and the people who use their services in this effort. MSEA-SEIU is now working with Alpha One, the employer, on a related legislative initiative. We’re supporting legislation to help both the people who use the services of Personal Assistants as well as the Personal Assistants themselves.”

Full report available: <http://www.mseaseiu.org/home.html> or contact Matt McDonald, MSEA, (207) 622-3151, (800) 452-8794, TTY (207) 621-1468.

### **Maine DD Council seeks board members**

The Maine Developmental Disabilities Council (MDDC), also known as the DD Council, seeks consumer representation for Board of Directors. For more information, contact Andrew Roth-Wells at (207) 287-4221 or (800) 244-3990 (voice and TTY) or e-mail him at [andrew.roth-wells@maine.gov](mailto:andrew.roth-wells@maine.gov).

## Maine PASA Recognition

### **Maine PASA in the news**

The January 2004 Issue Brief of the Better Jobs Better Care projects published by the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute and the Institute for the Future of Aging Services is titled *Direct-Care Workers Speaking Out On Their Own Behalf*.

The article provides an important explanation of why associations like Maine PASA are important. And, Maine PASA founding member Trish Richard is quoted in the article! “In recent years, a growing number of groups have emerged to represent the interests of direct-care workers and to ensure that the value of their work is more widely recognized and appreciated.<sup>1</sup> Worker associations help members develop their professional, leadership, and advocacy skills through education, networking, mentoring, and other types of support. Unlike unions, professional associations do not negotiate contracts with individual employers; rather they advocate for improvements in wages and working conditions across the sector.” ([www.bjbc.org/content/docs/BJBCIssueBriefNo2.pdf](http://www.bjbc.org/content/docs/BJBCIssueBriefNo2.pdf))

The Maine PASA November newsletter, Vol 2, #6, article written by member Roberta Record, PCA, “Am I a Professional” has been published in the national on-line newsletter of the National Clearinghouse on Direct Care Workforce, Voices from the Frontline: ([http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/voices\\_20.jsp](http://www.directcareclearinghouse.org/voices_20.jsp)) Congratulations, Roberta, and thank you for your contributions!

### **Maine PASA goes to Baltimore**

Maine PASA members Julie Moulton, DSP and Roberta Record, PCA will be representing Maine PASA at the U.S. DHHS, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Annual Real Choice-Systems Change Conference, *Building Systems so that Money Follows the Person*, in Baltimore, MD, March 1-3. They will be serving on a panel at the pre-conference program on Workforce Recruitment and Retention and staffing the poster session for the full conference. For more information, visit: [www.nashp.org/cmsconference2004](http://www.nashp.org/cmsconference2004).

**This is YOUR newsletter!  
Give it YOUR voice!**

Every thought about contributing  
to the newsletter?



We need:  
book reviews  
poems and essays  
personal stories  
training opportunities  
news bits

What do you want to share with other members?

## Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Health services jobs are at the top of the charts for job growth reported by the Maine Department of Labor. "Many of the fastest growing occupations will be in health care related jobs largely due to the rapid growth in the number of middle age and elderly people." The top 40 list for largest projected naet job growth 2000-2010 includes: Personal and Home Care Aides (#1); Registered Nurses (#2); Home Health Aides (#3); Social & Human Services Assistants (#5); and Nursing Aides, Orderlies, Attendants (#19) ([www.state.me.us/labor/lmis/pdf/MaineEmploymentOutlook.pdf](http://www.state.me.us/labor/lmis/pdf/MaineEmploymentOutlook.pdf)).

### Is this good news?

The biggest message here is to those people who are currently working as PCAs, HHAs, CNAs and Homemakers, Personal Assistants, PSSs, DSPs and other job titles that support elders and people with disabilities is that you are in demand! You are working in the top growth jobs and you are valuable! The State needs more people like you.

### Where is the good job news?

If you are looking for a job that can make a difference in peoples' lives and does not require very much training to start than this news should tell you that you have your pick of jobs. But there is a catch. Many of the jobs will offer part-time hours, not include benefits like health insurance or sick and vacation time, offer wages less than \$9 per hour, and you will require that you have a reliable car. The work schedules, benefits and wage levels vary in these jobs depending on the employer and their client/consumer payment sources. If you have other sources of health care insurance coverage and income, and want a varied work schedule with flexibility, these jobs can be very rewarding.

If you are currently working in one of these jobs, Maine PASA wants to recognize you and the work you do. We appreciate the challenges you face and the contributions you make. We encourage you to seek support from your employers, your co-workers and the Association. We would also like to encourage you to stay in direct care and support work and recruit other people to these important jobs.

If you are looking for a meaningful job, Maine PASA encourages you to consider working in directcare, direct support and personal assistance. There are a variety of job titles, work settings, employers to consider. Maine PASA members would be glad to talk to you about their jobs and the work being done by the Association and others to raise the recognition, wages and benefits currently paid.

### Where can you get more information?

For more information on training, contact the Maine Department of Labor's CareerCenters ([www.mainecareercenter.com](http://www.mainecareercenter.com)). Adult education and community colleges also offer a variety of training programs. Many employers provide training with employment.

For more information on job opportunities, check your local newspapers. Alpha One, an organization that supports independent living services for people with disabilities, can connect you with individuals with disabilities who want to hire personal assistants. You may contact them at (800) 640-7200 or visit their website at [www.alpha-one.org](http://www.alpha-one.org). Stay tuned to [www.maine-pasa.org](http://www.maine-pasa.org) for future listing services for direct care and personal assistants!

## Bonds and Boundaries: Thoughts on Caregiving & Professionalism

by Roberta Record, PCA

The world of caregiving has changed since more women moved into the workplace. In the past, women took care of family elders and friends with disabilities who needed assistance. Today, more elders are being taken care of by strangers. Questions surface for elders when an unrelated caregiver visits to be a part of their lives. Theft is the first concern. Is this person reliable, honest, warm-hearted? Do they have household skills, common sense, respect, and humor?

I find that elders have a hard time defining our roles as caregivers. We are either strangers or surrogate children, and there is no in between. An elder will say to me "You may be excused to go run and play." Another will tell me "You're a good kid." Male elders can look at a caregiver as a sex object. One man asked me if I would go to bed with him, another told me that if he was younger he would chase me, said to me in front of his wife. I find these remarks to be degrading. I have pondered this issue, and I've found that boundaries based on clarity of my role to be very important not only to protect the elder but also to protect myself from misunderstandings. This helps me to save precious energy to do our noble work.

The State of Maine attracts retirees and our resident baby boomers are aging. We will have a lot of elders who need assistance and care. The time has come to define who we are as caregivers. We are professional people visiting elders' homes to clean, shop, provide personal care, respite, companionship, or take elders to their appointments. We have to tap into our skills for empathetic listening, patience, respect for differences in opinions, politics, sports, religion, social studies, values and beliefs, storytelling, humor, wit, quick thinking. We need the judgment to know how best to care, assist or listen, and to know when bonds and boundaries are necessary - and how to balance them carefully. It is our profession.

The time has come to think about these roles as more than just an entry-level job. Hundreds of caregivers go to work daily to assist elders and people with disabilities in their homes. We can soften a harsh day, help someone get ready for days work, clean up a spill, supervise an emergency, appreciate the companionship of a cat, bring sunshine to a dull day, read labels, cook a meal, and save elder's money by price checking and clarifying confusion. It is all in a day's work for the caregiver. We are the new professionals to be recognized for working in our communities, helping elders and people with disabilities to be in their homes and our neighborhoods.



## Check This Out

### Creating Moments of Joy

by Jolene Brackey

This book is a gold mine of information to make your day with an elder with Alzheimer's or dementia a little easier. Jolene's writings are a guide to possible opportunities to get into a moment of joy with your elder. Her insights help to change our focus and raise our appreciation of the people we care for. The information can be passed on to our elder's families to help them understand their loved one.



In a campaign speech given by Franklin Roosevelt on internationalism, Eleanor Roosevelt noted:

*"We can lead the world by a great example...The Democratic program...is a plan of hope...We oppose money in politics, we oppose the private control of national finances...the treatment of human beings as commodities...the saloon-bossed city... (and) we oppose starvation wages...."* [emphasis added]

(Eleanor Roosevelt:1884-1933 by Blanche Wiesen Cook)



### You're Invited to Join Us!

Are you a CNA, PCA, HHA, DSP or PSS? Do you provide direct support or care for an elder or a person with a disability? Contact us for more information!

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Voice: (800) 268-6612, TTY: (207) 228-8440, Email: [scala@usm.maine.edu](mailto:scala@usm.maine.edu)



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