

SHELTERING TREE, INC.

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SHELTERING TREE NEWS

PREMIERE ISSUE

Sheltering Tree Wins Grant Award

In May, a grant of \$25,000 was awarded to Sheltering Tree, Inc. by the AIM Institute in partnership with the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM), funded through the Compassion Capital Fund of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sheltering Tree, Inc. is one of the twelve recipients in the Omaha area of this year's grant funds and one of the top non-profit 501c(3) organizations to receive the maximum funding. Nearly 70 applications competed for these grants.

The Compassion Institute of Midlands (CIM) grant monies will provide training and technical

assistance to awardees to help build operational capacity in five critical areas:

- 1) Leadership development.
- 2) Organizational development.
- 3) Program development.
- 4) Revenue development strategies.
- 5) Community engagement.

Marie Hiykel, CIM Director at the AIM Institute, views the Compassionate grant awards as a unique opportunity for nonprofit agencies in the area. Hiykel says these awards recognize the hard work and invaluable contributions that nonprofits make to our community.

The AIM Institute is a 501c(3) workforce development group of local, state, and regional businesses, area colleges and universities, secondary school districts, the Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce, and the State of Nebraska. Founded in 1992, AIM provides technology leadership to the Midwest region.



Activities supported through grant funds are intended to increase the organizations' overall capacity for service.

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"Building a community to inspire and empower individuals with developmental disabilities"



www.ShelteringTreeCommunity.org

“By 18 years, most young people are quite independent in traveling, managing money, choosing friends & leisure interests. . .”

Overview of the Development of Teens with Down Syndrome

Research studies demonstrate that young people with Down syndrome make significant progress in all areas of their development during their teenage years and into early adult life. For all young people, adolescence is a period of development which is characterized by a shift from dependence to independence.

At 11 years, most young people are still largely supervised in the community and supported by parents in all aspects

of their lives. By 18 years, most young people are quite independent in travelling, managing money, choosing friends and leisure interests, taking care of their personal daily needs and will be on the way to leaving the family home.

This life period is also important for deciding on future occupation, life style and personal identity. It is also a period of significant physical, sexual and emotional development, when establishing close friendships, dating

and partners become important. In this module it is argued that the physical, social and emotional needs of teenagers with Down syndrome are essentially the same as those of other teenagers and should be recognized as such.

Written By: Sue Buckley & Ben Sacks.

Buckley SJ, Sacks B. An overview of the development of teenagers with Down syndrome (11-16 years). Down Syndrome Issues and Information. 2002.

www.down-syndrome.org



Developmental disabilities

Lifelong mental impairments that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of **the individual**.

The Parent Dilemma: What will happen to my adult developmentally disabled child?

A developmental disabled (DD) person leaving the Nebraska Public School system at age 21, has practiced job skills in the community, is socially capable, and like all young adults is looking towards getting on with their life. The reality, in Nebraska, is the young adult with developmental disabilities is all dressed up with no place to go.

Over 1800 persons with developmental disabilities are on a waiting list to receive state aid for residential living, which would enable the person to live as independently as possible. Since 2006, NE residential

services are only available to the person with DD if there is a family crisis, such as the death of the parent or primary caretaker.

As many as 65% of NE residents with DD never obtain meaningful employment. This young adult is left with his family struggling to assist him to find a job, somewhere safe to live and friends to help him fill his long days. This uncertainty of safety and choices of lifestyle for the young adult with DD offers little comfort for the future and little opportunity for now.



Peace of Mind for Families

Parents and siblings of special needs persons formed Sheltering Tree Inc. as a non-profit 505(c)3 organization in 2007. They were then joined by volunteers and members of the Orthodox Christian Churches in Omaha and Lincoln.

Our mission is to create a premier, safe, caring, and affordable apartment style housing community with live-in caregivers and common healthy dining. There will be common social areas for activities, continuing education and jobs. This semi-independent living gives the opportunity for life-long friendship, while providing personal apartments for each resident.

THE 5 PHASES OF SHELTERING TREE'S COMMUNITY DESIGN



1) **Land.** Finding 3-5 acres of land to begin building in the Metro Omaha area.

2) **Housing.** Building a 10 to 20 single unit apartment complex with energy efficient materials and design. Each resident will have their own apartment. There will be a ratio of nine residents to one live-in manager/couple as caregivers. The

residence will have a common dining room and kitchen for healthy dining together, and leisure space for socializing and projects. The apartment complex will also include a bakery where the residents can practice culinary arts with the help of professionals.

3) **ABLE Center** (Arts, Business, Life Enhancement, and Education Center) inspiring and empowering Sheltering Tree residents and other persons with developmental disabilities to have small businesses, learn new skills and pursue their passions in visual arts, theatre, filmmaking, music and culinary arts with the help of teachers, mentors, artists, professionals and families.

4) **Chapel.** Providing a Christian Chapel helping to support resident's spiritual needs, regardless of their denomination.

5) **Vegetable garden & fruit-tree plantation.** Creating a lovely landscape and providing an opportunity to grow vegetables and learn how to take care of fruit trees, while having fun and enjoying eating these healthy life giving foods.

6) **Elderly Nursing Care.** Building a nine bedroom homelike facility to gently aid these developmentally disabled persons with their needs in their later years of life, without having to have them move out of the Sheltering Tree Community.

Vessels of Honor — All the glory we can hold

Printed with the permission of Touchstone Magazine - November 2006 by Louis Markos

On Earth, God expects us to succeed in accordance with one's gifts, no more, no less. As in the parable of the talents, the servants using different levels of talent were awarded the exact same blessing. "Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master."

With two vessels, one full with 16 oz. another full with 8 oz. both share equally in the joy of fullness and completion.

Likewise, a brilliant Christian doctor of theology and a Down Syndrome child who grasps only the basic gospel and golden rule, could experience equal joy and blessing when they come into the presence of God.

"And perhaps the Down's child will have access to dimensions of God's glory to which the greatest theologians is blind."

"Proper exercises of our gifts and talents will so expand our vessel that we can bear more of God's living water (His grace and truth and light) and thus be more full in our fullness."

"If I were asked to name the chief benefit of the house, I should say, the house shelters day-dreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace."

-Gaston Bachelard

Does Your Child Qualify?

Persons at least 19 years of age with mild to moderate mental disability and a 90 percent capacity toward independence.

This potential resident will not require a personal attendant,

nursing home or full-time medical care. The resident has no history of anti-social behavior, mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse. All persons must also qualify for Low Income Housing.



He Deserves a place to call his own.

Board of Directors

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