

# Transitions News!

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## **GIVING BACK**

By Michelle Sheren  
Transitions St. Johns

The noun *pride* describes a feeling of happiness that comes from achieving something. Each week people served at Transitions St. Johns take pride in knowing that they have been good citizens of their community by giving back to the area in which they live.

On Wednesday, Apr. 17, 12 people served by Transitions St. Johns were invited to take part in a Volunteer Recognition Brunch at Hazel Findlay Nursing Home located in St. Johns. At this event they were recognized for their weekly visits with residents, tasks they perform in the laundry area, as well as for their development of a Po-Keno Group in which they participate with residents. Another group serving as volunteers at Cristo Rey has recently been invited to a picnic on May 8 at which their efforts will also be recognized.

For 11 years now, volunteers from Transitions St. Johns have made dedicated visits to these sites as well as many others in the Clinton County area. In fact, 90% of the people served at Transitions St. Johns volunteer in some capacity at 16 different locations at some time each week.

In addition to Cristo Rey - where volunteers unload trucks and stock shelves and Hazel Findlay NH-where groups visit twice a week, other volunteer sites include: Clinton County Meals on Wheels Kitchen-preparing meals to be delivered, Lions Club Recycling Center-sorting recyclables, St. Peter's Church-collating/folding weekly bulletins, Giving Tree Farm-performing gardening tasks, Prestige Pines Nursing Home-running a bingo game for residents, Clinton County Senior Center-serving meals at weekly public lunch, Ovid Healthcare Center- visiting residents, Goodwill-Dewitt- stocking shelves and sorting clothing, Meals on wheels Deliveries at Suntree Apartments, Sierra Rose Farms- Mucking Stalls/feeding & watering the horses. Volunteers also collect recyclables at several

businesses in St. Johns and prepare and deliver flower bouquets to be sent with Meals on Wheels deliveries.

The people we serve at TSJ take their volunteer responsibilities very seriously and it shows in the quality of their work. We are told time and again by community sites how much their efforts are appreciated and how much they are missed when it is not possible for them to be in attendance. Through the years they have developed relationships with community members and taken ownership of the of the tasks they perform - asking others to fill in for them when they must be gone, remembering to take needed items with them, and asking staff to check in on residents for them when they can't be there.

Indeed, they have much to be proud of!!

## **YMCA BOARD MEETING SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT**

By Dorothy Archambeau  
Transitions North

Recently the YMCA requested information from Transitions North regarding our satisfaction with the YMCA Enhancement exercise class. This class teaches exercise and also focuses on balance. Approximately 15 people attend weekly, every Wednesday. The teachers of the class have a strong bond with the participants, knowing each by name and looking forward to their time together.

The Board asked an employee, Carol Fischer to speak. She also brought along Allie B, a person we support that attends the class. The Board asked questions and Allie was able to answer all of them herself. She was a little nervous, but did very well. The Board mentioned that when people from Transitions attend the exercise classes, they are always happy to see us, and are glad they are able to offer their facilities.

As a bonus, Carol and Allie had a free lunch, courtesy of the YMCA Board!

## CHANGING PLACES

By Deb Voss  
Transitions Supervisor

Time causes people to make decisions that change the face of Transitions. Since our last newsletter, 2 of the leaders in Transitions have left their employment with the agency.

Dennis Hall, Senior Vocational Counselor at Transitions North retired on March 8<sup>th</sup>! Dennis had worked for Community Mental Health for 25+ years. He had been active with Work Shop activities as well as serving on the Leadership group in Transitions. He also spent some time as a Case Manager for CMH.

Dennis was a genuinely caring individual who accepted people for who they were. He volunteered for countless tasks and assisted many in learning new jobs. He worked as a job coach, a counselor, a committee advisor and as a Vocational Counselor assisting with designing work stations so that people could reach their full potential.

Dennis' warm greeting and relaxed manner made him very popular with all the people we support. He celebrated his retirement with a cake, punch and popcorn party in the Workshop at Transitions North.

Anis Ahmed, Senior Developmental Disabilities Clinician also left his employment with CMH on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Anis had briefly worked as the lead staff with Transitions Charlotte before deciding to pursue other interests. Prior to his association with Transitions, Anis had served as a therapist with the Substance Abuse program and was a Case Manager for CSDD. Anis' methodical style of approaching his job is missed by the people we support and the staff. Given time limitations, a small celebration of Anis' work was held at a Transitions Leadership meeting.

We wish both gentlemen the best in this next chapter of life.

## ALA-PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES!!

By: Erin Parcell  
Transitions Grand Ledge

We continue to be blessed with our community reaching out to us in Grand Ledge in meaningful and amazing ways. One of the interns that joined us last year, Inger Lanese, attends the Trinity Episcopal Church in Grand Ledge and has offered their space in the past.



So when Lisa Cooper heard people sharing interest in a cooking group she took the church up on their offer. "The church and Inger have been great to work with. She is always here to let us in and is always happy to see folks." Inger has stated that she loved working with the people at T-Grand Ledge and is willing to help out anyway she can. The group meets every Friday morning from 9:30 to 12:00. They go shopping first and learn how to follow a recipe, find the ingredients and check out at the store. They then go to the church where they prepare the meals and learn about clean up. They have prepared many meals including porcupine meatballs, goulash, and even an easy Thanksgiving dinner (including pie!) last November. "I loved the tacos we made as well as the fish", stated one man, "I like the learning experience. Lisa is very experienced and knows us well. It is fun." Another man shared that "I like the people and the food. Lisa is a good teacher." Lisa "enjoys working with everyone and teaching them. They all work so well together and we have fun." The group has been going since late last year and they are excited for all the meals yet to come. Bon Appétit!



## REACHING OUT TO OUR COMMUNITY

By: Erin Parcell, DDC  
Transitions Grand Ledge

Transitions Grand Ledge has been looking for ways to get even more involved in giving back to the community in a meaningful way. Groups volunteer at Meals on Wheels, Tendercare West, and the Humane Society to help others and now we are embarking on something new. Since December, two groups of people are serving lunch at the Volunteers of America shelter in Lansing. They have done everything from cracking 15 dozen eggs, to peeling potatoes and carrots for 100 people, to serving drinks to people unable to walk to get it themselves. They have brought smiles to the faces of the folks that are there and are asked if they are unable to come. They have shown bravery in the face of interacting with people who at times they have reported as being "scary". It has opened their eyes to

the true face of "homelessness" in our area. They are always surprised when kids come through the line and are excited to make them smile the most. The simple act of people helping people affected everyone in a positive way. One woman stated when asked about her experience that she "likes the food that we serve and the people that we work with are really friendly."


## **TRANSITIONS LESLIE/SENIOR CENTER OPENS!**

By: Carol Carpenter  
Transitions Leslie

A party that was held to celebrate the opening of the new Senior Center was well-attended by consumers from T-Mason and T-South and community members, including the Mayor of Leslie, Pete Zamora, City Manager Brian Reed and City Council member, Pam Beegle. People from other Transitions also came to share the fun. Everyone enjoyed cake, coffee, and getting to know each other.

The new Transitions-Leslie Program, a Senior Center for older people served by Transitions and community members opened March 14<sup>th</sup>. The new location was designed for those who live in the Leslie area and wanted a quieter and more relaxed setting. Several people who had been attending T-Mason and T-South had been visiting and were excited when we were finally able to move into the new location. Activities are offered throughout the day at the Center instead of outings that are a big part of other Transitions Programs. The plan is to bring the community in and provide an environment where friendships can be formed.

CEI-CMH, Tri-County Office on Aging and Grace Lutheran Church have partnered to create this place. Lunches are provided on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays by Tri-County Office on aging. John D. states that "Lunches and Wii Bingo" are what he likes about the new program. "Bingo" was the favorite activity noted by Flo B. and Susan O. Kathy D. mentioned "puzzles" as the activity she most enjoys. Terry B. likes "all the activities," but wishes "more people could come."



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## **NEW FACES TO HELP YOU...**

By Kristin Emerick  
Transitions Central

For those of you who might be visiting Transitions-Central's Drop-In Center on a Monday or Friday, you will see a new (or perhaps familiar) face with Michael working as the latest consumer aide there. Last month, Steve, a Transitions-Central consumer aide for the past three years, made the decision to retire from the position. When thinking about who could be the newest member of the Transitions-Central team, Michael came to mind due to his experience as a newly certified peer mentor, as a Jolly Java employee and his overall pleasant personality. Michael has officially been on the job for one month now and things have gone very smoothly with him learning the ropes of what being a consumer aide entails. The consumer aides at Transitions-Central wear several hats, including transportation monitor, telephone receptionist, greeter, housekeeper, problem solver and conflict mediator all of which Michael is able to do well.

Michael was first referred to the Transitions-Central program in August of 2009. Seeking recreational activities one day a week, Michael has been involved in a bike riding group as well as mall walking on Tuesdays. Michael has maintained a consistent schedule with Transitions-Central the entire time he has been involved with the program as well as excellent attendance. Besides his involvement with Transitions-Central for employment and recreation, Michael continues to work at Jolly Java so he is a very busy fellow. Please join the entire Transitions-Central team and program in officially welcoming Michael as a consumer aide at the Drop-In Center!

# THE TRANSITIONS NORTH TITANS ARE ALMOST READY TO ROLL!

By: Dorothy Archambeau  
Transitions North

Transitions North has developed two basketball teams, named the Titans!



Twenty participants practice two to three times per week, and are learning many skills. The coaches for the teams are Patti Bruinsma, Carol Fischer and Travis Neller.

The first game is slated for May 31<sup>st</sup> at Gier Community Center. We also have two cheerleading squads to make sure the crowds stay rowdy! Stay tuned for the game times and your chance to purchase your Transitions North spirit gear to help fund the team.

## TRANSITIONS MASON SPRING FUNDRAISER

By Elizabeth Putnam  
Transitions Mason



Thank you everyone who supported the Transitions Mason Spring fundraiser. The plants are in and we will be distributing them before the Zone 5 frost date of May 15. We rented raised beds at the Mason Community Garden this season. The beds are easily accessed from a seated position which should open up opportunities for the people we serve who have mobility challenges. The current Garden Club members also commented that bending to weed really isn't much fun in the middle of July! We will be growing produce this year and hopefully, will have nice tomatoes varieties for sale in late Summer. If you missed this fundraiser, we will be offering Spring blooming bulbs for Fall planting, when the time is right. If you don't garden, you should start! It provides opportunity to nurture, to be creative with color and patterns and texture, to be meditative, to be physically active, to have a relationship with nature and to share stuff with your friends and neighbors. Author Margaret Atwood writes "In the Spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt". Amen.

## WHAT DO YOU HEAR IN STILLNESS

By Nicole Wright

I sit on my couch in my living room with nothing turned on  
I've refused to turn the television on  
because it would be an overload.

I don't want to put the radio on  
Because of all the unnecessary words.  
I don't want to talk on the telephone  
because it is too noisy.

I just want to sit  
To let my mind recompose itself  
into the mindful moment.  
Just this moment is all I have.  
With a little time my mind seems to find its way  
to a slower melody.  
Not a song per say, but a beautiful rebirth  
A place where I can almost hear God whisper to me.

## MICRO ENTERPRISE PRODUCTS AVAILABLE AT THE MEGA MALL

The Micro Enterprise Committee of Transitions continues to support booth B-8 at this 300 booth Store. Products are available 7 days per week with the Mega Mall handling the sales. Consumers volunteer twice per month at the store as helpers, along with the other volunteers for 3 hour shifts. This provides a meaningful experience for consumers to explore work in a retail setting. Consumers who have micro-enterprise products on display are able to go to the Mega Mall to check inventory, restock, decorate and rearrange the display. They can solicit sales by telling their family and friends where their items can be purchased. The site is handicap accessible and all on one level.

We look forward to meeting your last minute shopping needs by inviting you to visit. The Mega Mall is located at 15487 Old 27, 2 miles South of I-69, exit 87. It is open every day from 11 am to 6 pm.