



Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services, Inc. is now doing business as Gulf Coast Social Services

Touching Lives

Issue 4 - Winter 2011

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The King of Mardi Gras

Eric is the recipient of our Personal Care Attendant Services (PCA), a Home and Community-Based (HCBS) program offered through the New Opportunities Waiver (NOW) that allows individuals with disabilities to receive services in their home instead of institutional care.

When November rolls around, most people are planning their Thanksgiving meals, making Christmas shopping lists, and pulling out the Christmas decorations. Not Eric!

Instead of sorting through decorations for the Christmas tree, Eric is already wanting to play Mardi Gras music and eagerly awaiting

the day when Mom will get out the Mardi Gras Santa Claus, nutcrackers, and decorations for the Mardi Gras tree. To say that Eric likes Mardi Gras is like saying five year olds like Santa; Eric is a Mardi Gras fanatic!



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Caregiving

Caring for loved ones who are aging can be very demanding, especially while juggling work, family life and personal time. Many people believe that their loved ones cannot receive quality care from anyone else but themselves. While the bond between a parent and child cannot be replaced, there are many benefits to hiring a caregiver to help. Knowing when to ask for help is crucial in preserving your relationship with your parents as they age.

As the elderly population increases, more adults find themselves trapped in the "sandwich generation", being responsible for the care of both their children and their parents. While you may have planned for this next step, many individuals find themselves instantly transitioned from children to caregivers after a sudden illness or the death of one parent.

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Message from Rick Hardie, President and CEO



It is my pleasure to announce that the Board of Directors of Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services, Inc. has adopted a new "doing business as" name for our Agency. We will now identify ourselves as Gulf Coast Social Services. However, our legal corporate name will continue to remain Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services, Inc.

The name, Gulf Coast Social Services, was selected because it more accurately represents the wide array of programs and services we offer throughout various communities in Louisiana. Since we first began providing services to people with disabilities

in 1983, the Agency has undergone many changes in program growth and diversification of services. In addition to the change in our name, the Board of Directors, with the involvement of key staff, updated our mission and vision statements to better reflect who we are today, what we do, and the values we hold dear.

Our new mission statement is "to empower people with mental, physical, behavioral, and other challenges to improve the quality of their lives and to live as independently as possible in the community." Our new motto is "Personal Care. Quality Outcomes."

Thank you for your continued support.

Client Spotlight: Laurette B.



Laurette showing her journal

Laurette is a caring young woman with many passions and extremely creative. She is a client of our Supervised Independent Living program (SIL), a service that provides skills training and other support services to people with developmental disabilities to enable them to live independently in the community.

Laurette lives with two roommates (also GCSS clients) and personal care attendants in a pretty home where she can practice her gardening skills. Laurette tends to a couple of flower beds in the backyard and has been carefully protecting them from the cold temperatures we experienced this winter.

Among her other interests, Laurette is fond of horses and rodeos, collects beanie babies, enjoys reading romantic novels and keeping a diary. She is also very crafty, making bracelets and necklaces for friends using alphabet beads. Laurette displays a great analytical mind as well, having fun solving various word games and puzzles, which she glues together and sells as decorative objects.

Laurette is a pretty active person, as all the occupations described earlier are activities she performs during her spare time, when she is not working at a local McDonald's. Laurette started this job a few months ago and its positive impact in her life has been tremendous. Besides the financial benefits of earning a salary, Laurette made new friends among her coworkers. They nicknamed her "Sunshine", after her enthusiastic character and the yellow dress she wore one day! Laurette is eager to learn, growing her social and professional skills every day. She has been tending to the dining room and working the fries station. She is now ready for more, trying to convince her boss to let her work the grill!

Contributors

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Donna Curry	Natacha Krzesaj	April Schaff

If you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please contact us at (225) 201-0696 or info@gctfsbr.org

Foolproof Chocolate Fudge

(Courtesy of Ann Ditmore, GCSS Direct Care Worker)



Ingredients

- 3 cups (18 oz) semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 dash salt
- 1/2 to 1 cup chopped nuts (optional)
- 1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

- Line a square pan (8 or 9 inch) with waxed paper, extending the paper over the sides of the pan.
- In a medium-sized heavy saucepan, melt the chocolate chips with condensed milk and salt over low heat, stirring constantly.
- Remove pan from heat and stir in nuts and vanilla extract.
- Spread mixture in the square pan.
- Chill 2 hours or until firm. Turn pan onto a cutting board, remove the waxed paper and cut in squares.
- Store fudge covered in the refrigerator.

Enjoy!

The King of Mardi Gras *(continued)*

Eric's entire year revolves around that time of year when the purple, gold, and green beads start flying and the King Cakes get their final layer of sprinkles.



Eric, the King of Mardi Gras

When Mom says it's time to decorate, the first order of business is to hang a bow on Eric's chair. Next comes the tree in his room and all of his other decorations, and of course, the music is playing all the while. Each day, Eric picks a pin from his Mardi Gras jewelry box to wear.

Eric says the best parades are Hercules, Aquarius, Ambrosia and the other parades that roll through the Houma-Thibodaux area. For hauling loot from the parades, two 5-gallon buckets decorated for Mardi Gras are rolled around on a luggage carrier. The buckets have padded tops so they can also be used as seats. Eric

likes to catch themed beads, themed dolls or stuffed animals, as well as doubloons. So if you find yourself at Cleophas, Aphrodite or Cleopatra this year, you're in luck: you just might get to meet the King of Mardi Gras!

Make a Difference in the Lives of People with Disabilities!

Over the years, the GCSS Client Assistance Fund has allowed our Agency to support clients when unpredictable expenses occurred or they had the opportunity to attend social activities but could not afford it.

For instance, in 2010, this fund provided food for a Tracker family with no income, bought bowling supplies for a client who wanted to join a league, and also helped cover a client's home utilities while he stayed at the hospital.

We are reaching out to you today because our clients need your support! Just cut out this coupon, select the giving option of your choice, and mail your check or money order to:

**Gulf Coast Social Services, Attn: Donations
5850 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806**

Thank you for your support!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

E-mail Address: _____

I wish to make a gift of

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other _____

Please send me information about the programs offered by Gulf Coast Social Services

Gulf Coast Social Services is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization and contributions are tax-deductible.

Plan your Mardi Gras Weekend!

DAY	CITY	PARADE	START TIME	
Friday, March 4 th	Baton Rouge	Krewe of Southdowns	7:00 p.m.	
	Houma	Krewe of Aphrodite	6:30 p.m.	
	New Orleans	Hermes (Uptown)	6:00 p.m.	
		Le Krewe D'Etat (Uptown)	6:30 p.m.	
		Morpheus (Uptown)	7:00 p.m.	
Saturday, March 5 th	Baton Rouge	Spanish Town	12:00 p.m.	
		Krewe of Poseidon	4:00 p.m.	
	New Orleans	NOMTOC (Westbank)	10:45 a.m.	
		Iris (Uptown)	11:00 a.m.	
		Tucks (Uptown)	12:00 p.m.	
		Endymion (Mid-City)	4:15 p.m.	
		Isis (Metairie)	6:30 p.m.	
		Tickfaw River	Krewe of Wrecked Boats	12:00 p.m.
	Sunday, March 6 th	New Orleans	Okeanos (Uptown)	11:00 a.m.
			Mid-City (Uptown)	11:45 a.m.
Thoth (Uptown)			12:00 p.m.	
Bacchus (Uptown)			5:15 p.m.	
Port Allen		Napoleon (Metairie)	5:30 p.m.	
		Thibodaux	Krewe of Good Friends of the Oaks	1:00 p.m.
			Krewe of Cleophas	12:30 p.m.
Monday, March 7 th	Houma	Krewe of Cleopatra	6:30 p.m.	
	New Orleans	Proteus (Uptown)	5:15 p.m.	
		Orpheus (Uptown)	6:00 p.m.	
		Zeus (Metairie)	6:30 p.m.	
Tuesday, March 8 th	New Orleans	Zulu (Uptown)	8:00 a.m.	
		Rex (Uptown)	10:00 a.m.	
		Argus (Metairie)	10:00 a.m.	
		Grela (Wesbank)	11:00 a.m.	
	New Roads	Old Style Creole Mardi Gras	11:00 a.m.	

Caregiving *(continued)*

If you find yourself in this position, here are some questions you should ask:

Is it fair to ask my parent(s) to give up their home because I cannot always be there?" Do not underestimate the importance of a familiar environment. Independence is not something you can quite understand the value of until you lose it.

"How efficient of a caregiver can I be with these enormous stressors in my life?" It is easy to find yourself overwhelmed with the huge responsibility of caring for others. Self care is vital to avoid potential damage to your relationship with your parents. If you are frequently getting upset with or snapping at your loved ones, signs are that you need a break. No parent wants to think of themselves as a burden to their children.

If your loved one needs caregiving, there are choices beyond nursing home care or relocation into your home. Gulf Coast In Home Care, a service offered by GCSS, can help by providing Personal Care Attendants to look after your loved one in the comfort of their own home. Call us at (225) 201-0696 or visit www.GulfCoastInHomeCare.org for more information.

Michelle and Mark's Wedding

This Valentine's Day was particularly special for the Gulf Coast Social Services family, as we celebrated the marriage of our dear friends, Michelle B. and Mark T.

Michelle and Mark met back in November 2008 and the two have been inseparable ever since. Michelle grew up in St. Amant and Mark is a native of Lockport, LA. Michelle is a client of the GCSS Supervised Independent Living program (SIL) and Mark has become a close friend through his relationship with Michelle. The two met at an activities program and a friendship blossomed into love. It is clear to anyone who meets this pair that they are happiest when they are together. Both Michelle and Mark say the support they give one another is the most important thing in their relationship.

Mark and Michelle tied the knot on Saturday, February 12th. The couple's family and friends were joined by GCSS staff and clients to celebrate the happy



day. Michelle wore a beautiful ivory gown and was attended by her twin sister, Laurette, and her niece, Paige. Michelle's niece, Claire, acted as the flower girl. Michelle carried a bouquet of gerber daisies, roses, and lilies in soft pinks and ivories. All of the bride's

attendants wore watermelon pink, a favorite of the bride's. Mark was attended by his best man and brother, Jeremy. The ceremony was followed by a reception where guests danced, ate delicious wedding cake provided by GCSS, and enjoyed sharing memories with the glowing couple.

The couple plans to honeymoon in Cancun, Mexico. Michelle is a long time employee of McDonald's and will return to work after the honeymoon.

Our staff enjoyed hosting a shower for Mark and Michelle, as well as helping with the wedding plans. From all of us here at Gulf Coast Social Services, we wish the happy couple all the best!

