

Transitions News!

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Stories of Courage and Perseverance...

Rising to a Challenge

By Lisa Mack, SDDC, Transitions South

Dawn started in the Transitions South program after having been placed in the care of the agency following her rescue by police. She was moved from a small apartment where she lived with her son, to a large adult foster care home, in rural Ingham County. Her life had changed radically, overnight.

When Dawn joined the Senior Team she was very quiet for the first few weeks, rarely speaking and watching others intently. Staff felt that she was afraid of her new world. And she missed caring for her son.

However, as a flower opens its petals, so did Dawn open up to her new life. She joined others attending a Senior luncheon, going to an MSU cooking class and to the movies. When she goes to the movies, she is able to see her son who attends with the Mason group. He is very important to her and she still wants to be a "Mom".

Meals on Wheels is a regular community activity in which Dawn participates. She delivers meals at a high rise apartment building, going from apartment to apartment handing out food to seniors. She is very serious about doing this job. Her attendance is excellent, and she is so diligent in carrying out her duties, that she has added another route in Holt.

Dawn has done an amazing job adapting to change. She has done so with poise and determination.

Never Say Never

By Fran Toth, SDDC, Transitions North

Ron has attended the various Transitions programs for many years, currently attending T-North's workshop team. Ron's opportunities for community activities were limited by transportation and budgetary challenges. In the Fall of 2003, he expressed an interest in joining the lunch program at the Cristo Rey Community Center. After getting help with setting up Spec Tran rides, and support to learn the routine of the activity, he now attends independently.

Ron had a dream of meeting Mayor Benavides and after sharing that with someone at Cristo Rey, she told him she thought she could help. In December, Ron traveled to the Lansing City Hall and met with Mayor Benavides. Ron shared his concerns, about traffic with Mr. Benavides, who listened attentively. After the meeting, Ron eagerly reported to others in the Transitions North Consumer Council, as well as his Job Club, about his meeting with the Mayor. It was encouraging to all to see Ron's ability to advocate for himself and others. Ron had planned and anticipated this experience and will keep a fond memory of it for years to come. It just goes to show that dreams really can come true!

Finding a Voice

By Michelle Whitcomb, DDC, Clinton County Satellite

A Clinton County Satellite consumer who has shown courage and perseverance in making her dreams come true is Diana. Her growth has inspired others by showing what can happen when they are determined to change their lives.

Initially, Diana had a very quiet demeanor, and it was unclear whether she would enjoy her community experience. She was very shy and extremely nervous about trying new activities. Social interactions started primarily with staff, but after some encouragement she began to develop friendships with her peers. Those friendships have now grown beyond the Satellite with Diana and a friend recently enjoying a weekend movie together. They are currently talking of additional plans together.

Telling staff what she would not do seemed more definite than what she wanted to do. Diana started with a couple of activities that seemed to be of interest to her. She had fun and was successful. She moved from only recreational activities, to volunteering her time, both in a group and individually. She has had great success at one of the day care centers, and is expected to be independent at this site when it resumes in the Fall.

Diana has also become an activist for the agency (CEI-CMHB). She has taken an active role as a citizen by contacting her legislator and sharing with him the importance of the Satellite and how CMHB has helped her life. She began this process by writing a letter to her Congressman last year. This year Diana made a phone call to that same Legislator's office when it was time for a vote on the cigarette tax and she is now preparing to testify before the Mental Health Commission in August. Diana has even begun to recognize that she might enjoy working as an advocate for persons with disabilities as a career.

While she continues to be nervous about the things she is doing, Diana is no longer afraid to take action toward a bigger and better future. She gets excited thinking of what she might yet accomplish!

Becoming a Part of Her Community...

By Jean Stroesenreuther, DDC & Carol Kron, SDDC, Charlotte Satellite

Belinda has participated in Transitions programming for many, many years. She has always been interested in being active socially, vocationally, and recreationally. However, in the distant past when attempts were made to assist Belinda to be in the community, the community was not very receptive. When the Bretton Square Industries, Transitions South, building was closed Belinda transferred to the Charlotte Satellite, which was closer to her home. She was apprehensive about immersing herself in the community for fear of rejection. Belinda has been faced with both physical and neurological challenges, due to a degenerative condition she possesses. However, this has not deterred her from pursuing or obtaining her goals and dreams.

Eaton County citizens who have met Belinda have embraced her. Currently Belinda's schedule is so full, that she is lucky to have 30 minutes to eat her lunch. A love of her life has always been doing needlework. Therefore, her current favorite activity is meeting with other women, weekly, at a needlework shop called the Hen House. Nancy, the owner, is thrilled to see Belinda each week and has graciously accommodated Belinda so she can continue to participate there. Even with increasing physical and mental challenges, with natural supports like Nancy, Belinda continues to be active in her community. Belinda also attends a church quilting group weekly. She bowls, does ceramics, volunteers at the local Goodwill store,

plus goes independently to the Potterville library to read and check out materials, every week.

Belinda states that she is happy with her life now, being as independent as she is, as well as having a life full of the activities and people she enjoys.

No Limits

By Carol Kron, SDDC, Mason Satellite

The death of Jeanne's parents turned her world around. She and her sister decided that Jeanne should move into an AFC home, earlier this year, plus she began at the Mason Satellite. Jeanne has Osteo-Arthritis, which makes her bones extremely fragile, and every movement incredibly painful. She has very little use of her hands and walking is quite difficult. In spite of all this, Jeanne's eyes light up every time an activity is suggested to her. One activity that she requested early on was to go swimming because she felt it would help her movement significantly. After some planning, she was able to go swimming at the Michigan Athletic Club because they have a lift to get her into and out of the pool. At the end of her first session she had tears in her eyes as she got out of the pool and said that she had not been able to move so easily in years! She absolutely loved doing this and was very excited each time she was able to go. During the summer the MAC facility is not available. Jeanne asked staff to look for another location and found the Williamston Aquatics Center. This facility is well equipped to assist people with disabilities. Jeanne has been able to continue her weekly swimming classes and recently expressed in her Person Centered Planning Meeting, how much this activity has helped her both physically and emotionally.

Continuing to Chase His Dream

By Vivian Turner, VRC, Vocational Services

Ed has been a consumer of Transitions since 1982, and throughout that time his dream has always been to get a job in the community. Ed's dream became a reality when he was hired at the Michigan Resource Center (MRC), as a collator, in November 1998. Ed has grown and persevered through his six years of being employed at MRC. In 2001 the MRC experienced budget cuts that completely eliminated Ed's department. He was slated to be laid off, but an employee in another department decided to work part time instead of full time and the MRC management staff voted unanimously to offer Ed the other part time position. He was nominated and received recognition as Employee of the Month in the year 2000. His supervisor and co-workers describe him as being, "committed to his work, ultimate team player, motivated, steady and dependable worker, fantastic positive attitude, unfaltering attendance and always willing to work to get the job done". His co-workers enjoy working with him because his attitude is always positive and helps motivate those who are working around him.

Unfortunately this year the MRC has undergone additional budget cuts and Ed's position will be part of the cut. Ed's dream of being employed will continue and begin a new chapter. Soon Ed will learn to operate a Coffee Kiosk at the CMH Jolly Road building, which he is excited about and anticipating. Ed has shown perseverance and courage by continuing to chase his dream of independence through community employment.

Working Toward a Future

**By Michael Mahoney, Coordinator,
Transitions Central**

Upcoming Program Closings:

Labor Day.....Monday, September 6, 2004

In Service Day.....Friday, October 22, 2004

Robert first became associated with community inclusion ten years ago, when he began working with the "20/20" Project, which became Transitions-Central. His first volunteer experience was at Tendercare South nursing home where he volunteered three days a week for over 7 years. He did some housekeeping and assisted a friend who was also volunteering there. Robert displayed leadership abilities and his helpful nature through this. In addition to this volunteering position Robert was hired for paid employment by Goff's Food Store in Haslett, where he worked for four years. Robert also volunteered at the Haslett Child Development Center and The Pines Healthcare Center. Late in 1999 Robert's home of 14 years closed and he moved to Moore Living Center in Lansing. This was a significant change for Robert, since his former home was somewhat restrictive and his access to the community was very limited. Moore Living Center provided Robert with many community experiences for the first time. Robert's responsible behavior lead to paid employment through Transitions Central where he cleaned the Drop In Center. Robert wanted a good paying job in the community and late in 2000, he began employment at a Wendy's in Lansing as a maintenance worker. He is still employed at Wendy's after almost four years. It was at this time that he made a decision to reduce and eventually stop his volunteer sites to focus on his paid job. Robert had a drive to keep busy and to help others while demonstrating an incredible work ethic. After 2 years at Moore Living Center, Robert was able to move into his own apartment where he enjoys spending time with friends, and being active in the community. Robert has worked very hard and achieved more than he dreamed possible.

Quote: "Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new beginning."-----Anonymous

Congratulations!!

We are proud to announce that Transitions has been honored with the presence of not one, but two, recent recipients of Employee of the Month awards. Lisa Marshall who works at the Transitions South program, is the Employee of the month for August. Pam Mc Daniel who works at the Transitions North program, is the Employee of the month for September. As a Supports Coordinator recently shared with a Transitions staff person, "you are the ones who do the work that really matters...". We wish to thank both Lisa and Pam for not only doing the work that really matters, but doing it with passion and commitment.

É É É The mission of CSDD is to promote and support ongoing choices for people and their families to be full and equal citizens in the community.É É É

WANTED

Employers or businesses that can provide employment opportunities or production work for the Transitions North Workshop. The Work Services Team of Transitions wants to enlist the help of consumers, friends, and families of consumers in our efforts to find community employment and production work. Should you have an ideas, please contact:

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or

John Root
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