

# The Advocate

*"...building and supporting one-to-one relationships of friendship and advocacy between people with disabilities and community volunteers..."*



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## COORDINATOR'S MESSAGE

Orleans County Citizen Advocacy—our name may sound like quite a mouthful, but what we do is very simple. Our nonprofit program, established in 1988, serves people with disabilities in Orleans County. The idea is that ordinary citizens—neighbors—make the best advocates for people with disabilities in need of friendship and inclusion. “Neighbors helping neighbors” is our motto.

As the OCCA Coordinator, I match volunteers, or advocates, with people in our communities who have disabilities. The advocate then gets to know the person with disabilities, called the partner. Both people’s lives are enriched, and communities strengthened. Over the last 20 years, OCCA has made nearly 70 matches, with 25 currently in action.

The differences these advocates and partners make in each other’s lives are priceless. In these uncertain financial times, when all of us are being asked to do more with fewer financial resources, I often reflect on how Orleans County Citizen Advocacy is a model to emulate. Our advocates provide such a valuable support system for their partner, and do so for no monetary gain. If they were to be paid for all that they do, it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

Many wonder how OCCA is able to recruit advocates without financial incentives. The reality is it’s because of people like you, people whose hearts are drawn by being involved in something that:

- makes moral sense
- builds strong and inclusive communities where everyone’s gifts are valued and cherished
- does not need to bring public adulations or be rewarded with payment, but is done because one desires to reach out to a fellow human with kindness and compassion

We deeply appreciate our advocates for their altruism, and sincerely hope that their example inspires others to act.

Ellen Bowen  
Coordinator

## Looking for advocates...

An introduction from Ellen: *Karen Zale of Newport first heard about Citizen Advocacy when she and her husband ran in the Echo Lake Road Race a couple of years ago. All the racers’ names are then added to our mailing list, and in the summer 2007 issue, Karen read that we were looking for advocates, Karen gave me a call and said that she was*

*interested in becoming an advocate. I met with Karen, and we talked about what being an advocate was all about. Soon I introduced her to Sally, thinking they would make a good match. They did make a wonderful match, as you will see by listening to Karen talking about her experience as an advocate.*



Sally and Karen

“It has been over a year now since Ellen introduced me to Sally. I have the opportunity to visit with Sally once a week, either on Saturday or Sunday, since I work a full-time job. At times we will spend time at Sally’s apartment chatting away, simply enjoying our friendship. Oftentimes we will either take a walk at her apartment complex during the nice weather, or head out to IROC to walk on the indoor track. If Sally needs to do some shopping, we will take a

drive to the local businesses and we have made the trip once to Wal-Mart in New Hampshire. We celebrate our birthdays and the holidays.

“The relationship has proved to be invaluable to me, as I see Sally’s day brightened. Sally is a caring individual filled with stories to tell. We both enjoy sharing that special time together. If it wasn’t for Ellen and the Orleans County Citizen Advocacy program, I would not have known about the joys of sharing and now my horizons have been broadened.”

Since our last newsletter, we've been busy...

In August...

#### 16<sup>th</sup> annual **Echo Lake Road Race**

What a wonderful day for walkers, runners and bikers; \$6,952 was raised...read all about it, and all those people and businesses who made it happen in our Card of Thanks on page 3.

In September...

#### 11<sup>th</sup> annual Terry & Ben Claassen Memorial Northeast Kingdom Lakes Century Tour

A perfect day for a bike ride, and the cyclists at the bike tour enjoyed it all—scenery, routes, food, company. The final profit was \$5,861. Read all about the tour and who we have to thank for it all in the Card of Thanks on page 4.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> annual **Golf Tournament** ...

Our 4<sup>th</sup> annual OCCA Golf Scramble was scheduled for September, but without a chair to organize it, we decided it would be prudent to cancel it this year. We have some wonderful infrastructure in place for the event—a beautiful setting at the Barton Golf Club, contacts around the county to donate prizes. What we are lacking is a volunteer to do the publicity and pull the whole event together. Interested? Contact OCCA coordinator Ellen Bowen.

In October... OCCA board of directors **Annual Meeting**

A chance for us to review progress on our goals from the past year, and set goals for the new, this year was also the time to say good-bye and a heartfelt thank-you to outgoing board members **Cindy Stone** of Newport and **Barb Delzio** of Glover. Cindy served on the board for 16 years, and was the secretary for most of those years. Barb held the office of president and vice president over many of the 14 years that she was on the board, and coordinated the newsletter production. Both have volunteered their time as advocates also. The board presented them with gift certificates as a small token of thanks for all their devoted help to OCCA. Both are familiar faces to all the racers and riders at Echo and the Claassen NEK Lakes tour and, we are thrilled to say, both want to keep volunteering at those OCCA fundraisers.



**Barb and Cindy**

At the same meeting, the board made final approval of **updated OCCA bylaws** that were reviewed by OCCA vice president Mike Gruteke, Cindy Stone, and associate board member Connie Daigle.

In November...**New Board Member**

With two board members just having left, the board was pleased to welcome a new replacement, **Mary Jo Rigby**, of Morgan. Mary Jo read about OCCA in a Community National Bank mailing at work, and her interest was piqued. After meeting

with Ellen, she was ready to commit to serving a term of three years on our board. We welcome her!

Throughout...

#### **Presentations**

OCCA Coordinator Ellen Bowen sets aside time in each work week to meet with other groups and help spread the word about Citizen Advocacy, explaining what we do and how others can help. Since June she has spoken with Building Bright Futures, Charleston School Guidance Department, Agency Area on Aging, VT Health Department/WIC and Northeast Kingdom Families Together. Ellen and vice president Mike Gruteke have done two interviews on NEKTV. We are so pleased that Ellen has just compiled a short video about our Claassen NEK Lakes Century bicycle tour with lots of help from Tim Daley and Terry Difazio of NEKTV.

#### **OCCA Ad Hoc Committee working on board development**

President Steve Mason, Coordinator Ellen Bowen and board members Mike Gruteke and Ann Stannard were busy this fall contacting community members all over the county and inviting them to be part of an ad hoc committee to brainstorm ideas for building more team players to support OCCA, perhaps as board members, volunteers at fundraising events, or in other ways. The committee committed to meeting one hour a month for six months to accomplish their mission. Anyone who has ideas to share, please contact Ellen Bowen—there is still room at the table, and still four meetings to go!

#### **Mark your calendar**

An article asking for a town appropriation for OCCA is on the warning in most towns in Orleans County at **Town Meeting** on the first Tuesday in March. OCCA made the first request in 1991, and over the years, we have had wonderful support from towns, raising \$5,300 last year, which is about one-fourth of our operating annual budget. We look forward to the continued support for OCCA from the communities in our county. Please add your “yeas” when the question is called!

#### **THE ADVOCATE**

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Coordinator / Ellen Bowen / Derby Line

#### Board of Directors:

President & Acting Treasurer / Steve Mason / Lowell  
Member / Joan Alexander / Glover  
Member / Mike Gruteke / Derby Line  
Member / Ann Stannard / Morgan  
Member / Mary Jo Rigby / Morgan

#### Associate Board Members:

Member / Connie Daigle / Newport

### Thanks to Petition Gatherers!

We are so grateful for the support OCCA receives on Town Meeting Day—the total is a little over \$5,000, which is about one fourth of our annual operating costs. We have the voters at March town meetings all over Orleans County to thank, but we also want to thank some behind the scene workers. In order to ask for money at Town Meeting, several towns require that petitions first be filed with the signatures of 5% of the voters. Starting in October, volunteers are busy gathering those signatures in the towns of Barton, Brownington, Charleston, Derby, Irasburg, Newport and Newport Town, and Troy.

Our sincere thanks go to Connie Daigle, Bev Hall, Linda Studer, Joe Queenin, Jennie Kirsch, Tiffany Ovitt, Mike Marsh, Greg Hennemuth, Peter & Jeanne Alexander, Beverly May, Miriam Benson, Nicole Perry, Rosemary Claassen, Charlie Billis, Theresa Daigle, Connie Daigle, Barb Delzio & Will Werntgen, and board members Joan Alexander.

### Card of Thanks—16<sup>th</sup> Annual Echo Lake Road Race August 30, 2008

The Orleans County Board of Directors and our coordinator, Ellen Bowen, sincerely thank all the people and businesses who helped make the 16th Annual Echo Lake Road Race a fun, safe and successful fundraiser for our nonprofit organization. We send our thanks to...

**T-Shirt Sponsors:** *Gold Medal:* Radiant Heat; *Silver Medal:* Alan Fogg Agency, Columbia Forest Products, Concept 2 Rowing, Paul Decelles Investment Planning; *Bronze Medal:* Blue Cross Blue Shield, Brighton Garage, Brown's Drug Store, Butler's Bus Service, Casella Waste Systems, Inc., Chittenden Bank, Community National Bank, Degree Auction Services Don's Carpet One, Edward Jones, Farmyard Store & Taylor Rental, Garon-St. Sauveur Granite Co., Gene A. Besaw & Associates, P.C., Great Outdoors of Newport, Green Mountain Electric Supply, H&R Block, Hayes Ford, Hoagie's Pizza & Pasta, Hayes Ford, Island Pond True Value, Keene Medical, Lapierre's Decorating Center, Louis Garneau, Memphremagog Press, Nadeau's Plumbing & Heating, Newport Natural Foods, Newport Jewelers, Newport Rental Center, North Country Hospital, Old School Builders, Passumpsic Bank, Poulos Insurance, Rusty's Electric, Shattuck Motors, Taylor-Moore Agency, Village Bike Shop, and Vermont Community Foundation, and a special thanks to Sean McCarthy of Other World Designs of Hardwick.

#### **Food Donators:**

Bagel Depot, C&C Supermarket, L & B Snack Bar, Price Chopper, Tim and Doug's Ice Cream and Vermont Heritage Spring Water...

**Volunteers:** *before, during or after the race, these folks were willing workers...* Joan & Martha Alexander; Anthony Bathalon, Adam Batista; Chrissy & Corrina Billis, Ellen & Russ Bowen; Gerry Cahill; Lance Cleveland, Sophie Congdon; Ann Creaven, Connie Daigle; Frank Daigneault; Bev Davis, Pete Davis; Barb Delzio; Sue Dwelle, Jeremy Edwards; Peter Engels, Alexandra Graves, Mike Gruteke; Pam Hebert; Steve Mason, Jim Murphy, Marianne O'Brien; Derek Piette; Graham Rae, Wanda Reed; Gail Robitaille, Cindy Smith; Ann Stannard, Peggy Stevens; Jim & Winne Stewart, Cindy Stone, Roy Stuewe, and Will Werntgen.

**Prize Donators:** Advanced Auto Parts, Barton Village Corner Store, Birth of the Blues, Bond Auto Parts, E.M. Brown, Burke Mountain, Country Thyme, The Chronicle, Currier's Quality Market, Derby Village Store, East Mane, Eastside Barber, Farrant's Flower Shop, The Front Desk, Galaxy Bookshop, Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, Garden Patch, Greensboro Garage, Hannaford's Supermarket, Jimmy Kwik, K&N Auto, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Kingdom Trails, Kinney Drugs, L & R Automotive, Labour of Love Nursery, Lake Hills Landscaping, Long Meadow Farm Quilts, Lois Barrow's 10 K Granola, Louis Garneau, GrahaMassage, Margie's Cards & Gifts, Maple Grove Farms, Modern Hair Design, Moose Mountain Entertainment, Myers Jewelers, Newport Farm & Garden, Northeast Kingdom Balsam, Olympia Sports, Phogg Pottery, Pick & Shovel, Pizza Hut, RJ's Market, Subway, Vermont Teddy Bear, and Village Sport Shop.

**Echo Lake community....** What a beautiful setting! Sixteen years ago, it was Gerry Cahill who suggested that Echo would be a great spot for a race, and it has been! We thank the Engels for sharing their front yard, and Richard Mallory for the parking field, the State of Vermont and Great Bay Hydro for the Access and all the residents around the lake and the fishermen and women for their hospitality. Constable Martin Davis and the ADA Traffic Control helped keep everyone safe. We also thank Juddy's for their contributions...

#### **and the Racers!**

No matter how many prizes, food, t-shirts and volunteers we pull together, it wouldn't be much of a race without racers and so, finally, a big thanks to all for their enthusiastic biking, running and walking around the lake, some just for fun and others with an eye on the time. Congratulations to all the 199 registrants!

*With so many to thank, we are bound to leave someone out by mistake, and apologize if we have. The Echo Lake Road Race netted over \$7000 for Orleans County Citizen Advocacy. Our mission is to build and support one-to-one relationships of friendship and advocacy between community volunteers and people with disabilities. Thanks again for all the support, and see you next year on the last Saturday in August!*

**Thanks to Donators...**

Thanks to the following people and businesses for their generous donations:

Janet & Roger Cartee  
Kate Summey Frank  
Bethany Knight

Goodridge Lumber Co.  
Julie Alexander Ouillade  
The Perron Reunion, Glover

Carl & Susan Taylor

*A donation note:* In December, 2005, OCCA received a donation from Ann Stannard and Karen Karnes of Morgan, along with a note explaining that the donation was in lieu of sending holiday presents to friends. They asked us to send a copy of the OCCA newsletter to their friends so they could see what their special gift was supporting. "Commercialism today detracts from this season of light," Ann wrote.

As so many of us are finding making ends meet is getting tougher, we appreciate even more the generosity of those who share a financial gift with OCCA.

<b>ORLEANS COUNTY CITIZEN ADVOCACY</b>	
Name	_____
Mailing Address	_____
Phone	_____
Yes! I want to make a tax-deductible gift to OCCA to help bring community volunteers and people with disabilities together.	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$500	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please make checks payable to OCCA. Send your donation to:	
OCCA P.O. Box 247 Glover, VT 05839	
<i>Thank you for your generous support.</i>	

**Card of Thanks—11<sup>th</sup> Annual Terry & Ben Claassen Memorial Northeast Kingdom Lakes Century  
Saturday, September 20, 2008**

It was a perfect day for a bike ride, and 98 riders saddled up to enjoy the beautiful Northeast Kingdom and raise money for Orleans County Citizen Advocacy. The board of Orleans County Citizen Advocacy, and our OCCA coordinator, Ellen Bowen, want to thank everyone who made the tour such a successful fundraiser. Over \$5000 was raised to help our mission of bringing people with disabilities together with community volunteers in one-to-one relationships of friendship and advocacy. Our thanks go to the...

**T-shirt sponsors:** First thanks go to TDBanknorth, our major sponsor every year since our very first year. At the patron level: Concept 2 Rowing; and all the other supporters: Associated Insurance Agencies, Barton Area Chamber of Commerce, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Casella Waste USA, Chittenden Bank, Community National Bank, Jim Campbell Real Estate, The Garden Patch, Louis Garneau, Island Pond Motors, Old School Builders, Robert N. Taplin, Rusty's Electric, and the Village Bike Shop in Derby. Thanks to Sean McCarthy of Otherworld Designs for his design help and printing.

**Food Donators:** Bagel Depot, Bouyea-Fassetts, Meehan's Farm of South Barton, Shaws, Walmart, Price Chopper, and Vermont Heritage Spring Water. Special thanks to the Newport Rotary Club for their generous support, and to Brenda Sargent and the Barton Senior Center Meal Site for preparing and serving the BBQ meal for the cyclists at the end of their ride, especially all those pies! Our thanks to all the board members for baking all the goodies and for filling all those crock pots at the rest stops...

**Rest Stop Volunteers:** *at Crystal:* Joan Alexander, Nicole & Andre Perry, Cindy Stone; *at Willoughby:* Conrad and Connie Daigle; *at Country Thyme:* Kay Courson; *at the Haskell at Derby Line:* Ellen & Russ Bowen; *at Island Pond:* Lisa & Mike Farney-Daigle, Anita Mahew, Pam Veervort, and Maxine Douglas; *at the Sheffield Potato Company in Lyndonville:* Barb Delzio and Will Werntgen. We appreciated the support of Crystal State Park ranger John Corriveau and Brighton State Park ranger Kathy LaCross. Thanks to Wes Alexander, Sophie Congdon and Russ Bowen for helping the Crystal crew set up tents. Our thanks also to the other rest stop providers: the Haskell Library, Country Thyme, the town of Willoughby, and Bruce Grant of Northern Gas Transport at the Sheffield Potato Co. shed. Earl Whitmore and Jeff Manning were our volunteer on-call mechanic, and we were glad never to have to call on them!... Thanks to Craig Devlin at Verizon for the loan of cell phones...

**Volunteers behind the scenes:** Gerry Cahill, Cindy Smith and Joan Alexander painted all the directional arrows along the routes, with thanks to Dale Perron of Vermont Transportation Agency. The Northeast Kingdom Chamber provided the maps. Jeremy Edwards in Toronto kept the website updated...

**Financial Donators:** Arlene Bronstein; Rosemary Claassen; Jim Fairchild; Claudia Gibson; Marian MacIntyre; Al & Maggie Rosa; Catherine & Donald Salcito, in honor of Dorothy Schuetz and Leslie Edwards-Hill; and Anne Winkelmeier...

**The riders!** The cyclists' enthusiasm and excitement about doing the ride is always inspiring, and after last year's challenging weather, everyone was thrilled to have such a great biking day! We appreciate their praise about the routes, the food, and the friendliness of the volunteers. After 11 years, many riders feel like old friends. We appreciate all the returning riders and all the new faces. We hope for great weather again next year!

*Our apologies to anyone we forgot to mention. Join us next year on the third Saturday in September for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual ride!*