

## *A Day in the Life*

### OF A CHOSEN VISION BOARD MEMBER



By Melanie Dart

It's a two-alarm day (I had to set both the alarm clock and phone) with a 7:30 a.m. meeting at the Bank. Even as I am just out of bed and barely waking up, I see the horizon tinged with deep blue and pink, the early makings of a stunning sunrise!

After a very valuable meeting explaining some existing products and an exciting new one, I'm off to Grand Ledge, to a Chosen Vision (CV) SubCommittee meeting with Administrator Joann Gould and Chairman of the Board Kalmin Smith regarding the staffing of the new DeWitt location. After some mutual commiserating about world affairs, we settle down with coffee and job descriptions to the serious business of considering the requirements for the new (under construction) DeWitt Chosen Vision home. We are hoping for some economies of scale with our new operation. Some great ideas emerged along with areas where we need more information.

At 11 am, I'm back to the Bank to check messages, email, and prepare for Kiwanis Club. Today's Kiwanis program is about "Steppin' Up for Kids, Footwear for Youth," an organization that serves qualified families in Eaton and Barry Counties with shoes, backpacks for school, and other clothing and items. Their main drive is August 16th, 17th, and 18th. They do great work!

Now I return to my office to get some work done! I'm setting up appointments for some lunches with customers, distributing and reviewing information from nonprofits, and redoing a letter (for about the 50th time!). I love my job and the flexibility it gives me. I especially enjoy the opportunities I have to meet new people and make new friendships.

Time for a chocolate break! I've made pretty good decisions so far today about food, so I do allow myself a little square or two of dark chocolate in the afternoon. We have a hearty laugh at the Bank about an inside joke and I resume my work.

One of the things I like about being on the Board of Chosen Vision is how it opens me up to a whole new world, learning about both the limitations and achievements of others, and feeling that by being on the Board, I might contribute in some small way to these ladies' quality of life, safety, and growth in their Christian faith. I enjoy interacting with our CV ladies, and look forward to a time when I can do that more. I like meeting the staff and learning about their strengths too. I am blessed to be included in this Board, and I have to say it helps me get life in its proper perspective.

My work day is done now, and I'm excited to have something fun to do tonight! Joann (CV Administrator) has invited me to the United Way Awards Reception at the Lansing Lexington Hotel. Besides the fact that the Lexington does a beautiful job with food at any event I've attended there, I'm looking forward to seeing people from other nonprofits, some I know, and meeting new friends.

Day is done now. I love how the days are getting longer, and I drive home in front of a spectacular sunset, very showy evidence of God's love and power and creativity. I think of how each of our lovely Chosen Vision ladies is an emissary of God's very special love and what a privilege it is to have a part in taking care of them!

# Holidays

Holidays in my family have always been special occasions. My mom prepares a large meal with many different desserts, invites our immediate and extended family, and together we enjoy the company of each other while engorging our bellies with good food. This year, on Easter Sunday not much was different, except we had a special guest. Valerie first met my family around Christmas time. My mother and I picked her up from Chosen Vision and took her to dinner, shopping and to see Santa Claus. Valerie jumped in the front seat, even though I called "shotgun." She had so much fun that every time she saw me, she asked when we were going "shopping with Angel again." Angel is my mom. When I told my mom that I wished to invite Valerie over for Easter dinner, she was ecstatic, just as I knew she would be.

We went shopping for all the dinner fixings, and we bought Valerie a package of Almond Joy candy bars, one of her favorites. On Sunday, I drove to the house to get Valerie. She was all dressed and ready to go. It didn't take long for her to jump in the front seat, leaving my sister to ride in the back. When we arrived at my house, the yard was filled with many different brightly colored candy-stuffed plastic eggs. Valerie wanted to scoop some up right then, but we told her she would have to wait. When we walked into the house, my mom was standing near the counter waiting to greet Valerie. Val walked real fast toward her, making my mom think she was looking for a hug, but what my mom failed to realize was the Monster cookies she had just made were on a plate on the counter near where she stood. Valerie ate a cookie, and then offered a hug. While we cooked dinner, Val sat at the counter and told us about her plans for our next shopping adventure.



We planned on making macaroni salad, but we couldn't remember what all went into it. Valerie informed us that we needed macaroni, mayonnaise, mustard, relish, and tuna fish. She had to test the first bite, and gave her seal of approval. During dinner, Valerie sat at the table with our family. She really fit right in, and I honestly believe she felt it too. Val had two plates of food, then two servings of dessert. Even though I never thought this occasion would arise, Valerie announced she was full. Anyone who knows Val knows that she has a bottomless stomach. It was time for the Easter egg hunt, but we were too stuffed to participate. While my younger brothers, nieces and nephews ran around the yard loading up on Easter eggs, Valerie and I hung out on the porch watching the kids laugh and play.

We relaxed for a while, and then my mom got the kite out to fly. It was perfect weather for flying the kite that day. Val and I sat back and watched her. We were both too full to find a way to get out of the comfy chairs. After awhile, we went back into the house and warmed up. Mom offered more food, but again, Valerie informed us she was still full. Sometimes moms just feel like they need to stuff us with food to keep us happy. Valerie was happy. Even without more food. She laughed with us, told us about her programs and about the other girls at Chosen Vision. She involved herself in our conversation just as if she were one of our family.

Time flew quickly. It was now time to take her back home. We got our shoes on, and as we were heading out the door, she raced over to hug my mom goodbye. As we were heading out the door, she asked again "when are we going shopping, Angel?"



## To Each His Own

*I cannot change the way I am,  
I never really try,  
God made me different and unique,  
I never ask him why.*

*If I appear peculiar,  
There's nothing I can do,  
You must accept me as I am,  
As I've accepted you.*

*God made me a casting of each life,  
Then threw the mold away,  
Each child is different from the rest,  
Unlike as night from day.*

*So often we will criticize,  
The things that others do,  
But, do you know, they do not think,  
The same as me and you.*

*So God in all his wisdom,  
Who knows us all by name,  
He didn't want us to be bored,  
That's why we're not the same.*



*A special desert*

from our Ladies at Chosen Vision

### Mandarin Orange Mousse

*Everyone LOVES this dessert*

- 1 box SF orange Jell-O
- 1 box SF white chocolate pudding mix
- 1 can mandarin orange slices (drained)
- 1 8 oz tub of fat free cool whip

In a 8 x 10 dish or cake pan, mix Jell-O with 1 cup boiling water. Dissolve Jell-O completely – add 1 cup cold water and let it sit for 5 minutes. Using electric beater - beat in pudding mix and Cool Whip until well combined. Fold in drained fruit. Chill and Serve.

Yummmmm!

## REMINDERS...

- Give United Way
- Mark your Calendars for the Tenth Annual Chosen Vision Banquet and silent auction for October 20th 2012





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## Chairman's Corner

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One of the responsibilities of an adult foster care home is to deal with state regulatory agencies. Such

relationships are not easy and can sometimes be very frustrating. On the other hand, it is reassuring to know that Chosen Vision has successfully completed all inspections. The only issues raised have been minor and immediately corrected. This reflects well on our staff and the quality of care our special ladies receive.

Chosen Vision will have three state inspections this year. One inspection is an "Environmental Health and Sanitation" inspection by the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing of the Department of Human Services. This inspection includes a review of the water supply, sewage disposal systems, insect and rodent control, lighting and ventilation, plumbing, food service preparation and food storage, laundry, working conditions,

conditions of the interior and exterior of the facility and any other health and safety factors deemed relevant. A second inspection by the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing monitors compliance with 67 rules ranging from mandated qualifications for the administrator to record keeping, resident protection, crisis intervention, recreation, transportation, room temperature, bedroom furnishing and linens, smoke detection, means of egress, etc. etc. Finally, the Department of Community Mental Health does a separate review of staff training, management of human resources, medications, resident treatment, security of resident funds and valuables and much more.

In addition to state standards and inspection requirements, the Chosen Vision Board has taken further steps to ensure the safety and well being of our residents. CV Administrator Joann Gould is a disciplined and zealous "tiger" in her oversight of the treatment of the special ladies in our care. She conducts regular evaluations of the staff and provides direct care herself to ensure

that she misses nothing. Chosen Vision has set staffing levels above state mandates and requires staff training beyond that offered by the state. Further, the Chosen Vision Board contracts with Riverside Accounting of Grand Ledge to handle payroll, process all checks, monitor and track financial activity and provide direction and advice to help us properly manage and account for all Chosen Vision financial transactions. Finally, an extensive annual financial audit is conducted by the independent auditing firm of Cardinal office of Lally Group, PC of Grand Ledge. All of this information is available to state regulators and to the public through the Chosen Vision web site.

Although compliance with all these regulations keeps us busy and "on our toes", it is through these efforts that we keep our residents safe and comply with the directive of 1 John (3:18): "let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

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