

Gompers HABILITATION CENTER

Advocacy Empowerment Independence

Winter/Spring 2008

SANCTUARY ENCLAVE

Sometimes the most surprising things happen as a result of the most ordinary occurrences. At the end of 2007, Gompers Habilitation Center met with the wonderful people at SunCor Development. What was intended to be a meeting about the 2008 Golf fore Gompers Tournament turned into an extraordinary opportunity for some of Gompers vocational clients. In November, Gompers and Sanctuary Golf course at Westworld began a partnership in which Gompers vocational clients would begin working at Sanctuary learning about golf course maintenance. These useable skills would include everything from replacing divots to driving a golf cart. While we appreciate every opportunity that our partners provide the vocational clients of Gompers Habilitation Center, this opportunity has particular significance in that on May 2nd the 2008 Golf fore Gompers Tournament was held at Sanctuary Golf Course and now, because of this great enclave placement, Gompers vocational clients have truly come full circle.

Gompers and Tempe-based SunCor Golf are looking toward the future by planning to expand the program to other SunCor Golf Properties like Golf Club in Fountain Hills, Palm Valley in Goodyear and Club West in Phoenix.



“These guys are awesome,” said John Patzwald, director of golf at Sanctuary. “They not only are helping us maintain the greens, but they’re fun people to work with.”

John stated that Sanctuary and other golf courses until earlier this year have relied on immigrant laborers for maintenance work. With the new laws that prohibit companies from hiring undocumented workers, changes needed to be made and have therefore resulted in a shortage of labor.

“At first, we weren’t sure it would work and we were a little nervous about hiring them,” said Patzwald. “But they’re working harder and are just as efficient as our regular crews — sometimes more efficient.”

We extend our sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the wonderful people of SunCor Development and Sanctuary Golf Course at WestWorld. We consider ourselves lucky to be partners with such a progressive and proactive organization... and such exceptional people!

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This just in...

Discover Financial Services

In June, Discover Financial Services very generously donated \$10K to Gompers educational programs. We are so grateful to everyone at Discover Financial Services for their kindness and with this funding the students and clients Gompers serves every day will be afforded tremendous learning opportunities. Thank you again, Discover Financial Services!

In February, Gompers very own Executive Director took the big leap. No, he didn’t jump into another dunk tank. He got married! Mark Jacoby tied the knot with his beautiful new wife, Jeanmarie. Everyone at Gompers is so happy and we wish them a lifetime of love, laughter, health and happiness! Congratulations to Mark and Jeanmarie!



Mark's MESSAGE

There are times we all get complacent. Times when we look in the mirror and tell ourselves what a tremendous job we are doing on behalf of the clients and students we serve. Times when we say look at all the progress that has been made in educating people on the tremendous skills, abilities and aspirations the individuals we serve can bring to the community as a whole. Times when we say well we can take a little time off from fighting the battle.

And then days like Tuesday, February 5, 2008 happen.

On that Tuesday the clients from one of our adult program rooms went on an outing and were going to use the city bus. As these individuals excitedly paid their fare and went to take their seat, a woman spoke up. "Don't you have your own vans to get around on?" Shocked, the staff calmly explained they were from Gompers and the clients were working on accessing community transportation. The woman disgustingly looked at them and said, "Then use your own vans and keep them outta here!" Several other riders, aghast at what they heard, quickly lent their assistance.

Individuals with disabilities are the most easily overlooked, easily ignored and easily pushed aside segment of our population. That should not be the case in 2008, but it is.

Now, I could focus on those who offered their seat, or offered to move so one of our clients in a wheelchair could get by since the woman who spoke up wasn't going to. I could focus on them, but I won't. I can hear people saying, "But shouldn't we celebrate those who lent a hand?" We could, but then we would be falling into the trap of complacency.

Why should we focus on that woman? Because one out of every five people reading this has some form of a disability, and 10% of the population has what is classified as a severe disability. And yet despite these overwhelming numbers, individuals

with severe functional limitations have an unemployment rate nearing 70%. Nearly 7.2 million people with a disability between the ages of 15 and 64 have no insurance. Disability services are the first items cut when it comes to a budget crunch. When childhood diabetes reached 1 in 500 it was considered an epidemic. Autism stands at 1 in 150 and not one politician talks about it.

If I sound angry, I am. Individuals with disabilities are the most easily overlooked, easily ignored and easily pushed aside segment of our population. That should not be the case in 2008, but it is. There is no doubt that we have made tremendous headway since the days of institutions and pre-ADA, but we obviously have a long way to go. How can we change that? Become active and become involved. Take an interest in the agency your son or daughter attends, and participate in their parent groups and meetings. Write your legislators regarding disability rights issues. Support advocacy groups like the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities or the ARC or ABIL. Even more simply speak up the next time you see something happening that sheds a negative light on disabilities, or thank someone the next time they show an act of kindness.

The bottom line is that it is because of that woman on the bus that none of us can ever become complacent.

Birdies for Charity Recap

Gompers Habilitation Center was proud to participate in the 2008 Birdies for Charity Program presented by The Thunderbirds and the FBR Open. Last year, almost \$3000 was pledged to Gompers by generous individuals and corporations with 100% of those pledges going directly back into the wonderful programs and services we offer. This year, our goal was 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 program culminates each spring with an annual Gallery Showing where these extraordinary works of art are available for purchase with all proceeds benefiting both the artist and the art program. The big news is that we not only met our goal of \$6000 raised, we exceeded it!

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Birdies for Charity program presented by The Thunderbirds! Who knows...maybe next year we'll double it and raise \$12,000?!

APS

In May, APS gave \$10,000 to Gompers Habilitation Center in support of its collaboration with Beatitudes Center DOAR. Gompers and Beatitudes Center DOAR are engaged in a collaborative partnership bringing together two segments of the population that are largely ignored. In a unique and innovative move, Gompers and BCD came together in early 2006 to test whether or not there was compatibility between these underserved groups. Gompers' clients needed opportunities for social interaction, life skills learning and the unlikely notion of volunteerism. Beatitudes Center DOAR neighbors are home-bound and traditionally elderly individuals who exist somewhere between inde-

pendence and assistance; not fully self-sufficient but not quite ready for assisted living. It is a limbo state in which many home-bound individuals struggle through. They lack the familial support for grocery shopping, doctor's appointments, help with bill paying, handy work and other necessary tasks. Under the supervision of trained staff, Gompers clients provide these support services to the home-bound seniors meeting their basic needs. Additionally, Gompers clients learn useable skills in support of their progress toward self-sufficiency and independence. It's truly a remarkable relationship and we are honored that APS has found it worthwhile to support this exceptional program.

Dental Health Update

There are lots of amazing changes taking place at Gompers Habilitation Center. One of the biggest is Gompers Dental Center where we combine state-of-the-art dentistry with a caring, knowledgeable staff with the goal of making the dental experience one that is not only professional but enjoyable for the individuals with special needs that we serve. For many years, Gompers Dental Center was a fee-for-service clinic but big changes have allowed our patients to utilize such diverse billing options as HealthNet, APIPA, Mercy Care and Delta Dental. 2008 is proving to be an extraordinary year at Gompers!

In addition, the City of Phoenix honored Gompers Habilitation Center with a Community Development Block Grant award in March recognizing the invaluable work done by Gompers Dental Center by serving a segment of the population that goes largely unnoticed. We thank the City of Phoenix for this tremendous honor and we hope to continue this great work for years to come.

GRANTS UPDATE

Gompers Habilitation Capital Campaign

In December 2006, Gompers Habilitation Center began its largest capital campaign in its 59-year history and includes the relocation of its Vocational Center to a larger facility and the subsequent complete renovation of its main facility. During the first phase of the campaign, Gompers secured a \$1.6 million site for its Vocational Center with a total campaign projected at \$4.9 million.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Kieckhefer Foundation - \$10,000

This grant will directly support the cost associated with the renovation of Gompers Special Education School.

Sundt Foundation - \$10,000

This grant will provide a portion of the financial support needed to upgrade our educational tools for Gompers special education activities for visually impaired students.

Margaret T. Morris Foundation - \$ 5,000

This grant will directly support the cost associated with the renovation of Gompers Special Education School.

Knights of Columbus - \$ 1,700

This grant will allow Gompers Habilitation Center to purchase resources for our lending library inside Gompers Special Education School.

PROGRAM GRANTS

Thunderbirds Charities - \$50,000

This grant will allow Gompers to provide a greater percentage of the cost associated with the recommended treatment plans for our Dental Center patients.

Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation

The Dreyfus Foundation provided a generous donation to support Gompers' Day Training for Adults Program "Shopping Sharing for Our Neighbors." Gompers collaborates with Beatitudes on their program activities with its senior population.

EZGo Golf Cart - \$ 5,000

EZGo Golf Cart provided the use of a customized golf cart for one-year to support the Vocational Program activities of Gompers special needs clients at Sanctuary Golf Course.

Sam's Club - \$ 1,000

To support Gompers Habilitation Center's general operating expenses.

For more information about how to support Gompers programs, please contact Elaine Starks, Grant Relationship Officer at 602.336.0061 ext. 151.

SNAPSHOT

School's Day at the Zoo





AAPPD

Mark A. Jacoby was named Vice Chair of the Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities (AAPPD). Through this appointment, Mr. Jacoby will be involved in legislative agendas by attending hearings as well as meeting with members of the legislature. As representative for Gompers' students and clients, he will be very active in the planning processes for AAPPD. One of the first orders of business following the appointment, Mr. Jacoby, along with Chair Cletus Thiebeau, met with providers in Flagstaff and Tucson to hear what they had to say about the state of AAPPD; something which had not been done previously. Appropriate representation of all providers within the state is of paramount importance to both men.

States Mark Jacoby, "I think the thing that I'm most excited about is that we have started an outreach committee that I chair. Cletus and I thought that after the acrimony between providers and disability rights groups that it would be good to get everyone around the table and just talk. We have managed to get the Governor's Council on Disabilities, ABIL, SILC, the ARC of Arizona and the Center for Disability Law to agree to begin meeting on a monthly basis. The hope is that by talking when differences like Prop 202 arise, at least we'll understand where each side is coming from and we can have a more proactive exchange with more positive results. In addition, just imagine when we can get all of us on the same page? What an unstoppable force we could be for individuals with disabilities."

We see great things in the future for all members of AAPPD!

50/50 Raffle

In January, Gompers Habilitation Center was invited to partner with the Phoenix Coyotes as part of their 50/50 Raffle program. Many volunteers showed up at Jobing.com Arena to sell raffle tickets during that night's game in which the proceeds would be shared with the lucky raffle ticket winner, Coyotes Charities and Gompers Habilitation Center. When the numbers were tabulated it turns out that nearly 20 volunteers for Gompers raised more than \$2400 that night. It was hard work but the volunteers also had a great time enjoying the crowd and the awesome game. Thank you to the Phoenix Coyotes and Coyotes Charities for this wonderful opportunity!!

In Loving Memory of RICHARD CARMARGO

The entire Gompers family is saddened by the loss of one of our own. Vocational client Richard Camargo passed away on February 27th at the age of 33. Richard was a client at Gompers for a year and a half and during that time never failed to bring a smile to anyone who was fortunate to have crossed his path. A beautiful memorial service was held for Richard on March 4th and this quote is taken from the program from that service:

Love is kind; it does not envy, it does not boast. It is not proud, it is not rude, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. And now these three remain: Faith, hope and love.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Richard Carmargo. He was a wonderfully bright, warm and engaging individual and he will be deeply missed by so many who were blessed to know him.

VOC GRAND OPENING

Gompers took a huge leap forward on May 22nd by opening up our brand new vocational center. The new facility located at 5340 West Bethany Home Road in Glendale boasts 21,000 square feet of industrial work, storage, office and conference rooms complete with a loading dock. From its previous home of 9,000 square feet of space in all, the Vocational Department can now expand in proper ways to provide our clients with phenomenal experiential opportunities in a safe and sheltered environment while we offer our contract partners a more complete resource to getting the job done.

Random Act of Kindness

Random acts of kindness tend to be few and far between but one day when a group of Gompers clients and staff showed up at Burger King for lunch, kindness was all around. Upon realizing that there were very special individuals waiting in line at Burger King, John Bogatko stepped right up and paid for all of their lunches for absolutely no reason other than he wanted to do something nice for some very deserving people. We applaud John Bogatko for proving there are some incredible people walking this earth...and one of them lives right here in Phoenix.

Thank you from all of us at Gompers Habilitation Center.

GOLF FORE GOMPERS



On Friday, May 2nd, the 36th Annual Golf fore Gompers Tournament Presented by APS was held at Sanctuary Golf Course at Westworld. The Arizona Society of Professional Engineers once again hosted this great event which saw record breaking numbers only this time they weren't temperatures! There's something to be said about moving the tournament from mid-August to early May. It's called Spring and it was lovely at a mere 83 degrees.

Sanctuary was an incredible course and the staff couldn't have been more professional, helpful and accommodating. Overall the tournament raised nearly \$16,000 for Gompers Dental Center which exists to serve the needs of people over 21 years of age with disabilities. Gompers Dental Center is the only clinic in the state of Arizona that serves people with disabilities exclusively as there is an ever-growing need for professional oral healthcare offered to these individuals. Gompers is honored to provide these services to those in need and thanks to everyone who participated in the 36th Annual Golf fore Gompers Tournament, so many more will benefit from Gompers Dental Center.

Artful Minds Opening Night Reception and Gallery Showing

For the third year, Gompers Habilitation Center proudly presented the Artful Minds annual gallery showing. This year's event was featured during the month of June at the APS Gallery in the lobby of the APS Building at the Arizona Center. More than

40 unique works of art were

on display including a first time exhibit representing paintings and paper mache created by the students in Gompers School. Victoria Sucato, Gompers Speech Therapist Assistant, explains, "This year's theme of the Artful Minds Exhibit

was Nature's Life Lessons. Over the past several months, the students of the Gompers Habilitation Center have worked to create detailed, expressive pieces for the APS Art Show. Themes for this year included growth and transformation, as can be seen within the caterpillar and butterfly projects, in addition to family and relationships, as represented by the ocean and fish scenes.

During the creation of these projects, students used all of their senses to explore different mediums of expression. From the slippery, cold feel of paper mâché to the crinkling of tissue paper, each student discovered new sensations from which to grow and learn.

With the help of the therapy team, students refined motor and

communication skills throughout Artful Minds classes. Many students used adapted scissors to practice cutting skills, or learned how to better hold a brush. Some chose paint colors by pointing to picture cards, while others activated a pre-recorded message: "I want to use crayons today." Through art, our students gained knowledge of more than simple color and composition. Through art, our students learned the importance of team work, the excitement of exploration, and the self-confidence that comes with success."

This year's event was an extraordinary success and we thank our partner, APS, for allowing us to feature these incredible works of art and for hosting such a memorable event.





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