Summer is upon us and everyone at 21 Plus is gearing up to enjoy the long awaited warmer weather. The ladies at the Southampton group home are growing their vegetable garden again this year, while the guys at Mizzen have an herb garden. People living in other group homes are planning picnics and some local trips to enjoy the weather.

Sarah, one of our residents at 21 Plus, won the New Jersey Association of Community Provider’s Star Award for her achievements over the years. She received her award at a dinner in Princeton with friends present to help celebrate. 21 Plus is proud of Sarah’s success!

We continue to sing the praises of Northern Ocean Habitat for Humanity, Brush With Kindness, who has agreed to help us again with the beautification of 21 Plus group homes. They have been a remarkable group, and have made such a positive difference in the lives of individuals at 21 Plus. Staff and residents are amazed at how much beauty has been created with flowers, landscaping, and gardens.

We are exploring new grants in the hope of improving the affordability and access to our Family Support services. 21 Plus can provide in- and out-of-home activities, summer recreation, overnight stays, and school break programs for those residing with their families. We are also looking for grants to offset some new employee training opportunities.

The 21 Plus Foundation continues to work on behalf of the 21 Plus programs. Their goal is to fund all those unmet needs that exist. We currently need flooring, painting, and furniture replacement in our residential sites. Hope you will keep us in mind when you receive our summer appeal letter.

We continue to be very proud of the quality of the 21 Plus programs and the successes at 21 Plus. However, we are not anticipating an increase from the State of New Jersey in 2012. We have become increasingly more dependent on donations and volunteers to continue our good work. You can help by talking to your local legislator and sending the message that New Jersey needs to adequately fund programs for people with disabilities, or by sending volunteers our way.

Thank you to the many friends and families who continue to support our efforts, to the Board of Directors of both the Foundation and 21 Plus, and to the employees. Your contributions help us provide meaningful lives for individuals who live and work at 21 Plus.
**NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The 21 Plus, Inc. Board of Directors was honored at a breakfast on Tuesday, May 17th at the Holiday Inn of Toms River. The volunteer Board donates over 200 hours annually serving on committees, working on the Golf Classic, and lending their expertise to 21 Plus. Board President Frank Orawiec welcomed re-elected board members Ed Frankman, Anne Kraljic, Jule Raichle, Senator John F. Russo, Sr., and Michael York, Esq.

The following board members were elected to Officer positions for a one year term in 2011:

Frank Orawiec, President  Adrienne Socha, Treasurer
Jule Raichle, President-Elect  Judy Oswald, Secretary

Sheila Melore, Executive Director, expressed her thanks on behalf of the families and participants who benefit by the time invested by the Board Members. She noted that some members are involved in Board committees and the Foundation golf committee in addition to their Board duties.

Thank you to all for volunteering your time and energy!

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**SPECIAL NEEDS TRUSTS**

“What will happen to my son or daughter when I am no longer here?” is a question that is frequently posed by families. That is usually followed by the concern of how to leave money for the person with a special need without affecting the benefits they receive from the government.

On May 23rd, Diana Anderson, Esq., a 21 Plus Foundation Trustee, presented the nuts and bolts of Special Needs Trusts to families and guardians. She explained the importance of the Special Needs Trust and how to establish and fund it. The event was free of charge. Watch for the announcement of the next Family Information Session. Contact Diana Anderson at 732-797-1600 if you would like information on Special Needs Trust.

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WHERE CAN I GO ........

Robert from Mizzen Ave. has been making strides with planning activities to attend with his housemates. He really enjoys going through the newspaper and catalogs looking for fun and interesting things to do.

So far he has chosen car shows, the Howell Living Farm museum, the Atlantic City aquarium, ball games and a British car show. He looks forward to sitting with the staff and finding things that he thinks his friends would enjoy with him. In fact, he is becoming a social butterfly.

If you ask Robert which activity has been his favorite so far, he’ll tell you, “the British Car show was the best”. The show was held in Smithville, NJ. Robert got to see sports cars, old taxis, and the car from the Batman movie.

Taking the lead has helped to boost Robert’s confidence especially when he shares his ideas with his housemates.

FIRST ANNUAL AGENCY SPRING CLEANUP

Everyone knows that spring is the time that we all think about cleaning up the inside and outside of our homes. At 21 Plus, we thought it would be more fun if we had a small group of family members give us a hand, and have a chance to mingle with residents and staff.

At Dallas, we want to thank Tommy’s mom, sister, brother-in-law, and nieces for scrubbing down the kitchen cabinets and dusting.

Thanks to Dallas Drive Site Manager Dawn’s husband and brother for taking care of the deck furniture and carpet cleaning.

Wayne Avenue resident Lois’ sister and nephew changed curtains in the house and weeded the flower beds. Lois’ sister even purchased flowers for the house and planted them. After the cleanup was done, a picnic lunch was enjoyed by all.

Any and all of these endeavors are truly appreciated as they help us to maintain the homes despite a flat budget.

We need your help! We hope next year more families will come out and lend a hand!
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