

# Notes of Hope

BARBARA OLSON

Center of Hope



A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD OF DISABILITIES SINCE 1948.

WWW.B-OLSONCENTEROFHOPE.ORG

## And the 2008 Excelsior Award is Given to...

The Barbara Olson Center of Hope was nominated for a **third time** in 2008 for the Rockford Register Star's prestigious Excelsior community service award. "This award was established in 1979 to honor an organization or institution whose work has a positive impact on life in the Rock River Valley." The winning organization receives a plaque and a check for \$500, but most importantly it receives vital recognition by the community, business leaders and citizens.

This time the Center of Hope was in the great company of four other also-deserving non-profit agencies: Alzheimer's Association, American Red Cross, On the Waterfront and Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling. Would "three times the charm" come true for the Center? **Yes!**



*Joan Olson-Greenberg, daughter of the Center of Hope's first executive, and lifetime Honorary member of the Center's Board of Directors, accepted the Excelsior Award on behalf of the Barbara Olson Center of Hope last December in Rockford.*

In noting our many accomplishments, the award presenter acknowledged several:

- that thousands have benefited directly or indirectly from our work, we provide unique opportunities, doing what no other organization does;
- our dedicated staff is highly committed to make a difference...and these employees are passionate about their work to help a vulnerable population;
- the Center was entrepreneurial long before it was in vogue to be so;
- our "green" (environmentally responsible) Super Shredders division is growing rapidly; and
- the organization helps empower over 200 individuals with developmental disabilities to be the best that they can be—in any capacity possible.

It was a most thrilling evening, with dozens of congratulations and best-wishes, and then it was back to work the next day, facing our day-to-day challenges...life is back to normal. ♥



*l to r, The Center of Hope's Mary Buskohl, President-Board of Directors; Carm Herman, Executive Director. From Green Giant-Community Foundation: Al Watts*

## Assistance Crosses County Lines

Al Watts of the Green Giant General Mills, Belvidere plant, came to the Center of Hope in Rockford with wonderful assistance! The General Mills Foundation gave the Center of Hope a \$4,500 donation on April 3rd towards the Wellness Center Program. This program is established to promote healthy habits for the participants at the Center, all of whom have developmental disabilities. Many of them don't have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of various exercise equipment, or have access to educational videos. The donated

funds will be used to purchase various exercise equipment and supporting equipment.

With the establishment of a Wellness Center program, the Center of Hope will promote and encourage participants to take charge of leading a healthier and more active life. Although not all the participants may be physically able to participate in exercises, the educational aspects and the motivating of others to continue their quests will allow everyone to participate and benefit from the establishment of the Wellness Center. ♥

BARBARA OLSON CENTER OF HOPE • SUMMER 2009

*OUR MISSION: Help individuals with developmental disabilities reach personal goals through individualized skill development, vocational opportunities and community service.*

## CARF Accreditation: TOP 2%!



It was again time for the International Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) to come out and do a survey/review of our policies, procedures, staff and facilities for the 3-year re-accreditation of the Center of Hope.

The Center **did not** receive any Recommendation (notations of not conforming with standards, either partially or completely)! That means we are in the top 2% of surveyed facilities in the nation!

Some of the strengths of the Center of Hope were noted as follows

- The Center of Hope has many long-tenured staff members who with the management teams act as role models. The **Personnel** displayed a high level of professionalism; they interacted with participants in a meaningful way, spoke in a respectful language towards the participants, and were understanding and supportive.
- **The participants** we met appeared happy, motivated, and often enthusiastically involved in their activities. They spoke with pride of their jobs and community involvement.
- **The Administration** has created and reinforces an organization that is value-laden and true to its mission.
- **The Board of Directors** currently has 12 dedicated members, all volunteers, who meet monthly, also working in several committees.
- **The Financial Affairs** of the organization are managed most effectively and efficiently.

Additionally, we were given the following Exemplary Awarding:

**“The organization has developed a creative, evidence-based effective program for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The equipment used, the techniques employed and the highly qualified staff members serve to make this an exemplary program of the highest level and perhaps, a model for the industry. The program reaches out to the community, to assist in eliminating attitudinal barriers and creating positive awareness of the life of men and women with autism.”** ♥



I think Barbara and John Peter Olson would be proud of what the Center has achieved this year. We were awarded the much coveted Excelsior Award by the Rockford Register Star in December at a fabulous celebration of non profits and individuals who give back to the community. We were proud to be the recipients and hope to always live up to the status which comes with it; which is to provide quality programs and services to those with developmental disabilities living in our community.

CARF was here in May and awarded us a three year accreditation. We have received a 3 year accreditation, which is the highest accreditation level, for 7 consecutive surveys. What makes this year special is that we were able to get our adult autism sensory program accredited and we received our 3 year accreditation with no recommendations. Only 2% of organizations accredited by CARF receive no recommendations! Yes, I think the Olsons would be very proud indeed!

This was a difficult year for us as well. Because of the economy and consistently late payments from the state, we were forced to reduce the number of participants we serve as well as eliminate positions here at the Center. This was by far the hardest the Center has been hit with state payments being behind almost \$1,000,000 at this time. It is only because of the generosity of the community that we are still here! Please remind your legislators to continue to support funding needs of the Center.

I want to thank the employees of the Center. They work hard to meet the needs of the Center’s participants. But more than that, they really care about our participants and our community as evidenced by the many projects they volunteer for in the community, and not just for events that benefit the Center. They have also been part of Special Olympics, the “Polar Plunge”, hosted a blood drive and many more. They are truly an amazing and wonderfully committed group of individuals and I am very proud to be working with them.

Lastly, I want to thank the Center of Hope’s members of the Board of Directors for their longstanding support of the Center. Their time and participation is also very much appreciated. ♥

## DIRECTOR’S CORNER

CORNER



Staff from the Center who took the Polar Plunge for Special Olympics: 1 to r. front row-Whitney Williams, Darla Mantta; second row-Dolores Wendt, Val Lemen, Jennifer Vich. Top row: Latonya Cruse, Melissa Nipper-Manriquez, Pam Hermonson, Ericka Huffman, Misty Williams

### In Memory of

KURT SWANSON  
KIM LEGO

*What we have once enjoyed  
we can never lose. All that we  
love deeply becomes a part of us.*

~ Helen Keller

### Barbara Olson Center of Hope

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[www.b-olsoncenterofhope.org](http://www.b-olsoncenterofhope.org)  
A Private Not-For -Profit 501(c)3 Agency

### 2008 - 2009 Board of Directors

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## Inspired to Paint 2008 was Beautiful

Nov. 15, 2008, the 7th Annual "Inspired to Paint" Art Show took place at the Midway Village and Museum campus. The beautiful setting (both outdoors and in) lent itself wonderfully to the great artistic creations produced by our local professional artists and our participants. Many guests came for the first time—and most of them were surprised at how creative and accomplished the art and displays were. Thanks to our ever-diligent guest artists: Nancy Anderson, Dorothy Bock, Jeanne Coe, Ingrid Dohm, Marc Dull, Steve Ecklor, Brian Hierstein, Ed Riddle, Mary Rosendich, and Robert Sunday, to name a few. Over 100 people attended, and bidding was crisp for our silent and live auctions. Our participant, Jeremy A., had his own one-man show: he recreates famous works of art in oil, pencil or pastels. He sold all his paintings and even had orders. Our successful evening ended with lots of sales, new found supporters and lots of satisfaction. **Hope to see you at the 2009 Inspired to Paint Art Show and Auction, to be held at Cliffbreakers on Friday, Oct 23rd.** ♡



*Our participant, Jeremy A., in front of his recreations of famous artwork, at the 8th Annual Inspired to Paint Art Show in Nov. 2008*

## Center for Sensory Therapy Opens!

The Center for Sensory Therapy had its Ribbon Cutting and Open House on April 29, 2009. A total transformation of the former "mud room" of the ceramics department has resulted in a large, colorful, interesting and safe space for participants to experience, organize, interpret, and respond to different stimuli in their environment. The core of sensory therapy is to allow an individual the time, space and opportunity to experience his or her environment with a more organized response; thereby improving his quality of life.

Evaluation and treatment of basic sensory integrative processes is performed by occupational therapist Theresa McCarty Oster. Tess, along with Susan Jauch, Sensory Integration Specialist and Vickey Alexander, Job Coach for the Center for Sensory Therapy, provide the person with therapeutic sensory activities which help organize the central nervous system. Using a combination of therapeutic approaches such as the new custom-made free-standing suspension system and platform swing and therapeutic listening, participants at the Center are assisted in processing a more organized response to sensory stimuli.

Also opened for the first time is the "Moonlight Room" a dark room with UV (black) lighting and fluorescent tactile equipment to enhance visual stimulation.

The Regional Resource Center was opened last Fall, and we continue to acquire more books, equipment and helpful aids. Use of this room is open to the public and free of charge.

Funding for the sensory program began in 2003 with grants from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois and later the Rockford Pro Am. Most recently, the Community Foundation (again) and the Coleman Foundation of Chicago, IL granted major funds for the renovation, equipment and staffing of our Center for Sensory Therapy. Thank you! We couldn't have done it without you! ♡



*Staff, supporters and guests of the Center look on with Mr. Einor Forsman, President and CEO of Rockford Chamber of Commerce (2nd from right) at the official opening of the new Center for Sensory Therapy room.*



*Some of the members of the neighboring Fire Dept. who opened their hearts and their building to our North Towne site occupants.*

## North Towne Site Update:

It's been a year since the North Towne site had a major flooding problem.

In April, 2008 the Volunteer Center and GourMutts dog biscuits baking center at our satellite site had a major setback when a backed up sewer in a neighboring business caused major damage to the floors, carpeting and walls in our space. This is also where the Barbara Olson Center of Hope *Gift Shop* had been relocated. Although the actual gift shop area was not damaged, the remaining 2500 square feet was unusable, so the *Gift Shop* was also temporarily closed. The participants usually in attendance at North Towne (numbering 18 to 25, plus Staff), were temporarily relocated to the Central Avenue main site, when they were not delivering Meals On Wheels, assisting at the Rockford Food pantry, or at other outings. Our very good neighbor, the **Northwest Fire Station** next door, graciously

allowed the use of their large facility for activities. This arrangement lasted for over a month! Unfortunately, insurance did not cover the cost of all the necessary repairs, but North Towne management did make most repairs. With our satellite site cleaned and

repaired, the participants and staff returned to North Towne in June of 2008. GourMutts are once again in production!

As of February 1st, 2009, the storefront location for our North Towne site has been changed to the Main Street side. Although the square footage is less, thus less expensive, it remains a viable and busy space for our Volunteer Center and the GourMutts kitchen. The Gift shop component has been eliminated. (Please stop & shop for items at our main site on Central Ave.) ♡

## Calendar of Events 2008/09

June 16.....Monthly Parent Meeting  
 June 19.....L.P. Police & Businessmen's  
 "Grudge Races" benefits BOCH  
 June 26.....Board Meeting  
 July 3.....Center closed for 4th of July holiday  
 July 15.....Quarterly Parent Meeting  
 July 31.....Board Meeting  
 August 14.....Summer Bash  
 August 18.....Monthly Parent Meeting  
 August 22.....Rummage Sale/Crafts/  
 Fire Dept lunch  
 August 28.....Board Meeting  
 Sept. 3.....Blood Drive at the Center  
 Sept. 7.....Center closed for Labor Day  
 Sept. 25.....Board Meeting  
 Oct. 12.....Center closed for Columbus Day  
 Oct. 23.....In-service for Staff, no participants

**Oct. 23 .....Inspired To Paint at Cliffbreakers**



3206 North Central Ave  
 Rockford, IL 61101-1756

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
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### Pepper Profit Program

## Eat at Chili's in Machesney Park and help the Center of Hope

The Chili's at 1510 West Lane Rd is supporting the Center of Hope in a tasty way: Eat at that location any Monday through Thursday from May 15th through August 15th and you can get 10% of your meal price donated to the Center by Chili's. **You do need to have a voucher to turn in at that time**, but you can get those from the Center in person, by phone (we'll mail you some to give to your friends too) or go to our website [www.b-olsoncenterofhope.org](http://www.b-olsoncenterofhope.org) and print up vouchers under "News Headlines" on the home page. If you're eating at Chili's, you can be helping the Center! ♥

## We're wishing for (used or new)...

As equipment wears out or breaks down, we've often wished for and received a replacement from our supporters.

So once again, we cross our fingers and hope someone knows someone who can donate any of the following items. We are extremely grateful for any assistance you can give us.

- Riding lawn mower
- Full size refrigerator
- Laptops for staff training
- Stationary bicycle, recumbent bike
- A 15-passenger replacement van
- A used car that runs safely
- Vinyl padded arm chairs

Please call the Center at (815) 964-9275 if you have any items available. Thank you! ♥

## Our Sincere Thanks to All of You.

Donors 7/1/08 thru 12/31/08

Our apologies if we have inadvertently failed to list your name. This in no way reflects on our appreciation.

### CONTRIBUTIONS

Adamany, John	Cascio, Carol	Grady, William	Langejans, Gordon	LTD	Sjostrom, William
Albrechtson, Fred	Castle, Jean	Gray, Clifford	Layng, David	Perrecone, Marian	Spear, Ronald
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		LaBrant, Lu		Rogozinski, Paul	
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		Lang, Gerald		Rogozinski, Paul	