



From the Director By Nancy Sabol



It is my sincere hope that by the time this newsletter goes to print and is distributed, the Pennsylvania State budget will long since have been passed. As I write this, however, we are immersed in a stalemate that threatens our very existence and is, at best, unjust and intolerable for the thousands of

people who do the right thing every day.

Gannondale receives its funding from the counties who place children in our care. The counties are able to then draw down some State reimbursements, and the State is able to apply for some Federal reimbursements. It can be a complicated system, but there are a couple of undisputable and simple facts. First, counties are generally unwilling/unable to pay for the actual cost of service, and so we subsidize our programming with private donations from generous people such as yourselves. Second, in our world, the children come first.

So, imagine how it felt when the counties began informing us that, due to the budget impasse, we would not be receiving payment for any service rendered after July 1. We were asked to keep working with the children, there just wouldn't be any income. I don't blame the counties, per se. They are in a no win situation as well because the State isn't paying them. But let's look at this from a purely practical perspective.

Typically a business that doesn't get paid also doesn't continue to offer its goods or services. Imagine using the electric but telling the electric company you weren't going to pay the bill until your investment portfolio returned to its previous level. Or telling the grocer to keep you in a good supply of food, but your payment to

them would be delayed indefinitely. Clearly none of us could get away with this type of behavior.

From a business standpoint, we are being told (not asked, told) that our income is on hold, meaning money we would have had in our account is not there, so we lose that interest. The government is not going to magically print the money when the budget passes – someone has it and IS gaining interest. We have to dip into any reserves we have, so we lose that interest. And, if it goes long enough, we have to access a line of credit and incur those fees, which are not repaid to us when the money starts to flow again. I have asked a local legislator to consider legislation that would allow us to charge a late fee when counties don't pay up. Taxpayers should have the same right, as they wait for their paychecks in spite of the fact that they have shown up for work every day. It's a great system, isn't it?

Sometimes I would love to just return the children to their placing county pending payment. Unfortunately, we all know that the children would suffer and my employees would lose jobs they can't afford to lose. It is unconscionable that year after year this Commonwealth has been unable to meet their deadline of passing a budget. It is unconscionable that we are at the mercy of this same group. Oh, I know they all have their platforms and principles. But that does not give them the right to barter with our money and our livelihoods.

Social service organizations are subject to this inane type of politics repeatedly. We continue to provide the service because our mission demands that of us. It calls for us to care for the ones who cannot care for themselves, to aid in maintaining the safety of our communities, and to act with integrity.

“We continue to provide the service because our mission demands that of us.”

Bridging the Gaps

By Sister Mary Ann White, SSJ, Director of Mission and Ministry

Bridging the Gaps is an annual summer Community Health Internship Program for medical students who have completed their first year of education and is sponsored by the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM). This year Gannondale was extremely blessed to have with us a LECOM student, Melissa Auer, who worked with our residents over a seven week period, beginning June 8 and completing this partnership on July 24, 2009.

The areas explored with our residents touched on topics that are extremely relevant to them and their life experiences and encouraged active participation. While planning the sessions, Ms. Auer took into consideration the population and geared the input and the activities accordingly, breaking each hour session into four fifteen minute segments. The topics covered were nutrition, in which the residents found recipes, converted them, and created a healthy recipe

cookbook for their unit and women's health issues, which included body image, depression, anxiety, skin health, drinking and drugs. The lessons continued with breast health, Menstruation Station (a story created by Ms. Auer to explain the menstrual cycle), pregnancy (emphasizing abstinence as the only safe and 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy and STDs), sexually transmitted diseases, and dispelling myths regarding their bodies; and finally oral hygiene in which they were taught how to properly brush and floss their teeth and were each given a tooth brush and floss.

The residents' degree of attentiveness, respectfulness, and participation spoke volumes for the masterful way in which Ms. Auer handled some very sensitive topics with our residents. We are grateful for having had this opportunity to share in the Bridging the Gaps program.

Sanctuary Award

By Brooke Bourdeau, Unit Director

The residents of Nazareth Cottage were awarded the second Sanctuary Award on campus and celebrated with an evening off campus at a local skating rink. This past May, the girls and staff enjoyed several hours of fun roller skating and enjoying each others company in a relaxed setting away from campus. The girls were excited and appreciative for receiving the award and expressed their gratitude to staff for the prize of this special outing.

Nazareth Cottage was awarded the Sanctuary Award for their positive, role model behaviors in the unit as well as displaying teamwork on a daily basis. The unit was also restraint free for several months due to the residents utilizing learned coping and anger management skills.

Community Service

Recently many of our Gannondale residents have participated in a variety of community service opportunities at a number of different sites. They have served at Greater Calvary Church's day in the park, the Sisters of St. Joseph Neighborhood Network Soup Kitchen, at the Sister Mary Pascal Food Pantry, the close of the Year of St. Paul at St Paul's Church, Our Lady of Mercy Parish Festival, and as a part of the junior volunteer program at Saint Vincent Health Center.

These have been rich experiences for our residents as well as their fellow volunteers and the dear neighbors whose needs were being met by the residents' service to the community.

In fact, 10 of our residents have volunteered over 250 hours since the beginning of April!

Summer Scrubs: *Health Career Explorers Camp*

We had 11 girls successfully complete the Health Career Explorers Camp held on the campus of Mercyhurst Northeast. Summer Scrubs is an intensive career exploration opportunity for students who are considering careers in healthcare.

Students spend each day at a different site, exploring the health careers that interest them the most, and learning about issues that affect all health professions. They interacted with health professionals and observed them on the job. Students were able to talk with adults about their jobs and the educational paths they took to get where they are.

Mercyhurst offers several two and four year Allied Health Programs.

All girls were awarded a \$2,000 scholarship upon graduation from high school, contingent upon being accepted and enrolling into one of the programs at the college.

Jr's Comedy Club Wrap-Up

On Thursday, April 23rd, friends, staff and supporters gathered for an evening of entertainment at JR's Comedy Club. The father of one of the owners was the opening act, and he did a tremendous job warming up the crowd. After that, it was up to the headliners to keep everyone laughing.

The event netted over \$6000 and gave us the opportunity to have a great time, all while raising money to support the needs of the young women we serve. Special thanks to all of the individual and corporate sponsors who made this evening a success, and congratulations to the winners of the prizes!



Gannondale Director Testifies

On March 26, Nancy Sabol was called to testify, along with three other private providers, in front of the Pa. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services. This committee was considering the issues directly effecting children and youth services within the Commonwealth. Ms. Sabol was asked to share her experiences as a social services professional, and to discuss the impact of pending legislation on non profit entities. Her basic premise was that no matter what we do, we must “move forward in a way that honors the children that we serve, and the people entrusted to do this most difficult work.”

Wish List

Each year Gannondale incurs expenses not covered by the per diem rates we charge. The following items are needed, and we would be grateful for any gifts. We are not accepting gently used clothing items, and so any of these must be new. Sizes generally range from 12 and up.

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|-------------|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hats | Winter bathrobes | New strings of Christmas lights |
| Sweatpants | Crafts | Yarn |
| Lotion | Boots | Nintendo Wii |
| Earmuffs | Winter pajamas | |
| Sweatshirts | Playing cards | |
| Nail polish | Winter coats | |
| Gloves | Slippers | |

GANNONDALE

Residential Center for Girls

4635 East Lake Road

Erie, PA 16511

Phone: 814.899.7659

Email: gdale@gannondale.org

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Your Donation Helps

The basic cost of care for the youth served is covered by the placing county governments on a per diem basis; however, this provides only the necessities for the girls.

Through the years we have relied on grants and gifts to provide renovations, repairs and maintenance on our buildings.

Please consider a tax deductible gift to Gannondale: To

memorialize the life of someone close to you, or to commemorate a birthday, anniversary or other special event.

Your contribution, regardless of amount, will benefit the girls in care at Gannondale.

Mail contributions to:
Gannondale; 4635 East Lake Road; Erie, PA 16511

Mission Statement:

Gannondale, a ministry of the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, provides holistic and therapeutic residential care for young women placed by the courts.

The typical length of stay is nine to twelve months.

- reaching out to those in need
- willing to take the initiative
- alert to the needs of the times
- courage to meet the challenges

GANNONDALE

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