

# Family Champions assists many across the entire North Country

by Mary Peryea

Family Champions of the North Country may have started small, but the agency now assists those in need in five North Country counties.

According to executive director Karen Pioli, Family Champions was formed in 2005 and incorporated in 2007. It is a 501c3 not-for-profit agency.

In the beginning, Mrs. Pioli operated out of her home. She moved the operation to quarters on Park Street in September 2007. A year later, everything was put into storage, but she continued to work out of her home. In April 2009, Family Champions moved its offices to the former Mandy Maroun's storefront. Storage space at the old OWD was donated by Norman Bobrow and Associates.

In December 2009, Family Champions secured a five-year lease on the former Rebels site on Pine Street. This serves as their center, with the space at OWD used for donations to the Help Closet.

Mrs. Pioli and eight dedicated volunteers manage the entire operation. In addition to the donated items available through the Help Closet, Family Champions offers referrals to other agencies for services, as well as trainings on almost any topic.

The trainings are open to everyone, from agency staff to parents to interested



## Dedicated volunteers

From left, Karen Pioli, Armand Bourque, Pauline Magrino, Paul Metz, Steve Whitman, and Betty Smalley

individuals. Past topics have included asthma, autism, suicide prevention, and domestic violence.

Family Champions regularly offers parenting and co-parenting classes, as well as anger management.

Donations of cash and goods for the Help Closet come from individuals, agencies, and businesses. The thousands of square feet of storage space at OWD is crammed with items to be given to those in need.

Family Champions serves approximately 65 families a month by providing items they need, and approximately 100 families a month for clothing. Families served come from Clinton, Franklin, Hamilton, Essex, and St. Lawrence counties.

In addition, Family Champions rents an emergency apartment from its

owner, which is leased by the county. The apartment is available for use by families displaced by fire or other emergency situations.

At Christmas, Family Champions opens the doors of the Help Closet to children, allowing them to pick out gifts for their parents, which are then wrapped by volunteers. Parents are also allowed an opportunity to select gifts for their children. Last year, 56 children and 85 families utilized this service.

Anyone regardless of income can access the services of Family Champions and the Help Closet. The only information collected is name, address, phone number, county of residence, and family composition. All information is kept confidential and used only for grant applications.

The Help Closet is always accepting donations. Particularly needed at this time are furniture and baby items, especially cribs. Donations are tax deductible. Verification will be provided according to the IRS valuation guide. Mrs. Pioli asks that donations not be dropped off when the Help Closet is not open, as items often get wet and ruined. As well, if the site gets cluttered with "stuff", use of the building may be forfeited.

Volunteers are always needed, especially anyone with a truck or van for pickup and delivery.

The Help Closet at OWD is open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm, and on Saturday from 8:30 am to 3 pm, or by appointment.

The Family Champions Center on Pine Street is open on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 am to 1 pm, or by appointment. The phone number is 359-9110.

Mrs. Pioli can be reached at 359-2380 or 637-7622.

## St. Louis Construction

Custom Adirondack Camps

Cedar Log Work  
Additions  
Interior Renovations  
Kitchens & Baths  
Garages - Decks  
Masonry  
Adk. Fireplaces  
Sticky Stone - Painting  
Roofs & All Types of Siding



ALL WORK GUARANTEED  
FULLY INSURED - FREE ESTIMATES  
"Doing Business For Over 20 Years"

Robert St. Louis  
82 LeBoeuf St., Tupper Lake

(518) 359-3240  
Cell 354-1047

## FUN WORKSHOPS AT

# Art on Park

87 Park St., Tupper Lake

**Ages 9 - Young Adults**

Workshops will be offered on weekdays and weekends

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in July and August

**Call for Details...register in advance**

*Fused Glass, Personal Ceramic Plaques, Recycled Bottle Cap Artwork*

**(Saturdays 10-12: July 31, Aug. 7 & 14)**

**Call Pam at 359-2304**

*Learn to Knit: Basic Skills*

**(Sundays 10-12 TBA)**

**Call Sarah at 359-9106**

*Feed Your Talent for Sketching*

**(Saturdays, Sundays or Weekdays...TBA)**

*Inside Still Life Setups; Outside Landscapes*

**Call Sandy at 359-8525**



## Local contractor helping out

Shown above is a photo of Jim Meade installing one of the **ARISE Business Directories** at Little Wolf Campground. Jim did the log framing and finishing of these series of maps, and will be installing more around town, including Little Wolf Campground and Larkin's. Jim does all phases of construction and enjoys custom logwork.

"I like what ARISE has been doing, and I wanted to help contribute," Jim said. "My family and I enjoyed skiing at Big Tupper this past winter, and we want the positive energy to continue!"

## Come See the Art!

## Come meet the Artists!

*Celebrate the Talent of the Adirondacks!*

## Tupper Lake Art Show

### July 18-24

### Goff-Nelson Memorial Library

*Entries must be dropped off on or before*

**Mon., July 12th** between 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.

**Pick-Up Dates:** ...please pick up artwork

**Mon., July 26th & Tues., July 27th** between 10 a.m. & 5 p.m.

**\*\*MEET THE ARTISTS OPENING RECEPTION\*\***

**7-9 PM July 18th**

Goff-Nelson Library Community Room

### Stone Products for Sale

## Mitchell Stone Products LLC

*Products Readily Available*

#1 Stone

#2 Stone

3/8" Minus (Driveway Mix)

1" Minus

1 1/2" Minus (State Spec Item 4)

### Culverts & Road Fabric

*Pick Up or Delivery is Available*

Call for prices and other products you may need

161 Main Street, Tupper Lake

518-359-7029

# Tupper Lake Street Fest & Business Expo

Music Vendors Sidewalk Sales  
Loads of Fun!!

## Saturday, July 17th

10 am - 6 pm

Park St., Cliff Ave., Lake St.

*Free Concert with Tres Amigos & Friends*



10 am - 1 pm Cliff Ave., Music Tent

*Free Concert with Inisheer (Celtic Music)*



1 pm Beth Joseph Synagogue

*Free Concert with Howie Campbell*  
3 pm Cliff Ave., Music Tent

*Classic Car Show*  
11 am - 2 pm  
Cliff Ave.,

Sponsored by the Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce and the New York State Council on the Arts