

# The Path

News from the  
Tennessee  
Microboard  
Association

Spring, 2008

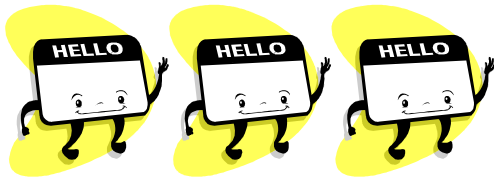
Volume 3, Issue 1

## Micro-Conference 2008

### MARCH IS A GOOD TIME FOR . . .

The TN Microboard Association, Inc.  
and People First of TN, Inc.,  
invite you to attend the

### TN MicroConference 2008



The MicroConference will be held on  
Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, March 15<sup>th</sup>  
at the Holiday Inn in Brentwood, TN  
just off I65 at Old Hickory Boulevard.

**The registration fee is only be \$45.00**

Hotel rates (plus tax) are \$119 per night (single or  
double). To reserve a room in our block, contact the  
Holiday Inn in Brentwood and tell them you are with the  
**MicroConference**.

For more information contact:

People First at 615-898-0075  
TN Microboard Association at 615-594-5988  
Or visit the TMA webpage at  
<http://www.tnmicroboards.org>

MicroConference 2008 will have breakout sessions that  
include:

- ✚ Board and Leadership Training
- ✚ Local Chapter Fundraising
- ✚ Personnel Management
- ✚ Non-Profit Budgeting 101
- ✚ Home Ownership
- ✚ Microenterprise Development
- ✚ Special needs Trust
- ✚ And many other pertinent issues

**Join us!**

### MED WAIVER FUNDING CUT EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2008

This is not a new revelation to those of us  
who are experiencing the 6.1% cut to Med  
Waiver budgets that was instituted on  
January 1 of this year by DMRS.

Many of the organizations who receive Med  
Waiver funding for their clients will have  
difficulty providing adequate services to  
their client or clients and may be forced to  
either close their doors or take drastic cost-  
reducing measures. The cut will make  
those providers who are trying to not only  
furnish needed services but are trying to  
provide a quality of life for their client or  
clients that is equal to that of the non-  
disabled an impossibility.

The largest cost for providers is salaries.  
Due to the many requirements of DMRS,  
providers would not be able to reduce  
hours provided by 6.1%, if at all.

The only other alternative would be to  
reduce salaries across the board by 6.1%.  
DMRS itself issued a raise in rates recently  
geared toward a quarter raise in the hourly  
salaries of direct care staff. Cutting those  
wages back would have the same effect as  
closing the doors, as the staff already are  
underpaid in the opinion of many. Many  
would be forced to find more equip

There is hope that these cuts will not result  
in a cutting of necessary services for clients  
but will only require an adjustment to  
priorities.

# On The Path

By Dr. Ruthie-Marie Beckwith  
Executive Director, TMA

Over the past seven years the Tennessee Microboards Association has blazed a new trail for individuals with disabilities and their families to follow. This road, based on the core values of self-determination, has led to exciting new prospects for personal growth and development, both for the persons at the heart of our effort as well as the microboard members who answered their call.

As we have made this journey, we have made significant discoveries about our communities and ourselves. On one hand, we have learned that failing to issue an invitation to potential board members keeps us, as John O'Brien would say, "root bound and limits our potential for growth". On the other hand, we have learned that sharing the vision we have for ourselves leads to new opportunities to share our gifts and receive others' gifts in return. Finally, we have learned that in order to continue on the road, extending the invitation to join us must be an ongoing effort.

Now it seems that we have come to a point where turbulent and dangerous waters threaten to impede our progress. Changes in how supports and services are made available to Tennesseans with disabilities have the potential of sweeping all of us down river. Given what we face, it is critical that we garner the strength and talents of all who have joined us in this pilgrimage in order to build a bridge to the other side.

What will this bridge look like? What materials will we use? How will we sustain ourselves until we can move forward? All of these questions are ones, which collectively, we have the wisdom and experience to answer. As an Association, we have the strength to raise the towers and suspend the cables. As an Association, we each can contribute a board sturdy enough to lie upon the deck whereupon each of us will tread.

However, as we build, we must not forget to look within ourselves to remember the essence of our work. We must adhere to a path that will provide safe passage to where we want to go and not to where others would lead us. In truth, we must remember the words of our Sam Gage, our Association president when he was asked why he and his brother created their own microboard.

"Because," he said, "we want to control our own destiny."

## **Tennessee Microboards Association, Inc. Board of Directors Executive Board**

Sam Gage, President  
[gage.gage@yahoo.com](mailto:gage.gage@yahoo.com)

Carolyn Campbell, Vice-President  
[jim\\_carolyn@hughes.net](mailto:jim_carolyn@hughes.net)

Sharon Bottorff, Secretary  
[sbbarc@bellsouth.net](mailto:sbbarc@bellsouth.net)

Kimbrough Cooper, Treasurer  
[northstarjxn@yahoo.com](mailto:northstarjxn@yahoo.com)

## **Tennessee Microboards Association, Inc. Staff**

Ruthie-Marie Beckwith, Executive Director  
[empfanatic@aol.com](mailto:empfanatic@aol.com)

Lorre Mendelson, Statewide Field  
Organizer  
[lorreleon@comcast.net](mailto:lorreleon@comcast.net)

Beth Barnett, Memphis Organizer  
[jabethkailey3@yahoo.com](mailto:jabethkailey3@yahoo.com)

This document was produced  
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TN Council on Developmental Disabilities

***SPREAD THE WORD***  
**Tennessee Disability**  
**MegaConference**  
**May 28 – May 30, 2008!**  
**Visit our website:**  
<http://www.thearctn.org/>

## Coming soon!!!

First in Memphis, then hopefully to the middle and east of TN, a human-service cooperative is in the works! The Memphis co-op, Freedom Co-op, Inc., started organizing with friends at the Memphis Center For Independent Living over a year ago, and has finally been granted funds for development to start this Fall. The founding Board of Directors feel that the co-op, badly needed in the Memphis area, will provide direct support staff services to those who need them. Those who could pull resources from the co-op can be consumers of the DMRS Waiver or the Aging and Disabilities Waiver, or even those who have other private funding.

The co-op is an answer to at least two of the all-time recurring struggles for anyone who uses direct support staff: being able to pay staff more with benefits, and being able to get well-trained, good staff to stay employed with those who want them most. Much like microboards, co-ops are able to pay staff higher wages by pooling their resources. By sharing resources, individuals who need a DSP will be able to join hours together enough to offer a good DSP fulltime work and benefits, hopefully creating longevity for the working relationship.

Another similarity the co-op hopes to have with microboards is that each individual contributes service and resources to the co-op in order for it to successfully function. Those receiving services will be, in a sense, shareholders of it, and will be sharing in the responsibility and work of its operation.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this in the organizing stages, or in joining the co-op for services and would like more information, please contact the board president, Suzanne Colsey, by emailing her: [pfennwest@aol.com](mailto:pfennwest@aol.com)

# Congratulations!

Hello all,

I would like to introduce us, we are **Harli Can Incorporated**, the state of Iowa's very first microboard and its very first microboard provider agency as well.

As many of you know, the road to self-determination can be a long and winding one; with more than its share of pot holes, detours and wrong turns.

After 19 months of paper work, policy writing, departmental wild goose chases and Dr. Beckwith traveling in some nasty winter weather to hold our hands, navigate us and at times stop traffic, we finally got our stamp of approval from Medicaid!

We have succeeded in laying the asphalt here in Iowa and the true journey, no doubt, has just begun.

After attending the TN Microboard Association's first mini-conference last year we were even more certain of our mission and certain success. I have never met so many amazing, awe-inspiring and determined people in one place!

All the personal stories of where they began to where they are now, the pride in their accomplishments and the triumph in their voices and faces as well as their workers and caregivers was just over flowing!

We had a glimpse into a future that was bright, that was dignified, purposeful, active and it was a future indeed to be envied.

As a single-parent to someone with challenges I have seen, witnessed and heard many amazing things in my life, but I have never been so uplifted as in the presence of those living their lives determined by the self.

I thank each and every one of you for pushing the line, for changing the expected and for believing in yourselves so that one day my daughter Harli could also believe in herself.

We will forever owe a debt of gratitude to the TN Microboard Association and especially Ruthie-Marie Beckwith for her hard work and commitment to ensure it is known that every life is worthy and that every life is deserving.

Tami R Mugler from Harli Can Inc.

***Harli Kirkpatrick living her life....determined by the self!***

## Medicaid

Key House leadership introduced legislation on February 7 to provide a temporary increase in the Medicaid federal medical assistance percentage (FMAP), or federal matching rate, to states. Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on House Energy and Commerce, and Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health, joined by Republicans Peter King (R-NY) and Thomas Reynolds (R-NY), introduced the bill to assist states facing potential declines in tax revenue as a result of the economic slump. This bipartisan legislation would provide:

- a temporary increase of the Medicaid FMAP of 2.95 percent for five quarters - April 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009;
- a similar temporary increase of the Medicaid FMAP of 5.9 percent for the territories;
- protection for States against a decline in their Medicaid FMAP during the same five quarters of the 2008 and 2009 fiscal years;
- a requirement for States to maintain their Medicaid eligibility at current levels in order to receive the 2.95 percent temporary increase in the Medicaid FMAP; and
- a requirement for States to adjust payments by localities and counties to account for additional federal funding.



## Cool Links! Across the State

Free Management Library:  
[www.managementhelp.org/topics.htm](http://www.managementhelp.org/topics.htm)

Community Building and PATH  
[www.communityworks.info/](http://www.communityworks.info/)

Vela Microboards Association:  
[www.microboard.org/](http://www.microboard.org/)

Homeownership  
<http://alliance.unh.edu/guide.htm>

College of Direct Supports  
<http://info.collegeofdirectsupport.com/>

Administrative Resources, Inc.  
[http://www.adminresources.net/company\\_profile.htm](http://www.adminresources.net/company_profile.htm)

Online Database Management  
<http://www.timasonline.com/>

TN Division of Mental Retardation  
[www.state.tn.us/dmrs](http://www.state.tn.us/dmrs)

How to Find, Hire and Manage  
the People Who Help You (or Your Loved  
One!) [www.bookmasters.com/marktplc/  
10013.htm](http://www.bookmasters.com/marktplc/10013.htm)

The deadline for our summer edition is  
June 30th, 2008.

Email stories to

[empfanatic@aol.com](mailto:empfanatic@aol.com)

or

[bobbisway@aol.com](mailto:bobbisway@aol.com)