

# VISITATION HOME NEWS

## *Living Together as Family*



### Visitation Home - a gift from God!

*"The greatest power in this world is retarded children, the deaf, the dumb, and the blind - those who suffer loneliness. They have time to live in God, to experience the joy of God, to experience the presence of God, and their prayer is powerful before the Lord."*  
- Mother Angelica

Dear Friends:

When parents have a child with a severe developmental disability, we innately worry about what lies ahead. It was through being a mother to Scott who has Autism, and the suffering we endured, that our hearts were filled with compassion for others that share the same concerns: What will happen when we die or become sick and cannot take care of him? Will he ever have friends and will he suffer the great loneliness that comes from having a disability? After learning that there are many thousands of people just in New Jersey who share the same worry, we prayed desperately for God's help! Like Mary at the Visitation (Lk 1:26-38) after conceiving Jesus in her womb is sent forth to serve her cousin Elizabeth, we are sent to serve others who need us. It was not easy, but through much prayer and the sacrifices of many good people, Visitation Home, Inc. was formed. Because of your generosity, we have opened homes for people with disabilities who are in need of loving, affordable places to live. In these homes, their dignity is respected, their gifts are celebrated, and they live in acceptance in a family-like setting. Many of our residents have experienced the painful loss of their parents and other family members and it is so beautiful to see how they have become "family" here.

The first Visitation Home opened in November 2003 and houses 5 residents with disabilities and their staff. The second in December 2005 that houses 4 residents and staff. We are presently in the planning stages with the architect to build a third house that will become home to at least 6 residents and their live-in staff. This is a miracle because these homes are operated by the generosity of our friends in the community and through fundraisers and grants. We are deeply grateful for and need our benefactors. We have a little chapel in the center of our home and we pray the rosary each evening and on Wednesday evenings we pray rosary and Holy Mass. All of our benefactors are remembered daily in prayer. We are often asked to pray for specific intentions and our residents never forget a special need or request! There is great power in their prayers and everyone who comes to visit feels the presence of God and His angels here. It is a gift from God!

Our homes are not just group homes or institutions - they are places of peace and belonging. It is a community that is concerned for those who have no voice - who suffer loneliness - and for *those who have time to live in God, to experience the joy of God and who experience the presence of God!* Words cannot express the gratitude I have for each one of you! I ask the Lord to shower you with an abundance of blessings and graces for the sacrifices you make to help these precious ones who suffer with disabilities! Please pray for us as we remember you in our prayers. May the peace the Christ Child brings fill your hearts and bless you this Christmas and always.

With love and prayers,  
*Denise*

### Christmas 2010

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*Visitation Home is a Catholic Community (open to all) where people with developmental disabilities and those without live together as family called by the truth of the Gospel principle that human life is sacred at every stage and in every situation. We recognize our responsibility to grow in a spirit of openness, simplicity and love through meaningful relationships. It is through these relationships that we discover each other's gifts and the inherent dignity of each individual.*



**Thomas James Bonacci**  
"TJ"

1987 ~ 2009

*We love and miss you, TJ!*

**WE ARE MOST GRATEFUL TO THE SPONSORS  
OF OUR 2010 GOLF OUTING!**

**PLEASE SUPPORT THESE LOCAL BUSINESSES**

- RICH BRANDYS - JOHN HANCOCK INS. CO.
- ROSELLI, GRIEGEL, LOZIER & LAZZARO, PC  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
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- MCMANIMON'S PUB
- CATHOLIC YOUTH ORGANIZATION
- SAUL FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
- DIRECT CABINET SALES

***The Winds of Change***

*Mary Lou Cimini, Director of VH Day Program*

Many people would agree that change is a good thing. However, some struggle to accept that change and some just plain dislike it altogether. Here at the Visitation Home Day Program, we embrace change because it helps us to grow in many ways.

The changes of the past year have been bittersweet for us. We are both humbled and enthused by our growth—adding five new participants and three volunteer staff members—and the steady progression of our program. The year was bittersweet in that our hearts will forever be saddened by the passing of our dear friend, Thomas "TJ" Bonacci. As we enter the month of December, we remember the joyful times and happy days we spent together with TJ. It is a constant reminder to all of us that every life is so precious and fragile and that each day we all need to stop for a moment and appreciate the beauty of a smile, the treasure of friendships old and new, and the importance of the best gift of all—the gift of our time.

The summer of 2010 was filled with many happy, warm and sunny days. We have welcomed back our friend Justin Ross, who now works with us five days a week and always arrives with a smile and a joke. Thanks to him, we take field trips to local beaches and parks, go bowling and to the movies, and have pizza birthday parties. We especially enjoyed our day at Shady Brook Farms picking pumpkins.

We also welcomed many visitors, from far and near, including TCNJ Bonner Scholars, Justice Worx, students from other local high schools and colleges and two lovely girls from Croatia. These volunteers filled our days with laughter, learning, and loving hugs. We are so grateful for the friendships we developed this summer!

These are just a few of the wonderful ways we feel that changes in the past year have shaped our lives and afforded us the opportunities to laugh and, at times, cry together. Saying goodbye to those we have come to love may be difficult, but we would never trade the wonderful days we've spent together. The lessons they taught us and the joy they have brought into our lives remains long after they have gone. Some may return again some day, and



*Denise with our Croatian friends Zrinka and Marietta who spent the summer living in our homes and volunteering at our day program*

## **VH3: A NEW HOME FOR THE FUTURE**

*By: Barry Black, VH Board Member*

VISITATION HOME (VH) is proposing to build a new home on Yardville-Allentown Road. The new home will be on the vacant lot between VH's other two homes (VH1 & VH2). VH owns this land and is planning to build a 4,500 square foot home (VH3). The home will be a two story house with a walk-out basement. A large expansive deck will be on the rear of the house overlooking the beautiful 4.5 acre wooded site. The views will be spectacular and will make it difficult to believe that we are still in NJ. The house will have an elevator and is designed to be fully accessible for special needs.



The architect, Kyle Paul Van Dyke, is evaluating innovative building technologies and products that will make the home as energy efficient and green as possible. Gardening areas and nature trails are being considered for the VH residents to enjoy the outdoors. Friendly areas inside will be also designed to make everyone feel at home.

Some improvements are being planned for the other two homes to make all three homes feel like one beautiful community. The proposed improvements will include curb, sidewalk, and driveway renovations. Repairs will be made to exteriors including the rear decks, and some landscaping features will be added. Some large trees that were damaged over the past years will be removed, and new trees will be added.

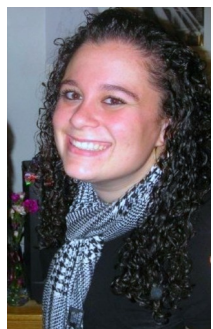
Much of the new home and other improvements will be completed with grants or soft loans from the Township of Hamilton and the County of Mercer, but private donations will also be solicited. The hope is to complete the new home with no bank loans, this way VH can keep monthly rental expenses as affordable as possible for our residents with disabilities. Any contractors, suppliers, or the general public should contact Visitation Home at 609-838-1187 or via email at [visitationhome@gmail.com](mailto:visitationhome@gmail.com) if they have an interest in assisting in any way with the new home, or to make a donation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the VH Board of Directors, residents, staff, and especially Denise Reil for giving me this opportunity to help with their new home. I look forward to VH breaking ground in 2011 for a **“NEW HOME FOR THE FUTURE – VH3”**.



### **A New Addition to Our Family**

In May, we welcomed our ninth resident to VH. Dan (or Danny as his friends like to call him) brings so many unique gifts to our VH family. He loves to help in the kitchen and is always ready to joke and smile! We are so blessed to have Danny with us and look forward to many wonderful memories ahead!



### **Recent TCNJ Grad Interns at VH**

Esther Brahma graduated from The College of New Jersey in May 2010. Shortly thereafter, she moved into VH2 to complete a year of service living with our residents. After volunteering at VH for four years, we are so happy she has chosen to share her time and talents with us for a fifth year!

### **“Good Shop” For VH!**

***Shop for Christmas & earn money for Visitation Home at the same time!***

Please make every gift count this Christmas season. You can find coupons at more than 1,600 top stores (including Amazon, Macy's, J.Crew, Toys R Us, Best Buy, Gap and more) AND a percentage of virtually every sale will be donated to Visitation Home!

Just go to GoodShop at <http://www.goodshop.com>, select our cause and then click over to your favorite store and shop away!

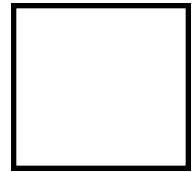
Or, add our toolbar to your browser at <http://www.goodsearch.com/toolbar> - and your purchases will earn a donation for us even if you forget to go to GoodShop first!

**There's no easier way to support us this holiday season and throughout the year!  
Please spread the word.**

**VISITATION HOME NEWS**  
**Living Together as Family**

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*Visitation Home*



**Find us on Facebook!**

Search "Visitation Home, Inc." and "Like" our page to stay in the VH loop! :)

*VH Christmas Wish List*

- |                          |                                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>Paper Towels</i>      | <i>Dishwasher Detergent</i>      |
| <i>Toilet Paper</i>      | <i>Hand Soap</i>                 |
| <i>Paper Plates</i>      | <i>Dish Soap</i>                 |
| <i>Napkins</i>           | <i>Shampoo/Conditioner</i>       |
| <i>Paper Cups</i>        | <i>Garbage Bags</i>              |
| <i>Cleaning Products</i> | <i>Sponges</i>                   |
| <i>M/F Deodorant</i>     | <i>Bottled Water</i>             |
| <i>M/F Socks</i>         | <i>Laundry Detergent</i>         |
| <i>Toothpaste</i>        | <i>Toothbrushes</i>              |
| <i>Tissues</i>           | <i>Feminine Hygiene Products</i> |

If you are able to donate some of these necessary items for the care of our residents, we would be so grateful! Thank you for your support!

*Merry Christmas*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

The next VH Golf Outing will be  
**Monday July 18, 2011**  
at Mercer Oaks Golf Course  
**Shotgun Start at 1pm**  
Email us to preregister your  
foursome now!  
[visitationhome@gmail.com](mailto:visitationhome@gmail.com)

