

# LifeWorks holds open house in Springvale

By **TAMMY WELLS**

Staff Writer

SPRINGVALE — Jeffrey Araujo stopped by LifeWorks on Wednesday afternoon to help commemorate the facility's renovation and re-accreditation at an open house.

It is a location that is quite familiar to him.

Araujo attends programs at LifeWorks, a Waban Projects program, three times a week. When he's not at LifeWorks, he's working at Shaw's Supermarket, bagging groceries and performing other tasks. He's been employed at the Sanford Shaw's for five years, moving here with his family from Brockton, Mass. where he worked for the supermarket for 18 years.

On Wednesday at the open house, he and his father, James, checked out the bulletin board and then took a tour of the facility.

Araujo said he likes walking the treadmills here and attending outings, like the Sanford Mainers baseball games.

And on a recent trip to the Special Olympics in Orono, Araujo brought home medals for shot-put, the 15-meter run and the 100-meter walk.

Araujo is one of about more than 100 developmentally disabled adults from Kittery to Portland who take advantage of LifeWorks programs that provide independent living skills,



TAMMY WELLS/Journal Tribune

Jeffrey Araujo and his father James check out a bulletin board at an Open House held at LifeWorks in Springvale earlier this week.

health and fitness therapies and vocational training.

It is all about being independent and part of the community, program staff said.

The facility was recently awarded a three-year accreditation, its second, from the Council on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

That is quite an honor, said executive director Neal Meltzer.

"This is the highest standard (a facility) can get," he said.

Meltzer said the CARF surveyors who examined the program noted some exemplary features, including advocacy efforts demonstrated by pro-

gram participants at the Legislature last year.

"We're very proud of our consumers," he said, adding he's equally proud of LifeWorks program directors Robert Mullins and Melissa Hall.

Inside the Pleasant Street facility there's been a renovation that has allowed an expansion of some programs, like the room set aside so those enrolled can work on job search skills, résumé building, and social interaction.

Program consumers also learn, hands-on, how to perform some jobs like bagging groceries or busing tables, Mullins

said.

Locally, program clients work at Hannaford, Shaw's, Applebee's, Shains, Metrocast, Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Wal-mart. Of the 100 program consumers, about 25 have part-time jobs, Mullins estimated.

In the Gateway to the Community Room, folks plan outings, like strawberry-picking trips, ball games, rock climbing, skiing, and — one of last year's highlights — a trip to the Legislature in Augusta to advocate for the programs they're involved in.

Another area promotes independent living skills, like cooking, washing and folding clothes, and money management.

In the health and fitness room, there are the treadmills, mats and stationary bicycles. There's an area where clients can work on their fine motor skills and, several participants take part in road race training, Mullins said.

In yet another program, program participants fill grocery orders called in by home-bound elderly folks and then deliver them.

LifeWorks at one time was located on the Waban campus on Route 4; in 2004 it moved to Pleasant Street.

"We wanted to be more accessible to the community," said Mullins.