

SPRING 2005

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MILESTONE MATTERS

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

MILESTONE RECIPIENT OF ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION GRANT

Milestone, Inc. is the recipient of a \$262,000 grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) which will be used to help expand the existing dental clinic to deliver pediatric dental care to children with developmental disabilities across Northern Illinois.

\$6,000,000 in grant funds from the Foundation.

Improving the oral health of Illinois children was one of the four areas that the Foundation identified as an area of greatest need. It was under this initiative that the Milestone Dental Clinic was deemed worthy of the grant award. The awarding of this first cycle of grant dollars marks the first contribution of funds from the ILCHF, which was created in 2002. The funding is a result of a 125 million dollar settlement made between former State of Illinois Attorney General Jim Ryan and an Illinois insurance carrier. ILCHF Chairman C. William Pollard said, "As we complete this first grant cycle, we are grateful for the foresight of Jim Ryan, who as Attorney General, initiated the formation of the Foundation". Former Rockford Mayor, Charles Box, is also a member of the Foundation Board.



He's In Good Hands

Expansion of the dental clinic is currently in progress. The expansion includes the addition of three dental operatories and a larger reception area. It is projected that construction will be complete by April 15th. Milestone, Inc. is currently working on securing operating funds for an additional full time dentist, full time

hygienist, two full time dental assistants, and a part time clerical position. The ILCHF's next grant cycle begins in June of 2005, with awards in December of 2005. A grant will again be submitted to the Foundation for operating funds.

The ILCHF received nearly 300 Letters of Inquiry from across the state in June of 2004. Fifty of those were then invited to submit a full proposal. The full proposals were reviewed by the ILCHF Board and a group of outside advisors. The announcement came on December 6, 2004 with 32 organizations from around Illinois sharing

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THE MIRACLE ON 7TH STREET

We all remember the "Miracle on 34th Street" and, thanks to the Illinois Licensed Beverage Association and the Rockford Association of Clubs, Rockford has its own version, which is the "Miracle on 7th Street."

Buccaneers Newspaper staff singing carols, serving lunch, and assisting with the gifts. One member was quoted as saying "I wish that all teens could experience this event. Perhaps they would appreciate all the opportunities we have in life. Milestone respects and appreciates the outstanding efforts of the Illinois Licensed Beverage Association and the Rockford Association of Clubs. Thanks for making miracles come true.



Visions of Sugar Plums

For fourteen consecutive years, these two groups have brought Santa Claus to life at Harmony Hall for more than 100 individuals with disabilities from Milestone's Elmwood Heights. These wonderful volunteers throw a party for the ages which includes a scrumptious



Miles of Smiles

lunch, a beautifully decorated Harmony Hall and, of course, Santa Claus bearing wonderful gifts to the 100 individuals who attend.

This year's event included the Belvidere

CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION GRANT

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Kathy Olson, Clinic Administrator said, "We are grateful to the ILCHF for awarding the Milestone Dental Clinic these grant dollars. I feel that it is Milestone's current reputation for and commitment to providing quality dental care to individuals with developmental disabilities that prompted the Foundation to choose to fund expansion of our program. The entire staff is enthusiastic about welcoming new staff and providing dental care to more children with developmental disabilities".



Right This Way Young Man

Warm Woolies

“T is the season for giving” and Amanda Burja and Jessica Starykowicz did just that. Amanda’s brother, Michael, resides at Elmwood Heights and Jessica is Amanda’s friend and neighbor from Long Grove, Illinois. They wanted to do something nice for the individuals at Elmwood Heights, so they handmade beautiful fleece scarves, ranging from paw print patterns to snowmen. Accompanied by Amanda and Michael’s parents, Denise and Frank Burja, all of the scarves were delivered to the individuals on December 20, 2004.



All Scarfed Up



From The Heart

Both Amanda and Jessica said their favorite part of making and giving the scarves was seeing the excitement on the faces of the individuals. Excitement is what they got! Many of the individuals needed assistance with opening the scarves, and there were plenty of smiles and sounds of laughter welcoming the gifts. “It is nice to give something that will be used, especially because of the cold weather,” says Jessica.

The individuals will stay nice and warm during the blistery winter. Thank you, Amanda and Jessica, for your time and generosity.

All That Glitters Is Gold

Gold medals abound for Milestone’s Special Olympians. On January 11th, individuals served by Milestone participated in snow shoeing and skiing at the Snow Star Ski Resort at Andalusia, Illinois. Milestone’s RocVale Children’s Home sent four boys for the snow shoeing competition and one as a down hill skier. When the day was complete, four gold medals adorned these young boys. Not a bad showing for their first year competing in these winter events. Milestone’s group home athletes also attended the winter outing in Andalusia and they brought home five gold medals.

Those that won gold medals at this outing were invited to attend the State Winter Games at Galena’s Chestnut Mountain February 1st through the 3rd. A great time was had by all. The event included opening ceremonies in downtown Galena with our athletes being chauffeured in horse-driven wagons. Wednesday night, there was a dance and each night we had excellent food and service. The weather was wonderful, giving us 40 degree temperatures and no wind. While gold medals were not in the offing, Milestone did come home with silver and bronze and exhausted athletes.



Sock Hats Abound

Special Olympics doesn’t end with outdoor winter games, but also includes our record-setting basketball teams. Milestone’s RocVale has a men’s basketball team called the “Rockers”. Thus far they have a 5-2 record and won Division IV at the Byron Districts on January 30th. Milestone also has the “Milestone Shooters” who won the

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ONE MAN'S JOURNEY LAUGHING ALL THE WAY....

John Gregg is a 54-year-old man with an extraordinary sense of humor and an uncanny ability to bring laughter to all around him. On August 18, 1951, John Gregg was the first born of John Andrew and Mary Gregg of Rockford, Illinois. Mary recalls that there was something different about John when she took him home, but the doctor who delivered John provided the Greggs with little information. Months later, Mary and John realized that their son's developmental growth seemed to be impeded. They sought consultation from another physician. It was at this time that they learned that their son had been born with Down Syndrome and would always be developmentally delayed. The doctor recommended that their son John be sent to an institution for the mentally retarded. Unfortunately, in the 50's, that was the course of treatment recommended by most physicians.



John At Home

Loving parents, John and Mary, followed the doctor's orders and on November 6, 1952 John was placed at Dixon State School in Dixon, Illinois. The family visited often and were as involved as a family could be in the care of their son, but the distance from Rockford made frequent visits difficult. At the same time, they were raising additional children – a daughter, Pam, and a son, Brent. This made the visits to Dixon even more difficult. Nineteen years later, John was transferred from Dixon to Elgin Mental Health Center in Elgin, Illinois. He remained

there until 1974 when he was transferred to Shapiro Development Center in Kankakee, Illinois. All along, the family visited frequently.

One day in 1980, Mary Gregg was at the Hilander grocery store in Rockford where she met a friend, Audrey Wickstrand. Audrey recommended that John and Mary consider moving their son to Milestone's Elmwood Heights. Elmwood Heights had opened in September of 1979. The purpose of this home was to help Rockford bring its disabled sons and daughters back home to Rockford. Mary and John immediately applied for their son's transfer and on May 14, 1980, John's journey landed him back in Rockford at Elmwood Heights. For the Greggs, this meant no more long trips to visit John, and as importantly, now they had the ability to take him home, to have him stay for dinner, to play with their dog in the backyard, and to be a part of their family again.

For the next 18 years, John and Mary Gregg became volunteers extra ordinaire with Milestone. They assisted with every fashion show, every poinsettia sale, and every other event held by Milestone because John and Mary and their son, John, had joined the Milestone family. Mr. Gregg died in 1998, but Mary continues to this day an integral part of the Milestone family.

For John, life's journey has had its trials and tribulations. John now lives at Milestone's Searles Group Home. His unique personality is unforgettable. John is a jokester. He uses his sense of humor to give others laughter and happiness. He loves sticking his tongue out at others, which is always followed by a hearty laugh. This is his trademark. He will greet you with a wink and a smile and, while at times he can be challenging, John's personality and wit always save the day.



Mom and Son

In 1999, John had major spinal surgery to correct cervical instabilities. Following the surgery, John had to wear a halo for two months in order to keep his spine in proper alignment. Through this entire ordeal, as painful and uncomfortable as it must have been, his humor, his laughter, his wonderful smile remained the centerpiece of his life. John is now 53 years old and while his journey continues, the last 25 years being home in Rockford has meant so much to his mother, the staff at Milestone, and his friends, the individuals served at Milestone. As his journey continues, laughter and smiles will accompany him and all of us who have the opportunity to share his life with him.

All That Glitters

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Division II championship. Both champion teams will be attending the State tournament the weekend of March 19th and 20th.

From the hard court to the swimming pool, we have Special Olympians now participating in aquatic events. Seven swimmers from Milestone, three from RocVale, and four from the group homes will be competing for an opportunity to swim in the State Summer Games this June. Milestone's Special Olympic Program is active, ongoing, and exciting for all the children and adults who participate. While gold is our goal, the opportunity to compete is cherished by all.



We Needed A Ride

FAMILY/GUARDIAN SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS FOR 2004

Milestone annually surveys its families and guardians in an effort to determine their satisfaction with our services and to enlist their recommendations for improvement. The 2004 survey results are as follows.

Milestone received an overall satisfaction rate of 99.2% and had a survey return rate of 82% for adult services. This compares with a 99.5% satisfaction rate in 2003 and a 78% return rate. For 2002, our satisfaction rate was 99%, with a survey return rate of 54%.

Milestone was pleased with the satisfaction rate, but was even more appreciative of the increase in surveys returned. This means that Milestone is continuing to strive for improved communication with its families and guardians, and that its efforts have been successful.

The results of the survey show that Milestone's strengths consist of the care and services we provide to the individuals, the quality of their living environments, and the accuracy of the information we provide. Areas in which the families and guardians requested improvement were the families' participation in the design of the services provided and improved communication with the families and guardians.

For the RocVale Children's Home, the overall satisfaction rate was 97%, with a 53.1% return rate. This compares in 2003 with a 84.5% satisfaction rate and a survey return rate of 30%. Milestone needs to continue to strive to increase the return rate for our children's facility.

These survey results are distributed agency-wide to our staff, Board of Directors, and also are sent to our families, guardians, and funding and regulatory agencies. The information gained is used to evaluate Milestone's strengths and weaknesses and to develop plans for improvement.

Thanks to all family members who participated in this survey. The more information Milestone receives, the better we can serve your family member. Family members should not wait until the next

survey to express a complaint, recommendation, area of improvement or to provide a compliment. We request this information all year round. If you are unsure of the appropriate person to contact, please feel free to call Helen Pyfer, Director of Social Services, 815-639-2944, and thanks again to all participating.



Happy Family

THREE-YEAR NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AWARDED BY CARF

Milestone, Inc. has again received the highest possible accreditation by CARF, a national accreditation agency. The survey was conducted by a team of surveyors from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Alabama who spent three days reviewing our programs, facilities, and operations. Among the strengths of the agency described in their survey report were the “genuine and respectful interactions” with the individuals served, the staff with many years of experience, and the staff commitment to assisting individuals to attain their personal goals.

Additionally, there were two areas cited in which Milestone was recognized for demonstrating exemplary conformance to the standards. The following is a direct quote from their report regarding these two areas.



“Milestone provides community housing services in particularly modern, clean, and well-maintained homes, which are dispersed throughout the community in very pleasant and safe neighborhoods.”

“Milestone is dedicated to assisting persons served in developing social contacts, personal relationships, and community networks. Staff members have been creative in developing numerous volunteer sites where the persons served have developed friends and natural supports. This commitment goes far beyond making community-based opportunities available, and it facilitates inclusion and the development of meaningful relationships. Staff members at Milestone are commended for their efforts in this area.”

When you see a Milestone staff member, please help us congratulate them for a job well done!



Hats Off To Our Employees

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.

ANNUAL REPORT - 2004

OUTCOMES MANAGEMENT

Milestone continues to strive to improve the quality of services it provides. Each year, Milestone establishes objectives which will enhance the quality of services we provide. The following is a sample of some of the successful outcomes for 2004:

- Increased sales of craft projects (the individuals choose how to spend the income from the sales on such things as lunch at the Rain Forest Café in Schaumburg).
- Two new work contracts for the workshop.
- Wonderful increase in the number and kind of volunteer activities our individuals participate in. (Did you see us bell-ringing at Christmas for the Salvation Army?)
- Maintained and improved accessibility of our buildings (with such things as changing the direction a door opens so a person in a wheelchair can go out independently).
- Significant improvement in our employee turnover rate. (Improved benefit package, self-scheduling, and improved initial and continuing training are contributing elements).
- Replaced an antiquated computer network at RocVale.

Some objectives will continue for this new year and others are being added. We are focusing on increasing activities related to healthier lifestyles and getting more people employed in the community.

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4060 McFarland Road
Rockford, Illinois 61111



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