

WINTER 2004

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MILESTONE MATTERS

Business Office: 4060 McFarland Road, Rockford, Illinois 61111, 815/654-6100

Dan Wickstrand Memorial Fund

In the Fall of 1996, Milestone received a substantial contribution from an anonymous donor to establish the Resident Enhancement Trust. The intent of the donor was to have the income from this trust be available for individuals served by Milestone who have no families to provide Christmas and Birthday gifts, special outings, clothing, and other extra items which will make their lives more complete. Since the inception of this fund, more than \$210,000 has been distributed. Individuals served by Milestone have been able to go to camp and to baseball and basketball games. They have new coats, new shoes, and televisions for their rooms. All this has been made possible through the generosity of this anonymous donor.



Our Friend, Dan

On October 11, 2004, Dan Wickstrand, a long time resident of Milestone, passed away unexpectedly. The anonymous donor has requested that we rename the Resident Enhancement Trust, the Dan Wickstrand Memorial Fund in honor of this fine young man. All memorial gifts made in Dan's honor will be placed in this fund.

Dan had a million dollar smile and a billion dollar laugh. He loved to joke and loved his possessions, and now, the Dan Wickstrand Memorial Fund will ensure that all needy individuals served by Milestone will for perpetuity have proper clothing, be able to attend camp in the summer, have the extra items all of us take for granted, and receive a birthday and Christmas gift each year.

Each time one of these items is provided through the Dan Wickstrand Memorial Fund, the individuals we serve will remember that Dan's million dollar smile is looking down on them. Dan will be remembered by Milestone and the individuals we serve forever.

TOO TALKATIVE

We take for granted the ability to communicate with others, but for some at Milestone, the ability to make sounds and vocalize your wants and needs are non-existent. Marvin, a 26-year-old young man served by Milestone has lived his life without the ability to communicate verbally. Thanks to Kaysa and the members of our Speech Department who struggled through mounds of paperwork and a little arm twisting, Marvin has a \$7,000 communication device called the Dynavox Series 4.



Marvin and Kaysa talking and smiling

The communication aid enables Marvin to communicate by making sounds through this device. Marvin calls up a picture or a symbol, touches the screen, and communicates his ideas to his friends and the staff at Milestone. Think about going through life without the ability to convey your thoughts and feelings and now just imagine how Marvin feels expressing his thoughts. The communication device has opened a new and exciting world for Marvin and has enabled his friends and the staff that work with him to better understand his needs.

This device is incorporated into his daily activities, including the job that he currently holds at Milestone Training Center Monday through Friday. His job includes collecting



Working hard or hardly working?

paperwork from all of the classrooms at the end of the day and turning it in to the secretary. Marvin is using his device to announce over the loud speaker that he will be

coming around to pick up the papers. Once he's inside the classroom, he pushes another button that tells the staff why he is there, and asks if their papers are ready. If their papers are not ready, he can push a button on his device that asks them if they would like for him to come back.

The employees who work with Marvin on a daily basis are also excited about the opportunities this communication device affords him. While Marvin has always been an expressive individual, the staff are now capable of being more responsive to his needs and desires since he can tell them exactly what he wants. The years to come will open new doors for Marvin, thanks to the Dynavox communication device and the miles of smiles from this young man.

LUNCH AT ARBY'S!

For almost a year and a half, small groups of individuals from Milestone Industries have been going to Arby's for lunch on a daily basis. On their assigned day, the ladies and gentlemen get their lunch money from the secretary and independently walk over to Arby's, which is located one block from Industries. When they return, the secretary checks their receipts and change.

The individuals and Arby's staff have developed a good relationship. The Arby's employees have learned who orders milk instead of pop and who needs help carrying their tray. In particular, the manager, Victor Snyder, has been very supportive of this community endeavor. He often gives them free pop! He has also called Industries with concerns regarding the individuals' health. Victor has said that the Milestone people are "the highlight of my day." He has demonstrated this attitude as he greets and visits with them.

In recognition of his supportive relationship, the individuals presented Mr. Snyder with a certificate of appreciation on November 12, 2004. The individuals will continue to use their community skills at our neighbor, Arby's.



Thanks, Victor

Dear Friend

For 31 years, Milestone has been in the forefront of creating residential and employment opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities. Our efforts included the development of 37 different residential options located throughout Winnebago County and serving more than 440 persons with disabilities. We operate three different vocational and developmental training facilities and operate the only free-standing dental clinic in the United States dedicated to serving individuals with developmental disabilities.

Our employees have grown from just one in 1973 to more than 580 today. We provide services to more than 1,300 individuals with disabilities on an annual basis. The agency and its services continue to be recognized for providing innovative individual-centered services to our community.

Milestone continues to change and grow to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Along with this growth comes the need for additional funding. While we receive a significant amount of our operational funding from state and federal government agencies, these funds are often effected adversely by budgetary variances in Springfield and Washington. These changes affect our ability to continue to serve people with disabilities.

Please consider sharing this holiday season with my family here at Milestone. Help me continue Milestone's commitment to Rockford's citizens with developmental disabilities. The limits on the programs and services we are able to provide are restricted only by the amount of money we receive and raise.

Thank you for your continued support, and may the spirit of the holiday season richly bless you and yours.

Sincerely,

James P. Hamilton
President and Chief Executive Officer
MILESTONE, INC.



High Fives and Excitement in Human Resources

Directly working with the individuals served at Milestone in combination with the daily duties of Human Resources is an exciting event. Recently, we were able to do both. Sean D. and Mark V., of Fleetwood Group Home, were hired to do janitorial work at Milestone Training Center. Human Resources was responsible for helping the two gentlemen fill out their paperwork and go over the general policies of Milestone.

They both did well at learning how to use the time clock. It was obvious to all who watched how proud and excited they were to be using the time clock. Their excitement continued as we did paperwork and it was contagious.

We had an opportunity to talk to the gentlemen about their feelings and expectations of their new jobs. Both individuals were extremely excited to have this opportunity with Milestone. Mark felt his experience at Growth Enterprises helped him get this job. Sean said he knew the cleaning he did at The Clock Tower would help him at the Training Center. Mark and Sean felt that this job would be different from their other jobs because of



More Paperwork



Working hard for my money

the staff and the supervisors they already knew at Milestone Training Center. Mark said it is sometimes hard learning a new job, but harder when you have to get to know other workers. Sean added, "Mark and I already know each other because we live at Fleetwood together." Mark said, "Yeah, Sean's right and we will work good together because we help each other at home." Then a high five was exchanged. Mark pointed out that at home, he will sweep the floor and Sean will hold the dustpan. Both men were quick to say that the good hours and good money made them happy too.

We asked Sean and Mark what they thought their new jobs would do for them. Mark explained the money from the job would help pay for a trip to Florida to see his Aunt Betty. Sean said he would use the money to take "his girl to Lone Star for dinner." Both men agreed that this job would make them feel good. Mark went on to say, "Now we get to help the individuals like staff have done for us." Another exuberant high five followed this.

Mark and Sean would like to thank the staff who have helped them get where they are today. They especially wanted to thank Lowell Lindell for helping them to become better janitors. They also wished to thank Linda Thornbloom, VP, Administrator of Residential and Day Training Services, for believing in them and hiring them.

Activities Abound at RocVale!

This summer and fall have been busy and fun for the children at RocVale. The mission for all our activities has been to have our children participate in all the activities available to other children in the community.

In July, four children spent a week at Horse Camp at the Lockwood Park Equestrian Center. They learned all the ins and outs of horse care including feeding, grooming, tacking up and, most importantly, riding! They learned the basics of riding in an arena and then participated in trail rides. The week ended with each child demonstrating their riding skills in a Horse Show with family and friends there to cheer them on. The kids fell in love with their horses! The staff at Lockwood were terrific and our kids are already talking about going back next year.

One of our children wanted to learn hip hop dancing and told his staff. In September, he and two other children



Love at first sight at horse camp

started attending a weekly dance class at the Rockford School of Dance. All are doing well and want to try other classes in the spring. For other children who needed a little more help with learning to dance, a four week session was held here at RocVale. The instructor from the Rockford School of Dance helped the children in skills such as awareness of body space and control of movement. The children are looking forward to more classes to start in January.

Our children planned, decorated for, and participated in a Fall Festival in October. The large outdoor party included a DJ, dancing, face painting, pumpkin painting, festival foods, and a pie-eating contest. A great time was had by all! The children have decided that this will be an annual event.



No lack of enthusiasm at pie eating contest

We Are Volunteers, Too

As part of Make A Difference Day in October, the individuals at Milestone Industries had a bake sale and recycled pop cans to raise money. They decided to send the two hundred dollars they made to self-advocates members of the ARC in Florida who lost everything in Hurricane Ivan. This is just one example of the numerous efforts made by the individuals at Milestone to help others in our country and our community. If you know of other needs in our community, we have volunteers eager to help.



This is easy!

Old to New

Milestone's Board of Directors has approved the construction of three new five-person group homes. These three homes will replace existing homes on Riverside Blvd. and Javelin Dr. The Board decided to replace Javelin and Riverside because neither home offers the home-like atmosphere Milestone is striving for.

Javelin was the first group home opened in Rockford, back in 1983. This building was originally a four-unit apartment building consisting of four two-bedroom apartments. Milestone's Maintenance staff transformed it into an eight-person group home. While it has served the eight women who reside there well for over 20 years, it is time to return it to apartment status and move these young women into a more home-like setting.

Riverside was originally a duplex and was converted into a five-person group home in 1996. This home serves five gentlemen. It is being replaced because some of the bedrooms are small and the physical layout restricts staff from having good visual control of all areas of the building.

Once these new group homes are open, both Javelin and Riverside will be transformed back into apartment buildings and sold. Milestone continues to strive to improve the quality of our living arrangements to ensure all individuals with developmental disabilities have a comfortable home-like environment in which to live.



There's no place like home



Milestone, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Illinois not-for-profit organization. Milestone Matters is developed to inform the public of the programs and services we offer to the developmentally disabled citizens from the greater Rockford area. To learn more about Milestone and the individuals we serve, please call (815) 654-6100. Chief Executive Officer, James P. Hamilton; Milestone Matters Editor, Pat Todd.

LENNY'S WALK

On October 16th, a cold and windy Saturday, Lenny, Randy, and Robert, three individuals from Milestone, participated in the breast cancer awareness walk. The walk was approximately four miles long. The group was led in aerobic exercises to warm up prior to beginning the walk. There were representatives from Channel 13 News and Radio 98.5 present to participate as well.

Lenny was approached by Terese, from Human Resources, to participate. He says he agreed to participate because his real mother died from cancer and he felt it would be a good way to honor her memory. He says that he then asked a staff member if she would help him and see if any of her individuals wanted to join as well. When asked, two of the men at Sawgrass, Randy and Robert, said they would like to participate.

The three men were responsible for raising their own money. They approached various staff members and some community members as well. Between the three men, they raised \$310. They would like

to thank all those who sponsored them.

Lenny stated that the experience was a lot of fun, and all three men enjoyed socializing with others from the community and Milestone. They would all gladly do it again next year. Lenny just hopes it won't be as cold.



Walking for Mom

Handcrafted Christmas Cards

It's official - Milestone Industries is in the business of selling handcrafted Christmas cards. Many people have waited for this day and the first cards are out the door. We started very small this year, as we did not know exactly how many orders we would be able to fill in time for the holidays.

At Milestone Industries, our individuals are hard at work creating new card stock out of recycled paper for what we hope will be a banner year in sales in 2005. The entire process to make the cards is completed all within the workshop. The individuals take great pride in finishing all of the steps. The process includes making the card stock, embroidering the stock, printing the greeting, and mounting our handcrafted item to the card.

We apologize if you had heard about our product, but were unable to order cards this year. Please keep us in mind for Christmas 2005. We will send out reminders in various forms, including future editions of Milestone Matters.

Please look for our new line of gift tags and baby cards. The baby cards include shower and birth announcements.

For questions and inquiries about any of our card products, please call 815-654-6100, Monday through Friday, and ask to speak with Jeanette. Please place all orders early.



Mina embroiders Christmas cards

VOTER REGISTRATION TRAINING AND VOTER AWARENESS

In October, approximately seventeen individuals at Milestone Industries participated in three hours of voter registration training classes. The classes were taught by Mary Mathis from the Barbara Olson Center of Hope.

Class methods involved viewing a video, discussion and worksheets. The individuals talked about the various locations of polling places, such as: schools, libraries, and nursing homes. They learned how to register and about the voting process. Absentee ballots were also part of the discussion.



God bless our polling place



Every vote counts

The individuals learned that they could ask for and have help in the voting booth. They were encouraged to find out about the candidates through the newspaper, radio and television. The individuals showed much interest in these topics and said they planned on voting.

All of the individuals at Industries used photographs of the presidential candidates and simplified explanations of their views and proposals to help them decide whom to vote for.

The week prior to the election, thirty five individuals at Industries practiced voting, using an actual ballot from the County Clerk's office. The procedure involved checking in, using the simulated voting booth, and having assistance as needed.

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