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**SEEConnections**  
**Summer 2001**

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**Summer Fun**

Atlantic City, here they come! Are they high rollers? Will they bet millions? Nope! They’re just a group of friends looking for a fun getaway.

Delfino Carrillo and David Guilbert, two individuals supported in SEEC’s Community Living program, hit the road for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. They were joined by SEEC staff, Massa Bropleh-Lanier, Pedre Fall, Amelia Bacallao, and Amelia’s son. Everyone agreed the vacation was a wonderful experience from the very start. According to Massa, “Delfino was just a different person. He can be fussy, but in the car he was singing Spanish songs and he kept saying, ‘Are we there yet?’ When we arrived he didn’t want to sleep, and when it was time to leave, he didn’t want to go.”

The group was headed for Wildwood, New Jersey when they were sidetracked by rainy weather and the bright lights of Atlantic City. The decision paid off and the group enjoyed the beach, casinos, fireworks, eating out, and shopping on the boardwalk. David Guilbert said, “The fireworks were my favorite and I liked the beach. I enjoyed the gambling, but didn’t like losing money. I’m ready to go back there next week.” David’s giving nature came out when he decided to forgo gambling and save his money to buy souvenirs for his dad, SEEC staff, and a neighbor.

Delfino Carrillo also joined in the shopping and bought souvenirs for his uncle and sister. Delfino enjoyed the beach and casinos best. His favorite casino was the “Showboat” because he found a lounge where Spanish music was featured. Unlike David, Delfino did not care for the fireworks because he is visually impaired and the noise bothered him.

As a whole, the trip was a huge success. Everyone was excited to go and sad to leave. Seems like SEEC might have a new annual tradition?

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**The Newest Hearts of SEEC**

SEEC is happy to welcome its newest employees. We look forward to working with you.

**Community Living**

Elizabeth Whitlock – Community Connector II

***Employment Services***

Deborah Holmes – Employment Specialist  
John Solyst – Employment Development Specialist  
Amanda Van Hooser – Employment Specialist

***Values in Action***

Joseph Emmanuel – Activities Assistant  
Almamy Gassama – Activities Assistant  
Bob Greenberg – Program Director  
Robina Sanni – Activities Assistant  
Agnes Taylor – Assistant Team Leader

***Administration***

Bonny Roy – Comptroller

Congratulations to Randi Barclay on her promotion to Director of Human Resources!

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***In Memoriam***

SEEC remembers Adrian Tasseff who passed away.  
Adrian was a participant in SEEC’s medical day care program, Values in Action.

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***Makeover for Values in Action***

SEEC is happy to announce some much-needed changes at our medical day care program, Values in Action (VIA). We’re painting, installing new floors, tearing down, and building new walls! Renovations include building a new restroom and kitchen area. The restroom will be ADA compliant and will include a changing area. The newly renovated kitchen will serve as an “Activities for Daily Living Training Area,” providing consumers with the opportunity to participate in cooking projects. Other new sections include two Activity Centers and a Conference Room.

In response to many concerns over VIA’s large size and operational challenges, we have also decided to break up the program space. Individuals who participate in only medical day care will be in one section, and those in both medical day care *and* employment services will be in the other section. Administrative offices and an entrance for ALL will be in the center of the building. Our goal is to create a smoother-running program with smaller areas that are more open, brighter, and functional.

As a nonprofit organization, SEEC is not able to complete the VIA renovation project alone. We are asking community members for financial contributions to help offset our construction costs of \$15,000. VIA’s existing funding primarily focuses on providing staff support, food, and building expenses (rent and utilities). Tax-deductible donations to support the project should be forwarded to SEEC, Attn: VIA Renovations, 707 Conservation Lane, Suite 200, Gaithersburg, MD 20878. Please make checks payable to “SEEC.” Thank you for your support!

*SEEC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – donations to which are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. A copy of our current financial statement is available upon request by contacting SEEC at 707 Conservation Lane, Suite 200, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878, Phone: 301-527-0440.*

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***Recruiter’s Rectangle***

SEEC is currently looking for qualified applicants to fill positions in its administrative offices and programs, Community Living, Employment Services, and Medical Day Care (Values in Action).

Open positions include Employment Specialists, Activities Assistants, Employment Services Team Coordinator, Child Support Specialist, part-time Physical Therapist, Companion, and Community Connector II. For more information on these positions, call the SEEC Job Line at 301-527-0307.

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**Success Stories**

***Community Living***

Congratulations to Yolanda Chapple on her new apartment! With assistance from Community Living staff, she moved into a studio apartment at The Pavilion in Rockville. Other staff members and friends of SEEC also volunteered to decorate prior to her move.

SEEC welcomes Jorge Echevarria to its Community Living program. Jorge moved into an apartment in Gaithersburg with long-time program participant, Delfino Carrillo. The Spanish-speaking pair make a great match!

***Employment Services***

Congratulations to the following individuals who began new jobs:

- Joshua Brynes – Ross Dress for Less
- Lori Chavis – Kentucky Fried Chicken
- Catrina George – Tina’s Consignment Shop
- Kip Jarrett – Montgomery County Department of Family & Community Partnerships and Rockville Library
- Saverio Mazza – Kensington Library
- Raymond Pitts – Montgomery County Department of Family & Community Partnerships and Rockville Library
- Seamus Roles – Olde Towne Thrift Shop

*The Gazette Newspapers* is one of SEEC’s newest employers. Every Wednesday, nine individuals supported by SEEC deliver 465 newspapers to residents in Gaithersburg and Germantown. These new Gazette employees are David Guilbert, Kelly Long, Cindy Montgomery, David Mulkey, Amy Patigalia, Chammi Rajapatirana, Michael Reese, Ilene Teller, and Chris Turner.

SEEC’s new Employment Development Specialist, John Solyst, began in mid-July and has already secured new employers for a total of five jobs and three volunteer positions! With John on board, we look forward to many more employment successes.

Congratulations to Laura Kuster on her increased hours at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. Laura increased from four to five days a week. She has also been with the organization for over six years!

***Family Support Services***

The need for SEEC’s Family Support Services (FSS) was certainly apparent when the program began in 1999. The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) awarded SEEC funding to support children with developmental disabilities and their families. These dollars were quickly used up, leaving the agency with a waiting list for services.

Now, in the fiscal year 2002, SEEC is happy to announce a \$30,000 increase in funding. The total program budget from DDA now totals \$126,000. SEEC also secures additional money through fundraising. Family Support Services include respite care and financial assistance unique to each family’s situation. Typical needs include payment of therapy or medical expenses not covered by insurance, home accessibility modifications, educational materials, and assistive technology equipment. For more information or to apply for FSS, call 301-527-0440.

***Values in Action***

SEEC’s new VIA Program Director, Bob Greenberg, is hosting Family Meetings on the last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the VIA Rockville location. He is also beginning a Family Advisory Council, and a monthly Family Support Group Discussion. For more information, call Bob at 301-251-1076.

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## **Life After the Wage Campaign**

### ***Looking Back***

In April 2001, Maryland Governor Parris Glendening signed a bill to close the 55% wage disparity between workers in nonprofit agencies and those in state residential centers. The bill calls for a \$118 million increase over five years beginning in the fiscal year 2003.

### ***Celebrating Success***

Agencies across the state gathered on June 28, 2001 to celebrate the successful “Campaign to Increase Direct Support Wages.” The event was a Crab Feast sponsored by the Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) in Pasadena, Maryland.

During the Crab Feast, MACS acknowledged individuals who helped make a difference in the Wage Campaign. Maryland Delegate Joan B. Pitkin (D-Dist. 23) and Senator Thomas McLain (Mac) Middleton (D-Dist. 28) received special recognition for their support as bill sponsors. Their leadership helped guide the bills through the legislative process with overwhelming support from their colleagues. 77% of the Maryland Senate and 90% of the House of Delegates signed on as bill sponsors, and each bill passed unanimously.

Members of the MACS Public Policy and Media committees were also thanked for their work on the Wage Campaign. Two “Media Leadership Awards” were given to Jennifer Appaneal, SEEC’s Director of Communications, and Adam Sachs from the Arc of Montgomery County. Karen Lee, SEEC’s Executive Director, said, “We’re so fortunate to have Jennifer working with us. It is wonderful to not only have SEEC benefit from her skill, but all of MACS acknowledge her also.”

### ***Looking Forward***

MACS and its member agencies recognize two issues as they look forward to “life after the wage campaign.” First, the public policy effort must continue to make the wage increase happen. Secondly, wages are not the sole issue with recruiting and retaining staff.

The MACS Public Policy committee held a retreat to outline their direction for the future. In regard to the Wage Campaign and other issues, they will make their presence in Annapolis felt. The committee will continue “thank yous” to Legislatures and press the importance of implementing the wage bill. The committee is also planning a Statewide Public Policy Forum in November to boost the upcoming legislative session. This forum will educate agency employees at all levels with an emphasis on core direct support staff. A few sessions that might be offered include grass roots organizing/grass roots advocacy, skills needed to work with elected officials, and pulling people from our local regions to work together.

Community-based agencies have always recognized that increased wages are not the only answer to attract and retain quality staff. SEEC and other agencies have been implementing industrious recruitment and retention strategies for many years. The good news is – most agencies will continue their efforts independently and in collaboration. The better news is – agencies, MACS, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) are now coming together to tackle the issue. The bad news is – there is never a quick fix. Individuals receiving community-based support and their families must have patience and work with their agencies throughout this effort.

On a statewide level, there is collaboration between MACS, DDA, and agencies. DDA has developed a “Workgroup on Staffing Issues.” This Workgroup is joining with the MACS Media Committee to examine the feasibility of launching a public information campaign to improve staff recruitment efforts. Jennifer Appaneal is representing SEEC in this effort. Other states have implemented similar campaigns using print and television mediums, and the Internet.

In addition to the media campaign, the DDA Workgroup seeks to develop strategies and recommendations in three main areas: 1) Retention and Staff Development Strategies; 2) Short-term and Long-term Recruitment Strategies; and 3) Reducing Dependency on Staff.

In Montgomery County, there is also collaboration to look at recruitment and retention on a local level. SEEC's Director of Human Resources, Randi Barclay, is representing the agency on a "Workforce Development Taskforce." This group is a part of the Montgomery County InterACC/DD, a coalition of nonprofit organizations serving individuals with developmental disabilities. The Taskforce purpose statement is "To increase awareness and market career paths that emphasize the diversity, social value, and opportunities of developmental disabilities professions in Montgomery County."

If you have questions or if you would like to participate in these efforts, please call Jennifer Appaneal at 301-527-0440 or e-mail [jappaneal@seeonline.org](mailto:jappaneal@seeonline.org).

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**Award Winners**

***Charmayne Ison***

Photo caption – Charmayne Ison, SEEC Employment Specialist, was named Maryland's "Professional of the Year for Direct Service" for her work supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. The Arc of Maryland presented the award to Charmayne at the group's annual convention in Annapolis, Maryland on May 18, 2001. Pictured from left to right: Robin Butler, Employment Specialist; Dawn Steis, Team Coordinator; Cynthia Brown, Charmayne's mother; Cynthia Posthumus, Team Coordinator; Charmayne Ison; and Annapolis Mayor Dean L. Johnson.

***Karen Migdail***

Photo caption – Karen Migdail, SEEC's President of the Board, received a volunteer award at the Maryland Association of Community Services (MACS) Crab Feast in Pasadena, Maryland on June 28, 2001. As a Board member, Karen has gone "above and beyond" for over five years. She is currently President of the Board, a member of the Executive Committee, Chair of the Nominating Committee, and a member of the Fundraising Committee. In addition to her committee involvement, she has been a tremendous help with special projects and task forces. Karen is pictured above receiving her award from Sandy Adkins, MACS Board President.

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**SEEC's Building Search Continues**

In the fall of 1999, SEEC made a big announcement. The agency received a \$1.1 million capital grant from Maryland's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to purchase a building.

Since this time, finding the right building has proven to be a difficult task. SEEC has a Building Committee comprised of qualified professionals. We have a realtor who knows the nooks and crannies of Montgomery County. We have staff who work long hours on this assignment.

But – there is nothing "on the market" at this time. Our realtor, and staff, on occasion, spend time driving through Montgomery County to identify possible buildings. The realtor then identifies the owner and sees if he or she wants to sell. This process has yielded numerous possibilities, and two actual contracts. We keep coming close, but just haven't found the right one yet.

So, if you're out-and-about in Montgomery County and see a building under 20,000-sq. ft., near public transportation, give us a call. Or maybe you know someone who owns a building? The more people who know we're in the market, the better!

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**COMING SOON...**

[www.SEEOnline.org](http://www.SEEOnline.org)

SEEC's web site is in the works! This new tool will help us improve communication and processes with our constituencies. To receive an alert when *SEEOnline* is complete, send your e-mail address to [jappaneal@seeonline.org](mailto:jappaneal@seeonline.org).

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### **Lending a Helping Hand**

SEEC needs assistance from the community to ensure quality, individualized support for all individuals with developmental disabilities.

#### ***How can I help?***

A number of in-kind (or product) donations are needed:

##### Medical Day Care Program Wish List

- VIA is looking for donations to create a Music Center, such as a piano and karaoke machine.
- Exercise and recreational equipment
- Old books and magazines
- Reclining chair with footrest

##### Household Goods for People in Community Living

- Tools
- Furniture
- Linens
- Kitchen utensils
- Electronics
- Home decorations

##### Office equipment for Administrative and Program Offices

- Photo copier
- Filing cabinets
- Furniture
- Computer equipment

Volunteers are needed for a variety of jobs:

- Household repairs and painting
- Yard work
- Office work

#### ***How do I lend a helping hand?***

If you can assist SEEC with the above items, please call Jennifer Appaneal at 301-527-0440. Thank you!

#### ***Recent Donations***

Thanks to the following individuals who made donations to SEEC:

- Ruth Dalton donated an Apple computer and desk
- The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) donated office equipment and furniture
- Mr. and Mrs. Nolan Rappaport donated audiocassette tapes, CDs, and books
- Brian Rubin and Jodi Siff donated household and office items
- Ms. Mary Ellen York donated fabric and assorted art supplies
- Sarah Bias donated an exercise bike and lounge chair

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#### **Melrose Cole**

Melrose Cole has been a tremendous asset to SEEC's Community Living program for almost four years. As a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), she provides overnight support for Cheryl and Tania, two women with developmental disabilities who rent their own apartment in Gaithersburg.

When Melrose first came to SEEC, she provided relief coverage and worked full-time as a home health aide at an assisted living facility. She decided to join SEEC full-time because she liked her supervisor and enjoyed the individuals she supported. Even after joining the organization full-time, Melrose worked as relief staff with other agencies.

Cheryl and Tania are fortunate to have Melrose in their lives. She has all the characteristics of an excellent direct support professional. Community Living Team Coordinator, Massa Bropleh-Lanier describes Melrose as “reliable, respectful, flexible, positive, and caring.” Massa is most impressed with Melrose’s interaction with Cheryl and Tania and her capacity to handle tough situations in a professional manner.

Melrose treats Cheryl and Tania like family. When she is done working, they are not gone from her thoughts. In the spring, Tania was preparing to attend a function. Prior to the event, Melrose asked hairdressers for advice on how to style Tania’s hair. She bought hair products with her own money and styled Tania’s hair on her own time. Friends and family were delighted with the results! Now and then, Cheryl and Tania have also been the lucky recipients of Melrose manicures and gifts. On one occasion, she gave sneakers to Cheryl, and a hat and gloves to Tania.

When it comes to her co-workers, Melrose is also respectful. She is a team player, willing to provide coverage during the day and on weekends. Massa believes that Melrose’s flexible and positive attitude hold the team together.

Melrose Cole is a native of Sierra Leone, West Africa. She came to the United States in 1996 and lived in New Jersey briefly. She moved to Silver Spring, Maryland in the same year and continues to reside there. In her spare time, Melrose likes to relax by reading and watching television.

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**Rights and Rallies  
Self-Advocacy Group**

The Rights and Rallies fundraising cookbooks are still available! Donations for the books start at \$10 and proceeds from the sale will help Rights and Rallies members attend conferences. To purchase a book, see a group member or contact Elizabeth Weightman at 301-251-1076. (Checks should be made payable to “SEEC.”)

Rights and Rallies meetings are held the last Thursday of the month at Values in Action in Rockville from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. The group is always interested in welcoming new members! For more information, contact Elizabeth Weightman at 301-251-1076.

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**SEEC In Brief  
Group from Georgia Tours SEEC**

A group of disability professionals from Georgia (a former republic of the Soviet Union) visited SEEC on May 8, 2001 with assistance from the Foundation for International Arts & Education (FIAE) based in Bethesda. The group traveled to the United States to learn about community-based services for individuals with developmental disabilities. SEEC staff members, Karen Lee, Steve Blanks, and Jennifer Appaneal gave a SEEC program orientation and tour of our medical day care program (Values in Action). The Georgian professionals were impressed with the progress the United States has made in the areas of disability rights and inclusion. The FIAE has already contacted SEEC for another tour in August with a second group from Georgia.

**Call for New Board Members**

SEEC’s Board of Directors is accepting applications for new members. They are interested in people who can volunteer expertise in certain areas (i.e. fundraising, public relations, human resources, etc.). Members of the community and family of individuals supported by SEEC are encouraged to apply. For more information on board expectations or to submit an application, contact Karen Lee at 301-527-0440.

***John Emanuelson Joins Leadership Montgomery***

John Emanuelson, SEEC's Secretary of the Board of Directors, will be in the Leadership Montgomery Class of 2002. This group brings together current and emerging leaders to make Montgomery County a better place to live and work. According to Karen Lee, SEEC's Executive Director, and a 1999 Leadership Montgomery graduate, "We are delighted for John. This is a prestigious honor and great opportunity for him and SEEC. The program is really a 'Who's Who' of Montgomery County."

***Karen Lee Becomes WDC Officer***

Karen Lee, SEEC's Executive Director, was elected Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Workforce Development Corporation. The WDC promotes a strategic and comprehensive workforce development agenda. The group provides a variety of job assessment, job readiness, job training, and job placement assistance to a variety of populations, including individuals with disabilities, and many other groups.

***Staff Attend APSE Conference***

A group of SEEC professionals attended the national conference of the Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) in Washington, DC. The conference had over 500 participants from six countries. SEEC attendees included Steve Blanks, Employment Services Program Director; Employment Services Team Coordinators Cimone Coulbourne, Cynthia Posthumus, and Dawn Steis; and John Solyst, Employment Development Specialist. The conference theme, "Gaining Independence Through Employment," was a great match with SEEC's philosophy. The sessions were diverse, ranging from "Organizational Development" to "Identifying Jobs in the Healthcare Field." The Employment Services team plans to extract key concepts from the APSE conference and make it work for SEEC on a day-to-day basis.

***New Phone System is Purchased***

SEEC has purchased a new phone system, partly funded by a \$20,000 capital grant from Montgomery County. The system will be completely up and running by the end of the summer. SEEC will have one main phone number to reach all our locations; there will be plenty of phone lines to handle our increasing demand; and particular individuals will have direct dial numbers and direct e-mail addresses. This change will greatly improve communication for SEEC and its constituencies.

***Looking for NAAR Walk Participants***

SEEC is looking for team members for "Walk F.A.R. for NAAR Washington, D.C. National Capital Area." This fundraiser for the National Alliance for Autism Research ("NAAR") will be held on the campus of the National Institutes of Health on Saturday, September 29, 2001. All participants will receive a SEEC baseball cap. To join us, call Jennifer Appaneal at 301-527-0440.

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***SEEC's Newest Employers***

- The Gazette Newspapers
- Kensington Library
- Montgomery County Department of Family & Community Partnerships
- Olde Towne Thrift Shop
- Rockville Library
- Tina's Consignment Shop

For information on becoming an employer, contact John Solyst, Employment Development Specialist, at 301-527-0440.

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