

# Soaring

A newsletter for the family and friends of Wingspan Life Resources

choice \* independence \* dignity \* fellowship

## Boston College Alumni Clean Up at Wingspan

Most of us wouldn't call 65° and cloudy a perfect weekend day. But for the local chapter of the Boston College Alumni, it was perfect. A perfect day for working in the yards of Wingspan homes. On Saturday, April 21, 2007, 57 Boston College Alumni and Wingspan volunteers ventured out to clean up and beautify six Wingspan yards. They raked, weeded, moved rocks, planted and transplanted, until they were satisfied that the yards were beautiful. Jeannie Rogers, house coordinator from one of the homes, said, "I want to thank all of the volunteers who worked on our yard, it is beautiful! We love it!"

The clean up is part of the Boston College Alumni Association Second Annual National Day of Service. Roshan Rajkumar, alumni member and member of Wingspan Board of Directors, organized the day of service for the local chapter for the past two years.

The Boston College Alumni Association Minnesota Chapter works to promote and connect the

800 alumni in the state with the greater community through service, social, and sports events. It is led by dynamic alumni who graduated from Boston College from 1967-2006, who live the motto "Men and women in service for others."



Ben Andrews, (bottom right) Boston College 1999 graduate said, "I had a great time as a part of a team that ended up raking and



cleaning up a yard at a Wingspan residence. It was amazing how much we accomplished as a team in just a few hours, and I got the chance to meet other volunteers and BC alumni I'd never met, something I always enjoy. While at BC, I helped organize Days of Service for my fellow students, so it was truly a blessing to continue in this wonderful tradition as an alumni participant. I greatly look forward to the next one!"



The crew started the day at Sherburne, before heading to their work sites.

## ***Jeanette Newman Receives GMAC Community Leadership Award***

Wingspan Life Resources Board of Directors Chairperson, Jeanette Newman, recently received the Community Leadership Award from GMAC-RFC. The award is given to GMAC employees for their extraordinary efforts and involvement in the community.

Ann Cibulka, Board Vice Chairperson, summed up Jeanette's service to Wingspan nicely, as follows:

*Jeanette has served on our Board of Directors for the past six years, contributing vast amounts of her time, talents, and financial resources to support the staff and people served by Wingspan. She*

*is always looking for ways to improve conditions for our employees. Most recently she took the lead on a salary study that resulted in increased wages for all employees at Wingspan.*

*Jeanette has a huge heart for the people with disabilities and Hmong elders served by Wingspan. She willingly participates and contributes to all of our fundraisers, sharing in our joy when goals are met or exceeded. She is a champion for our new Taking Flight fundraising program and has gone above and beyond attending meetings, telling attendees about her personal connection to Wingspan, and doing whatever is needed to make the program successful. Congratulations Jeanette!*



## ***Ruby Gems Share Time With Tsev Laus Kaj Siab Elders***

In the peaceful and beautiful setting of the Cedarhurst Mansion in Cottage Grove, the Ruby Gems Red Hat Club members enjoyed Afternoon Tea. This outing is one of several since the Ruby Gemmers invited the women of Tsev Laus Kaj Siab to join their sisterhood. The cross-cultural friendships have continued to grow, and the women all look forward to their outings. On this particular day, the women enjoyed the grace and beauty of the historic Cedarhurst, while sampling a variety of teas and fancy desserts.



Most recently, the Ruby Gemmers wanted to recognize the role the male Hmong elders played in supporting the U.S. troops in their fight against the communists during the covert war in Laos in the 1960's. On June 28, they came to Tsev Laus Kaj Siab to do so. Ilice Kunde, Ruby Gemmer and former Wingspan employee, spoke to the men and thanked them for their service to the U.S. The Gemmers then pinned a double American flag on each of the men, a small token of appreciation for their bravery.

## Stepping Out

Pam has attended the past four Wingspan Annual Magnolia Balls. However, this year is the first time she walked into the formal dance on her own two feet. Pam had several surgeries to repair problems with her ankles, caused by cerebral palsy, and had been confined to a wheelchair most of her life. After the last surgery, she was given physical



therapy exercises to strengthen her ankles and legs. However, the exercises were not done consistently, and Pam continued to rely on her wheelchair. Yet, Pam was determined to walk, and with the help of house coordinator Geriann Hansen, they persevered with the exercises, and within a few months Pam was able to stand and walk on her own. Pam was not only thrilled to walk into the Magnolia Ball, but to get out on the dance floor.

The Magnolia Ball is the annual formal for the people served by Wingspan. Everyone dresses in formal attire, thanks to discounted tuxedos from A Formal Affair and donated formals from the Blaine Dance Team and other individual donors. M&I Bank sponsors the event, including providing volunteers Donna DeMatteo, Cindy Tintner, Brett Ewig, Mary Foster, April Hearn, and Jim and Carol Carlson. Pam and her friends send "A million thanks" to all!

## Spring Gala Raises Funds For Outdoor Accessibility

A garden of spring flowers adorned Wingspan Life Resources' 2007 Spring Gala on May 18, 2007 at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Jeanette Trompeter of WCCO TV led the festivities. Karen Lee Sorbo, professional fundraising auctioneer, captivated the crowd with her exceptional auction tactics. Miss Katrine's jazz trio entranced the guests with beautiful music. When all was said and done, \$50,000 was raised to enhance Wingspan's services. Over \$11,000 was raised in the Fund-A-Need portion of the Live Auction to provide outdoor accessibility for three Wingspan homes.

Many thanks to our sponsors (listing on back page), attendees, donors, Spring Gala Committee, and staff. Members of the 2007 Spring Gala committee: Ann Cibulka and Nancy Jones, co-chairs; Pam Carlson, Lesley Erickson, Jeff Hager, Bev Mooney, Pat Moore, Michael Swanson.



*The guys at Woodbridge try out the new ramp that was built using funds raised at the Spring Gala.*

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**\$3,000 Fund-A-Need Contributors:**

**Lynn Starkovich & Michael Swanson**



Mark your calendars and join us on the morning of Saturday, September 29, 2007 at Thomas Beach on Lake Calhoun for the annual Made in the Shade Walk, Run, Roll. For more information, pledge sheets, and registration information go to [www.madeintheshade.org](http://www.madeintheshade.org) or call Lesley at 651-646-3846, ext. 246.

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