



**"As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good."**

**2 Thessalonians 3: 13**



# **DYNAMIC DUO**

**"Gramme Rocks"; a collection of unique concepts designed for use with residents of health care facilities, took wings all because of the efforts of Activity Director Tim Trafford and Assistant Activity Director Melody Childers; a dynamic duo that colors outside the lines with such unique strokes that daily living for the elderly has been changed forever. Through their creativity, dreams daily transition into reality and the ordinary soars to the unimaginable; all because they never grow weary of doing good for those in the winter season of life; a group of people they view as extraordinary and incredibly loveable. Since "can't" and "impossible" are two words that simply don't exist in their minds, laughter echoes down the hallways and seeps out into the courtyard with such magnetism that those entering the premises can't help but smile. In fact, outside community members have stated, "They have more fun than we do!"**

**Also, dear readers, it is due to their continued support and keen imaginations that the material offered on devotionalembassadors.com continues to grow; thus, the latest arrival titled "Gramme Rocks". Not only did the participants experience these fun filled activities, but allowed themselves to be photographed with the goal of sharing their good fortune worldwide. After all, there is nothing the residents love more than to extend a helping hand to others; a behavior established over a lifetime.**

## **MEET TIM:**

*"My inspiration to serve the elderly dates back to my childhood where I observed my grandfather in a nursing home. I knew what he was like when he still lived at home (alive with humor, personality and purpose) and couldn't understand why he was so different now that he was living in "the home." The environment lacked stimulation and appeared bland. It was here that I first thought, "I want to work in a nursing home someday."*

*Now, fast forward to after high school graduation when I had been accepted into physical therapy school. However prior to the start of the*



*first semester my dad passed away and I just wouldn't leave my mom. By the time she convinced me that I NEEDED to go to college, my spot in the PT program had been given away. I spoke to the admissions counselor and he led me to this up and coming profession called Recreational Therapy. It sounded promising so I enrolled and the rest is history; I became a Recreational Therapist.*

*As a society we treat our elderly poorly compared to other countries i.e. Japan and China to name a few. Additionally, we have become a disposable nation and quickly discard things when they no longer have purpose. Consequently, we tend to treat our elderly the same way. Although I may not be able to change the country, state or city in which I live, I CAN make a difference in the lives of those where I am employed; thus the primary motive that drives me. ONE person CAN make a difference if he chooses to act. President Jimmy Carter said, ""The measure of a society is found in how they treat their weakest and most helpless citizens." How will the society in which you are a part be measured?"*

*Nursing home residents give up so much of the control they have over their lifestyle when they come into a facility that their dignity and quality of life are at stake. Activities, if done correctly, should give them back some control and maximize their dignity, skills sets, and interests, while at the same time offering opportunities to feel purpose.*

*An individual's personality, meaning their heart and soul (their "spirit"; the things that make them unique), are usually developed by the age of 30. Thus, simply because the physical body begins to decline does not mean their "spirit" fails to be alive and well! It is still inside each elderly person and is just WAITING to come out. Therefore, staff members in the activity department have the opportunity and responsibility to facilitate that reactivation.*

*Empathy is a great word that can be defined as, "The ability to put yourself into other people's shoes and see life from their perspective." Try wearing the moccasins of a resident and ask yourself, "What would I want someone to do for me when I am living in a nursing home?" Not only should the answers to that question cause self enlightenment, but also serve as the cornerstone for all activity programs.*

*When I look into the eyes of nursing home residents I see a vast array of experiences and lessons from every walk of life. I recognize years and years of being there for others; whether in the capacity of a parent/ grandparent or as an employee in their former work environment. Also, in those eyes I still witness the desire to be the "giver", the thirst to remain self sufficient and independent. However in those same eyes I identify the vulnerability that comes from knowing they will need to be the "receiver" of care. As an activity director it is my honor to anticipate and exceed the needs of these vulnerable people while facilitating opportunities for them to continue to give.....to the staff, fellow residents, and to the community.*

*Repeatedly, I hear residents exclaim, "When I entered this place, I thought I was coming here to die. Little did I know I was actually coming here to LIVE." This has been said to me on more than one occasion. These words beautifully describe what nursing home residents can feel when care is individualized to bring out the best in everyone.*

*What is so great about choosing a career in the nursing home (or any setting involving the elderly) is that you get to be so close to the customers! How many people must go through the motions of work every day feeling like no one cares or notices, thus, prompting the question, "Do I really make a difference?" The beauty of working at a health care facility is that EVERYONE is given the opportunity to make an impact; regardless of the position held. The catch is that the difference made can be positive or negative; depending completely upon an individual's attitude. If you choose to go about your day with a caring heart and helping hands, along with the mission of advocating for the elderly, as a single individual, your actions will glow with the radiance of a shining light on a hill; exuding a brilliance that truly touches lives. Furthermore, since compassion and caring are contagious, sit back and watch it illuminate the darkest of places! Inspire people to share your passion. Since others are just WAITING for an opportunity to do something special, give them this privilege by allowing your behavior to set their spirit ablaze." Mark 4: 21 states, "And he said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand?"*

**MEET MELODY:**

*"When answering the question, "What about my career do I love?" my reply is a resounding..... EVERYTHING! Being able to care and express love and gratitude to every resident is absolutely paramount in how I just responded.*

*The first thing to realize when interacting with the elderly is how vast the differences are among this population. God created each and every individual by the work of his hand without one being identical. Thus, after internalizing this fact, no matter the circumstances, it is my belief that every person deserves to be loved unconditionally.*

*Since these sweet old folks I serve have worked all their lives either as a homemaker or at a career, when they reach the sunset of their earthly journey, it is the time for them to enjoy life; totally free of worry and stress.*

*Although it is not their wish to be in a nursing home, we should assist them in all areas of their lives without hesitation or judgment. They have both great and challenging days just like all of us and react no differently than any person still living outside in the community. They get frustrated when their aging bodies limit the lifestyle they have enjoyed prior to entering the healthcare facility.*



*Their generation fought for freedom in faraway lands, built the roads you now travel, constructed the buildings where you reside or conduct business, started the churches that still exist, and had hopes and dreams just like every person in the world. They traveled the highways and byways that dished out joy, heartache, disappointment, and recognized how to right themselves and move forward under the direst of circumstances.*

*Therefore, rather than cast off these pathfinders, which is the usual norm in society, these seasoned veterans of life should be recognized as treasures; absolute gems that contain a storehouse of information at the ready when citizens of all ages are making the tough decisions in life. This group of elderly people possesses the ability to point out the stumbling blocks and the wisdom to offer assurance that, in spite of the dark and eerie clouds that enfold man, the sun will once again offer its brilliance as a new tomorrow peeks over the horizon. The behavior they now display in the sunset years of life is possible because they are no longer bothered by the layers those residing in the outside world struggle with every second of their lives. These sweet souls are now focused on the present and fully realize they have more yesterdays than tomorrows in front of them. Thus, they cherish each moment, individual, and gesture others extend in their direction.*

*One example that shows how small things mean so much to them can be illustrated by the last request from a sweet godly resident named Elsie. As I approached her bed, just prior to her departure, in a soft precious voice she said, "I only want to hear you sing one more time." Although I willingly granted her wish, I have to admit, the song was sung through a veil of my own tears. Little things mean the most!*

*When viewing the residents from the heart, I visualize each one as being a child once, then a teenager, an adult, and now, having endured life's hardships, reached the well deserved winter season of life. Even though their emotions are still alive and well, due to the aging process, the ability to express feelings may present a challenge. Recognizing this problem, it is my responsibility to model the same behavior used with my children; I must anticipate their needs and carefully listen; actions that will be received by them with gratitude beyond measure. These sweet old folks absolutely adore each gesture of kindness extended to them; an example mankind should follow without fail.*

*Finally, when I note a resident's health quickly declining, I know the shores of heaven are within view, and the earthly journey is nearing the end. Most indicate their lack of fear when that time arrives, they just dread the process required. As caretaker, having become intimately acquainted with them, I have made it my goal to ascertain if Jesus is present in their lives. Why? After watching the saints depart with the Savior in their lives, I AM CERTAIN BEYOND DOUBT THERE IS NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT! They simply rest in his arms with the knowledge they are bound for their heavenly home. Breathing their last breath of earthly air means their next breath will be that of eternal life. "*

***Philippians 3:20-21 "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself."***



# **The Dynamic Duo At Work**



*Recognizing Sandra's uniqueness, these two dynamos anticipated her every need and allowed her personality to surface as an integral part of activities.*



*Who has  
more fun?*

*SUPER HEROES TO OLD FOLKS!*





*KING OF COMEDY LIFTS THE SPIRIT!*



*IN SYNC WHEN ADVOCATING FOR THE  
ELDERLY!*





### Closing:

Ladies and gentlemen, by now you certainly understand the importance of choosing the correct individual/s as activity director in a health care facility. They literally become the face, not only of the entire activities program, but the image of the facility itself. Choose well and then get 100% behind them!

### Characteristics Of An Outstanding Activity Director

- \*\*LOVES THE ELDERLY WITH ALL THEIR HEART MIND AND SOUL**
- \*\*WELCOMES CHANGE AND NEW IDEAS WITH OPEN ARMS**
- \*\*ADVOCATES FOR EACH RESIDENT, NO MATTER THE PERSONALITY OR STATE OF HEALTH**
- \*\*HAS AN UNBELIEVABLE AMOUNT OF HUMOR THAT IS CONTAGIOUS**
- \*\*ENJOYS BALANCING SEVERAL BALLS IN THE AIR AT ONE TIME**
- \*\*LIKES THE SOUND OF HIS/HER OWN NAME BECAUSE IT WILL BE HEARD A LOT**
- \*\*POSSESSES TREMENDOUS ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**
- \*\*IS COMMUNITY MINDED**
- \*\*TEAM SKILLS A NECESSITY**
- \*\*REALIZATION THIS LIFE IS NOT ABOUT SELF**



**LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL!**