



June 2014

HEADLINES

Summer vacation: The serious business of play



Summer vacation has begun and the kids are home. Many parents have found difficulty trying to keep everyone busy and engaged for the next three months.

Monarch therapist Ana Cisernos-Howard is also a registered play therapist and knows the

importance of allowing children space to play. The therapist also said the summer is one of the best times for kids to do just that.

Play is essential to human growth, development, learning, and cultivating relationships, according to the Association for Play Therapy (APT).

The APT also notes “play is our first language. Just as adults use words to communicate, children use play. When playing, we express thoughts and feelings that might otherwise remain hidden.”

Howard explains that we all have an inner child, so doing fun activities and engaging in play are things both kids and adults need to recharge. During the summer, parents have more opportunities to spend quality time with their children.

“Play a board game together, do something interactive like an art project, go out for ice cream, or simply get the coloring books and crayons out and color together, and leave the electronics off more than they are on,” Howard suggested.

She explained that when parents invest the time to talk with their children, it helps them to process what they are experiencing, and models effective ways of conversing, communicating and interacting with the world around them, plus it strengthens the parent-child relationship.

She also emphasized that summer activities don’t have to cost money. They can be as simple as visiting the park, riding a bike, playing catch or going for a hike.

Here are some other tips for a healthy and fun summer vacation:

- Alone-time is good: Encourage your kids to spend a portion of their day on their own, whether you have one kid or five! This is good for them all year long, and a great thing for parents to model, too!
- Talk it over: Have a conversation with your kids about limits before problems occur. Make sure they know what you expect of them individually.
- Limit screen time: Just because it is summertime doesn't mean screen time should be unlimited. Kids need physical and mental stimulation and activity all year long.
- Bottom line: Be flexible! Open up to the possibility that things don’t have to be a

certain way, and that maybe your “ideal” situation isn’t everyone else’s—or even realistic

[Click here for information from the Center for Creativity and Healing.](#)

Howard also provided a few more summertime resources for parents here:

- [Summer Parenting: Tips for Good Behavior \(www.education.com\)](http://www.education.com)
- [Positive Parenting Tips for Summer \(www.education.com\)](http://www.education.com)
- [Patience and Balance: Summer Parenting Tips for Keeping the Peace and Learning to Thrive \(www.northstateparent.com\)](http://www.northstateparent.com)
- [How to Survive Summer Vacation \(www.addcenters.com\)](http://www.addcenters.com)
- [Parents \(www.ncchildcare.gov\)](http://www.ncchildcare.gov)

Stanly County Special Olympics Swim Team



Joel Laster has been a member of Monarch’s Board of Directors since Sept. 2013. He is a certified lifeguard, USA Swim Coach and a U.S. Master swimmer. Laster has been coaching the Special Olympics swim team in Stanly County since February and six of the people Monarch supports are on the team. He wrote about their experience at the regional competition in April and the hard work the athletes have put in this year.

The Stanly County Special Olympics Swim team has been training since February at the YMCA, and in April they finally got to show off their hard work at the Greensboro Aquatic

Center for the regional Special Olympics competition.

Diane Billings and I were head coaches for the team this season and we were assisted by Nai Scales, and five local high school youth who volunteered their time as unified athletes.

Being a unified athlete provides an inclusive sports program where there is an equal number of special athletes with intellectual disabilities and partners without intellectual disabilities on teams for training and competition.

Special Olympics Unified Sports promotes social inclusion through shared sport training and competition experiences for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

On April 26, 11 of the athletes, six unified partners, coaches and workers headed to the Greensboro Aquatics Center for a regional competition, with five of the 11 athletes being Monarch’s very own. They included: James Matthis, Lindsey Colavito, Bevin Wilcott, Elliot Schmel and Beth Townsend.

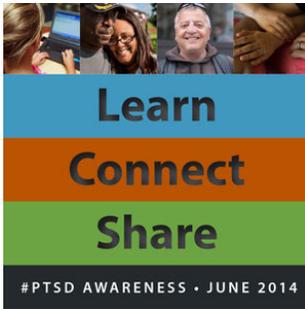
The athletes and their partners did an exceptional job in the pool and several took first place, while all took their best times. It is also worth noting that all athletes who attended qualified for the State Games on May 30 – June 1. There was not one disqualification in the group!

In spite of a long day, the athletes and their partners did a great job. The venue itself—one used by U.S. Olympic swimmers in the past—provided extra incentive to swim well.

It is also with special thanks that recognition goes to the event volunteers. There was a lot of walking to and from each event and it could not have been done without such dedicated help from our athlete volunteers.

Ways to raise PTSD awareness

The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) promotes awareness of PTSD and effective treatments throughout the year. The following article is from their website to raise awareness during PTSD Awareness month.



Starting in 2010, Congress proclaimed June 27 PTSD Awareness Day (S. Res. 455).

Following trauma, most people experience stress reactions, and some develop PTSD. Mental health experts are not sure why some people develop PTSD and others do not. However, if stress reactions do not improve over time and they disrupt everyday life, help should be sought to determine if PTSD is a factor.

The purpose of PTSD Awareness Month is to encourage everyone to raise public awareness of PTSD and its effective treatments so that everyone can help people affected by PTSD.

Our call to action during the month of June is to encourage everyone to spread the word and raise awareness of PTSD and its effective treatments. Everyone can help those affected by PTSD.

Discover the facts.

Start with PTSD Basics, key information about trauma, PTSD and treatment options. For a more advanced overview, watch our PTSD 101 Course: PTSD Overview. We offer many free, in-depth Continuing Education Courses for Professionals as well.

Take the mystery out of PTSD treatment. Hear from Veterans and their clinicians at AboutFace.

Or, take advantage of technology with PTSD Coach Online or mobile apps to help you manage PTSD symptoms.

Work together.

Promote PTSD Awareness Month with us! We have promotional materials to help you organize event or pass along information on PTSD and effective treatments.

Help someone. Help yourself.

Do you want to find out if you have PTSD or talk about treatment options? Take action for yourself or someone you care about. Learn where to get help for PTSD.

Give support. Get Support.

It can be hard to reach out for help. Read some tips on how to overcome barriers to care, and know that there is support for family and friends, too.

Tips for traveling with children: Take control of your trip and keep your head high



Child Mind Institute, an organization dedicated to transforming mental health care for children, has compiled summer travel tips for children with disabilities.

Often parents are tempted to stay close to home to avoid adverse and unpredictable reactions and the possibility of meltdowns in public places,

but the truth is: a kid with anxiety, autism, or any other hurdle is still 100 percent kid, and vacations can be a great way to get the whole family energized, active and playing.

[Read the full story here.](#)

PEOPLE WHO CARE

Tuesday's Together



Each week, the people we support at Monarch volunteer their time and talents in their local communities. In 2013, volunteers logged more than 33,000 hours by partnering with local organizations and non-profits.

One such partnership that formed through volunteer efforts this past year is with The Children's Museum of the Outer Banks.

Two of Monarch's day programs, the Beach Club of Dare County and the Lighthouse Club in Currituck County take turns each Tuesday sending volunteers to work with preschool children through a program called Tuesday's Together.

Tuesday's Together brings young children and women with mild intellectual disabilities together do crafts and games. The goal is to facilitate positive feelings towards persons with

disabilities and emphasize adults with disabilities can perform activities effectively and offer their service to help others.

Alyssa Hannon, executive director of The Children's Museum, co-founded the program in 2012 after receiving a grant from the Outer Banks Community Foundation. The grant allows preschoolers to visit the museum free of charge as well as provides art supplies and tables and chairs for both the adults and children.

Since the program's inception, Hannon says Monarch participants have logged countless hours of volunteer time at the museum working with the kids, preparing arts and crafts, helping around the museum and assisting with different projects throughout the year.

"The adults have grown to love volunteering in the museum, and being a part of the community," Hannon said.

Merry Ann Liverman, lead development specialist at Monarch's Beach Club, said Tuesday's Together has "taught the people we support so much about working with children and about the jobs they can do."

One of the women who volunteers has been able to start working part time at the museum, and another volunteer going to college next year has decided to work with children as a result of her experiences at the museum.

"They love the kids. Children don't see the people we support as any different than anyone else. They work together, communicate together, they love going there," Liverman said.

[Check out this video from a day at Tuesday's Together.](#)

NEWS AND NOTES

The Heritage Club's Garden Party



The Heritage Club of Edenton recently took part in the Kellogg Supply Company's first ever Garden Party in Edenton, N.C. Those we support got the chance to decorate flower pots and enjoy some friendly competition.

Bridget Leary, lead development specialist at the Heritage Club, said those in the club go to the hardware store once a week to look around and enjoy free popcorn. During one of these visits, they met staff member Renee Overton.

Overton, who has a sister with a disability, always made sure the group from the Heritage Club had popcorn and felt welcome at the store. She told Leary she wanted to do something extra special for the Heritage Club participants so they started brainstorming, and the idea for the garden party was born.

Overton decided to invite the Heritage Club to Kellogg Supply for a decoration contest. She gave each of the 16 people from the club a flower pot with all the tools to paint and decorate them. While the people we support designed their pots, they enjoyed cupcakes, cookies and snacks.

Leary said those from the club were excited about decorating, and at the end the manager gave them ribbons that read: "I am a winner at the Kellogg Supply's First Garden Party."

Each of the flower pots were displayed in the store and customers voted on their favorite design. Leary said this was a great way for the Heritage Club to be involved in their community and to meet people.

"We want to make them a part of our community. My coworkers have grown attached to them, Overton said. "I call them my kids, I've come to love them and I look forward to the second annual garden party."

The winners of the flower pot contest: First place recipient was John Ammann, second place award went to Oscar Ochoa, and Nicholas Winslow received third place.

Justin Inscore receives Outstanding Volunteer Service Award from Homes of Hope



Justin Inscore, a participant of Monarch's Stanly Industrial Services (SIS), has been volunteering with Homes of Hope, a non-profit organization seeking to reduce homelessness in Stanly County, since 2009.

Every morning, Justin heads to the Community Inn, an emergency housing facility in Stanly County run by Homes of Hope, to help clean the facility. He vacuums, dusts, helps with laundry and takes out the trash.

Because of his service to the Community Inn he was recently presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for “Outstanding Volunteer Service.”

Curtis Moore, a development specialist at Monarch who works with Inscore, said this award “sent Justin into orbit. It’s great for him to be recognized because the highlight of his day is his volunteer work.”

Moore has been working with Inscore for two years, and says during that time he has seen him grow and his skill level increase. He said Inscore loves to give back to his community. He also volunteers with Meals on Wheels and Clean Up with Parks and Rec in Stanly County.

Rivercity Achievement Center helps with tornado relief in Elizabeth City



Early in April, Elizabeth City, N.C. was hit by a tornado causing damage to homes and businesses in the area. People we support at Rivercity Achievement Center saw the damages and wanted to do something to help those in their community.

Group picture (l-r): Robert Wills, Karen Savage, Shamyra Randall, Eddide Adkins, Tjuana James and Timothy Creecy.

The group decided to volunteer at a fundraiser for two families who lost their homes in the storm. The fundraiser was organized by two Elizabeth City residents and they partnered with a catering company to sell dinners at a local high school with the proceeds going toward the home repairs.

A group from Rivercity Achievement volunteered by holding signs and bagging dinners. More than 900 plates were sold.

Rivercity also purchased relief items and made a donation to local organizations assembling care packages for families affected by the tornado.



Leslie Hughes, site manager at Rivercity, said it made them proud to be able to make a difference in their community.

Pictured (l-r) are: Timothy Creecy and Tjuana James holding a sign while a staff member helped to direct traffic.

Direct support professional at Monarch publishes children’s book



Angela Thompson’s lifelong dream has always been to write a children’s book. As a child, she recalls spending her time coming up with stories and ideas, and that followed her into adulthood. In April, her dream finally came

true with the publication of her first children’s book entitled, “Who Has Seen the Wind Today?”

The book is about four animals chasing the wind to discover where it is going. Thompson, a direct support professional at Monarch’s Columbus Industries, said it took her a month to write the story after developing the concept. She

then met with the publisher and they talked through ideas for the book's illustrations.

Thompson said the book is a fun, easy read for kids of all ages and has read it with each of her five grandchildren.

Thompson has four more books in the works and looks forward to continuing to write more stories in the future.

[Click here to find the book on Amazon.](#)

Arc of Stanly County, Monarch receive grant to lead four advocacy and education forums

Monarch and The Arc of Stanly recently received a grant award of \$1,000 from the Stanly County Community Foundation to hold four advocacy and education forums for parents and families of special needs students in the Stanly County School system.

The forums will look closely at individualized education plans (IEP) required by law for students receiving special education services in public schools.

In 2012-13, 1,624 of Stanly County's 8,662 students had an IEP, which establishes educational goals and outcomes for students with disabilities and is developed collaboratively by parents, teachers and administrators.

Often though, many parents of students with disabilities find the process complex and daunting. As a result, many parents struggle to advocate for the best interests of their children.

The four parent education forums will be led by Jeanette Wilhelm, quality enhancement coordinator and advocate at Monarch, who has special training in advocacy and inclusion

services. Wilhelm will address key IEP concerns and equip parents with the knowledge needed to work with educators on plans that help their children achieve success in the classroom.

"The Arc of Stanly is eager to help parents become strong advocates for their children with disabilities," said Laurie Weaver, director of grants and foundation relations at Monarch. "The training provided by this grant will help parents more effectively navigate the education system."

Through the course, participants will receive a resource notebook for use in IEP development and lesson topics will include:

- The IEP process and purpose.
- The advantages/disadvantages of self-contained classrooms, resource classrooms.
- Parents' rights and responsibilities.
- Guardianship and advocacy.
- Panel discussion with parents who have navigated the IEP process.

The first forum will be held from 6 – 8 p.m. on Monday, August 11 and the location will soon be announced. Additional forum dates for late 2014 and early 2015 will also be announced soon. For more information about the forums, please contact Jeanette Wilhelm at (704) 986-7234 or jeanette.wilhelm@monarchnc.org.

Monarch forms new Grant Review Team

As part of a plan for expanding grant support opportunities for Monarch programs and services, a Grant Review Team has been formed. Members of the team were selected from across various Monarch departments statewide and will read grant applications and

proposals to check for clarity and accuracy before submission to funding agencies.

“The team is a great cross-section of professional staff at Monarch,” said Laurie Weaver, director of grants and foundation relations. “I know their expertise and insight will be invaluable as we apply for grants.”

Members of the team include:

- Andy Basinger, chief technology officer
- Eileen Bress, volunteer & community coordinator
- Melissa Hall, state services director, REC
- Selenia Hinson, quality management coordinator
- Kim Kimrey, integrated care projects director
- CJ Lambert, quality enhancement director, REC
- Natasha Suber, director of marketing & communications
- Lizzy Underwood, finance budgeting director

For more information on the grant process at Monarch, contact Laurie Weaver at Laurie.Weaver@MonarchNC.org or 704-986-1536.

Monarch hosts ribbon cutting for community garden in New Bern

Monarch hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 4 to celebrate the development and success of its large community garden in Craven County. The public event was held at the garden which is located at one of Monarch’s day programs at Health Dr. in New Bern.



The Monarch Ability Garden Integrating Community and Land (M.A.G.I.C.A.L.) project was designed to provide a place for people to gather and learn about sustainable gardening while reaping the benefits from expanded access to healthy, locally grown foods.

Monarch received a \$30,000 award from the Harold H. Bate Foundation, Inc. for the community garden, which was designed by local architect John Lucas. Additional grant proceeds, instrumental in designing and constructing the garden, were received from the CarolinaEast Foundation and from the Richard Chapman Cleve Fund with the Craven County Community Foundation.

Monarch officials believe the garden will help increase physical activity through gardening, offering positive health benefits from improved nutrition through a series of educational seminars on health and nutrition that will be available on site.

Most importantly, the garden is a way to build community and inclusion through existing partnerships with agencies like the Craven County Health Department, N.C. State University’s Cooperative Extension Service and the Small Business Center at Craven Community College. The garden in New Bern is one of three large community gardens that Monarch has developed across the state.

FIS Unique Seniors group take on the Piedmont Plus Senior Games



The Piedmont Plus Senior games recently took place in Winston Salem, and a group called the “Unique Seniors” at Monarch’s Forsyth Industrial Systems (FIS) joined in the sports competition.

They played shot put, cornhole, football, baseball and basketball. In each category, the Unique Seniors medaled successfully and exceeded their goals.

The seniors were coached and supported by FIS staff members Cheryl Cole, Marjorie Plowden, Tanya Waddy and Judy Wikel.

Monarch named 2014 Moving Mountains Best Practices Award recipient

The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP), an organization working to enhance the status of direct support professionals, has named Monarch its 2014 Moving Mountains Best Practices Award recipient.

This national award recognizes organizations, like Monarch, that use best practices in direct support staff workforce development, which results in improved outcomes for the people with disabilities who are supported.

Monarch was selected from among numerous award candidates for its Helping Dreams Take Flight initiative, which includes a partnership of agencies joined to create a training and certification program for direct support professionals to enhance their skills and increase

the quality of care provided to the people they support.

“We are elated to be recognized in such a meaningful way by a well-respected national organization that aims to enhance the work and position of direct support staff,” said Monarch CEO Dr. Peggy Terhune. “We are proud of the professional development initiatives we have implemented to better support the work of staff. The outcomes have not only been beneficial to those professionals, but have helped to vastly improve the quality of life of the people we support who are directly impacted by these valuable staff members.”

This year's Moving Mountain Best Practices Award winners will be honored during the 2014 Reinventing Quality Conference in Baltimore, Md. Aug. 3-5. Monarch CEO Dr. Peggy Terhune will accept the award on behalf of the agency.

[Click here for more information on the National Alliance of Direct Support Professionals.](#)

MONARCH SPOTLIGHT

Q&A with Amanda Talbert



Q: How long have you worked at Monarch?

A: I have worked for Monarch at the Mt. Gilead Children’s Home for seven years. I started in March 2007.

Q: What is your title?

A: I am the Operations Manager.

Q: What does a typical workday look like?

A: I start the day with a walk-through/inspection of the home to ensure it is clean. I check medications and data books. I check to see if there are any doctor's appointments, or if appointments need to be made. I check email and answer them accordingly. I check the schedule and staff assignment sheet for the day. I ensure that staff has the supplies that they need.

When the boys arrive home from school, I go on the floor and spend time with them and help get their afternoon snacks, monitor medications, and give lots of hugs. Finally, I say my goodbyes to everyone and I head home.

Q: What is the most important aspect of your role and why?

A: Ensuring that the people I support live the best life possible. It is the most important because every child deserves to have a happy childhood and live a full life.

Q: What has been your most rewarding or satisfying experience, or your proudest moment while working here?

A: One of the boys who lives here has really had a troubled and hard life. Everyone had given up on him when he was placed here. He made it very difficult for anyone to work with him or try to help him. His adoptive mother was terrified to let him come home for a visit and was convinced that it would never happen. After a year and half, and a lot of work on the staffs part, as well as his, he went home for an entire week. He was so happy and his mom could not believe how far he had come. He has been home for several visits since.

Q: What might someone be surprised to know about you?

A: I have a son who is 6'2" and weighs 235 lbs. I look so small compared to him.

Q: What do you do when you aren't working?

A: I am very active in my son's school. I am on the board of the Albemarle High School Booster Club. I help run the concession stand for every home sporting event the high school has. This includes all sports for the entire school year.

Q: Favorite place to visit?

A: The beach when I get a chance to go.

Q: Movie or song that best describes you?

A: "Hero" by Mariah Carey. I chose this song because I believe we all have a hero inside of us and we should all believe in ourselves.

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

Preparing for the Future: Planned giving and end of life planning seminar

June 18, 2014

5:30 p.m.

Stanly Community College

Small Business Center

143 N. Second St.

Albemarle, N.C. 28001

Monarch invites you and your family to join us as we host a seminar with industry experts to discuss planning for the future of your family member with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Topics include planning for their financial needs, protecting their benefits and ensuring they receive the same dignity we all deserve at the end of life.

Please RSVP by June 13 by contacting
Whitleigh Pinion at (704) 986-1578 or
Whitleigh.pinion@monarchnc.org

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day

June 27, 2014

Following trauma, most people experience stress reactions, and some develop PTSD. Mental health experts are not sure why some people develop PTSD and others do not. However, if stress reactions do not improve over time and they disrupt everyday life, help should be sought to determine if PTSD is a factor.

For more information:

http://www.ptsd.va.gov/about/ptsd-awareness/ptsd_awareness_month.asp

Advocacy & Education Forum

Aug. 11, 2014

6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Monarch and The Arc of Stanly recently received a grant award of \$1,000 from the Stanly County Community Foundation to hold four advocacy and education forums for parents and families of special needs students in the Stanly County School system.

The forums will look closely at individualized education plans (IEP) required by law for students receiving special education services in public schools.

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