



September
2015

The Telescope

News for the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club

President's Message

Dear Probus members and potential members:

Last year was a successful year for Hartford Probus and this year offers more opportunity for Probus to grow and evolve in the Greater Hartford area. Our best fortune is our membership. We plan to continue with previous projects such as the September picnic for clients, the Memorial Day balloon sale, offering free tickets to clients for special events, the Spring raffle, and community fundraiser day events. In addition there is a project we plan to begin soon which will bring funding to projects for special needs instructors. So all in all there is much to look forward to. I hope that these projects will all be able to go forward and be successful.

I would be glad to hear from you and get together for a cup of coffee or lunch to discuss any ideas you may have. Just give me a call or email me.

Thank you all.

Best wishes,

David Hoff

dhoff@sbcglobal.net

TELE: [860-726-0505](tel:860-726-0505) cell #

Probus Meeting of 5/5/15: MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 6:55 p.m.

Thanks to Bob Goldberg and the wonderful ASD Sodexo chefs for preparing a gourmet cookout on the patio on a picture perfect Spring evening ! The food was great and plentiful and we held our business meeting afterwards also on the patio.

Michael Croll introduced a friend of his whom he brought as a guest to our meeting. Thomas Donohue is a Clerk at the Hartford Children's Probate Court, and Tom has agreed to volunteer his time for our upcoming Memorial Day Parade balloon sale.

Michael then updated the membership on our Raffle fundraiser. He distributed tickets (20 per member) to be sold beginning on May 11th (because of legalities). Hopefully members have put together their hit lists so they can hit the ground running with ticket sales starting on the 11th ! Michael include a "cheat sheet" of instructions and tips to assist all of us with our sales. Make

sure when you turn in your collected money and tickets stubs that all names and addresses of ticket purchasers are legible. These will be turned in when you arrive at our June 3rd Installation Dinner. Remember that Michael is our point person/conduit for the Raffle and if you run out of tickets and want more to sell or conversely you find you cannot sell all of your allotted 20 tickets then just let him know and he will either get you more tickets and take your unsold tickets and redistribute them to another Probian. Our goal is to raise between \$1,500 and \$2,000 from Raffle sales. Michael mentioned that one of the State of Connecticut workers who assisted him in preparing the paperwork he needed to file to make our raffle official is himself a CODA (Child of a deaf adult) who was sympathetic to our cause and that of ASD. Also, Michael was happy to report that our printing cost was ½ of what it was last year.

Steve Blotner who is the National Rep for the National Probus Board reported about a meeting held on April 26th. He said that Mark Goldberg ran a great 3 hour meeting and one of their agenda items was the effort being put into trying to get a Probus Club started in Pittsburgh. Mark is planning to fly to Pittsburgh to help facilitate this endeavor. Steve also mentioned that of the 4 Probus Clubs in CT: (Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Torrington) Torrington is down to just 5 members. Steve added that the National Telescope will be printed twice per year. Finally, Steve imparted that the main thrust of their 3 hour meeting was a discussion concerning by-laws revision.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE BALLOON SALE

Our annual balloon sale fundraiser kicks off on March 25th at 7:00 a.m. sharp ! We need manpower (and woman power) ! Syd Elkin who is the event coordinator said that we will be inflating between 400 and 500 balloons. Tom Brady of the Patriots has volunteered to deflate 12 balloons pro bono....Plan to arrive at the South Entrance of the West Hartford Town Hall (the old Hall High School for the old-timers) and go up the staircase from the parking lot to the 3rd Floor where coffee, bagels/donuts will be available to energize everyone for powering through our work ! Balloon sales on the parade route streets will begin at 9:10 a.m. The parade itself kicks off at 10 a.m. and runs until 11:05 a.m. 12 noon is Clean Up and departure. Balloon sellers will wear vests saying Probus on them and with vendors licenses in the vest pockets. You will begin with seed money from Meyer Frankel to make change with while selling.

INSTALLATION DINNER: JUNE 3rd

We are still looking for a guest speaker for our upcoming Installation Dinner. Both Beth Bye and Jen Rizzotti had schedule conflicts and could not accommodate us. If you have any ideas please get ahold of David Hoff ASAP !

We approved our 2015-2016 slate of officers at tonight's meeting:

President – David Hoff

1st Vice President – David Maslin

2nd Vice President – Michael Croll

Secretary – Charles Dobrow

Treasurer – Meyer Frankel

Probus National Rep - Steve Blotner

The Installation Dinner will be held at the same location as last year which is the Cogswell Building at ASD at the very end of the driveway, all the way back at 6:00 p.m. Guests, spouses and Associate Members will be charged \$25 to attend the dinner. Bring your own wine if you care to.

Mark Goldberg spoke about the Board of Governors and how this body is the final arbiter of by-laws issues, etc.

New member Mark Roffer has agreed to serve as the Editor of the National Probian. Mark also updated the membership saying that he hopes to have our website updated/revised within 30 to 45 days. He will be populating it with activities, fundraiser information and photos, etc. Thanks for your hard work in revitalizing our website Mark ! FYI: Mark owns a company called eBiz Kingdom if anyone needs website development and marketing resources. (www.ebizkingdom.com).

Camp Horizon Clean Up Day has been cancelled due to the fact that their cabins are in good condition and the camp has expanded their staff so they have sufficient manpower to spruce up the camp before their 1st camp session begins. However, Probus members are welcome and encouraged to attend any of the camp's 4 Intake Days in South Windham as a great opportunity to view what some have dubbed the best facility of its kind for developmentally disabled youth in the world. David Hoff will have Bob Goldberg do an email blast soon to provide the Intake Days dates so that interested members can carpool together.

New Business

There was a Finance Committee meeting this past week. It was agreed that \$3,000 of our \$23,000 would be put into 3 different conservative funds (\$1,000 per fund) to dip our feet into the water of securing a better return on investment for our money. Details forthcoming as to which funds we will use, but currently we are exploring putting \$3,000 of our Endowment into an Equities Mutual Fund with Fidelity.

Mark Goldberg revisited the fact that we never chose an official Membership Chairperson to track new guests to our club and to encourage their retention and participation in our charitable activities.

Save the Date: Our Annual Picnic will occur on September 27th in Windsor at Northwest Park. Details will be announced soon by Bob Goldberg.

Warren Weber is back in the hospital again so our thoughts and prayers are extended to him for good health !

Special Educator Award

David Hoff expressed his excitement about the upcoming Special Educator Award program which is on the horizon ! David Maslin then stated that he would like his planning to develop organically first and said he is working hard to line up key players and the infrastructure for the big picture. He would respectfully like to table the discussion of a \$2,500 loan from the Club to serve as seed money. He feels a vote on loaning his program this seed money right now would be a bit premature.

Probus member Shai Elkayam has started a business venture...a locksmith company. We wish him much success in this enterprise!

www.lockedct.com

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charlie Dobrow

Secretary

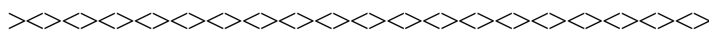
Reminder: **Next Probus Meeting (No Speaker):**
*(Please note the time and location at ASD's
"Cogswell Hall")*

Date: Wednesday September 16, 2015

Time: 6:00 PM

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

No Speaker:
Please remember our meetings will always be in **Cogswell Hall** this year.
This is the same building we have held our Installation Dinner.



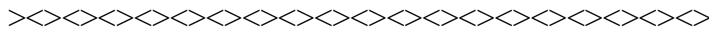
2014-2015 Probus Club's Donations/Camperships:

Probus Club of Greater Hartford, working with Debra Muirhead, (Case Manager, State of Connecticut, DDS) provided financial support to 7 individuals, to help pay for summer programs at the following facilities:

Camp Einser	\$ 749.00 (Great Barrington, MA)
Camp Horizons	\$ 3,250.00 (South Windham, CT)
Camp Sunburst	\$ 680.00 (East Hartford, CT)
Camp Sunrise	\$ 630.00 (Glastonbury, CT)
Camp Ramah	\$ 320.00 (Palmer, MA)
Total	\$ 5,629.00

Note: As recommended by the State of Connecticut, DDS.

Note: "DDS" = Department of Developmental Services.



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.

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR PROBUS CLUB OF GREATER HARTFORD

September 16, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

September 27, 2015: Probus Client Picnic, from 9:30 to Noon.

October 16, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

November 18, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

January 20, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

February 17, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

March 16, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

April 20, 2015: Dinner Meeting at the American School for the Deaf.

May/June, 2015: Installation Dinner at the American School for the Deaf.

Department of Developmental Services: Soaring OT at Agency

Criticized: (From 09-13-2015 Hartford Courant:)

HARTFORD — Robert Onyina is a direct-care worker at one of the state's three regional institutions for people with intellectual disabilities.

He works in the Newington facility, providing hands-on care to residents. His base salary is about \$54,000. But in the institutional system run by the Department of Developmental Services, base salaries are often irrelevant.

Onyina earned \$151,000 in overtime on top of his salary, nearly tripling his base pay this past fiscal year, records show. His total earnings, more than \$205,000, dwarfed Gov. Dannel P. Malloy's salary of \$150,000.

Onyina, 61, was in good company. Fourteen workers for the Department of Developmental Services earned more than \$100,000 in overtime alone in the fiscal year that ended in June, records show. The department paid a total of \$48 million to its employees.

Nearly 200 direct-care workers at DDS earned at least \$50,000 in overtime alone, even as advocates fought to restore cuts to in-home services and day programs, and the population at the state's largest institution — the Southbury Training School — continued to drop.

Of the more than 16,000 people served by DDS, only about 820 live in the institutions or state-run group homes, but those facilities receive a disproportionate amount of the department's \$1.1 billion budget.

Meanwhile, more than 2,000 families are on a waiting list for residential placements in private group homes or apartments — but the department says there's no money for those placements.

“There is money — they just choose to spend it in a different place,” said Leslie Simoes, executive director of The Arc Connecticut, the state largest coalition of advocacy groups. “These continued inefficiencies equal a denial of services. There's a direct line from one to the other.”

Onyina was, as could be expected, busy at work on a recent day.

“I'm at work; I cannot take this time to talk,” Onyina, 61, said to a reporter who called to ask him about a system in which double-shifts and 75-hour weeks are the norm. Onyina, who has worked for the department since at least 1994, didn't respond to additional phone and email messages.

The Courant emailed 10 workers who earned over \$100,000 in overtime, but none responded.

“In our view, overtime is out of control,” said Walter Glomb, of Ellington, whose son, Nick, 27, has an intellectual disability, lives at home and works two jobs.

Glomb, an MIT graduate who teaches a graduate-level course in organizational change at the University of New Haven, helped compile an initial report last year on overtime spending in the 2013-2014 fiscal year.

He worked with three other parents of children with intellectual disabilities — Tom Fiorentino, of West Hartford, a retired assistant state attorney general; Fiorentino's wife, Shelagh McClure, a lawyer in the state treasurer's office and chairwoman of the Council on Developmental Disabilities; and Collette Bement, of Tolland, a Ph.D. toxicologist and consultant.

The parents work closely with The Arc Connecticut, and have come together as an informal research team for Arc.

To update their work, the parents obtained the latest salary report from the Department of Developmental Services through a freedom of information request.

Glomb said that the staffing ratio inside the state facilities is high enough to avoid excessive overtime, and that the Department of Developmental Services could shift millions of dollars from the overtime account to help families on the waiting list without adding a dollar to the budget or shedding a single job.

Fiorentino said the parents' work has one goal — to suggest ways to free up money and put it to better use.

“I hope the administration sees that there really are ways to manage better, and that better management will help families who aren't getting services now,” said Fiorentino, who serves on a panel, appointed by Malloy, to look at ways to reduce the waiting list.

“It's very frustrating to keep pointing out these areas, and not see meaningful movement. I'm hoping this time will be different,” said Fiorentino.

Glomb said the parents hope to present their latest report to the state's Finance Advisory Committee, which has the power to shift money from one line item to another after the budget has been set. Malloy, Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman, the top state finance officials and five legislators serve on the panel.

The Department of Developmental Services declined to discuss the overtime issue. “We have nothing to add,” said Joan Barnish, the DDS spokeswoman.

Overtime costs are rising at a time when the institutional population is dropping. This is particularly true at the Southbury Training School. As of last week, 275 residents remained at Southbury, served by a workforce of more than 850 full- and part-time employees.

The 1,600-acre campus, once home to 2,000 residents, is shrinking with each passing month, and cottages are shuttered as they empty.

Since 2011, under the terms of the settlement of a lawsuit filed by the Arc, the state has been compelled to offer training-school residents an opportunity to live in small community settings. Fifty have moved and another 40 are preparing to move.

The average age of the remaining residents is 66. “We could be looking at a census of 230 or less next year,” said Simoes.

She noted that the Mansfield Training School had about 200 residents when Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. decided to close it in the early 1990s. “We're nearing that tipping point,” said Simoes. All of the remaining Mansfield residents went to group homes and apartments in communities around the state — and none returned to any other state institution. Of the 50 residents who left Southbury, no one has asked to come back.

But Arc and other advocates so far have been unable to get the legislature and Malloy to commit to a plan to close Southbury.

An institution in Massachusetts — the Walter E. Fernald Developmental center in Waltham —

didn't close until there was only a handful of residents remaining, and the cost to care for a single patient had reached \$1 million a year.

Admissions have been frozen at Southbury since the mid-1980s. Simoes noted that no new institutions are being built and the federal government doesn't fund large, segregated campus facilities anymore.

The state now says the annual per-resident cost at Southbury is \$182,000, but there are incidental costs tied to operations at Southbury, such as fringe benefits, pension liability payments, and administrative overhead, that drive the actual per capita cost well over \$300,000.

The state was billing Medicaid to cover those incidental costs, but was told by federal authorities in 2011 that it could no longer attach those extra costs to the bill. Those costs, adding up to millions of dollars, are now paid out of the state budget.

Meanwhile, 16 of the top-40 wage-earners at DDS this past fiscal year work at Southbury.

“These kind of expenses are exactly why we need to move from a large, 24/7-type facility to more community-based settings for people with disabilities,” said Sen. Beth Bye, D-West Hartford. “That's where we need to move, and this is more evidence that we have to make that move.” Bye is co-chair of the legislature's budget-writing appropriations committee.

Following demonstrations at the Capitol by parents and advocates, and a petition with more than 14,000 signatures last spring, Bye and a bipartisan group of lawmakers restored the cuts to in-home services and day programs that were contained in Malloy's recommended budget.

Organizers at the unions that represent the direct-care workers and the training-school's own in-house fire department have said that DDS should hire more workers and pay them their regular wages.

DDS officials have said that the overtime is necessary to provide the round-the-clock services required by a needy population.

But time and time again, in presentations to legislative committees and at conferences, Simoes and other advocates have stressed that people who are just as medically fragile as some of those at Southbury, are cared for every day, for significantly less money, at home, or in private group homes.

Meyer Frankel, Editor

The “Telescope” is the monthly newsletter of the Greater Hartford PROBUS Club