

Transitions News!

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STEPPING OUT

Transitions Central
by Beth LaFleche-Hall

MSU women's basketball games. Wharton Center plays. Hay rides. Lansing Lugnuts games. Movies. Color Cruises. Musicals. These sound like great ideas about how to spend your weekends, right? Actually, these are just a few of the exciting activities enjoyed each month by Transitions Central community groups.

In the fall of 2002, four small groups of consumers were formed with the goal of providing enriched community inclusion opportunities. "Enriched" was defined as activities occurring evenings or on weekends, when most people enjoy their leisure time. Consumers initially met with Transitions Central staff to brainstorm their ideas regarding possible activities. Armed with "The List" of ideas, one Transitions Central staff person provided support for the agreed upon monthly activity by coordinating, supporting and driving each group. Consumers were responsible for a small portion of the activity cost. The remaining cost was offset by money received from the Myrtle Yoshinaga Award for Clinical Excellence, which was presented to Transitions Central in 2001. This idea caught on and continues some 3 years later!

Expressions of satisfaction come from consumers on a regular basis. Risa grins as she talks about the Lugnuts game and fireworks. Karen enjoys the chance to be "one of the girls" each month. Simone excitedly suggests ideas for new activities. With consumers input as the driving force behind the community groups, "The List" of ideas is sure to keep growing.

Dates Worth Remembering

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October 30.....Daylight Saving Time Ends
November 11.....Veterans Day...No Program
November 24....Thanksgiving....No Program
November 25.....Thanksgiving...No Program

From Crisis to Calm

Transitions Charlotte
by Dawn McLeod

Hurricane season is drawing to a close for the Atlantic Ocean at the end of this month. It also feels as though the Transitions Charlotte season of crisis is nearing an end. Jean Stroesenreuther who has organized activities, determined consumer needs and generally kept things operating in Charlotte had a massive heart attack 2.5 months ago. She was in grave danger of succumbing to death.

Her medical crisis of these past few months is beginning to stabilize as the oceans are also stabilizing. She expects to return to her job soon after the holiday season. She looks forward to the challenges which lie ahead as she resumes her work routine.

Jean is lucky to work in Charlotte as it has proven to be a place who pays attention to safety. There have been organized clinics to screen folks for cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, diabetes and other maladies. Consumers were able to participate in the clinics some of which were held at Peckham Vocational Industries. These screening clinics had a significant impact on some consumers.

Charlotte and the surrounding areas make a real effort to ensure the safety of people with special needs. There has not been a site who found it impossible to provide easy accessibility and acceptance for the inclusion experiences established. The people of Charlotte and Eaton County are amazing at how they accept the challenge. Jean and the others who work in Eaton County are happy to be there and look forward to many more challenges.

A DAY WITH DEB AT TRANSITIONS ST. JOHNS

Transitions St. Johns
by Michelle Sheren

Deb is a "Charter member" of Transitions St. Johns who enjoys community inclusive activities every day which means that she is a very busy lady? It must be agreed however, that Friday is Deb's favorite day of the week

because after 4 days of bringing her bathing suit and towel to Transitions St. Johns it is finally time to go to Aqua-Therapy class at St. Johns High School! A scenic ride through the countryside provided by Dean Transportation delivers Deb in St. Johns at about 8:30 a.m. ready for the day's activities. Upon her arrival Deb greets everyone, puts her belongings away and embraces the day. She may do some baking or packaging products for The Pet Pantry or enjoy a magazine, listen to music or socialize.

Deb gathers her belongings for Aqua Therapy class and joins the other who go with Tami. Spending an hour in the pool exercising and interacting with other community members is a sure sign that Deb loves to be there. Deb smiles from start to finish and she is working on making new friends with classmates. After showering, dressing and returning to Transitions St. Johns, Deb takes a few moments to have lunch.

Deb likes to talk with others during lunch but not for too long because she can't miss Bingo at the Clinton County Senior Center. This also ranks high on Deb's list of favorites as she is often a winner with a deepening pile of prizes on her bed. The seniors at the Center have noticed Deb's love of stuffed animals and frequently save them for her to choose as prizes. The Seniors look for Deb and the rest of the group each week. People inquire about her and others if one of the group is missing. Deb has been included in this activity and is integrated into the community fabric.

After Bingo, Deb and the group enjoy refreshments at a local diner where they compare weekend plans and Bingo winnings. Upon returning to Transitions St. Johns

following her refreshments, Deb usually spends time with Amy Cheetham, Speech Pathologist who plays games and does craft projects with her! Deb has a full day!

Flo, the friendly Dean driver takes Deb off to Westphalia for a weekend of R and R. Monday, it starts all over!

HONORING ELDERS

Transitions North

by Mary Studenka and Susan Speers

As part of the CSDD Mission of promoting and supporting ongoing choices and opportunities for people and their families to be full and equal citizens in the community, there is no mandatory retirement age for consumers to receive Transitions services. At Transitions-North, we offer two special opportunities for individuals who have reached their golden years. If individuals wish to continue to work in the workshop area, they may continue as long as physically able. Additionally they may participate in a Senior focused section of our Community Independence class, which focuses on leisure activities and community based activities for Seniors. Each Wednesday, the class spends the entire day in the community, doing a variety of recreational activities. Consumers can also be part of the Senior Team, who participate in community activities daily, but at a slower pace. Community living supports are provided as needed in the team setting.

Life includes dealing with death and loss, especially for Seniors. Many individuals have experienced the loss of their parents, siblings and close friends. Many individuals have no family left to provide comfort and closure related to these losses. At Transitions-North, if consumers are not able to attend memorial services, special efforts are made to recognize the loss of a special friend and celebrate their life. Three veteran consumers recently passed within a short time span. Although their health had declined in recent months, and they were no longer attending program, Dorothea, Cindy and Nellie had participated in several Transitions Components for many years and were visited during their illnesses. Their feistiness, sense of humor, and loving ways that were unique to each one of them will be missed.

In their honor, consumers and staff arranged a brief ceremony. A rainbow of colored balloons were released into the air outside the Transitions-North building by peers and home and program staff. The balloons floated high into the air as carrying our good-byes. The team staff provided refreshments and a memory board, and it was a meaningful time for all involved. A memorial plaque in the hallway in the office area, holds the names of individuals who have passed on. Each individual leaves an imprint on those they have touched.

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RESPONSIBILITY REWARDED

Transitions Mason
by Elizabeth Putnam

Joey has enjoyed involvement with Transitions Mason since it opened three years ago. For the past year, she has successfully worked as a Consumer Aide at the Transitions Mason Drop In Center. Her job duties include helping the staff and consumers. She answers the phone, takes messages, gets the mail as well as other clerical type duties. Consumers can rely on her to help them with lunch prep, tell them when their ride is there, assist with going to Rite Aid to shop and managing their bus passes. Directing her work at the Drop In Center is Elizabeth Putnam who would be lost without her help. Prior to securing this position, Joey's attendance was sporadic. Now, the only days she is absent, are the ones she plans for and requests in advance. In addition to learning new job skills, she is maintaining a savings account at a local bank, arranging her own transportation to and from the bank while completing all the bank transactions independently. Joey states she enjoys her job, feels important and is happier than ever.

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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 any ideas, please contact:

**Steve Frese
323-9558**

frese@ceicmh.org

or

**John Root
346-9568**

root@ceicmh.org

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