

Bright

futures

FALL 2014

Providence Place



GIVING GOD'S CHILDREN
A FAITH, A FAMILY, A FUTURE™

Star Achievers

Every month, Providence Place recognizes CHI student achievements.



Charles Morris, Education and Training Manager with August Star Achiever Jasmine Nelson.

May 2014

Jacob Obermeyer for huge improvements in attitude and behavior.

Kayleigh Guinn for working hard to get a job, and not getting discouraged.

Garrett Rankin for trying to grow and learn personally and spiritually; for being positive and creative.

Juan Lopez for being so friendly and making others laugh, for listening and being serious when necessary.

(Star Achievers on page 4)

Master Plan Will Take Center Stage

With the formalization of the master plan for the Providence Place campus into a multi-page document, the different phases of design and construction are beginning to take shape.

Project Manager Marcus Wieser, whose responsibility is to guide the project, to control costs and liaise with Providence Place CEO Jennifer Sample and the master plan committee, said in August that reviewing the existing infrastructure and current zoning will be immediate priorities.

"As part of the first construction phase, we will create the plaza in front of the chapel and the admin building with the terraced gardens, and the Horticulture Training and Collaborative Center to the west," he said. "The new entrance and driveway will have a much more inviting, campus-like feel. But infrastructure comes first."

Construction is a long way off — September 2016, at the earliest — and for now, he is reviewing the existing power grid to ensure optimum performance under greater demand. The master plan includes new power lines on campus and a back-up power generator for IT, air conditioning, the cafeteria and freezers, and the administration building.

"Our current electrical is almost to capacity," he said. "We will need new power to accomplish our goals and to ensure minimal work disruption."

Zoning is another current focus and will be a time-consuming process. Some level of replatting will be required. Marcus' experience as liaison between architect and contractor on the renovation of both the cafeteria and the Volunteers of America Texas LIGHT building will stand him in good stead on this project, *(See Master Plan on page 3)*



Project Manager Marcus Wieser works on a project at Providence Place.

2014 Graduates Ready for Life!
Read the story on page 5.

P2 From My Heart, Jennifer Sample | P3 Chaplain Finds Perfect Fit in Counseling
P4 Open Adoption Success Story | P5 2014 Graduates | P6 Horticulture Training Center
P7 Impact 3 Promotes Employee Wellness | Memorials and Honors | P8 Around Campus

From My

heart



It's hard to believe we're almost into fall again.

This has been a busy and fulfilling time, with many achievements again this year. We had our CHI graduation in June on a cool, sunny day and witnessed 16 bright young people go forward with confidence into futures few of them had envisioned for themselves. This graduation event, where students share their personal stories, is always a heartwarming and inspiring event that brings tears to my eyes every time.

Our horticulture training program continues to attract students and we are pleased to find we are building strong relationships with potential employers in the area — golf courses, nurseries, botanical centers and more. Another popular course is our culinary training program with the San Antonio Food Bank, which is open to CHI students and all residents on campus to prepare them for entry-level jobs in food service.

Most exciting is our master planning effort, which sets some ambitious goals for the future of our 25-acre campus. It will upgrade our buildings and lay the foundational infrastructure for our entire property and existing buildings. We are looking at a future for our campus that will truly make the most of what we have — an attractive, spacious property with the potential for collaboration with many like-minded nonprofits, and a common goal of serving women and children and young adults with disabilities.

As you will read in the story on the master plan in this issue of *Bright Futures*, our initial phase will focus on rezoning to ensure we proceed in an orderly manner and make sure our infrastructure is adequate to accommodate our future plans and growth. We are looking at electrical grid enhancements, water supply and re-routing — for greater efficiency — the entrances and egresses from our campus, as well as the roadways on campus to increase efficiency. We will also utilize landscaping to emphasize our campus environment, and continue to preserve security and protection on our campus for those who most need it.

We will soon begin the serious effort of a capital campaign to support this plan and, in the months ahead, will keep you abreast of our activities in this regard.

We have a committed and dedicated team working to achieve our goals, and also know that without your continuing support — both spiritual and financial — we could not begin to dream of this future. We are deeply grateful. As we move toward the end of the year, we look again to your continuing help that enables us to ensure God's children have a faith, a family and a future.

Jennifer Sample, President & CEO

Providence Place Administration

Jennifer Sample, *President & CEO*
Judith Bell, *Chief Operating Officer*
Regina Murphy, *CHI Director*
Carol Williams, *Chaplain*

Amber Bagwell,
Development & Community Relations Officer
Casey Beach,
Development & Church Relations Officer
Mia Buentello, *Development Officer*
Emilie Dujour, *Marketing Specialist*
Robyn Gambrel, *Action Adoption Director*
Carol Trevino, *Development Coordinator*

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Bright Futures is the official newsletter of Providence Place. We welcome your comments, suggestions and ideas.

Contact Us:

Emilie Dujour, Providence Place
6487 Whitby Road, San Antonio, TX 78240
210.696.2410 x181 ~ emilie@provplace.org

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Carol with Chance, her 14-year-old Labrador, a human whisperer who provides affection and comfort to people on campus.

Carol Williams Shares Love and Brings Counseling to Campus

Carol Williams started a career in system administration before she realized that it wasn't a good fit for her. Her true passion has always been to help people and afford them support. She's been working at Providence Place as chaplain for five years.

"I knew that system administration wasn't a good fit for me, but I wasn't ready to recognize it until one night when I was working late, God told me that I needed to search for another direction in counseling," said Carol.

She waited a couple of days to think about it and it became so clear that she decided to save money to go back to college for a master's degree in community counseling.

Master Plan (continued from page 1)

as will his own long background in construction since the early 1990s.

Involved in the master plan development from the beginning, Marcus, along with the master plan committee, is now defining the parameters for the first phase. He hopes to begin identifying partners for the project toward the end of this year, and select the architect and landscape architect in early 2015. The design work would get underway toward the end of that year. Infrastructure upgrades, including power lines, new fencing, necessary storm water detention and new roads along the west side of the campus

will be completed in 2016 before construction begins.

"For this project, it's clear that to achieve the campus-like environment we have planned, the landscaping is vital to our success," he said. "We will likely hire the landscape architect first, and have this design concept influence the general architectural improvements," he said, noting that frequently, if a project runs over-budget, the landscaping is the line item in the budget that is cut. That will not be the case here.

Marcus estimates the cost for the first phase of construction and infrastructure

"It's clear that the landscaping is vital to achieve the campus-like setting we have planned."

After she graduated, she did some of her training at Providence Place.

"I worked on the *Walk with Jesus*, a spiritual walk for young adults with disabilities and for deaf and hard-of-hearing adults. After this amazing experience, I was hooked," she said.

She's always been interested in helping the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, and when Providence Place's previous chaplain recommended her for the job, she realized it was perfect for her. She started working at Providence Place in July 2009.

Carol has a busy schedule. She teaches spiritual classes, she offers counseling for birth moms and young adults who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and she invites birth moms to eat out and talk on Fridays. She also prays with people if they want to, and she organizes campus events, such as the *Walk with Jesus*, Summer Jam, 911 Memorial, National Day of Prayer and Fall Festival. She also offers worship services on campus.

When asked about her job and duties, Carol simply says that she's here to love people unconditionally no matter who they are and to show them that God loves them. She brings energy, faith and hope to the people on campus.

"My office is open to everyone, it doesn't matter if they are religious or not. I want everyone to be able to express their opinions freely to me and I will never judge them," said Carol. ■

development to be in the order of \$4.5 to 5 million. The fundraising team led by consultant David Sapadin, who has worked with Providence Place since the early 2000s raising significant funding for the recent renovation projects, will begin work soon on a major capital campaign also to be completed in phases.

"It's an exciting time," Jennifer Sample said. "Our dream of expanding this wonderful campus and community, where people who have lived on the fringes and often felt excluded are truly welcomed may be a dream that's coming true." ■

Adopting Leland: The Rosses' Complicated Journey

Some adoptions are more complex than others; the end result is never predictable. Sometimes the adoption doesn't go through for some reason, while other families are quickly selected by a birth mom, and everything goes according to plan. There are usually some difficulties, and adoptive families know they have to keep the faith.

This is the story of a complicated adoption journey with a happy ending.

Owen Ross, pastor at the Christ's Foundry United Methodist Mission in Dallas, always wanted to adopt, even as a single man. When he and Xóchitl Medina married, adoption seemed a natural choice to them. They decided they wanted to adopt a child, and contacted Action Adoption at Providence Place.

They started the process in December 2012, with their profile shown to numerous birth mothers until one picked them a year later. They were ecstatic and couldn't wait to meet their baby. Leland was born in February, 2014, and the Rosses travelled to San Antonio to be part of the birth of their child. However, paperwork completion requirements meant the baby had to stay with a foster family during the weekend until everything was finalized. It seemed simple enough.

"It was an unusual weekend," Owen said. "We bought diapers, baby food, toys; we were staring at the clock, and couldn't stop thinking about our little Leland. Then, on the same day we carried Leland from the hospital to the foster family, we discovered Xóchitl was pregnant, and that Leland



The family of three is soon to be four: with her second child's birth just months away Xóchitl Ross and her husband, Owen, pose with their son, Leland. (Photo from family)

would have a little brother or sister. It was a very emotional time, full of surprises and joy."

Then Monday arrived. The Rosses received a phone call with the news that unforeseeable complications in the adoption process would prevent them from taking Leland home with them that week, and that his future placement was uncertain. Owen and Xóchitl were heartbroken. They looked at Leland's baby clothes, the packages of diapers, the bright little toys. They left San Antonio devastated.

So, the Rosses resumed their lives, not sure if they would ever see their baby again. Four months later, however, they got a call that would change their lives forever. Because of the wishes of the birth mother and its own analysis of the case, Providence Place

went to trial to fight for the adoption, and won. For the Rosses, the path was clear — they could pick up their baby at last.

To any couple considering adoption, Owen has some heartfelt advice: "Patience is key. Have faith, as God loves all of His children and has a plan for every one of them. Sometimes we had not been able to understand why a birth mother hadn't chosen us. However, now we know that if another birth mother had picked us, we wouldn't have Leland. He is a wonderful reward at the end of an emotional and complicated adoption."

"Leland is such a calm, happy child, smiling all the time," said Owen. "We're so happy he's with us, and actually a little nervous about the one on the way. We just hope he'll be as easy as his big brother."

Star Achievers (continued from page 1)



June 2014

Aaron Stewart for working hard to make improvements, for wanting to help.

Courtney Williams for keeping a positive attitude during her job search time and always being willing and motivated. Also, for getting a job!

Alicia Poarch for doing her best, though seeming quiet and reserved, and for being up for anything, with a nice, positive attitude.

Alec Morris for opening up more and socializing, and for helping a new student.

Matthew Terrazas for staying mature as a new student, opening up with jokes and being an example for the importance of working out!

July 2014

Victor Griffin for always having a positive attitude, and for a high level of motivation to succeed.

Robert DeLeon for setting a great example by stepping up to be extra helpful to new students.

David Poulton for his focus, positive attitude, not complaining and his dedication to completing the training to become independent.

Mariana Shelby for volunteering to wash dishes after lunch even though she was not required to do so, for showing she wants to be successful.

A New Life for 16 CHI Graduates



CHI Director Regina Murphy, graduating student RhaShad Dudley and Bill Avera, Chairman of the Board, at the 2014 CHI graduation. (Photo by Ashley Lopez)

"I see in you the courage to overcome the challenges of whatever your diagnosis is. I see in you the creativity to imagine a life for yourself that might be different from the "average" person but that is no less beautiful or meaningful. And I see in you the compassion to reach out to the people with true disabilities — people who have forgotten how to feel, people who have forgotten how to hope, people who have forgotten what it means to have someone who loves them."

These eloquent and encouraging words from Daniel Wendler, who lives with Asperger syndrome and is the author of *ImproveYourSocialSkills.com*, highlighted graduation at the Center for Higher Independence this year.

After long months of effort, challenges and struggles, Providence Place's newest graduates had their special day. On Friday, June 27, 16 young adults at CHI had completed their vocational training and were able to celebrate their success before venturing into their brand new lives.

On that beautiful summer day, the ceremony took place outdoors in front of the administration building on Providence

Place campus. Family, friends, and everyone who touched the students' lives were cheering this important accomplishment and first step in their new lives, a success that most of them had not dreamed possible. After graduation, these graduates can plan on holding a paying job, with the skills and training to live on their own with minimal assistance.

As usual, the CHI *Signs of the Times* Choir began the ceremony with a prelude and processional, followed by a welcome speech by CEO Jennifer Sample and an invocation by Chaplain Carol Williams. Dawn Natalino, a DARS Area Manager,

Jacob Obermeyer for repeatedly agreeing to help out with Cafeteria clean-up after lunch, for consistently working independently with a very positive attitude.

August 2014

Leo LaCross for making huge improvements in handling hard situations, and learning to talk things over.

Ben Peirce for volunteering to help in the cafeteria and with the garden and chickens; for having a strong work ethic and willingness to learn difficult tasks.

Jasmine Nelson for consistently giving your best effort and always having a positive attitude.

Kevin Hormozi for being an example of how hard work can really help you to change the way you handle situations; for being a great example of how you can be independent.

Ryan Semian for working very hard on developing his cleaning work skills on lunch duty; for mastering cleaning glass and for a great attitude. ■

Congratulations to Our 2014 Graduates

Jennifer Alvarez — Beeville, TX
 Kimberly Carpenter — Harlingen, TX
 Kevin Casey — San Antonio, TX
 RhaShad Dudley — San Antonio, TX
 Jason Enloe — Carthage, TX
 Abnom Faulk — Beaumont, TX
 Geno Fernandez — Baton Rouge, LA
 Kayleigh Guinn — Katy, TX
 Kevin Hormozi — Corpus Christi, TX
 Afton May — Baytown, TX
 Marcus Merritt — San Antonio, TX
 Thomas Mitchell — Boerne, TX
 Robert Panzer — Houston, TX
 Ben Reinhardt — San Antonio, TX
 Samantha Torres — Corpus Christi, TX
 Caleb Willis — Abilene, TX

also spoke to graduates about the opportunities ahead and congratulated them for their achievement.

Still, the most inspiring part of the event was when students spoke about their accomplishments, their hopes for the future, and what they felt about their time on Providence Place campus.

"It's truly stirring," said Regina Murphy, CHI Director, "to hear what they've been through in their lives, and to think of how much they accomplished, it's really a great moment for them and for us."

And so the Providence Place team said goodbye to this year's graduates, wishing them a great future in their quest for their personal level of independence — holding a job, living in their own apartments, riding buses wherever they want to go; for most, these are exciting plans that didn't seem possible even a year or two ago. ■

Kayleigh Guinn beams with pride at her certificate recognizing her persistence in finding a job.



The HTC, Offering More Than Just Gardening

The Horticulture Training Center (HTC) is a professional program for campus residents with an interest in horticulture occupations, such as working in a garden center, on a golf course or with a botanical program. A program started just two years ago now has a formal curriculum that prepares students for paying jobs in a growing industry. They learn the basics of botany and biology but that's not all.

Derek Alexander, a CHI student at Providence Place, has always been interested in agriculture. Back home in Houston when he was 16, he joined the Future Farmers of America (FFA), an organization that helps young people develop leadership skills, encourages personal growth and promotes and supports agricultural education.

When he started at Providence Place in September 2009, he wanted to continue gardening and to learn more about agriculture, so he applied for the HTC program.

"It's a lot of fun. I'm learning every day, and I hang out with my friends. I don't

have a favorite part, because it's great every day," said Derek.

Since beginning the program, Derek has absorbed a range of skills — he knows when and how to use a hoe or a rake in the garden, he operates the irrigation system, knows about fertilizing. He also has completed the agricultural worker pesticide safety training, and he proudly carries his card in his wallet. He knows when to plant vegetables, which time is best for summer and winter crops.

"Right now, we grow eggplant, okra, peas, bell peppers, potatoes, hot peppers. We had to stop growing tomatoes because it's not the season any more. I hope we'll grow some pumpkins soon for Halloween," he said, excited.

While HTC manager Robert Kwiatkowski was out of town recently, it fell to Derek and several other students to take on the responsibility of managing the garden. Not only did they water plants and vegetables, they also collected and cleaned the eggs every day, making sure the

chickens had plenty of water and food. Derek took those responsibilities as a personal challenge and made sure he did a great job.

"Horticulture is also a great way to teach responsibility," Robert said. "Our students can see the results of their work very quickly."

The benefits of growing and preparing healthy food are stressed in both the horticulture and culinary programs at Providence Place. Derek is part of the cooking program, and says he would like to become a chef someday. After graduation, he hopes to go back to Houston and do just that.

"I've noticed recently that more restaurants are focusing on the idea that when it comes to taste, local is best," he said. "I think it would be interesting for a new restaurant to produce its own vegetables."

It's clear this program is doing more than getting students ready for jobs in horticulture; it's also teaching them responsibility and encouraging them to pursue their dreams. ■



Derek Alexander loves horticulture and is thriving on the new skills he's acquiring in the Providence Place program.



Impact3 for Health and Wellness, a Priority



Emilie Dujour shows off a pedometer she received her first week on the job to record her daily steps.

Nearly a year old at this point, Impact3 is a program that's gaining traction and was designed to engage employees in making healthy living a priority. Implemented in the first quarter of 2014, it's proving to be fun and a social outlet for everyone on campus.

"Employee health and wellness is paramount to the continuing well-being of any organization," said Judith Bell, Providence Place's Chief Operating Officer. "I believe leadership's commitment to health and wellness empowers our team. That commitment tells everyone here we are committed to them as a person, not just as an employee,"

The Walking Challenge plays a major role. Those who participate are offered a pedometer to record their steps. At the end of the month, the person that walked the most steps earns an incentive prize for the accomplishment. All incentive prizes are related to some component of health and wellness. As many as 65 percent of Providence Place team members participated in the Walking Challenge.

The program is a voluntary program open to all employees; they can join as an individual or participate in a team, if that's preferable. No one is required to participate.

"Impact3 is specifically focused on employees. Our philosophy is we must

first have a health and wellness-conscious workforce in order to promote health and wellness to our students and birth mothers," Judith said.

"This is also a health and wellness model we believe has value to other nonprofits. We are working with Mary Kaye Morse to develop a series of seminars specifically for nonprofit leaders wanting to emphasize a health and wellness culture."

Mary Kaye Sawyer-Morse, who has a PhD in Health Promotion and Education from the University of Texas at Austin, coordinates Impact3 at Providence Place and is also a registered dietitian and a Certified Wellness Coach.

"I'm excited about this program, especially as, nowadays, people are interested in wellness programs, which wasn't the case 20 years ago. It makes the program more effective because people really want to change," Mary Kaye said.

What's in the future? Coming up is a confidential weight-loss monitoring plan for those who are interested. ■

Memorials

In Memory Of

	From
David Anstine.....	Mr. and Mrs. Dan Zivney
Don A. Beere.....	Mr. and Mrs. Don E. Beere
Tristan Alexander Brakebill.....	Mr. and Mrs. David Brakebill
Gertrude Carle.....	Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Carle
Hershal Caron.....	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Snider
Chase Wesley DuBose.....	Mrs. Bobbie DuBose
Ruth Downes Evans.....	Mr. Alfred Evans
Paul and Lena Fleming.....	Mr. and Mrs. John McAleer
Robert A. Gilmore, Jr.....	Mrs. Rosa Gilmore
Warren Griffin.....	Mr. and Mrs. David Harvey
Mrs. Dorcas Guerrero.....	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Snider
Roberta Hartlove.....	Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Jackson
Elizabeth Horwood.....	Mr. and Mrs. Clay Jones

In Memory Of

	From
June Kinzie Gibson.....	The Kinzie Foundation
Jim Manning.....	Ms. Sharon Lord Daggett
Missy True Matthews.....	Ms. Sharon Lord Daggett
Steve Meyer.....	Ms. Sharon Delgado
Pat Morris.....	Ms. Betty Stewart
Mrs. Carol Price.....	Mr. and Mrs. Carl Sample
Nevaire Richardson.....	Rose Hill United Methodist Church
Gina Symons.....	Ms. Sharon Delgado Mrs. Elizabeth Hughes
William A. Thompson.....	Margot Thompson
Annelle Waddil.....	Mr. Ken Schwenke & Mrs. Sallie Gordon
Rodney Wilson.....	Mr. and Mrs. Tony Clark

Honors

In Honor Of

	From
Rev. and Mrs. Dan Boyd and Family....	Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Perry
Emily Brand.....	LTC and Mrs. Fred Martin
Glen Cliett.....	Mrs. Becky Cliett
Ellen Coulter.....	LTC and Mrs. Fred Martin
The Fenter Family.....	Mr. and Mrs. Douglas James
Rachel Fournier.....	LTC and Mrs. Fred Martin
Bill Gibson.....	The Kinzie Foundation
Brian Gibson.....	The Kinzie Foundation
Ashley Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Christopher Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Christopher and Ashley Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Elizabeth Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Lisa W. Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
William Hall.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Stan Horwood.....	Art & Lisa Spanjer

In Honor Of.....From

Tim and Shirley Jambers.....	Sharla & Travis Myers
Wyatt Landry.....	Mr. & Mrs. Russell Landry
Charles Lyles.....	Mrs. Anne Lyles
Dan May.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Jake May.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Mathias May.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Jennifer Sample.....	Crestview United Methodist Women
Donald & Lori Stanley.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Jeri Dawn Stanley.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Lori W. Stanley.....	Mr. Gerald Williams
Louise A. Taylor.....	Reno Kiwanis Club
Travis Wall.....	Mr. Kurt Wall
Carol Williams.....	The Woodlands United Methodist Church



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around campus



Volunteers from Baton Rouge FUMC Youth Group work to clean up the walking trail at Providence Place.



Graduates relax after the formal ceremonies are over.



At center is culinary student Kray Ramsey, flanked on left by SA Food Bank CEO Eric Cooper and Chef Jill Jurkow, right.



Culinary students flip pancakes on the griddle as they prepare for the Pancake Breakfast.