



## **Monarch is going greener!**

The plastic shopping bags that you see at the grocery store, drug store, and department store are all recyclable. Many people do recycle them by using them again for book and lunch sacks, gym bags, and trashcan liners. However, there are many more that end up in the landfill, on the sides of roads and in our lakes and streams. It can take hundreds of years for the plastic to break down and as the bags decompose, toxins seep into the soil and water.

Monarch is asking community members in all of the 44 counties where they are located to bring unwanted plastic shopping bags to their local office and do something good for the environment. The bags can be from a variety of different stores; they may be different sizes and be of different textures. The shopping bags will be recycled and turned into park benches which will be around for a long time, maybe even longer than the bags in the landfill. For more info, visit our website, [www.monarchnc.org](http://www.monarchnc.org).

## **Partners in Policymaking**

Have you ever considered learning more about how you can affect change in the system for someone you care about? There is a wonderful way! The website, [www.ncpartnersinpolicymaking.org](http://www.ncpartnersinpolicymaking.org) states the following:

The North Carolina Partners in Policymaking™ program helps open the door for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and family members to participate in the public discussion of principles and policies that affect their lives and their role in the community. Those selected to take part learn about how to communicate with public officials and legislators and the general public, often making use of the media. Through a series of eight weekend seminars they also gain information about the structure of laws and agencies that determine and administer programs affecting people with disabilities.

An innovative leadership training program created in 1987 by the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Partners in Policymaking™ provides adults with disabilities and the parents of young children with developmental disabilities the skills needed to be effective advocates. Participants learn how to build partnerships with elected officials, legislators, agencies and opinion leaders so that they can better express their views on the policy decisions affecting the services they and their families use.

If you are interested, they are currently accepting applications!

## **Economic News is Grim**

You are probably hearing the awful economic news everywhere. People are being laid off, companies are closing, people are losing their homes and having trouble buying food. The state of North Carolina is no exception. There have already been significant cuts to state agencies that have been passed along to providers, and we anticipate more cuts. These cuts affect the 3500 people we support across North Carolina in 44 counties. They affect the staff that work with those people. And they affect your neighbors and coworkers, and maybe even you. That's why this time of year, we all must look out for each other. In addition to our recycling efforts, our staff in several areas have created angel trees. In some areas, we are having a "Do what you "can"" Drive, looking for cans and other foodstuffs to take to local food banks. Won't you consider helping? Our website isn't yet set up for donations, but if you have a little to spare this year, please send your donation to Monarch donations  
350 Pee Dee Avenue  
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