

Greetings from Village Community Services

November 18, 2009

Another year has passed and Village Community Services (VCS) has many successes to share. This year we would like to share Bruce, Mary Jo, and James' stories. Their stories illustrate VCS' funding needs, vision, and commitment, and how your continued generosity helps.

Bruce and Mary Jo: Helping adults with disabilities grow older in their own homes

Bruce is a charismatic and outgoing member of his community. He will also be one of the first VCS residential participants to move into a new home especially designed for older adults who have developmental disabilities. After a fall that led to a prolonged stay in an assisted living facility, Bruce is happy to be back in his home community of Stanwood. He now relies on a walker, and a staff member is stationed with him for the majority of waking hours to prevent, and if needed, respond to a fall or other emergency.

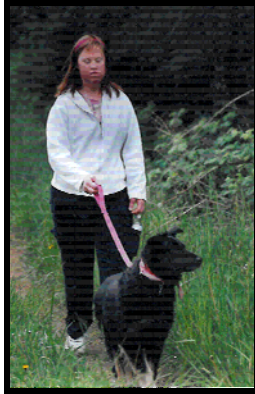
This winter, Bruce and 2 other VCS participants will move into their new home located in Stanwood. VCS board president, Art Hutton, is their generous new landlord. The new residential site will be staffed 24 hours, seven days a week. It will be remodeled to accommodate wheel chairs and walkers, and to provide safer bathing facilities, walkways, and more. Most importantly, it will be their home and the VCS emphasis on safety, independence, and inclusion in the community will continue.



Bruce at Friday Music

Mary Jo was a dynamic young woman and a founding member of Voices of the Village when the early onset of Alzheimer's disease changed her life. Today, she spends most of her time in a wheel chair and requires 24 hour care from her team of dedicated Residential Services staff. Mary Jo can no longer participate in Voices of the Village and needs 80-100% assistance with the simplest tasks including eating, bathroom hygiene, and dressing. However, thanks to Village Community Services and the generosity of our donors and volunteers, she has the quality around the clock support she needs to enjoy her favorite things in life. Jon Dalgarn, Voices of the Village's bandleader, regularly volunteers private music sessions with Mary Jo in her home. She stays active and alert by engaging in her own care to the best of her ability, and VCS staff strive to adapt the environment to maximize Mary Jo's health, safety, and independence. Recently, VCS staff helped Mary Jo see an optometrist who specializes in neurological eye exams. She got new glasses (that match her red hair) and has shown a dramatic improvement in her ability to locate others in her home. This is an important quality of life improvement for Mary Jo.

VCS' long term goal is to help aging participants like Bruce and Mary Jo live in their own homes and communities and avoid premature placement in a nursing facility. Your donations help make this possible.



Mary Jo in 2005



Mary Jo Today

James: Providing the vocational support people need to succeed

James is looking for his dream job. He had always been interested in working with children but never had the opportunity. His VCS vocational consultant helped him find an opportunity to volunteer at a child care center. The benevolence of our donors provided additional direct service hours so James could learn how to read to the children and provide support to the caregivers at the program. James had a passion for this work that he had not had for any of his previous work experiences. He is now looking for paid employment working with children. Our donors' generosity allowed him to gain needed experience that will make him a stronger candidate as he applies for his dream job.

VCS' commitment to direct services and the retention of quality staff

VCS' funding from the government is not enough, and donations allow Village Community Services to provide the extra support our participants deserve. Due to deep cuts to government funding, Village Community Services' does not currently have funds for staff bonuses. The majority of our staff earn an entry level wage with most starting at \$10.20 per hour. For many employees, staff bonuses make a critical difference in their ability to make ends meet. Bonuses along with a supportive work environment, allow VCS to retain top quality employees who have the skills and demeanor necessary for their challenging and rewarding work.

Your donation will fund those needed extra's that help people with disabilities achieve their personal potential at home, work, and in community life. Staff bonuses, direct service hours for residential participants, and increased job development support are just a few examples of how your generosity helps. VCS couldn't do it without you, our dedicated family members, staff, volunteers, and friends who make a true difference. Please make your donation today!

Sincerely,

Michelle

Michelle Dietz-Date, Resource Development Manager