

The Gateway to Independence

Vol. 1

Spring Newsletter 2010

No.2

The Gate

Our mission is to help young adults with disabilities to achieve independence by providing them with social activities and vocational training.

Gate Facts:

- ❖ Young adults (ages 22-30) living in Blount County with severe disabilities.
- ❖ Social activities including games, music, art, crafts, exercise, and cooking
- ❖ Vocational activities
- ❖ Meetings Tuesday and Thursday at Sycamore Tree United Methodist Church from 9am – 2pm
- ❖ 31 participants
- ❖ Training and participation in Special Olympics bowling, basketball, and track and field.
- ❖ 501(c)(3) organization
- ❖ Modest monthly fee for materials, primarily supported by fundraising and donations
- ❖ United Way Venture Grant recipient

We are always looking for volunteers for our program.

We provide recreational activities and some vocational training to 31 young adults in Blount County, Tennessee. At the current time, we meet at Sycamore Tree United Methodist Church. This program began because there are no other services in the area for the people we serve. They have graduated from high school, and without The Gate, they would be sitting at home with nothing to do and no communication or interaction with friends. At The Gate they participate in games, music, crafts, and exercise activities. They visit with friends and mentors. We participate in Special Olympic bowling, basketball, and track and field events. Pizza and Movie day is always a big hit, too!

*Visit our web site at
www.gatewaytoindependence.org
for more information about
our programs.*

Giving Back

On Sunday, May 16, Gate participants and their families visited both services at Sycamore Tree United Methodist Church to thank the congregation for providing space for our programs. Elizabeth and Shellie performed an original arrangement of “Amazing Grace.” Accompanied by Elizabeth on the keyboard, Shellie's voice filled the Worship Center with power and joy.

Elizabeth shared that she was pleased to play the piano because the audience enjoyed hearing her. Also, she wanted to do something to praise the Lord at Sycamore Tree. This is the first time Shellie and Elizabeth have performed together. Shellie commented, “My voice is a gift to me. I enjoy using it to bring happiness to others. Elizabeth on the keyboard was the perfect partner for me. Together, we are happy to give back to this church in return for the space they provide for us.”

2010 Track & Field Special Olympics

On Wednesday, April 28, Gate participants joined other Area 15 athletes at Heritage High School for competition and fun. Corey ran the 100 yard dash and also entered the softball throw event. He liked the 100 yard dash. He won a gold medal, and in 2011, he plans to challenge himself by entering the 200 yard dash. Dustyn entered the standing long jump and the 100 yard dash. He enjoys Special Olympics for the “fun of it”! He is thinking about his choices for 2011 and he will decide when we practice again in October. Angel did the 400 yard walk and the softball throw. She liked them both. In the past, Angel has run in the 100 yard dash, but she now prefers the 400 yard walk.



2010 Basketball Special Olympics

Congratulations to the Gateway to Independence Pass & Shoot basketball team, the winners of their division on February 24, 2010.

We Rocked the April Foolies!

On April 10, The Gate Crashers performed in the April Foolies at the Clayton Center for the Performing Arts. Dressed in bright, eye-catching tie-dyed shirts, the group performed some crowd pleasing favorites. Heather had a wonderful time singing during the performance. She remarked that her favorite song is “Stand by Me”. She was nervous on the stage, but she was excited when the crowd cheered for us. Bonnie thought that the stage was hot, but she sang anyway! “The lights were a little bright, and the stage was huge,” said Emily. Michael was impressed by our standing ovation from the crowd.

Edward Harper and his band, Pistol Creek Catch of the Day, played the music as the Gate Crashers sang. After many weeks of practice, the ensemble was confident and ready to entertain.

The 2010 April Foolies raised a record amount of money for three Blount County charities. Joining The Gate as recipients of the fund raising event were New

Hope Children's Advocacy Center and the United Way Birth to Six Programs. The Gate Crashers were honored to perform for this event, and are already considering songs for our 2011 show.

2010 Dessert Fest – An Annual Success

On Saturday afternoon, March 6, families, friends, and fans of The Gate Crashers met at Maryville High School for confections and songs. This year, the group, mentored by Edward Harper, gave the audience a preview of the April Foolies songs. A new performer, Wacek Koneczny, accompanied the group on the keyboard. This added a new dimension to the performance. The Gate Crashers have a following in our community and typically perform at our fundraisers. The singers are sharing their voices, but more importantly, they are sharing their hearts and their joy of life in spite of the challenges they have to face.



Congratulations!

- To: The Gate Special Olympics Pass & Shoot Basketball Team, which won first place in its division on February 24 at Heritage High School.
- To: The Gate Crashers + Pistol Creek Catch of the Day for the amazing performance at The April Foolies. We are proud of our 2nd Place Trophy!
- To: Shellie V., who “brought down the house” for the second year in a row by singing “The Star Spangled Banner” during opening ceremonies for the 2010 Track and Field Special Olympics.
- To: David C., the 2010 Area 15 Special Olympics Athlete of the Year. David is a skillful athlete who uses his strength in several events, including the softball throw and basketball. He is modest when asked to discuss his superior athletic ability. His kindness and willingness to control his power make him a wonderful leader, both on and off the field and gymnasium.
- To: Carolyn Lyden, a double major in English literature and writing/communication from Sevierville, who was named the 2010 Outstanding Senior at Maryville College during the Academic Awards Ceremony held at the Clayton Center for the Arts April 17. Carolyn has been a loyal and caring volunteer at The Gate since 2008.
- To: Paul M. for his “Gold Medal” achievements in the Tennessee State Power Lifting competition on May 22 in Nashville at Vanderbilt University and the Centennial Sportsplex. Competing against 49 other contestants, Paul earned gold medals in the Bench Press, Dead Lift, and Combination events.
- To: Trudy White, Program Director at The Gate, for her Special Olympics Area 15 Coach of the Year award.



Edward Harper plays through a practice of the Dessert Fest performance.



No Dessert Fest would be complete without the delectable desserts!



The Gate Crashers perform at the April Foolies.

Informational Websites

(For information only; The Gate does not endorse agencies, products, or services)

Blount Hearing and Speech Services

<http://bhssinc.com/index.html>

Janey Tolliver Speech Pathology Services

<http://janeytolliverspeech.com/JTSPS/Home.html>

East Tennessee Technology Access Center

<http://www.discoveret.org/ettac/>

ASA – The Voice of Autism

<http://www.asaetc.org/>

Autism Foundation of East Tennessee

<http://www.autismfoundationoftennessee.org/>

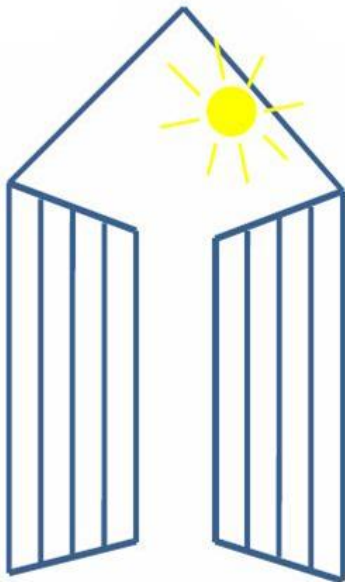
ADA Home Page

<http://www.ada.gov/>

The Gate's April Foolies Co-Beneficiaries

New Hope Blount County Children's Advocacy Center – A safe place that serves the needs of children who are victims of physical or sexual abuse. <http://www.blountkids.org>

United Way Success by 6 – An early childhood initiative which prepares children physically, emotionally, and socially for lifelong learning and success. <http://www.liveunitedblount.org>



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