

OPEN DOORS

Gallagher Services

January 2008

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

My Cousin Ricky

Each week for the past 34 years, my Uncle Buck has driven with Aunt Mary to visit their son Richard "Ricky" Breitenbach. For thirty-three of those years, they visited him at Rosewood. Since April of this year, they have been driving up from their home in Chester on the Eastern Shore to visit Ricky in his new home with Gallagher Services in Pasadena.

My first memories of my cousin Ricky were as a young child. He was seven years younger than me. We were mainly together at Breitenbach family gatherings where I would entertain him with his toys. He especially liked to collect little bottles and trinkets—anything he could hold up to the light. If he spotted something like the top of a percolator, it became a new treasure. However, the biggest part of my relationship with Ricky began when I was 12. That's when we used to go on day trips to Mr. Webb's cottage on the Magothy River. Mr. Webb was a family friend who grew up with our family in Baltimore Highlands.

When the Breitenbach clan gathered at Mr. Webb's, there would often be 40 of us. Ricky was

always included in the fun. His greatest joy "down the shore" was swimming in the river or riding in the speedboat with me—the faster the better. His specialty was swimming under water, where he must have broken some Olympic record staying under water the longest. At least none of us could beat him at it.

Ricky lived at home with Uncle Buck and Aunt Mary until he turned 20, at which time he moved to Rosewood. During his early years there, he would come home for weekends and holidays. My daughters got to know him the best at family gatherings or when we would visit him at

Rosewood. When my daughters were young, they were fascinated by Ricky's collection of bottles and toys, and by the way that he would entertain himself. They were also pretty impressed by his fastidious table manners, which I never failed to call to their attention. I wanted them to know how much a part of our family Ricky was.

During those years, Uncle Buck and Aunt Mary were very involved volunteering at Rosewood in a variety of capacities: fundraising for the cottages, participating in the Citizens Advisory Committee, and the Parents Auxiliary. Uncle Buck was

Chair of the committee for a number of years and President of the Auxiliary for two terms. As Ricky's visits home became less frequent, his parents became even more involved at Rosewood working in the Canteen. Uncle Buck was the cook, and Aunt Mary covered sales in the store.

Each of the changes in Ricky's life brought with it special challenges for him and his family, particularly the move to



Mary, Ricky & Charles "Buck" Breitenbach

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A Gift of Caring

They came running into Gallagher Services with Santa hats, smiles, and giggles, ready to sing Christmas carols. They left feeling good, knowing that they had made some people smile. They were Girl Scouts from Timonium Elementary School—eight girls from Junior Troop 1573 and four girls from sister Brownie Troop 4979—taking the “Gift of Caring” to a new level.

Every year Girl Scouts have the opportunity to participate in the Gift of Caring when they sell cookies. Each girl in the troop pays for an extra box of cookies which is donated to the charity of the troop’s choice. The Timonium troops have participated in the Gift of Caring for many years, but this year they decided to really make a connection with the folks to whom they were donating by caroling before dropping off the cookies. The



Scout Stein, P. D. Stein, Molly McDowell, Lucy Marks, Amanda Bostwick, Nicole Widner & Lily Widner.

girls went into each of Gallagher’s four apartments in the main center in Timonium and sang Christmas carols to the folks who live there. In every apartment there were one or two residents who joined in, and there were lots of smiles all around.

Most people associate Girl Scouting with cookie sales, but Girl Scouts is more than just cookies. It’s also an opportunity for girls to have fun while learning leadership skills and learning about giving to others in their community. Caroling at Gallagher Services was a great way to learn that giving to others can be fun.

Girl Scouts who participated: Lucy Marks, Hannah and Amanda Bostwick, Lily and Nicole Widner, Nika and Nakisa Rafiee, Vita Maghsadi, Molly McDowell, P.D., Scout Stein, and Hope Eckhart..

Becky Stein

Confirmation

A yellow school bus rolled up to Gallagher Services in Timonium on a recent Saturday morning from St. John Westminster—as it has four times a year since 2002, when we began coordinating volunteer activities for candidates for Confirmation from St. John. Since then, we have assisted in preparing over 300 candidates for Confirmation. Their volunteer experience is a simple one: to help 30 to 40 residents of Gallagher Services enjoy an afternoon of Bingo. Some of the young people from St. John have had experiences with people with developmental disabilities—easily half of the groups. Their take on their experience has been consistent in appreciating the satisfaction they get from assisting individuals who need help and just hanging out with those who do not. Everyone plays, and the general agreement is that it is fun being with Gallagher folks. For some this comes as a surprise. Those who have previous experience expect it to be fun. We often hear the comment that “people with developmental disabilities are just like us.” And that’s the point we hope they take away. As part of preparation for Confirmation in the spring, candidates will go on a weekend retreat as well as write a reflection for Bishop Malooly on their experience at Gallagher Services—and he reads them all. It has been a



Isaac Lucas & Mary Jeppi enjoy a game of Bingo.

privilege for us to be a part of these young people’s journey, a coming of age in their faith!

Jim Hillmann

Reflection

My service-learning commitment at Gallagher Services, combined with class, has truly helped me to better understand the needs and personalities of individuals with communications disorders. Before this semester, I had never really had any contact with a person affected in such a way; and my opinions rested on things I had heard but never actually experienced first-hand. Now, after taking the class and receiving the facts about communications disorders, I feel excited to have broadened my knowledge base and also to be able to understand what some people have to go through and how they can be helped.

I feel excited as well, because now I more firmly realize that all people are people with their own personalities, feelings, and needs. Even if a person does not speak much, or cannot use speech at all, I understand that he or she still wants to communicate and be companionable.

“ My experience at the Gallagher center has changed me as a person all-around. ”

One of the first people who came to the karaoke event walked in and asked, “Where’s my Best Buddy?” I think that this simple statement made all of us realize how much the individuals at Gallagher are really like everyone else—anyone going to a party would first of all wonder where his or her friends are. Just as some people have different customs or skin colors, some people communicate differently. However, just as people from different ethnic backgrounds can easily get along and be friends, so can people with different communicative abilities. If we simply make an effort and are patient, we can all be friends, no matter the race, religion, or disability.

My experience at the Gallagher center has changed me as a person all-around. I have stored away memories and experiences that I am sure will remain with me for a long time. Even if a person has a disorder that makes it hard to communicate or is associated with a lower intelligence, that person still deserves attention and respect—although not extra and dumbed-down attention. During my first week at Gallagher, I found it difficult to simplify my speech without feeling like I was talking down to the individuals. It was therefore difficult for me to make conversation. However, I feel as though I have improved on this



Loyola College Speech Pathology Students and Gallagher Individuals enjoy Karaoke at the end of semester event in December at Gallagher's Main Center.

aspect during my service-learning experience and now feel more comfortable, both speaking and patiently and respectfully listening to what others have to say.

Although I remain undecided as to where I will go career-wise, this experience is still vital to me as a human being. No matter their professions, everyone should have some sort of experience similar to this one. Not only does it encourage the kind and appropriate treatment of all people, but it also is a kind of community service that promotes an instant feel-good effect. It is fulfilling to clean up a riverbank or collect toys to give to a poor family at Christmas, but visiting the individuals at Gallagher provides an immediate gratification for time spent.

Seeing the same people each week is nice for the volunteer, but is especially nice for the individuals at Gallagher. It was truly moving to see that by the second and third weeks of service, the people I met and routinely visited were excited to recognize me and have me back again. Seeing what a difference two hours a week can make in a person’s life is a special feeling that cannot really be achieved from other, less personal, kinds of community service.

I thoroughly enjoyed my service-learning experience at the Gallagher center. It taught me both information and how to be a better person. I am grateful for this opportunity and would consider doing it again.

Maria Surdokas

Thank you MAPO

Maryland Association of Professional Organizers hold Gallagher Services Staff to the Ultimate Test: "Were They Able to Stay Organized?"

On November 8, 2007, twenty-five members of The Maryland Association of Professional Organizers (MAPO) arrived for "Office Organizing Visit #2" with the Gallagher Services staff. MAPO members were pleasantly surprised to find that most of the work completed during the initial office organizing day in May 2007 had held up. "Systems were maintained, desks were visible, and there was very little backsliding," stated Amy Rehkemper, MAPO Community Outreach Director and coordinator for the two events.

Most staff members stated that they were able to follow the systems that the organizers had put in place; and, as a result, they were able to locate items quicker and work more efficiently. When asked if staff members missed anything that they de-cluttered in May, all replied no. This means that the items they purged were truly serving no purpose for their daily job tasks. Working in an environment that is less cluttered made the staff feel more in control of their workday.

When asked mid-process how he was feeling, Gallagher Staff Member, Brian Trees, stated, "This is awesome—fewer piles, less stuff, more organization! Thank you MAPO." It appears that after only two days of individual attention from the MAPO organizers, staff members have caught the organizational bug. As a result, Gallagher Services staff members have increased their space and



Brian Trees, Day Program Director

lessened some stress. This positive combination makes for an overall more productive workday and seems to be having a positive effect on the entire office. Keep up the good work, Gallagher!

Mora Babineau
MAPO Publicity Director

My Cousin Ricky

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Rosewood 34 years ago, and the recent move to Gallagher Services in spring of 2006. However these changes also brought new opportunities.

It had long been a dream of Uncle Buck's to move to the Eastern Shore. So, in 1991 he and Aunt Mary moved to Chester on Kent Island, which made for a long trip to visit Ricky each week. That's when we first started thinking about having Ricky live closer to their home, and I became very involved in the project. More recently, however, it was Uncle Buck who first heard about Gallagher Services from one of the other Rosewood families, and we began in earnest to make plans for the move. All-in-all, it took six months. Looking back, the time seems to have flown by. Although there were challenges along the way for Ricky and for us—what were we worried about?

Today, Ricky is enjoying life in his new home, where he has his own room, his own TV, and a special place to keep his treasures. He's also gradually getting to know his housemates and is becoming involved in their weekly activities. On Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings, he attends Lake Shore Baptist Church with them. During the week he attends Opportunity Builders Inc., where he does assembly work and earns a paycheck. Aunt Mary and Uncle Buck are thrilled with the adjustment Ricky has made, as are we all. Although Ricky cannot put it into words, he nonetheless clearly communicates how much he likes his new family and his new home!

Sharon Welsh

O Holy Night

A brass fanfare by the Concert Artists of Baltimore Brass Quintet opened the 1st Christmas Festival at The Basilica on December 13th. Voices of Concert Artists of Baltimore's Vocal Ensemble and The Choir of The Cathedral of Mary Our Queen then filled the newly renovated National Shrine of the Basilica of the Assumption with the joyous music of the season. Daniel Sansone's organ solo, *In Dulci Jubilo*, and Paula McCabe's thrilling performance of *O Holy Night* were high points of the evening that concluded with the combined choruses in a beautiful *Christmas Cantata* by Daniel Pinkham. Skip and Margie Counselman graciously chaired the 1st Christmas Festival at the Basilica, which benefited the Gallagher Family Fund. The following quote of His Holiness Benedict XVI is from Skip Counselman's comments at the concert.

"I am convinced that music is truly the universal language of beauty. This language is capable of uniting men of good will throughout the world, and having them lift their gaze on high so as to open themselves to what is good and beautiful, which both have their ultimate source in God. May the greatness and beauty of music help to give to you as well, beloved friends, a new and continuous inspiration to build a world of love, solidarity and peace."

— Benedict XVI

Catholic Charities cordially invites you
to mark your calendars for the
2nd Christmas Festival at the Basilica
Thursday, December 11, 2008



Gallagher Services

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