

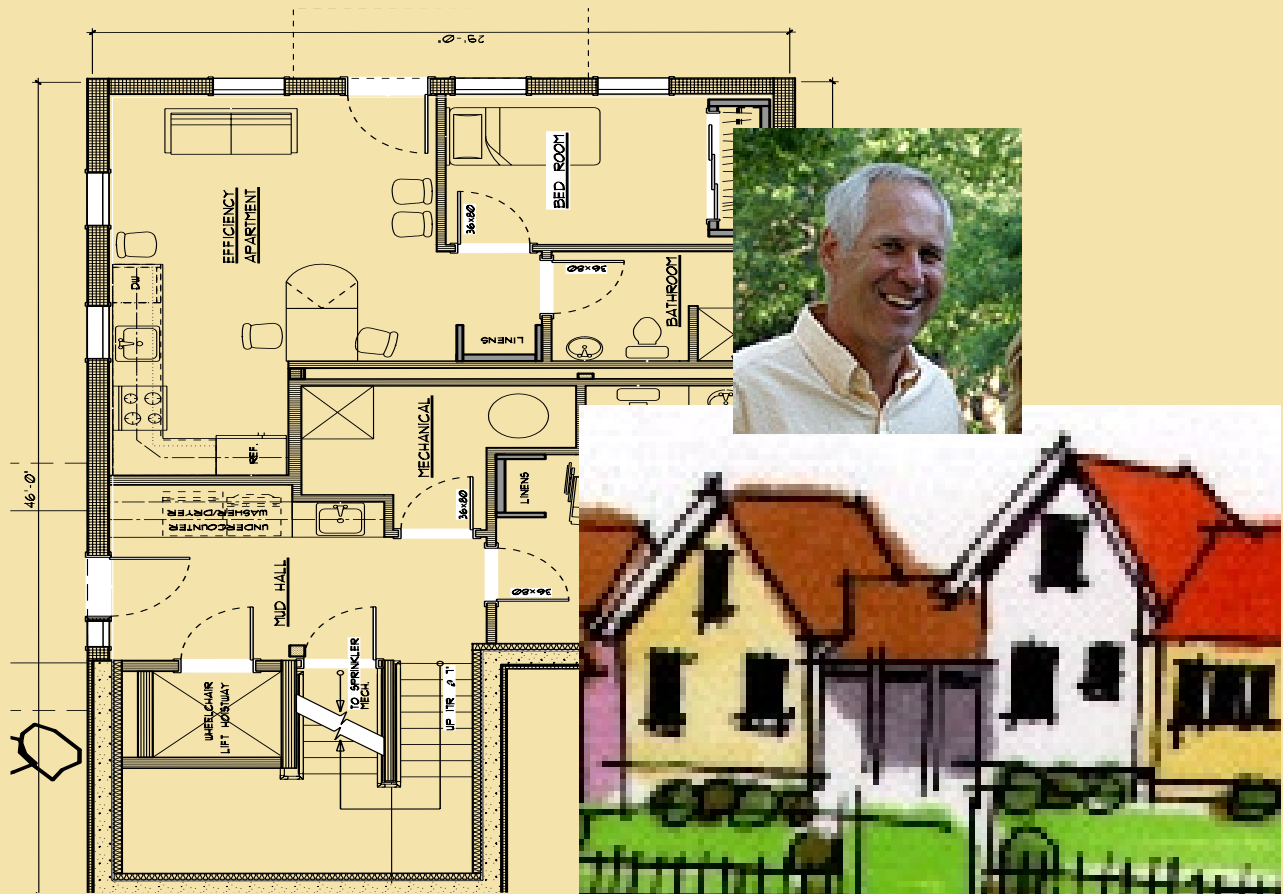
**RAISING THE BAR** *Raising Funds and Awareness*  
**THE FACE OF PHILANTHROPY** *Leave a Legacy*  
**DANCING HER WAY TO SEATTLE** *Jenny's Odyssey*

FALL 2005 • VOLUME 5, NUMBER 3



# HORIZONS

A NEWSLETTER FOR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF CROTCHED MOUNTAIN



## WHEN BIG, HAIRY, AUDACIOUS IDEAS COLLIDE

*At our June Trustees Meeting, Tedd Benson spoke about creating  
the first house in the first neighborhood in the first community of mutual support...*

*continued on page 4*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



My companion in the picture is Caitlin, a student at Crooked Mountain School. As you can plainly see, we were having a good time at the Sunset Lake waterfront on our campus a few months ago. I'm including this picture instead of my usual headshot because I wanted to provide further visible proof that I really enjoy my job. I consider myself the luckiest man in the world to be leading this organization and to get to know friends like Caitlin. I also wanted to pay tribute in this issue to the great team and spirit of the staff at Crooked Mountain.

The reason I'm at the waterfront with Caitlin this day is because I'm filling in so that Caitlin's aide -- and all our teachers' aides -- could participate in special training on "gentle teaching." This was the day Caitlin's class was to go to the waterfront, so off we went! While we were getting wet and enjoying the sun, the aides were learning new skills that we offer through our Center of Excellence in Behavioral Supports, the TRUST Center. Gentle teaching is the method we use to communicate with students and adults with disabilities. Led by

Center Director, Jan Holland, we have learned that when consistently and thoughtfully applied, gentle teaching methods can successfully reduce the incidence of aggressive behaviors so

that more learning and positive experiences can occur.

For the teachers' aides to receive this training, we had to provide substitutes for their responsibilities. We put out the word to managers and staff and, not surprisingly, they responded. Now, understand that our direct support staff throughout Crooked Mountain are some of the hardest working folks on the Mountain and in the community. I think all of the managers and staff who filled in came away with renewed appreciation for the valuable role they play. They are vital to our work.

Medical director Carl Cooley said that he now has a greater appreciation of the demands of the job and the quality of what our teachers do every day. Residential services director Jon Eriquezzo told me that his experience brought to life just how much the students are learning daily. Michael Shields, director of continuing education, observed what a real asset our waterfront is for learning lifelong activities like fishing, swimming and boating.

One of our staff values is teamwork and these experiences really brought that home. Thanks to all who made a difference.

We've always thought that strong organizations aren't afraid to try new endeavors and that often the best ideas emerge from those closest to the action. To this end, we've started a new fellowship program that makes grant awards to staff who need funding to develop a new idea or program. An article on page eight tells more about the first three recipients. I eagerly look forward to the results of their research and thinking.

Finally, I want to share exciting news about two special staff who are being publicly recognized for their work. Carl Cooley received the Director's Award by the Bureau of Maternal and Child Health of the US Department of Human Services for his contribution to improve the health of children, youth and families through the medical home model of primary care. Jan Holland, director of the TRUST Center, is receiving the first Serena Merck Leadership Memorial Award by the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (developmentally disabled and mentally ill). Congratulations to both these leaders at Crooked Mountain. While we believe every day that we are leading the way to better teaching, better therapy and better supports, we couldn't accomplish what we do without the best staff.

### ON THE COVER:

*Tedd Benson and Bensonwood Homes, Walpole, NH, are working with us to build the first in a series of prototype accessible homes that "soothe, shelter and welcome those who live there and those who visit," here at Crooked Mountain.*

# RAISING THE BAR

## Crotched Mountain Student Raises \$2,000 in Support of Rwandan Student Program

People all over the world were moved by the movie *Hotel Rwanda*. Miles Forma, a student at Crotched Mountain School was moved to do something about it.

The energetic teenager was so affected by the movie, he raised \$2,000 in support of Rwandan children. And he raised awareness of the Rwandan tragedy throughout Crotched Mountain and the surrounding area.

Born with cerebral palsy, Miles cannot speak or walk. But he zooms around campus in his wheelchair, he likes to hang out at the tree house, “a great place to think and come up with new ideas,” and he communicates using his Dynavox, a programmed keyboard that puts words and phrases at his fingertips, like “Nice to meet you,” “Cool,” and “Are you kidding?”

*“Learning to be independent can be hard work.” Miles Forma*

“Paul Rusesabagina is amazing,” Miles grins, pushing a button and referring to the Rwandan hotel manager in the movie who saved more than 1,200 of his countrymen during the Hutu-Tutsi slaughter in the 1990s.

With help from his family, friends and staff at Crotched Mountain, Miles organized a free showing of *Hotel Rwanda* and an African dance workshop by a dancer and drummer from *The Moving Company* in Keene, NH. Miles chose to disburse the resulting donations through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee’s “Back to School Program” that has helped more than 1,500 Rwandan orphans to return to secondary school.

School is important to Miles. At Crotched Mountain his academic schedule includes science, social studies, physical education, English, and his favorite, desktop publishing. He participates in the digital film program, performing arts and the science fair. He has composed two songs and entered a video he made in the Crotched Mountain School Talent Show.

Through the Rwandan effort, Miles learned about the mechanics of fundraising, developing a data base, doing research, and writing thank you letters, laboriously tapping out his messages letter by letter. He credits the

staff when asked what he likes about Crotched Mountain.

He also learned that Paul Rusesabagina is as kind in real life as he was in the movie.

Miles had hoped for an e-mail from Paul when he wrote to him about his fund raiser. And just as the response to his idea was more than he ever expected, so was the reward! In August, Miles met Paul at the Fifth Annual New England African/Caribbean Festival in Bedford, NH. After Paul’s talk, Miles asked the “best question of the evening.”

“Can you forgive the Hutus?” He tapped out on his Dynavox.

“Yes,” Paul answered unhesitatingly. “If we don’t forgive, we’ll just go on butchering each other and die.” Paul said he was humbled by Miles’ efforts on behalf of the Rwandan orphans. He thanked Miles over and over.

Don Cheadle, who played the role of Paul Rusesabagina in *Hotel Rwanda*, is co-authoring a book on Activism with John Prendergast, Special Advisor to the President at International Crisis Group. Researchers interviewed Miles to illustrate how single individuals can make a difference during crises like Rwanda.

Miles has now set his sights on raising money for the Sudanese in Darfur and for the Katrina Relief Fund. Paul encouraged Miles to continue his good work, to graduate from high school and to go on to college where Miles would like to pursue a career in fund raising.

The look of determination on Miles’ face and the enthusiasm that radiates from his whole body as he searches for the right response indicates that Miles is well on his way to all three. ❖



# WHEN BIG, HAIRY, AUDACIOUS VISIONS COLLIDE

*As told by Tedd Benson*

The history of Crotched Mountain, according to Tedd Benson, was woven into his own vision for improving the world with better buildings at our June Trustees Meeting where he was keynote speaker.

Benson's version begins early one morning in 1944, when Harry Gregg took a walk on Crotched Mountain. In a flash of sunlight, Gregg saw not just the scenery and views, but people, buildings and roads – indeed an entire community – all dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with disabilities through education and healing,

Harry Gregg then set about putting a foundation under his magnificent vision and began building Crotched Mountain Center.



*Tedd Benson with students Chester (L) and Jennifer (R) and teacher Cindy Medeiros of Office Occupations.*

*If you have built castles in the air,  
your work need not be lost;  
this is where they should be.  
Now put foundations under them. Thoreau.*

Benson called Gregg's concept a *Big Hairy Audacious Vision* and compared it to his own vision in the early 1970s to revive timber framing as a viable method of building. Looking back, Benson recounted his keys to success: blind ignorance, youthful naivete, unwarranted optimism, dumb perseverance and a single-minded vision with no Plan B. But somehow it added up to success, and later that decade, he published his first book, *Building the Timberframe House*.

While Bensonwood Homes grew from 2 to 18 employees and he continued to develop and refine

innovative systems for his structures, Benson also formed the Timber Framers Guild and grew it from 80 initial members to over 2,000.

His techniques got the attention of *This Old House* and three of his projects were featured over four seasons of the show.

In the next decade, Bensonwood's workforce reached 40 employees and his second book became the manual for timberframe construction methodology for the USA.

Then in the mid 1990s at the peak of the US revival of timberframe craft and industry, Benson recreated his company. He wanted more responsibility, authority and *fun* to flow through the organization. And he stepped back to let it happen.

Today Bensonwood Homes has grown to 65 associates and is at the top of the home building market. Their Open-Built System is reinventing the American home

building industry: improving quality, predictability and efficiency, reducing the cost and complexity of custom architectural design, compressing on-site construction time.

Combining 21<sup>st</sup> century technology with 19<sup>th</sup> century craftsmanship, Bensonwood not only builds a better building, all associates are involved in a culture of constant improvement.

Now Bensonwood has brought its culture to Crotched Mountain to create for us the first house in the first neighborhood in our first community of mutual support, making our vision for this community a reality. Design work is underway and the plans call for the first Open Built prototype home to be constructed at Crotched Mountain in the Spring 2006. It will be the first of four, each building on the successes of the ones before. After an introductory period during which the nation's foremost building professionals will be invited for a tour, the first home will become an accessible dwelling for people with disabilities who are transitioning to a more independent lifestyle. ❖

Mobility issues have never stopped Jenny from trying a climbing wall, sailing, adaptive water and snow skiing, making maple syrup or racing in Special Olympics. “There are so many opportunities for all of us at Crocthed Mountain,” according to this active 19-year-old.

Jenny, who has cerebral palsy and uses a wheel chair, began dancing as one of the “electric elves” in Crocthed Mountain’s holiday production *The Night the Reindeer Rocked*. Performing arts teacher Bonnie Arpin encouraged kids in wheelchairs to move around the stage to the music, and that very successful production inspired staff and students to start an adaptive dance program in 2003.

Every week since then, except for school vacations, Jenny and twenty or more students and staff share the joy of dance, experimenting with



*Jenny, shown here with AXIS dancers in Seattle, led an adaptive dance workshop for dancers of all abilities during Fall Festival. More photos of Jenny’s cool adventure can be found at [www.crotchedmountain.org](http://www.crotchedmountain.org).*

“There are all kinds of abilities. People move in different ways. All of us adapt,” she observes.

Each dancer created a solo, using an object in the studio such as a trash can, a fan or parallel bars. Jenny chose the piano, incorporating the

hammers, keys and hand movements. In addition to learning new dance concepts and trying improvisations, Jenny visited the Space Needle and Pike Place Markets. She ate halibut cheeks and Dungeness crab.

*“Dancing makes me feel as if I’m flying!” Jenny*

## DANCING TO SEATTLE

choreography and lightweight dance wheelchairs.

Jenny found a friend and mentor in Kitty Lunn, principal dancer of Infinity Dance Theater, and internationally known wheelchair dancer and adaptive dance instructor. During Kitty’s first residency here, she and Jenny were chatting and rolling their wheelchairs down a walkway, when, Jenny recalls, “All of a sudden, I was flying! I felt so free and I knew then that I wanted to become a dancer.”

This past summer, Jenny became the youngest participant in a 10-day dance intensive in Seattle with the AXIS Dance Company and more than 40 dancers from New Zealand, Japan, England, Ireland, and all over the United States. Gifts from her parents, the State of Connecticut, the Major Wheelock Discretionary Fund and the Lynch Foundation made the experience possible.

### *Looking at the World Through Dance*

“We learned the concepts of pushing and yielding, extending and closing, creating shapes with my body

alone and with a partner or group,” Jenny describes with graceful hand gestures and shining eyes. “Sometimes the group would pick me up and drape me across other partners. It’s a little strange and new but it’s fun at the same time.” She found the power of stillness, ways to get in and out of her chair by herself, and some limits, too.

One dinner plate was so pretty she and her aide, Beth Simpson, photographed it and posted the photo on her blog. Beth also videotaped many of their adventures and dance classes.

### *Follow Your Dream*

“It was a great learning experience,” Jenny laughs. “Reading bus schedules, paying for transportation, asking directions. People were so friendly and helpful.” At the end of the workshop, Jenny purchased some new purple dance wear, pledged to stay in touch with her new friends, and to share photographs, ideas and news. “It was awesome,” she grins.

Dance has strengthened her body and her endurance, has made her new friends, and has gained her poise and self confidence. Jenny’s dream now is to teach adaptive dance when she graduates from Crocthed Mountain. ❖

## THE FACE OF PHILANTHROPY

### ANYONE CAN LEAVE A LEGACY

Crotched Mountain has joined LEAVE A LEGACY NH/VT, the partnership of charitable organizations, professional advisors and corporations, with the message that all people can make a difference by leaving a charitable legacy.

*Every one of us can make a difference and leave the world better off.*

Through wills, trusts, life income arrangements and other means, charitable legacy giving is a subject of increasing discussion across the nation because people see every day that charitable organizations are an essential part of our communities.

Whether you serve on a charitable board, cook for a church supper, volunteer on a hotline, or coach a children's team, "helping out" is part of who we are. In New Hampshire, especially, volunteerism is one of our very visible strengths.

In spite of the fact that 80-90% of us are involved with charities and also contribute money to them, less than 10% of this same group will include charities in their wills.

How come, you might well ask.

First of all, only 20-40% of adults have wills. And many may think that a small or modest gift is not enough. But all of us know that when we're fund raising for a good cause, many small gifts are what get us to the goal! It's possible, too, that people just haven't thought about it.

When people do make a planned gift to a charity, they very often do not discuss their intent with the charity. There are many benefits from including the charity in your discussions and planning. Skilled development officers can help people and their advisors achieve the maximum benefit to both donor and recipient. When the charity understands the donor's intent, the donor's gift is assured of having the desired impact.

The goal of LEAVE A LEGACY is to enhance the number of charitable gifts made in New Hampshire and other states.

#### HORIZONS

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As a service to our readers, please write us at the above address if you wish to have your name removed from our mailing list for fundraising requests supporting Crotched Mountain

#### TEN STEPS TO LEAVING YOUR LEGACY

1. Prepare a will. Without a will you lose control over your property at death
2. Evaluate your financial situation and decide what your charitable goals are
3. Consult an attorney
4. Choose one or more organizations that have made a difference in your life to leave a gift to in your will
5. Learn more about the organizations that support LEAVE A LEGACY NH/VT
6. Contact the organizations of your choice to learn about opportunities for legacy giving
7. Leave a specific dollar amount or a percentage of the assets in your will to a charity of your choice
8. Name a charity as the beneficiary of your pension or a life insurance policy
9. Consider using non-cash assets for your legacy gift
10. Encourage family and friends to leave gifts to charities in their wills

For more information about wills, charitable giving, and how to make a bequest to Crotched Mountain, contact Michael Redmond, Vice President for Advancement, 603 547-3311, ext. 404.

#### In Memoriam, COL. LEONARD FRANK SMISSON

Longtime Crotched Mountain trustee, father of former Crotched Mountain student, Lon, and decorated war hero, USAF Colonel Frank Smisson passed away on June 12, 2005. A resident of Fort Valley, GA, Smisson assisted in authoring the Georgia Wheelchair Lemon Law with his son, Lon. He and Lon

ran in the Olympic Torch Relay of 1996. He was predeceased by his older son, Chris, a USAF Veteran/Pilot and his younger son Lon, and is survived by his wife of 60 years, Mary Lou of Fort Valley, his daughter-in-law, Heidi, and grandson, Skyler.

**BRIEFLY** *Noted* **BRIEFLY** *Noted* **BRIEFLY** *Noted* **BRIEFLY** *Noted* **BRIEFLY** *Noted*

The **CROTCHED MOUNTAIN GOLF CLASSIC** raised over \$24,000 to benefit Crotonched Mountain School. 144 golfers participated at the Stonebridge Country Club event, on July 25, underwritten by Bank of America, The Mattson Family, Anthem BC/BS, Granite Group Benefits, the Committee to Support Youth Activities, Stoner & Company and the Fennelly/Taylor Families. Winners of this year's tournament were the Anthem team of Phil Stockton, Paul Kent, Larry Hart, and Don Mullen.

**50<sup>th</sup> REUNION, SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.** On Saturday, July 23, some 200 people gathered from throughout New England and across the nation to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Crotonched Mountain School for the Deaf. In operation from 1955-1979, the School began with 12 students and served as many as 200 during its peak years. Former students, family, staff and friends enjoyed a brunch, cookout, entertainment, a commemorative plate, and time to reacquaint and reminisce.



**DR. ROCCO CHIAPPINI** has been named director of brain injury services replacing Bud Elkind who is moving on to direct the Lakeview Neurorehabilitation Center. For the past year, Dr. Chiappini has been medical director of Crotonched Mountain's Brain Injury Center. In addition to leading the Brain Injury Center, he will continue his practice of physiatry at the Center and in our outpatient services.

**WHAT'S COOKING ON TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN** is a new cookbook featuring the favorite recipes of the staff, students, families and friends of Crotonched Mountain. Just in time for the holidays at \$10 (plus \$2 for shipping) from Crotonched Mountain School, 1 Verney Drive, Greenfield, NH. 03047.

**CORRECTIONS** *In our 2004 Annual Report on page 9, we featured a story that incorrectly identified Elena Grace Spahr. The Clinton Hilliard Lecture Series presentation by Kara Swanson will be Monday, November 14, at 3:15 PM at Carter Hall, Crotonched Mountain. We regret the errors.*

**TWO RETIREES, 81 YEARS!**

**MARY FRANCES LAWLER, RN,** known to all as Mrs. Lawler, will be remembered as the infection control guru, mentor, humorist, educator, facilitator and confidante. Throughout 40 years, she guided the care given by nursing assistants, worked in every

nursing unit of the rehabilitation center and encouraged hundreds of students to continue their nursing education. Mrs. Lawler is one of four generations of her family who have worked for Crotonched Mountain.

**FRANCES F. KENDALL'S** retirement was highlighted by a handwritten letter from Sen. and Mrs. Judd Gregg and a NH State Senate Resolution recognizing her 41 years of service at Crotonched Mountain. Fran led the ambitious task of centralizing the medical records office and worked with Information Technology toward converting the records into a digital imaging storage and retrieval system.



OFFERING A LIFELONG ALLIANCE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

# CROTCHED MOUNTAIN

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## THREE STAFF EARN CROTCHED MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

Established this year, the Fellowship Awards provide financial assistance for employees to undertake individual projects outside the parameters of their job, but within the context of their field. “Our intention,” according to



President Don Shumway, “is to stimulate creative thinking in the development of new program or service approaches which will, in turn, directly benefit the students, clients and employees of Crotched Mountain.”

The recipients of Crotched Mountain’s first Fellowship Awards are **David Kontak**, (L) MA, MS, OTR/L, director of assistive technology, who will develop musical instruments for persons with sensory, motor or cognitive challenges. “As an occupational therapist and working musician,” Kontak observes, “I appreciate the therapeutic value of performing music. It is clearly one of the most motivating activities for people of all ages.”

**Mary Lou Moreen**, (center R) RN, BSN, a clinical resource nurse for the Children’s Specialty Hospital, will generate and evaluate an effective pain management assessment tool to assist non verbal patients with pain management. “As a result,” she states, “we will improve our nursing practices to better manage pain for a population that may be under treated.”

**Diane Cloutier**, (R) MEd. will create a school television news program, video streamed on demand through the organization’s intranet. “In addition to building language skills,” she notes, “this project will enable students to learn about the filming and editing processes and the creative arts.”