

Gompers HABILITATION CENTER

Advocacy Empowerment Independence

Issue 3 Winter 2010

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Save the Date



Mark your calendars
for April 2011!

The 39th Annual *Golf fore Gompers* will benefit the Gompers Dental Center program "Special Smiles for Special People". Proceeds from this event will support dental treatment for uninsured or underinsured individuals with disabilities.

In past years, we've had over 100 players and volunteers attend and we look forward to a great crowd again. Look for an invitation with all the details in the mail soon!

If you would like to participate for the first time and join our invite list, please contact Michael at 602-336-0061, ext.162 or msimoni@gomperscenter.org

Gompers Vocational Program Services Broadening Reach

More than two years ago, Gompers Vocational Center moved into a 21,000 square foot facility to accommodate the growth of its program while supporting over two dozen corporate partners. The \$1.6 million facility completed in May of 2008 has brought with it all the benefits we hoped for at its conception, and it's still growing. Client skill sets continue growing with the agency's vision of diversity and depth for its program activities. Those goals emulate a real workplace environment in a person-centered supported setting. The practical program opportunities focus on preparing clients for opportunities outside Gompers. In the coming year, our goal is to broaden our reach to support other corporations, while expanding our existing corporate partnerships. Here are several examples of Gompers services and corporate partnerships:

Vocational Program Services

Document Scanning

Gompers and Express Digital Solutions (EDS), a local document imaging company, established a partnership in 2008 creating a new learning opportunity for our clients, utilizing technology. EDS recognizes the value of working with people with disabilities. Clients with basic keyboard skills learn to input information and create digital files. Other clients learn how to operate high-speed scanners and review scanning data for errors. This partnership utilizes nearly 25% of our vocational staff and at least 30 client positions are dedicated to this collaboration. These efforts give Valley companies a place to send paper document scanning projects at affordable prices -- within a HIPAA compliant facility. Alongside our community partners, this project has received acclaim, including:

- 2008 Express Digital ranked #1 in Document Management in *Ranking Arizona Magazine*
- 2009 "Spirit of Enterprise" Award W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University

Direct Mail and Packaging Solutions

Our program services include:

- Inserting
- Folding
- Labeling
- Sealing
- Postage Affixing
- Postal Entry

Gompers Maintenance Team

With a supervised team, clients are responsible for maintaining the common areas of Gompers properties: offices, restrooms, kitchens, halls and its lobby from top to bottom.

Sammy G's

Under the supervision of a program leader, clients are responsible for the total operation of Gompers in-house cafeteria. Clients organize and stock cafeteria while serving as cashiers to their peers, staff and visitors of this eatery in compliance with the Board of Health Food Safety Standards.

Corporate Partnerships

Safeway Corporation

A collaborative training program with Safeway to prepare clients to become Safeway employees. Program featured in *Arizona Republic*, September 2009.

Ben Avery Shooting Range

With the support of Gompers Job Coaching team, program participants are responsible for the total maintenance of a 1,650-acre facility.



Shirley operating case sealer purchased with funds donated by Safeway Corporation.



Mark's MESSAGE

Let's be honest with each other: The state of dental services for those with disabilities in Arizona is deplorable.

Despite a wealth of studies highlighting the importance of oral health on a person's overall health, on October 1 of this year the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) eliminated ALL dental services for individuals over the age of 21 – from basic care to emergency services. That means if you need dentures so you can eat or your teeth cleaned so they don't rot or a tooth pulled because the pain is so bad you can't sleep or even think straight... too bad. You are out of luck.

More than 15 years ago Gompers saw a need for better oral health care for those with disabilities and created what we believe is still the only dental center in the state of Arizona that exclusively serves individuals with disabilities. Gompers Dental Center, in many ways, has been an unqualified success. From very meager beginnings, Gompers Dental Center will offer more than 2,500 appointments for those with disabilities in 2010. Thanks to our caring, professional staff we have seen individuals go from covering their mouth when they speak so they don't have to show their teeth, to proudly displaying their smile for all to see. More importantly, we

have improved the oral health care of individuals who, quite frankly, might have died if their specific dental needs had gone untreated.

That's the success. Where we have fallen short is in bringing in the necessary revenues to forge a sustainable program. Since 2003 Gompers Dental Center has run at a nearly \$400,000 deficit providing these services. No business, let alone a non-profit organization, can continue down that road.

The difficulty comes in the fact that we serve those with the greatest need, but with the fewest resources. In fact, the losses would have been much greater without the strong support of the City of Phoenix, Thunderbird Charities, Nina Mason Pulliam and many other donors. However, even with these generous grants and donations we are only able to provide the most basic services for many individuals, and many more remain on long waiting lists. While certainly better than nothing, where is the overall benefit to cleaning decaying teeth when we are unable to complete a treatment plan that may call for dentures, extractions or more?

Gompers is at a crossroad. Because of dwindling funding in our other programs the losses suffered by our Dental Center are taking an even greater toll on our agency as a whole. The most difficult questions are being asked, including the one that no one wants to hear: "Can Gompers continue to sustain our dental program?" To that end we are examining every facet of the

operation from personnel, to who we serve, to reaching out to the community, to exploring partnership opportunities. The situation demands we focus all of our 2011 fundraising efforts on the Dental Center. All avenues are open, and we will be turning to many of you for guidance, counsel and support.

Is this harsh? Yes. Is it reality? Yes. With all of our heart, we at Gompers believe in this program. Unfortunately, it is no longer about what we want or believe it must be about sustainability. Historically, what has made Gompers great are the collaborative efforts of our tremendous business partners and the community at large. We just need to focus those efforts more now than ever before. Only with your help will Gompers be able to serve the dental needs of those with disabilities.

If you have ideas, suggestions or thoughts on partnering, please do not hesitate to contact me at 602-336-0061, ext.101 or email me at mjacoby@gomperscenter.org. From what may seem the most insignificant or outrageous idea often springs the greatest moment of enlightenment.

Thank you for your continued support of Gompers Habilitation Center.



GO GREEN with GOMPERS

Would you like to help Gompers do something good for the environment (and save a few stamps too)? Join our e-mail list to receive electronic versions of our newsletters. By signing up you will also receive periodic announcements regarding upcoming events, program updates and seasonal activities at Gompers.

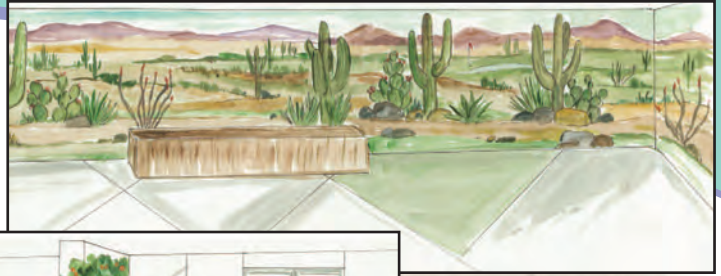
How? It's easy...simply send an e-mail with your name to: msimoni@gomperscenter.org with "Sign me up" in the subject line!

Help Us Wrap-up the 2010 Accessible Garden Campaign

Gompers is close to completing the dream that started with our Boundless Playground!

Gompers Habilitation Center is excitedly awaiting the opening of our "Accessible Garden" in Spring 2011. Friends, staff, corporate and community partners have generously supported the 2010 Annual Campaign to complete phase II of the Boundless Playground and Accessible Garden project at Gompers. We thank you for your support!

Our \$125,000 campaign, which started in January 2010, focuses on building an "Accessible Garden" designed to create a safe, accessible environment for individuals with disabilities. The first phase of the project, our "Boundless Playground," opened on May 27, 2010 and is a wonderful addition to Gompers and the community we serve. The garden will complete the expansion of the recreational activities throughout of our main facility.



There is still time for you to make a donation that will help us pave the paths that connect the walkways to our "Boundless Playground" and "Accessible Garden". Our "Buy a Brick" Campaign can "carve your name in stone" as a lasting reminder of your partnership and support of Gompers and those we serve.

To participate, please make an outright gift or pledge (\$50, \$75, \$100, other)

Checks should be made payable to: Gompers Accessible Garden

We will make every effort to honor your request on the scope and timing of your generous gift, but we reserve the right to modify it in event of unforeseen circumstance with written notification to the donor.

Please list my gift as follows:

(Please Check One)

Brick will be etched with up to 3 lines with 13 characters per line (please write one letter per box).

In Memory Of

In Honor Of

Name Only

No Name

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip: _____ Daytime Phone: _____

Please indicate the manner in which your name is authorized to appear on any official or public recognition. If you prefer anonymity, please indicate either "anonymous" or print "leave blank." If you have questions, please contact Elaine at 602-336-0061, ext.151 or estarks@gomperscenter.org.

RETURN WITH YOUR SUPPORT BY DECEMBER 31, 2010

Gompers Dental Center

Where do you turn when your choices are limited? This is the question many individuals with disabilities ask themselves every day when looking for dental services. Far too often it's difficult for dentists in a typical practice to serve someone with disabilities. It's not because dentists don't want to, but because individuals with disabilities often require special accommodations that your typical dentist is simply not prepared to provide. From specialized training, to special equipment, to being able to reserve a chair for an appointment that might take longer than your typical patient, these are all obstacles preventing individuals with disabilities from finding proper oral health care.

That is why programs such as Gompers Dental Center were created. However, the need is far greater than what a specialized center like Gompers can offer. So, to address this need we have taken a new expanded approach to the challenge of treating individuals with disabilities: Education of students and dentists.

"If even a handful of people change their minds about special needs dentistry, that's a huge success" ~ Karolin Bilal

Gompers Dental Center has partnered with a variety of community entities to lend our expertise to those desiring to learn more about the world of special needs dentistry. Partnering with Phoenix College, Rio Salado, A.T. Still University and Carrington College, Gompers helps educate students in gaining a greater understanding of the special accommodations often required to work on individuals with disabilities. By working alongside Gompers specially trained staff, students learn that while a little more time, care and caution may be necessary, special needs dentistry is just, well, dentistry.

"The students that come to Gompers get a hands on experience," says Karolin Bilal, Gompers Dental Director. "They learn they have nothing to fear. If even a handful of people change their minds about special needs dentistry, that's a huge success."

Students are excited about their experience as well. Madison Kaizer, a student at Phoenix College added, "The dental team at Gompers is fabulous. They are great with the patients and very understanding. My experience at Gompers was just wonderful and I want to keep coming back to volunteer."



On October 8, more than three years after he first started attending Gompers, Bryan left our Special Education Day School – and we threw a party! It's not that we aren't going to miss Bryan. His infectious smile, outgoing personality and sense of humor will be missed every day. We are happy because Bryan progressed enough to reintegrate with his peers and transition back to his home school of Dysart Elementary.

The mission of Gompers Special Education Day School is to assist our students in reaching a level of independence that will enable them to rejoin their peers. Our specialized services help students deal with matters as diverse as behavioral issues, medical issues, communication issues, and other barriers to remain in their home district. To overcome these may take some of our individuals months and for others it may take years, but ultimately that is the goal of everyone who attends Gompers Special Education Day School.

Special Education Day School

To that end, Bryan is truly a success story. Bryan came to Gompers displaying a variety of issues. His situation required he be assigned a full time staff just for him. Thanks to the hard work of his teacher, staff and therapy team, things began to change. Bryan learned that by making the correct choices he was offered a variety of fun options, including taking personal walks with his teacher, and offering special assistance in the room such as making photocopies or delivering the mail. The biggest reward for Bryan came when he was asked to be the Assistant Coach for Gompers basketball team! Bryan no longer needed a personal staff and would often tell the staff he didn't want a break, but instead, "I just wanna work!"

Bryan, from all of us at Gompers, we wish you nothing but the best!



Inaugural Gators Softball Team Wins Special Olympics Gold!

On September 21, the Gompers Gators softball team took home the Gold Medal in the Special Olympics West Valley Tournament! "What makes this accomplishment so amazing is that this was the first time we have ever fielded a Special Olympics softball team. I am very proud of how hard everyone worked, and they deserve it," remarked Steve Bejar, Activities Coordinator.

The road to the Gold Medal was not easy, but teamwork and dedication were the driving force for this new team. The leadership of their co-captains, Alan, shortstop, and Oscar, pitcher, proved to be the winning formula for the Gators.

Beginning preparation for the tournament at the end of June, the hottest part of the year, forced several practices indoors to the gym. As a newly formed team, trying to fit player's talents to the right positions was challenging as well. The team went through many changes, and to find the right catcher it came down to the last week of practice, where a strong performance by Luis was the deciding factor.

DTA



If you've driven down 31st Avenue between Glendale Avenue and Northern Avenue recently, you've probably noticed the street is looking much cleaner. That's because Noelle, Brian, Deedee, Rachel and Daka are on the job!

As an agency, Gompers staff and clients spend nearly 5,000 hours a year volunteering in our community. This is a major point of pride for Gompers. While we receive so much generosity from the community, we also believe strongly that it is our duty to give back. That is why every one of our Day Training for Adults (DTA) program rooms "chooses" their place to volunteer, whether that be a senior center, food bank, animal shelter or in partnership with organizations such as the Talking Book Library and Duet.

So when it came time for these five individuals to pick a volunteer site, they did what all of our groups do. They got together, talked about what their options were and chose to join the City of Phoenix "Adopt-A-Street" program. The "Adopt-A-Street" program provides all of the supplies, picks

up the garbage once the group is done and only requires service four times a year - but that wasn't good enough for this group. Since February, this industrious group has been heading out every Tuesday for a few hours of fresh air and hard work. From picking up garbage, to sweeping sidewalks, to grabbing fallen branches, they do it all. Deedee said she likes to work and Noelle added she likes working with their staff, Kari Cramp. "We have a great time. Not only are they learning things, but they are helping the community," said Kari Cramp.

City of Phoenix District 5 Councilman, Claude Mattox also realizes the critical importance of what Gompers clients are doing. "In these difficult economic times we all can use a little help and support. This is especially true in our neighborhoods. Gompers DTA program members 'Adopting a Street' is what giving back to the community is all about and is greatly appreciated by the neighbors and the City of Phoenix," said Councilman Mattox.



Vocational Program



If there is one thing Gompers is about, it's success stories! From students successfully being able to transition back to their home school, to dental patients being able to once more show off their smile with pride, to our adults successfully helping older community members feel part of life again, every day seems to bring a new story. That's why we would like to introduce you to Kira.

Kira joined the Gompers family back in 2005. She began her vocational training in the main workshop area doing basic assembly jobs. However, it was apparent from the beginning Kira had skills which had not yet blossomed. Her outgoing personality and talents quickly lead to her handling more complicated jobs which required speed, attention to detail, and being able to coordinate multiple steps. Taking a genuine "never say never" attitude, Kira consistently rose to the challenge.

In June of 2008, Gompers partnered with Express Digital Solutions to begin a scanning operation. By this

point, does it surprise you Kira was among the first clients to be selected to train on the high tech scanning equipment and digital indexing machines? Kira quickly met the challenge, becoming one of the fastest and most accurate workers in the scan center.

However, being one who is always on the lookout for her next challenge, Kira jumped at the opportunity to take on front desk reception duties when Gompers Vocational Center began its clerical enclave. She now answers the phones, files and makes sure our community visitors are greeted warmly and made to feel welcome - all with rave reviews from everyone who meets her!

Most exciting to Gompers and Kira is the understanding that there are so many more opportunities waiting for her around the next bend. As Kira moves forward, the next step along her ramp to success will likely be a community supported employment opportunity. In the meantime, when asked about Gompers, Kira said with pride, "I love working at Gompers because I like the staff and I am learning a lot of stuff."



The tournament was held at beautiful Rio Vista Park in Peoria where Gompers needed to defeat two teams to bring home the gold. The first game saw the Gators put up 10 runs in three innings for a 10-0 victory. Then it was on to the Gold Medal game where the Gators put away their opponents in six innings with a 6-4 win. The celebration began with a two out, bases loaded strikeout thrown by Oscar (left) to clinch the game! Congratulations to all the players and staff!

Go Gators!!

2010 Gompers Gators Softball:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Pitcher - Oscar | Outfield - Derek |
| Catcher - Luis | Outfield - Jennifer |
| 1st Base - John | Outfield - J.D. |
| 2nd Base - Nick | Extra Player - |
| Shortstop - Alan | Dominic |
| 3rd Base - Paul | Reserve - Stephen |
| Outfield - Sofija | |



Dancing the afternoon away!

Michelle "Mickey" Gardner is all dressed up for the Halloween Dance Party at Gompers on Friday, October 29. The costumes and decorations made for a great afternoon of fun, music and plenty of dancing for everyone!

Notable attendees included Superman, Fred Flintstone, Michael Jackson, Spiderman, Dracula and several clowns!

Gompers By the Numbers!

5,000

The number of hours Gompers clients have volunteered at other nonprofit agencies in 2010.

900

The number of individuals with special needs Gompers Dental Center will serve this year.

204

The number of days since the first Boundless Playground in Arizona has been open and active at Gompers!

130

The number of people identifying and strengthening their abilities through employment at our Vocational Center every day.

2

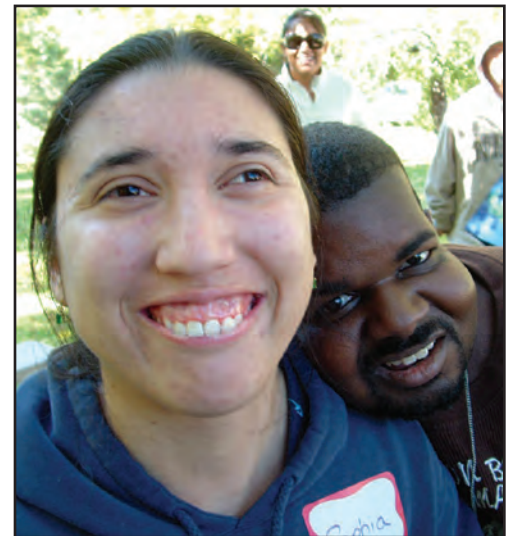
Minutes it takes to schedule a tour! Come see all the great things happening at Gompers! Contact Michael at 602-336-0061, ext.162 or msimoni@gomperscenter.org to make an appointment.

DID YOU KNOW?

You have until December 31, 2010 to make a donation to Gompers and qualify for the Arizona State Working Poor Tax Credit (up to \$400)!

For more information, contact:

Elaine Starks at 602-336-0061, ext.152
or estarks@gomperscenter.org



Luis (left) shows off his catch of the day as Sophia and Coddie (right) enjoy the afternoon festivities at the Rainbow Trout Farm and Living Springs Camp in Sedona (center).

Gone Fishing!

On October 30, the Sedona-Oak Creek Canyon Lions Club hosted a beautiful day of fishing and games, with a barbeque for 29 clients and Gompers staff.

The October day featured spectacularly beautiful weather, changing leaves, and some fish that were a tad stubborn. But in the end, we caught 'em, the Lions Club cooked 'em and we ate 'em!

For more than 25 years, Gompers has partnered with the Sedona-Oak Creek Canyon Lions Club for our annual field trip. It's a fun filled day that our clients and staff look forward to every year with a tradition we are looking forward to continuing.

Birdies for Charity supports Gompers “Special Smiles for Special People (SSSP)” Dental Program



Help Gompers Dental Center provide treatment that will improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities.

For SSSP, eight out of ten clients with disabilities have gum disease—so for Gompers, this is a very serious effort! Each year SSSP provides oral health treatment to support “the recommended treatment plan” for those who otherwise could not afford it.

With the support of oral health institutions, grants and your donations, Gompers will provide affordable care for 900+ clients. Our initial goal is to provide every client with his or her “recommended treatment plan.” This means Gompers will need to raise \$309,000—and with *Birdies for Charity* providing a 10% bonus or \$30,900—your gift will actually increase our efforts.

Since 1994, Gompers has provided affordable dental care for those with disabilities. Our goal has not changed—nor our challenges. In 1994, four barriers affected access to affordable dental care.

In 2010, 3 of the 4 barriers remain:

1. No state or federal program providing dental coverage
2. Lack of oral health professionals trained to serve this special population
3. Transportation

✓ Adapted dental equipment is now available

How can you help “Special Smiles for Special People?”
Provide a one time gift to support one or more services!

\$1,070 – Full Recommended Treatment Plan* (includes all services)
\$42 – Comprehensive Oral Evaluation*
\$74 – Full set of X-rays*
\$201 – Four Oral Health Cleanings* (or \$50.15 per cleaning)
\$584 – Four Periodontal Scaling* (or \$146 per section)
\$20 – Fluoride Treatment*
\$73 – Periodontal Maintenance*
\$76 – Full Mouth Debridement

Free-Oral Health Instructions for Aftercare with each visit

To support this important project, please complete the pledge form and return it to: Elaine Starks, Grant Relationships Officer, Gompers Habilitation Center.

If you have questions, please contact Elaine at 602-336-0061, ext.151 or estarks@gomperscenter.org.

PLEDGE DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 6, 2011

PLEDGE FORM

1

I PLEDGE AND PROMISE TO DONATE TO THE BIRDIES FOR CHARITY PROGRAM FOR EVERY BIRDIE MADE DURING THE 2011 WASTE MANAGEMENT PHOENIX OPEN.

PER BIRDIE PLEDGE
1¢ MINIMUM

OR

ONE TIME DONATION
\$20 MINIMUM

Make checks payable to

Thunderbirds Charities

CHECK #

2

Name

Company Name (only if using company address)

Address

Suite or Apt. No

City

State

Zip

Telephone (Including Area Code)

3

THIS PLEDGE FORM MUST BE RETURNED TO THE CHARITY INVITING YOUR PLEDGE

Gompers Habilitation Center
6601 N. 27th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85017

148

Charity inviting your pledge

Birdies for Charity Number

Visit www.birdiesforcharityaz.com
for more information or to make a pledge on-line.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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