

# Network

A quarterly publication  
of Sertoma Centre



Brian Leveston, who was trained through the janitorial program at Sertoma, enjoys his job at the DMV.

## The Proof Is In The Pudding

**By Laura Gardner, Volunteer Services Manager**

I would like to send a HUGE shout out to all the Sertoma Centre volunteers who have logged over 4,300 volunteer hours with us this past year! That is amazing and so are YOU! Thank you so much for all of your time, talent and treasure. We had over 50 volunteers for the Holiday Bazaar back in December, approximately 110 volunteers who joined forces at McCormick Place Housewares Show (and we got the job done in record time!), over 75 different volunteers helping to set up and work the Super Sale at the end of March, and 40 plus volunteers came to our rescue and volunteered at the Big Event on May 2nd. But that is not all! We had approximately 25 interns working with our programs over the past school year as well as eight Marist students who came to Sertoma Centre every day during their school year to work one-on-one with our consumers. In addition, we had two students from Homewood Flossmoor and a total of four students from Southwest Cooperative who were in a school-to-work training program.

But wait, we still are not done. We have also had our share of FUN and unique volunteer groups that provided enhanced programming for our consumers—six different girl scout troops, 4-H Club, over 80 staff and faculty from Moraine Valley Community College, employees from Nordstrom Rack, approximately 45 individuals seeking community service, a home schooling group of fifteen and Composition 101 students from MVCC who had to write and present their experience of volunteering at Sertoma Centre at the “Act Out Now” Fair!

Fiscal year 2015 was truly inspirational and as I take a step back to reflect on these amazing numbers I am truly humbled by the generosity of the Human Spirit! I have the best job in the world--I am able to work with so many wonderful people who are willing to lend a hand, who work so hard, who are dedicated to our mission and who give to us the most precious gift of all, their TIME!

Thank you so much to all the wonderful volunteers of Sertoma Centre past, present and future! You have truly defined what it means to be a VOLUNTEER!

If you have not had a chance to volunteer with us and would like to, or have a question about our Volunteer program, please contact Laura Gardner, Manager of Volunteer Services at (708) 730-6211 or email at [lgardner@sertomacentre.org](mailto:lgardner@sertomacentre.org)

## Consumers Enjoy Norm Meyer Day

Over 100 volunteers, staff and consumers from Sertoma Centre attended the 22nd Norm Meyer Special Kids/People Day in Orland Park. Free access to rides, games, and a lunch on the house; it was a fun-filled day for all! The event was created by Norm Meyer, the original owner of Midway Entertainment, a traveling amusement park business that wanted to give back to his community and is put on by the Orland Park Lions Club.



Discovering the  
potential in all of us

## Letter from Gus van den Brink, Executive Director



The past several years have been very challenging times for community providers of human services. Sertoma Centre is no exception in this regard and we have worked hard to maintain the quantity and quality of our services. This has been accomplished in an environment of financial uncertainty, funding rates for services that have not increased in over 8 years, funding cuts in some service areas, and increased administrative work to meet new rules, regulations, and

system changes.

This year as we approach the 2016 State budget year which begins in July, it seems we are at an exceptionally crucial juncture for human services. The new political dynamics with a republican governor and democratic controlled legislature, the Supreme Court ruling that the state pension changes are unconstitutional, and a state budget that has a 6 billion dollar deficit are a few of the reasons I believe this.

The governor and legislators have a huge responsibility on their shoulders to make decisions that remedy the State's financial problem and at the same time meet the needs of Illinois citizens. That includes the individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness we serve at Sertoma Centre.

I believe it is our responsibility as citizens to be active in the process that those decisions are made in. Although we already do this every year, we are looking to be more effective in our advocacy with and education of public officials as they make their decisions. To do this, we are asking you to consider getting involved to help us accomplish our goal to make our voice even stronger through increased advocacy. As parents, family members, consumers, staff, volunteers and supporters we need to communicate clearly, loudly and frequently with our public leaders to assure they have the knowledge and ongoing awareness to make decisions in the best interest of individuals with disabilities. Will you help? We need you to accomplish our goal. Please contact Ericka Moore at the Centre to learn more, get involved and make a difference. Ericka can be reached at [emoore@sertomacentre.org](mailto:emoore@sertomacentre.org) or 708.730.6208.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gus van den Brink". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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## Sertoma Centre, Inc.'s Mission Statement

At Sertoma Centre, Inc., our mission is to provide opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve personal success.

CARF Accredited, 501(c)(3) Organization

## Sertoma Centre, Inc. Code of Ethics Policy

Sertoma Centre has the obligation to act in ways that will merit the trust, confidence, and respect of individuals, their families, and the community. To this end, we have a Code of Ethics. Our commitment is to ensure any allegation of violation of this Code by individuals, family members, guardians, staff, and members of the community are investigated and addressed. For a complete copy of the Code and the complaint process, please visit the Sertoma Centre website: [www.sertomacentre.org](http://www.sertomacentre.org).

## Consumer Spotlight: Aaron Timmons

By Ericka Glorious Moore, PR and Marketing Manager

I remember when I first met Aaron Timmons. It was at the Community Mental Health and Counseling facility for an open house event in April. He walked past with his guitar on his back dressed in a unique artistic style. There was something special about him and I wanted to meet him. We began talking and we talked about all kinds of things. At first I thought he worked for Sertoma, only to find out that he was a consumer of Sertoma services. It turned into an impromptu interview and I asked him this question, "How has Sertoma Centre helped you?" Aaron responded, "Sertoma has already made me realize this is who I am and I am accomplishing my dreams of being more outgoing and more confident. When I



**Writing and singing songs is a coping skill Aaron has developed at Sertoma Centre.**

was diagnosed with autism, it just kind of rocked me a little bit, I didn't know what was going on. Being at Sertoma, has helped explain more of who I am and the problems I struggle with. In my head I can do this, I can go do whatever, but my body's reaction would be like, no can't do this, and I kind of backed away. Sertoma has helped me to change a little bit. I'm actually trying new things that I'm not used to and I am happier. I've been depressed less. The more I come here the less depressed I am. I have no time to be depressed. My dream is to unite people through my music and the first step is gaining some confidence to even try that. I'm even writing a new song about my autism and depression. It's about how people need to see a person for who they are on the inside, not just judge them for what they see on the outside."

Aaron shared such enthusiasm and excitement about enjoying all the programs. He said, "It's like being in school and I used to love school." He mentioned that he wants to be a role model for younger kids and encourage them. Later that evening Aaron sang the song he had been working on and one of the main chorus lines was "I want to be seen by you, by what I am on the inside." It is our desire at Sertoma that all people would begin to recognize the beauty of our consumers on the inside. They have much to share with the world, if we would just stop to take the time to listen we may be surprised. I'm glad I did.

## Meet Ericka Glorious Moore

By Ericka Glorious Moore



It is a pleasure to join the Sertoma Centre team since March of this year. I have a background of over 15 years in the advertising field that I bring to the table and have worked with Fortune 500 companies and local clients to enhance their message with a unique and clean flair through web and print collateral. Such clients include LG Electronics, NEC, Chicago Police Department, University of Illinois at Chicago and McGraw Hill Education.

I was responsible for the redesign of the spec sheet templates that LG Electronics currently uses through their website and tradeshows for B2B Market Division. I also spearheaded campaigns with UIC for cancer awareness among women and healthier eating for taxi cab drivers.

I was nominated by the Chicago Southland Chamber of Commerce in 2013 for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for my graphic design business, the story of [e]. I have also been part of Toastmasters International since 2014 and have won ribbons for best speech and best table topics.

With over 10 years of missions work throughout the world, I bring a heart of compassion to help people without a voice be heard. Having been exposed to different cultures, races, and economic backgrounds, I understand some of the struggles and hardships that people endure. It is my desire that all my experience, skills and talents will help bring exposure to Sertoma Centre in a greater way. I hope that through all media outlets and print collateral that people will want to join the bandwagon of our mission and advocate, volunteer, and donate to our cause to "Discover the potential in all of us."

In my spare time I enjoy going on missions trips and love spending time with my family and friends and my 16 nephews and nieces. I love to write songs, sing in the choir at my church and workout. I also enjoy creating new challenges for myself and exceeding my goals.

## Autism 3rd Annual Walk-a-Thon Brings Awareness

On May 8, 2015 over 172 Sertoma consumers showed up and like clockwork took to the walk trail already knowing the path to follow. Matteson consumers and staff were there to cheer on 123rd and 127th locations with pom-poms to show their support. Every person that crossed the finish line was given a medal, that they proudly showed off. Snacks and outdoor games finished off the event.



Senator Hastings talks with Alindra Hunt and Joseph Poe, consumers of CMHC.

## Senator Hastings Stops By Sertoma To Talk Budget Cuts

By Ericka Glorious Moore

It was an honor and privilege to have Senator Hastings drop by our Community Mental Health and Counseling (CMHC) facility in Matteson on March 31, 2015. Hastings sat down for a round table discussion with Paula Phillips, Assistant Executive Director, Michele Arthur, Associate Director of Program Services, and Sarah Wiemeyer, Director of Mental Health Services, to talk about budget cuts and the impact it will have on Sertoma Centre in the upcoming fiscal year. Hastings is aware of the programs provided by Sertoma Centre, because his uncle had the opportunity to use the services years ago. During the discussion Phillips states, "with the close of the mental health facility in Tinley Park it opened up opportunities for mental health programs and we have expanded five times our original size fairly quickly. The potential cuts are devastating to us because the program is supported through Medicaid billing and also grants." Hastings listened to Phillips, Arthur and Wiemeyer's concerns and lightened the mood at times with light banter. On a serious note, Hastings said, "Actual lives are at stake here and it is important to invest now before we have liabilities later." He further stated, "We have been crippled by the recession, but we will be devastated by these cuts, conveying a message saying, 'This is what it looks like. Real, I'm a real person.'" He urged Sertoma to reach out to the governor and to prepare to find funding from other sources in case the substantial cuts come through. After the discussion he was given a personal tour of the facility by consumers Alindra Hunt and Joseph Poe.

## "Road to Recovery" Open House at CMHC

By Ericka Glorious Moore

The "Road to Recovery" Open House at our CMHC facility on Thursday, April 16th was a great success. With over a hundred people in attendance guests went on interactive tours, learned about the programs and services offered, met with staff and networked with others in the community. Some highlights of the evening were seeing all the consumers beautifully framed artwork displayed on the walls and the opportunity to meet with consumers personally. I had the privilege to speak with one of the consumer's parents and she said before her son attended Sertoma four years ago he was a blank slate with "yes" and "no" answers. Now he has confidence, participates in a planning committee with other consumers and is looking for a job. Partnered with Sertoma Centre, our consumers are "discovering the potential" inside themselves and that is what made the night a huge success.



Interactive tours, raffles and artwork made the night fun and informative at CMHC.



Sertoma staff and consumers in Springfield for IARF Advocacy Day.

## Road Trip! Sertoma Springs into Action at Springfield

By Ericka Glorious Moore

It was a brisk, sunny day as a group of sixteen Sertoma staff and consumers headed down to Springfield for Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc. (IARF) Advocacy Day on April 22, 2015. Advocacy day is held every year in April through IARF. Almost 200 advocates showed up in support of community developmental disability and mental health services. The main objective was to show our senators and representatives the need to support our community by fully funding our services and emphasize the huge impact of budget cuts. Gus van den Brink, Executive Director, is no stranger to Springfield as he goes down at least once a month, but a pivotal decision was made to have staff and our consumers join him from our facilities at 123rd, 127th and Matteson.

The team arrived around 10:30am and received folders from IARF with information on how to talk with the legislators and where they were located at the capital. We split into two groups and off we went to visit legislators in their offices.

In preparation, we brought information that would be sure to have a lasting effect on any legislator. We had an arsenal of handwritten letters from our consumers that use Sertoma Centre's services and explained how the budget cuts would affect their lives. When our team went to visit the legislators, they were all in session. My team gave information to each secretary and our consumers told them how the services at Sertoma have helped them, and without Sertoma they don't know where they would be. To our amazement, the letters and the consumer testimonies caused the secretaries to stop what they were doing and listen to hear our consumers' voices. After each presentation, the secretary put the letters on top of the stack and told us they would tell the representative or senator about us and how they greatly support our cause. The

other team also had great success as they had an opportunity to meet State Representatives Al Riley and Kelly Burke.

At the end of the day the consumers really enjoyed themselves. Some didn't even want to go home. A few of the consumers went around and grabbed as many cards as they could because they wanted to write each one a letter to tell them how much they need Sertoma. All in all I think it was a success. I look forward to next year and maybe you will consider joining us for IARF's Advocacy Day in 2016.



Gus van den Brink with Sertoma consumers and Representative Kelly Burke.

## Housewares Super Sale Fundraiser Big Hit for Spring!

By Lisa Molloy, Special Events Manager

The Sertoma Centre Housewares Super Sale Fundraiser was held Friday, Saturday and Sunday, March 27-29 at Orland Park Crossing shopping center on 143rd and LaGrange Road in Orland Park.



Super fun girls at the Super Sale, Laura Gardner and Lisa Molloy from Advancement.

Thousands of brand new donated houseware items from vendors at the International Home + Housewares Show held at McCormick Place were displayed for sale, from big name designers to well-known brands, which included high-end dishware, kitchen appliances, crystal, coffee makers, fans and heaters, skillets, grills, candles, Disney items, mops, brooms, glassware, containers, and plenty of home décor. This was not an easy undertaking—we had lots of help. Over 100 volunteers packed and moved all these products and then unpacked and set up our pop-up store! As a token of thanks, our volunteers were able to take advantage of an Appreciation Night of shopping before we opened the fundraiser to the public and helped us raise over \$10,000 just that evening! On Saturday morning, shoppers lined up and down the block to save 50 percent or more on amazing products.

An extra special thank you goes out to Edwards Realty for donating the space at Orland Park Crossing for us to hold this amazing event, as well as the stores and restaurants in the center who welcomed us so graciously. They even made sure that we had other opportunities for families to enjoy the weekend, with trolley rides, a SpongeBob look-alike and even the Easter Bunny! All proceeds from this annual fundraiser support critical programs and services provided by Sertoma Centre for individuals with disabilities.

## 2015 Sertoma Centre's BIG Event & Firefighters' Cook-Off—HOT, HOT, HOT!

By Lisa Molloy

On Saturday, May 2nd talented firehouse chefs from Chicago and the surrounding suburbs competed at Sertoma Centre's BIG Event and vied for the title of Best Firehouse Chef in four different categories—ribs, chili, poultry and an other/ ethnic group. There was even a coveted trophy for the People's Choice Award, allowing the guests a vote in the challenge. Firefighters from Alsip, Niles, Lemont, Wheaton, South Holland, Blue Island, Lombard, and two Chicago firehouses participated in the cook-off at 115 Bourbon Street in Merrionette Park.

Celebrity judge Mark Nilsson from hit TV show 190 North, Scott Martin of Fox News, Chef Anthony Di Fabio of Square Celt Ale House and Grill, and local celebrity Rachel Miklas from 115 Bourbon Street helped to decide winners of Best Ribs, Jim Leibach and Steve Zook from Niles with their Tillerboy Ribs, Best Chili, Anthony Tabb and John Cochran from Wheaton with their 4-Story Milk Stout Chili, Best Poultry winner Bob Hopper for his Buffalo Bob's Chicken Sliders, Best Ethnic winners Tony DiNovo and the South Holland Black Shift from South Holland for their fish tacos and Peoples' Choice winners, Joe DiNovo and Ken Dompeling of Blue Island Fire Department for their Bad Ax Ribs & Cornbread!

Sertoma United, Sertoma Centre's self-advocacy group, helped elevate the festivities by creating a taco dip. The American Heritage Sertoma Club returned once again to support us this year with their infamous baked goods selection. Sertoma Centre also offered an alternative for the kiddos by providing a hot dog stand.

Everyone got into the celebration by dancing and singing along with live band Audiomatic, and kids and adults alike enjoyed magician and juggler Dave Fleming and our amazing balloon artist & stilt walker from Sparkles Entertainment, Tom Chyna. Some "taller" folks even had their faces painted by Fun Pete from Entertainers R We! A special kids' area was also created and run by our Sertoma Centre volunteers, complete with games and prizes.

We couldn't have held such a successful fundraiser without the support of 5-Alarm Sponsors: Sertoma Clubs (Chicago Lawn, A.C.T.I.O.N. and POW-R) and Blazing Hot Sponsors: United Sertoma of Lemont and Horton Group. Please remember to visit them and continue to pay it forward!



Winners and friends of Sertoma Centre's 12th Annual BIG Event 2015 Firefighters' Cook-off.



Consumer artwork at CMHC made possible through the generous support of the Benjamin B. Green-Field Foundation Grant.

### Consumer Holiday Party 2014

Thanks to the generosity of Pace, our consumers enjoyed the best Holiday bash ever. On December 7, 2014, over 300 consumers, families, board members and staff crowded Lexington House in Hickory Hills to celebrate the season. Back by popular demand, Michael Jackson impersonator (Rico) put on a spectacular show that did not disappoint. One of the highlights for years has been the consumer awards recognition ceremony at Sertoma Centre, officiated by Executive Director Gus van den Brink and Assistant Executive Director, Paula Phillips. The event was made possible through a generous underwriting gift by Pace, which provides daily transportation services to our consumers. Company representative, Cynthia Stockle, participated in the festivities.



Cynthia Stockle, Pace representative, and Gus van den Brink.

### Generous Support Brings Creative Expression

Through the generosity of the Benjamin B. Green-Field Foundation, our consumers who participate in the Art, Music and Cooking/ Nutrition Programs have the materials they need to fully express themselves. The grant made it possible for staff to purchase supplies to accommodate consumers in all three of our locations during the 2015 fiscal year.

### Sertoma Centre's Wish List

At this time, we are in need of replacement puzzles (100 pieces or less), colored pencils, markers, scissors, glue, glue sticks, paints (water color, tempera, alcohol inks, etc.), other art supplies (chalk, charcoal, canvas, construction paper, rubber stamps, stamp pads, etc.), games (Connect Four, Uno, Bingo, jumbo tic-tac-toe, memory games), word search books (large print), and lacing shapes (shoes, designs, etc). For a complete wish list of items, visit our website at [www.sertomacentre.org](http://www.sertomacentre.org).

If you would like to make a donation please contact **Debra Marillo, Director of Advancement and Communications** at **(708) 730-6206**.

### Join Our Silent Partners In Supporting Our Mission

Do you share a strong commitment to our mission of providing opportunities that empower individuals with disabilities to achieve success? Do you have an interest in supporting our mission on a committed, personal level? Would you like to be part of an elite group of donors who are making a difference in the lives of others?

Silent Partners not only help us to provide programs and services to more than 800 people each year, but they also have the opportunity to network and establish relationships with other partners who share the same philanthropic goals. We would like to welcome you into this partnership. If you are interested in becoming a Silent Partner, contact **Debra Marillo** at **(708) 730-6206**.



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Mark your calendar with these important upcoming events:



**Action Sertoma Golf Outing\*** – July 15, 2015

**Community Day of Learning** – Tuesday, September 29, 2015

**Oktoberfest Pub Crawl** – Saturday, October 3, 2015

**Annual Awards and Recognition Dinner** – Thursday, November 5, 2015

**Holiday Bazaar** – Friday, December 4, 2015

\*Watch our website and social media pages for Sertoma Club and other Sertoma Centre events!

For More Information, Call or Write:

Sertoma Centre, Inc.

4343 West 123rd St. Alsip, IL 60803

Phone: **(708) 371-9700** | Fax: **(708) 371-9747**

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