



Growing **Hope**
For Children

The **IMPACT**



WEDGWOOD
CHRISTIAN SERVICES
TRANSFORMING LIVES ONE CHILD AT A TIME

SHARING HOPE, PROVIDING HELP, TRANSFORMING LIVES.

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Save the Dates

28TH ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF OUTING: MONDAY, JUNE 3, 2013

4TH ANNUAL WEDGWOOD WELLNESS 5K WALK/RUN: OCTOBER 5, 2013

53RD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION DINNER: NOVEMBER 5, 2013

Growing Hope for Children

BY SAM BEALS, PRESIDENT & CEO



For 53 years Wedgwood Christian Services has been transforming the lives, hearts and minds of children in our communities through a continuum of professionally excellent, faith-based services.

We provide a safe haven for emotionally hurt and spiritually empty children who come to us *traumatized* from physical abuse and neglect. We have helped *thousands* of young people discover their worth and purpose, to find hope and have a future.



Wedgwood is grateful for the success of its services in helping children and their families make sustainable changes in critical areas of their lives. In fact, we enjoy an 85% success rate across all service areas in helping at-risk children and their parents gain and sustain improved relational skills, emotional and behavioral stability, effective parenting skills, employment, and notable advancements in their education. This in turn enables them to live productive, self-sufficient lives. The economic advantages in helping those we serve achieve these gains are immeasurable to our community.

The harsh reality is that the demand for our specialized staffing and services has grown exponentially in the last five years alone. The number of at-risk children served by our Community and Education Services has

increased by more than 300%, and those served by our Residential Services have increased by 60%.

Due to this continual growth, our facilities and programs are reaching capacity. We need your timely and generous help, as well as support from other friends in our community, if we are to sustain our ability to meet the growing number of children being referred to our services. Therefore, in the summer of 2012 we launched the quiet phase of **Growing Hope for Children**, a campaign designed to raise \$10,000,000 to meet the demand for services we currently provide, and services we seek to provide in the near future. In the following pages, we outline more details about this campaign.

There is no denying that the need is urgent. Your support will help enhance an environment filled with the compassion our children need to heal from the unspeakable harm and developmental challenges they have faced. Together we can bring hurting children the hope and future they deserve. ■

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

— Jeremiah 29:11

Growing HOPE for Children

A Wedgwood Campaign

Growing Hope for Children is a \$10,000,000 campaign designed to address the extraordinary and growing needs of our community's most at-risk youths, while ensuring Wedgwood is prepared to respond to the continued demands of this vulnerable population well into the future. The following is a summary of the projects included in this campaign:

Lighthouse Academy – North Campus



To respond to continued requests from the Kent County Juvenile Court and several social service agencies in the northeast area of Grand Rapids we will establish Lighthouse Academy – North Campus (near the corner of Leonard and Fuller) with a proven educational model for expelled students, those adjudicated for a crime or those with special needs.

The 30,000 sq. ft. Strict Disciplinary Academy is modeled after Wedgwood's original Lighthouse Academy which began in 2005 with 12 students. More than 95% of Lighthouse Academy's graduates have successfully transitioned into college, technical training or military service. The new Lighthouse Academy – North Campus will be able to serve more than 1,500 students annually.

By aiding in the funding for Lighthouse Academy – North Campus, our campaign supporters will help provide an opportunity for a second-chance to hundreds of at-risk 2nd through 12th grade students in desperate need of an alternative educational approach to complete their education and eventually secure gainful employment.

Bouma Counseling Center



Wedgwood's Community Services provide a variety of compassionate and professional outpatient services and 20 community based programs equipped to meet the growing and often complex behavioral, relational, emotional, financial, and/or spiritual needs of our clients.

To respond to a 300% increase in the number of children, teens and families served by our Community Services programs, we will expand the Bouma Counseling Center by 12,000 sq. ft. to accommodate the needs of current staff, better support our growing clientele and specialized training needs, and allow for future growth.

By supporting the Bouma Counseling Center's 12,000 sq. ft. expansion and staffing needs, our campaign supporters will provide countless children, teens and families with an opportunity to experience hope, healing and wholeness.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

On May 16th dozens of community leaders, local media, Wedgwood supporters and Board members gathered outside of Wedgwood's campus to celebrate the launch of the **Growing Hope for Children** capital campaign. During the event Jim Boelkins, Chairperson, Wedgwood Board of Directors, shared with the guests about the growing need for services that we've witnessed in our community, while also recognizing the blessings God has bestowed upon the agency in recent years. Guests had the opportunity to tour the Manasseh Project Shelter, Lighthouse Academy, and see the site of the new Bouma Counseling Center, which will be completed in the fall of 2013.





Manasseh Project Shelter/Trauma Recovery Center

For more than 50 years Wedgwood has provided exemplary residential treatment services for children and teens; more than 80% of whom have extensive histories of sexual abuse and, increasingly so, girls who are victims of sex trafficking.

To respond to this urgent need for a respite and treatment center for girls who are victims of sex trafficking and other forms of severe sexual abuse, we will establish the first residential facility of this kind in Michigan. The facility will provide a secure and nurturing environment along with trauma-focused treatment and programming to address the unique needs of these victims.

The 8,500 sq. ft. home-like shelter will feature state-of-the-art security measures to ensure the well-being of residents and staff, while providing ample space for individual, family and group therapy, a classroom and computer lab staffed by Lighthouse Academy, and other customized services to meet the exceptional needs of those in care.

By providing funds for the Manasseh Shelter/Trauma Recovery Center, our campaign supporters will help Wedgwood retrofit one of its homes to allow for the setting and services described above and help girls without financial resources and/or state or court funding to receive the specialized care they need in a safe and nurturing environment.

With God’s blessings on the campaign to date, the Lighthouse Academy – North and Manasseh Project Shelter/Trauma Recovery Center projects have been completed to the point where they are operational. Through God’s provision and the generosity of our supporters we are confident we will be able complete these projects in the near future and by doing so better meet the needs of our community.

Additional Campaign Goals

FACILITY UPGRADES AND ENHANCEMENTS

To increase operational efficiencies, we will update our utility resources, purchase updated technology and security devices, and purchase new furniture for several residential facilities.

WEDGWOOD FOUNDATION EXPANSION

To continue to support Wedgwood’s Community, Educational, and Residential services and facilities into the future, we will seek to grow the Wedgwood Foundation’s Endowment Fund.

The potential impact of this campaign is extremely significant for our community. Not only will these campaign goals help more children, youth and families in West Michigan, but they will also equip us to serve them more expertly. The three larger goals of the campaign (the Lighthouse Academy – North Campus, the Manasseh Project Trauma/Recovery Center, and the expansion of the Bouma Counseling Center) are all an intentional part of this campaign because of the increased need for unique, specialized treatment and services for at-risk students, sex-trafficked and severely sexually abused victims, as well as children and families with a range of counseling and community service needs.

If you are interested in learning more about the Growing Hope for Children campaign or would like more information about making a donation to this campaign, please contact Connie Frazier, Chief Advancement Officer at cfrazier@wedgwood.org, call (616) 831-5620 or visit www.wedgwood.org.



**BY CONNIE FRAZIER, BBA
CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER**



Providing Unique Opportunities for Students

This March, a group of high school students from Hope Academy had the opportunity to tour the MLive Media Hub and gain insight into the real world of journalism. What started out as a simple field trip quickly turned into a moving experience for the eager-to-learn teens.

The students became more engaged as the field trip progressed. Each student's hand was raised in excitement to ask questions about starting blogs, how to be a fashion journalist, and more.

The most moving part of the trip came near the end of the tour when the group met MLive President, Dan Gaydou, who took time out of his day to speak with the students about his upbringing. Surprising to everyone, Gaydou was born and raised in Flint, and at times would want to skip school to avoid

confrontations with many bad influences that surrounded him. He talked about the importance of perseverance and dreaming big. It was moving to hear stories of struggles coming from a local CEO. It really showed the students that with hard work and determination, anything is possible.

The students were very thankful; some even giving hugs as they left. They plan to work with their teachers to put together a Hope Academy blog to brush up on their writing skills and hopefully see some of their work published on MLive someday. ■



BY PHIL HAACK, M.ED.
PRINCIPAL HOPE ACADEMY OF
WEST MICHIGAN



NATIONAL READING MONTH Life lessons at Hope Academy of West Michigan are found not only on fieldtrips, but also through many visitors who have stopped by the school to share their stories. More than a dozen West Michigan business and community leaders traded the boardroom for the classroom throughout March as part of National Reading Month.

We are grateful for the following individuals taking the time to read to our children!

Jim Boelkins – Provost Emeritus, Hope College and Chairperson, Wedgwood Christian Services Board of Directors

Maranda – Host of WOTV4's *Where You Live* Television Show and Wedgwood Christian Services Board Member

Tracey Brame – Assistant Dean, Cooley Law School

Lesia Dion – Executive Director, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Outstate Michigan

David Eisler – President, Ferris State University

Bing Goei – CEO of Eastern Floral

John Gonzalez – Radio personality and journalist, MLive

Officer Ben Hawkins – Grand Rapids Police Department

Rick Huisman – Executive Director, Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids Commonwealth

Shelley Irwin – Morning show host, WGUV

Gloria Lara – CEO, Girl Scouts of Michigan Shore to Shore

Emily Loeks – Director of Community Affairs, Celebration! Cinema

Michelle Smith-Lowe – Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, Kent County Prosecutors Office

Mark Meijer – President and Founder of Life EMS Ambulance

Dr. Lawrence Wells – Director of Charter Schools, Ferris State University

Todd Woodward – VP of Corporate and Integrated Communications, Amway

According to Reach Out and Read, reading aloud is widely recognized as the single most important activity leading to literacy acquisition.

"The outpouring of support from the community to participate in this program has been amazing," said Phil Haack, Principal of Hope Academy.

Lighthouse Helps Even More Youth with Lighthouse WiSH Program

While Lighthouse Academy (LA) provides educational opportunities for students in Kent County who are court placed, IEP placed, expelled or suspended long-term, there are still many educationally at-risk youth in need of LA's services. To help meet the needs of these students, LA launched its WiSH program in 2012. LA WiSH serves three residential service providers in Kent County: St. John's Home, Kent County Juvenile Detention Center, and The Haven.

The mission of LA WiSH is to "illuminate student potential by inspiring positive values within a safe educational environment." Students enrolled in LA WiSH remain actively engaged in the learning process by working with staff to develop their learning goals and track their success. This involvement creates a positive environment that encourages students to feel empowered about their education; a feeling unfamiliar to many of the youth in the program. Without LA WiSH, many of these students would not be able to earn credits towards graduation for their education.

Because the average length of stay varies for each student and they cannot be served by LA WiSH once they are released from residential care, staff work closely with Lighthouse Academy to ensure that students receive the same educational experiences after they leave. LA WiSH is eager to see how they can help these students reach their goals and better prepare for their futures. ■



LISA KEY, M.ED., MSW, LMSW
PRINCIPAL, LIGHTHOUSE WISH

Meeting Children Where They Are – YOUNG LIFE AT HOPE ACADEMY

Every Friday afternoon I spend my lunch in the company of six middle school girls at Hope Academy. For 45 minutes, my day is filled with constant chatter in English and Spanish, giggles, tears, and loud squeals of excitement. Each week it's the same routine. We sit together, giggle about boys, and chat about the ups and downs of our week. Lunch goes by quickly when I'm with them; a roller-coaster ride of emotion and sound that leaves me breathless and exhausted when we're through. I'm always unsure if what I hear next will be full of laughter or sadness.

Most days, our conversations start with "would you rather..." and end with heartfelt exclamations like "my dad died and I miss him" or "my mom doesn't want me." For many of these girls, loss is a huge part of their incredible stories. One of them just lost her father, and her mom is left to raise seven children on her own. She talks about her loss every week. Another deals with the constant pain of a mother who wants nothing to do with her. I am always amazed at how the girls come together



to comfort and support each other the best way they know how.

We part with a few words of encouragement and prayer, then run up the stairs giggling and making promises for

next week before returning to our normal day. As it is each time I see them, I leave feeling forever changed by their strength and hope, and I am so grateful for our relationships. ■



BY SARA WEBB
SENIOR YOUNG LIFE COORDINATOR

Lighthouse Academy Navigators Basketball Team Wins State Championship

Every year, hundreds of expelled students in our community fail to attend school - which often means they lose out on the opportunity to play team sports. For students at Lighthouse Academy, though, not only do they have the chance to finish their education but they also learn valuable life lessons from playing sports, like basketball, as part of a team.

Last February the Lighthouse Academy Navigators basketball team put their athleticism and sportsmanship to the test and won the State Championship for the Michigan Alternative Athletic Association Class C Division with a score in their final game of 69-36. We are incredibly proud of these students for not only showing what they can accomplish on the court but also for treating their teammates and competitors with respect, having positive attitudes and for staying motivated to succeed in school. *Congratulations Lighthouse Academy Navigators!* ■



HEIDI CATE, MA, M.ED.
SUPERINTENDENT, LIGHTHOUSE & HOPE ACADEMIES

What's Your Passion? is the question youth were challenged to explore in this year's Pure Passion for Fashion (P2) Program.



(L:) Students model fashions from local retailers.

(R): Musical Artist George Moss energizes the audience with his performance.

P2 is a nationally-known peer-to-peer education program that engages teens with an innovative blend of fashion, drama, music and multimedia. The program encourages teens to make healthy choices by using their passions to stay involved in positive activities while abstaining from risky behaviors like sexual activity.

On March 8th, hundreds of youth and their parents came to Kentwood Community Church to see P2 2013, hosted by Maranda from WOTV4 and presented by local students.

The show began with nationally-known recording artist George Moss and youth speaker David Mahan, and also included students showcasing their passions through fashion and the arts. Modest fashions from retailers including Meijer,

Deb, J.C. Penney, and Maurice's were modeled by students. The P2 cast of teens represented 10 area high schools and a community college.

"P2 taught me the importance of loving myself," shared one student after the show. "It's okay to wait, to say no to sex until marriage. It's great to know I'm not alone in the decision to remain abstinent."

To learn more about P2, visit www.purepassionforfashion.org



CATHY JORDAN, MA, CHES,
PREVENTION PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Communicating Love for the First Time

For kids like Alex, who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, communication can be extremely difficult. However, thanks to the help of our Parramore program, Alex was recently able to convey his affection for his family for the very first time.

Currently, 70% of the children in our Parramore/VanderArk homes are non-verbal and unable to communicate. Our primary goal is to teach these children an appropriate way to communicate their wants and needs. This can be achieved through a variety of techniques such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), sign language, or touch screen devices like an iPad.

When Alex began the Parramore program he could barely use PECS as a method to communicate. When we learned he could spell, though, the possibility for major improvement in his communication skills increased significantly. Over time we were able to teach him how to use the iPad as his primary source of communication. We began with simple requests called "mands." If Alex wanted a toy, he would spell it out on the iPad. If he wanted a snack, he would do the same. Once he got used to using the iPad for requests, we moved onto "tacting," or identifying items throughout his environment.

Sharing Love with Family

The real breakthrough came during one of Alex's family therapy sessions. Upon seeing his parents, Alex became exuberant. A smile lit up his face. He rushed over, hugged his parents, grabbed the iPad, and spelled one word.

"Love."

His parents were in awe. For the first time in his life, Alex was able to tell his parents he loved them. Lately, our staff have been able to work with Alex on vocalization. He can now speak a handful of vocal words.

Many of the children who enter our program are unable to function independently at the time of their arrival, and we dedicate ourselves to helping these children improve their quality of life. We help them with communication, and in



doing so they are naturally able to grow in other areas. As their communication improves, their relationships become easier and they begin to do things on their own. We have recently expanded our services into two separate homes to better serve more children in our community. As we continue to grow, it is our hope that through God's grace we can continue to help kids like Alex move beyond the barriers that face them every day and reach their potential. ■



**BY CONNY RAAYMAKERS, LLP, BCBA,
CLINICAL SUPERVISOR
PARRAMORE HOME**

DELIVERED

Out of the Valley



**BY KEVIN VAN DEN BOSCH, LMSW
DIRECTOR OF RESIDENTIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Growing up, Derek didn't have contact with his father and his mother was addicted to multiple substances. It seemed only natural that Derek should follow in his mother's footsteps. He became involved with gangs and started abusing substances himself. Soon enough, Derek found himself placed in one of Wedgwood's residential treatment homes and it was here that his life changed forever.

When Derek first arrived at Wedgwood, he was lost in a torrent of self-esteem issues and self-loathing. To some he appeared to have it all together. He would often focus on his peers, giving feedback and advice and helping whenever he could. It wasn't long before we realized this was Derek's way of prolonging the beginning of the journey he would need to take if he was to heal himself.

As his time at Wedgwood wore on, Derek began to open up and face his past. He cut all ties with his mother; a decision that was both difficult and necessary for the success of his future, and when the time came for the annual trip to Montana, Derek was chosen to go.

When trip leader Greg met Derek, he knew he was special. Having led six other trips to Montana, Greg noticed the young men with him were extremely appreciative of the opportunity to be there, especially Derek. By the second day, Derek's passion and awe for the beauty that surrounded him forged a strong bond with Greg that would later be the foundation of his future.

“As he watched the sunrise, he declared that down in the darkness of the valley was where he lived, but this is where he wanted to live now — in the light.”

Everyday Greg asked the group how they saw God throughout their day. One of the most memorable responses came from Derek as they were camped at 9,000 feet in the snow. Derek explained that he was awakened that morning by the sun, which had risen above the mountain range to their east. As it broke over the peaks, he found himself bathed in sunlight while the valley below was still in complete darkness. As he

watched the sunrise, he declared that down in the darkness of the valley was where he lived, but this is where he wanted to live now — in the light. Greg was touched deeply by Derek's profound declaration, and as the trip came to an end, he was sad to see Derek go.

In the months following the trip, Greg only saw Derek a few times. As Derek's 18th birthday approached, he began to fear for his future.

His time at Wedgwood was coming to an end and he had nowhere to go. In a chance meeting with Derek's therapist, Greg was informed of his situation and after talking it over with his wife, they decided to offer Derek a home.

Derek has lived with Greg's family for a couple of months now and has passed the first two exams for his GED. He is currently seeking enrollment in a hospitality program, and has even started to think about college.

“I never would have guessed that trip to Montana would change my life the way it did,” said Derek. “I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to go. I only wish that others will benefit the way I did.” ■

On the outside, Joe appeared to be an ordinary kid. He went to a highly respected high school, dressed nicely, was very polite, and was the type of young man you would expect to see in your local youth group. But on the inside, things were different.

For three years, Joe had been struggling with drugs. His grades began to slip, he lacked motivation, and his dreams and goals were not as clear as they once were. He knew the drugs were to blame, but he was addicted and powerless to leave them behind.

One day, Joe got caught smoking marijuana with some friends at school and was suspended. The school gave him two options; remain suspended for the full length of time, or seek counseling for his addiction and return to school early. Knowing he had to get control of his life back, Joe chose to seek help. His mother called Wedgwood, and after undergoing an assessment he began his journey in our Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP).

Joe knew immediately that our program was what he needed, but his mom found it increasingly difficult to get him to Wedgwood's campus. After a few sessions, his mom told him he wouldn't be coming back because the drive was inconvenient for the family and she didn't believe he really needed it. Joe knew otherwise. Despite his insistence that he stay in the program, his mother denied the opportunity. The following weekend, Joe had a major relapse and his mom saw first-hand how significant Joe's substance abuse problem was.

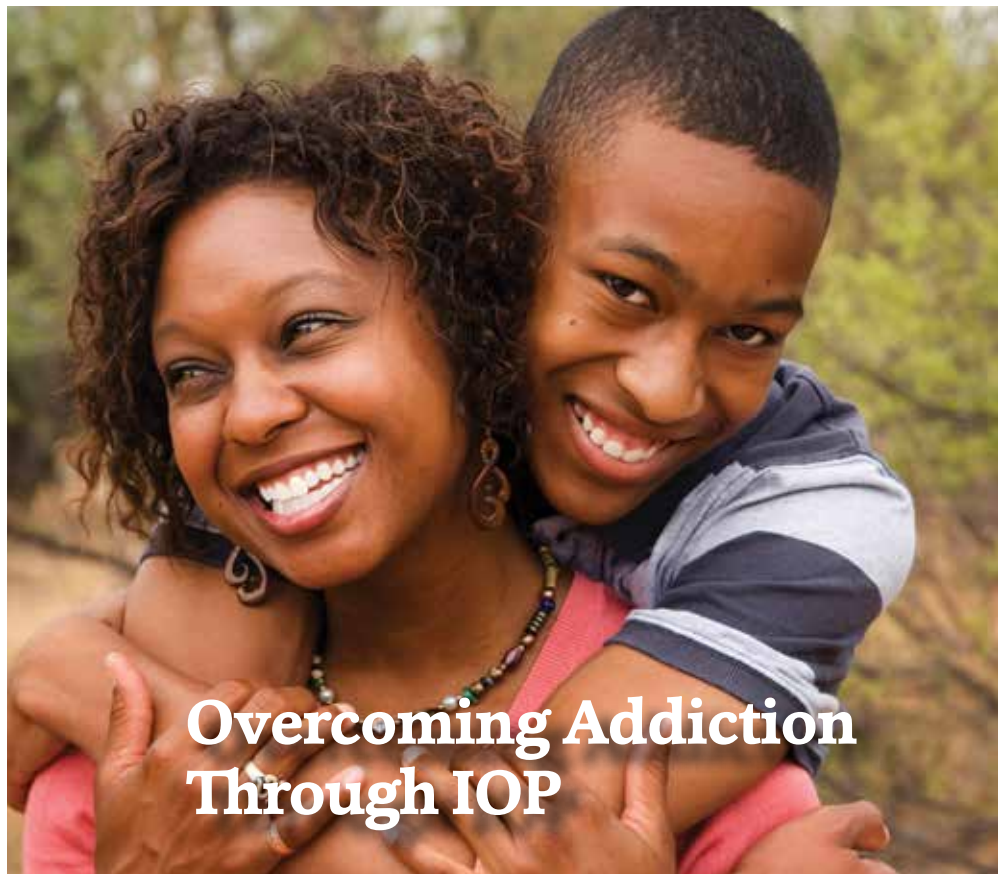
A Supportive Treatment Plan

With a clear understanding of Joe's struggles the family unit came together. His mother contacted Wedgwood and got Joe set up with IOP again. A schedule was developed to alleviate the strain put on the family and soon after returning, Joe identified the root of his triggers and learned ways to deal with them. Support and boundaries were developed and clarified. Future goals and dreams became clear again and his internal motivation shifted to allow his environment to become supportive for sobriety.

Without the help of IOP, Joe wouldn't have been able to overcome his addiction. For the past five months he has remained clean, and is currently completing his time in the program.

The time Joe has spent in our care has inspired him to help others in the same situation. He is in the process of applying for a peer mentor position in our program where he can act as a role model and help other youth make the changes necessary to living a substance free life. ■

If you or someone you know struggles with substance abuse, Wedgwood can help. Contact our Bouma Counseling Center today at (616) 942-7294 and we'll match you with a treatment program to fit your needs and start you on a path towards recovery.



**BY ANTHONY MULLER, MA, LPC, CAADC
CLINICAL SERVICES AND
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Helping Children Discover Their Worth: Tom and Mary Stuit

For Tom and Mary Stuit, helping hurting children is a top priority. Over the years, they have helped spread word of Wedgwood's success in the community which has allowed our ministry to grow. In recent years they have supported Wedgwood through their Capital Campaign involvement and Tom's participation on the Board. Their insight and leadership have helped us thrive, and we are so grateful for their help in allowing Wedgwood to continue to share God's love through our ministries to hurting children. *Thank you Tom and Mary for all you do to support our ministry and the children we serve.*



Mary and Tom Stuit

How/why did you first get involved with Wedgwood?

Gord Buter nominated me (Tom) for the Board. He was a friend, neighbor and fellow church member. As a long-time supporter of Wedgwood, he thought it prudent for younger generations to be involved in the organization. It was one of my first experiences serving on a Board outside of our church community. While Mary and I are very involved in our church, we also understand there are many wonderful organizations spreading God's love in the community. We wanted to be a part of that.

In what ways have you been involved?

I served on the Board and the development committee several years ago. Since then, I have remained involved as a Legacy Society Member and Capital Campaign supporter. Currently, I am involved in the development of Lighthouse Academy and Hope Academy. Mary worked alongside me on the Capital Campaign and was an active member in one of the guilds that support Wedgwood.

What drives you to be so supportive of Wedgwood's mission and work?

Mary and I have remained involved because we have a heart for hurting kids. The staff is inspirational to work with and a blessing to those they serve. We also understand that most of Wedgwood's funding comes from public sources, yet they still deliver a clear Christian witness to those in need. That's important to us.

What do you desire for the children of Wedgwood?

We desire that the kids at Wedgwood benefit from their relationships with mentors and good role models. It's important for each child to recognize their own worth. Along with that, we hope each child continues to receive professional support to help them cope with difficult childhood memories so they may become productive, functioning adults. Most importantly, we desire for them to come to Christ; to learn the meaning of unconditional love and to understand that He is, and always will be, by their side.

How do you encourage others to support Wedgwood?

What Wedgwood does in the community is important, and we often find ourselves encouraging others to become involved as we did. We invite people to join us at Wedgwood events and share success stories. We are so excited about Lighthouse Academy and Hope Academy's efforts to reach kids in need and provide high-quality education. We find it very hard to control our enthusiasm for this, and often mention it to others. Wedgwood is making a significant difference in the lives of many children, and we are grateful for our ability to help the ministry grow. ■



BY CONNIE FRAZIER, BBA
CHIEF ADVANCEMENT OFFICER

Growing Hope – Leave a Legacy



Someone once wrote, “In the future, there will be only two kinds of nonprofits: endowed and extinct.”

Perhaps you agree with the above statement, or perhaps you don't. Either way, we are grateful that the wisdom of Wedgwood's Board of Directors established the Wedgwood Foundation in 1990. The Foundation's sole purpose was to begin endowing funds for future use by Wedgwood Christian Services. Since its inception, the Foundation has given Wedgwood nearly \$1.8 million to help with operating costs. With the help of these funds, Wedgwood is able to meet the growing needs of those we serve in our community.

The assets of the Foundation are built up by a number of different means. Bequests from estates and trusts are the largest source of funds for many charities such as Wedgwood. In this manner, devoted individuals can leave a permanent legacy to help many hurting kids and families find a better way to live. Individuals can also choose to set aside restricted funds to help support specific programs and facilities at Wedgwood. By creating or increasing these funds annually, our donors truly are helping to transforming lives, one child at a time.

Charitable gift annuities are another category of planned giving that benefit the donor and Wedgwood. Gift annuities

are issued by the Wedgwood Foundation with interest paid quarterly, semi-annually, or annually to the donor. In our current economy of low-interest returns, these investments are a very favorable means of generating higher returns and locking them in for life, while at the same time benefitting those with needs.

Other assets that make worthwhile gifts include life insurance policies, charitable remainder trusts, appreciated stocks and bonds, and real estate. These gifts provide assets to the Foundation that will allow us to continue growing hope and providing services for future generations in need as we wait for our Lord's return.

As a member of the Barnabas Foundation and the National Christian Foundation of West Michigan we can offer their expert services at no cost to you. If we can assist you in your planning for leaving a legacy, please call (616) 831-5623 or email graterink@wedgwood.org. ■

“He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”
— Proverbs 11:25



**BY GARY RATERINK, CPA
PLANNED GIVING OFFICER**

Wedgwood Welcomes the Following Individuals to Our Leadership Groups

Wedgwood Board of Directors



Luis Avila, Attorney,
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Home at Last

For the girls who come to Wedgwood’s Manasseh Home, they often carry with them the baggage of abuse, sex trafficking, and a history of limited choices and a lack of freedom. Arriving at Wedgwood opens new opportunities for these girls to grow in a comforting and supportive environment. Not only do they have the opportunity to live in a safe and supportive environment but they also have the opportunity to learn how God treasures them as his children through our Chaplaincy/Young Life Programs. Below is just a glimpse into the experience of arriving at the home for one of our girls in treatment.

When Kendra arrived at the Manasseh Home, she couldn’t believe her eyes. An open recreational space filled with clean and comfortable couches and chairs loomed before her, the colors on the walls warm and welcoming. The kitchen, off to her right, was filled with top-of-the-line appliances and stone countertops. The concept that she could take what she wanted from the cupboards and refrigerator, when she wanted, was foreign to her.

Her eyes widened with wonder as she was led down a hallway and allowed to pick whatever bedroom she wanted. They widened further when she was told she could decorate it with colors and designs of her own choosing. Kendra could scarcely believe this was her new home.

When staff showed her the classroom and recreation room in the basement, they could see the sense of panic lift from her face; she wouldn’t have to leave the home if she didn’t want to. The beauty salon also inspired a response of shock and awe. Never had Kendra had the opportunity to be pampered. Her reaction was touching.

After living in the home for a while, our staff asked her how she felt. “This place is amazing,” she said. “I’m safe, and I feel hopeful for the first time in years.” ■



**BY ANDY SOPER, MA
PROJECT COORDINATOR
THE MANASSEH PROJECT**



THE MANASSEH PROJECT HOSTED ITS 2ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON APRIL 24-25

This year’s conference was held at the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Grand Rapids and was split into two days to equip both law enforcement and supporting professionals with the skills needed to engage traumatized and at-risk populations.

Speakers at this year’s event included Sheila White and Deanna Green from Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS); Assistant Attorney General Kelly Carter; Judge Paul M. Herbert, of Ohio; Carmen Kucinich, FBI; and Western Michigan University Children’s Trauma Assessment Center Co-Founder/Project Director Dr. Jim Henry, among others.

Growing and Learning *in God*

It is a natural part of life to grow and learn. One might say God wired us this way to always be increasing, whether in knowledge, skills, capacities, or even movements of the heart. We believe that learning is life-giving. Living life to the fullest enables us to grow as individuals, which, in turn, allows us to help others reach their potential. As we work with those we serve at Wedgwood — whether a young child, teenager, or adult, we consider the person’s drive and ability to grow. Hunger for growth can be diminished greatly by the trauma of abuse and neglect. Often, a sense of safety and trust in others must be established and maintained before a passion for growth can be reborn or revitalized. There is nothing more exciting than when those in our care develop goals they personally own and have a desire to achieve.

God doesn’t allow us to grow for the sake of learning itself, or for us to hoard our own accomplishments and knowledge. He desires us to grow for the purpose of something bigger than ourselves, to share our gifts with those around us. I believe this is the type of growth Paul is referring to when he says,

“We will in all things grow up into Him, who is the Head, that is Christ.”

— Ephesians 4:15

Spiritual formation involves more than just an individual, personalized faith in Jesus. Growth this profound takes sacrifice, self-examination, and often self-denial. In order to grow in Christ we must let go of preconceptions and trust that we are in His hands. With His guidance, over time, we begin to see the world as He sees the world. As we embrace a lifestyle that demonstrates His active presence and concern for a world he sacrificed his own life for, we begin to mimic His response of love, truth and compassion.

A wise man once said, “The big things, not ourselves, are the things that make us big. The paradox is that to join those things bigger than us, we have to humble ourselves and become smaller. The greatest people have not sought greatness, but served great causes.”



Wedgwood Christian Services is in a continual flux of change and growth. Just recently we launched a new Capital Campaign **Growing Hope for Children**, and we continue to reassess and modify treatment and programs to more effectively meet the growing needs of hurting children in our community. Our prayer in this process is to remain humble as we give ourselves up to something so much bigger than ourselves by standing next to Jesus as he leads us to those in desperate need of hope and healing. In standing next to Him, we point to Him, not ourselves, as the giver of all hope and peace, and together we celebrate in His victory.

Remember in prayer those we serve and that they may desire to grow and learn; to begin seeing value and purpose in their lives. And as you pray for Wedgwood staff and its greater community, pray that as we continue to grow, we do so for the greater good and the purpose of His glory. ■



REV. LERAE KUPERUS, M.DIV.
DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or visit www.wedgwood.org to view a special video and learn about the ways you can help abused and hurting children in our community.

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Nettie Dykhouse
William and Helene Dykstra
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First Cutlerville CRC Women's Bible Study
Elaine Faber
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