

H.O.P.E. Happenings

H.O.P.E.

Volume V, Issue I

Jan-May 2009

"You will be secure, because there is hope." Job 11:18 NIV

5th Annual HOPE



WWW.JESTERPARKEC.COM

H.O.P.E.'s 5th Anniversary Celebration Picnic, Wagon Rides & Horsin' Around with HOPE Games.

Please join us to celebrate with appreciation to our participants, families, and supporters.

BBQ sandwiches, hot dogs, beans, slaw and dessert will be served at 5:00 pm.

Where: Jester Park Equestrian Center

11171 NW 103 Ct., Granger, IA

Date: Friday, June 12, 2009

Time: 4:30 pm-7:30 pm

Contact: 515.277.HOPE (4673) or 515.554.8989 (Linda)

Cost: Free will offering

RSVP: by June 8th @ Noon, please! Call 277-4673 or email HOPE_Office_Records@yahoo.com

What to Wear: "close-toed" shoes & Jeans or pants. Bring the equine permission form (download from Jester Park's website www.jesterparkec.com)

Welcome to our H.O.P.E. family!



Angela Leusink



Pam Douglass

Welcome to Angela Leusink and Pam Douglass! Angela is available in our office every day except Wednesday between 8:30-1:30 to help us keep our wheels greased so we're not squeaky! We are so very excited that Nathan helped bridge the connection to help Angela get on our H.O.P.E. train!

Pam is working remotely and providing many opportunities to assist us as well. From updating planners for providers and sharing them with families, to a variety of administrative tasks, plus managing the weekly Out & About, Pam has become invaluable to us as well!

Both Angela and Pam come to us with a plethora of experience and we feel incredibly blessed to have them join us! Please take a moment to welcome them!

You can reach Angela at HOPE3_Angela@yahoo.com and Pam at HOPE_Planners@yahoo.com.



The Garage Project ~ Take II is currently ongoing at Finney Art Studio! Make sure to watch for our display at the 5th Annual Horsin' Around with HOPE picnic!



“Have you ever wondered how you happened upon H.O.P.E.? Whether you are a participant or a provider, the answer is the same. It’s because we prayed for you. It’s that simple.”



L to R:

Amy Wallman, Co-Founder & COO,
Tammi Matkovich, the inspiration for
H.O.P.E.; and
Linda Matkovich, Co-Founder & CEO



“The older I get, the more thankful I am to be walking in my own shoes.”

*Perspective,
Perception
Patience*

Linda’s Logic

*Mission Statements. Missions. God’s Purpose.
Purpose-filled life. Following God’s will.
Prayer with a Purpose.*

These are thoughts I find myself in conversation with others quite frequently. I have known many people who have felt a calling and traveled many miles to help others in need. They have given of themselves freely and without reservation and it has changed the course of their lives for the rest of their days on this earth.

Have you ever wondered how you happened upon H.O.P.E.? Whether you are a participant or a provider, the answer is the same. It’s because we prayed for you. It’s that simple.

Even before H.O.P.E. incorporated five years ago, Amy and I made a commitment to take God as our partner on this journey and lead us to follow His will for others.

When we held our initial Planning Committee, we opened or closed every meeting with prayer. And to this day, every single week, when we hold our “weekly planning meeting”, we always ask God to fill our plate with His will ~ to

guide us to meet the needs of our participants and our providers.

We have never advertised in traditional ways. We’ve considered it...for a few seconds...but the need has always been filled by our Lord.

I believe we are where we are at on our life journey to fulfill God’s purpose. You may not like where you are at or wish you were somewhere else, or even questioning if this is God’s plan for you. But as I shared with you in the last newsletter, there is no doubt in my mind that you are where you are at for the learning of this time in your journey.

We are on a mission trip each and every day as we are meeting the needs of our participants. We are fulfilling God’s mission to help those in need. Refer to Proverbs 31:8-9 NIV “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.” I am humbled by the dedication our providers display each time they provide services to our participants. We are truly blessed.

If you come across a need for us to add your requests on our prayer list, please let us know.

Amy’s Anecdotes

Perspective. Perception. And Patience. These are my New Year’s aspirations. I used to say resolutions, but that didn’t help me keep them, so in an effort to be more realistic, I am going with “aspirations” this year.

Perspective and Perception: For our Festival of HOPE this year, we were able to share the women of Christmas’s perspective. In addition to being eye opening, it was a reminder that there are so many perspectives to take into consideration regarding events and the way we live. When Mary was giving her perspective of giving birth in a manger with animal dung (and no epidural or pain medication) and straw for her precious and vulnerable newborn, it was impossible not to feel her sacrifice as she so humbly reminded us that this was not her son, but God’s son.

In addition to perspective, perception is something I aspire to be more cognizant. I may perceive someone to be grumpy or rude, but maybe they had just been told some sad news, just lost their job or are operating on 4 hours of sleep. The older I get, the more thankful I am to be walking in my own shoes. And I want to be more open to looking at others possible point of views or angles. Perception is not always reality.

Patience: Raising a two year old has definitely stretched my abilities in this category. The latest battle has been what is “appropriate” to say and what is not. “No” had been our favorite word until just recently, “no WAY!” has entered our vastly expanding vocabulary. I struggle with what battles to fight as well as understanding that as being human, we all like to feel that we have some control over our lives and destiny. Now I am not saying that my daughter should have a total say in all things...after all she is only two. However, I am learning to be more patient (out of necessity more than anything else) with what is truly important. If it makes her feel good to be able to choose to take off her socks when inside, so be it. However, if she chooses to wear her summer sandals when it is snowing outside, this is where this new found patience comes into play until she puts on her socks and shoes.... or until I forcefully put them on with many tears and screams J. Guess I really need to work on the patience virtue this next year.....

Here’s to a Wonderful New Year of Perspective, Perception and Patience!!!!

Alison's Assertions



Alison Lumsden,
Director of
Independent Living
Opportunities



"...pay attention to what's happening around you, so you don't miss those important everyday moments."

I can't believe it's a new year already! Time for those resolutions, right? This year I am forgoing the usual pacts I make with myself that are usually broken within the week. My vow from this day on is to do a better job *living in and appreciating each moment.*

As I have shared before, many of the life lessons I am learning as an adult come from my children (certainly many of these things I used to know and embrace). My kids may talk about the past and anticipate the future, but their focus is truly on the 'here and now' and the enjoyment that comes from each moment. I would like to be more like that, appreciative of all my blessings and more in attendance with whomever I am talking to or whatever I am doing.

My challenge to everyone reading this is to do the same. For those who are providing services, always be present and involved; *you can make a difference.* For those receiving services, be an active part of improving your life; *it is your life and these services are all about you.* For others, support the services that are being provided; *it can be just the thing to promote change.* We find ourselves daily in situations where we can learn from each other and grow as a result. Be sure to *pay attention to what's happening around you so you don't miss those important everyday moments.*

Wishing you all a safe, prosperous, healthy and blessed year ahead filled with many meaningful moments.

Notes from Nancy

Searching for HOPE

Being in the field of job development I have naturally stumbled upon a classic guide for job hunter's called "What Color is Your Parachute?" by Richard Nelson Bolles. It is a wonderful reference for job-hunters or career-changers. Well, considering the shape of our economy this might be most helpful for some of our friends and family. In his chapter on "The Five Best Ways to Hunt for a Job" Bolles says that "Wise job-hunters know from the beginning that they are hunting *secondly* for a job but *first* of all for **HOPE.**" Bolle's has Seven Most Important Truths to Remember so long as you are unemployed:

- (1) *Job hunting is an activity that repeats itself over and over again in most people's lives.* The average worker job hunts every 4-5 years.
- (2) *Job hunting is not a science, it is an art.* Be creative and use all the resources you have.
- (3) *Job hunting is always mysterious.* You may not always understand how or why things happen as they do.
- (4) *There is no always wrong way or always right*

way to hunt for a job or change careers. Don't be afraid to try the unusual, but be aware of which paths are most likely to be successful.

- (5) *Mastering the job hunt this time and in the future is a lot of **hard work** and takes some **hard thinking.*** The more work and thinking you put into your search, the more likelihood you will be successful.
- (6) *Job hunting always depends on some amount of **luck.*** Successful job-hunting means you are reducing the amount of luck you need to obtain employment.

We all may not be hunting for jobs, but we are most likely in the process of career development no matter what phase of employment we are in. And searching for HOPE and meaning to our lives can often be centered around our employment. Let's keep in mind that for ourselves and for those we work with, thoughtful consideration, creativity and hard work seem to be the keys to success no matter what we are searching for.

Nancy Williamson,
Director of
Employment
Opportunities

"...Thoughtful consideration, creativity and hard work seem to be the keys to success no matter what we are searching for."





Festival of HOPE 2008

- 1 - Krystal Arleaux, Tammi M & Dick Swarzentruer
- 2 - Deb H & Mary Todd
- 3 - Alicia Scheuermann & Josh S
- 4 - Amy, Laynie & Jason Madden
- 5 - Ali H, Jen Piper, Jerroid S & Jeanne Piper
- 6 - Alison Lumsden, Savina Cervanes & Marty D

- 7 - Larry & Linda Christensen, Annie K & Jeanne Piper
- 8 - Lisa Singer & Jerroid S
- 9 - Megan D & Miriam Nash
- 10 - Linda & Amy
- 11 - Santa with Anna G
- 12 - The Gilbreath Family
- 13 - Troy & Laura Spurgeon, Laura & Karen Griffiths

Disability teaches 'everything good' about life



Michael Cusack knows we're talking about him, but he can't follow. He sits in the living room with us, but he's not taking in much of this.

Esther Cusack, Michael's mother, is telling me about when Michael was born. He was a mongoloid child -- that's what everybody in 1956 called people with Down syndrome -- and a doctor told Esther she should place Michael in an institution. Don't bring him home -- don't get attached.

"Of course I'm bringing him home," Esther said. "He's just a baby!"

"Ah, yes," said the doctor. "But that's just the problem. He will always be a baby."

Later that day, Esther told her husband, John, a Chicago cop, what the doctor had said. John muttered a couple of things he'd never say in church, and he and Esther brought their son home.

"This is what it was like 50 years ago," Esther tells me now. "You never saw a child with Down syndrome. They didn't bring them home. When they did bring them home, they didn't bring them out. I think people thought it was some kind of curse, that the mother had done something wrong."

Esther looks across the room at her son. It's a mother's look. It's a look that says Michael is anything but a curse.

'Bathe him and love him'

What's it like, I wonder, to raise a child like Michael? He will be 50 on May 6. What's it like to be his mother or father, his sister or brother?

One of the great success stories of the last half century is the more compassionate way that we, as a nation, care for the mentally disabled. But it must be tough on the families. And it must have been tougher 50 years ago when people like the Cusacks were pioneers, showing the rest of us a wiser way.

Visiting with the Cusack family in their Beverly home -- Esther, Michael and two of his four sisters -- that's what I want to know: How did they do it?

"You just do the normal things," Esther says. "When Michael was a baby, what would I do? I'd treat him like any other baby. I'd feed him and diaper him and bathe him and love him, and that's it."

But people must have stared.

"I'd take Michael everywhere, and nobody would say a word," Esther says. "Every once in a while, somebody might point and say, 'My uncle's got one of those.'"

But what about mean children?

"There was no mystery to Michael -- all the kids in the neighborhood knew him," Connie, Michael's older sister, says. "It helped that he was a good athlete. He could really hit a ball."

But there must have been times.

"I do remember having to run interference," Maureen, a younger sister, says. "I remember saying to kids, 'You should be nicer.'"

Connie nods. She remembers what she used to shout: "Would you choose to be him? You think it's his fault?"

Looking at Michael, who has an IQ of 35 or 40, I wonder if he understands how his sisters stood up for him.

A 'terrific teacher'

When Michael was 6, his mom and dad and other parents started their own school for the mentally retarded, RCA -- for Retarded Children's Aid -- in a room in a synagogue. The kids drew pictures, learned table manners, recited the alphabet.

Three years later, the local public school created a program for mentally disabled children, as required by a new federal law, and Michael went there.

At times, the public school class was decent.

"He had one terrific teacher, Viola Anderson, who really held him to standards," Maureen says. "She taught him to write his name, how to recognize bathroom signs. If he misbehaved, he got a zero -- a big goose egg."

Maureen turns to her brother. "Do you remember when you got a goose egg, Michael?" she asks. "Was it up or down?"

Michael points thumbs up.

"No, down."

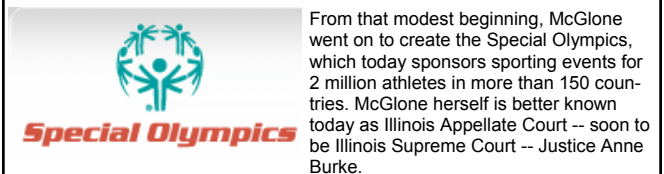
But most of the time, the class was pathetic: A little drawing. A little lunch. A lot of forced napping.

"It was unbelievable," Connie says. "These are people with potential, people who have a place in the world, and they should be allowed to live up to their potential."

Life for Michael really took off when he was 9. His father, who died 14 years ago, read in a community newspaper one day that West Pullman Park was starting a recreation program for the mentally disabled. Esther drove over with Michael but wasn't much impressed. The 19-year-old woman who ran the whole thing, Anne McGlone, had a lot to learn.

"She'd say to the kids, 'OK, line up on the blue line,' and they'd all look at each other," Esther says with a laugh. "They didn't know what a line was or what blue was."

But the young teacher was a fast learner, and her recreation program blossomed -- running, swimming, field hockey, you name it. And Michael became a star athlete.



From that modest beginning, McGlone went on to create the Special Olympics, which today sponsors sporting events for 2 million athletes in more than 150 countries. McGlone herself is better known today as Illinois Appellate Court -- soon to be Illinois Supreme Court -- Justice Anne Burke.

At Maureen's urging, Michael leads me up the stairs to show me his bedroom. The walls are covered with dozens of Special Olympics ribbons and trophies. Michael's a fine athlete, especially in swimming, and has competed in California, Canada and Ireland.

Looking around the room, I am impressed. I ask Michael to show me his favorite ribbons. Instead, he points to a photo of Dorothy and her companions in "The Wizard of Oz." In a muffled voice that I can't always understand, he names all of the actors for me -- "Jack Haley, Bert Lahr, Ray Bolger, Judy Garland."

Michael adores the movie "The Wizard of Oz." But I think he's also telling me something -- he knows things.



Feeling resentment

As sweet a guy as Michael appears to be, I have to think his sisters resented him when they were growing up. All four of them -- Connie, Maureen, Colette and Carole -- had to be his caretakers and defenders. All four had to make compromises and sacrifices.

"I do remember taking a can around and collecting for Michael's school," Connie says. "Most kids aren't doing that at 10."

"Michael used to call me 'meanie,' which morphed into Mimi, so apparently I did resent him a little bit," Maureen adds.

But it could not have been a serious problem. Or Connie and Maureen would not be special education teachers today. And Colette and Carole would not be Special Olympics volunteers.

"What I learned, and what my sisters learned, and what my own children have learned, is the value of service to others," Connie says. "I can trace everything good in my life to Michael."

Not to be overly dramatic, but this just stops me. Here I am poking around for hard-luck stories, and they tell me about being blessed.

I wonder if Michael knows this. I wonder if he ever contemplates how much his family has given him, and how much he has given in return.

Probably not. Michael, I suspect, is not one to think like that.

But I bet he feels it.

April 17, 2006 BY **TOM McNAMEE** SUN-TIMES COLUMNIST

H.O.P.E.

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www.hope-agency.org

Check it out!

You will be
secure...for there
is hope.
Job 11:18

To:

Thank You!

Community partnerships—

HyVee-Johnston; Perkins Academy;

24/7 Beaverdale; Jester Park Equestrian Center;

YMCA of Greater Des Moines; Grounds for Celebration; Debbie & Brian Kemp—popcorn @ Beaverdale Days; First American Bank, Beaverdale Branch; Kathryn & Andy Finney & family ~ Finney Art Studio

The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention. ~Oscar Wilde



Our H.O.P.E. List

The following items or services are needed to help us best serve our participants. If you can donate any of the following, please contact Linda or Amy at 515.277.4673.

HOPE list items:

__ Donate to the NEW Heart of HOPE fund! This is designed for our participants and their providers to apply for up to \$50 towards activities or transportation costs while receiving services! Your donation is tax deductible by simply notating in the memo "Heart of HOPE"

- _ File size fire-proof box
- _ Ink Jets— for HP printers
- _ Postage Stamps
- _ Sam's gift card

How to Get Involved

- Watch a game on TV or take a participant to a sporting event
- Volunteering to coordinate a community activity for one or more of our participants
- Helping with special events, such as our Annual Festival of H.O.P.E.; Picnic or our next UNO tournament
- Helping with fund raising events, such as a luncheon with a speaker, a golf marathon, etc...
- Share about H.O.P.E. with others! Keep your antennas up for people who are naturals with compassion for others & who can mentor to one of our participants.

Advisory Committee

Nathan DeLange
Dr. Jim Pullen
Nancy Lyng
Melinda Christensen
Jon Hansen
Melanie Hansen
Stephanie Linser Blair
Jessica Gertler
Marcus Littleton
Sara Hoffman
Dick Swarzentruher
Amy Ryan

H.O.P.E. Credentials

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Waiver Provider accredited to provide:

Ill and Handicapped Waiver:
Respite, CDAC

Brain Injury Waiver:
SCL, SE, Respite, CDAC

Mental Retardation Waiver:
SCL, SE, Respite, CDAC

Elderly Waiver: CDAC, Respite

SCL—Supported Community Living
SE—Supported Employment Services
CDAC—Consumer Directed Attendant Care
Respite

Contracted with IVRS (Vocational Rehabilitation)
Certified Employment Services Specialists
Polk County Preferred Network of Care Provider & Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Network Member