



People First: Inside IBR

The Institute for Basic Research
in Developmental Disabilities



News and Information from the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities

Fall 2013



Governor Andrew Cuomo has named Laurie Kelley OPWDD Acting Commissioner.

Laurie Kelley Named Acting Commissioner of OPWDD

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in July announced the appointments of Courtney Burke as the administration's new Deputy Secretary for Health and Laurie Kelley as the Acting Commissioner of the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The Governor intends to nominate Ms. Kelley to serve as Commissioner of OPWDD during the next legislative session. Her nomination is subject to confirmation by the New York State Senate.

"Throughout their careers, each of these individuals has dedicated themselves to protecting and preserving the health of all New Yorkers," said Governor Cuomo. "Ms. Burke's excellent work at the OPWDD and her key role in the creation of the Justice Center make her exceptionally qualified for her new role as Deputy Secretary for Health. Ms. Kelley's time as head of the Ulster-Greene ARC and her experience caring for people with developmental disabilities make her an excellent choice to be the next Commissioner of the OPWDD. I thank these committed public servants for taking on these positions, and look forward to their continued work in our administration."

"I would like to thank Governor Cuomo for the honor of serving the people of the state of New York, especially our vulnerable population," said Ms. Kelley. "In the last two and a half years, our state has made great strides in ensuring the proper protection and care for people with developmental disabilities. I hope to build on that progress and achieve even more in the immediate future."



Issue Highlights

IBR Holds 6th Elizabeth Connelly Memorial Autism Conference

Jervic Clinic Team Available to Conduct Remote Evaluations

IBR Employee Opens Doors to Opportunities Despite Developmental Disability

High School Volunteer Wins Prestigious Science Prize

continued on page 2

Laurie Kelley Named Acting Commissioner of OPWDD *(continued)*

Laurie Kelley has been the Executive Director for the Ulster-Greene ARC for 11 years, where she led the Taconic region on Portal Initiatives and Individualized Supports and oversaw a \$50 million budget and over 1,000 employees. During her tenure as Executive Director, she reduced physical interventions in behaviorally challenged individuals by more than 80%. In addition, Ms. Kelley initiated successful regional collaboratives to share information technology departments and achieve network accreditation among ARC agencies. Before joining ARC, she served as Vice President of Business Development, Professional Services, and General Services at Benedictine Hospital, Kingston, where she worked for 19 years. Ms. Kelley received a Bachelor's Degree in Food and Nutrition from the University of Iowa, as well as a Master's in Business Administration from Union College, Schenectady.

Courtney Burke most recently served as the Commissioner of OPWDD. Previously, she was the Director of the Rockefeller Institute's New York State Health Policy Research Center, the public policy research arm of the State University of New York. Prior to joining the Institute, Ms. Burke was employed by the New York State Office of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities for several years, including as the senior policy analyst, and by the New York State Department of Health.

During her tenure as Commissioner of OPWDD, Ms. Burke:

- Decreased the number of individuals with developmental disabilities living in developmental centers operated by OPWDD by 19% between April 2011 and February 2013 and moved them into more integrated settings. Fewer than 1,000 people are now living in campus-based institutions operated by OPWDD.
- Implemented numerous reforms resulting in an overall 21% decline in allegations of abuse and serious incidents at state and nonprofit provider agencies when comparing the most recent six-month period ending March 1, 2013 to the six-month time frame ending September 1, 2011.
- Reduced the use of physical interventions in state-operated programs by 19% in the six-month period from August 2012 to January 2013 as compared to the previous six months.
- Submitted the People First Medicaid Waiver to the federal government to restructure OPWDD's delivery system to one that provides more integrated and better managed supports and services.
- Reached a system transformation agreement with the federal government that makes funding for services more transparent while also increasing self-directed services, employment, and community living.
- Returned 67% of eligible individuals with development disabilities to New York from out-of-state residential schools since July 2011.
- Developed core competencies and a code of ethics for all direct support professionals serving people with developmental disabilities in New York.
- Created a provider performance report card, which is publicly available on OPWDD's website.



IBR Holds 6th Elizabeth Connelly Memorial Autism Conference

The 6th Elizabeth A. Connelly Memorial Conference, on Autism Throughout the Lifespan, organized and hosted by IBR, was held on April 11 at the Hilton Garden Inn, Staten Island. It brought together 225 physicians, psychologists, nurses, teachers, social workers, speech pathologists, applied behavior analysts, physical therapists, occupational therapists, administrators, and staff members from organizations that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Attendees also included parents seeking information about advances in understanding of autism spectrum disorders.

Sponsored by OPWDD, the Research Foundation for Mental Hygiene, and Richmond University Medical Center, the conference featured presentations by internationally recognized experts on the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorders and on the development and functioning of individuals with autism during adolescence and adulthood.



At IBR's 6th Elizabeth A. Connelly Memorial Conference: Autism Throughout the Lifespan are (left to right) Susan L. Hyman, MD, speaker from the University of Rochester Medical Center; Catherine Lord, PhD, speaker from the Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, Weill Cornell Medical College and New York Presbyterian Hospital; Ira L. Cohen, PhD, chairman of IBR's Department of Psychology; Joseph J. Maturi, IBR deputy director; W. Ted Brown, MD, PhD, IBR director; and Marsha R. Mailick, PhD, speaker from the Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

IBR has hosted and organized the conference since 2007, after **Charles Isaacs, PhD**, and **Maureen Marlow** initiated the idea of the event as a memorial to Assemblywoman **Elizabeth (Betty) Connelly** and her advocacy for individuals with developmental disabilities. Each conference has presented advances in a different area of research and services in the field of developmental disabilities, especially autism.

Mrs. Connelly served in the New York State Assembly from 1973 through 2000. She was the first woman elected to public office on Staten Island and championed the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities, and with alcohol or substance addiction. Her work helped close the Willowbrook State School and develop community-based services for New York's citizens with developmental disabilities. In 1993, Mrs. Connelly was appointed Chair of the Assembly Committee on Standing Committees, and in 1995, Speaker Pro Tempore, the highest-ranking position ever held by a woman in the history of the Assembly. She held this position until her retirement from the Assembly in 2000. Mrs. Connelly died in 2006 at the age of 77.

In his opening remarks at the conference, Dr. Brown described Mrs. Connelly as "a champion for individuals with developmental disabilities, with mental illness, and with substance addiction."

continued on page 4

IBR Holds 6th Elizabeth Connelly Memorial Autism Conference *(continued)*

Afterwards, **Diane Peruggia**, the parent member of Borough President **James Molinaro's** Autism Team, commended IBR for its "dedication in putting together this conference" and hoped attendees would be "inspired and empowered to continue to make a difference for those affected with autism spectrum disorders and their families." The speakers at the conference were the following:

- **Catherine Lord, PhD**, Professor and Director, Center for Autism and the Developing Brain, Weill Cornell Medical College and New York Presbyterian Hospital, White Plains, NY;
- **Marsha R. Mailick, PhD**, Professor and Director, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison;
- **Ami Klin, PhD**, Professor and Director, Marcus Autism Center, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; Division of Autism and Related Disorders, Emory University School of Medicine, Atlanta, GA; and
- **Susan L. Hyman, MD**, Professor, Neurodevelopmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, University of Rochester Medical Center, School of Medicine and Dentistry, Rochester, NY.



Distinguished guests included Assemblyman **Joseph Borelli** and his chief of staff, **David Carr**; **Michael Arvanites**, deputy chief of staff for operations for State Senator **Diane Savino**; **Marie Carmody-LaFrancesca**, budget director/director of constituent services for Councilman **James Oddo**; **Kim Marselle**, community liaison for State Senator **Andrew Lanza**; **Carmine Raimondi**, director of constituent and support services for Assemblywoman **Nicole Malliotakis**; and **Diane Marciuliano**, education director for Borough President **James Molinaro**.

The Program and Planning Committee for the conference comprised IBR Director **W. Ted Brown, MD, PhD**; IBR Deputy Director **Joseph J. Maturi**; **Ira L. Cohen, PhD**; **Eric London, MD**; **Judith M. Gardner, PhD**; **Bernard Z. Karmel, PhD**; **Maureen Marlow**; **Ezzat El-Akkad, PhD**; **Mary Ellen Cafaro**; **George Morris, PhD**; and **Miroslaw Mierzwa**.



IBR Welcomes New Plant Superintendent

It has been a little over a year since IBR welcomed its new Plant Superintendent, **Steven Sill**. After he joined our staff in September 2012, he spent his first weeks learning about the facilities and planning approaches to caring for them. That was no small feat, given the size of the IBR campus: five buildings situated on a grounds plot of approximately 45 acres.

Not long after Mr. Sill arrived at IBR, Hurricane Sandy hit, requiring much vigilance on the part of him and his staff. Given the fierceness of the hurricane, IBR fared well, suffering the loss of power for three days and the downing of one tree. His concern for the impact of the storm on the homes and personal property of IBR staff was shared by his wife, he said, whose company raised funds for IBR'S Affirmative Action/ Human Relations Committee to donate to IBR staff and other Staten Islanders who were affected by the hurricane.



(Left to right) Stephen Sill, Dan McCarthy, and Charles Ferrando review blueprints of renovations to the SIDDSO/IBR electrical distribution system.

As Plant Superintendent, Mr. Sill oversees IBR's Engineering, Grounds, Housekeeping, and Maintenance staff. Under his leadership, more frequent testing of fire alarms has been implemented, and service contracts for all generators, freezers, and chillers on the premises have been established. In addition, the fire alarms in building 28 have been integrated with alarms in SIDDSO's Safety offices in building 46, where it is possible for alarms to be heard any time of day or night because of around-the-clock staffing. Fire alarms in IBR's other buildings will be similarly integrated. In addition, plans have been made for trailers to be installed near building 27 for storage of brain specimens by the Department of Developmental Neurobiology.

Mr. Sill credits **Dan McCarthy** of Maintenance, **Charles Ferrando** of Engineering, **Jim Maynard** of Housekeeping, and Deputy Director **Joseph Maturi** for the help they have consistently offered him. "They have done so much to introduce me to IBR and to assist me with the projects I'm involved in," he says.

An employee of New York State since 1994, Mr. Sill first worked with the State University of New York, at Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse until 2001. He followed up on that assignment with positions with the Department of Corrections at its facilities in Butler and Auburn. He is a resident of Central New York, commuting to IBR for the work week and returning home for weekends.

In addition to his responsibilities at IBR, Mr. Sill has been assisting other DDSOs in the region with facilities management on a temporary basis. "Steve has been very accommodating in his willingness to lend a hand as needed," says **Michael Barry**, Supervisor of Plant Superintendents and Maintenance for OPWDD Regions 4-6. "I would also like to express my gratitude to Joe Maturi, who has been very supportive in our initiatives."

Recently, Mr. Sill has been taking courses on building codes in preparation for becoming a code enforcement officer. In that capacity, he will be qualified to inspect OPWDD buildings, with the exception of IBR facilities.

Gregory Giordano Named IBR Employee of the Year

IBR staff gathered in December 2012 to honor **Gregory Giordano**, administrative assistant in the Department of Human Resources, for his selection as the 2011 IBR Employee of the Year. The event coincided with the state-wide webcast ceremony honoring Employees of the Year throughout OPWDD.

Mr. Giordano's responsibilities at IBR include assisting Director of Human Resources **Ann Marie Pannell** in hiring, benefits enrollment and administration, and timesheet management for state employees. When he is unfamiliar with information that employees request, he researches the subject matter and delivers the answer in a timely manner.

"Greg has excelled in his role," said IBR Deputy Director **Joseph Maturi** at the celebration. "All IBR employees know Greg. He is the first person state employees meet when they come for their interview and the last person they speak to when they complete their exit checklist. And in between, he is the 'go-to' guy for assistance in day-to-day administrative matters."

"He is a great team player and always goes the extra mile to get the job done," said Ms. Pannell. "He is conscientious, diligent, and respectful and always giving a helping hand to all employees. His determination and dedication to the Institute is a plus."

In addition to those responsibilities, Mr. Giordano has on several occasions gone well beyond the call of his job duties to take on special projects. In 2003, with the support of State Senator **Andrew J. Lanza** and New York City Councilman **James Oddo**, he helped secure a seven-year, \$1 million grant for the George A. Jervis Clinic from the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation.

"I was raised by my parents to give back to the community," he recalled, "and this is one way I was able to do so."

Later, he led the effort to rename IBR's research tower in 2009 in memory of former director **Henry M. Wisniewski, MD, PhD**, which required the passage of a bill sponsored by Senator Lanza and Assemblyman **Michael Cusick**. "This has been my proudest moment at IBR," said Mr. Giordano. "I promised Dr. Wisniewski's wife, Krystyna, that we would succeed at renaming the tower after her husband, and we did." **Krystyna E. Wisniewski, MD, PhD**, died in 2008, with the knowledge that her dream of the tower being named in her husband's memory would come to fruition.

Mr. Giordano started his career at IBR in April 2002, after having served as a community aide for State Senator **John J. Marchi** and an administrative associate at the New York City Board of Elections. He has been active in several community organizations, including the Alzheimer's Foundation and the Staten Island office of the American Cancer Society.



Gregory Giordano (front row, third from right) was honored by his colleagues in December 2012 for his selection as 2011 IBR Employee of the Year. Also joining him at the celebration was his father, Patrick Giordano (front row, right).

Jervis Clinic Team Available to Conduct Remote Evaluations

For more than 10 years, a team at the George A. Jervis Clinic has been conducting remote evaluations of individuals with developmental disabilities residing in or receiving services from OPWDD facilities that are located a significant distance from IBR. These evaluations are performed mainly for individuals whose health or aggressive, dangerous, or criminal behaviors preclude long-distance travel, or for whom the costs of traveling and staying at hotels near IBR with family or staff for an on-site, two-day-long evaluation would prove prohibitive.

Members of the evaluation team include psychiatrists **Gail Beldia, MD**, **Ronald Rawitt, MD**, and **John Tsiouris, MD**, and psychologists **William Korosh, PhD**, and **Paul Patti, MS**. In

addition, if there is a neurological component that should be accounted for, **Seth Adelman, MD**, the Clinic's epileptologist, participates in the review. **Karen Amble, LMSW**, Director of Clinical Services in the Clinic, manages the administrative aspects of the remote evaluations, conducting a preliminary review of the individual's chart, setting up the appointment for the evaluation, notifying the IBR clinicians about the individual and the scheduled evaluation, communicating with the staff at the remote location to make all the arrangements, and following up to ensure completion.



Among the members of the Jervis Clinic's remote evaluation team are (left to right) Gail Beldia, MD; John Tsiouris, MD; William Korosh, PhD; and Paul Patti, MS.

facility had mailed to the Clinic. The charts include documentation of individuals' medical, social, and behavioral histories. As technology has improved, reviews of patient charts have been supplemented with reviews of videos of the patients' behaviors. More recently, as OPWDD has implemented its teleconferencing capability statewide, the evaluations can be conducted by teleconferencing after the team extensively reviews patients' charts and/or videos. In some cases, individuals first visit the Clinic for their initial evaluations, and their follow-up evaluations are conducted remotely.

Before each remote evaluation that he conducts, Dr. Tsiouris reads through the individual's chart very

To date, remote evaluations by the Clinic team have been conducted for more than 60 individuals. The reason for most of these evaluations has been to consider a modification of an individual's medications to better control aggressive or inappropriate behaviors. The sites that have requested remote evaluations most often are Developmental Disabilities State Operations Office (DDSOO) 3 (Sunmount), DDSOO 2 (Broome), and DDSOO 1 (Finger Lakes).

Initially, the team conducted these remote evaluations solely by reviewing an individual's chart that the home OPWDD

IBR Employee Opens Doors to Opportunities Despite Developmental Disability

For the past nine years, **Bruce**, a 60-year-old Staten Islander who has Asperger's syndrome, has volunteered and worked part-time at IBR. His colleagues here have come to appreciate his dedication, reliability, and loyalty; his kind nature; and his ability to express himself. How Bruce came to IBR is a story of his determination to succeed and of the support of his community willing him to succeed. And it is a timely story as we observe October as National Disability Employment Month.

In June 1999, Bruce received a B.S. degree in business management and marketing from the City University of New York College of Staten Island (CSI). Several years later, he says, he met with the CSI Office of

Disability Services (now the Center for Student Accessibility). Recognizing his abilities and talents, the staff there, along with **Maryellen Keogh, PsyD**, a psychologist in IBR's George A. Jervis Clinic, formed a plan for him to volunteer at IBR. "Bruce is computer-savvy," says Dr. Keogh, and "his skills are well-suited to help support a laboratory that has a lot of data from its studies."

In April 2004, he began volunteering as a data entry specialist in IBR's Neurophysiological Development Laboratory, headed by **Bernard Karmel, PhD**, in the Department of Infant Development. There, Bruce entered data from forms completed by families participating in the laboratory's research studies. He also assisted with clerical functions in the department.

The position eventually became salaried, funded until June 2011 by a National Institutes of Health grant that the department was awarded. "Bruce was one of the most reliable and dependable workers we have ever had," recalls Dr. Karmel.

Since January 2012, Bruce has been employed part-time as a research assistant in IBR's Placental Modulation Laboratory in the Department of Developmental Neurobiology. There, he continues to work at data entry and also assists with labeling histological slides for autism research. His part-time salary is funded by a Department of Defense grant that was awarded to the laboratory's head, **Carolyn M. Salafia, MD**.

The affable research assistant is meticulous in his work, says **Elaine Marchi, MA**, laboratory manager in the Placental Modulation Laboratory. "We're delighted that Dr. Salafia sees Bruce for his abilities, not his disabilities," she says.

Bruce explains his *modus operandi* this way: "I'd rather ask a question ahead of time, than not ask and then make a mistake."

His positions at IBR have been learning experiences not only for him, but also for his colleagues. "For most



Bruce (center) working in IBR's Placental Modulation Laboratory with laboratory manager Elaine Marchi, MA, and research assistant David DiLillo, BS.

Employees Honored at Women’s History Observance

Five longtime IBR employees were recognized on April 19th at the annual Women’s History event, sponsored by the IBR Affirmative Action/Human Relations Committee (AA/HRC).

The honorees were:

- **Eulalia Badmaev, PhD**, head of the Histology Laboratory in the Centralized Services;
- **Catherine Marino, RN**, registered nurse in the George A. Jervis Clinic;
- **Maureen Marlow, MA**, electronic grants manager, editor, and communications liaison in the Centralized Services;
- **Simhachalam Raguthu, MD**, neurologist in the Jervis Clinic; and
- **Vicki Sudhalter, PhD**, head of the Clinical Psycholinguistics Laboratory in the Jervis Clinic.

Together, they have served IBR for an impressive total of 127 years.

AA/HRC chairperson **Jeanette Mitchell** welcomed attendees, after which IBR Director **W. Ted Brown, MD, PhD**, explained the history of the national observance of Women’s History Month. Next, each honoree was introduced by her supervisor and then presented remarks of her own.

“I am proud of what we do here—we help individuals with developmental disabilities,” said honoree Dr. Sudhalter. “We try to make lives better and more fulfilled. What could be more important?”

Ms. Marlow told guests, “The work being done here is nothing short of inspiring, and I feel privileged to be able to help share your efforts with our local, national, and international communities.”

The AA/HRC has been holding events in observance of Women’s History Month since 1996. “We decided these would be a good way to highlight the talents of the women who work here,” explained Ms. Mitchell.

The celebration concluded with a luncheon that was catered by Lifestyles Café and served by members of the AA/HRC.



At IBR’s Women’s History celebration (left to right): AA/HRC chairperson, Jeanette Mitchell; honorees Eulalia Badmaev, MD, and Vicki Sudhalter, PhD; IBR Director W. Ted Brown, MD, PhD; and honorees Catherine Marino, BSN, Maureen Marlow, MA, and Simhachalam Raguthu, MD.

High School Volunteer Wins Prestigious Science Prize



Deshana Barua, pictured here with one of her mentors at IBR, Ved Chauhan, PhD, won first place in the environmental sciences category in the New York City Science and Engineering Fair last March.

Deshana Barua, a volunteer in IBR's Cellular Neurochemistry Laboratory, headed by **Ved Chauhan, PhD**, won first place in the environmental sciences category in the New York City Science and Engineering Fair on March 21st. The fair, the largest high school research competition in New York City, is sponsored by the New York City Department of Education and the City University of New York.

The award went to the project that Ms. Barua, now a senior at Hunter College High School, completed at IBR during summer 2012: "The effect of walnut extract on endosulfan-treated *Drosophila melanogaster* (fruit flies)." Dr. Chauhan and **Madhabi Barua, PhD**, of the Developmental Neuroscience Laboratory, were her mentors.

Endosulfan is a synthetic pesticide that has serious effects on development in young children. "Dr. Chauhan was aware of my

interest in how the environment affects human development, so he suggested I look for a way to counteract the negative effects of endosulfan," said Ms. Barua. "The substance we hypothesized could work was walnut extract—or, more specifically, the antioxidants in walnut extract."

She said that she had much to learn to conduct her experiments. "The only living organisms I had worked with before were plants, so there was a learning curve involved. I learned about the fruit fly's life cycle, how to identify the sex of flies, how to make their food, and how to properly sedate them," she explained. "And until I started hands-on work, I didn't know that flies die easily when food gets stuck to their wings or that they need one full hour to clean their bodies before experimentation can be done!" She also had to learn the chemical make-up of endosulfan and research the function of antioxidants.

The results of her study showed that walnut treatment reverses the effect of endosulfan on the survival and development of *Drosophila*: endosulfan-mediated fly mortality decreased by 30–60%, and the number of pupae increased after treatment. These findings suggest that walnuts in a diet may prevent the damaging effects of environmental pollutants.

"Should I continue my research," she said, "I would want to explore whether these results are universal for all antioxidants and whether walnuts work against other environmental agents besides endosulfan."

Ms. Barua returned to IBR this July, volunteering again in the Cellular Neurochemistry Laboratory. In August, she traveled to her native India to visit relatives and to volunteer with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata (formerly known as Calcutta). There, she worked with children 2 to 14 years of age with physical and intellectual handicaps, helping them with their meals and playing with them. "They were content and very well taken care of," she said.

Looking ahead to college, the award-winning student hopes to study science and to minor in anthropology or linguistics and to continue conducting research and publish her own scientific paper. She is considering pursuing a medical degree, perhaps specializing in psychiatry.

Jervis Clinic Team Available to Conduct Remote Evaluations

(continued from page 7)

thoroughly and in some cases, contacts clinicians at the individual's OPWDD facility for further information. If he thinks that review by additional IBR clinicians is indicated, for example, if behavioral interventions are strongly indicated, he will then request that an appropriate clinician, a behavioral psychologist in this case, review and contribute to the evaluation. His careful reading of each chart helps him understand each individual's story and the experiences that have influenced him or her, to be able to explain this story and make suggestions to the individual's family and caregivers. "Dr. Tsiouris helps them understand the individual's story, not just their disability and its manifestations," explained Ms. Amble.

"I try to see the person as a whole person (including their family history, temperament, personality, and mental health and medical issues), not only as being aggressive or sexually inappropriate," said Dr. Tsiouris.

IBR's remote evaluation program was initiated by Ms. Amble in response to inquiries from families and staff members. "The mission of the Clinic is to meet the needs of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities of all ages, economic statuses, and geographic areas," she explained. "Remote evaluations make it possible for us to serve individuals of all geographic areas in the state."



IBR Employee Opens Doors to Opportunities Despite Developmental Disability

(continued from page 8)

colleagues," says Ms. Marchi, "this is their first experience of interacting in a lab with a person with Asperger's." She notes that weekly, he and the laboratory staff have lunch together for the opportunity to socialize together.

Bruce has been quite resourceful throughout his life. He is a good self-advocate, and he has a strong spirit of independence, says his case manager at OPWDD Region 4 DDRO. "He's done his damndest to navigate the system throughout his life, and he seeks out challenges for himself to achieve his educational and employment goals."

Bruce's formal education ended during kindergarten, after which his mother home-schooled him. "I have been successful because my mother had the courage to home-school me," he recalls. "She taught me to read by the phonics method, sounding out letters. While other people underestimated me, she believed that I was able to learn."

He went on to obtain a general equivalency diploma before applying to CSI. He now lives independently in a private house; his aunt resides in an upstairs apartment.

Bruce leads a full and active life. He navigates the public transportation system, swims weekly at the local YMCA, and attends many local concerts and exhibits. His pastimes are many: computers, physical fitness, cooking, gardening, woodworking, photography, and basic home repair. His favorite subjects to read about are American history, world history, the history of flight, home economics, biographies, and numerous other subjects. He has an encyclopedic memory of Staten Island history.

And he continues to seek out new learning opportunities. "I would like to learn to use the Internet more and to become more proficient in Excel," he says.

"Bruce has shown such drive and determination," says his case manager. "Even when doors close for him, he keeps on keeping on. He is inspiring."



Team IBR turned out in force on April 28th for the annual March of Dimes walk on Staten Island (left to right): Bernard Karmel, Judith Gardner, Kathryn Chadman, Nancy Zellers, Evelyn Nesbitt, Glenn Heaney, Maureen Gavin, Robert Freedland, Ashfaq Sheikh, Cass Freedland, Karen Amble, Mohammed Junaid, and Salomon Kuizon.



Pictured at the Autism Speaks walk held October 27th at the College of Staten Island are Team IBR members (left to right) Maureen Gavin, Robert Freedland, Anne Gordon, Cass Freedland, and Judith Gardner.