

The View



FALL 2011

Chosen Vision Banquet 2011

By Joel Hofman

IN REVIEW

There was not an empty seat in the house during the 8th annual Chosen Vision Banquet held at the Lansing Country Club on October 22nd, 2011. Over 200 people attended this year's banquet, which also included a silent auction with items completely donated by individuals and local businesses.

The program offered an excited opportunity for the attendees to learn about the progress Chosen Vision made over the past year while honoring the individual residents of the Grand Ledge home. After the dinner, each girl received a special award and an accompanying trophy that detailed their accomplishments and improvements over the course of the year. It was truly a blessing to see each resident's face light up as board members Jim Russell and Kal Smith talked about their achievements and highlighted each girl's unique personality.

In addition, Chosen Vision volunteers Annette Stephens, Jackie Schneider and Brianna Penrod were presented with exemplary citizen medals from the Potterville Chief of Police and Fire Department for their role in evacuating Chosen Vision residents from a burning van just minutes before it burst into flames. Each volunteer was given a standing ovation by the crowd for their heroic efforts during this unimaginable situation.



Guests enjoy the annual banquet and silent auction

This year's entertainment came courtesy of the locally formed "Three Men and a Tenor," who provided tight vocal harmonies and a sense of showmanship that had the formally dressed crowd on their feet and fully participating in the show within the first ten minutes. Highlights of the performance included renditions of favorites from the Beach Boys to Bob Marley, yet the real treat came when the guys brought up Chairman of the Board, Kal Smith to attempt his very best Elvis Presley impersonation for the crowd.

At the end of the night, Chosen Vision raised over \$40,000 through ticket and raffle sales, silent auction and personal donations. We would like to thank everyone who attended or helped with the facilitation of the banquet. God has truly blessed us with a supportive family of donors who help us with our vision of enabling developmentally disabled adults to live in a safe and secure Christian environment.



Three men and a tenor perform during the entertainment portion of the evening.



Chairman of the board, Kal Smith does his best Elvis impersonation



The ladies rush the stage after "Elvis" performs for our special guests.

There Are Heroes Among Us

› Tuesday, August 2nd, 2011

It was a normal day at Chosen Vision-- a small group home for six developmentally disabled ladies. Most residents were ready for a day full of workshops and community volunteer programs while others stayed home to help with chores or engage themselves with some Nintendo Wii games. As evening approached, the residents helped clean up after dinner and loaded a 12-passenger, handicap-ready van headed to Charlotte for a bi-weekly bowling outing.

Everything was running smoothly until Chosen Vision volunteer Annette Stephens smelled something burning near the front of the van. Despite the fact that no indicator lights were on, Annette saw smoke coming from the instrumental panel of the van and immediately pulled over to the side of the road. In an urgent and timely manner, Annette along with volunteers Jackie Schneider and Brianna Penrod got the girls out of the van and moved them far away from the smoking vehicle. Because the wheelchair lift was moving slowly due to the van's condition, resident Holly Tallian was the last resident removed from the van as flames were beginning to approach the back of the vehicle. Within two minutes of the evacuation, the van was engulfed in billow-



From L to R: Annette Stephens, Jackie Schneider, Brianna Penrod

ing black smoke and reduced to nothing but a smoldering, skeletal body of what it once was.

Through the swift actions of the Chosen Vision volunteers, it was evident that God was watching over the staff and residents during this scary situation. Chosen Vision would also like to thank the EMS and Pottersville police for their quick response to the 911 call and the considerable caring they provided the residents and staff during this traumatic experience.

Chosen Vision Resident Awards 2011

At this year's Chosen Vision banquet, each resident was presented with a special trophy and award that signified the personal improvements they have made over the past year.

Kathy Bowland (Personal Awareness Award): Kathy has made great strides in letting the Chosen Vision staff know how she is feeling on a daily basis. This has also made Kathy more intuitive as an individual and has significantly improved her ability to care for herself and continue to thrive in the Chosen Vision home.

Valerie Bodiford (Courageous Spirit Award): Since she first arrived at Chosen Vision, Valerie has been terrified of water and unable to participate with the other girls when they frequent water parks and pools for summer fun. Through incredible courage and an always optimistic spirit, Valerie personally conquered her fear of water and is ready to keep breaking down more barriers during the upcoming year!

Amy Russell (Community Involvement Award): Throughout the course of the year, Amy expanded her outreach and became involved in various community volunteer programs, took college courses, and even learned to efficiently use the public transportation system. Amy has always had an adventurous side to her that she truly showed this year by becoming a very active member of her local community.

Kim Denyes (Social Butterfly Award): Kim became much more independent during the past year and has made many new friends. Despite the fact that she already has many peers at the Chosen Vision home, Kim made a special effort to reach out to others and provide a comforting, encouraging personality to her growing group of friends.

Laura Carpenter (Active Engagement Award): Effective and clear communication is a cornerstone of life in the Chosen Vision Home. This year, Laura exemplified this phrase by more actively and willingly engaging with the staff to better communicate her needs. In addition, she became much more proficient in the use of sign language over the year.

Holly Tallian (Assertive Communicator Award): In the past, Holly has had trouble expressing her wants and needs to the Chosen Vision staff. This year was a different story. Holly stepped up to the plate by being more forthright with the staff while also learning more about herself in the process. These improvements, along with the positivity that Holly brings to the house have been a blessing for both the staff and residents of Chosen Vision.

Long Lake Bar and Grill 5th Annual Charity Golf Event *Benefitting Chosen Vision*

by Bob Tallian, Board Member

Long Lake Bar and Grill (LLB) held their 5th Annual Golf Scramble benefit for the Developmentally Disabled on August 28th and Chosen Vision was selected as the Non Profit recipient. This marks the 5th straight year Chosen Vision has been selected. We're truly grateful for the generosity of our supporters at Wicker Hills and Long Lake Bar patrons in Hale, Michigan located 200 miles away.

72 golfers made up the 18 teams in a four person nine hole scramble that included prizes for first place, drives closest to the "squiggly" line and closest to the pin contests for both men and women. A repeat twist to this year's event included the opportunity to purchase "mulligans" and there wasn't a team that did not take advantage of these little helpers. Matter of fact, most teams said they should have bought more. After golf, everyone went back to the LLB for dinner and to see if they won several raffle items that were donated including gift certificates, golf clubs, tools and some unique household items.



36 golf carts gassed and ready to go

This year's event couldn't have come at a better time. All the participants were informed of the near fatal fire and subsequent total loss of Chosen Vision's 12 passenger van. The support was overwhelming. The LLB golf outing raised \$1,800, the winner of the 50/50 raffle donated her winnings back to Chosen Vision as well as the team who won the 1st place prize. A local dealership in the Tawas area donated \$2,000 and a personal donation of \$2,000 was received from a generous long time supporter. In addition, the winner of the golf event started up a "match me" donation in which several participated. All in all, nearly \$6,000 was raised which made a huge impact on offsetting the costs associated with acquiring a replacement van.

Chosen Vision is extremely appreciative to Long Lake Bar owners Carole Wilson and Tim Prichard for their sponsorship and Cathy Baker, owner of Wicker Hills Golf Course, for hosting the event and closing the golf course just for us. The weather was perfect; everyone had a great time and is looking forward to the 6th Annual golf outing.



From left to right, Jim, Shirley, Jane and Dan getting ready to tee it up



Capital Area United Way

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new web site at
www.Chosenvision.org**



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Chairman's Corner

I enjoy reading about the lives of Christian martyrs. These exceptional people gave their lives for their faith and we can learn a lot from them. One of the more interesting but lesser known martyrs is James the Persian, also known as Saint James Intercisus. Tradition states that he was a military officer in Persia who was courtier to King Bahram V who kept himself busy persecuting first Zoroastrians and then Christians. James was from a Christian family and eventually confessed his faith, after which Bahram ordered him tortured and killed. James surname, Intercisus, is derived from the Latin word for "cut into pieces," which refers to the manner of his martyrdom. He was slowly cut into twenty-eight pieces before being ultimately beheaded. The Church of St. James Intercisus in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem is dedicated to him.

I admire James Intercisus for his faith and his courage but I mostly remember him for his manner of death. Imagine being cut into 28 pieces and then beheaded! Sometimes my life is so "cut" or fractured in terms of competing demands for time and emotional investment that I want to adopt James Intercisus as my patron saint. I think most people who have a healthy attachment to the community and a desire to serve others often feel fractured as they are pulled in multiple directions by friends, family, church, work and community service.

God left us beautiful stories in the scriptures. In the exemplary actions of the saints, and the lives of those around us, God gives us hope and encouragement. These stories inspire and teach us to trust that God is in control of every minute of our day and has a plan and purpose for each trial and test. Through his plan, God teaches us to conform to the likeness of His Son. When we remember this lesson,

feelings of peace and purpose and wholeness banish the negative feelings of too many demands and too little time.

God uses the lives of the special ladies of Chosen Vision to inspire us and teach us to trust Him. Just being at the home and seeing the smiles of our beautiful residents reminds me of God's love and brings me peace. Perhaps this is because, as Matthew 25 says, "What you have done unto the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me". This makes each of our special ladies Jesus in disguise. When we project our love for Christ unto them, it changes our lives because it changes the lens through which we see the entire world. Advent is the beginning of the Christian year and the approach of Advent is a good time to ponder the stories of our faith and the lives of exemplary Christians can reveal new ways to project our love for Christ unto others.

Kalmin D. Smith, Ph.D.
Chairman of the Board