

OPEN DOORS

Gallagher Services

July, 2009

Through the power of human relationship & pursuit of excellence, we open doors to a fuller life for people with developmental disabilities.

Anne Lindsey Otenasek Scholarships

To the illuminated mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light! — Ralph Waldo Emerson

This year's Otenasek Scholarship Dinner was held on Thursday, May 7th. The theme for the evening, developed by Fronzie Williams, was "Let There Be Light." Light symbolizes knowledge, enlightenment, compassion, and action that leads to self discovery. Our scholarship winners challenge themselves and inspire us to carry the "Light of Knowledge" into the world following the example of Anne Lindsey Otenasek, in whose memory the scholarships are awarded each year. The 2009 Otenasek Scholarship Winners were Special Friends Gabby Allen and Stephanie Mattiello, and Staff Members Markayla Lee and Tyest Williams.



Gabby Allen, Stephanie Mattiello, Peggy Otenasek, Markayla Lee & Tyest Williams

Gabby Allen

I started volunteering at Gallagher Center my sophomore year. Gallagher is a place for individuals who are developmentally challenged. I had two main reasons for volunteering there: I honestly really enjoy volunteering—it's something I've always loved to do; and I had just started to think that I might want to pursue a career working with people with special needs. So I thought this would be a great opportunity to get an idea of what a job in that field might be like. Going into it, I had no idea what an amazing experience this would be and how much these people would impact my life.

Last year, I, along with some other volunteers, was assigned to one of Gallagher's apartments that is home for eight ladies. The first couple of times going up there were a little rough. It was difficult finding ways to communicate,

and it didn't help that they weren't very interested in the arts and crafts activities we had planned. So I was faced with a challenge: I needed to find other ways to connect. Like I said earlier, they weren't very interested in arts and crafts, so we decided to try music. We brought up maracas, drum sticks, and tambourines for them to use and CDs for them to listen to. We turned on the music, and their eyes lit up. Some of them began to sing, some shook the instruments we had given them, and others just smiled. Music allowed us to connect with each other, and as the weeks went on we got to know more about each other, and we were able to rely less on the music.

For example, if Jackie was in a bad mood one day, I knew talking about parties and hotdogs and pocketbooks would cheer her right up. I knew that Sarah loved to make faces

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Catholic Charities

at me. I knew that Katie gave the best hugs. I knew that Barbara would jump up out of her seat to greet me each time I walked in the door. From this experience I learned that some people are harder to get to know than others, but they are definitely worth the extra time and attention. If I had just had given up on these women, I wouldn't have discovered how beautifully unique each one of them is.

Going up to the apartments to be with the individuals one-on-one was only part of my Gallagher experience. After we went up to the apartments, we brought down some of the individuals to be with others who had come over from homes nearby for the church service. The church service at Gallagher is very different than any other service I have ever been to. It was loud; there were people getting up randomly—it seemed just all over the place. But everyone was so passionate and excited to be there, it was contagious. Throughout the service, several different people would get up in front of everyone and express their love for God, whether it be through singing, dancing, or lighting the candles. For example, each week Sally gets up and sings, “This little light of mine,” and Susan sings “Kumbaya”. My personal favorite, though, is Ralph’s dance. When it comes to his time, the room gets quiet, and the music is turned on. He starts in the back corner; working his way through the isle to the center. Every inch of his body is dedicated to the music, and he moves with such grace and passion, you can just tell he loves what he is doing. Gallagher is a place to be yourself and let go of your insecurities. I’m a relatively shy person. Rarely do I sing in public, much less dance, but at Gallagher I learned to let my guard down and just be myself. They opened their arms to me, and embraced me, literally and figuratively, into their community.

My experience at Gallagher has been more than rewarding. I was able to learn about others as well as about myself. They inspire me to live more freely and embrace the differences of those around me. Through this experience and others I have discovered that this is my passion: working with developmentally challenged individuals, being their friend, and noticing their abilities when others can only see their disabilities. I only hope that one day I can bring as much happiness into their lives as they have brought into mine.

Gabby Allen
Special Friend

Stephanie Mattiello

If anyone should ask me to describe some of my best friends, they would most likely be met by a blank, distant stare. I am not dazing off into cloudy daydreams or focusing on the bursting sun shimmering outside of a nearby window. Instead, my mind is erupting with song, colorful crayons, gluey cotton balls, warm hands, loving faces, smiling hearts, neon basketballs, ice cold watermelon, contagious laughter, unexpected Halloween costumes, pillow fights, adventurous walks, dancing in the rain... memories of the most important people in my life. I am not quiet for lack of something to say—I simply do not know where to begin.

The guys in the group home in which I volunteer—Rudy, Michael, Bryan, and Ray; and Brian, Richard, Steve, Murray, Kurt, and Mason (who have lived together over the years)—have become not only a big part of my life, but a huge part of who I am. I have grown up and spent all of my high school years with them. Needless to say, these individuals have become a second family to me.

Since first coming to Gallagher at age 14, I have felt a gentle tweaking in my heart whenever I am around my Gallagher friends. It is this previously unknown feeling that enlivens my spirit, floods my soul with joy when I see Michael racing towards me in his “baseball shoes” in greeting, makes me smile when a client from the work program or Sunday service remembers my name, and sometimes even brings tears to my eyes when Rudy hugs me hello or goodbye.

Whether it is watching a movie on a cold, winter night or playing basketball on a warm summer day, I have definitely gained more than I have given. I have learned that there is strength in simplicity, and am able to see the world the way Gallagher individuals do: full of hope, joy, and happiness. When I leave for college in the fall, I cannot even begin to imagine how hard it will be to leave the friends I have made during my years at this special place. Gallagher is a place that I do not intend to desert, but to return to whenever possible, to hold close to my heart, and to take with me in memory wherever I go in life.

Stephanie Mattiello
Special Friend

Days to Remember

Dwell in Possibility — Emily Dickinson

As I was sitting at my desk on May 22, 2009, and checking my email, I received the most exciting message of my professional life. The Rosewood Center had closed at 12:24 p.m.! The last person moved out at that time. I have personally looked forward to this day since my early days volunteering at The Rosewood Center in the summer of 1968. I always thought that people in this institution could experience a fuller life in the community. I also believed that community service providers could support Rosewood residents successfully and that their families would be well served in the process. Movement towards this day had actually begun when Gallagher Services was founded 32 years ago. That summer 17 individuals came from Rosewood to live with us.

On May 27th, when I toured the now empty buildings at Rosewood with advisory committee members and service coordinators, it was with mixed emotions. I was seeing some of the buildings for the first time since I volunteered there in 1968. Jones Cottage was the last inhabited cottage at the Center, and Gallagher Services had recently



moved several of the Jones Cottage residents into community homes. It was a moving experience to see the building with the few remaining items of residents who were now settled into their new homes. I felt my personal and professional life had truly come full circle. We had assisted 19 individuals in moving

from Rosewood over the past 15 months into Gallagher homes, where they were thriving, and their families were unbelievably happy with what we had done. It was a privilege for me to be a member of the Rosewood Advisory Committee to facilitate these moves.

Catholic Charities has done a good thing!

Rick Rowland
Director, Residential Services

Anne Lindsey Otenasek Scholarships *(Continued from page 2)*

Markayla Lee

Markayla Lee has worked at Gallagher for the past 12 and one half years. She initially started as a Residential Counselor and has worked as the Medical Clerk for the past seven years. Ms. Lee is currently enrolled in a Nursing Program at The Community College of Baltimore County. As the Medical Clerk, she schedules medical appointments for approximately 44 individuals. She also locates physicians when needed for special medical needs. Over the course of the past seven years, she has developed a positive relationship with the many doctors and lab workers that provide services to Gallagher Residents. Ms. Lee has often expressed an interest in going back to school and understands the importance of improving her skills so that she can enrich the lives of her three children. I believe this scholarship will both encourage and motivate her even more to pursue her goal to become a nurse.

Fronzie Williams
Director, Residential Services

Tyest Williams

Tyest has been a Day Program Instructor at the Gribbin Center for the past five years. She tries her very best to foster team spirit. Tyest is willing to help her co-workers in any way she is able. She will take the lead to administer medication if someone is absent, or offer advice if they are having a difficult time with a certain task. I believe Tyest should receive this award because, since I've been working with her, she has always talked about going back to school, and now she has finally completed the first process—getting enrolled. I would love for her to be able to attend college based on her effort and the support from this scholarship. Tyest has been accepted to The Community College of Baltimore County and will major in nursing.

Alyscia Smith
Gribbin Center Manager

Calvert Hall Father's Club

"I will often consider myself as an instrument which is of no use except in the hands of the workman"

— St. John Baptist de La Salle

The Calvert Hall Father's Club is a group of men, fathers of Calvert Hall students, who, on their own initiative, select community service projects that they volunteer to complete each year. For about 10 years, the club has come to Gallagher Services. The Father's Club has truly embraced a philosophy of service to others. They help with whatever they are asked to do. They

come prepared, organized and eager to work, and they understand that the non-profit agencies that they are volunteering with often do not have the means or manpower to accomplish these projects without outside help. The "dads" bring their sons with them for the projects. Usually, before the volunteer project begins, the "dads" ask a representative from the agency to speak about what the agency does and why the project is so important and needed. It really is an opportunity to share with the young people about our work and the people that we support.

Some examples highlight the types of projects done by the Calvert Hall Father's Club. In 2009, a group of about 25 fathers and sons (and two daughters) came to the Gribbin Center, a day vocational program in Perry Hall. The Center had recently been renovated, but there had not been enough funding to paint all of the areas affected by the renovation. The Father's Club painted a large warehouse area, about eight doors and door frames in the hallway and four large program rooms. It was important to them that a quality job was done, and they painted the large warehouse in the three colors that the staff had selected so that colors represented different functions of the space. In 2008, the Father's Club devoted their time to two group homes. They painted picnic tables and benches, two offices, one individual's room and assorted

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Dean and Al Tijerina. Al began volunteering in the Calvert Hall Father's Club project when Dean was a freshman at Calvert Hall. Al then assumed the job of coordinating the project for the following three years. Dean graduated this year and will be attending Penn State in the fall majoring in Biology—a family tradition. Al is a Dentist with a practice in Timonium.



Calvert Hall Fathers' Club and crew.

Calvert Hall Father's Club *(Continued from page 4)*

door frames, and they also washed windows and power washed the exterior siding. In other years, they have scraped and repainted porch railings at group homes, put down mulch and plantings to make the homes more attractive, painted large areas of the day program in Timonium, built cold frames for the greenhouse program, sealed gazebos and pavilions and revitalized gardens and outside sitting areas.

Dr. Al Tijerina was the leader of the Calvert Hall Father's Club for this year's project at the Gribbin Center. The project was very well-organized — Al ran a tight ship! It was important to Al that the volunteers produced a high quality job, and he showed this by following his list of what needed to be done and actively checking and inspecting the work. Most impressive to me, though, was Al and the other dads' sincere dedication to wanting to help others. Everyone seemed very motivated by the mission of the program and the desire to help out however they could — they seemed to look forward to the day, and they showed a great example to the high school students (often demonstrating and teaching skills to the students, such as how to properly paint a door frame). It also is especially impressive that the Father's Club has come back to Gallagher Services, year after year, for at least ten years. They have created a history of



volunteering with us; and their mission of service seems important enough to them that, at the end of one project, they already are talking about what they can do for the next year.

Brian Trees
Director, Gallagher Day Programs



Loyola College in Maryland

Center for Community Service and Justice

Teach us to give and not to count the cost. — St. Ignatius Loyola

In the founding of the Society of Jesus, Saint Ignatius Loyola and his companions determined that they would be “contemplatives in action” whose lives were devoted to “reading the signs of the times” and responding creatively and concretely to the pressing needs of the world. In the Jesuit educational tradition, this action-oriented focus has translated into a mission of developing “men and women for others.”

Service has been a part of Loyola College in Maryland throughout its entire history. For many years it was simply known as the Community Service Office, an office dedicated to offering students the opportunity to “do service.” However, in 1992, a Jesuit priest, Fr. Timothy Brown, a professor of law; and a laywoman, Erin Swezey, director of the



Dr. Lisa Schoenbrodt conducting a class in Speech Pathology in the Great Room at Gallagher Services in Timonium with Loyola College students and individuals from the Gallagher Day Program.

Community Service Office, co-founded the Center for Values and Service.

Though both co-founders have moved on, today their vision continues to be realized in the Center for Community Service and

Justice, where students and the broader Loyola College community are engaged in education through service for a just and equitable world. The name change from The Center for Values and Service to The Center for Community Service and Justice was made in 2006.

Best Buddies

Loyola’s vision was to do more than community service. It was to help students explore social justice issues, to offer students an opportunity to reflect on an experience of service, to improve the quality of service experiences, to initiate a service-learning program, to build partnerships with community agencies—to be a center for service and education.

Gallagher Services has been a community partner through a variety of service projects, including The Annual Halloween Carnival, Group Leaders in Special Friends, and Service Learning. In continuing to seek other ways to work together, the



Best Buddies, Kenice Fleming & Nichole Giannini

College founded a Loyola Chapter of Best Buddies in 2005, with Gallagher Services as the host site. Best Buddies was founded in 1989 by Anthony Shriver to enhance the lives

of people with developmental disabilities by providing opportunities for mutually enriching one-to-one friendships. By 2010 Best Buddies will have programs in 50 states, 50 countries with 500,000 participants world wide. Programs include Best Buddies for Middle Schools, High Schools, Colleges, Citizens, Jobs, and e-buddies.

Each year the Loyola Chapter is convened by a College Buddy Director and Buddy Director from the host organization. The 2008/2009 College Buddy Director is Nicole Giannini, and the Gallagher Buddy Director is Kenice Fleming.

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Kenice Fleming

Kenice came to live with Gallagher Services in 1979. She has grown up in the Gallagher Family and has a wide variety of experience that makes her a good candidate for the Buddy Director's position. Kenice lives in her own apartment in Hamilton. She currently works for Stella Maris as a Dietary Technician, where as part of her duties she delivers meals to residents—which she says is the best part of her job. She had previously worked in the laundry at Marriott's Hunt Valley Inn, and with Taco Bell in the dining room and on the service line. A unique experience that Kenice has also had was being invited to the Improving Quality in Community-Based Care Conference. This national conference was held on May 2-3, 2002, at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Convention Center in Nashville Tennessee. This invitation came as no surprise to those who know Kenice Fleming. She is experienced in speaking before large groups. She has also appeared on the television talk show "Real to

Nicole Giannini

Kenice's Best Buddy, and Co-Director, is Nicole Giannini, whom Kenice describes as very friendly and outgoing. She is also one busy college student who in her junior year assumed the role of College Buddy Director. Nicole became involved with Best Buddies last year at the invitation of her friend Katelyn Larkin, who was College Buddy Director. She was last year's Membership Coordinator, but did not have a Buddy last year because of her academic schedule in student teaching at St. Katherine's School. She will be student teaching again next year either in a Baltimore City or County School—she hopes a city school. However, she and Kenice will continue to be buddies. She says that Kenice is "the best!" One thing that she gained by having her as buddy is understanding that a person with developmental disabilities is just another person—another friend. Nicole says, "It was important not to treat Kenice differently. We treat one another with respect. I don't have to give her a pass, and she's not going to give me one either."

Nicole is an Elementary Education Major and Special Education Minor. Her Best Buddies experience has her leaning towards a career in Special Education. In the process she sees herself as an advocate for people with special needs. Her job as College Buddy Director had required her to become wrapped up in the details of managing the Chapter's monthly events and reports; however, the outcome is that the buddies just want to be together! The details are important but not the end result!

Reel." Kenice is very articulate, and takes pride in her role as a spokesperson for people with developmental disabilities.

One memorable experience for her was when she spoke at the dedication of Gallagher Services' newly renovated main center in Timonium in 1991. During the presentation, Kenice explained the importance of the Ask Me program: "I am a person with a disability, so it makes it easier because I understand what it's like to have a disability. I'm more patient, and so the person that I interview can be more relaxed. In the Ask Me Program, we interview all kinds of people with all kinds of disabilities. Sometimes people want to be interviewed; sometimes they don't. We try to interview everyone, even if they might have difficulty answering the questions. If the person can't answer a question, we do a proxy interview with a family member or staff."

As the scholastic year winds down, Nicole is looking forward to returning home to Copiague, Long Island, New York, where she will be helping out her dad Mitchell in the family landscaping and construction business. She will be helping her mother Gail in the office. The family tradition is that the women run the office. Her brother Anthony will be helping out in the field with quality control. Summer also brings another learning opportunity: She will spend four weeks in Camerano, Italy. Professor Celeste will be teaching a Special Education Class, and the students will also run an English Language Camp for the village children.

Next fall, Nicole begins her senior year. She has a clear plan for the future, which includes the possibility of completing a Master's in Special Education at Loyola and returning to Long Island to teach. Just so you don't get the idea that Nicole is all work and no play, her avocation is Dance of all genres: Modern, Jazz, Ballet & Lyrical—Jazz would be her favorite. She has been involved in dance since the age of three, was on her High School Dance Team, and is President of the Loyola Dance Company. Nicole is looking forward to her Senior Year and participating in Best Buddies, although not as an officer. She will leave the planning and details to others. Meredith Marondy is next year's College Director. So, next year Nicole and Kenice will concentrate on just being Buddies!

Jim Hillmann

Gallagher Services

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Catholic Charities Christmas Festival at the Basilica to benefit Child and Family Services

*Concert Artists of Baltimore
Edward Polochick, Artistic Director*

*Peabody Children's Choir
Doreen Falby, Choir Director*

*Thursday, December 10, 2009
7:30 p.m.*

The Child and Family Services Division of Catholic Charities provides hope by offering effective services to vulnerable children and families in need throughout Maryland. Services include adoptions, specialized foster care, early childhood and special education, as well as mental health programs. This year's proceeds will help ensure that our students will have the best tools available to achieve their educational dreams.

Open Seating & Reception \$125

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