



January 2015

# The Telescope

News for the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club

## President's Message

Dear Probus members,

At our executive meeting in December we discussed various exciting events for this year.

1. A brand new raffle coming up this Spring
2. A social night for members and their spouses
3. A Special Educator Awards Project
4. Our Balloon Sale on Memorial day
5. An improved website
6. The installation dinner in May or June
7. Horizons meet and greet day
8. Crown fundraising day

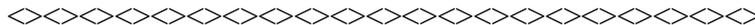
The season to get busy with volunteer work will be starting real soon and I hope everyone will be participating. In advance I would like to say thank you! And Happy New Year.

*David Hoff, President*

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### GREATER HARTFORD PROBUS BOARD 2014-2015

- |                                       |                       |
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| <b>Probus National Rep:</b>           | <b>Steve Blotner</b>  |
| <b>Member at Large:</b>               | <b>Bob Goldberg</b>   |



# Parents Of Intellectually Disabled Plead For State Funding, Cite Growing Waiting List

By [Josh Kovner](#) [jkovner@courant.com](mailto:jkovner@courant.com) [contact the reporter](#)

- *The Hartford Courant January 16, 2015*

CT residential waiting lists decried by parents of intellectually disabled children

HARTFORD — Their plea was as simple as it was powerful.

Parents of intellectually disabled children told a legislative panel Thursday that unless funding was increased to the Department of Developmental Services, thousands of families would be marooned on a waiting list for apartments or group homes.

There are at least 2,000 families waiting now, and the number is growing. The only way a family can qualify for residential support for an intellectually disabled child is for the caregiver — the parents, in most cases — to die or become incapacitated.

"Could we have designed a crueler system?" said Tom Fiorentino of West Hartford, whose son, Dan, 24, has Down syndrome.



## [Opposing Sides Clash As Debate Resumes Over Closing Southbury Training School](#)

But the solutions have been elusive. Over the past seven years, the legislature has lacked the political will to increase the department's \$1.1 billion budget. In fact, about \$30 million has been cut.

According to one estimate provided to the legislature last year, it would cost nearly \$150 million over the next two years to provide the families on the waiting list with the services for which they qualify.

Last year, the legislature's new Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Caucus managed to find \$4.4 million to pay for residential services for 100 families on the waiting list with the most pressing need.

But there are few if any openings in group homes or apartments managed by either the state or private contractors — and a portion of those 100 families are still waiting for placement for an adult child with intellectual disabilities even though they were singled out for the funding.

The disabilities caucus, which is gaining legislative members by the week and is now up to about 45, listened Thursday as an overflow crowd of respectful but emotionally drained parents at the second annual Family Hearing Day asked the panel to find more money, or fix a system that spends considerably more to care for a resident in a public facility than it does for a person with the same level of need at a private location.

Formed in February 2014 by Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford, Rep. Jay Case, R-Winsted, and Rep. John Hampton, D-Simsbury, the caucus "fights for the interest" of people with developmental disabilities.



#### [Southbury Training School Too Costly To Keep](#)

"What's different this year than last is the families are not only asking for more money," Bye said after the hearing. "They are asking us to have a five-year plan to deliver services in a way that meets the needs of more families. They are saying there is a problem with the way the money is allocated."

The families want residential services now, or soon, for their children. Waiting until parents die, and then abruptly making their sons and daughters wards of the state, would devastate their fragile worlds, parents testified.

"What would happen to Spencer, then?" said Alison Jacobson, whose 16-year-old son is profoundly intellectually disabled. She is his sole caregiver, as she is for her husband, who has multiple sclerosis.

at 8:29 AM January 16, 2015

As parents get older, caring for an adult son or daughter with an intellectual disability becomes increasingly difficult, physically and emotionally, the families said. Having the opportunity to live in a well-run group home or an apartment — and visit at home on weekends — helps build independence and enriches lives, the parents said.

Rabbi Jim Rosen said the legislature has a duty to provide intellectually disabled citizens with housing opportunities after the parents on whom they had depended their entire lives are gone.

Several parents cited successes — strong programming at Chapel Haven, caring group homes run by Oak Hill — as examples of what needs to be replicated and supported.



[Report: State Must Strengthen Bridge to Adulthood For Young People With Autism](#)

Last month, The ARC of Connecticut and other advocacy groups joined in a call for the closing within five years of the Southbury Training School — the largest remaining state institution for developmentally disabled people — and several regional facilities run by DDS.

The advocates are asking that money saved from the closing of the state campuses be shifted to the private sector to significantly expand housing opportunities in the community.

Although admissions have been frozen at Southbury for 29 years and the population there has dwindled to 318, neither Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, the legislature, nor DDS has committed to a definite closing date. Many of the families of the remaining 318 residents do not want Southbury to close, and Al Raymond, whose brother, Duncan, has lived at Southbury for many years, reaffirmed that position to the panel on Thursday. The state is consolidating the Southbury campus, mothballing buildings as they empty out, and offering community placements to the residents, who have priority over those on the waiting list.

Any major shift from the public to the private sector would be a "race to the bottom" for wages unless a stable, decently paid workforce was part of the funding equation, said Jennifer Schneider, a spokeswoman for Local 1199 of the Service Employees International Union.

Workers at private group homes have not had a cost-of-living increase for seven years, said Schneider.

A Courant investigation in 2013 that revealed lapses in care, some of them fatal, at public and private facilities, noted that group homes suffered from high worker turnover and that companies had difficulty recruiting and retaining quality workers.

"We are on the same page as the families — there is a crisis with the waiting lists," said Schneider. "But stability in the workforce has to be linked to the solution." Copyright © 2015, [Hartford Courant](#)

**Thank You Greater Hartford Probus Club:**

From: [AnnMarie.Gugliotti@ct.gov](mailto:AnnMarie.Gugliotti@ct.gov)  
To: [Debob50@aol.com](mailto:Debob50@aol.com)  
Sent: 9/17/2014 1:41:33 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
Subj: (no subject)

The residents of 242 Mountain Road would like to thank the Probus House staff for all their hard work in putting together an enjoyable picnic—Probus House staff where friendly!!! All that attended had a wonderful time...and it was nice to have all get together and see old and new friends. ☺

Thanks again

242 Mountain Rd.

**Probus Picnic:** Duane Montalvo SDSW and everyone at Beelzebub Road, CLA in South Windsor, CT.

**Probus Picnic:** Brian Johnson SDSW Brown Street.

**Probus Picnic:** Carol Ziogas DDS-North Street.

**Probus Picnic:** Carolyn Simmons SDSW

**Probus Picnic:** Sheryl Scott SDSW-1

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**Campership: NEBA, Springfield, MA.** Jeannine Pavlak, MS NPM

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**Donation:** Irene Schloss Special Needs Coordinator JCC

**Reminder:      Next Probus Meeting (Speaker):**

**Date: Wednesday January 21, 2015**

**Time: 6:15 PM**

**Location: American School for the Deaf**  
139 N Main St, West Hartford, CT 06107  
(860) 570-2300

**Speaker: David Maslan**

**Subject: Special Educator Awards Fundraiser.** The Probus Club hopes to initiate this as its next big project.

## An Easy Fund Raiser

### Occasion Cards

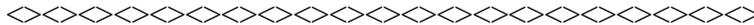
As you know, the Probus Club is 100% committed to helping those that, for no fault of their own, cannot help themselves. One of our fund raising events that we sponsor is the ability for us to be able to accept contributions to honor, praise, memorialize or make a special acknowledgement to someone who is either in our presence or in our memory.

By you making a contribution to the Probus Club, our very own Bruce Stanger will process your contribution; inform the donee that a contribution was made to Probus to recognize him or her and for the event that is being recognized. Also, an acknowledgement will be sent to you, the donor, to thank you for your charitable contribution to the Probus Club. As always, 100% of donations to the Probus Club are used exclusively for charitable purposes.

Consider the Probus Club when honoring or remembering someone special.

Bruce Stanger can be reached at:  
Attorney Bruce Stanger  
433 South Main Street  
Suite 112  
West Hartford, CT 06110

The check should be made payable to The Probus Club and forwarded to Bruce along with the information necessary for a proper acknowledgement. Thank you for supporting The Probus Club.



## 2015 COMING EVENTS FOR GREATER HARTFORD PROBUS CLUB

Schedule of Dinner Meetings at the American School for the Deaf:

January 21--speaker

February 18--speaker

March 18--speaker

April 15--Business

Installation Dinner ---May 20; May 27; or June 3 --- to be announced

Meyer Frankel, Editor  
The Telescope  
Newsletter of the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club