

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR FOUNDATION – PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORT

The New Hampshire Bar Foundation plays an important role in supporting a wide range of legal services that serve New Hampshire residents struggling to overcome poverty, abuse, and discrimination. Each year, Justice Grants are made from the Bar Foundation's endowed funds to help ensure access to the justice system for all residents, especially those with limited means.

For the past two years, the foundation has chosen the Institute on Disability/UNH *NH Leadership Series* as one of its select grantees, awarding Justice Grants in the amount of \$5,000 in 2007 and \$3,500 in 2008. "We see funding the *NH Leadership Series* as an ideal way of accomplishing what we and our Justice Fund donors are trying to achieve," said David Snyder, executive director of the New Hampshire Bar Foundation. The *Stanley M. and Thalia M. Brown Fund* and the *Judge Richard E. Cooper Fund* both provided support for the *NH Leadership Series*.

"Our role is to work with community programs that are helping to find solutions to justice-related problems. This can mean supporting everything from training for volunteer attorneys about consumer issues confronting low-income people in New Hampshire to programs like the *NH Leadership Series*, which prepares families to play a role in the legislative process and educates legislators about issues that are key to individuals with disabilities."

In 2007, Justice Grant funds helped to underwrite the Series' Legislative Session – one of seven such sessions during which the 35 program participants receive in-depth leadership and advocacy skills training. At this session, participants meet with their legislators at the State House for round-table discussions about issues of concern. "The training session the day before with a national expert was terrific," said Snyder. "During that session, family members and legislators alike get a real hands-on education about the law and the justice system – exactly the kind of work we are here to support."

In 2008, funds are helping to support training for participants who will emerge from the program better prepared to address – and teach others how to address – the discrepancies that persist between mental health services and supports in the state and those for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.

"It is easy sometimes for people to assume that programs like the *NH Leadership Series* have the funds they need," says Snyder. "But much of the state funds that were available in the past for such programs are gone, and it is important that others step in to make sure this important work continues."



Parents participating in the NH Leadership Series pass out samples of homemade foods that seem to help calm hyperactivity in children with autism. The link between diet and behavior is still being studied but appears to make a significant difference for some children with autism.