

Perspectives



*Thirty years of
breaking the cycle
... creating hope*

MISSION

To improve the quality of life for homeless and at-risk families and children.

PROGRAMS

Supportive Housing – A national model

- Transitional Housing (22 units)
- Permanent Housing (30 units)
- One-to-one Case Management
- Parent Education and Support
- Recovery Support Groups
- Parenting and Empowerment Classes

Kids Connection Children's Enrichment

- *Kids Cafe*® cooking, nutrition, and social skills
- *Reach for the Stars* after-school academics
- *Summer Explorers* full-day summer school and recreation

Parenting Time

- Supervised Visitation and Exchange
- Parent Coaching and Mediation

Jeannie Seeley-Smith, CFRE
President/CEO

Jeff Martinka
Vice President of Community Affairs
Newsletter Editor

Perspectives Family Center
3381 Gorham Avenue
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

(952) 926-2600

info@perspectives-family.org
www.perspectives-family.org

*“Perspectives never
gave up on me.”*

By Wenona K.

Perspectives reached out to Wenona K. and her family three times, starting back in 2000. On the third try, it worked. Wenona is the most recent of the hundreds of Perspectives' graduates, women who arrived homeless and without hope, but ultimately left us for their own permanent homes in the community.

Fiercely independent, Wenona had tried to live her life as she chose for 15 years. Raised in a series of Minneapolis foster homes, she ran away from her last foster family at 16 and soon after, dropped out of high school. A year later, she was pregnant with her first child. Though she earned her GED on her own by the age of 18, Wenona's attempts at college failed when she did not attend class regularly due to her drug and alcohol abuse.

I wanted to do things my way. I directed my own life and got myself in trouble. I really needed to stop and listen.

Wenona is well spoken and poised and her work ethic wasn't her problem either. She's labored in factories, coffee shops, gas stations, wherever she could earn part of a living. Her problem was her addictions – alcohol, pot, crack, meth – the pull of her addictions led to repeated failures and many personal losses, including the pain of losing her first four children to adoption.

I was in treatment more times than I can remember. I did try to address my parenting issues, but my drugs kept interfering. You know what you're doing is wrong, but you just can't stop.

With the pregnancy of her sixth and last baby, something clicked within her – this last time, Wenona decided she had to change. She enrolled in a treatment

program at RS Eden and after five months, petitioned to be accepted back in the Supportive Housing Program apartments at Perspectives for a third and final time. After a long selection process, Wenona moved in and began the challenge of rebuilding her world and getting back the custody of her two youngest children.



Wenona K and son

Normal, everyday things that people do took me a little longer. I wanted to be clean and sober; I wanted to live a life without blemish. But I didn't have basic living skills; I didn't know basic budgeting skills. Well, people CAN change. A lot of people don't think they can, but you never know when it will click for you.

With strong support, it did click for Wenona. Looking forward, she is eager to continue the rebirth of her life. Now 31, she recently moved with her two children from her Perspectives apartment, happy to be in her new home in south Minneapolis, near friends and family in the American Indian community. Her plans include maintaining a good and stable home for her two children and re-enrolling in school, with an eye towards programs in human biology or forensics.

Reflecting on the advantages of Perspectives for her and her family, Wenona pointed to three unique features that made Perspectives the place for her and her children. She cited its immensely supportive environment, its affordability for parents with little or no resources, and its willingness to offer a recovering Mom a second, or even, a third chance.

How many times can you cry wolf and still get attention? Still be taken seriously? Well, Perspectives took me seriously. Perspectives never gave up on me.

I will always be grateful. I will always appreciate this place. I am thankful and grateful to those who make places like Perspectives possible.

Our 30th Anniversary Year!

This is a big year for Perspectives, Inc. We were founded in 1976 and formally recognized as a tax-exempt organization in 1977. We have already laid plans for a series of 30th Anniversary celebrations during the year. They include recognition of this benchmark in our print, Web, and other outreach materials. In addition, we are planning several special events to mark the occasion. They will include a 30th Anniversary Luncheon with founding Board members and special presentations at our *Perspectives of Hope* Gala on October 13th at the Metropolitan. Watch for more details in the summer Perspectives newsletter, on our Web site, and in your mailbox.

A Tribute to Founder Jane Onan in this Anniversary Year



Jane Hanan Onan
1933-2006

She was known for her warm and captivating smile, but after working with Jane for more than 20 years, I also knew her heart. It was tender, caring, compassionate and generous . . . generous enough to reach out to another. Don't confuse her as a "softy," for her passion lay in helping others to help themselves. Jane knew the difference between providing an opportunity and offering a "hand out." She knew that opportunity empowers one to self-actualize, while a hand out keeps a person in self-deprivation and dependency. She wanted to provide opportunity for those who would maximize it and that passion set her and others on a mission.

It began 30 years ago, when Jane Onan joined a handful of other women who had been personally affected by alcoholism, either through their own addictions or that of loved ones. They sought to create programs that would provide opportunity. They knew that one of the barriers to receiving help for alcoholism was the stigma held by this insidious disease – both to the addict and to the family. Therefore, these early reformers, Jane Onan, Barb Montgomery, Marge Humphrey, and Carol Daniels key among them, set out to educate the community about the disease of alcoholism and how treatment and recovery can bring victory to the addict, their family and the community. It was a tough road, as alcoholism was viewed by many as a moral deficiency, a lack of will, or a weakness in character. Their strategy was to tell the story of recovery, as well as to educate on how the medical community recognized that alcoholism is a disease which treatment could arrest.

The name of Perspectives came from the desire to provide education, awareness, and a "new perspective" concerning the issues involving addiction. It was these early pioneers who began the "self- help" groups, the workshops and lecture series that quickly swept the Minneapolis metro area. It was Perspectives that first brought people from all walks of life to join together on Thursday afternoons to hear how increasing self-esteem and taking care of one's self could ricochet through their home. It was in these lectures that people learned to "let go and let God" and that if one wanted change, one needed to look to their own selves first. All these concepts that are so well known today were first launched in forums known then as "the Perspectives' lecture series."

Three decades later, Perspectives has grown into a \$2.5 million dollar agency and is home to one of the largest supportive housing programs in Minnesota for recovering families and their children . . . and Jane Onan stayed on as a board member for all of those years.

When Jane left this world this past January, she certainly left behind a legacy. It is a legacy that will continue long after all the early founders and I are gone. But let it not be forgotten that it all began through the commitment from those who early on practiced the 12th step: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. I will miss Jane. I will miss her energy, her optimism, her entrepreneurial spirit, and her "can do" attitude. Most of all I will miss her friendship. We at Perspectives, however, will carry on her work to help those help themselves, and in that very real way, Jane will always be with us.

Jeannie Seeley-Smith, President/CEO

New Board Member and Officers Elected

Perspectives, Inc. elected their 2006 Officers at its Board of Directors' Annual Meeting in December. The incoming Board Chair is Jan Finken, President/CEO of IQ, the new Vice Chair is Gretchen Buhler Ventura, President/CEO of Technology Project Group, and the new Secretary is Marilyn Dahl, Regional President and Executive Vice President at Wells Fargo Bank. Returning as Director of Finance is George Wood, President/CEO at LockerMate Corporation.

The Board also elected new Board member, Jim Kremer. Mr. Kremer is a Partner at Dorsey & Whitney LLP and been a longtime volunteer at Perspectives. With Jim's help, Dorsey & Whitney LLP has provided pro bono legal assistance to Perspectives for more than a decade. In recognition of that help, the firm was given Perspectives' 2005 Community Partnership Award.



Jim Kremer (left) with recent Board inductees
Linda Domholt from Better Life Media and
Jim Murphy from General Mills

THANKS FOR MAKING OUR WORK POSSIBLE

More than 50 percent of the operating funds for Perspectives, Inc. programs come from private sources. That critical support is much appreciated. Here is a roster of our private institutional donors since October 2005.

Henry & Betty Albrecht Fund

Henry & Betty Albrecht Fund
of The Minneapolis Foundation

Ameriprise Financial

American Express
Gift Matching Program

B & H Way Foundation

Burdick Craddick
Family Foundation

Burt Foundation

Excel Bank Minnesota

Frenzel Foundation

Goldberg Bonding Company Inc.

Hawn Family Fund
of The Minneapolis Foundation

Hubbard Broadcasting

Intraco, Inc.

James R. Thorpe Foundation

Marvin Edward Mitchell and
Marjorie Weil Foundation

Open Your Heart To
The Hungry and Homeless

Peace Presbyterian Church

John & Carole Sayer Fund
of the Catholic Community Foundation

Sime Foundation

St. Olaf Bon Appetit

Union Church

Women's Fellowship

The Whitney Foundation

Womack Family Foundation

Women Who Really Cook

Perspectives, Inc. received major
in-kind donations from:

ABC Radio

D'Amico Catering

General Mills

Minnesota Monthly Magazine

Mpls/St. Paul Magazine

Pottery Barn

Seasonal Concepts

Ten Thousand Things Theatre

Toro Company

UPN 29 Television

General Mills Receives 2006 Community Partnership Award

Perspectives, Inc. announced recently that General Mills is the winner of the 2006 Community Partnership Award. General Mills has been the source of key volunteer and financial support to Perspectives for more than 20 years. General Mills' employees have generously provided ongoing volunteer assistance to Perspectives programs. From offering nutrition workshops to producing graduation events to hosting book bag drives to volunteering in Kids Cafe to scheduling one-on-one tutoring, the company's employees have truly adopted the families of Perspectives.

This past holiday season, General Mills employees took their support to another level. The employees of the Meals Division reached out to our Supportive Housing and Parenting Time families by delivering 53 Christmas trees and decorations in early December. Soon after, they treated our Kids Connection after-school students with the return of the General Mills' holiday store. These trees and gifts brightened the holidays for the over 160 parents and children who live within our supportive housing apartments and the many families in the Parenting Time program.

Now in its third year, Perspectives' Community Partnership Award is presented annually to an organization that has provided significant contributions to Perspectives. Previous winners included Dorsey & Whitney LLP and Wells Fargo Bank. The 2006 Award will be officially presented to General Mills at the *Perspectives of Hope* event on October 13th.



Volunteers from General Mills with the trees – Jim Murphy from General Mills and Jeannie Seeley Smith from Perspectives are in the far right, second row

Perspectives: Our Impact Last Year

Here are outcome highlights from our three core programs in 2005.

Supportive Housing Programs (SHP):

- Housed 79 parents and 134 children during the year (up 11%)
- 100% occupancy of our 5 apartment buildings (52 units)
- 70 children housed at Perspectives were reunited with their parents
- Average school attendance rate for SHP children is 89%
- 73% of residents increase their skills through employment and/or attending school or job training programs

Children's Enrichment Programs:

- Enrolled 85 children in our Kids Connection after school programs
- Enrolled 70 children in our Summer Explorers full day summer school
- Total of 108 students served in Kids Connection (unduplicated total)
- 64% of students increased their math skill scores by at least one-half grade
- 98% of school age children living in supportive housing successfully stayed in the district and completed the school year
- Served 10,599 meals in Kids Cafe

Parenting Time Supervised Visitation Program:

- Served 134 parents and 113 children (up 44%) from 71 families
- Supervised 871 monitored Parenting Time sessions (up 40%)
- 100% of 391 parent/child exchanges occurred successfully
- 100% of the children reported feeling safe and enjoying their visits
- Seventeen families "graduated" from supervised visitation (52% of exiting families)

Parenting Time Program Expands, Again

By Beth McNally, Parenting Time Coordinator

In 2005, after being awarded a substantial grant from the Bush Foundation, the Parenting Time supervised visitation program expanded its programming. Throughout the year, with this new funding, the program was to add more and more families to the new time slots. To bolster its offerings, visitation times have moved to later in the evenings to help more parents by opening up 5 more slots in the late afternoons. This has allowed more flexibility in meeting client needs and offers more opportunities for all our great interns.

In addition, the larger Parenting Time room will soon be converted into a family community game room to accommodate the many donations of toys and games, including an ESPN sport machine that the kids love. When the conversion takes place, the room will no longer be just a private room for one family. Instead, multiple families may use it during the session times, giving parents and kids a greater chance to relate to one another.

To meet growing demand, the number of volunteer interns in the program has almost reached 30. We've seen great dedication and enthusiasm from all of them in working with Parenting Time families. We even had a few interns volunteer extra time over the holidays, which can be a tough time for many families. The interns stepped in and offered to facilitate sessions on their days off. Clearly, our program simply would not exist without volunteers and interns.

Our annual client survey, completed in January, came back with raving results. As an example, 100% of the children surveyed reported feeling safe and enjoying their visits. Parents also provided positive feedback, such as, "Supervision personnel were all wonderful. I felt safe leaving my son there." And when asked what they liked about the program, a client noted, "Staff, volunteers, autonomy, respect, and support."

Leadership Luncheons: A Successful Partnership

Leadership Luncheons at Kids Cafe are now a regular component of our community outreach program. We have hosted four gatherings and the results are impressive – raising nearly \$30,000. The lunches have also identified 21 new program volunteers, 11 future table captains, but most of all generated an immeasurable dose of community good will.

The concept is simple – with the help of volunteer Table Captains, we fill the charming Kids Cafe space with 50-60 friends, past and new. We provide them with a fast-paced, one-hour update on the programs and successes of Perspectives. The agenda includes welcoming and closing remarks by volunteers, a guest chef-prepared menu, a brief video, and program reflections by Jeff Martinka, VP of Community Affairs, Jeannie Seeley Smith, our CEO/President, and a current program participant or graduate.

The Table Captain is a special friend of the organization; they each invite seven guests to the luncheon. The Table Captain contacts and confirms potential guests and then sends out printed invitations supplied by Perspectives' staff. There is no charge to attend.



January Leadership Luncheon Table Captains (from left): Katherine Johnson, Bill Milota, Vicki Fraher, Jan Finken, Dave Allen, Marie Jules, and Terry Egge

Our next 2006 Leadership date is Wednesday May 10th. For more information or to volunteer as a Leadership Luncheon Table Captain, please contact Jeff Martinka at (952) 926-2600 Ext. 29 or via jmartinka@perspectives-family.org.

Wear Orange in May

Beth McNally, Parenting Time Coordinator

Supervised visitation centers exist to provide a safe haven for children during parental visitation. May is Supervised Visitation Month and supporters can acknowledge the month by wearing an orange ribbon, which is the symbol of supervised visitation.

What color signifies safety better than orange? Orange is a bright color used to warn people to pay attention and take notice. We want the world to see the orange ribbon and take notice of the thousands of children and families in need of this valuable service.

Starting on May 1st, Perspectives will have orange ribbon pins available at the Front Desk. The pins are free, but a donation of \$2 is welcomed.

A Night of Personal, Hard-Fought Successes

Twice each year, the Kids Cafe at Perspectives is transformed into a room of miracles. The Supportive Housing Program's semi-annual Recognition Nights provide a passionate catalog of personal achievement – collective stories of lives rebuilt. This winter's event was held on January 12th. Seventy residents, staff and alumni applauded five graduates from Perspectives' apartments, five mothers who successfully completed our program and moved with their families to their own homes in the community.

The five included Michelle D, Wenona K, LouAnn P, Heather S and Gwen W. Four other mothers moved from Perspectives' Transitional Housing to our Permanent Housing and were also lauded.



Wenona K, Jazi Foreman – Supportive Housing Program Director, and Gwen W

The recognition nights also feature the awarding of Sobriety pins. Forty-three of our women and our two fathers received pins for sobriety achievement, with sobriety ranging from six months to 8½ years! Those with the longest sobriety periods included Gwen W, Kanisha B, Amy M, Shirley W, Debra S, Barb F, Jan T, Janet M, Yolanda B, Dena M and Maria M. All have been sober for more than 3½ years.

Perspectives always includes a focus on rebuilding families at each event. Over the past six months, six mothers were reunited with their sons and daughters (totaling 10 children back with their parents). Five of our parents had their child protection cases resolved and eight others substantially increased their family stability since last summer.

School and employment successes are also recognized. Seventeen of our residents were continually employed over the period, including three mothers who were promoted to managers. Seven started new jobs and eleven others were in school during the last six months. The entire evening was a testament to the hard work and dedication of our Supportive Housing residents – congratulations!

Perspectives Selected as 2006 Hats & Mittens Winner

The Hats & Mittens Foundation has selected Perspectives, Inc. as the organization to receive its support in 2006. Established in 1996 and based in Deephaven, Hats & Mittens' Board members select one charity each year, focusing on an area organization with effective programs serving children.

The Hats & Mittens founders began their work as a way of refocusing the holidays on celebration and a spirit of gratitude.

The organization selected by Hats & Mittens receives the entire net proceeds of an elegant year-end ball, produced by the Hats & Mittens volunteers. Perspectives and its programs will be featured at their 2006 event, scheduled for December 30th 2006 at the Marriott Southwest. Thank you, Hats & Mittens Foundation, for this important selection!

You Can Make a Huge Difference in Our Community

By Ruth Barnes of
General Mills' Family
Meals Division



I became aware of Perspectives in 2004 when the Meals Division at General Mills sponsored a "store" for the children to give a holiday gift to their caregivers. There were a few stages with the store program – delivering the gifts, setting up the store and helping the children select a gift and wrap it. The last sounded like the most fun, but because of my work hours, I signed up to deliver gifts instead. I was expecting a little "that was nice," feeling . . . until I walked through the Kids Cafe. I was struck by the unbelievably GOOD ENERGY of the room. Words kept popping in my head like real, love, caring, commitment, family, support and hope.

More recently, being a part of this year's Christmas tree drive for families at Perspectives seemed like a miracle from beginning to end. Delivering the trees to the Perspectives' families' apartments had all the excitement of a party, but it went deeper than that. We knew we'd been given the chance to be part of something important.

If anyone wants to find a way to help a group make a huge difference in the community, I would urge them to visit the Kids Cafe or have a chat with Perspectives' Volunteer Director Laura Arne. Either experience will inspire you to be a better person than you were before.

Thoughts of a Kids Cafe Table Mentor

Brian Tuttle, Owner of Blue Sky Creamery and a regular volunteer at Perspectives

Volunteering at Perspectives each week is a very personal occasion for me. Having come from a large family, mentoring at Kids' Cafe reminds me of how important gathering for dinner as a family was to me, as a child.

Engaging these kids, sharing their day's experiences, telling stories, listening and laughing with them comes so easy for me...and it is so wonderfully rewarding.



page five

Volunteer Help Jumped 50 Percent in 2005

In any year, volunteers provide critical services to the families of Perspectives. In 2005, however, that help was truly special. Volunteers gave 9,306 hours of their time to our organization, which is up 50% from the prior year's total of 6,190 hours and up 7% from the previous strongest volunteer year in 2000.

Our volunteers offered support in almost every aspect of Perspectives' operations. This included interns who helped with the Supportive Housing and Parenting Time programs, teaching aides, and guest chefs in Kids Connection.

Volunteers also help to maintain our facilities, provide childcare while the children's mothers are in support groups and classes, staff our events and committees and help with summer recreation programming.

Here are examples of some of the largest areas of volunteer support in 2005 (shown in hours):

Kids Cafe guest chefs and mentors	1,184
Kids Connection classroom aides	1,473
Parenting Time interns	2,171
Supportive Housing interns	1,066

Volunteer Night at Kids Cafe April 19th

Each year, we try to recognize the importance of our volunteers with a special thank you event. This year's Volunteer Recognition Night is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19th and will be held in the Kids Cafe.

In addition to great food and company, this year's volunteer event will include: a tribute by author and motivational speaker David McNally, brief addresses by several members of our Supportive Housing and Parenting Time communities and a special presentation by students from the Kids Connection program.

To reserve your spot at the event, contact Volunteer Director Laura Arne at (952) 926-2600, Ext. 16 or via larne@perspectives-family.org.



Local Police Officers A Big Help With After School Program

By George Bickham, Perspectives' Kids Connection Teacher

St. Louis Park Police Officers Dan Meyer and Paul Barnes have been volunteering in Kids Connection after school program since February 2005. These two officers volunteer 3 hours a week of their time to support the program and our students. When one of the officers is unable to attend, they have asked their Lt. Chad Kraayenbrink and Officer Tony Nikula to attend in their place. At times, all four officers attend the program, making an even greater impact.

These officers add a great deal of strength to our classrooms by being so consistent and always creating a positive environment. To their credit, they have established great rapport with the students as well as the Kids Connection staff. In the classroom, the officers participate in activities with the students and assist them in completing their homework. In the evening, the officers take part in the group meal in Kids Cafe with the students, where they have truly shown the importance and values of family-style dining.

As a result of their commitment to Kids Connection, our students have developed healthy relationships with police officers and at the same time they have learned to trust law enforcement. They have also learned how to set healthy boundaries and have developed greater knowledge in "the how to" keep themselves safe in the community. Dan Meyer is greatly involved in the students' games and is having just as much fun as the students, maybe more. Asked about his experience at Kids Connection, Paul Barnes replied, "This is the highlight of my week."

As of February 2006, the St. Louis Park Police Department has volunteered approximately 200 hours of their time to Kids Connection after school and the Summer Explorers program. You add up this huge commitment and you get positive community relationships that can last a lifetime.

Thank you, St. Louis Park Police Department, for all of your support!

Annual Reports Available

Perspectives' 2005 Annual Report will be available at the end of April. Please call Jeff Martinka at (952) 926-2600 Ext. 29 or at jmartinka@perspectives-family.org to request a copy.



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Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
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Minneapolis, MN

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3381 Gorham Avenue
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

www.perspectives-family.org

Save The Date
A Perspective
Hope
October 13, 2006

2006 Calendar

Wednesday, April 19th (6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.)
Annual Volunteer Recognition Event at Kids Cafe

Wednesday, May 10th (12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)
Leadership Luncheon at Kids Cafe

June 2006 (date tba)
Supportive Housing Recognition Night
at Kids Cafe

Friday, June 2nd (4:30 p.m.)
Kids Connection Spring Graduation event,
sponsored by General Mills

Tuesday, August 1st (6:00 p.m.)
Take Back the Night Activities at Perspectives'
Louisiana Court Apartments

Friday, October 13th (6:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.)
Perspectives of Hope Gala at the
Metropolitan Ballroom

Greetings from Perspectives' New Board Chair – Jan Finken

This year is our 30th anniversary of serving women and children. What a special year in which to greet you as the new Chairman of Perspectives Family Center. These past four years, we have been blessed to have Pat Weller at the helm of Perspectives. I assure you that without Pat's calming leadership, compassionate commitment, and historical knowledge Perspectives Family Center would not be where it is today.



Stepping into Pat's shoes is my first challenge. Pat has led many successful efforts to reinforce Perspectives Family Center's reputation as a global model for serving women and children, through times when needs were high and giving was down. We are deeply grateful to Pat for all that she has selflessly offered. We look forward to more years of accomplishment together in her new positions as Past Chair and head of the Leadership Development committee.

As the new Chair, I encourage you to enjoy the many stories of recent success contained in this newsletter. Supporters like you make all our work possible.

In the coming year, I am particularly excited about our anniversary and the events we've planned to celebrate our 30 years of work. I also look forward to sharing news of even stronger results and new programs with you, as we continue to expand the breadth of services we offer our families.

We are blessed with a dedicated and caring staff, incredible volunteers, and a compassionate Board. We hope that the more you know about Perspectives and our work, the more you will continue to encourage and support our many programs.

Jan
Jan