

The Music of Hope



This photo ran in the Minneapolis Star Tribune in 2002.

The air was thick with the rich sound of a lone trumpet playing "Amazing Grace." With the slow draw of each note, another person stopped to listen. A woman wiped a tear from her face, a man closed his eyes to take in the music, and the small crowd was obviously moved by each note that rang out on this cold and snowy night. The musician conveyed struggle, strength, joy, despair, and triumph, offering hope to anyone who would listen.

A natural musician, Tom Stake found great joy in playing his trumpet and took every opportunity to perform. But his battles with mental illness almost took his one happiness away.

"He was popular, cool, and I was proud that he was my big brother," recalls Karin Kaihoi, Tom's sister. But in 1974 as the Watergate scandal surfaced, 17-year old Tom, began to experience bouts of paranoia. Often, he would have uncontrollable thoughts about being the center of the Watergate conspiracy.

He spent weeks hiding out in the basement of his parents' home trapped by his own mind, eventually, fleeing to California.

Even today, Tom's bright eyes cloud as he recounts the overwhelming confusion and exhaustion which enveloped him as he wandered the streets of San Francisco. "I was dirty, smelly and homeless; it was awful. I was always being kicked off park benches or sidewalks. It was impossible to find a place to rest," he remembers.

After many years of cycling through hospitalization, homelessness, and isolation from his family, Tom asked himself, "This can't be it! Isn't there more to my life?" When Tom joined Tasks Unlimited, he found his answer. "I feel like a millionaire now with a job, money in my pocket, friends, and time with my family," says Tom.

Tom never gave up on his dream and continues to play his trumpet for anyone who will listen. "He didn't let mental illness take away his dream," boasts Karin. "We are so proud of him and what he is now accomplishing for himself."

p2 Homelessness is an issue many of our clients face. John Trepp comments on the successes of our clients despite the failures of our health care system.

p3 Tasks Unlimited has our own economic stimulus plan. Find out more about it.

p4 Tasks Unlimited clients cook up a storm for the First Annual Chili Cook-Off.

Real People Real Change

Founded in 1970, Tasks Unlimited was created around the evidence-based model of recovery. Many of our clients, who were once homeless, now, wanted to live a normal life; go to work, have a nice home. It was the tenacity of the clients and the dedication of the staff have been the

Hope for the Homeless commentary by John K. Trepp



The causes of homelessness are complex, but experts agree that mental illness is a major factor — accounting for maybe 50% of homelessness in America. In the 40 years since we began closing or severely downsizing our mental hospitals, homelessness has become the fate of tens of thousands of people.

The solution to this crisis is elusive. Hundreds of programs

have been created to address the problem, and yet it seems to grow rather than shrink — representing the failure of our mental health system; our society has not found the solution for caring for people with mental illness.

I can't imagine being homeless is any fun. It must be scary and exhausting to spend your days worrying about where to sleep and eat; an endless cycle of restlessness that perpetuates one's mental illness.

But when I talk to someone like Tom Stake (see pg 1), I get a sense of hope. For many years, Tom bounced in and out of hospitals, shelters and hobo jungles, cadging a meal where he could find one, playing his trumpet for spare change. All the while, battling mental illness.

But unlike many of our homeless, Tom had the continued support of his family, especially his three sisters. They pleaded with him to find a job, get a place live, seek mental health treatment — the three things he finally found at Tasks.

And unlike most, Tom found the strength to reach out for help. He toured Tasks Unlimited, liked what he saw and signed up for lodge training. After all those years of wandering, it wasn't easy to adjust to schedules, rules and obligations, but Tom hung in.

Last spring, Tom graduated into his new home at the Pulsars Lodge. His illness flared up this spring, and he was hospitalized briefly, but it wasn't just his sisters that visited to support his recovery; his lodge mates were there too, and soon Tom was back home and back at work.

I wish we had the resources to serve all the homeless people with mental illness, even the ones who don't have the initiative to get themselves to Tasks' door the way Tom did.

50%
of the homeless
suffer from
mental illness

Be a part of real change. For career opportunities, please contact:

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sed Fairweather model which was designed to provide on-going support for those with mental illnesses. The clients then, just as a simple dream. Through the years, we have seen what people with serious mental illness and accomplish with adequate support. e foundation of this organization and we look forward to helping more people reclaim their lives from mental illness.

Tasks Economic Stimulus

Open the newspaper or turn on the TV and you will be hard pressed to find anything else but the economy. Struggling to survive financially, it is the # 1 thing on people's minds these days.

And it's also on the minds of the people that work for Tasks Unlimited Building Services (TUBS), the employer of 200 clients at 17 Minneapolis and St. Paul area jobsites. "We watch our expenses as closely as possible during these difficult economic times," says Gil Bessard, Associate Director of Operations.

"We monitor cleaning supply usage closely and keep our equipment in top operating shape," says Whipple supervisor Tony Curtis. "We try not to waste anything and still keep this building spotless."

It is also essential to reward the people that make up the most important part of the organization, so each year TUBS gives it's workers bonuses based on the productivity of their jobsite. It's an

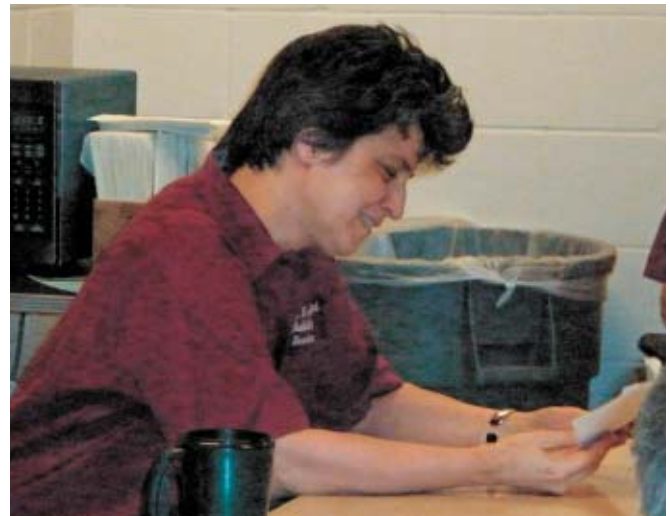


Clients are congratulated as they receive their bonus checks.

incentive program to motivate our workforce to increase efficiency, decrease costs, and still retain the quality customers want.

The amount of the bonus check isn't exorbitant by any standards, but it is plenty meaningful. "This is the first bonus check I've ever gotten!" exclaims Susan Till. "I can buy something special for myself, like new shoes!"

TUBS client-employees value their employment and take pride their work. Bonuses are our way of recognizing a job well done.



Susan Till holding her first bonus check.

Planned Giving Ensures Unlimited Resources

Planned giving provides Tasks Unlimited an on-going resource to continue changing lives ravaged by mental illness. You can help families, for years to come, reclaim their lives from mental illness.

Planned giving also provides advantages to donors. Charitable Gift Annuity can yield tax deductions and pay you high-interest income every month for the rest of your life.

You can plan for retirement by opening a Deferred Gift Annuity and enjoy an immediate tax deduction. There are

also plans such as Charitable Lead Trusts designed to reduce the estate tax burden on your heirs. With thoughtful planned giving you can ensure both the long-term health of the Tasks Unlimited's mission and the fulfillment of your personal financial objectives.

For a comprehensive description of your Planned Gifting options to Tasks Unlimited, please visit our website our make an appointment with Joyce Chin at 612.871.3320 or jchin@tasksunlimited.org.

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First Annual Chili Cook-Off

On February 22, Tasks Unlimited hosted the First Annual Chili Cook-Off. A crowd of 65 people consisting of clients, friends, family, and staff attended the inaugural event.

Those in attendance were greeted first with the aroma of 15 different types of chili made by the clients themselves, but everyone there agreed that the aroma was nothing compared to the amazing flavors of each chili. There were all kinds on display and one for every liking, ranging from the exotic and spicy to the traditional and mild, but every single one of the entries were equally as delicious. Every pot of chili that was presented was devoured almost immediately.

Many lodges decided to team up and cook together while some paired with other clients or enlisted the help of family members.



But no matter how they did it, the clients found a creativity within themselves and had developed a sense of pride in what they had accomplished. "It was such a great feeling to see so many people crowding around our chili just to get a taste," said Tony Pierce.

At the conclusion of the event, the chili given the honor of being voted "Crowd Pleaser" by their peers was given to the trainees of the Interlachen lodge, but in the end, there were no winners or losers, just a lot of happy, well-fed people.



Congratulations to everyone who submitted a chili entry. We look forward to next year!

(top) Mary Houska presenting her chili. (bottom) Tony Pierce and Alton Robinson of Interlachen work together to make their popular chili.