

ANCOR LINKS

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Inaugural ANCOR Education and Cultural Tour Breaks New Ground

The ANCOR International Committee sponsored its first international tour in late April 2007. ANCOR members Barbara Pilarcik, The Association for Community Living, Massachusetts; Bob Bartles, Kreider Services, Illinois; Diane Beastrom, Koinonia Homes, Ohio; Cindy Haworth, Human Service Connections, Illinois; Dawna Teeguarden, Rise, Utah; and ANCOR staffer Jerri McCandless participated in a 10-day educational and cultural tour to Romania and Moldova, culminating in a two-day optional visit to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Strangers at the outset, these ANCOR members became close-

knit colleagues by tour's end.

Beginning in Bucharest, Romania, the country's capital, participants were warmly welcomed by local host Motivation Romania, headed by CEO Christian Ispas. Motivation Romania is an ANCOR international member, and Ispas had attended several ANCOR conferences in the U.S.

The Moldovan portion of the trip was hosted by Speranta Center, headed by Director Lucia Gavrilita. Speranta Center is also an ANCOR international member, and Lucia has attended the several ANCOR Management Practices

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It was a life-changing experience...so informative and so much to take in! The program work we saw was inspirational.



ANCOR travelers in Bragadiru, Romania were (L-R) Dawna Teeguarden, Diane Beastrom, Jerri McCandless, Cindy Haworth, Bob Bartles and Barbara Pilarcik.

Blackjack, from page 7

ing and watch for an ANCOR Action Alert on the things you can do in August to get your Representative's attention.

DSPs to DC

The NAC is working hard to give America's direct support workforce a voice. But no one can communicate the challenges facing this essential workforce better than the Direct Support Professionals themselves. To that end, ANCOR is organizing a special *DSPs to DC* event in conjunction with its 2007 Governmental Activities Seminar (GAS). This September 10th and 11th GAS special feature has no registration fee and is open to DSPs, as well as families and self-advocates, who want to show their support for their DSPs. ANCOR members will be responsible for all travel and lodging costs for participating DSPs and the event itinerary includes:

- Attend customized DSP training sessions on Monday afternoon, September 10 at The Washington

Court Hotel.

- Special evening reception (with GAS registrants) on Monday evening, at The Washington Court Hotel, featuring entertainment by The Capitol Steps.
- Attend a morning briefing on Tuesday, September 11th at the Holiday Inn on the Hill.
- Box lunches and a joint pre-Hill session and DSP recognition with ANCOR Seminar attendees Tuesday morning, September 11th at the Washington Court Hotel.
- Attend RALLY on Capitol Hill at noon, September 11th.
- Participate in Hill visits the afternoon of Tuesday, September 11th.

To get more information on the *DSPs to DC* event and lodging options or to register your DSPs, please view the GAS registration form at www.ancor.org, http://www.ancor.org/conferences/2007_GAS_Brochure.pdf.

ANCOR is committed to bringing a minimum of 100 DSPs to Washington, DC for this important event and there are many reasons for ANCOR members

to participate—raising awareness on the issue, raising your organization's profile on Capitol Hill, building good will with your workforce, internal and external promotional opportunities, etc. Whether you send one DSP or 20 to Washington, it will *Make a Difference* in telling the story of the workforce crisis. You simply cannot afford to leave your DSPs at home! Register your DSPs today!

If you have any questions about the *DSPs to DC* event or any NAC activity, please contact our advocacy consultant, Daryn Demeritt, ddemeritt@fieldgoals.net. ■

Get Ready, from page 11

ANCOR appreciates all of your efforts to expand opportunities for employment for people with disabilities. Watch for more NDEM activity ideas in future LINKS, WICs, and www.ancor.org. Please share any NDEM activities or ideas your agency or state association is sponsoring with Jessica Sadowsky at jsadowsky@ancor.org. ■

Education, from page 1

conferences. Both Mosaic and Keystone Human Services, who sponsor Motivation Romania and Speranta Center as international members, provided assistance in coordinating local arrangements, including transportation, lodging, interpreters and guide services.

In addition to a full schedule of tours and visits with staff and people served at both organizations, the host agencies also arranged tours to other local agency programs and to area institutions. Visits to the cultural and scenic highlights of the each country were also included. In addition to spending time in the capital cities of Bucharest and Chisinau, participants has the opportunity to visit and experience the countryside, small village life and farms,

Loved really getting to know the people and the work being done in community-based supports and services.

It was a great trip. One of the best I have ever experienced. I am really inspired by their work and would definitely do something like this again.

including a visit to Motivation's rustic mountain camp for people with disabilities and Keystone's Tudora village project in Moldova.

Participants were impressed with the in-roads ANCOR international members in Romania and

Excellent experience, start to finish. Informative, enjoyable.

Moldova have made in providing foster care and community-based supports and services to people with disabilities and socially vulnerable children.

They also experienced the continuing challenge of deinstitutionalization through visits to government-operated facilities and orphanages.

All-in-all, member participants were inspired by the people they met and programs they observed, gaining an appreciation for and understanding of the challenges still facing these countries and the NGOs providing community-based supports and services. As a

result, several participants have since joined the ANCOR International Committee in order to remain involved and strengthen their affiliation with ANCOR international members.

ANCOR is planning two tours in 2008-09. One, prospectively to northern Russia, and a second to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. An African tour is anticipated in late 2009 or 2010. Details will follow as they are available. ■

Special thanks to Motivation Romania, Mosaic, Speranta Center and Keystone Human Services for their assistance and support in making this tour possible.

If you are interested in a future international tour or in getting more involved in ANCOR's international efforts, contact Jerri McCandless at ANCOR jmccandless@ancor.org. Opportunities for staff exchanges and international support donations are available.