

RECREATION

Center hosts bowling night

Students at the Phoenix Center recently participated in its second annual Family Bowling Night on June 5.

Over 75 students and family members occupied 16 lanes at Brunswick Zone, Belleville, for an evening of fun. The event allowed students with special needs and their families to participate in a recreational activity many take for granted. With assistance from special bowling ramps and gutter bumpers to help participants roll the ball and knock down bowling pins, it was just another day at the bowling alley.

"Our goal," said Dr. Geraldine Gibbia, co-founder and executive director of the Phoenix Center, "is to provide inclusion opportunities in less restrictive settings, to provide programmatic excellence in a small nurturing environment, and to empower our students to become independent members of society. This program allows us to do that by providing our students with opportunities others take for granted — normal recreational activities, like bowling."

Gibbia sums up the program's success by noting parents' reactions. One parent said it was the first time her son had ever bowled. Because of the behaviors associated with his autism, this parent was afraid to take him to a bowling alley with the rest of her family. Thanks to Phoenix Center, the same parent now feels confident she can take him on her own on the weekend.

For more information about the Phoenix Center or this event, contact Dr. Gibbia at 975-542-0743 or visit the Web site www.phoenix-centerinc.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHOENIX CENTER

Phoenix Center student Billy T and his family, of Bloomfield, enjoy the Phoenix Center's second annual Family Bowling Night.