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What A Year It Was For Gompers!

What a year 2007 was! There were wonderful victories achieved; we overcame and excelled as a result of Proposition 202, we changed our name, adopted a new mission statement, introduced a new logo and a fresh new attitude as well as a myriad of other wonderful new things.

But as with all great successes there are inevitable challenges and 2007 saw no exception to that rule. Namely, in September Gompers was the target of vandalism and for the third time in five months, tens of thousands of dollars in damages occurred to our air conditioning and heating units. However, thanks to a very generous donation from Steve Haugen of St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Gompers was better able to help Phoenix police track the vandals and make an arrest. Mr. Haugen had

donated video cameras that we installed on the building and as a result we caught the vandals on tape red-handed. And with the addition of a witness who came forward to identify the thieves, we anticipate an arrest and successful prosecution of the vandals. With that said, we hope that we will be vandalism-free in 2008.

In addition to the wonderful nature of people like Mr. Haugen and many others who generously stepped forth to offer their support, SRP donated \$5000 to offset some of the costs of replacing the air condition and heating units. In addition, we reinforced the units with steel cages and have taken extensive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of all those who call Gompers their second home.

Thank you one and all for your support!

Thank you just doesn't begin to express our gratitude...

With the holiday season behind us and a brand new year ahead, we've got so much to not only be thankful for but also to be excited about. At this time we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to the following organizations that, once again, supported Gompers throughout the 2007 holiday season, as well as those poised to partner with us in 2008. Our amazing supporters include:

- St. Joseph's Mission Services
- Phoenix Suns Charities
- Arizona Diamondbacks
- Arizona Cardinals and the Teddy Bear Express
- Phoenix Coyotes Charities
- APS Volunteer Clown Troupe
- Thunderbirds Charities
- SunCor Development
- Arizona Public Service
- SKIDS Catering
- Nile Graphics
- Williams Express
- Old Country Buffet
- Washington School District
- Beatitudes Center DOAR
- HALO (Helping Animals Live On)
- Salt River Project

This Just In:

Gompers Habilitation Center is proud to announce that we've created one-of-a-kind, first ever t-shirts so everyone can proudly proclaim that "I am Gompers"! For a limited time these great 100% heavy gauge cotton white tees are available in small, medium, large and extra large for \$10 each. If you'd like to proclaim that you are Gompers too then stop by the Center or call 602.336.0061 to order yours. For mail orders, please add an additional \$2.50 for postage and handling.



All Board members can be contacted via the following address and phone numbers:
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The Best Day Fishing...

By Mark A. Jacoby, Executive Director



On September 29, 2007, 30 clients from Gompers were accompanied by staff for a day of fishing at the Rainbow Trout Farm in Sedona. This incredible event has been sponsored for several decades by the Sedona Oak Creek Lions Club. In speaking with the Lions Club members, a theme ran through what they were saying, and while I am paraphrasing, the spirit of it ran like this:

"Do you know how many events we (the Lions Club) sponsor every year? Well we have never worked with another group of employees that are so appreciative of what we do, or who are as committed, caring and passionate about what they do as Gompers staff."

No words have ever rung as true to me. The management team may drive the car, but it is the staff that works directly with our clients and students that is the engine behind what we do. They are on the front line every day, celebrating the glories and triumphs of our clients and students, but also managing the difficulties, setbacks and frustrations that are bound to happen when you serve more than 300 people. There are so many examples of truly

inspiring staff that it seems unfair to point out just a few but in referencing them, I hope you will keep in mind all of Gompers staff.

Mary Radil – Mary's enthusiasm and energy is infectious and it can't help but rub off on her clients who volunteer to assist homebound seniors through our collaboration with Beatitudes Center DOAR. Thanks to Mary, two often forgotten segments of our society – the disabled and the elderly – are re-discovering that they are valued and needed.

Guillermo Leon and Zeb Samuel – These two are the creative genius behind our Artful Minds program. Thanks to their talents, Gompers clients and students are finding a voice through art that many never knew they had.

Angelic Calvin – Angel's many years of dedicated caring and support lead to her promotion as lead staff in Gompers new Premiere Program for individuals over the age of 50. Now individuals in their golden years are being afforded an opportunity to truly live life to its fullest with their peers.

John F. Long Foundation

The **John F. Long Foundation** is a great supporter of Gompers Habilitation Center and in December, **John F. Long** provided Gompers with a year end grant. The caveat? That the money was to be utilized to help a needy family in some way during the holiday season.

With that, Gompers was inspired to select 11 families, each one representing one student or client from each program room, in which we provided them with a \$50 gift card to Fry's Food and Drug for their holiday needs. This was something that we felt would benefit each of these wonderful families and we are wholeheartedly grateful to the **John F. Long Foundation** for their generosity and

the freedom they gave Gompers Habilitation Center to utilize the funds as we saw fit...to support the families of the individuals we are so honored to serve.

Margaret T. Morris Foundation / J. W. Kieckhefer Foundation

Gompers Habilitation Center received two grants totaling \$15,000 from the **Margaret T. Morris Foundation** and the **J.W. Kieckhefer Foundation**. These grants represent funds for the renovation of Gompers Special Education School. As part of Gompers' expansion, our facility at 6601 North 27th Avenue will undergo a complete renovation beginning in Spring 2008 which will allow for greater accessibility, continuity and expansion of our exceptional programs and services.

Phillip Dominguez – Phillip's patience, caring and hard work has made him a client favorite in our Vocational Center. Phillip is never too busy to give a smile, or take that extra bit of time to make sure that a client is fully able to do his job independently.

Carmen Lopez – Carmen's dedication to her student in our school is clearly evident in everything she does. Carmen has gone above and beyond by creating a variety of assistive technology activities using picture cards generated with Boardmaker. With Carmen's assistance, her student has been able to increase his independence by gaining new verbal and sign vocabulary.

Gompers front line staff, the staff that I consider to be the best of the best, continues to come back day after day not because they hope to get rich in the monetary sense of the word. They come back day after day because their caring, passion and genuine love of the individuals we work with is what defines their heart and their very soul.

Thank you, Gompers staff! You are appreciated!

Grants Update

We are so grateful to the **Margaret T. Morris Foundation** and the **J.W. Kieckhefer Foundation** for their continued support of people with developmental disabilities. It is because of organizations like these that we are able to provide even greater opportunities for all of the individuals with disabilities that Gompers so proudly serves.

WalMart Community Involvement

In December, Gompers received a \$1000 donation from **WalMart Store 5330**. These funds will be utilized for the 2008 Artful Minds program giving Gompers students and clients the opportunity to experience the joy that comes from self-expression through art.



John celebrates Thanksgiving with an APS volunteer clown

Who Is Gompers? John Ferguson is Gompers!

John Ferguson doesn't seem to be a traditional client served by Gompers' DTA Program. At 66 years old, and cognitively disabled since birth, most people are surprised that someone John's age can even attend Gompers. However, Gompers serves a number of individuals over the age of 50 and John is one of the wonderfully unique clients we are lucky enough to support every day.

John enrolled at Gompers in September 2006. Hailing from Memphis, Tennessee, John's sweet and gentle demeanor quickly won the hearts of clients and staff alike. However, early on John seemed anxious and had difficulty in focusing on his

tasks. He had a tendency to pace and it was challenging for staff to really connect with him. In October 2007, John chose to join Gompers newly created Premiere Program for individuals 50 and older and the transformation was almost immediate. Now John is task-oriented, focused on his programs and goals and is even learning to use augmentative communication devices and flash cards. For John, though, his biggest achievement might just have been winning a bronze medal in Special Olympics bowling. Or perhaps it was when he received the Client of the Month award in November 2007? Whichever it is, John now participates in all activities. He also laughs often, smiles with greater ease and is seemingly a much happier, more fulfilled individual. When John shows off his new talent of animal impressions, the laughter is infectious. A big lover of all things furry

and four-legged, John's repertoire includes a cat, dog, cow and pig! He can even do a galloping horse and if you didn't know it, you'd swear it was coming down the hall after you. John's best talent? Doing the funky chicken dance! Too bad Special Olympics doesn't give out medals for that one because John would win the gold! It's heartwarming to know John is finally having the time of his life and what better time than in his golden years. We are incredibly proud of the progress that John has made during his short time at Gompers, and we know that only good things are to come for this funny, wonderful and warm person.

Thank you, John for being such an extraordinary representative of WHO Gompers is. Because after all, John IS Gompers.

Another First: Gompers' Premiere Program

As we reviewed the footprints we left in 2007, we considered what we could do better in 2008, and it was during this period of reflection that we saw a void in our services for individuals over the age of 50. We asked ourselves why not create a

component of our educational and social programs specifically focused on senior members of our clientele? Subsequently we have targeted this viable and valuable segment of our population that has very specific needs, and in order to better meet

those needs we've launched Gompers' Premiere Program. In this new program, our senior clients are provided all sorts of fun, interactive and engaging activities including arts and crafts, educational events, music, field trips and much more!

Voc Gets A New Home And A New Director

At the end of September 2007, Gompers closed on our new building located at 5340 West Bethany Home Road in Glendale and renovations are underway at the 21,000 square foot warehouse that will be the future home of Gompers Vocation Department.



As Gompers Habilitation Center has grown over the years, so has our need to expand our facilities. Our Vocation Department has been growing exponentially and in order to better meet the needs of our vocational clients and our contract partners, we decided to focus on moving the vocation department offsite, thereby increasing the department's space to more than three times what is currently available. In addition, this move will better equip us to propel into 2008 and beyond.

It's an exciting time to be a part of Gompers Habilitation Center and these thrilling leaps forward are just the beginning of even better things to come.

But wait, there's more great news!

In addition to the warehouse property acquisition, Gompers welcomed a new Vocational Director in late summer 2007. Fred Siegel joined the Gompers family in August and before landing in Phoenix Fred worked at an ARC in upstate New York. Fred brings with him a tremendous passion to serve our very special population. In addition, Fred spent many years in the corporate sector in sales and marketing, but says, "I get a special satisfaction at Gompers I can only get from serving our clients, and because of that I love coming to work every day."

As a native of the northeast, Fred and his family enjoy Arizona winters almost as much as he enjoys working at Gompers.

Welcome Fred!

SNAPSHOT

This SNAPSHOT: Thanksgiving Celebration 2007

Every November, the Phoenix community comes to Gompers Habilitation Center to help us kick off the holiday season and this year was no exception. In fact, Thanksgiving 2007 was the best ever because every single organization we invited showed up and brought with them amazing heart and enthusiasm! This year's Thanksgiving Celebration saw appearances by the APS Volunteer Clown Troupe, the Phoenix Suns Dancers, 'Go' Gorilla from the Phoenix Suns, Big Red from the Arizona Cardinals, Howler from the Phoenix Coyotes, D. Baxter Bobcat and musical mascot Bobby Freeman from the Arizona Diamondbacks, Spike The Super Ball (mascot for the 2008 Super Bowl) and our dear friend OC Bee from Old Country Buffet. What an incredible day it was and with an abundance of laughter and palpable joy, it was another memorable Thanksgiving for the students and clients of Gompers Habilitation Center.



From our hearts to yours...thank you one and all for your continued support of the amazing faces seen here. These faces are Gompers!



Birdies for Charity - 2008 FBR Open



For the second year in a row, Gompers Habilitation Center is thrilled to participate in the 2008 Birdies for Charity Program presented by The Thunderbirds and the FBR Open. Once again this year, the Thunderbirds Charities will donate an additional bonus of 10% to Gompers Habilitation Center based on the total amount of pledges we raise. So for every dollar you pledge, the Thunderbirds Charities will give Gompers an additional \$.10. If you give \$1000, the Thunderbirds will give Gompers an additional \$100.

Last year, \$3000 was pledged to Gompers Habilitation Center by generous individuals and corporations with 100% of those pledges going directly back into the exceptional programs and services we offer. This year, our goal is to raise \$6,000 through the 2008 Birdies for Charity program for "Artful Minds". Gompers' Artful Minds program gives students and clients of all

ages and disabilities the opportunity to express themselves through painting, drawing, sculpting, and other artistic modalities. The Artful Minds program culminates each year with an annual Gallery Showing where these extraordinary works of art are on display and available for purchase with all proceeds benefiting both the artist and the art program.

This year's gallery showing will be held at the APS Gallery at the Arizona Center during the month of July, 2008. (More details to be announced later in 2008.)

If you are interested in supporting Gompers Habilitation Center and the Artful Minds program through the Birdies for Charity program, please contact Thea Smith at 602.336.0061 ext. 162 or via email at tsmith@gomperscenter.org for a pledge form.

Artful Minds Around Town

The second edition Artful Minds Note Cards have been unveiled and this installment boasts a festive holiday theme.

As with the first edition, these beautiful reproductions represent four amazing works of art by the students and clients of Gompers Habilitation Center and sell for \$20 a package. Each package includes 12 high quality cards and envelopes and all proceeds benefit the Artful Minds Program and the artists themselves.

The Artful Minds Program and Note Cards will be highly visible in 2008 so check our website for updates on showings, sales and so much more.

For more information, or to order either the first or second edition Artful Minds Note Cards, please call 602.336.0061. If you prefer to order yours by mail, please add an additional \$2.00 for postage and handling.



Family of Snowmen by Alfonso R.



Beautiful Red Flowers by Betty G.

Untitled by Irene D.

Frosty Day by Rhonda F.

2007 Arizona Cardinals Teddy Bear Express

In December, Gompers was thrilled to be a stop for the Arizona Cardinals Teddy Bear Express. Marcel Shipp, Neil Rackers, Darnell Dockett, Alice Whisenhunt, Big Red and a few of the wonderful cheerleaders were all aboard the Teddy Bear Express with the singular goal of bringing some holiday cheer to Gompers students and clients. Guess what? Mission accomplished!



Calendar of Events

January

- Gompers Habilitation Center has been selected as the featured charity for the 50/50 Raffle on Tuesday, January 15th during the Phoenix Coyotes game against the San Jose Sharks
- Gompers Habilitation Center and the FBR Open Birdies for Charity Program January 28th through February 3rd

April

- Grand Opening of our new Vocational Center (date TBA)
- Launch of Gompers Habilitation Center's new website (date TBA)

May

- 36th Annual Golf Fore Gompers Tournament at Sanctuary Golf Course at Westworld Friday, May 2nd

July

- 3rd Annual Artful Minds Gallery Showing at the APS Gallery running throughout the month of July

Miscellany

- ♦ Would you prefer to receive this newsletter via email? If so, send your request to development@gomperscenter.org and you'll receive the Winter 2007/2008 edition of the Gompers Gram in your email inbox.
- ♦ Would you like to make a donation to one of Gompers' great programs or services? To donate online, please visit our website at www.gomperscenter.org.
- ♦ Have you ever thought about volunteering at Gompers Habilitation Center? We have many fulfilling and fun opportunities for people to volunteer a few hours a week or even once a month. Whether you'd like to spend time with our students or clients or support one of our great fundraising endeavors, we would be happy to match you with a program or project that suits your schedule and supports the wonderful work being done every single day here at Gompers Habilitation Center. For more information, please call our HR Coordinator at 602.336.0061 ext. 118.