



The Tenant VOICE

West Michigan Therapy—Housing Program— Next Tenant Voice Meeting is December 23rd at 1:30pm

Francis T. Vincent Jr., the Commissioner of Baseball in 1992 said this:

Baseball teaches us, or has taught us, how to deal with failure. We learn at a very young age that failure is the norm in baseball and, precisely because we have failed, we hold in high regard those who fail less often—those who hit safely in one out of three chances and become star players. I also find it fascinating that baseball, alone in sport, considers errors to be part of the game, part of its rigorous truth."

Those same principles can be found in spirituality: *"Spirituality teaches us, or has taught most of us, how to deal with failure. We learn at a very young age that failure is the norm in life. . errors are part of the game, part of life's rigorous truth."*

Kurtz and Ketcham, 1992

As the holidays approach us, the thoughts of spirituality, of wisdom, and giving are in the air. It is also a time when those thoughts are challenged, as the

holidays may bring us the opportunity for great joy and remembrance, they can also at times bring us discomfort for what could have been or what is not. It is also a time of reflection and story telling.

As Kurtz and Ketcham have stated: "Listening to stories and telling them helped our ancestors to live humanly—to be human. . .yet as life speeded up, as the possibility of both communication and annihilation became ever more instantaneous, people came to have less tolerance for that which comes over time. . .our most common complaint is that we 'have no time' and we modern people are problem-solvers, but the demand for answers crowds our patience and perhaps, especially, patience with mystery, that which we can not control." In essence, *Spirituality* hears and understands the pain in these questions, but its wisdom knows better than to attempt an "answer." Some answers we can only find: they are never "given."

During this season. . .we challenge you and your family to take the time to Listen! Listen to stories! Share their wisdom and tradition. For spirituality, some believe, in and of itself, is conveyed by stories, which use words in ways that go beyond words to speak the

language of the heart. Reflect on your accomplishments and struggles in 2008 and ask yourself where would you like to be in 2009.

Remembering, that all good things come with time, patience, self-will and determination. You are not alone in the journey.

Thomas Prugh is quoted as saying: *Spirituality is a lot like health. We all have health; we may have good health or poor health, but it is something we can't avoid having. The same is true of spirituality: every human being is a spiritual being."* Thinking on that statement, it is often through the spirit of the holidays that we reflect most on our own spirituality, our own beliefs and values. . .our fellowship and belonging.

"There are two ways of spreading light: To be the candle or the mirror that reflects it." -Edith Wharton

Which will you be? Whatever your thoughts or choice, may you rejoice in your new home, your renewed spirit and most of all for the opportunity that lies ahead. Warm Wishes for a Wonderful Holiday Season—may the stories be plenty and your reflection bright!

-WMT Staff

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If you need transportation to the meeting—please speak with your case manager!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Tenants of the Month	2
Tenant Voice Committee	3
Recovery through the holidays	4
Community Resources	5

Refreshments and treats are available at the Tenant VOICE Committee!



Support Service News and TENANTS of the Month ~ Winter 2008

September 2008 ~ Arthur Rhymes



Arthur at his new home

My name is Arthur Rhymes and I grew up in Hazlehurst Mississippi. At 6 months old I was adopted by my Aunt and she gave me the best care that she could and I felt very loved. I became the first member of my family to attend college, and I received a degree in Speech Pathology from Grambling University. Later on I acquired a graduate degree from Governor State University in Illinois. I worked for many years in this field, and eventually ended up in Muskegon taking care of my Aunt who was very ill. This is when my life spiraled completely out of control. Shortly after moving here I was introduced to crack-cocaine, and before long it had consumed my entire life. I could no longer work in the job I loved. I was completely lost and miserable; and worst of all I was spiritually dead inside. After many years of this abuse and degradation, the misery of that moment finally outweighed the fear of change, and I got clean. I was homeless and stayed at the Rescue Mission and while there I had the opportunity to see myself honestly in every man who came through the door. I was truly humbled at that moment. While at the mission I applied for the HARP program. It took some time, and the mission was gracious enough to extend my stay, but eventually I received a voucher and was able to move in to the beautiful home that I still live in today. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have a place to stay, and I am working and saving money as well. Today I enjoy working, living and waking up in the morning. I am excited about the opportunities to come, and extremely privileged for the blessings of today.

October 2008 ~ Shelly Overkleeft

Shelly Overkleeft came to Muskegon from the Holland area in the fall of 2006. After staying at the Woman’s Muskegon Rescue Mission for a short period of time. She was one of the first individuals housed by West Michigan Therapy’s CHI program in Oct. of 2006. She was determined to make major changes in her life. When she came to Muskegon she had no job, no family and no means of transportation. Using the only transportation available to her she walked everywhere and searched for employment. She began working at a local factory in November of 2006 and was able to purchase reliable transportation. The obstacles were frequent. She struggled with depression, limited financial resources and custody issues with her two children. During the next two years she was able to furnish her apartment and turn it into a home for herself and her children. She has kept her transportation going and maintains her employment. She completed counseling and is managing her depression. In October of 2008 her income had risen and she is able to be completely self sufficient. She is paying her own rent and no longer needs rental assistance. Congratulations Shelly!



Shelly and WMT Case Manager, Ann Dean

November 2008 ~ Charisse Elijah

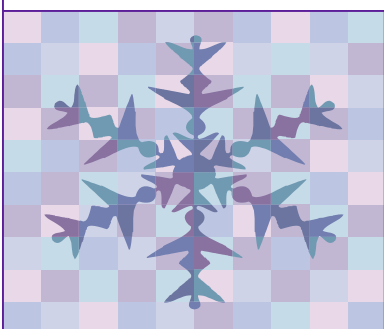


Charisse Elijah

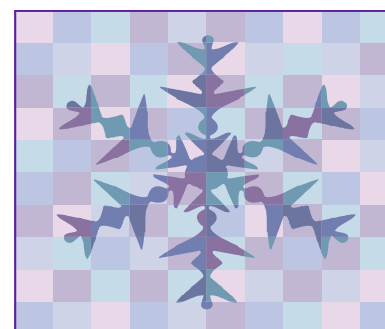
I first meet the housing staff at West Michigan Therapy when I applied for The Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP) in September 2008. When I found out the waiting list was so long, I knew I needed another option. I decided to continue to work with the staff through the Housing Navigation Center (HNC). I had relocated to Muskegon from Flint due to severe medical issues that I have and to be closer to my family. I found my self, along with my four children, homeless. While working with the HNC I began to set goals and explore other housing options. My main barrier at that time was my low self esteem—everything seemed overwhelming and I didn’t know which way to turn. The HNC staff provided me with encouragement, motivation and referred my family to a local transitional housing program. I moved into a three bedroom home in early November that I can afford on my limited income and focus on raising my children. I want to take this time to thank my mother, who provided

me with temporary shelter and unconditional love during this difficult transition in my life. My children are all attending school and finally feeling safe and secure at our new home. I want to let people know that there is help out there and you just have to be willing to go out there and get it!

TENANT VOICE COMMITTEE



*Holiday Gathering
Tuesday
December 23, 2008
1:30pm*



Please join us for an afternoon of festivities, food and fellowship as we celebrate the holiday season and plan for a successful and fulfilling new year in 2009.

The Muskegon County Health Project will be our guest speaker. Come and learn about health care services that are available through the many programs operated by this community agency.

Please assist us in planning accordingly - RSVP to Steve Ritter at 739-6840 ext 114 if you plan on attending.

Transportation is available with 24 hour advance notice

New Walk in Office Hours available for Ann Dean Wednesdays Noon—4:00pm

If you are currently housed through the Homeless Assistance Recovery Program (HARP) and are working with Ann Dean, please be advised that she is available for walk in appointments every Wednesday from 12 noon until 4:00pm. This time is to be utilized for issues arising between your scheduled home visits that are urgent in nature (evictions shut off notices, etc.)



If you currently do not have a case manager and would like to begin receiving housing support services, please contact Jennifer Stewart at 739-6840 ext 108 to arrange your first appointment. We are looking forward to meeting with you!



RECOVERY THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS

It is no secret that the holiday season can be a difficult time for anyone. It is also a well known fact that it is one of the most difficult times of the year for anyone struggling with an addiction, or anyone in recovery from an addiction. Follow these twelve suggestions, and you could be amazed at the results (hmm... That sounds familiar)!



- 1) **Seek support from family and friends:** Let people know what you need. It is okay to allow the supportive people in your life to be supportive. Don't give in to the temptation to isolate.
- 2) **Take Care of Yourself:** Make sure to eat, sleep and relax. This will prevent unnecessary stress.
- 3) **Create new activities:** Do something outside of your usual holiday pattern. Be creative and find a new, fun tradition for yourself.
- 4) **Do a daily gratitude list:** Instead of focusing on what you don't have, spend some time each day being grateful for what you do have. There is always something to be grateful for, and this can change your attitude immediately.
- 5) **Take an honest inventory:** See if you can discover the actual causes for why you may have a hard time during the holidays. In order to solve a problem, you must first find out what the real problem is.
- 6) **Protect yourself:** It sounds obvious, but there will be temptation to go to some old familiar places if you are lonely or bored. Make sure that these places are not dangerous to your recovery. You're not missing anything.
- 7) **Identify your support:** Make a list of people you can call or go see if you feel like you might want to drink or drug. Carry the list anywhere you go.
- 8) **Give back:** Find someone who may be worse off than you and try to help them, or volunteer at a local organization. You would be amazed how much better you feel when you're not constantly thinking about yourself.
- 9) **Plan your days:** It will be smart to plan your time effectively. This will give you a sense of purpose and accountability. It will also increase the likelihood of positive action.
- 10) **Take a moment:** Give yourself time to breathe. This will allow you to not get caught up in the madness of the season and you will be able to re-gain proper perspective.
- 11) **One day at a time:** Stay in the moment. Fear and worry are most commonly found in the past or future. If you live in the now you can appreciate and appreciate your life more fully.
- 12) **Stay close to local support:** During the holidays your local AA and NA groups will be planning extra activities to increase support. Get involved and celebrate your recovery.



AA CENTRAL OFFICE: 231-755-2224 NA HOTLINE: 231-726-6262

Holiday Assistance Programs

- Need help for the holidays?
- Interested in donating your time or other gifts to holiday assistance programs?

CALL 2-1-1 has information on holiday assistance programs that may be available in your community.

Dial 2-1-1 or 877-211-5253
www.call-211.org

2-1-1
Get Connected. Get Answers.
Community Access Line of the Lakeshore

Area Resources

MUSKEGON AREA FOOD TRUCK SCHEDULE

Friday: Dec. 19, 2008	10:00a.m.	Fifth Reformed Church	2330 Holton Rd., (M-120)
Tuesday: Dec. 23, 2008	1:00p.m.	Holton Sanctuary Church of God	8473 Holton Rd., Holton
Saturday: Dec. 27, 2008	10:00a..m.	Calvin Christian Reformed Church	973 W. Norton Ave.
Monday: Dec. 29, 2008	1:00p.m.	LC Walker Arena	Fourth St. at Shoreline Dr.
Tuesday: Dec. 30, 2008	5:00p.m.	New Life Christian Center	1624 Hoyt

OTHER FOOD RESOURCES

- 1) C.A.S.T. Loaves and Fishes Pantry: Phone: 722-9352 1095 Third St., Midtown Bldg., Suite 10-Basement. Hours for pick-up include Tuesdays from 10-2:00 p.m. and Fridays from 10-Noon.
- 2) Mission for Area People: Phone: 733-9672 2500 Jefferson St. Muskegon, MI 49444 Meals are served from 4 pm. To 5:25 p.m. Monday through Friday. They also give food donations, but you must first make an appointment.
- 3) Muskegon Rescue Mission: Phone: 727-6010 1691 Peck St. Muskegon, MI 49441 (women) and 727-6805 400 W. Laketon Ave. Muskegon, MI 49442 (men) The women's shelter offers emergency food packs, and the men's shelter serves breakfast, lunch and dinner every day.
- 4) Angel Food Ministries: Host Church: Shiloh Tabernacle: Phone: 766-2776 460 E. Tyler Rd. Muskegon, MI 49445, Provides grocery relief by selling boxes of quality food for half of what you would pay at the store. Call for ordering information.

FOR MORE FOOD RESOURCE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT 2-1-1

Avoiding Utility Shut-Offs This Winter by Ann Dean, Housing Case Manager

Staying on a budget and paying bills on time is a challenge for everyone. Stretching our money to keep ourselves and our families warm should be at the top of our priority list.

So what can we do?

1. First of all be smart and be safe. NEVER use your stove as a source of heat. I often go into homes and the family has the oven door open and turned on. This can be a FIRE HAZARD and it runs up your bill much faster than turning up the thermostat a degree. Never use a space heater if you are not home or if they are old. They are very expensive to run and can cause fire or produce carbon dioxide if gas operated.

2. Turn your heat down between 65 to 68 during the day. If you are not going to be home for most of the day you can lower it to 60 degrees and turn it back up when you return home.

3) Dress for the weather. Wear a sweater. Don't have the heat at 90 degrees and put on a pair of shorts. Remember that it is winter. So your behind on your utility bills, now what? Resources in the community are very limited and can be difficult to access. The Department of Human Services (DHS) often has new requirements for those wishing to receive assistance and may require that you have at least attempted to make a payment.

Lets try these steps first.

- 1) Call the utility Company and get on a budget plan to prevent a shut off. Never skip a payment always pay something on your bill. Keep all receipts.
- 2) If behind, make payment arrangements and stick to them.
- 3) If you do get a shut off notice fill out an SER form at DHS and turn it in with a copy of the notice the day you receive it.
- 4) If you are denied, call 211 to see if there are community funds available.
- 5) If no community funds are available call your case manager.

West Michigan Therapy—Housing Program— Transitional Living Center

HEADQUARTERS

130 East Apple Avenue, Muskegon, MI 49442

HOUSING PROGRAM

2333 Jarman, Muskegon Heights, MI 49444

Phone: 231-739-6840

Fax: 231-739-5940

Web Site: www.wmttlc.com



This program is made possible in part by a grant from the JASAM Fund of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County.

Louis Churchwell
Chief Executive Director
WMT/TLC



Agency Policy

It is the policy of WMT to offer treatment and shelter services to all who need and can benefit from them regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual preferences and/or physical handicaps.

West Michigan Therapy, Inc., a not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 agency, was incorporated in 1985 to provide Outpatient services for persons and families who were experiencing substance abuse problems. Today WMT provides services that are covered by State and Federal grants, Medicaid, commercial insurances and private donations. We provide counseling, housing services for the homeless, and treatment services at a reasonable cost.

Service fees are based on a sliding scale and are established according to the person's ability to pay, taking into consideration family income and size.

If you or someone you know suffers from substance abuse or dependency, please don't wait—there is a solution! Call West Michigan Therapy at 231-728-2138 for an appointment. Walk-ins are also welcome! We are located at 130 East Apple Avenue in the City of Muskegon. **WMT works to re-create the HOPE that RECOVERY is POSSIBLE!**

We have a staff of qualified counselors including Certified Addictions Counselors, Master's Level Clinicians and Doctors of Psychology as well as some names that have been working in the field for over twenty years.

WEST MICHIGAN THERAPY
2333 JARMAN ST.
MUSKEGON HEIGHTS, MI 49444

Mission Statement

To provide every individual who struggles with the effects of Substance Abuse including Homelessness, the tools and support systems necessary to improve their quality of life.

Promise

WMT promises to provide services in a dignified and ethical manner encompassing the realities of the entire family system to any person that requests such services despite his or her ability or inability to pay a fee for service.

Values

WMT values the safety and prosperity of the community.

WMT values family involvement in treatment and recovery.

WMT values a holistic approach to providing services to all individuals.

WMT values the integrity and confidentiality of the persons served.

WMT values the principles of spirituality.

WMT values community collaboration and partnerships.

