

# EARC News Express

JANUARY 2009

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*From the Director - 40 years and still growing*



In 1969, forty years ago this coming April, EARC first incorporated as the Edmond Association for Retarded Children. In its infancy, EARC's mission was to provide education and promote awareness of the needs of children with mental retardation/developmental disabilities (MR/DD). EARC also functioned then as a support for families with children with developmental disabilities. Since at that time there was no funding for any community-based services for children or adults with developmental disabilities; EARC opened its first Thrift Store as its only means of financial support.

Prior to the early 1980's, the only residential services available in Oklahoma for individuals with MR/DD were in the three large State Institutions (located in Enid, Pauls Valley and Sand Springs) and a couple of large nursing facilities specialized for this purpose. There were several Sheltered Workshops around the State providing employment training and activity programs to individuals living with their families. At that time, these employment training programs were operated by volunteers and had to be able to generate their own funding for wages paid out of the contract work and donations they could procure, as did EARC's Thrift Stores.

Oklahoma's first community-based residential programs (Group Homes) got their start in the early 1980's. Thanks to then Governor George Nigh's wife, Donna, who brought support and promoted this State's funding of community group homes. EARC was at the forefront of the movement and by 1982 had opened its first six-bed group home in Edmond. Later, in 1985 we opened a second six-bed home, and in January of 1989 EARC opened The Nova Centre, one of Oklahoma's first small home-like intermediate health care facilities serving adults with MR/DD. *(This month The Nova Centre is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and will be honoring its namesake, Nova Cox, and four of its original residents that still call it home.)* EARC today offers a full array of residential program options in Edmond from Daily Living Support Homes (maximum three-beds) to individualized habilitation services in the person's private home.

EARC's Employment Programs have also expanded. We opened our Sheltered Workshop called The Trails in 1986. It's current job training programs include processing clothing donations for sale in our three Thrift Stores, mailing and packaging contracts and a small soda and snack vending operation started in 2006. Our services have really boomed in recent years in the area of community job training and placement. With the opening of our third thrift store in May of 2006, our thrift stores that started as our sole source of funding, have now become a community employer with more than 50% of our labor force comprised of individuals with developmental disabilities. EARC provides placement and job coaching services for these workers in competitive jobs with EARC and elsewhere in our community, too.

We are very proud of the progress we have made over the last forty years. EARC continues to develop and grow, refining our programs designed to meet our mission of promoting independence and improving the quality of the lives for those we serve. The challenge EARC faces today is to maximize community involvement and self-reliance, while still offering the security of a supervised environment. These concepts may seem contrary in nature. However, training that encourages people to develop their skills and become more employable results in the ultimate outcome of maximizing self-worth! Thank you to all of the caring contributors, volunteers and staff that have made it happen over the last forty years! **HAPPY NEW YEAR & HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO EARC!!!**

**Submitted by: Bonnie B. Wells, Executive Director**

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## • *Nova Centre Spotlight*

Lenee Lane is our Consultant Pharmacist from Sequoia. Lenee's responsibilities include reviewing patient drug therapy in line with ICF/MR regulations and making recommendations to improve disease management and overall patient care to the Physicians. The Pharmacy Consultant also makes recommendations to the nursing staff on monitoring medication administration, storage, med destruction and Pharmacy Policy.

Lenee graduated from Oklahoma University's College of Pharmacy, where she received her Doctorate Degree in Pharmacy. Lenee also completed her residency at Texas Tech specializing in Geriatrics. Lenee taught at OU's School of Pharmacy for three years and has worked in retail pharmacy for 5 years. She has been with Sequoia Pharmacy and consulting for The Nova Centre since November of 2005.



Lenee lives in Piedmont and is married to Joel, a fellow Pharmacist, who manages a local pharmacy. They are the parents of Lauren, age seven and Amanda, who is three years old. They attend the Piedmont Baptist Church. Lenee also has a degree in interior design, and she enjoys dabbling in design and decorating. In her spare time she enjoys exercising on her treadmill, running and being with her family.

**Submitted by: Martha Sanders, Director of Nursing**

## *Christmas with Elvis \_\_\_\_ Rocked Around The Clock*

The whole Trail's Crew, and all their friends too, crooned with Elvis all night long on the evening of Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>. Everyone seemed to enjoy EARC's Christmas Party Entertainer. Yes, Elvis was in the house! So was EARC's Board President, Chuck Paine and his family, along with Board Secretary Kenny Holloway and Cynde Holloway. Thank yous were extended by John Adame, Trail's Floor Supervisor, to Mary Jo Smith for planning another fun event!

## *Nova Centre \_\_\_\_ The Joy of Christmas*

On December 19<sup>th</sup> The Nova Centre residents had their gift opening ceremonies after enjoying a delicious supper including roast beef with all the trimmings and apple pie. Since many of our residents take leave to be with their families over the Holiday, we schedule this fun event ahead of time so all are present. The gift opening is definitely as much of a joy for staff, as it is for the residents. Everyone at The Nova Centre must have been good this year, even though some of the residents didn't seem so sure of what might be in their gift bags before they opened them. Thanks goes to Santa's Elves (Molly & Martha), who had worked hard to find the perfect gifts for our very deserving Nova Centre Residents.

**Submitted by: Bonnie B. Wells, Executive Director**

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## *Human Resources News*

**Congratulations** to our Attendance Bonus **Winners** for December 2008. **Thelma Crow**, our receptionist at the Administration Offices, won the December 15<sup>th</sup> drawing and **Tracy Hein**, residential habilitation training specialist, won the prize for December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Listed below are all of the EARC employees that qualified for the Attendance Bonus drawing in a December pay period. Special recognition (\*) goes to these seven employees who qualified in multiple pay periods. Keep up the good work!

### 12/15/08 payday

Chandell Bell \*  
Deb Bethel  
**Thelma Crow** \*  
Marissa Davis \*  
Janice Eckroat  
Tracy Hein \*  
Kenisha Kimani \*  
Leslie Manley  
Kelsie Marshall  
Jacob Murithi  
Sandy Spence \*  
Demetro Stevenson  
Phyllis White \*



### 12/31/08 payday

Chandell Bell \*  
Anthony Burns  
Thelma Crow \*  
Marissa Davis \*  
**Tracy Hein** \*  
Kenisha Kimani \*  
Brandy Ledesma  
Irene (Tina) Pickard  
Lou Schlegel  
Sandy Spence \*  
Velma Trahan  
Phyllis White \*

## *Employees Of The Month*

**Jenny Lenz** is the Residential Employee of the Month for November 2008. Jenny has been employed with EARC at The Nova Centre as a Certified Medication Aide for the last eleven years, since October 1997. Jenny now works the overnight shift, and she is charged with getting The Nova Centre residents off to work four mornings per week. *Jenny's favorite part of the job is taking care of The Nova Centre residents.* **Congratulations Jenny!**

**Kelsie Marshall** is the Vocational Employee of the Month for November 2008. Kelsie works at The Trails Workshop and also at The Nova Centre. She hired on with EARC last July and has become a valuable asset. Kelsie keeps the workers at her table busy and happy. Kelsie is originally from Australia, but now has made Edmond, Oklahoma her permanent residence for raising her ten month old son. She also works at the YMCA childwatch on the weekends. During her free time Kelsie enjoys reading and cooking. **Congratulations Kelsie!**

**Alan Hill** is another Trail's Employee of the Month for November. Alan has a wonderful attitude when it comes to working. He has steadily improved his production. Alan always has a smile on his face and is a pleasant employee. He is a joy to have around. **Congratulations Alan!**

**Submitted by: John Adame, Trails Floor Supervisor**