



## Transition e-News

### In this issue

Welcome Back .....	1
Transition Coordinator Network.....	2
APSE Webinars .....	2
Did You Know Training Module .....	3
Family Involvement In Transition .....	3
Cutting-Edge Program .....	5
Improving Employment Outcomes .....	5
Special Education Transition Addition .....	6
Upcoming Events .....	7
Youth Updates .....	9

If you would like to submit an article or information on an upcoming event for future newsletters, please contact Linda Maitrejean at [lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us](mailto:lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us).

Future editions of the 2010-2011 e-News are scheduled for December, March, and May.

## Spotlight News

### Welcome Back!

by Linda Maitrejean, WSTI Director

We hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable summer and are rejuvenated to get back to the important transition planning work that is so critical to our youth with disabilities.

We've had a busy summer in the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative (WSTI) project. As you can see from the newsletter heading, our WSTI logo has changed a bit and we are in the final stages of updating our new WSTI brochure (which will be posted soon to the WSTI website). We have also made some changes to the WSTI website over the summer and invite you to take some time to peruse the new website redesign at <http://www.wsti.org> and let us know what you think!

Some features from the previous website that will still be featured on the new website include:

- Transition Advisory Council pages for each county
- Transition Resource Directories for each county
- Calendar of Events
- WSTI vision and mission
- WSTI Staff Directory
- Indicator #13 information
- Summary of Performance
- Professional Development Modules
- Transition E-News archive
- Conference information
- Transition Coordinator Network log-in

New features include:

- Introduction to Transition
- Current Transition News
- Upcoming Events notice
- For Parents section
- Section for teachers new to transition
- Ask a transition question feature
- Section for the Wisconsin Community on Transition (WI CoT)
- And more!!!

We'd love to hear from you on the changes that have been made and additional needs that you would like to see included on the website. Please contact Linda Maitrejean, WSTI Director at [lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us](mailto:lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us) if you have any questions or comments, or for more information on WSTI or the website features.

Thanks for the transition work you do for our Wisconsin youth with disabilities. Have a great year!

## Articles of Interest

### Transition Coordinator Network (TCN) to Focus on Employment

by Jen Ledin, WSTI Transition Coordinator, CESA 12

In response to feedback from its members, the Transition Coordinator Network meetings during the 2010-11 school year will focus on employment of students with disabilities.

The Transition Coordinator Network (TCN) is made up of district level transition coordinators from across the state who get together three times a year to problem solve around transition issues at the local level. The TCN is supported by the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative (WSTI) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Our TCN meetings align with the vision and mission of State Superintendent Tony Evers (Every Child a Graduate) and IDEA 2004, and will focus on engaging youth and improving employment outcomes for students with disabilities. TCN members will review statewide and local data and collaborate with their Directors of Special Education and fellow staff members to complete a Transition Coordinator Action Plan to improve transition programs and services in their districts.

The TCN will be holding its meetings on the following dates for the 2010-11 school year:

- **Thursday, November 4, 2010** from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM at Madison Marriott West, Middleton  
Registration information will be coming soon on <http://www.wsti.org>!  
Topic: Review state and local data (if available) and develop a Transition Coordinator Action Plan.
- **Wednesday, February 16, 2011** from 6:30 PM-8:00 PM at Kalahari Resort, WI Dells (in conjunction with the WI Transition Conference)  
Topic: "Ask an Expert." This meeting is an opportunity to get additional information needed to further the work in your district related to the Transition Coordinator Action Plan goals.
- **Thursday, April 7, 2011** from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM at Madison Marriott West, Middleton  
Topic: Report out on Action Plan progress including any challenges and an opportunity to ask for help from other district coordinators who may have strategies to share. Set goals for the 2011-12 school year.

Meetings are free, however, TCN participants are required to register at <http://www.wsti.org>.

It is our hope that we have **one representative from each district in the state** at these meetings so we can continue to learn from each other to improve results for youth with disabilities. Please consider joining the TCN today!

Current TCN Members: Don't forget that referring a new school district to the TCN for the November meeting will earn you a FREE registration to the 2011 WI Transition Conference! Please contact Jen Ledin ([jenniferm@cesa12.k12.wi.us](mailto:jenniferm@cesa12.k12.wi.us)) if you have questions about district participation.

Questions about the TCN may be directed to Linda Maitrejean, WSTI Director ([lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us](mailto:lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us)).

### APSE Webinars

The Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE) will be hosting webinars this fall with James Emmett, APSE HR Connect Director. James is a national leader in development of employment services for individuals with autism and other disabilities as well as in assisting corporations in the creation of outreach efforts to the disability community. To register for a webinar, go to <http://www.apse.org/training/lead.cfm>.

**October 14, 2010**

1 PM-2 PM

*Workplace Supports for Employees with Autism*

**November 11, 2010**

1 PM-2 PM

*Corporate Development Foundation & Philosophy*

**December 9, 2010**

1 PM-2 PM

*Business Partnerships in a Down Economy*

## Articles of Interest

### “Did You Know? Now You Know” Module 6: A Training on Transition to Adult Life



This training module is designed to provide youth, families and providers with high quality, comprehensive, and understandable information about transition that crosses service system boundaries. The transition training will focus on helping participants think about and understand options available to youth as they transition from school and children’s services to lead meaningful adult lives that include work, community involvement, and appropriate long-term supports, including Family Care, Partnership, and IRIS.

Children and youth with significant disabilities and their families often dream and imagine their future. However, if there are no role models within a family or experience with how people with disabilities contribute to their communities and work, it is more difficult for families to talk with their child with a disability about the future. All too often, families and youth may not dream or imagine a future broadly because they have not had experiences or opportunities that provide that fertile ground for thinking “what do I want to do when I grow up?” Families need access to information that will give them an understanding of how people with disabilities work and contribute so they can help their child build a vision for their future.

The “Did You Know” Transition Training is a comprehensive training curriculum with supporting materials that will clarify the roles of schools, vocational services, and long-term support services and will provide families with that foundation of knowledge, as well as ways in which they can work with their youth to dream, imagine and realize work opportunities that match the passions and interests of the youth. This cross-system thinking is in accordance with family dynamics and culture; families think about how they can best support their youth, independent of what service fits into what service delivery model.

Content areas will include: dreaming and envisioning a future for the child/youth; the role of the family in building self-advocacy skills; how a family’s cultural and personal values contribute to planning for the future of a child/youth; options for supported decision-making, employment, residential settings, and community involvement; understanding the role of educational, long-term, and vocational supports; fundamentals of self-determination and how the family plays a role; and understanding natural and community supports.

The training will involve a variety of training techniques to accommodate participants’ preferred learning styles and a broad selection of handouts for their reference after the training. Participants will be encouraged to explore the training information individually, in small and large groups, and through their own work or family experiences.

For more information on the “Did You Know” Transition Training, please contact Barbara Katz at 608.233.3726 or by e-mail at [barb@fvofwi.org](mailto:barb@fvofwi.org).

## Family Involvement in Transition

by Beth Swedeen

The beginning of each school year is both exciting and stressful for me as a parent of a teenager with developmental disabilities. I don’t especially anticipate gearing up for school meetings or spending hours supporting homework or arranging supports for her to participate in school and community activities. Of course, when I see my daughter engaged in and enjoying school, making connections and learning new skills, I am reminded it is all worthwhile.

We know from research both within the transition field and throughout the field of general education that parental involvement is a critical component to school success for all students, and particularly for students with disabilities during the transition process. A useful annotated bibliography by Dawn A. Rowe that is available on the NSTTAC website both summarizes the importance of family involvement and also points to research and resources educators can use to learn more in order to more effectively engage families.

Families play many roles in supporting their students—as coaches, cheerleaders, sounding boards, and advocates, to name just a few. They may have knowledge of community resources that a student would not know about, and they can provide important supports (e.g., transportation to activities or work). The ways in which schools partner with families and incorporate their input into transition planning also takes many forms.

*(continued on page 4)*

## Articles of Interest

### Family Involvement in Transition

*(continued from page 3)*

Monica Lopez, an active parent leader in the Milwaukee Latino community and a Milwaukee School District parent liaison, points to the fact that many parents and students with disabilities with whom she works do not have a clear vision of what life after high school can look like if given the right preparation and supports. Monica's approach with families of diverse backgrounds in Milwaukee has been to work with high schools to create monthly transition meetings—a sort of learning circle model—in which invited guests from the community talk about the range of opportunities (post-secondary educational options in technical colleges and programs for students with disabilities; career choices; short- and long-term employment options) as well as locally available range of supports (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Social Security, Independent Living Centers, inclusive recreation and community programs). Lopez says this approach fosters optimism and a sense of support in families, as well as giving them a better idea of the importance that school transition programming plays in supporting students to reach their goals.

Another strategy—Kansas University's Self-Advocacy Strategy (Van Reusen, Bos, & Schumaker, 1994)—is used by Cherryville High School in Gaston County, North Carolina. As part of their high school's Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, teacher Jennifer Cease-Cook says school staff members work with students throughout the year to develop a career portfolio that includes a résumé, list of vocational coursework and skills learned in each, three reference letters, cover letter, examples of keyboarding skills, job experiences, photos of the individual student with a listing of areas of strength and interest, and other useful information.

Students invite parents, teachers, school staff, and potential local employers to a career portfolio presentation, as opposed to an IEP or transition meeting. As part of a presentation to “sell” themselves, the students dress for success and share their portfolios, often using PowerPoint or other tools. Jennifer says parent participation is high because individual assignments call on family members to contribute to or support certain aspects of the portfolio, and students go through several dress rehearsals for their final presentation with parents as the audience.

The formal presentation is actually their Summary of Performance as they approach their exit from school. Clearly, this activity is designed to build self-determination, self-advocacy, and vocational skills, but the performance component is also a hit with parents, who are rightfully proud of their children.

This past school year, my own daughter's transition teacher worked with her during one study hall each week to develop a PowerPoint presentation for her IEP, using the template from the I'm Determined website (<http://www.imdetermined.org>). Throughout the semester, Cara enjoyed taking pictures of the activities and classes in which she was participating, then incorporating them into the presentation she was planning. Rather than responding to a written announcement of her IEP from the school, each participant—including me—received an e-mail invitation from my daughter to share her experiences from the school year and plan for the next one. Her personal invitation to participate in a process she was leading seemed like a welcoming and celebratory way to participate in the process. For Cara, it empowered her and helped her see her own role and responsibilities in planning her future.

While supporting the self-determination and leadership of youth with disabilities is critical, supporting families to be involved in a variety of ways in their children's transition planning is also important. Every state has a federally funded parent training initiative that is full of resources both for families and for schools seeking to create better connections with families. To find the one in your state, visit <http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu>.

#### References

Rowe, D. A. (2010). Parent and family involvement annotated bibliography prepared for NSTTAC. Available at [http://www.nsttac.org/products\\_and\\_resources/ParentInvolvementAnnotatedBibliography.aspx](http://www.nsttac.org/products_and_resources/ParentInvolvementAnnotatedBibliography.aspx)

Van Reusen, A. K., Bos, C., & Schumaker, J. B. (1994). Self-Advocacy Strategy for education and transition planning. Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises

## Articles of Interest

### Cutting-Edge Program

by Dedra Hafner, Director of Cutting-Edge Program

There is a new generation of children with disabilities being educated alongside their peers without disabilities in regular education classrooms and given access to general education curriculum. These individuals are transitioning out of the K-12 public education system and seeking inclusion in college and universities. Edgewood College is the first college in Wisconsin to offer inclusion in college to adult learners with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities. Since the pilot of the program in 2007, the Cutting-Edge program has served 25 students who would not otherwise attend or be successful in college in an individualized model of inclusion.

The program strives to give the Cutting-Edge students, to the greatest degree possible, a college experience of academic and social inclusion. Such an experience is truly on the cutting-edge of ground-breaking academic research. Recent studies have shown that students with intellectual disabilities want to improve their chances of getting jobs by attending post-secondary education. The National Longitudinal Transition Study found that the completion rate of youth with disabilities in high school increased by 70% between 1987 and 2003 (Wagner et al., 2005). Findings show that individuals with disabilities who have taken even some amount of post-secondary education are employed at double the rate of those with just a high school diploma. Students with disabilities who are educated in higher education have a higher amount of earnings and significantly increase their financial stability.

On a daily basis, the Cutting-Edge students demonstrate their commitment to their classes and coursework at Edgewood College. Whenever Cutting-Edge students request their desire to take a course, the Director of the Cutting-Edge program reviews the class syllabus, meets with the faculty member who teaches the class and considers the class schedule. Courses are often selected based on professors' teaching style, classroom management and being supportive of the principles of Universal Design for Learners (UDL). The instructors are approached with the request that the student be allowed to either audit their class or take the class for credit. As a whole, the faculty reacts positively to the requests and accepts Cutting-Edge students into their courses. Students have taken forty general education courses such as Spanish 101, College Writing, Digital Photography, Environmental Biology, and African Drumming. Students have been pleasantly surprised at the positive comments they have received from professors on completed assignments, projects and papers. As an individually designed approach to inclusion, students have their own standards for measuring success. When asked about their impressions of Edgewood College, one student said, "I think that teachers have a more friendly personality and they are really helpful. In the past, teachers wanted to fit me into a box that they perceived to be appropriate for me. At Edgewood College, faculty accepts me for who I am." *(continued on page 6)*

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### Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities

by Dave Nass, WSTI Transition Consultant

Directors of Special Education have been attending Regional Service Network (RSN) meetings held at various CESAs during the past month. The purpose of these meetings is to increase collaboration and communication to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities in Wisconsin. These collaborative gatherings make use of the Wisconsin Post High School Survey Outcomes data [Indicator 14] and other county level and local data to better understand how our special education exiters are doing in the job market and in post-secondary education and training settings. This session is as much about working together locally as it is about analyzing data from our 2009 graduates to determine areas of strength and needs. I encourage Directors to participate in this half-day session in your CESA if it has not yet been held! Please contact your CESA Regional Service Network Director for more information.

## Articles of Interest

### Cutting-Edge Program

(continued from page 5)

The Cutting-Edge program depends heavily on the involvement of graduate and undergraduate students who serve as peer mentors to students in the program. Since the program was piloted in 2007, over 200 students at Edgewood College have been involved as peer mentors. Peer mentors are drawn from numerous areas of the campus, including graduate and undergraduate students who are pursuing their degrees in Education and Special Education and serve as *Study-Skill Peer Mentors*. Peer mentors meet regularly with Cutting-Edge students to assist with both academic and social situations, including help with coursework and problem-solving daily schedules. Undergraduate students serve as *Social Peer Mentors* and *In-Class Peer Mentors*. The peer mentors have played a significant role in connecting Cutting-Edge students with student-life in resident halls and campus activities.

When not in class, Cutting-Edge students work with their undergraduate social mentors, to learn how to put information about safety, self-determination and interpersonal relationships to use in their lives. Undergraduate mentors are the best source to learn about social life on campus and to direct the Cutting-Edge students to appropriate social activities. These students help teach what behaviors are socially appropriate for college students. When social peer mentors participate in social activities on campus, they take their Cutting-Edge mentees along with them and introduce them to their friends. This has been an excellent way to help students with disabilities break into the social networks already on campus and in the community.

The range of student interests goes beyond the academic coursework into co-curricular activities, service organizations, and athletics. Upon entering the Cutting-Edge program three years ago, one of our students expressed the desire to be on the men's tennis team. The only problem was that Edgewood College only had a women's tennis team at that time. So last year, this student took it upon himself to meet with the college athletic director regarding forming a men's team, and the athletic director agreed. Edgewood College now has a men's tennis team with 10 athletes. Practices have started this fall and tournaments will begin in the spring.

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### Nice Special Education Transition Addition [Edition] 2010!

by Dave Nass, WSTI Transition Consultant

In the past I have written about "TAG! You're it!" and I did not get a lot of great reviews or feedback about my literary skills, so I won't use that line again. Instead, I'll do this other word play with *addition* and *edition*. Every public school district in Wisconsin recently received a useful transition resource for parents, students, teachers, agency representatives, and the community in general. Each district received 20 copies of the current edition of the **Transition Action Guide (TAG)**. This well-bound, tabbed, full-color version is made available to districts by generous funding from the Department of Health Services (DHS). This document describes the roles and responsibilities of those involved in developing effective transition plans (which are required for students by the time they reach age 14 in Wisconsin), and may be helpful to all involved in transition IEPs.

What is the best use for the TAG guides? My opinion: understanding roles—despite what we wish for, not everyone has a computer at the ready to read the online version, so these paper copies are presented as a lasting reference to share at IEPs, student/staff trainings, parent meetings, small group conferences, and as a reference for all. To access the Transition Action Guides that were sent to each district, check with your district's Special Education or Pupil Services Office.

## Upcoming Events

### 2010 Fall Self-Advocacy Series

Sponsored by Wisconsin FACETS and IndependenceFirst

#### Location:

IndependenceFirst  
540 S. 1st St., Milwaukee

#### Session 1: Career Exploration

October 12, 2010  
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

#### Session 2: What to Expect in College

October 26, 2010  
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

#### Session 3: Conflict Resolution

November 9, 2010  
6:00 PM-8:00 PM

All sessions are free. For more information or to register, contact Matthew Zellmer (414.374.4645 x103 or [mzellmer@wifacets.org](mailto:mzellmer@wifacets.org))

These workshops are especially for transition-aged students with disabilities, parents, educators and service providers!




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### Family Voices of Wisconsin: What's After High School?

October 18, 2010

5:00 PM-8:00 PM

Gateway Technical College, Racine

Register: 608.220.9598 or [lynn@fvofwi.org](mailto:lynn@fvofwi.org)

Training for parents, caregivers, youth and providers on the transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs. Topics will include: dreaming and envisioning a youth's future in the community; the role of schools; long term supports; vocational resources; adult health care; guardianship and other legal issues; advocacy; and the fundamentals of self-determination.

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### Expanding Opportunities and Relationships for Youth in Transition: A Collaborative Meeting October 21, 2010

The Wisconsin Community on Transition (WI CoT), the Autism Society of Wisconsin (ASW), and the Community of Practice on Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities have come together for a statewide meeting around Youth in Transition. The meeting will be held at the Holiday Inn Convention Center in Stevens Point on October 21, 2010. The day begins at 9:00 AM, includes lunch and will finish at 3:00 PM. There is no charge. Registration and more information is available at <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/connections>.



The morning will feature presentations by the UW-Madison Waisman Center's Erik Carter, Ph.D., who is an associate professor in Rehabilitation and Psychology and Special Education, and Beth Swedeen, a Youth Transition Senior Outreach Specialist. We will also hear from a panel of youth and young adults presenting on their personal experiences with transition. In the afternoon, a number of practice groups focusing on different topics of interest will meet. One practice group will host a seminar with Ellie Hartman on Health Self Management for youth and young adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, and another practice group will host Julie Bryda, MSW, Manager of the Children's Long Term Support Section speaking on the Children's Waiver renewal process.

The meeting is free and open to anyone interested in attending. Pre-registration is necessary before October 13. Walk-ins cannot be accepted. If you have any questions, please contact Amy Whitehead (608-267-3861 or [Amy.Whitehead@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Amy.Whitehead@wisconsin.gov)).

## Upcoming Events

### Transition for Your Future

Resource Fair and Informational Workshops  
Sponsored by LEAPP (Local Educators and Agencies Promoting Potential)

November 3, 2010  
5:30 PM-7:30 PM  
Irving School, West Allis

For more information or to register, contact Chris Jackson (414.773.1009 or [jacksoch@wauwatosak12.wi.us](mailto:jacksoch@wauwatosak12.wi.us))

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### Wisconsin Educational Services Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Outreach Proudly Presents

#### College Fair 2010

November 3, 2010  
1:00 PM-6:00 PM  
Memorial High School, Eau Claire

November 4, 2010  
1:00 PM-6:00 PM  
Southwest High School, Green Bay

November 5, 2010  
8:30 AM-12:00 PM  
Wisconsin School for the Deaf, Delavan



For more information, contact Maryann Barnett (262.728.7194 or [Maryann.barnett@wesp-dhh.wi.gov](mailto:Maryann.barnett@wesp-dhh.wi.gov)).

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### WI AHEAD 2010 Annual Conference

#### Looking AHEAD to 2010 and Beyond

November 11-12, 2010  
The Osthoff Resort  
Elkhart Lake, WI  
Keynote Speaker: Trey Duffy  
Lunch Speaker: Jean Ashmore



For more information or to register, contact Elizabeth Watson (262.472.1630 or [watsone@uww.edu](mailto:watsone@uww.edu)).

For information about upcoming Transition meetings and trainings, remember to check the WSTI Calendar of Events at <http://www.wsti.org>.

## WSTI Website Resources

### Transition Resource Directory

Transition Services are provided by local and statewide agencies and are listed by County. Check it out at <http://www.wsti.org/trd.php>

### Transition Topics A-Z

A complete list of transition topics can be found on the WSTI website at [http://www.wsti.org/transition\\_topics.php](http://www.wsti.org/transition_topics.php).

## Youth Updates

### Seeking Youth Stories!

The Natural Supports Project at Waisman Center is seeking stories about youth with developmental disabilities who are working in competitive, community-based jobs for minimum wage or higher who use natural, rather than paid supports.

They are especially looking for youth ages 15-18 who have more significant disabilities and/or use technology to communicate on the job. They would also be interested in stories where the job was found through natural supports (i.e., a parent, sibling, friend, neighbor).

A booklet will be prepared featuring stories of 4-5 youth who were working in the community **before** they entered the 19-21 year old transition programs. Interviews will be conducted with the youth as well as the employer and others who helped set up the job and/or who support the youth on the job. Pictures will also be taken.

Youth will receive a gift card for participating. If you know of someone who might fit this description, please contact Beth Swedeen (608.263.6745 or [swedeen@waisman.wisc.edu](mailto:swedeen@waisman.wisc.edu)).

### Society's Assets

#### 12th Annual Youth Art Contest

Society's Assets is sponsoring its 12th annual youth art contest. Students in grades kindergarten through high school in the agency's service area of Racine, Kenosha, Walworth, Rock, and Jefferson counties are invited to participate. Schools in the area will soon receive contest packets. Parents can ask at school or contact Society's Assets for entry blanks. The contest theme is "Ability. . .Not Disability." All students that enter will receive a gift. Prizes are awarded to first (\$100), second (\$50), and third (\$25) place entrants in each grade category.

Contest entries must be received at a Society's Assets office by 5:00 PM on Monday, November 8, 2010. Offices are located in Racine at 5200 Washington Avenue, Suite 225, in Kenosha at 5727 6th Avenue, and in Elkhorn at 615 E. Geneva Street. Judging takes place in the month of November and winning entries in each age category are permanently displayed at the main office in Racine. Contact the Society's Assets office in Racine for more information, (262) 637-9128, ext. 3605.

#### Scholarship Awards

Society's Assets will have applications for the 2010 Scholarship Awards program available in October. Area high schools and colleges will receive application packets and the public may also inquire with the office listed below. People with physical or sensory disabilities could be eligible for up to five awards ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. Applicants must reside in the Society's Assets service area, which includes Racine, Kenosha, Walworth, Rock, and Jefferson counties. Graduating high school seniors, continuing students, or adults returning to school on a full-time basis to seek a post-secondary degree in the fall of 2011 are eligible. Judging will be based on academic record, extracurricular activities, personal essay, and recommendations. All application materials must be postmarked by February 1, 2011. Proceeds from the annual Society's Assets Open Golf Outing are used to fund the Society's Assets Scholarship Awards. The 2011 Scholarship Awards will be presented at the Society's Assets Open in June.

#### Facebook

Society's Assets has joined social media. We hope you'll become a friend and check us out. You can also find more about Society's Assets and our services at <http://www.societysassets.org>. Remember our goal is to assist individuals to remain independent in their own homes.