



## Family Resources Community Action

# Reaching Out

A Semi-annual Newsletter

Fall 2011

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## Training and Experience Leads to Job Success

FRCA recently launched an internship program to help FRCA Employment & Training students gain experience and increase the chances of securing employment.

Dayris Figueroa, a student in the Healthcare Reimbursement Specialist Training, began a 30 hour per week internship at the office of Dr. Mihaela Iovanel in Cumberland, RI in June. Due to the quality of Dayris' work, she was hired in early September for a permanent position.

"It is going really well," Dayris said. "I feel very lucky to get an internship and am so grateful to be hired." Dayris has a wide range of duties including answering the phone, scheduling patient



Dayris Figueroa, Healthcare Reimbursement Specialist Graduate

appointments, doing EKGs, prepping patients for procedures and maintaining electronic health records.

The ability to handle administrative tasks efficiently while having a pleasant manner

with patients was key, according to Dr. Iovanel.

"Dayris is great with patients. She has excellent customer service skills. She helps everything to run smoothly," Dr. Iovanel said.

Dayris is one of ten Employment & Training students who have been placed through the new internship program at area physician's offices in northern Rhode Island as well as in units at Family Resources Community Action.

Student candidates are screened across a wide range of elements to ensure they are job-ready, including educational/credential qualifications, home/life supports, communication and problem

*Continued on pg 3*



### PLEASE JOIN US!

FRCA's 23rd Annual ShelterWalk  
**Saturday, October 15th at 9am**  
 River Island Park, Woonsocket.

## Shelter Program Helps Strengthen Families

After experiencing a loss of income and moving from place to place, Danielle Plante and her two children Nathaniel, 13, and Brianna, 11, found themselves homeless. The family has been at the Woonsocket Shelter since April, 2011.

Danielle noted the strain that has been felt by her family over the past few years.

"The changing apartments, coming here (to the shelter)...



It is not home, but at least we have a place to be that is not

on the street," she said.

Danielle is currently working with the staff to secure permanent supportive housing, and is on several waiting lists. In

the meantime, she and her

*Continued on pg 2*



FRCA Executive Director  
Ben Lessing, Jr., MSW

## Greetings from the Executive Director

This issue of *Reaching Out* reflects some of the collaboration with business and other community and faith based organizations happening across FRCA service divisions.

Though in past issues we have highlighted specific collaborative projects with different organizations, we thought it important to again underscore the value and importance of this process to the people we serve.

As part of our philosophy to serve families and individuals in a comprehensive manner, for over 10 years FRCA Board and staff have purposely worked to develop and nurture these relationships that add value and an additional level of quality to our work.

The resulting themes associated with many of these projects include skill building such as employment readiness, money management, parenting and education as

well as addressing healthcare and other basic needs.

At a time when poverty among children, families and individuals is at its highest level in recent history, we believe meaningful collaboration that produces positive outcomes is an innovation worth pursuing.

To all those with whom we are fortunate to work with in a collaborative manner, we thank you!

- Ben

## Woonsocket Shelter Helps Strengthen Families

*(Con't from pg 1)*

children are tapping numerous resources to obtain assistance and support.

Danielle participated in Life Skills training to assist with home management, and recently completed *More for Your Money*, a four-week financial literacy class administered by FRCA with NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley.

"I learned a lot about budgeting and how to save," Danielle said. "I've always had a hard time with money management. Had I been better with that, I may not have been in this situation," she said.

Danielle's children have also received support services. Brianna attends the after school program at the Shelter where she receives homework help.



Danielle Plante (left) with FRCA Case Manager Nicole McKenna

In addition, Brianna was able to have her pediatric visit on-site at the Shelter through the new collaboration with Thundermist Health Center that arranges weekly pediatric appointments at the clinic located in the shelter.

"I don't know what I'd do if I didn't have the shelter. I wouldn't have my kids. They are my rock," Danielle said.

"I decided it was best to come to the shelter so we could all

be together. That's the most important thing," she said.

Danielle is working with her current Shelter Case Manager Nicole McKenna to prioritize her goals and figure out her next steps. They work together to ensure all the paperwork is in place so when a permanent opening is available, the family will be ready to move.

When asked what she would say to other families who might find themselves homeless, Danielle said, "Don't be afraid to come to the shelter and use their resources if that is what you need. They are wonderful people. They've been good to me and my kids."

**Last year, the Woonsocket Shelter served 340 individuals, over half of them children.**

# Training and Experience Helps with Job Success *(con't from pg 1)*

solving skills, self knowledge about own interests, and demonstration of job readiness while enrolled in the training program.

**“Internships provide students with a real-life opportunity to do on the job training and practice their newly learned skills.”**  
*-Deb Martin, FRCA Employment & Training Director*

“The screening ensures that the students are ready and they are a right fit. It is important to find the right match for both the employer and the employee,” said Melissa Rouleau, the Healthcare Reimbursement Specialist Train-

ing instructor. “The internship program gives the employer a chance to try out a candidate. It is a win-win for the employer.”

In addition to the training program, Dayis, a single mother, has received financial coaching and other supports through FRCA’s Financial Opportunity Center.

The 12 week Healthcare Reimbursement Specialist training covers career preparation



Dr. Mihaela Iovanel (left) with Dayis Figueroa and Office Manager Diane Mulbouf

and basic computer skills in addition to training in medical reimbursement, medical terminology, electronic health records, and other areas to prepare individuals for careers in healthcare settings. Certifications awarded upon com-

pletion include Electronic Health Record Certification, Coding & Billing Specialist Certification, Customer Service Certification and iCritical Thinking Certification.

“The class really helped to prepare me,” Dayris said. “I’m putting it all together now. They reinforced the importance of being consistent, being on time, taking notes...all good advice that I’m using here at my job. The more you know, the better. There are so many open doors now.”

Learn more about FRCA’s Employment & Training programs at the weekly Information Sessions held Wednesday afternoons at 3:00 pm at 55 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI.

## Examples of FRCA Partnerships at Work!

We know we can accomplish more together than alone. That’s why FRCA has made a commitment to work in collaboration with local organizations to help strengthen individuals and families.

Here are just some examples:

- ⇒ *Project Impact*, a GED and Career Preparation Program with Project RIRAL
- ⇒ *Stepping Up*, a Healthcare Career Exploration training program with Landmark Medical Center and Thundermist Health Center

- ⇒ *TEAMhealth2*, a CNA training and career laddering program with St. Antoine Residence
- ⇒ *Access To Recovery* (ATR) assessment and care coordination with partners East Bay Community Action, TIDES Family Services and South County Community Action
- ⇒ *Family Care Community Partnership* network of care established by the Department of Children, Youth & Families with NRI Community Services, Gateway Healthcare, Inc., and Comprehensive Community Action Program

- ⇒ *Financial Opportunity Center* with NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley
- ⇒ *Local Food Pantry Network* with Woonsocket area churches: St. James Episcopal Church; St. Joseph’s Catholic Church; Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Church; St. Charles Church
- ⇒ *On-site Health Clinic*, a new resource with partner Thundermist Health Center for families living in the Woonsocket Homeless Shelter



Stepping Up Graduates with Woonsocket Mayor Leo Fontaine



ATR Partners from left: Sean Walsh, South County Community Action; Seena Franklin, East Bay Community Action Program; Mike Schmitt, Tides Family Services; Darlene Magaw & Celeste Greene, FRCA

## Working it Out...for Area Youth

This summer was all about working! Thanks to funding from the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, 41 area young people were provided with meaningful employment for six weeks at local agencies, businesses and schools in Woonsocket.

Youth, ages 14-21, worked as summer camp counselors, food service staff, daycare assistants, janitorial assistants and community gardeners.



Youth in GrowUp! Community Garden summer job placement (above) and Garden Volunteer Steve Sheeky (right)



ensure the youth had a summer filled with both fun and skill building.

We thank our community partners for the worksites they provided for these young people, and also for the supervision, guidance and mentoring they provided along the way.

money more effectively—all valuable skills needed for acquiring and retaining employment.

One summer youth employee said, "Without this opportunity I'm not sure where I would have been this summer, probably hanging out on the street with knuckleheads."

Another youth noted, "I feel more prepared for what I need to do to be a good employee and how to save my money!"

This summer would not have been possible without the generosity of summer youth employment partners Beacon Charter High School, Connecting for Children and Families, The Cakery, and Hope Street Daycare.

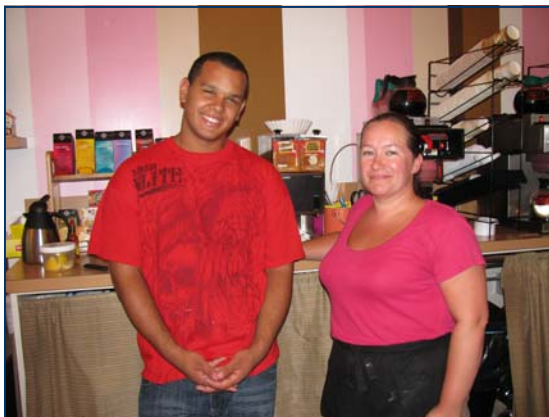
We also want to acknowledge the valuable contribution of our fabulous Grow Up! Community Garden volunteer, Steve Sheeky who worked to

Look for all the new and exciting programs that are happening at FRCA's youth center throughout the year. Check us out on Facebook at NorthernRITeenspot for weekly program updates including homework help, leadership training, college tours and much more!

For more information about the YouthWorks411 Career Center, contact Stump Olsen at 401-671-2971 or [solsen@famresri.org](mailto:solsen@famresri.org), visit [www.famresi.org](http://www.famresi.org) or stop by the YouthWorks Center at 55 Main Street, Woonsocket, RI.

"Vegetables that you grow yourself taste much better, cost less and are better than the ones you get at the supermarket."

-GrowUp! Garden Youth Summer Employment participant



Summer Youth Employment Participant Sean Prim with The Cakery Owner Sarah Gauvin

Each young person placed in the summer employment program also went through a 20 hour job training program at FRCA that helped them create a professional resume, learn interviewing skills and manage their newly earned

## FRCA Monthly Radio Show on WOON 1240 AM

This spring, FRCA began a radio show *Community Connections* on WOON 1240 AM that airs the fourth Wednesday of every month at 9:00 am. Host Roth Nhar, the FRCA Community Services Liaison, has been joined by guests from the agency and the community to discuss issues of concern and share information on community resources that can provide support to families. Past shows have covered areas including child abuse prevention, health & well-being, financial literacy, housing & homelessness prevention and addiction recovery & support.

Dates and topics for upcoming shows:

- \* October 26th - Accessing Basic Needs Support
- \* November 23rd - Caregiver Support
- \* December 14th - Supporting People Living with HIV/AIDS (*note different week for this month*)



Deb Martin, FRCA Employment & Training Director & Ainsley Morrisseau of NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley



From left: Roth Nhar, host, Janet Anderson, Assistant Dir. Children's Behavioral Health, RI Dept. Children, Youth & Families; Mary Turillo, Dir. of Children's Intensive Services, NRI Community Services; Patti Corbett FRCA Child Welfare Director; Rev Dorian Parker, FRCA Board member and First Baptist Church Pastor

You can listen to a recording of the most recent *Community Connections* show on WOON's website at [www.onworldwide.com](http://www.onworldwide.com) as well as on the News & Events page of FRCA's website at [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org)



**Saturday, November 5th 2011**

**Woonsocket Middle School -Hamlet Building - 8 am to 2:30 pm**

Families Matter is a conference designed to connect families, teachers and schools to positively influence the lives of children.

For more information visit [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org)

### Workshop Topics Include:

- \* Nurturing Early Literacy
- \* Music & Development
- \* Cultural Sensitivity
- \* Talking with Youth About Risky Behavior

CEU and PD credits available

### SAVE THE DATE! WORLD AIDS DAY EVENT



**Thursday, December 1st 2011**

**St. Ann Arts & Cultural Center,  
84 Cumberland St., Woonsocket, RI  
6:00 to 8:00 pm**

**"It Takes a Village to Fight HIV/AIDS"**

*Food, Music, Silent Auction, Poetry Reading, Resources & More!*

For more information, contact Lorna Cohen at [lcohen@famresri.org](mailto:lcohen@famresri.org)

## Golf Tournament Raises Funds for Shelter

FRCA's 6th Annual Golf Tournament was held on Friday, June 17th at Crystal Lake Golf Club, Mapleville, RI.

Many thanks to the more than 80 golfers and the 20 tee hole sponsors. Special thanks to our Major Sponsors:

- ⇒ ACE Sponsor: Technical Support International
- ⇒ EAGLE Sponsors: Merrill Lynch/Christopher Bouley; Provider Insurance
- ⇒ BIRDIE Sponsors: KLR (Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co); Realty Maintenance Services, Inc.; Mainland Properties; Northern RI Community

Services; Raybo Realty; Realty Maintenance Services, Inc.; Shore Point Capital Partners, LLC; and Tides Family Services

⇒ REGISTRATION Sponsors: BankRI; Fournier & Fournier Funeral Home

Over \$15,000 was raised to support the Woonsocket Shelter and homelessness prevention programs. A complete list of all sponsors can be found

on FRCA's website at [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org).

Details about next year's golf tournament coming soon!



FRCA Golf Tournament Co-Chairs and Board members Suzanne Blades and Julien Ayotte

## Volunteer Groups Help in Many Ways...

FRCA has been fortunate to have the volunteer services of many groups this year.

Through their Day of Action program, APC by Schneider Electric helped paint the interior of the Woonsocket Shelter and beautify the outside grounds in the spring, and returned to make some additional interior improvements to the shelter this fall.

Catholic Heart Work Camp put their volunteers to work at the Northern Rhode Island Visitation Center staining and building a deck and painting the interior.

Junior League of Rhode Island organized a Kids in the Kitchen Event, a hands-on cooking and nutrition education program for children.



Rhode Island School of Design Students (pictured above) are working to design and build furniture for the Woonsocket Shelter as a part of their Introduction to Design Studio class.

FRCA greatly appreciates the work of all these volunteer groups. You have really helped make a difference!

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

FRCA is gearing up for the holiday programs. If you are interested in learning how you can help with the annual Kettle Campaign and other holiday programs, please contact Wendy Pires at 235-6096 or [wpires@famresri.org](mailto:wpires@famresri.org)



## FRCA Board Member Profiles



Jo Ann Rajabiun

Jo Ann Rajabiun, a retired clinical social worker and RN, who has worked in the community for over 30 years, joined the FRCA Board in 2008. She had previously been a FRCA Board member in the 1980's.

Jo Ann began her career at Head Start as a Special Needs Coordinator in 1976, and received her Masters in Social Work from Rhode Island College in 1991. She worked with children, adults and families at NRI Community Services for 10 years, and later did federal reviews for Head Start.

Jo Ann has put her background and experience to

great use as a Board member, including assisting with the Adopt-A-Family Program. (FRCA does the screening for this program that provides holiday toys for low income Woonsocket families).

"It is amazing the number of single parents there are," Jo Ann said. "So many people have been laid off; families have very little money to live on." Jo Ann has also assisted with the Volunteer Tax Assistance (VITA) program and has participated in FRCA's annual ShelterWalk.

"I like the composition of the Board," Jo Ann noted. "It includes people from different sectors—business, nonprofit. It is a very diverse group of people who genuinely want to help."

\* \* \* \*

Bamby Mohamed, a Woonsocket resident who joined the FRCA in 2008, has been an active and engaged member of the community for many years. She was a case aide at a local agency where she worked in collaboration with

other organizations throughout the city of Woonsocket. Bamby has also worked in several area businesses, and during that time was a strong advocate for FRCA's former Boys' Shelter.

Bamby has continued her engagement as a FRCA Board member, participating



Bamby Mohamed

on the ShelterWalk planning committee, assisting with Adopt-A-Family and holiday toy distribution, and helping with the VITA Program.

"I've always felt a need to help those less fortunate than myself," Bamby said. As a single parent who juggled several jobs while attending college part time over many years,

## Board of Directors

- Nancy L. Benoit - **Chair**
- Rev. Dorian Parker - **Vice Chair**
- Julien Ayotte - **Treasurer**
- Gerard A. Noel, Jr. - **Secretary**
- Suzanne Blades
- Chris Carcifero
- Christine Chiacu-Forsythe
- Wesley Cruz
- Dee Henry
- Ron Miller
- Bamby Mohamed
- Charles Noel
- Vimala Phongsavanh
- Jo Ann Rajabiun
- Candy J. Seldon
- Carol Wilson-Allen

Bamby knows first hand the challenges many families face. (Her persistence paid off, as she graduated cum laude from the University of Rhode Island in 2004 with a degree in General Studies.)

Bamby clearly enjoys her work as a Board member. "It gives you an overall inside look at the day-to-day operations of a busy nonprofit agency," she said. "It's really important to get involved in your community and learn more about your community agencies. It really does make a difference."

## FRCA Presents Awards at Annual Meeting

The contributions of St. James Episcopal Church ministries in Woonsocket were acknowledged at FRCA's 125th Annual Meeting in June with the presentation of the Paul Dempster Award, named for the founder of the Woonsocket Shelter. FRCA Board Chair Nancy Benoit noted that the Ministries, including the Prescott Beach Food Bank, the Coat of Many Colors Clothing Ministry, and other special funds that help with heat and utilities and other needs, have been an important resource to FRCA for over 20 years. Last year, the food bank distributed 37,836 meals to over 4,200 individuals; last year FRCA issued over 2,700 vouchers for clothing that were filled by the Coat of Many Colors.



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## Family Resources Community Action

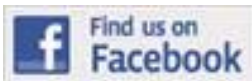
245 Main Street  
Woonsocket, RI 02895

Phone: 401-766-0900



Strengthening families and the  
community since 1891

Visit us on the Web!  
[www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org)



## Upcoming Events

- Tune in to **WOON 1240 AM at 9:00 am the fourth Wednesday of every month** to hear FRCA's new radio show: **Community Connections**. The show highlights issues of concern to community members and shares resources and programs at FRCA and in the broader community to help support individuals and families.
  - **Saturday October 15th 2011** - Please join us for FRCA's **23rd Annual ShelterWalk** to benefit the Woonsocket Homeless Shelter. Registration opens at 9am and the walk kicks off at 10am! River Island Park, Woonsocket. We are actively seeking individuals and teams to participate! More information is on FRCA's website [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org).
  - **Saturday November 5th 2011 - Family Matters Conference** at the Woonsocket Middle School - Hamlet Building; 8am to 2:30pm
  - **Thursday December 1st 2011** - Please join us for the FRCA Agape Center's local **World AIDS Day Event** at the St. Ann Arts and Cultural Center, 84 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, RI., 6:00 - 8:00 pm.
  - **Learn about FRCA's Employment & Training Programs and Employment Support services** at the weekly Information Session Wednesday afternoons at 3:00pm, 55 Main Street Woonsocket, RI.
  - For a complete list of the most updated list of events, trainings & community happenings, visit [www.famresri.org](http://www.famresri.org).
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