



# **Gate - Gateway to Independence**

## **Annual Report 2011**

**The Gate  
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## From the Executive Director

Dear Friends of The Gate,

For those of you who read my letter last year, you may recall that I attempted to provide an executive summary and thank all of our supporters. As I pondered what to share this year, I decided to share a more personal reflection.

The mission of The Gate is to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve independence by providing social and vocational activities. With each year that I am involved with The Gate participants, I find it more stressful to describe the young people who come to The Gate as “individuals with disabilities”.

The 36 young adults who come to The Gate are as different from each other as any group of 36 young adults are. Just like every one reading this letter, they are multi dimensional. Just like everyone reading this letter, they have abilities and challenges. Each time I group them together and describe them as individuals with disabilities, I feel I am in some ways doing them a disservice. I believe we, and even more heart breaking, they are conditioned to

believe that being described as a person with a disability has a negative connotation.

The truth is that I have never had the experience of being with a group of people who are more caring, accepting and sensitive to others. They celebrate each other’s gifts with open hearts. They demonstrate true empathy when things are difficult. “The Real Housewives of Wherever” could learn much from them.

The staff and volunteers at The Gate often share with each other how our lives are enriched by interacting with the participants. In spite of the language I must use to try to give others an idea of what we are about, I am confident that The Gate is helping each of the participants to realize that they have many gifts and much to share with the world.

Sincerely,

Christy Walsh, Executive Director

## Making a Difference

The following are quotes from participants and their families about the impact The Gate has on their lives. (Names are deleted to protect confidentiality)

- *“The Gate has been a godsend in our lives. Seeing \_\_\_happy and looking forward to activities with friends has made such a difference to all of us! This organization is a huge blessing”.*
- *“Before attending The Gate, \_\_\_ had really withdrawn into himself and was not talking and communicating with others as he had been- extended family, church family all commented on how much happier and more “like himself” he was after he started attending”.*
- *“ The Gate is a blessing to our family. \_\_\_looks forward to it every week. The staff is caring and we feel safe leaving \_\_\_ with them’.*
- *“When \_\_\_ graduated high school, he became depressed because his daily schedule had changed and he missed his teachers and friends. Once he was accepted and began at The Gate, he was no longer depressed and had something to look forward to. When The Gate closes for the summer, he knows he’ll be back in August and counts the days.”*
- *“My family greatly appreciates the life-changing service The Gate has provided us. It would be wonderful if The Gate could provide their services throughout the entire year”.*
- *“The Gate has been a wonderful addition to our family. --- It allows us, his parents to enjoy some free time to do the things we need to do”.*

# Gate-Gateway to Independence Board of Directors and Staff 2011

## Board of Directors

### Fiscal Year 2011

Rosemary Garland, Board President  
Kathy Stinnett, Vice President  
Jan Morgan, Treasurer  
John Evans, Secretary  
John Elder  
Janet Harville  
Frank Hogsed  
Angie Hooker  
Donna Hooker  
William Pyle  
Tommy Spears  
Jeff Wadley  
Debra Whaley  
Honorary-Russell Hogsed

### Fiscal Year 2010

Dr. Jerome Morton, President  
Kay Overbey, Vice President  
Karen McCoig, Secretary  
Jan Morgan, Treasurer  
Rosemary Garland  
Dawn Borden  
John Evans  
Angie Hooker  
Donna Hooker  
Karen McCoig  
Bill Pyle  
Kathy Stinnett  
Brian Tuggle  
Honorary- Russell Hogsed

## Gate Staff

Christy Walsh , Executive Director  
Trudy White, Program Director  
Steve Bowen, Program Assistant  
Shirley Irwin, Program Assistant  
Shirley Lovin, Program Assistant

## Routine Volunteers

Marion Brink  
Mary Ann Brock  
Becky Carleton  
Brad Carleton  
Frank Faber  
Janet Harville  
Polly Morgan  
Ruth Purchase  
Jean Smither  
Nan Taylor  
Gary Teper  
Students from Maryville Christian  
Academy Maryville College, and  
Maryville High School

## Special Gifts 2011

In March 2011, The Gate became a United Way of Blount County Community Partner. Russell was prominently featured in their campaign video. Additionally, Christy and Shellie, as part of United Way Speaker's Bureau, represented United Way of Blount County at many corporate campaign kick offs. We were able to tell *The Gate* story as one agency that United Way supports. We became an integral part of United Way's campaign and were proud to assist them to achieve their goal.

April Foolies, a collaborative fundraising effort of United Way, Children's Advocacy Center and The Gate, raised more money than ever for the three agencies. Each agency received over \$8,400.00. For comparison, in 2010, each agency received \$7,000. Even more important, The Gate participants and other acts performed to a sold out crowd of 1200 people and April Foolies has become a highly anticipated event for the whole community.

M. R. Foundation of Tennessee, Inc., a Knights of Columbus Charity, awarded The Gate a grant of over \$2,000. This grant made it possible to produce our video and funded the purchase of two additional Wii setups including TVS. Check out the video on our website or on You Tube.

A team from ALCOA supported The Gate with a visit to learn about the program and then spent the day working to put together and install shelves for our storage area. In addition, we received a generous monetary award.

Many area churches recognize, value and generously support The Gate on an ongoing basis. Sycamore Tree United Methodist provides space to make the program possible; Holston Conference awarded The Gate a \$1,000 grant; First Providence Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, Highland Presbyterian Church, and Immanuel Baptist Church have supported the Gate for many years and continue to support us with regular contributions.

Many special people make monetary contributions to The Gate. Many of these people have a personal connection to The Gate and just as many have no personal connection but recognize the importance of everyone having a place to belong. We are grateful for their caring generosity.