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# THE Independent

FALL ■ 2010

*Mission Statement*  
 Alternatives, Inc. provides comprehensive support services to individuals with special needs to enable them to reach their highest level of independence and integration in the community.

*In the News*  
**SWEENEY-VITALE BILL REMOVING DEMEANING, DISRESPECTFUL TERMS FROM STATE STATUTES NOW LAW**  
 In early June, the New Jersey Senate Health and Senior Services Committee approved legislation to eliminate demeaning and disrespectful terms from state laws that are targeted at individuals with developmental disabilities. The bill also removes all references to the terms “mental retardation,” “mentally retarded,” “idiot,” and “feeble-minded” in statutes and regulations and replace them with the terms “intellectual disability” and “developmental disability.” These changes reflect the Division of Developmental Disabilities’ services for all persons with developmental disabilities, not only those with intellectual disabilities.

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The senators said that removing references to “retardation” and ensuring statutes conform to a “person-first” wording will help break down barriers for residents with intellectual or other developmental disabilities. “Person-first” language refers to an individual as a “person with a disability,” rather than as a “disabled person.” Senate President Sweeney (D-Gloucester/Cumberland/Salem) said, “The fact is that individuals with disabilities are not defined by their disability, but by the strength and character they exhibit in overcoming their disability.”  
 Governor Christie signed the bill into law on August 16th. On October 5th, President Obama signed Rosa’s Law which will ensure similar changes occur in federal laws.

## Star Studded Evening

### NJACP PRESENTS COMMUNITY STARS AWARD TO JOANNE FECANIN



Joanne, who lives in Phillipsburg, was honored at the 11th Annual “Community STARS” Dinner. She joined with more than thirty individuals representing several agencies statewide in receiving Community Stars Awards presented by the New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP). More than 300 well-wishers gathered to celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of these winners who meet life’s challenges with grace, dignity and determination. Through the Community Stars Awards, individuals are recognized for the way that they meet the challenge they face in their daily lives.

Joanne was deservedly proud as she stood on stage and listened as her accomplishments were highlighted. Joanne joined Alternatives in 2003 in the Supervised Apartment Program where she received 24-hour staff support for medication administration, finances and daily living skills. By 2007, she needed very little assistance in these matters and moved into Supportive Housing where she had greater control over the decisions in her life. She moved into an apartment that allowed her the freedom to walk to stores, her doctor’s appointments, the pharmacy & the bowling alley without staff. The new location also made it easier for Joanne to arrange transportation to her job at Shoprite. Most recently, Joanne was able to “move on” and grow yet again. She now lives completely independently in an Alternatives Supportive Living Program where she meets with staff only a few hours a week.

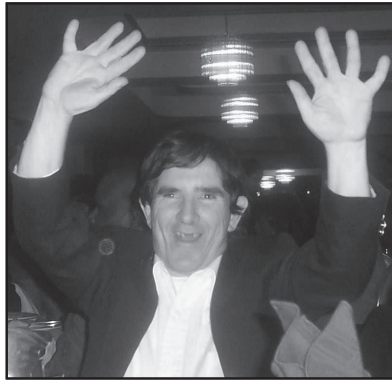
Joanne is truly realizing her full potential and it has been a pleasure to watch blossom into an independent, successful woman. She was joined at the award dinner by several Alternatives’ staff that came to offer words of congratulations.

## In Memoriam

This summer Alternatives lost two cherished clients – Michael Lee and Arthur Turoff.

Michael lived in our Bridgewater program for 23 years. During that time he was filled with a level of energy and enthusiasm that was hard to match. He loved to play the guitar and listen to Bill Withers music. Of course, few things gave him as much pleasure as a frosty chocolate milkshake and a cheeseburger and his staff was happy to join him on these outings!

Arthur lived in the Phillipsburg program for nearly 25 years. He was always ready to go when a movie or Alternatives event was offered. In recent years he was most proud of the progress he had made in his literacy class and he enjoyed spending time with his friend Florence and watching the Yankees.



Michael Lee



Arthur Turoff

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## THE Independent

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# Corporate Neighbors Team-up with Alternatives Inc.



L to R: Victor Rivera, Investors Savings Bank, Three Bridges Branch Manager, Nancy Good, Alternatives, Inc. President, Jorge Diaz, Alternatives, Inc. V.P. of Finance, Manju Kumar, Investors Savings Bank, Clinton Branch Manager

## THE INVESTORS SAVINGS BANK FOUNDATION, SOMERSET SAVINGS BANK AND THE PSE&G FOUNDATION SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Investors Savings Bank Foundation recently joined Somerset Savings Bank and the PSE&G Foundation to help Alternatives, Inc. renovate a property that provides affordable housing for families with low income from the State's Welfare to Work Program - the only program of its kind in central New Jersey.

Through the help of these supporters, \$21,500 has been raised so far for the project. Additionally, Sincox Associates donated architectural plans and the Alternatives executive team joined with the Facilities Department to do the demolition of this project. "We are committed to providing affordable housing," said,

## Client News

Florence Mulray, a client at our Phillipsburg program for more than 25 years was recently recognized by Our Blessed Hope Church for her 25 years of dedication. Florence was also recognized for her outstanding fundraising. Florence has sold more than \$25,000 in fundraising products during her time of service to support Our Blessed Hope and earned the distinction of "Highest Fundraiser."

## Hearing Expo

An estimated 36 million American adults have some degree of hearing loss. No matter what the severity, there are services available to them all. "People who are Deaf may use American Sign Language to communicate while someone who is Hard of Hearing may use some kind of Assistive Listening Device to amplify sound or use captioning services," says Alyse Betso, Manager of Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services for Alternatives.

On June 26th Alternatives, Inc., held its first annual "Hearing & Communication Expo" at Raritan Valley Community College. Their goal was to bring those with all types of hearing loss together to make them aware of the services that are available to them as well as how they can benefit their lives both personally and professionally.

There were a number of vendors in attendance to inform individuals as well as conduct demonstrations of the services or products they offer. Bridges to Employment has recently expanded their vocational services program to work with those impaired by hearing loss in six counties throughout New Jersey including Middlesex, Mercer, Somerset, Hunterdon, Monmouth and Ocean Counties.

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# Fundraising

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS HONORED AT DIGNITY GALA

The 2010 Dignity Gala honored the achievements of the past, showed optimism for the future and provided a party filled with casino games and entertainment for the present. Adding to the excitement was the caliber of our honorees; Affinity Federal Credit Union and Kevin McMurtry Founder and CEO of Advanced Health Media, were honored at the March event for their achievement and commitment to the community.



Dignity Gala guests enjoy Tumbling Dice Entertainment

with talk of Alternatives around the dinner table," said Board Chair, Linda Olson. When Kevin established his own business he also established a long relationship with Alternatives in his own right. He has been a lead sponsor of the Dignity Gala and Alternatives for years."

Affinity Federal Credit Union, New Jersey's largest credit union, is a member-owned, not-for-profit, full-service financial institution. "Affinity has been a financial lifeline for Alternatives staff for years," said Alternatives President Nancy Good. "In addition to offering outstanding benefits, Affinity routinely provides the agency with financial education on many topics."

"The gala was a great accomplishment!" said Good. "Despite the difficult economic times, our volunteer committee conducted one of our largest and most successful events ever." The room swelled with more than 200 guests who enjoyed casino games, dancing to a live band and bidding on auction items. The committee is already making plans for the 2011 Dignity Gala which will be held at Dolce Basking Ridge on Friday, April 1st...no foolin', hold the date!



Agatha Niemiec, Alternatives HR Mgr. with Affinity Federal Credit Union Execs

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Susan Proulx of Branchburg learns that she has won the cash raffle



Dignity Gala Honoree, Kevin McMurtry with Patty, Sheila & Deirdre McMurtry

## FUNDRAISING THE COMMUNITY

Small community fundraising events are an emerging opportunity for Alternatives to build awareness and raise funds for our clients. These fundraisers are entirely staff driven by people who work directly with clients. Once their work day is done, they go on to create events to give their clients the extras that make their day a little brighter.

The Bridges to Employment Department along with Delta Community Supports, Inc. and Our House, Inc. joined together to hold Walk for Work at the Bridgewater Commons Mall. This fun-filled celebration attracted more than 100 people who walked and raised more than \$4,000 to help people with disabilities find employment.

All three agencies have supported employment programs that assesses a person's skills prior to employment. They also spend hours in the community learning the needs of employers. In the end, a match is made with a person eager to work and an employer who has a job filled with a qualified person.

The Community Outreach Services (COS) Program had their second Kid Junction fundraiser in the Spring. They gathered families with young children for an event at this family friendly location in Branchburg. Staff members had so much fun that an encore performance is in the works.

COS provides supportive housing and services to those who are homeless and/or who are mentally ill.

## Hold The Date

ALTERNATIVES CASINO NIGHT

Friday, February 4, 2011

Come out of the cold & get hot at the tables!

More information to follow