

HOPE *network* Connections

Integrated Employment: G.A.T.E. (Gaining Access To Employment)



▲ Getting Back on track: *Deb Austin acquired employment at American Eagle Outfitters with the help of the G.A.T.E. Program. Pictured are, from left to right, Cynthia Arnold, G.A.T.E. Employment Training Specialist; Deb Austin, G.A.T.E. participant; and Jennifer Murphree, Manager of American Eagle Outfitter's Woodland Mall location.*

THE G.A.T.E. PROGRAM is offered through Hope Network West Michigan's Supported Employment Department with funding support from Kent County Community Mental Health. It provides integrated employment opportunities to persons with severe and persistent mental illness. G.A.T.E. was established in October, 1998, and is currently serving 90 individuals with mental illness.

Deb Austin has participated in the G.A.T.E. program since its inception. Since that time, she has been on a steady road towards greater independence. For some time Deb

had been living at the Lodge, a program of Horizons of Michigan (a Hope Network affiliate) that provides an intensive supervised setting for people with mental illness. Since then, Deb has been able to progress to a more independent housing situation with another consumer.

Deb enjoys the freedom her new living arrangement offers her. "I really like having more independence. I'm able to manage my money, pay bills, cook, clean and shop. I've even learned to use the bus to get around town!"

Gradually, Deb has also been able to move to a more independent work setting. When first starting with G.A.T.E., Deb was very vocationally limited. She had a spotty work record and was unable to maintain employment for extended periods of time. Since that time, Deb's Employment and Training Supervisor has worked closely with her, helping her move from an employment assessment setting to supported group employment at Pottery Plus Warehouse, G.A.T.E.'s first group site. With the additional assistance of Cynthia Arnold and Mike Wilkerson who provided assistance with job seeking, job development and placement, Deb is now working competitively in the community at American

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Eagle Outfitters in Woodland Mall. She selected the option of having a one-on-one job coach work with her for her first forty hours until she was comfortable doing the job by herself.

Since joining the G.A.T.E. program, Deb's level of independence has grown significantly. She now meets two times a month with Cynthia Arnold at

G.A.T.E. gatherings. In these gatherings, participants come together to socialize, participate in community activities, and talk about work in a non-work setting. Sometimes the group goes bowling; sometimes they visit museums; sometimes they just talk about the issues that people with mental illness face every day. The members, not the

staff, direct these events and discussions, and there is no mandatory structure or participation. Through these gatherings, Deb is gaining strength and encouragement to help her live as independently as possible.

"I'm really proud of the accomplishments I've made in my life with the help of G.A.T.E." The G.A.T.E. program is very proud of Deb.

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—DEB AUSTIN,
G.A.T.E. PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT

CORPORATE UPDATE



Margaret Sellers-Walker, President of the Hope Network Board of Trustees (left), accepts the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Nonprofit of the Year Award from Michigan Lieutenant Governor Richard Posthumus.

Hope Network Named Nonprofit of the Year

THE GRAND RAPIDS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE named Hope Network and its West Michigan affiliates as the "Non-Profit of the Year" for 2000. The Chamber's PAC, "Friends of West Michigan Business", presented the award at their annual event.

Lieutenant Governor Richard Posthumus, in presenting the award, noted, "Hope Network has a tremendous economic impact on this area's economy. Its growth over the past years, and its financial stability, make it a special organization."

Accepting the award on behalf of Hope Network and its affiliated organizations was Margaret Sellers Walker, Chairperson of the Hope Network Board of Trustees. Walker said, "Hope Network and its west Michigan affiliates pour more than \$50 million into this area's economy. But while it's nice to talk about our size and economic impact, it's important to remember that we're primarily about people!"

Herb Start, President and founder of Hope Network, also joined Walker on the podium to receive the award. More than 200 business leaders were present to celebrate this year's awards.

HOPE NETWORK, S.E. CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



Herbert Start, President of Hope Network, is honored by Hope Network, S.E. for his lifetime of service to people with disabilities.

A DAY OF CELEBRATION was recently held to honor the accomplishments of Hope Network, S.E. on its fifth anniversary. Hope Network, S.E. provides integrated living arrangements for people with mental illness in the Oakland and Macomb County area.

The day's events began with an art auction that featured the works of participants in Hope Network, S.E.'s "Art Experience" program. According to Virginia Skrzyniarz, Marketing and Development Director of Hope Network, S.E., eighty percent of the program participants were once residents in a state hospital. "We owe it to the community to have them see this..." says Skrzyniarz. "...to see that these people have feelings and dreams, and they're more than just numbers."

The event concluded with a celebratory dinner and awards ceremony featuring the newly

created Herbert A. Start Award which is to be awarded annually to persons whose work and achievements help enhance the dignity of people with disabilities.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES BESTOWS AWARD TO LIVING WAYS EMPLOYEE

COMMUNITY ADVOCATES, an organization that advocates for the rights of people with disabilities, acknowledged the extraordinary efforts of Vicky Pelletiere, Program Director for the Options program of Living Ways of Southwest Michigan (a Hope Network affiliate located in Kalamazoo) by presenting



George Martin, Executive Director of Community Advocates, presents the Individual Service Award to Vicky Pelletiere.

her with the Individual Service Award. Vicky has set standards for excellence that challenges us all, and has been a strong advocate for consumer choice.

An excerpt from the award certificate issued by Community

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ARCH, Inc. Appreciation Luncheon Honors Community Partners

THE THIRD ANNUAL ARCH, INC. APPRECIATION LUNCHEON was held recently in Sturgis, Michigan, to honor area businesses, agencies, organizations and friends that support ARCH (a Hope Network affiliate) in its mission of enhancing the dignity of people with disabilities. Some of the attendees of the event

include: (left to right) Hope Network President Herbert Start; MI Dept. of Community Health Director James Haveman, Jr.; State Rep. Cameron Brown, R-Fawn River; Exec. Director David Smith; Program Director Jill Moerland; Hope Network CEO James Tuinstra; and Sturgis Mayor John Hayes.

Genesis NPHC Project Moving Full Steam Ahead

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Advocates summarizes her dedication:

“Looking for the individual needs of each person, Vicky has challenged this community to define ‘Person-Centered-Planning’ as it was truly intended to mean. She insists that individuals be able to decide where to live, with whom, and what staff works best for them. She does not advocate for the easiest or cheapest solutions. She pushed for solutions that really work.”

Hope Network joins Community Advocates in congratulating Vicky for being a true champion for consumer choice.

Cliffwood Home Opens in Portage for Elderly Adults with Mental Illness

LIVING WAYS OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN, in cooperation with Kalamazoo CMH, is pleased to announce the opening of Cliffwood Home, a new residence serving six elderly adults with mental illness who formally lived in state-run facilities.

Cliffwood is located in a beautiful neighborhood in Portage, Michigan. It is a large home that is in excellent condition, and each resident enjoys his/her own bedroom.

The objective of Cliffwood is to support its residents and their aspirations to live as full members of the community, with the right to be supported without stigma and to enjoy life with dignity, integrity, happiness, and the freedom they deserve.

THE GENESIS NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION was formed by three Kent County not-for-profit housing agencies in early 1998. These agencies—The Inner City Christian Federation, The Dwelling Place, and Hope Network—were part of the initial group of nearly 30 different human service agencies who formed the Kent County Permanent Supportive Housing Consortium in 1996.

The Kent County Permanent Supportive Housing Consortium was formed in response to the entry of the National Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) into

the State of Michigan in 1996. CSH formed a partnership with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (DCH) to support the development of new affordable housing. The development and opening of the Genesis East Apartments is the first result of this partnership effort in Kent County.

The Genesis Non-Profit Housing Corporation will provide support services to the tenants of the Genesis East Apartments through a contract with Pathfinder Resources, Inc. and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.



Construction of the Genesis East Apartments in southeast Grand Rapids will soon be completed.

Synergy NPHC Receives Award from Michigan Housing Trust Fund

HOPE NETWORK'S SYNERGY NON-PROFIT HOUSING CORPORATION was recently honored by the Michigan Housing Trust Fund for the development of Alten Homes—housing for people with developmental disabilities in Grand Rapids. Awards were presented to Synergy NPHC and nine other organizations for their dedication to affordable housing, their ability to put together complex financing

packages necessary to maintain affordability, and their spirit of cooperation.

Alten Homes is a cooperative effort between Hope Network, the City of Grand Rapids, the Federal Home Loan Bank, the Michigan Housing Trust Fund, and local contractors. Support services for residents are being provided by the local organization Guardian Angels.