

“Key”munications

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Key Program, Inc. is a not-for-profit agency serving children and families in Massachusetts and Rhode Island through residential and community-based intervention services. Key’s mission is to assist youth and their families with developing positive life skills and life experiences so that they may pursue productive and rewarding lives. **To learn more, please visit us at www.key.org**

PUBLISHED FOR EMPLOYEES AND FRIENDS OF KEY PROGRAM, INC.



“Recognizing A Valued Employee”

Submitted by **Jacqueline John**, *Assistant Program Supervisor*, Rhode Island Outreach

At this time, I would like to recognize **Allison Stein**, Program Supervisor at the Rhode Island Girls’ Shelter. In addition to her responsibilities at her own program, she has worked extremely long days at the West Kingston Group Home during a severe staffing shortage – without one complaint and always with a smile on her face.

Allison never leaves shift until she is sure that her assistance is not needed for any foreseeable situations.

Allison is extremely flexible and willing to do whatever she can to ensure the success of all of the programs throughout the region, usually without being asked. She is a terrific role model for all employees.

1909 vs. 2009

- Gallon of Gas 6¢ vs. \$1.66
- Postage Stamp 2¢ vs. 42¢
- Loaf of Bread 5¢ vs. \$2.74
- Gallon Milk 32¢ vs. \$3.79
- New Home \$2,650 vs. \$219,000

Halloween in the Berkshires!

Submitted by **Angela Bryan**, *Senior Program Supervisor*, Berkshire region



My first Halloween in America was in 2000 after moving here from the United Kingdom. I remember being amazed at how much effort went into making the day a wonderful experience for the all the clients. I worked at the Emergency Shelter as a Residential Caseworker and the house was decorated with cobwebs, ghosts and ghouls. The staff threw a big party for all the clients which included making and dressing up in costumes and creating a creepy haunted house. We went trick-or-treating and for those clients who could not go, we handed out candy to the neighborhood kids who came trick-or-treating at our door. I remember the kids had such a great time...as well as the staff.

Since then the tradition of Halloween has continued to grow in Pittsfield. In the spirit of healthy competition, each program competes for the Best Decorated House Award! This has now turned into an annual event in Pittsfield. Staff and clients in each house really put forth their best effort to decorate, both inside and out. This year the winning residence was Howard House, with only a small margin of a win! The staff and clients were treated to pizza for their victory. I would like to personally thank all the staff for all their hard work

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Important Information! Things You Need to Know...

*This past summer, Key Program made technology upgrades to its payroll and human resources computer systems. This change did, however, create one potential complication for this year. Employees who were with Key prior to the upgrade may have two separate payroll files (one from the old system and one from the new). Each file may generate its own end-of-year Form W-2, so a number of employees may receive two of them. Before you file your 2008 tax returns, be sure that you receive all of the W-2s that you need. If you receive only one form that reflects all of your annual earnings, you are all set. If you receive a W-2 that does not seem to accurately reflect your 2008 earnings, you’ll probably have to wait a week or so for a second W-2 to arrive. If you have any questions, please contact the Finance Staff in the Framingham office.

*By now, most Massachusetts residents should be aware of their legal duty to maintain health insurance coverage. Starting on January 1, 2009, that coverage must meet certain “minimum creditable coverage” requirements as set forth by the Commonwealth Health Connector. Please be advised that Key Program’s group health insurance plan DOES meet the minimum creditable requirements and will, therefore, satisfy the individual mandate for which you are responsible under Massachusetts law. Please contact Benefits Coordinator **Sue Barry** at 508-877-3690 or sbarry@key.org if you have any questions about your benefits.



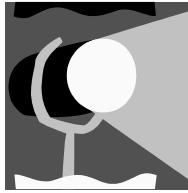
A Message From the President, Bill Lyttle

As this newsletter is being printed, we find ourselves on the brink of a new year, a new Presidential administration and new challenges. There is no doubt that 2008 is ending in a less than glowing light. The U.S. and numerous other countries are in financial recession, cost-of-living expenses and unemployment rates are high, terrorist activities continue around the world and a staggering number of people go to bed hurt and hungry every night.

Though it would be tempting to get discouraged and brace for “more of the same,” I am struck by the way people are embracing the beginning of 2009 as an opportunity to start anew and make improvements to their lives and the world around them. The human spirit is an amazing force for change; particularly change for the better. The difficulties of the past several years, especially the past year, have spurred people to action. We are using less gas and are less reliant on consumer credit. Communities are coming together to care for their neediest members. Political and social awareness and activism are at an all-time high and people truly believe that they have the power to change things for the better.

Pessimists argue that the “new” call for personal and governmental accountability and societal and corporate responsibility has come too late to make a difference. Here at Key, we know that this is not the case. Every day, the youth and families we serve become more hopeful and

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Alumni Spotlight

Recently, Key made contact with **Tom Poirier**, a former employee who worked for the Key Program in ‘83-’84 as a Shiftworker/Transporter in Worcester’s Intake Unit, a DYS-funded program that has now been closed for a number of years. Following are a few of the thoughts that Tom wanted to share about his experiences with Key:

I started with Key in the Arrest/Holding Unit while attending Mount Wachusett Community College. I sometimes drove kids to foster homes and “lock-ups,” usually in my own car. Working for Key at that time was definitely a learning experience. There were kids in need at many levels ranging from the basic needs of food and shelter to intense structure and security at longer-term programs.

Key was located on Grove Street (Worcester) at the time. I recall the difficulty in placing some of the kids due to lack of foster homes available to Key, but there were some great people who took these kids in both in the long- and short-term. Although I was only at Key a short time, I do have some great memories. There were several kids who left a lasting impression on me. They had no one in their corner, nothing good in their lives, and nothing much to look forward to. I remember one boy, probably about 10 to 12 years old, who we had to physically restrain one day for throwing a plate at me. After the restraint he called me over and apologized. I asked him why he chose to make us restrain him. His response was that it was the only way that he could get someone to hold him. I didn’t have any children at the time, but I’ll tell you this; my kids get a lot of hugs.

There were some great people working at Key back then, as I’m sure there are today. And, of course, our supervisors were the best – and I mean that sincerely.

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LOCALLY GROWN

Submitted by: **Sheila Griffin**, Program Supervisor at Taunton Community Re-Entry Center



The staff and clients of the Plymouth CRC participated in a community service project at Soule Farm Homestead in Middleboro, MA this past spring and summer. Rodman Ride funds were used to rent a 20 ft. by 20 ft. plot of farmland, which clients and staff rototilled to get ready for planting in April. Clients then chose what kinds of seeds to plant. Their choices were pumpkins, tomatoes, hot and sweet peppers, zucchini, eggplant and squash.

Clients spent the summer months weeding and composting the plot as well as learning about farming from Frank Albani, the Executive Director at Soule Farm. They enjoyed getting out into nature and seeing things they never had the opportunity to see before. With all the rain last summer, some of the weeds were over their heads.

At the end of August, clients were able to harvest all the vegetables they had planted - except for the eggplant since they were accidentally “weeded” by a Program Supervisor who shall remain nameless. Clients brought the produce home to their families.

Everyone involved in the project at Soule Farm is looking forward to continuing it next year; and all are hoping that the eggplant survives next summer.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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optimistic about their future. The ideals of personal responsibility and accountability, activism, and work ethic that you role model and teach does make a difference. It is never too late to help a child or family. As we enter what is hoped to be a new beginning for our nation, please continue your work in helping others find new beginnings for themselves and believe that they too can change their lives for the better.

HALLOWEEN - BERKSHIRES

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in making this Halloween another wonderful experience for all the clients we work with. Best of luck for 2009!

Raking Leaves is Patriotic!

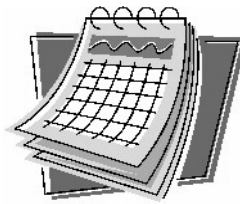
Submitted by: **Mike Brennan**, *Regional Program Supervisor* in the Central Region

A few weeks ago, the residents from the Grafton Boys' Program and Worcester Group Home performed community service for a soldier, who was soon being shipped out for his second tour of duty, and that soldier's wife.

He spent 12 months serving in Iraq during his first tour, and the current one is scheduled to last 9-12 months in Afghanistan. The boys were not about to let the soldier spend his last couple of weekends at home raking leaves when he should be spending time with his family. The boys stepped in and completed the task for him.

Worcester Group Home clients K.S. and M.S., along with Program Supervisor Joe Allred and Grafton Boys' clients K.H. and S.E., along with RPS Mike Brennan raked the yard and cleaned out the brook that flows through it. Staff Sgt. Gosler spoke with the boys about his role in Iraq. The boys left feeling that their support was very much appreciated. The boys volunteered their time for more yard work this fall and are already planning to help out again in the spring.

A little trivia to start the year!



Under the Georgian calendar used through-out most of the world, January is the first month of the year. The month was named after "Janus," the Roman god of gates, doorways, beginnings and endings.

Historical January events include the birthdays of Paul Revere, Betsy Ross, Martin Luther King Jr., Richard Nixon, and Benjamin Franklin; the additions of the states of Kansas, Michigan and Utah; and the explosion of the U.S. Space Shuttle Challenger in 1986.

The second month in the calendar, February, originally had 29 days with a 30th day every four years. Roman emporor Augustus took one day off and added it to August, the month named after him. Consequently, the month now has 28 days with 29 in leap years. Historical events include the gifting of New Mexico and California to the U.S. in 1848; the end of the Spanish-American War in 1899, the first manned space orbit, the addition of the state of Oregon and the birthdays of Charles Lindbergh, George Washington, "Babe" Ruth, Ronald Reagan, Charles Dickens, Thomas Edison and astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus.

According to the early Roman calendar, the month of March (then called "Martius") was the first month of the year. January 1 was later made the start of the year and March the third month in the new, Georgian calendar. The month is named for Mars, the Roman god of war. Historical events include the addition of the states of Ohio Nebraska, Florida, Vermont and Maine; the birthdays of Alexander Graham Bell, Albert Einstein, Andrew Jackson, Grover Cleveland, Johann Sebastian Bach and Robert Frost; plus the incorporation of the Girls Scouts in 1912, the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C., and Patrick Henry's proclamation "Give me liberty, or give me death!" in 1775.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

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Some of them I hear are still around. I still run into teammates now and then, and it is always great to see them.

It is clear that my experience at Key helps me in my career because it showed me the many aspects of juvenile problems that existed then and today. I learned about a side of kids that I would not have otherwise known if not for the time that I spent at Key. I believe that I have a bigger picture as to why some juveniles and adults do some of the things they do. I also believe that as I do my job I can sometimes relate just a little bit more because of my experience at Key.

I am currently a proud member of the Massachusetts State Police and am assigned to the Office of the District Attorney as a State Police Detective. This is my 21st year with the State Police. I am assigned an array of investigations that include, but are not limited to: homicides, suicides, bank robberies, sexual assaults, financial and drug-related crimes. During these investigations I am often in contact with juveniles, DYS, DCF and local secure facilities for juveniles. More often I am involved with parents whose actions devastate their children and turn kids' lives upside down. Unfortunately, my contact with many kids today is not a very good experience. I find myself having to give them bad news about their families, arrest one or both of their parents due to violent or drug-related crimes, or because they are involved in crimes themselves. It is no longer my job to shelter them or feed them or attempt to get them the treatment of which they are in need. That is, however, the job of Key's staff.

Whether you are using your experience at Key as a stepping stone or are hoping to stay on more long-term, I would impress upon you that you may be the last chance to help many of these kids make something of themselves and choose the right paths in their lives. It's true that you can't "save" them all, but don't ever stop trying.

*Trooper Thomas Poirier #1740
Massachusetts State Police
Detective Unit*

"HEY DIDDLE, DIDDLE, EVERYONE LOVES A RIDDLE!" CONTEST

Following are 10 riddles for you to mull over and solve. Submit your entries no later than **January 30**. Two winners will be selected at random from correct entries to win a **\$100 prize each**. Happy puzzling!

Example: Violet, indigo, blue and green, yellow, orange and red. These are the colors that you see after the storm has fled.

Answer: RAINBOW

1. Take one out and scratch my head. I now am black, but once was red.
2. I can be found where anything cannot. Dead men eat me all the time, but if a living man eats me he will die.
3. My voice is tender, my waist is slender and I'm often invited to play. Yet wherever I go I must take my bow or else I have nothing to say.
4. Almost everyone sees me without noticing me, for what is beyond is what he or she seeks.
5. I am in the sky, but cannot fly. I can swim in the ocean and yet remain dry.
6. Lovely and round, I shine with pale light. Grown in the darkness, a lady's delight.
7. A skin have I and more eyes than one. I can be nice when I am done.
8. Look at me. I can bring a smile to your face, a tear to your eye or a thought to your mind, but I can't be seen.
9. I fly in the air but am not always there. I cannot be touched, but I can be felt or held. I can be seen, but only some of the time.
10. I have legs but walk not, a strong back but work not, two good arms but reach not, and a seat but sit not.

Challenge: A correct answer is worth an additional \$25!

My thunder comes before the lightning. My lightning comes before the clouds. My rain dries all the land it touches.

Need to Get Away? Check Out MARES!

Who couldn't use a break these days? If you are planning a day trip or vacation, you may be able to benefit from Key Program's membership in the Massachusetts Association for Recreation and Employee Services (MARES). Members receive discounts and other promotional offerings for certain hotels and resorts, travel agency services, entertainment venues and a variety of home services. To see what is available, log onto **www.mares.org** and click on "Member Services." The log on ID is "key" and the password is "program." The site allows you to browse by category (travel, entertainment, dining, etc.). If interested in a particular offering, the site also provides an e-mail link to the MARES representative by which you can request more information. Enjoy!

Power Outage Preparedness from the American Red Cross:

Based on recent severe weather events in Central, Northeast MA and New Hampshire areas, we thought you might find this information helpful.

Top Safety Tips

- * only use flashlights for emergency lighting. Candles pose a high fire hazard.
- * turn off electrical devices that were in use when the power went out. Leave one light on so you'll know when power returns.
- * avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer.
- * listen to local radio for updated information.

Before a Blackout Occurs

Assemble supplies including:

- * flashlights
- * spare batteries
- * portable radio
- * manual can opener
- * at least one gallon of water
- * small supply of food

- * small supply of cash since ATMs will not work and banks may not be open

When Severe Weather is Expected:

- * fill plastic containers with water and freeze. This can be used to help keep food cold without refrigeration.
- * find out where your garage door's manual release lever is located and learn how to operate it.
- * keep your car's tank at least half full since gas stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- * back up computer files. Consider buying power converters for laptops and cell phones, since they can operate most models from a vehicle's cigarette lighter.