

# We Are So Blessed

*...to continue to give the Gift of Hope.*



While talking the other day about the successes of Gracious Promise, our new case manager, Jim Echols mentioned something very insightful to me. He said, "Those volunteers who have no connection to an incarcerated relative or friend, no criminal history, no connection to the neighborhoods, and no problem with the stigma are a key to something special at Gracious Promise Foundation." Indeed, many of our clients are inspired by those who give expecting nothing in return.

That statement made me wonder . . . Why exactly do people like that volunteer? Why do they work with and love not just the families and children, but the ex-offenders who at times seem to be unlovable? The story below is an example of the Gracious Promise community working together to help a man affected by incarceration:

We first met Sam through our Feed-the-Need jail program in early 2007 as his felony conviction had led to incarceration. In March 2008 Sam completed his sentence and paroled to Texas. He subsequently transferred to a small town in Kansas in July 2008. Prior to his conviction Sam had been employed in the health care industry, however his felony conviction has virtually restricted his ability to regain employment in the health care sector.

Under Sam's terms of parole he is required to secure and maintain employment in order to comply with the law. Regrettably, the economic downturn has made it extremely difficult for any individual to find employment, much less someone with a felony. Being unable to secure permanent full time employment in the small town,

Sam was at serious risk of having his parole revoked and returning to prison.

Gracious Promise became actively involved again with Sam when his mother related his plight. "Never would I have thought that I would personally need the services of Gracious Promise," she said. We contacted the parole office in Emporia and worked in concert with them to help locate transitional housing for Sam in Kansas City (where the prospects for employment were considerably better). It's important to note that Sam was willing to perform any kind of labor in order to gain a fresh start... if someone would just give him a chance. We then assisted Sam in his transition to KC, working with the local parole office, the non-profit group which offered transitional housing, and meeting one-on-one with Sam to develop a game plan for employment. We provided several appropriate and targeted job leads, and the very next day when Sam went to

apply he was asked if he could start immediately. Within a few short weeks of this newfound employment Sam was able to obtain his own apartment and has even secured a second "part time" job.

In reviewing Sam's file, we see that our staff advocated on Sam's behalf 26 times via personal meetings, email and phone. While our agency didn't have to spend a great deal of money to assist Sam, we would like to believe the support was priceless. Sam is now well on his way to success as a tax paying citizen within our community. "Gracious Promise was there for him. They have worked so hard during this time, and I am forever grateful to their ministry." . . . Mom.

(The name of our client was changed for this publication)



**Just some of the people who volunteer and give to support our clients (from our Fall Open House)**



**Employment is a vital part of a successful re-entry to society. Tim Ryan (right) accepts the award for the company recognized as our Employer of the Year...**

**CLIENT PROFILE**

**CLIENT PROFILE**

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## We Did It Together!

*Our Matching goals were met this fall...*

The gifts, both large and small, kept coming in throughout the fall and into winter. We have now met the first \$116,000 of our Matching Grant for Employment Services and Client Assistance. We are still working to raise the Grandma's House portion of the funding (\$40,000), so there's still time if you'd like to be a part of this collaboration. Thank you to all who have given to meet this need.

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Stories like Sam's and many others happen because of your generosity and compassion. This season, with its miraculous meaning, quickly gives us a reason why many of you enthusiastically reach out. **Our Savior voluntarily took upon himself the form of a servant to rescue those who could not keep the law (Galatians 3:10).** He adopts us as part of His family. The true spirit of Christmas works at Gracious Promise Foundation throughout the year - - made possible by you, our donors and volunteers. Thank you for what you have given this year. Through the end of this past September, we have already served more people in need than in all of 2007. A special "Thanks" to our:

- Donors - Who continue to support us in these uncertain economic times.
- Businesses - Who give our clients a chance for employment.
- Volunteers - Who give of their precious time.

We wish you all a Blessed Christmas, that your hearts would be touched, not only by the tremendous gratitude we feel for your generosity, but by the touch of our Savior who joins you in your touch of compassion.

Merry Christmas,  
Shirley Miller, Executive Director

*With your help, we hope to raise \$20,000 by Christmas. There is so much need this time of year, and we hope you'll partner with us to touch those in need in Kansas City.*

## Fall Open House/Appreciation Event



*Mattie and Brooke Galgan were recognized as our Youth Volunteers of the Year for their Birthday Toy Drive.*



*Dana Blackbird (right) received the Volunteer of the Year award for her hard work coordinating the Dream LOUD Clubhouse.*

Donors, volunteers, businesses, board and staff all came together for our Open House. Much fun was had learning important facts, like "Who is Vinnie?", touring the building and recognizing all of you. We were thrilled to see each of you there and to spend a bit of time interacting. For those of you who couldn't make it, we hope to see you soon. Ask someone who attended about "Vinnie." He's really important.