

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE & PROGRESS IN THE 110TH CONGRESS

The 110th United States Congress convened its first session on January 4, 2007 with the Democrats in control of both the Senate and the House of Representatives for the first time in 12 years. Pennsylvania's General Assembly convened in early January as well, also with many new members.

Both chambers of the legislatures at both the federal and the state levels announced ambitious agendas. Part of the work of organizations like United Cerebral Palsy is to make sure the needs of persons with disabilities are included in those agendas. On the national level, UCP has partnered with several leading disability advocacy groups to form the Disability Policy Collaboration (DPC) which has itself embarked on an ambitious set of goals to pursue in the 110th Congress.

Many of the priorities the DPC has identified are related to the federal budget. Ensuring adequate funding for disability related services is always a challenge, and more so in the current fiscal atmosphere. In addition to the current budget deficit and continuing increases in defense spending, at the beginning of this session, Congress enacted the PAYGO (Pay As You Go) provision which requires that any new spending on entitlements such as Medicaid be offset by spending cuts in other areas or by tax increases.

The overall goals of UCP and its partners in the DPC are; protection of the rights of people with disabilities, expansion of community-based service systems, and protection and expansion of benefits for their constituents. Among the specific objectives:

- **Medicaid** – advocates are looking to Congress to oversee waivers that have been approved in several states that alter basic Medicaid provisions. Also they will work to make amendments to programs created by the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 such as the home and community based services option to make them work better for persons with disabilities.
- **Direct Support Professionals bill** - would provide funds to enable states to increase the wages paid to direct care workers in community based settings to make them comparable to those paid to workers in government-run Medicaid programs.
- **Housing** – efforts to prevent or minimize expected cuts to the Section 811 Supportive Housing for People with Disabilities Program and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program.
- **Education** – the No Child Left Behind Act is scheduled for reauthorization this year. Disability groups strongly supported the principles in the NCLB act, especially the notion that all children, including those with disabilities, be assessed to determine their academic progress.

• **ADA Restoration** - a number of court decisions have in effect denied the law's protections to people with disabilities. Congress is expected to clarify the definition of disability in line with the original intent of the law.

- **Assistive Technology** – since increased funding seems unlikely, emphasis will be on attempting to bring every state program to the minimum allotment level defined in the 2004 reauthorization, and restore funding lost in recent years.
- **Civil Rights** – several pieces of Voting Reform legislation are under consideration this year and the DPC partners intend to ensure that whatever reforms are implemented, voting systems and processes are fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Health Care** – advocates hope to expand funding of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), but any increase must comply with the PAYGO provision.
- **Long Term Community Supports** – the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act (CLASS Act) would create a national, premium-based, long-term supports insurance program for Medicaid eligible people. The bill could take pressure off the Medicaid system while providing more individual choice in long-term supports.

(Related article on back)

New Assistive Technology Service Improves Telephone Access for People with Disabilities



Pennsylvania's Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) is the newest service of PIAT, Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology and the Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) at United Cerebral Palsy.

The TDDP provides specialized equipment, without charge, to eligible Pennsylvanians who have disabilities that impair their ability to access telephone services. Devices available thru the program include TTY (text telephone), TTY with large visual or Braille displays, amplifiers, voice activated dialers, and telephones with large buttons. The program is coordinated by PIAT in cooperation with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the PA Public Utilities Commission.

Contact Linda Mesavage at the ATRC at UCP for more information and eligibility guidelines.

Executive Director's Message

Dear Friends of UCP,

Even though this is our "Spring/Summer" newsletter and all around us are the telltale signs of spring, I wanted to take this opportunity to talk about our 2006 Holiday Gift-Wrap at the Viewmont Mall. As many of you know the Holiday Gift-Wrap booth is our major winter fundraiser. The 2006 holiday season marked our 22nd consecutive year of gift-wrapping! The success of this fundraiser is due mainly to our fantastic volunteers. We have individuals, groups and families that volunteer their time year after year. For some, UCP has become part of their family holiday tradition.

For the 2006 Gift-Wrap we sent out letters to all of the Guidance Counselors working in our local middle and high schools in Lackawanna, Susquehanna and Wayne Counties. We asked them to let their students know about Gift-Wrap and the opportunity to volunteer. The response was amazing! We had over 75 students from 12 different schools volunteer their time and talent. We had one group of teenage students come in on Christmas Eve day 2 hours earlier than expected and stay an hour later than scheduled! All of the students were dedicated to doing a great job and "giving back" to their community.

On behalf of the consumers and families who benefit from services offered by UCP of NE PA, and our staff and Board of Directors, I would like to thank everyone who volunteered at Gift-Wrap. To all of the great students of Northeastern Pa we are truly grateful for your help and support. It is encouraging to know that the students of today will be the adults of tomorrow who will carry on a long tradition of supporting our community.

Enjoy the spring and summer!

Summer Compuplay Camp Set

UCP's Compuplay program is currently accepting reservations for the summer Compuplay Camp for children ages four to ten. The camp is scheduled for August 7th thru 10th.

Compuplay Camps feature computer games and learning activities along with other recreational activities and social opportunities. Children without disabilities participate in the camps as peer tutors.

Compuplay is a part of UCP's Lekotek program. Compuplay strives to make computers accessible and enjoyable for children with special needs, much the same as Lekotek does with toys. Both programs also include family members to help improve the family's interaction and involve everyone in the special needs child's development.

For more information, contact Sally McCullon, Lekotek Leader, at 587-5892.

United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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***WHERE IN THE WORLD IS.....
EVENING OF TREASURE??***

At Boscov's, of course!!

Running around the departments of Boscov's Department Store for this year's Evening of Treasure will make you something of a globe-trotter. In the tradition of "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" our annual spring fundraiser, to be held on Sunday, June 3rd, will take you on an imaginary trip around the world.

Each time you solve a clue, you get a chance to win one of the many prizes available. Or another clue taking you to another secret location.

An hors d'oeuvres reception will begin the evening at 7pm and our journey will bring us back to Scranton by 10pm for the awarding of the grand prizes.

Tickets are \$25.00 and will be available at the door, or can be purchased in advance at the UCP office or from any board member.

HOLIDAY FUND RAISERS & PROJECTS

Holiday Gift Wrap Generates Funds, Publicity

UCP's 2006 Gift Wrap at the Viewmont Mall was a success once again, raising about \$9,000 to support the agency's programs. The event, which runs from "Black Friday" thru Christmas Eve, also garnered a little extra publicity this year with a feature on public access Channel 61 and a photo in The Abington Journal.

A number of new groups volunteered for the first time, joining those we have counted on for years. We appreciate everyone's help and as always, special thanks to the Viewmont Mall for their support.

Volunteer groups included:

Abington Heights High School	Alpha Iota Sorority
Employees from Bank of America	Bishop Hannan High School
Carbondale Area High School	Dunmore High School Spanish Club
Employees from Gertrude Hawk Chocolates	The Gilgallon Family
Girl Scout Troop #48	Girl Scout Troop #201
Girl Scout Troop #281	Hickory Street Presbyterian Church
Kiwanis Club of Scranton	Lackawanna College Stenographers Lab
Lackawanna College Student Activities Group	Mid-Valley High School
North Pocono High School FBLA	Employees of Prudential Asset Management
Scranton High School	Scranton Prep National Honor Society
United Presbyterian Church	Wallenpaupack Area High School
West Scranton High School	Western Wayne High School
Western Wayne Middle School	Youth Advocate Program

UCP board and staff members

***UCP's Wreath Sale raised
over \$1,800 this past
Holiday Season.
Thanks to everyone who
participated!***

***Angel Tree Project Made Holidays Brighter
for 225 children who were provided Holiday presents
Our thanks to:
Employees of General Dynamics
Moses Taylor Hospital Obstetrics Department
Trinity Lutheran Church
Staff of UCP***

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

All contributions were received between October 1, 2006 and February 28, 2007. If we have omitted or misspelled your name, or if you would prefer not to be listed, please call us at 347-3357. Any corrections will be made in the next newsletter.

Donor Levels

\$2,500 – Benefactor

\$1,000 2,499 – Partner

\$500.00 - \$999.00 – Associate

\$250.00 - \$499.00 –Friend

\$100.00 - \$249.00 – Patron

\$50.00 - \$99.00 – Donor

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Membership Campaign Ongoing

If you haven't already, please take a moment and contribute to UCP's annual Membership Campaign. Your contributions help us continue these vital services for individuals with disabilities:

Early intervention – education, sensori-motor activities, and therapy provided for infants, toddlers and preschoolers in their homes or day care centers;

Lekotek – toy lending library and resource center for children with special needs and their families;

Compuplay – computer-based education and recreation program for children and adolescents with disabilities;

Adult Day Program – educational and skills training activities for adults with mental and/or physical disabilities;

Community Options – transportation and other supports for adults with disabilities to participate in community activities;

Work Connections – supported employment services including job development and coaching for individuals with disabilities;

Assistive Technology – information, referral, training and advocacy for individuals who use or need assistive devices or services;

Community Living Arrangements – supervised, semi-independent group housing for adults with disabilities;

Supported Independent Living – part-time support and assistance for adults with disabilities living on their own; and

Home Services Program – advocacy, referral and other assistance for children and adults with disabilities and their families.

A return envelope is included in this newsletter for your convenience. Thank you for your support.

*Thank You
for supporting
UCP!*

MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS
Received October 1, 2006 thru February 28, 2007

In Memory of Willard Heckman
Bill and Doris Lindsley

In Memory of Zola Darrow
Nancy and Regina Savage

In Memory of Mary Duffy
Nancy and Regina Savage

In Memory of Ruth Davis
Frieda K. Robertson

In Memory of David B. Jones
Frieda K. Robertson

In Memory of Gweneth Kaleel
Bill and Doris Lindsley

In Memory of Mary A. Walski
The Ronald Krafjack Family

In Memory of Harold P. McGowan
The Ronald Krafjack Family

In Memory of Luciano Lepri
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Frank, Francis, Nancy and Regina Savage

In Memory of Rosemary Kelly
Michael, Kaitlyn and Krista Savage

Susan D. Keller Memorial Fund

In Memory of Susan Keller
Melodee S. Dixon

In Memory of Angelo John Quatra
Elaine R. Fernandez
Frieda K. Robertson

In Memory of Lil Jones Dornheim
Frieda K. Robertson

Honoraria

In Honor of the 50th Birthday of Dr. Fabien Bitan
Dr. Richard and Erin Weinberger

About Memorials

United Cerebral Palsy is grateful to our many friends in the community who support us thru their membership contributions, in-kind donations, by participating in our special events and thru memorials and honoraria.

These special contributions can be sent to UCP at 425 Wyoming Avenue, Scranton PA 18503. An acknowledgment is sent to the donor and a card notifying the honoree or the family of the person being memorialized are sent.

Memorial contributions are placed in UCP's Land, Building & Equipment Fund, to support major needs of the agency.

How to Contact UCP

United Cerebral Palsy
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425 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503-1227

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Web: www.ucpnepa.com

State & Local Efforts Focus on Funding

UCP of Northeastern Pennsylvania recently participated in a Legislative Breakfast sponsored by the Lackawanna & Susquehanna Counties Mental Health/Mental Retardation Providers Council.

Members of the Council sought to inform legislators, many of whom are newly elected, of the work of their respective agencies.

Many pieces of legislation have important implications for people with disabilities and the programs that serve them and the Council wants to make sure that legislators know how the issues affect their constituents who have disabilities.

The Governor's 2007-08 budget proposes a 3% cost of living adjustment for agencies to offset rising costs and maintain competitive wages and the Council urged the legislators to keep that and other provisions intact.



UCP's Coordinator of Adult Services Denise Summa and consumer Rudy Giles were among those in attendance at a recent Legislative Breakfast sponsored by the Lackawanna-Susquehanna Counties MH/MR Providers Council.

The United Cerebral Palsy Newsletter is published three times a year by:

**United Cerebral Palsy
of Northeastern Pennsylvania
425 Wyoming Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503**

for the staff, volunteers and friends of this agency.
Barbara Siarkiewicz, *Editor*
We welcome your comments and suggestions. If there is an error in your address label, or if you have any questions regarding agency programs or services, please write or call the agency at 347-3357



Please recycle

United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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Robert Schwartz, *President*

Sarah A. Drob, *Executive Director*

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Participating agency of United Way of Lackawanna County and United Way of Wyoming County
Provider agency of Lackawanna-Susquehanna Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program
Provider agency of Wayne County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Program

*United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Pennsylvania is a non-profit, voluntary health agency
serving those with cerebral palsy and other disabilities regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age.*

UCP is registered with the Pennsylvania State Bureau of Charitable Organizations.
A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the PA Department of State
by calling toll-free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

A United Way Agency

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United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Pennsylvania
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