

## A Good Story, A True Story, A Giving Story

I am a mother of three, ages 14, 12, 3. I recently completed my college degree. The last class I had to take was Sociology. The teacher was absolutely inspiring with the qualities that I wish every human being had been graced with. Her last project of the term was called, 'Smile.' The class was asked to go out and smile at three people and document their reactions.

I am a very friendly person and always smile at everyone and say hello anyway. So, I thought this would be a piece of cake, literally.

Soon after we were assigned the project, my husband, youngest son, and I went out to McDonald's one crisp March morning. It was just our way of sharing special playtime with our son. We were standing in line, waiting to be served, when all of a sudden everyone around us began to back away, and then even my husband did. I did not move an inch... an overwhelming feeling of panic welled up inside of me as I turned to see why they had moved. As I turned around I smelled a horrible 'dirty body' smell, and there standing behind me were two poor homeless men. As I looked down at the short gentleman, close to me, he was 'smiling'. His beautiful sky blue eyes were full of God's Light as he searched for acceptance. He said, 'Good day' as he counted the few coins he had been clutching.

The second man fumbled with his hands as he stood behind his friend. I realized the second man was mentally challenged and the blue-eyed gentleman was his salvation. I held my tears as I stood there with them.

The young lady at the counter asked him what they wanted. He said, 'Coffee is all Miss' because that was all they could afford. (If they wanted to sit in the restaurant and warm up, they had to buy something. He just wanted to be warm). Then I really felt it - the compulsion was so great I almost reached out and embraced the little man with the blue eyes.

That is when I noticed all eyes in the restaurant were set on me, judging my every action. I smiled and asked the young lady behind the counter to give me two more breakfast meals on a separate tray.

I then walked around the corner to the table that the men had chosen as a resting spot. I put the tray on the

table and laid my hand on the blue-eyed gentleman's cold hand. He looked up at me, with tears in his eyes, and said, 'Thank you.' I leaned over, began to pat his hand and said, 'I did not do this for you. God is here working through me to give you hope.'

I started to cry as I walked away to join my husband and son. When I sat down my husband smiled at me and said, 'That is why God gave you to me, Honey, to give me hope. We held hands for a moment and at that time we knew that only because of the Grace that we had been given were we able to give.

We are not church goers, but we are believers. That day showed me the pure Light of God's sweet love.

I returned to college, on the last evening of class, with this story in hand. I turned in 'my project' and the instructor read it. Then she looked up at me and said, 'Can I share this?' I slowly nodded as she got the attention of the class. She began to read and that is when I knew that we as human beings and being part of God share this need to heal people and to be healed. In my own way I had touched the people at McDonald's, my son, instructor, and every soul that shared the classroom on the last night I spent as a college student. I graduated with one of the biggest lessons I would ever learn: **UNCONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE.**

Much love and compassion is sent to each and every person who may read this and learn how to LOVE PEOPLE AND USE THINGS - NOT LOVE THINGS AND USE PEOPLE.

### **An Angel wrote:**

*Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.*

*To handle yourself, use your head.*

*To handle others, use your heart.*

*God gives every bird its food, but He does not throw it into its nest.*



## 2010 Financial Performance Snapshot

As you can see from the chart below, Chosen Vision has been relatively close in achieving budgeted operating performance over the last several years. However, 2010 was not the case.

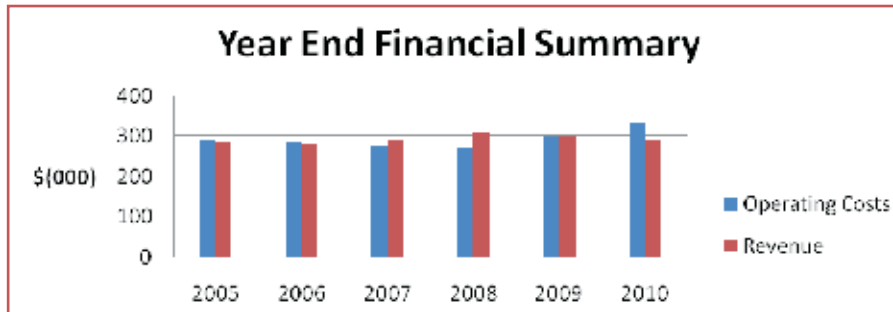
Although Revenues for 2010 (\$293,000) were near budget, Operating Expenses were \$41,000 over budget. Several unexpected factors contributing to the increase were:

- Elevator repair not covered by a Warranty-Maintenance Agreement
- Increase in staff costs due to additional care for some of our residents needs
- Unforeseen water damage(not covered by insurance) that resulted in complete tear out and replacement of a bathroom
- Vehicle repairs
- Insurance premium increases
- Furniture and appliance replacement

With all that said, there were several cost saving measures as a result of our extraordinary VOLUNTEER base that:

- Provided lawn care, tree trimming and plant/shrubbery pruning
- Power wash and seal/stain a large wrap around deck and ramp areas
- Interior painting
- Exterior vinyl and window cleaning
- Roof repair and gutter cleaning

*Thank you to all that provided those volunteer services. We would like to thank all previous donors and pray their financial situation improves so they may once again donate. We thank you for your past and present support and pray that it may continue. Thank you to all that have made Chosen Vision a unique home that provides care for our developmentally disabled residents.*



## New DeWitt Home Update

We are pleased to report that solid progress is being made on the plans and fundraising for our second home “**Chosen Vision – DeWitt.**” Because of the growing need for housing for the developmentally disabled and the substantial waitlist of residents to get into our Chosen Vision – Grand Ledge home, it has been on the hearts of the Board of Chosen Vision to consider adding a second home to serve additional developmentally disabled woman in the Lansing community.

As you may know, last fall the decision was made to move forward with these plans, thanks in part to a generous donation of a beautiful walkout building site in DeWitt, along with over \$100,000 of in-kind construction donations.

With that solid footing to build on, we started doing additional fundraising and we are pleased to report substantial progress has been made. **Thank you** to each and every person, family, business, and Foundation that has stepped forward to help us move forward with the plans for **Chosen Vision – DeWitt.**



To date, we have received the following:

• Cash gifts received so far .....	\$57,000
• Pledged cash gifts .....	\$77,000
• Lot donation .....	\$60,000
• In-kind construction donation/pledges ....	\$100,000
<b>Total: .....</b>	<b>\$294,000</b>

As you can see, we are over halfway to our goal of raising \$550,000 so that we can build and furnish the **Chosen Vision – DeWitt** home and open its doors debt free.

The potential residents, staff, and the Board of Chosen Vision extend our deepest gratitude to those who have already stepped forward in support of this challenging yet meaningful undertaking. It is our desire to obtain matching funds thru Foundation grants. If you know of or are involved with other Foundations or organizations that might be willing to support this endeavor, please let us know so that we can continue raising the funds, in hopes of breaking ground and beginning construction on this worthwhile project in the summer of 2011.

# Don't take LIFE for Granted

by Joann Gould

Chosen Vision hired 2 new staff last year; we welcome MaryAnn and Maryam. Hiring new staff is quite a process: reviewing applications, setting up & conducting an interview, filling out paper work to get permission to do a complete background check, checking driver licenses to make sure they are valid & all references checked. If those items come back good and the House Manager & I feel this person is a good candidate, we move forward & schedule a physical & a TB test. By law, we cannot put any new hire on the floor working directly with the residents until we receive the results of their T.B test. If the test comes back negative, we can move ahead and schedule Community Mental Health training & this can take up to a month or better as a lot depends on what classes are available.

Chosen Vision has in home training too where all CV policies and all AFC/CMH rules and regulations procedures are reviewed and explained. The House Manager also schedules this new hire to work "with her" out on the floor to acquaint her with the residents, to learn her responsibilities and to make sure she knows what is expected of her. This normally takes up to two weeks and everyone gets to take their time growing accustomed to who we are and what we are all about. Training has many different facets to cover and is very important to the "new hire" and most important of all - to the ladies of Chosen Vision.

Here are some examples of why training is so important:



- If you were unable to shower yourself - How would you feel if someone was giving you a shower

and you couldn't communicate effectively to let them know you like your water real warm and you are given a shower with a temperature that is not real comfortable for you?

*\*\*\*Don't take that shower you take every day for granted. You can control the temperture just the way you like it.*

- What about having someone brush your teeth? Having a new face staring at you with toothbrush in hand and the toothpaste they are using is not the kind that you like.

*\*\*\*Don't take your favorite toothpaste for granted - you can go to the store and buy the flavor you like. We have to tell the new staff what each resident prefers.*

- What about waking up in the morning and you are unable to blow your nose which is stuffy because you have a cold. We have to train new staff on how to help some residents blow their noses and what signs to look for when they need help.

*\*\*\*Don't take blowing your nose for granted. You can pick up a Kleenex and blow your nose and think nothing of it.*

- How would you like someone new coming into your house and cleaning your toes or ears? Someone you have never met?

*\*\*\*Don't take cleaning yourself for granted. You can pick up a washcloth and know what to do with it.*

- What if you need a hug because you had a bad day? Most of us can go to mom or dad, to our spouses or a close friend; but the ladies here at Chosen Vision cannot always express how they are feeling & sometimes tears will roll down their faces and the staff has to know that when they see tears on residents cheeks this means they need a hug and some comfort.



*\*\*\* Don't take emotions for granted - you can tell someone about your day and get a hug to let you know "its ok".*

- The list goes on and on

Chosen Vision takes hiring staff very seriously and making sure all the CV policy & procedures and the AFC/CMH rules & regulations are being followed. It is the training in the home & making sure our new staff knows the likes and dislikes of each resident in this house that we call HOME. Some cannot communicate well enough like the majority of us can & I count on the House Manager and the senior staff to communicate to the new hire who we are, what we do for our residents, their likes and dislikes and for many many other things that each resident may need to get through their day.

**\*\*\*Don't take LIFE for granted - because you never know when life will change\*\*\***

## Reminder Mark Your Calendar! October 22, 2011

Chosen Vision will be hosting our 9th Annual Banquet and Silent Auction at the Country Club of Lansing.

For more Banquet information or, if you're interested in donating an item to our Silent Auction, contact Joann Gould 517-622-0574 or e-mail [chosenvision@comcast.net](mailto:chosenvision@comcast.net)



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## Chairman's Corner

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Lent is a forty-day period before Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday. The period between Ash Wednesday and Easter is actually more than forty days because we do not include Sundays. Sundays are skipped in counting the forty days because Sunday is the day Christians commemorate the Resurrection. This year Lent begins on 9 March. For some Christians Lent ends on 23 April which is the day before Easter. For other Christians, Lent ends at Sundown on 21 April (Holy Thursday), with the beginning of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In most churches, the decorations for Lent are purple, the royal color used to prepare for the King.

Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It originated in the earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when Christians rededicated themselves to God and converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism.

The ancient church that wrote, collected, canonized, and propagated the New Testament observed Lent, believing it to be a commandment from the apostles. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

Some erroneously believe that mentally disabled people may be excluded from exposure to religious education because they do not have sufficient reasoning capacity to understand religion or have a relationship with God. But those who live with the developmentally disabled will tell you they often exhibit great faith. They can be totally trusting. They can love unconditionally. They rarely allow doubt to overtake their faith the way more rational believers sometimes do. They have the kind of faith that prompted Jesus to say: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

At Chosen Vision, Lent is taken very seriously as is Jesus' command to "Let the little children come to me." Each Monday our special ladies have Bible study led by Ellie Tobey. This year Mrs. Tobey will take them through Lent using their Bible studies. The emphasis will be on prayer, self evaluation, alms giving, penitence, and the death and resurrection of Jesus. Ellie will use visuals, sign language and various objects as tools in her Lenten Bible studies. We at Chosen Vision are thankful for the season of Lent. Through Lent we are reminded of God's love and sacrifice for us. We are also grateful to Ellie Tobey for her commitment to Lent and to our Ladies, as we are also thankful to each of you for your faithfulness in your support of Chosen Vision as work God has given us to do.

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