



**MARATHON YOUTH
SERVICES
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Happy New Year everyone! It's that time again to make more of those foolish resolutions most of us promptly forget about shortly after the balloons lose their helium. Like many of you I suspect, I've resolved to take better care of myself in '07, get more exercise, and lose some of that extra 'poundage'... We'll see; I won't be holding my breath.

New Years' celebrations are some of the oldest festivities of mankind. It's said that it dates back about 4000 years to the Babylonians. At that time however, New Years was celebrated around the time of the vernal equinox, the first day of spring. Actually, that makes sense when you consider it's a time for a new moon, planting new crops, rebirth, starting over, etc... And those Babylonians knew how to celebrate too with the action continuing for 11 days! Kind puts our partying in perspective...

That arrangement continued until well after the Romans took over. Eventually of course, religion and politics began tampering with the calendar until in 46 BC Julius Caesar decided January 1 would be new year's day. The Julian Calendar has held sway ever since. Even the Church gave up condemning it as a pagan celebration and turned it into one of its own; the Feast of Christ's Circumcision no less. New Year's Day has been a holiday in the West now for over 400 years.

At my house we've generally celebrated the arrival of a new year in a rather low key fashion; quiet family meal, a movie followed by some games, maybe a few fireworks and a bonfire in the backyard, a toast or two...no wild parties here. Not the norm, I know. But always enjoyable. And no hangover...

Back to the resolutions... These days they generally seem pretty self centered and almost petty; like mine. Again, the Babylonians seemed to have the right idea...Their most popular resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. Something in there about setting things straight makes sense. Not that there's anything wrong with losing weight and quitting smoking! But what about doing something that benefits others, primarily...

I'm sure that most of us here at MYS will be giving some thought to our own personal and professional resolutions for the coming year. However, we've all resolved a long time ago to do the best job we possibly can in supporting our residents, and helping them identify and succeed at *their* resolutions. And we promise to keep it up in 2007...Happy New Year to all!

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Reynolds Group Home Update!

There have been so many activities this past month at RGH that it's almost impossible to list them all...bowling, laser tag in Appleton, hunting for a Christmas tree, wall climbing at the YMCA, ice skating...and then of course there's any and all school related responsibilities. The boys also found time to go on a hike at Eau Plaine Park and several high school basketball games as well.

Another activity that has begun to attract the guys is cooking. They're doing more of that on weekends now. As you can see over on the right, it even helped create a vocational pursuit for one of our former residents. Most of the guys simply find it one more skill to help them in their future efforts at independent living.



There are more plans for January and the rest of winter. Tubing at Sylvan Hill is a favorite, if the weather finally cooperates. Right now it looks more like an early spring! The same goes for ice fishing. This is something that a lot of the guys have always enjoyed, but again, the weather isn't doing much for favorable conditions there either. And of course sliding... It looks like more laser tag is on tap in the meantime.

There have been several accomplishments of note this past month at RGH. Both Cody and Soua have obtained our highest level, "Social". This is a highly independent level and provides good ground work for independent living and discharge planning. Both guys deserve congratulations for their hard work and progress. On another 'note', Soua is also looking into taking piano lessons as well. Rob showed great progress at his job this past month. He was awarded for his good work at East Bay with a gift certificate to eat out at Hudson's Grill. He treated his mom to lunch with him.

We have a couple of **new employees** starting this month in our Adult Residential Program. Katie Kennedy and Lorie Wolff started training with us late in December. Welcome aboard ladies! Hopefully we'll have a picture or two by next month, along with a little bio. information.

Adam, one of our former RGH residents, has been accepted into the Le Cordon Bleu culinary school in Minneapolis! Congratulations Adam...and good luck. We'll be looking forward to hearing about your successes.



Another of our boys at RGH has his future in his sights...Rob is on a quest to join the Army and can't resist the opportunity to outfit himself at the Army Surplus Store.



Hamilton House Highlights

Did you ever see a more smiley bunch than the men from **Hamilton House**? It would seem Christmas brings that out in most people... These guys are no exception and have been enjoying the season with family and friends, and gifts. But December has been more than just the annual festivities...Much has been accomplished by the group this month. House Manager Julie Richards filed the following report on house activities:

Tong started work at the Northern Valley Workshop this month. He attends work Monday through Thursday. It has been reported that he is doing well there, and will make a great addition to their team. This is Tong's first job so we wish him the best of luck! He plans to continue to go to the Salvation Army learning lab to work to further his education on Fridays when he is not scheduled to work.

Sam has been rehired for the season at the Granite Peak Ski Hill and will be starting as soon as the weather allows the ski season to get into full swing. He has been taking some time off from work for now and enjoying the Christmas Holiday season and all the goodies that come along with it. His favorite treat is egg nog.

Kyle continues his employment at Sam's Pizza, and says he really enjoys it. His employer reports that he continues to be a really great addition to their team. Way to go Kyle!!

Shawn continues his job at Northern Valley West where he works Monday through Thursday. He looks forward to the holiday season each year as he gets some time off from the workshop. Shawn recently purchased a Sega Genesis (old-school version) and says it was the best investment he ever made. We have a feeling he may be spending his extra free time over his vacation getting reacquainted with his old favorite games.

Holiday fun also occupied most of the month for the residents at **7th Street Suites**. For starters, Terra, Crystal and Mark all attended Trigg's Holiday Celebration where there were many free food samples, holiday carolers, singers and face painting. They also attended the Holiday Parade with Terra and Mark riding on the Friends of Scouting float. Crystal and Terra also helped to make Christmas cookies. Crystal even found time to participate in the AREH Christmas pageant.

Not all activities involved seasonal pursuits. Staff and residents at 7th Street Suites attended an Open Mic Night at UWMC to watch a band perform and also went to the Youth Outreach Center-Mosinee to take in another band called "Project O".



Terra, Crystal, Mark and staff member Katie also took in a movie, "Happy Feet". And house manager Corissa took the ladies for an appetizer sampling at Hudson's Grill. Mmmmm good! December was also the month for Crystal and Terra to start Special Olympics basketball practice again. It looks like another busy season again this coming year...



It was another busy month for **the men at Grand Place**. There were lots of holiday parties and visits to see family. John and Mike went to the Wildwood Zoo in Marshfield to see a Christmas light show. John enjoyed the sights at the Wausau Holiday Parade. Grand Place also hosted a Christmas Dinner.

Besides all of the holiday activities, Mike celebrated his 24th birthday in December and invited friends over to share a homemade ice cream cake.

Dustin competed at the Special Olympics state bowling tournament and received 3rd place medals.

The end of bowling season marks the beginning of Special Olympics basketball. Dustin, John and

Mike have joined this as well. Since we are lucky enough to have snow, Mike was also able to go sledding with some of his friends from 7th Street Suites.

House manager Dwight Eik of **Prospect Place** filed the following report...

Prospect Place has seen a busy month for both staff and residents as everyone closes the books on another year.

Sean finished his semester at the Goal Lab through NTC. He attended a party with other classmates on 12/19/06 held at the Salvation Army. Sean also finished out the bowling season at the State Tournament for Special Olympics in Milwaukee where he did very well.

Adam has been practicing for Special Olympics basketball every Wednesday night. He also has taken part in the River Valley Harmonizers annual practices and special singing events held in the community. Adam is very proud of his participation and he should be! Several MYS residents from the various homes and staff attended the main concert and enjoyed the beautiful job they did.

John continues his employment at Wal-Mart and seems to enjoy his job very much. He has gone ice fishing a couple of times already with limited success. He is looking forward to more fishing adventures on his days off.

Mike has again this month taken in numerous sporting events in the community. He attends Wausau East games for the most part, but will attend any events that he is able to go to. Mike as well as Adam and Sean also attended the Northern Valley Christmas party on 12/21/06.



Happy New Years Everyone!

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