DAMAR VIEW

SUMMER 2010

JUST BEING Jonny

Jonny had faced adversity before, but 2002 was different: He was 10 years old and having trouble coping with his father's cancer diagnosis. He had just been referred to residential treatment for his aggressive behavior in elementary school and equally disruptive behavior at home. Diagnosed at birth with developmental challenges, Jonny, was considerably small for his age. But he was strong, angry, fearless and mentally unaware of his actions.

"He didn't realize what he was doing, but he injured me so badly that I knew we couldn't do this on our own anymore," said his mom Amy Chester.

Amy and her husband Jon had spent years paying for various treatments and consulting with school officials before placing Jonny in a residential facility more than 120 miles from their home in Carmel, IN. Still, his behaviors seemed to worsen.

Financially and emotionally strapped, Amy said, "We considered Damar to be Jonny's only real chance, but to achieve the impossible, we had to do the unthinkable."

It was difficult, but the Chesters waived their parental rights, giving the state supervision over Jonny's treatment. Just as they had hoped, their youngest of five children, was brought to Damar.

A tenacious little firecracker, Jonny was known for being angry, aggressive and often making bad decisions. But, his zest for life and raw musical talent are contagious strengths that allowed Damar's staff to connect with him quickly. Over the years, family support, individualized services at Damar and his own determination to succeed have given Jonny — and the Chesters — hope.

"From day one, every Damar staff member has done everything possible to make his life better; and he is doing wonderful now," Amy said of Jonny, whose Mohawk, pink Converse® and spunky personality make him a popular icon on campus.

"Jonny is so active and sociable now; he's grown by leaps and bounds," Amy continued. "And Damar gave me a chance to be a mom. I love Damar!"

Since graduating on May 21 from Damar Academy, Jonny has been able to successfully transition to Damar's adult community living program and began working part-time as an apprentice on Damar's maintenance and recreation staff. With great pride and attention to detail, Jonny works alongside Damar's staff cleaning windows, pulling weeds, laundering swim towels and keeping the pool deck tidy.

"He's the most dependable, hard-working client that has ever worked with us, and he's just a joy to be around," said Jim Porter, recreation director.

"That's my boy!" Jon said. "That's Jonny."

DAMAR SERVICES

It takes a team

Whew! The past two years have been brutal for so many. The Recession, the downs and ups (and downs again) of the stock market and, for those dependent upon state dollars to fund services for those in need, a dramatic reduction in revenue continues to challenge our good work.

Some months ago, I pledged that Damar would seek new ways to serve its vital mission in these difficult times. While other organizations are cutting programs and jobs — Damar has been seeking new opportunities, finding new efficiencies and implementing innovative approaches while continuing to expand its reach to those in desperate need. New initiatives and more cost effective operations have kept success for our clients at traditionally high levels.

This success has not come without dedication, resourcefulness, commitment and sacrifice from the entire Damar family. Staff members have taken on extra work loads without pay raises and with some reduction in benefits. Board members and volunteers have given more freely of their time and talents, and our donors have given more, even when their own budgets have been stretched way too thin.

This summer we have faced additional and unexpected challenges by a few who questioned our purpose and impugned our reputation as a quality provider that helps people who need our help the most. Our clients, referral sources, staff and mission supporters knew and understood the truth, and have continued to offer the same rock-solid support that has enabled Damar to succeed in good and not-so-good times.

There are likely more challenges to come. We promise our continued diligence while remaining confident that our great team will pull us through any challenges we face… as we continue to celebrate our clients' victories and the fulfillment of our great mission of service.

Greg Johnson,
President & CEO

Damar seeks foster parents for new Foster Care Services

A new initiative that expands the scope of Damar's mission also offers individuals and families new opportunities to help children in need. The organization has recently launched Damar Foster Care Services, and is seeking foster parents for children of all ages and abilities who are temporarily unable to live at home.

Indiana foster parents can be single or coupled, but must be at least 21 years old; have the patience, time and space in their home to care for a child; and successfully complete licensing and training requirements.

DAMAR FOSTER CARE SERVICES

More than just a place for kids to stay, foster care has a huge impact on a child's future success — especially youth with special needs and older youth, who are aging out of the nation's foster care system in record numbers. Indiana's need for dedicated foster parents is steadily rising.

"Without the safety net of an education and skilled, supportive foster parents, the sad reality is that foster youth are more likely to drop out of high school and become homeless, unemployed or incarcerated," said veteran child placement specialist Guenevere Kalal, Director of Damar Foster Care Services. "We want to make sure that our foster children have loving foster homes and the best possible chances for success. We need caring and compassionate adults and families to come forward and help us achieve that goal."

To learn more about Damar Foster Care Services or the mutual rewards of foster parenting, contact Guenevere Kalal at 317.856.5201 or gueneverek@damar.org, or visit **damarfostercare.org**

O'CONNOR RECEIVES DAMAR STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Indianapolis businessman Patrick J. O'Connor, was honored July 28 for more than 30 years of dedicated stewardship to Damar. Pat, an executive of City Securities Corporation, retired as member of Damar's Board of Directors, where he previously served as board president, chaired several committees and served on countless others. He now shares his experience, wisdom and community leadership skills as a member of the Damar Advisory Council. "Pat's guidance, counsel and direct service to Damar have been instrumental to our important mission as our organization has grown through these years and his efforts will not be forgotten," said Greg Johnson, President & CEO.

Patrick O'Connor

In life, a lesson taught is often a lesson learned

Dwight Ashley
Damar Academy Principal

With the bittersweet end of another school year in late May, Damar Academy had to say farewell to the 39 deserving students representing the Class of 2010 — the largest graduating class in our school's 16-year history and my first graduating class as school principal.

Like any high school graduate, these youth are passionate about more than the latest pop stars, video games and trendy fashions. They are genuinely excited about their futures and the many great opportunities that await them. I'm anticipating their future success as well.

As Jonny Chester was dancing cross the graduation stage – sporting a fresh-cut Mohawk, blue jeans and his signature bright pink Chuck Taylors underneath a cap and gown – I doubt that anyone present was focusing on his disability or the challenges that may lie ahead. For me, Jonny and his fellow classmates are textbook models of how courage, perseverance and determination can turn those obstacles into opportunities. With the right support, they are all capable of achieving success.

Damar Academy also is looking forward to future successes. Our new education pavilion will open this summer and include three large classrooms, a vocational training room and a computer lab with 15 workstations. However, I'm sure all of us here at Damar are most excited about getting to know the uniquely talented students who will fill those new seats. Inevitably, they will teach us as much about living and learning as we teach them.

PHILANTHROPY PHILANTHROPY PHILANTHROPY

DAMAR GUILD SPONSORS NEW SENSORY GYM

A generous $26,300 gift from the ladies of the Damar Guild is enabling Damar to convert a small campus gymnasium into a multi-sensory stimulation retreat for residents with autism. The money was raised during the Guild's 2010 Dinner Dance.

The Damar Guild Sensory Gym is expected to open in October and will feature therapeutic furniture, toys, sound machines, fiber optic lighting and other interactive stimulation effects used specifically to redirect young residents with passive or overactive behaviors.

Therapeutic Rocker Chair

"This new facility will be a wonderful resource for our children and provide a safe, treatment-based environment where they can engage in a series of appropriate stimulation exercises as an alternative to engaging in negative behaviors," said Kristin Harmon, Director of Autism Services. "It will offer valuable training opportunities for parents seeking to better understand their child's sensory needs so that they can be proactive in providing the appropriate stimulation in community settings."

ANTHEM VOLUNTEERS SHARE GIFTS OF TIME

In recognition of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield's national Community Service Day, 49 employees and their friends and families generously shared their time and talents to volunteer at Damar. The April 24 event marked Anthem's first corporate volunteer activity at Damar.

As part of the effort, the company donated interior paint, 10 wooden picnic tables, hundreds of garden plants, and other supplies used by volunteers to spruce up campus residential areas, gardens and green spaces. Anthem also gave 10 individual-size trampolines to Damar residents with autism.

DAMAR EXCEEDS ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GOAL

Hundreds of supporters have given a total of $566,054 in cash and in-kind gifts and services to Damar, enabling the organization to exceed its annual fundraising goal. This generous philanthropic support from individuals, civic and business organizations and charitable foundations will benefit more than 1,200 clients and families who each year depend on Damar's life-changing treatment and services.

Damar's latest fundraising victory comes one year after the successful end of the three-year, $6 million *Exceeding Expectations* capital campaign, and represents the organization's most prosperous fundraising effort in a non-campaign year. It also comes at a time when Damar is expanding programs to meet community need, and the organization is facing potentially deep cuts in state funding.

"This year, when charitable giving has been down by nearly 4 percent, Damar giving is up by 45 percent," said, Greg Johnson, President & CEO. "In a tough economy, we are truly blessed to have dedicated staff donors and other contributors who not only believe in what we do, but also continue to support our mission through their contributions."

"I donate to Damar because I see the positive changes in our clients' lives every day, and I'm proud of that."

Alvergie Green
~ Damar receptionist and donor

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2010 DAMAR CLASSIC GOLF EVENT

Damar congratulates the champions of the 2010 Damar Classic charity golf tournament, held July 20 at the Golf Club of Indiana — Zionsville. The winning foresome included (l. to r.) Steve Ferguson, Seth Ireland, Dr. Jim Dalton and Marty Erschen.

In all, 105 golfers participated in the Classic, which raised more than $15,200. P.I.P.E., Inc.; Tynan Equipment; Holladay Construction Group and Holladay Properties; BKD, LLP; Indiana Live! Casino; Patrick Tynan; and Baker & Daniels served as top sponsors. Water to Wine Catering and Arni's Restaurant donated lunches and appetizers.

The next Damar Classic will be held Tuesday, June 23, 2011 at the Club. Dave DeWitt at 317.856.5201 or daved@damar.org for more information.

The Damar Guild Presents

A Salute to Damar

Italian Bingo Night

Friday, September 24, 2010

Northside Knights of Columbus
2100 E 71st St., Indianapolis, IN 46220
Doors open at 6:30 p.m. • Bingo starts at 7:30 p.m.

Cash Prizes • Gift Certificates • Door Prizes • Lottery Tickets • And More!

TICKET PRICES
$35 per person includes
Bingo • Dauber • Italian Pasta Buffet • Snacks • Beer/Wine/Soft Drinks
or
$100 per couple includes
Name in Event Program and 2 Tickets
Bingo • Dauber • Italian Pasta Buffet • Snacks • Beer/Wine/Soft Drinks
(Must be 21 to attend)

RSVP by Friday, September 17, 2010

GET YOUR TICKETS ONLINE AT
www.damarguild.org

VISA MasterCard ACCEPTED

All donations to Damar Services, Inc., are tax-deductible to the extent provided by law. In remembering Damar's mission in a will or bequest, the following language is suggested: "I give, devise and bequeath the (sum of _____, percentage of _____, residue of my estate, etc.) to Damar Services, Inc., an Indiana not-for-profit corporation exempt from federal income taxation under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, and located in Indianapolis, Indiana, for the furtherance of its charitable purposes."

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