



*A quarterly letter to friends of the Breaking New Ground Outreach Program*

## BNG receives renewed USDA AgrAbility funding

Faithful readers of the News Note will remember that we reported bad news concerning funding in our last issue. After 16 years as a USDA AgrAbility project, Breaking New Ground failed to receive funding through the competitive grant process in 2006. During the past year, BNG has continued to operate via funds from other sources, including Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Indiana State Office of Rural Health, and NEC Foundation of America.

Last December, BNG again submitted a proposal for USDA AgrAbility funding. After several months of waiting on the review process, we recently learned that BNG has been awarded another four-year grant.

The grant will enable BNG to continue providing its core services, like on-site assessments, our toll-free helpline, and the development of resources for farmers and ranchers with disabilities. In addition,

the project will tackle some new areas, such as Web-based training for consumers and professionals, outreach to migrant and seasonal farmworkers, development of emergency preparedness materials for rural residents with disabilities, and an initiative to address mental health issues for farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

In regard to collaborating organizations for the Indiana AgrAbility Project, BNG will welcome a former partner and two new ones. The Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter, will continue to work with the project to provide outreach and education in regard to arthritis. One scheduled activity is the production of a Spanish version of the popular brochure, *Arthritis and Agriculture*. A national conference on arthritis and agriculture is also planned.



The new partners to Indiana AgrAbility are The League, a center for independent living headquartered in Fort Wayne, and Transition Resources, an organization specializing in employment and training services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers. The addition of The League will increase Indiana AgrAbility's impact in the northeast area of the state, while Transition Resources will enable the project to begin reaching a previously underserved population.

Breaking New Ground wants to thank those organizations and individuals that have continued to support us during the past year. We look forward to renewing and strengthening existing relationships and forming new ones.

## New Toolbox CD released, distributed nationwide

BNG recently produced a new version of The Toolbox CD, the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of Agricultural Tools, Equipment, Machinery, and Buildings for Farmers and Ranchers with Disabilities. Thanks to NEC Foundation of

America, the CD has already been sent to every county Extension office in the U.S.

The Toolbox CD catalogs more than 770 assistive technology products that can make agriculture more accessible for individuals with physical limitations. Products are presented in a fact sheet format with added features that include video clips, color photographs and hyperlinks to contact information for product suppliers.

NEC Foundation of America was established in 1991 and supports programs with national reach and impact in the arena of assistive technology for people with disabilities. Their

financial support enabled BNG to update The Toolbox CD, send it to the agriculture specialist in every county Extension office in America, and develop a Web site focused on assistive technology for agricultural workers. "Many agricultural workers with disabilities—and the professionals who serve them—are simply unaware of the help that is available," said Paul Jones, BNG Program Manager. "By making information available to more communities, this initiative will have a significant impact on the lives of farmers and ranchers with disabilities."

The CD is also available for \$25, and the 2000 print version plus the CD is \$80.

To view a sample, visit the Toolbox Web site at [www.bngtoolbox.info](http://www.bngtoolbox.info).





BNG Project Leader: Bill Field Program Manager: Paul Jones Rural Rehab Specialist: Steve Swain

## Rural caregivers: unique needs, unique resources

Those who have lived in rural areas know the benefits of country living. Among other virtues, the pace is usually more manageable, the people often friendlier, and the landscape almost always more scenic than in urban areas.

However, life in rural areas has its drawbacks, especially for caregivers. The wide-open spaces that contribute to a tranquil atmosphere also mean longer distances to needed services, such as health care providers, adult daycare facilities, pharmacies, and other important providers. And anyone who has lived in rural areas knows that accessible public transportation is nonexistent in many places.

Social contact is generally more limited in rural areas, and that often translates into less emotional and practical support for caregivers. As *Today's Caregiver* magazine points out, young people often exit rural areas for urban centers because of employment and education, thus leaving rural caregivers with more limited direct support from their own families.



Even so, there are resources available to help rural caregivers. In addition to assistance provided by friends, neighbors, and family members, rural churches can often fill a void by supplying practical help and social, emotional, and spiritual support. One interfaith organization, called Faith in Action, coordinates volunteers who assist caregivers by providing help with non-medical tasks, such as running errands, giving rides, or just visiting caregivers or care receivers. Indiana has ten Faith in Action-affiliated organizations, and you can find out about them at [www.fiavolunteers.org](http://www.fiavolunteers.org).

The network of Area Agencies on Aging also has specific programs for caregivers, as mandated by the Older Americans Act. These include information about available services and assistance in gaining access to them; individual counseling, organization

of support groups, and caregiver training; respite care; and supplemental services. To contact your Area Agency on Aging in Indiana, call 800-986-3505.

There are also an abundance of Internet resources for rural caregivers. Many of these have been captured on BNG's rural caregiver Web site, [www.ruralcare.info](http://www.ruralcare.info). The site has more than 10 help categories, including organizations for caregivers, consumer health information, finances, and emergency preparedness. Also included are links to online support groups and information on respite care. Visitors can also download many of BNG's award winning *To Everything There is a Season* resources for rural caregivers.

BNG is also working with the Indiana State Office of Rural Health to assist rural caregivers this summer. See the article below for more.

## Caregiver workshops, survey slated for summer

The Indiana Office of Rural Health (InSORH) is again assisting BNG with outreach to rural caregivers by funding several initiatives.

InSORH has helped to fund 15 Caregiving in the Heartland workshops, and four more are scheduled for this summer. Three consumer-focused workshops

are planned at critical access hospitals, and a train-the-trainer workshop to give professionals the needed information and tools to serve caregivers is being held in conjunction with the Indiana Rural Health Association.

BNG is also scheduled to conduct a survey of caregivers and professionals working with them to help identify the most pressing needs and most desired training modalities for caregivers, plus other issues of importance related to caregiving.

### 2007 Caregiver Workshops

July 23: Jasper County Hospital - Rensselaer

July 31: St. Vincent Randolph Hospital - Winchester

August 2: Margaret Mary Community Hospital - Batesville

August 15: The Marten House - Indianapolis (train-the-trainer workshop)

