

GARY EDLER CELEBRATES 25 YEARS WITH LEAP

Gary Edler, LEAP Communications Specialist, recently celebrated 25 years with the organization. He began as an Assistant to LEAP's first Director, Reverend David Kukelhan. The program was known then as Lutheran Employment Awareness Program, and offices were located on the third floor of the West Side United Church of Christ on Bridge Avenue.

Gary continued to serve as Assistant to the Director under Acting Director, Reverend Richard Sering, and then in 1986 to Executive Director, Doris Brennan. As LEAP services and programs grew, so too did the amount of staff, and the number of consumers served. Gary then assisted each of the Program Directors with tasks such as billing, mailings, data tracking, newsletters, program activities and events.

With his wealth of knowledge about community services for persons with disabilities, and his history of LEAP, Gary now provides information and referral services to callers. As part of his duties with the Doris Brennan Center for Disability Education & Advocacy.



"I've had many duties over the 25 years, but what is most gratifying is when a consumer thanks us for helping them with their situation. It really feels good when a consumer takes the time to tell me how we have changed their life."



Adam Sweeney (seated, front center) with BPAO co-workers.

LEAP'S SWEENEY HONORED

Adam Sweeney, LEAP Benefits Specialist with the Benefits Planning, Assistance & Outreach (BPAO) program received the Northeast Ohio Regional Spinal Cord Injury System (NORSCIS) Community Service Award at the 11th Annual Spinal Cord Injury Forum on August 4th, at MetroHealth Medical Center. The award is presented in recognition of an individual who has shown dedication to improving the lives of people with spinal cord injury. As a Peer Mentor at MetroHealth, Adam counsels and provides support to newly injured spinal cord patients. He is President of the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Spinal Cord Association.