

THE GATE POST

Fall 2011



GATEWAY WOODS
Apostolic Christian Children's Home

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SELAH

By Jeff and Sarah Stoller, Adoptive Parents



"...does God have to "walk" us through various facets of the Christian life, placing one foot in front of the other, teaching us step-by-step how to trust in Him..."

When Sarah and I decided to adopt, we did not envision bringing a special needs child into our family. We specifically asked for a healthy child or at least a child who did not have known special needs. But we did give up to God the possibility that the child placed with us might turn out to have special needs. And that is what God chose for us.

Our adopted daughter, Selah, was recently diagnosed with cerebral palsy. When we brought her home at the age of seven months, she could not even hold her head up, let alone turn over, crawl or reach

A PEEK INSIDE

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for objects. Therapists said that she would catch up quickly. After some months, it became clear that she was not improving. We took her to a neurologist, got an MRI, and learned that she had suffered brain damage from a lack of oxygen in utero.

In spite of her condition, we know that God created Selah—without a doubt—and brought her into our family. He did so in a fearful and wonderful way. We can testify that He has sustained us through each step of this journey. The road has not been easy, but we have learned and grown a lot (I hope!) in our trust and knowledge of Him as a Father.

The brain is an amazing creation. Just watch a newborn grow and develop. A baby learns how to "coo", roll over, sit up, babble, crawl, stand up, walk and talk, without specific training. At least a normal baby does. Selah, however, has to be shown, literally, how to do each of these very complicated biological functions. For example, Sarah and I had to crouch on the floor, one of us in front of Selah and the other behind, and "walk" her through the crawling motion, one leg and one arm at a time. We did this over and over to help her brain learn the crawling action. Amazingly, she eventually learned, and now is able to crawl!

How often, I wonder, does God have to "walk" us through various facets of the Christian life, placing one foot in front of the other, teaching us step-by-step how to trust in Him, to keep His commandments or to bear fruit? Currently, Selah is learning to walk with the help of a walker and feet braces. How often, does our merciful Father give us a "faith walker" or "charity braces" because we are unable to learn any other way? Truly, He is longsuffering and tender-hearted! And yet, just as we need to push Selah through tears and tantrums in order to teach her the next function, our Father will also push us (I'm afraid!) to perfection and to maturity.

2011 AUCTION UPDATE – OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY, A RECORD YEAR

I feel humbled and blessed by the outpouring of love and support toward the Gateway Woods ministries to troubled children and hurting families. This year our Annual Auction raised approximately \$432,000—a new record. This support truly helps us fulfill our mission to “Honor God by providing help and healing to troubled children and families who then may bless others.” Thank you and God bless.

Jeff Schumacher, Executive Director

TEACHING THROUGH WORK

By Ben Gerber, Top Quality Manager



Ben Gerber, along with several volunteers, assisting in one of his many summer duties: preparing for the Auction.

Top Quality is a summer vocational program designed to give Gateway Woods residents a chance to work in an actual job-like setting. Residents undergo regular job experiences, including interviews, performance reviews and pay raises or decreases depending on their productivity.

I have been the Top Quality manager for the past two summers, and have been very blessed by my experience. Both summers I learned lessons in leadership, mentoring and work ethic. Working alongside and managing the residents has been challenging but also extremely worthwhile and rewarding. Often Houseparents

would remark that Top Quality manager was one of the hardest jobs on campus, or that one of my workers could not stop raving about how awesome Top Quality was, or even that they have seen a change in the resident because of the program.

While working for Top Quality, I also got to experience meal times at each of the different houses on campus. This was a great time to build and solidify relationships with both Staff and residents.

I would recommend that any young man who desires to sharpen or improve his leadership and business skills should apply for the Top Quality position for a summer. The experience I received from Gateway Woods has been beneficial and life changing. I would also like to say thank you to Gateway Woods for allowing me to be a part of changing children's lives.

THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTMAS

By Joe and Heather Beer, Houseparents

Every year as Christmas approaches we wonder how we will make the current season more than just a rush of checklists and events. How can we capture the essence and importance of Christ coming to earth as an infant? We search for elaborate traditions and new ideas; fancy ways to make the message of the season sink in. However, the longer our family works at Gateway Woods, the more we realize the answer to capturing the essence of Christmas – keep it simple.

Working with at-risk teenagers has brought us face to face with the reality of how many people really know nothing about the true story of Christmas.

Every year Gateway Woods sets up a life-size wooden nativity scene at the entrance of our campus. When it is not on display, it gets stored in our shop building. Early on in our Houseparenting, one of our residents saw the figures in the shop and asked what



Joe and Heather Beer along with their three children: Hannah, Cooper and Connor.

they were. I told her they were the pieces to the nativity scene, to which she questioned, “What’s that?” I was then able to explain the Christmas story to this young lady and share that the nativity scene was a depiction of Christ’s birth. It was a teachable moment—an opportunity to share the truth behind Christmas to a young girl who had never heard the wonderful story.

There are also opportunities to provide a loving atmosphere where kids can experience the joy of giving and receiving with no strings attached. We have seen young men with hardened hearts find joy in singing Christmas carols with exuberance to nursing home shut-ins. We have seen self-centered girls become excited while brainstorming and using their creativity to make or purchase gifts for every person in the house with just their meager earnings. The awe on the faces of underprivileged teenagers as they look at a candlelit table decorated for a Christmas meal causes us to reflect.

The essence of Christmas is simple. It is about sharing the story of Christ’s humble birth with those who have never heard it. It is about bringing joy to those who rarely experience joy in its purest form. It is about giving to those who may believe are not worthy to receiving anything. Sometimes we feel like simple is too easy—there has to be more we should do in order for this Christmas to “top” the Christmases past. However, for those who have never heard the story, have never experienced the joy or have never felt loved, their plea is simple. Tell me the truth of Christmas. Share Jesus’ joy. Love me for me. This, we are discovering, is the essence of Christmas.

P.S. We wish you all a blessed holiday season as we celebrate the reason we know a loving Father.

KEEP THE MOMENTUM PROMISE FUND PUBLIC PHASE LAUNCHED

By Tim Sauder, Church Relations Director

After several years of meeting quietly with many of our leaders and supporters, we launched the Public Phase of the Promise Fund project with a key announcement at our recent Auction. In the weeks following, a special mailing went out across the land to invite all of our supporters to prayerfully consider an extra gift to help our ministry prepare a firm financial foundation for the unknown future.

We are sincerely grateful and encouraged as gifts of all sizes continue to come in almost daily. We trust that these numbers will increase through the course of the fall and winter until our project completion target in March.

The Promise Fund is also a great fit and a wonderful opportunity to give a tax-advantaged or planned gift. (As an example, see the special limited opportunity see the IRA transfer information below.)

IRA TRANSFER TO TURN LIVES AROUND

Individuals 70 1/2 or older may give a tax-free charitable gift to Gateway Woods this year and this year only. An IRA transfer to Gateway Woods of up to \$100,000 can be made tax-free and can count toward fulfilling your required minimum distribution. Please contact either Andrew Gerber by phone at 888-443-4283 or via email at andrew.gerber@gatewaywoods.org, or contact your IRA custodian to learn about this simple, one-step opportunity that can help turn a life around for good.

A STEADY ROCK

By Kristin Zimmerman, Science Teacher

Devin was a resident at Gateway Woods for over a year and attended Gateway Woods School during his whole stay, as opposed to spending part of his time at public school. He was a very intelligent boy with a photographic memory. However, before coming to Gateway, he was failing his classes.

You see, among many other things, Devin had an anger issue. He resisted authority, especially when those in control imposed their will upon him. He only wanted to do what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it.

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“Our expectations and rules didn’t change. Our proclamation of our faith in God didn’t falter. What was causing it? Devin was changing because we were not.”

This attitude led to many problems. When Devin was asked to leave a classroom due to his disruptive behavior, he wanted to make sure that everyone knew he wasn’t happy about it. Thus chairs and desks would be shoved, grumblings were uttered under his breath, doors were slammed and pens and papers were thrown, just to name a few ways he responded to the teacher’s demand. Almost every day was a battle with Devin, both behaviorally and academically.

However, as the months passed, Devin began to change. He began to perform academically and the amount of daily battles began decreasing. He began opening up and allowing the Staff into his life. Why was this happening? Our expectations and rules didn’t change. Our proclamation of our faith in God didn’t falter. What was causing it? Devin was changing because we were not. We were becoming a steady rock in his life that he could rely on.

Fast forward one year. Devin has a 96% A in my science class and he is being discharged from GW to live with a foster family. That was 3 years ago and I am still praying for him even though I haven’t seen him since. I don’t know where he is or what he is doing. All I know is that while he attended Gateway Woods School he experienced guidance, accountability, unwavering expectations, academic success and above all, God’s love.

NEW STAFF



Left to right: Angie Knoblach, Maria Steffen (Assistant Houseparents), Katie Kaufmann (Math Teacher), Kaitlyn Isaia (Home-Based & Adoption Worker), Abby Freed (Assistant Houseparent), and John & Amy Klotzle (Alternate Houseparents)

It is quite easy to see God’s faithfulness here at Gateway Woods, and it seems to have been especially clear these last few months. We have welcomed seven new Staff members to the team! We ask that you would join us in prayer as we welcome them.

“I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.” Psalm 91:2

CHRISTMAS WISH LIST

Please contact Ross Feller at 888.443.4283 before purchasing any of the items listed below. Thank you very much for your support!

Restaurant gift cards (Pizza Hut, Subway, McDonald’s, Olive Garden, etc.), store gift cards (Wal-Mart, Meijer, etc.), roasting sticks, portable or living room radio/cd player/ipod dock, desktop or laptop computer, tennis racquets, tennis balls, basketball, football, volleyball, soccer ball, new or used adult bike, adult baseball glove, ping pong balls, card and board games (Settlers of Catan, Wits and Wagers, Ticket to Ride, etc.), new or used bike, knife set, craft items (scrap booking, rubber stamps, etc.) lemon zester, cheese grater, pots and pans, table settings (large and small plates plus bowls), piano bench, roasting pan (16” x 12”), muffin tins, Razor scooter, hair clippers, blender/smoothie maker, two burner deep roasting pan, grill brush, bread knife, dish washer, elliptical machine