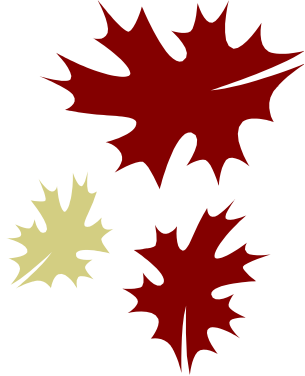


# Transtions News!

Volume 11 Number 5

September 2013



## Independence Day

Transitions St Johns  
By: Michelle Sheren

Independence means lots of things to different people, but to increasing numbers of people served at Transitions St. Johns, it means doing things on their own....no longer using the support of staff....

More and more people served at Transitions St. Johns have begun to participate in a variety of community activities independently. At the end of the last quarter, 19 individuals had participated in some kind of volunteer or recreational activity on an independent basis! Some of the activities people do independently include: volunteering at Hazel Findlay Nursing Home (visiting residents), at Prestige Pines Nursing Home (running a bingo game for residents) and at the Meals on Wheels Kitchen. They also

go to lunch, bowl, go to the library and play Bingo at the Senior Center. This movement toward independence has grown gradually and without incident. People have responded to this challenge with confidence and pride. The change has been somewhat more difficult for staff to “let go”. While confident that the skills they have been working on with folks for the last 12 years are in place, it has been a little difficult for staff to step back....but we have- and the outcomes have been priceless!! Some of the comments from people participating in activities independently included: “It’s an incredible feeling-My grandma would be so proud of me”. “It makes me feel important”, “I feel like I’m an adult”, “It’s a good feeling” and “I do an important job”. These are the comments we expect to hear more as we continue to increase independent opportunities for the people served in St. Johns.



---



### **Transitions- Charlotte Open House**

Transitions Charlotte  
By: Andrea Manchip

Transitions- Charlotte recently opened in its new space at 512 E. Lovett in Charlotte at the old Galewood elementary building. We have had some time to unpack and have spent some time decorating our rooms with some individualized and group art projects and now we are VERY excited to show it off!!!

Please join us for our Open House on Friday, October 4, 2013, from 11a-2p. We will be providing a fun filled afternoon consisting of a hot dog cookout with all the fixings, karaoke and dancing, face painting and balloon animals. Please tell all of your friends, family, neighbors and community partners to join us to celebrate the opening of our new

space. We look forward to seeing you!

### **The Story of a Volunteer**

Transitions Grand Ledge  
By: Erin Parcell

“The Job I Got to Choose: The Story of a Volunteer”



When I think of social work, I think of it at its core as serving people selflessly in a meaningful way. This embodies: Jim Cooper. Jim is the husband of one of the staff and has been volunteering with Transitions Grand Ledge in countless ways. When I asked Jim to tell me a little about himself and how he got to us he began by revealing that he himself was born with a disability. He was born prematurely, was blind for the first 6 months of his life and the doctors did not expect him to live long. He defied the odds and grew up to marry and have children. Shortly after the death of his first wife, he discovered karaoke. He really enjoyed seeing the words and listening to each

story in the song. Jim was moved to offer this to others in places besides bars, so he provided this monthly at his church. The public was invited with a banner out front. Jim goes on to say that in 2008, he prayed and “told God that I was grateful for my job at GM but that I would like to retire with enough money to live on and to help people.” He was offered early retirement and he took it. In 2011, he met Lisa at a dance and she brought him into his volunteer position. They later married, now own a home and have two great dogs that are their loves. When asked why he likes volunteering at Transitions, Jim replies: “I like interacting with them, encouraging them to participate in activities, helping them grow and helping them feel good about themselves. It makes me feel good. Someday I would like to be a part of a community center where families could come and sing and dance and have fun together.” Jim has assisted people at the Kalamazoo Air Zoo, Art Prize, Color Cruise, Binder Park Zoo, Museums, Festivals, Fairs, parties, the Santa Train and countless others. He volunteers to come in and co lead the Men’s Coffee group every week, as well as the Senior Center trip, even when Lisa has the day off. He has been a part of beginning new programming like the Tour de Grand Ledge, a monthly bike outing

at Lincoln Brick Park (featured in the picture). He also spearheaded Karaoke in the Park. This had been one of our more popular events shared between the sites. He has offered his karaoke services to other sites for parties and open houses. He is always willing to be silly and have fun. When asked what they think of Jim, the folks at Grand Ledge describe him as a “pretty nice guy”, “helps me out”, “a friend”, “and my favorite person”. Jim is the epitome of someone “who likes people matter”. Thanks, Jim



### **Happy Harvest**

Transitions Mason  
By: Elizabeth Putman

You say tomaaato, I say tomaaahhto. The Mason Garden Club had a bumper crop of tomatoes this season thanks to plenty of rain, sunshine and organic fertilizer. The plan was to sell the fresh produce, but members have decided to donate all of them to the

Mason Food Bank. The food bank is located at 118 West Oak Street in Mason and is open from 11-2, Wednesday and Thursday. If you (or someone you know) have a surplus of food from your own garden, please consider a donation to the Mason Food Bank. If you want to purchase fresh produce and other tasty treats, check out the Mason Farmer's Market, Saturdays until October 5<sup>th</sup>, from 9 am-1 pm, 121 E. Maple Street (north side of the courthouse). The Garden Club is also considering a fall bulb sale to raise money for next year's garden. If interested in purchasing fall bulbs that will bloom in the spring, please contact Elizabeth Putnam at [putnam@ceicmh.org](mailto:putnam@ceicmh.org) or call the drop in center at (517) 676-3401. Happy Harvest everyone!

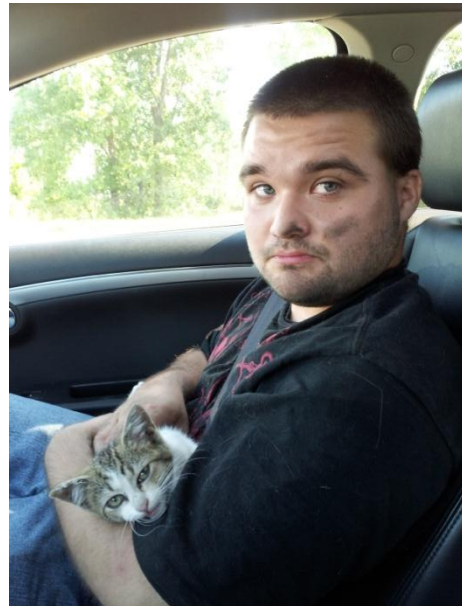
### **"Kitten Rescue"**

Transitions Central

By: Linda Kimball

Volunteering at the Salvation Army took on a definite "feline" focus a few weeks ago for Keith Jorgensen and others from Transitions Central. Upon completing their volunteer work and getting into the vehicle to leave, Keith heard the sound of a kitten's cry. At first staff thought it was children nearby, but this was not so. Upon further investigation, Keith discovered the

kitten had crawled up into the bumper of the staff's car. After much time, coaxing & getting dirty, Keith was able to get the kitten out of the bumper...see the photo below. After many calls by staff person, Jody Pohl, the kitten eventually found a temporary home at the Capital Area Humane Society and I just learned that the kitten, called Dee Gee, has since been adopted. Thanks Keith for making this wonderful rescue & giving this kitten a chance at a happy home.



## **Lake St Clair Adventure**

Transitions North  
By: Nathan Wood

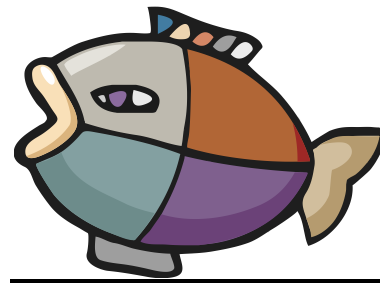
The thirty-fifth year for the Annual Handicapped Fishing Derby was the first time anyone from Transitions participated. Seven from Transitions North attended and enjoyed the experience—David, Devin, Kyle, Lorenzo, Terry, Tim and Carl. (Photo)

Upon our arrival we were given fishing hats. During the time at the Island Harbor Marina on Lake St. Clair we were surrounded by a host of deputy sheriffs, life guards, fire fighters and paramedics. In fact, we saw four deputies lift an electric wheelchair onto a boat to assist someone in having a chance to fish. Boats took people on the lake to fish. There was also a pier on which to enjoy looking at the water. Since we were the last group for that charter boat, the captain kept us out in the lake fishing for thirty-five minutes—twenty five minutes more than those that went before us. Every one of us fished—even Captain Don and his son. David caught a 16” small-mouthed bass. Two inches less than required.

The all you could eat lunch offered hot dogs, chips, donuts, pop and many, many novelty ice cream choices. There was even an

impersonator who looked like Jonny Depp from **Pirates of the Caribbean**

Staff and team members found this activity most enjoyable—in fact thrilling! This adventure is something we all want to repeat in 2014!!!!



## **Summer Party at T-North**

Transitions North  
By: Christina Johnson and Nathan Wood

Zone 2 Party had ice cream and a magician. Carrie Rostollar from Proximity Illusions entertained us with her magic. Carrie shared a little about why she uses crutches to get around. Carrie stated that she had spent a lot of time in the hospital “... getting fixed up. They did a pretty good job.” She went on, “No matter what happens to you, you can always do something.”

After her short introduction, she launched into her magic. In each of the two sessions she used audience members to assist her. Jeannie and Said were in on the balloon dog



trick. Tammy and Samoya held a chosen card away from the monkey eyes. Jacob helped with the appearing/disappearing egg.

A few people were asked about the show and here is what they had to say:

Noemi - "Yea!"

Delores - "It worked."

Julie - "Everything."

Corey - "The monkey thing."

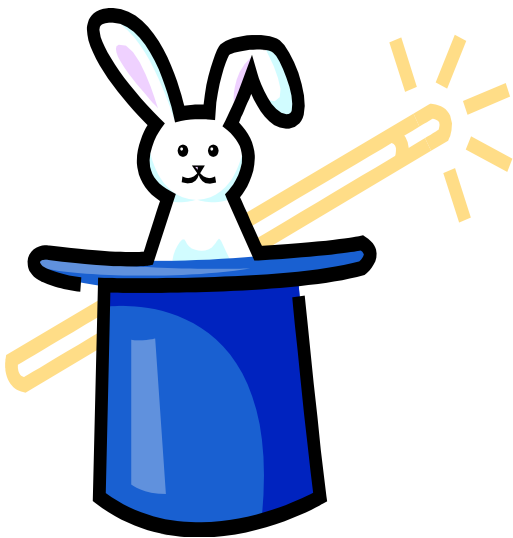
Said - "Doggie thing."

Joe - "Enjoyed. The balloon dog trick!"

Tim - "It was a concert. It was funny."

The magic show with Carrie was a success and worth repeating in the future. She would be willing to do the same for you.

Carrie Rostollar with Proximity Illusions (989-450-8609).



# Thanksgiving

---

## **Building Relationships in Our Community**

Transitions Employment Solutions

By: Terri Beard

Transitions Employment Solutions is developing a working relationship with the Meijers Distribution Center on Creyts Road in Eaton County. Staff attended an orientation briefing and site tour which explained and demonstrated Meijer's labor standards. Their Performance Accountability standards were quite impressive. Meijer's believes that in order for an employee to be successful in their job, they need to get clear and consistent feedback about their performance through direction, training, recognition and feedback regarding performance. There are clear and monitored attendance policies, expectations and guidelines as well as performance discussions. These features are transparent and dedicated to improve work performance.

Transition Employment Solutions has assisted several people to find work

at various MSU cafeterias. There were 7 placements last fall and spring semester (6 at Shall Hall and 1 at Brody Hall). Recently two people attended a MSU career fair at Peckham, Inc. where they applied for and interviewed on the spot with the MSU's Division of Residential and Hospitality Services. Both have been hired, one at Holmes Hall and one new hire placement to be determined after his orientation next week. The unique experience with these new placements have shown MSU's supportiveness – MSU allowed the new hires to choose the number of hours they could work (under 25), they were also very flexible about days and times they could work. Job coaching services provided the support needed for success!

Benefits for employees included... meal discounts for themselves and their friends and families up to 7 people. They get an I.D. that allows them to use the fitness equipment.

Employees are off during times when students are out of school including Winter break, Spring break and the entire Summer Break. Other businesses on our radar are Game Stop, The Crown Plaza (former Lexington Hotel & Conference Center), Hayes Green Beech Hospital, Culver's to name a few.

If you have job leads, please contact Terri Beard at 517-346-9535 or Iman Abdullah at 517-346-9568.



### **Program Closing Dates**

Inservice Day: Friday, 11-08-13  
Veterans' Day, Monday, 11-11-13  
Thanksgiving, Thursday 11-28-13  
Day after Thanksgiving, Friday,  
11-29-2013



