

A quarterly letter to friends of the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program

BNG launches new rural caregiving initiatives

From 2000-2003, Breaking New Ground coordinated the annual Caregiving in the Heartland workshop series, and more than 850 attendees participated. This year BNG will continue to assist rural caregivers, though through different means.

With continued financial support from the Indiana Office of Rural Health, and in cooperation with many other organizations, such as the Arthritis Foundation and ATTAIN, BNG is developing a Web site for rural caregivers and sponsoring a train-the-trainer workshop for professionals working with caregivers. It is hoped that these efforts will multiply the impact of the previous caregiving initiatives and expand their effects to other regions of Indiana and other states as well.

The Web site, www.ruralcare.info, is scheduled to be on-line by the end of June. It will feature many of the materials from the *To Everything There is a Season* resource kit developed by BNG, including on-line versions of the



workbook, leader's guide, and video. Also included on the site will be links to a variety of other organizations and information sources that may benefit caregivers.

While the impact of the Caregiving in the Heartland workshop series was largely confined to Indiana, the Web site will be available worldwide and will contain specific caregiving resources for each state. Also planned for the site is a bulletin board where caregivers can share and receive information and support.

The train-the-trainer workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, June 29, at the Arthritis Foundation in Indianapolis. The focus of this session will be on equipping professionals to function as re-

source specialists for caregivers. The Web site will be introduced and its features highlighted. Participants will also be given a primer on conducting their own caregiving workshops. Featured speakers will include many of the favorites from the Caregiving in the Heartland workshop series, and panelists will discuss both the things that seem to work well and those that don't work so well when conducting workshops.

If you are interested in participating in the June workshop or would like more information about the Web site, contact BNG at 800-825-4264. Feel free to bookmark www.ruralcare.info and visit the site at the end of June.

Bill Field receives ICRC Spirit of Justice Award



Dr. Bill Field was recently honored by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission with a Spirit of Justice Award during the Commission's annual Indiana State Employees Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration. The Spirit of Justice Awards recognize civil rights advocates who have furthered Dr. King's dream by devoting their careers and personal efforts to social justice in Indiana. The award was given to Dr. Field for his efforts to assist people with disabilities in Indiana.



At left is Dr. Field receiving his award from Lt. Governor Kathy Davis (right) and Indiana Civil Rights Commission Director Sandra Leek (left).

Distribution of TOOLBOX CD is progressing

Since announcing the release of the new Toolbox CD in our last *News Note*, BNG has already distributed more than 100 copies of the resource.

This latest edition of *Agricultural Tools, Equipment, Machinery, and Buildings for Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities* offers many product updates plus features available only in electronic format, such as hyperlinks to Web sites and video clips.

The Toolbox CD is available for \$25. Contact BNG at 800-825-4264 to order your copy.



BNG Project Leader: Bill Field

Program Manager: Paul Jones

Rural Rehab Specialist: Steve Swain

Self-employment continues to be a topic of interest

In 2003, Breaking New Ground, led by Rural Rehabilitation Specialist Steve Swain, coordinated a series of workshops and one-on-one meetings concerning self-employment for people with disabilities. Even though the formal sessions ended last fall, this initiative continues to generate a great deal of interest and activity concerning the topic of self-employment.

Dave Hammis, a nationally-known expert in employment for people with disabilities, was the lead instructor for the 2003 self-employment project. Approximately 60 people attended one or more of the three classroom sessions Hammis taught. Attendees included VR counselors, Extension educators, Small Business Development Center staff, and people with disabilities. An additional session was conducted at the Indiana Deaf School for parents, students, and professionals. BNG staff also made a total of 35 individual client visits concerning self-employment issues, and Hammis participated in 21 of these.

As an example of a success story, one of the participants who attended the workshops was interested in starting a pet grooming business. She had completed some initial work on a business plan prior to the workshops and was

also able to meet with Swain and Hammis for individual consultation. After some modifications, the business plan was submitted to VR and funded.

Steve Swain has continued to expand his expertise in the area of self-employment. He is a member of the Purdue Extension New Ventures Team, a group involved in facilitating agricultural business start-ups in Indiana, and is also part of the National AgrAbility Program self-employment committee. Steve has been assisting with several business plans for consumers interested in starting their own businesses. He believes these efforts are important because they open another door for people with disabilities to return to work. Steve notes that there are several options to help people with disabilities participate in gainful employment while maintaining Social Security and Medicaid benefits. However, he also adds that starting and maintaining self-employment is hard work and is not for everyone.

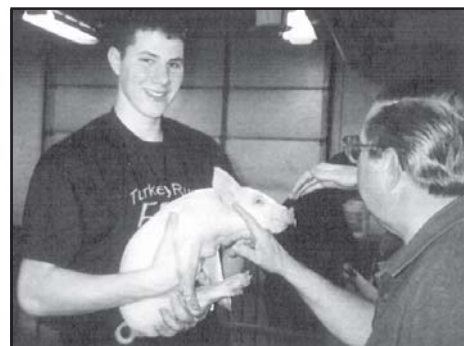


Steve Swain (left) and Dave Hammis (right) assist BNG consumer consultant Randy Martin with his business plan

If you are interested in further information concerning self-employment for people with disabilities, contact Steve Swain at 800-825-4264.

Staff puckers with pig for BNG

The Turkey Run FFA chapter came up with a creative way to bless BNG with some added funds by sponsoring a "Kiss the Pig" contest as one of their FFA Week activities. Students and staff members at the school made donations to piggy banks representing each staff member. The two "lucky" staff members who received the most money got to pucker up with a pig during halftime of a home basketball game. BNG thanks Turkey Run FFA for their hard work and creativity, the two staff members for their "sacrifice," and Orville the pig for his animal magnetism.



Orville prepares for his big date

Partners in Policymaking accepting applicants



Individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities are invited to apply for the Partners in Policymaking Training Academy. This program equips its graduates with the necessary skills and information to play a leadership role in policy development and advocacy within their communities and at the state level in order to improve the quality of disability-related services.

The Partners program includes eight weekends of intensive training over a nine-month period of time. While there is no cost to participants, they must be willing to commit to attendance and homework requirements.

The application deadline is June 4. For more information about applying, email pip@ucpainty.org or call 800 821-6708.