

# Garden Gazette

Volume 1, Issue 1

November/December, 2005

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## Inside this issue:

Holiday Open House	2
Charitable Appeal	2
Spotlight on Staff	3
Committee Reports	3
Team Member News	4,5
Directory Project	4
11/17 Parent Training	6

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## UPCOMING SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS



Beautiful poinsettia plants starting to develop color in our greenhouses!

## WE GROW DREAMS 1ST ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY!

**Who:** WGD Parents, Guardians, Staff & Board Volunteers

**When:** Dec. 9, 6:30-9:30pm

**Where:** The home of Jim and Laurie Jerue, 3104 Treesdale Court, Naperville 60564

**Why:** While so many of our Team Members are enjoying their Holiday Parties with SEASPAR or WDSRA, let's give ourselves a chance to get to know each other better, celebrate the year's accomplishments and toast to the continued success and improvement of We Grow Dreams in the coming year.

Wine, beer & holiday cheer provided by hosts. Please bring a holiday appetizer or dessert to share as follows: Last name beginning with A-M appetizer, N-Z dessert. Festive attire. RSVP no later than Friday, Dec. 2nd to Laurie at 630-922-3232 or email [jeruefamily@comcast.net](mailto:jeruefamily@comcast.net). Hope you can come!

Please note: Plans are also in the works for quarterly, fun outings that could be open to all We Grow Dreams Team Members, employees, families and friends out in the community. We're looking for at least one family or other adult volunteer to help Team Members plan these outings. Locations and activities will be determined by Team Member interests. For more information, see the 'Out and About Club' item on page 4 of this newsletter.

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## HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE & PLANT SALE

**Who: General Public**

**When: Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 3 & 4, 10:00 - 3:00**

**Where: 1055 S. Washington St., West Chicago Illinois 60185**

Choose from a great selection of beautiful seasonal items made or grown on the premises, including poinsettias, fresh wreaths, decorated fresh wreaths, fresh garland/roping, centerpieces and several sizes of outdoor container plantings made with an assortment of holiday greenery. Our specialty reindeer made from fresh greenery come in four sizes.

Or delight in our new indoor retail center for home holiday décor with fantastic gift items that include blooming (forced) containers of paper whites and amaryllis; unique decorated silk wreaths, garland, swags and centerpieces; gift baskets with yummy fillers such as jams, salsas, & pie fillings; tree decorations and more! Refreshments will be served.

Whether shopping for your own home or for that perfect holiday gift for those special people in your life, visit We Grow Dreams for your gift giving needs! All proceeds go toward supporting people with disabilities through our community-based jobs training program at the greenhouse and garden center.

For more information about We Grow Dreams or a listing of our regular retail Holiday hours, call 630-293-0100 or visit our website at [www.wegrowdreams.org](http://www.wegrowdreams.org).

## KEEP WE GROW DREAMS IN MIND FOR YEAR END GIVING

It's been quite a year in the world.

The requests for our charitable giving have increased exponentially as a result of the natural disasters wrought by hurricanes and other factors both here and abroad. But as the end of year draws near, and as we approach the inevitable year-end tax planning, please keep We Grow Dreams in mind for a tax deductible charitable cash donation.

Many of you may work for companies that generously offer matching gift programs; if this is the case, please consider approaching them about making a matching gift. What an outstanding way to help ensure the future for the Team Members of We Grow Dreams. Just make sure your check is dated by December 31, 2005 to ensure the tax deduction, and of course you'll receive a prompt 'thank you' and acknowledgement of your generous gift.

We appreciate your continued support of We Grow Dreams.

**OCTOBER 9 OPEN HOUSE RESULTS:** Our 'grand opening' Fall Open House was a beautiful day, with over 600 people in attendance to enjoy the fresh air and shop among the creative displays and meandering paths of our fall products. Thanks to the hard work of our WGD staff and special event volunteers, we raised about \$1200 from the raffle & food sales that day—and a few lucky customers received some great raffle prizes. Fantastic effort staff, families, Nancy Possinger & volunteer crew!

**WE GROW DREAMS WEBSITE UP & RUNNING:** Thanks to our committee members and Joanne Metoyer for developing a format, content and some wonderful photos for

the We Grow Dreams website. It's a work-in-progress, but hopefully we've gotten it off to a productive start. Check out the changes by visiting [www.wegrowdreams.org](http://www.wegrowdreams.org).

**WDSRA FOUNDATION AWARDS \$5,000 GRANT TO WGD:** Great news! Western Dupage Special Recreation Association Foundation has awarded us a \$5,000 grant to support our programs. This is only the second time the foundation has given money to a group outside of WDSRA. A huge thanks to Jane Hodgkinson, Executive Director of WDSRA and the Foundation Board! More to come in our next issue about volunteer & donor recognition plans for 2006.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** Do you like to plan parties & events, or work on just a piece of these activities? Like to have fun? Our Special Events subcommittee is planning many fund-raising events for 2006, including a February Valentine's Day event with silent auction; a summer Garden Gala and several other seasonal Open Houses.

We could also use help (& this could be done from your home) in writing & getting publicity notices out to different media for our many events. Contact Nancy Possinger at [fvp47@ameritech.net](mailto:fvp47@ameritech.net) to volunteer for any Special Events or Publicity.

Volume 1, Issue 1

## SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF: Meet Josephina Gabriel

Often the first face you see upon entering the greenhouse is Josephina Gabriel, a seven-year employee of We Grow Dreams who concentrates her efforts in the retail side of the business. Josephina handles a variety of duties, including customer service, making or taking down plant displays, planting and transplanting, caring for the plants and of course taking good care of the customers at our register! When asked what she likes about working at We Grow Dreams, Josephina says she loves working with plants and takes great satisfaction in “making beauty inside and outside”.



When not at work, Josephina stays busy taking care of her family and sells jewelry as a side business. Her hobbies include the art of ‘tatting’, which is the very delicate process of making lace by hand. She is also a big fan of baseball, and enjoyed seeing the Chicago White Sox win the World Series this season!

Since the Team Members began working at the garden center this past spring, Josephina has enjoyed getting to know some of her new co-workers and their unique and very distinct personalities, and especially their smiles!

Someone you should know...Josephina Gabriel. Thanks for being our first ‘Spotlight on Staff’!!

**FACILITIES UPDATE** Beginning this past April, Franz Kissel and his dedicated committee put on their toolbelts and went to work improving our facilities at We Grow Dreams. When the going got tough, they got going...most weekends you could find these handy volunteers offering their services, time and energy to accomplish a tremendous amount of work! Thanks to our many volunteers as well as the Robinette demo company and Phil Abbinanti from Chapple Design-Build who was very accommodating in trying to meet our changing needs for building designs. Some specific projects included:

- \*Robinette Company demolished the existing house on our property pro bono.
- \*Garage & Retail Space needed extensive work; remodeling included rewiring, insulation and re-building walls.
- \*Office floor partially replaced; roof stripped and redone.
- \*Heat/air installed in Office & Retail Space.
- \*Overhead door in garage replaced with double doors.
- \*Furnace room and closets built with donated supplies.
- \*Donated ramps with handrails installed.
- \*Sign donated by John Doyle’s company installed.
- \*Donated office furniture throughout the facility.



More to come in our next issue about plans for the new building which have been put on hold until Spring 2006. In the meantime, doesn’t the new retail space carved out of the old garage look great? Stop in and see our beautiful selection of holiday gifts and décor!

## DIRECTORY PROJECT



Team Members finishing up a productive shift at We Grow Dreams.

Several Team Members and families have requested we put together a Team Member Directory for We Grow Dreams. This could serve several purposes. First, it would provide Team Members a fun way to get to know one another and help to foster friendships, connections and fellowship. Second, it can serve as a practical resource for families and Team Members getting in touch with one another if we include addresses and phone numbers. And last, it can provide Job Coaches, WGD

employees or volunteers with some useful tools to establish rapport and positive working relationships with or between Team Members.

If you'd like to be included in the Team Member Directory, please download or copy the form on page 5 of this newsletter, complete both the Information and Permission sections of the form, and **return the completed/signed form to the We Grow trailer office no later than Wednesday, Nov. 30th.** Margie Wiesenthal and son

Rob have graciously agreed to compile all of the information and ready it for printing in Directory form. Copies of the new Directory will be available for pickup at the We Grow Dreams office before Christmas, date to be announced.

Don't forget to attach a photo so we can all begin putting names with faces! :) Inclusion in the Directory is optional. Contact Margie at [BOBLISLE@aol.com](mailto:BOBLISLE@aol.com) with any questions you have.

## OTHER FELLOWSHIP PROJECTS

**'OUT AND ABOUT CLUB':** Attention Team Members! Want to get out and about in the community with your friends from We Grow Dreams? Volunteer to help plan and coordinate a seasonal quarterly outing for We Grow Team Members, family and friends. Get those creative juices flowing! How about a bowling match for those long cold months of January or February? Or a

trip to an indoor waterpark? Poll your fellow Team Members to find out what people like to do for fun; then plan, price, and help publicize the event in our next newsletter.

Meeting dates and times will be determined based on your interest level; meetings to plan events can occur at the We Grow trailer conference room, and could coincide with your regular work

schedules at the Greenhouse.

If you are interested in working on this project, please add your name to the Out and About Club 'interested list' located in the trailer office.

This project is tentatively scheduled to begin in January, 2006. Let's work on communication, recreation and life skills... and have some fun, too!

*"Fellowship is defined as companionship; friendly association; and a mutual sharing of experience, activities and interests."*

**'NEWSLETTER CLUB':** Here's another opportunity for Team Members to build their resumes, make a meaningful contribution to We Grow Dreams, and have fun along the way! Help plan a quarterly segment for our We Grow newsletter that's produced by and for Team Members!! Some ideas are:

\*Fun and informative questions of the season such as

"Did you make a New Year's Resolution and if so, what was it?" or "What's your favorite or least favorite job you've ever done at We Grow"?

\*Seasonal artwork or poetry  
\*Restaurant/movie reviews  
\*Topical news about Team Member accomplishments in sports, school, church, other clubs etc.

\*Photograph/interview an

employee for our "Spotlight on Staff" segment each quarter.

Sound interesting? To learn more, add your name to Newsletter Club in the trailer office. This project is also tentatively scheduled to begin in January and would occur at the Greenhouse. Staffing may be available thru WDSRA or a family volunteer with writing expertise in addition to parent participation.

WE GROW DREAMS TEAM MEMBER DIRECTORY

Name:

[ Photo of Yourself Here]

Address (optional):

Phone (optional):

Parents' (guardians') names:

Brothers/Sisters:

Pets:

Favorite Song/Singer/Band/Music:

Favorite Movie/Actor/Video:

Favorite Games/Hobbies/Sports:

Favorite Foods/Restaurant/Junk Food:

Favorite vacation place?

What makes you laugh?

What else do you really like?

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PLEASE READ BEFORE SIGNING:

I understand that the information provided above will be compiled into a Team Member Directory. I give permission to We Grow Dreams, Inc. to share the contents of the Directory with other WGD families, Team Members, employees, volunteers or to promote We Grow Dreams, Inc. in development, public relations or marketing activities.

Team Member Signature/Date

Parent/Guardian Signature/Date



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West Chicago, IL 60185

Phone (630) 293-0100

FAX (630) 293-1510

wegrowdreams.org

**Honoring the concepts of human dignity,  
respect, hard work, fellowship and friendship.**

## **SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS WORKSHOP**

**Attn: Families and Team Members of We Grow Dreams**

**When:** Thursday, November 17, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

**Where:** Holy Spirit Catholic Community, 2003 111th Street, Naperville IL

**Presenters:** Shirley Morley, Social Security Benefits Project and Don Davia, Benefits Counselor with the Dupage Center for Independent Living.

The Illinois Department of Human Services is sponsoring workshops for families and people with disabilities to help answer questions regarding Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, Medicare and Medicaid.

Social Security benefits for persons with disabilities can be a complicated application process.

If you love someone with a disability, and expect they will work even a few hours a month, this information is important. If you are concerned about health care coverage for a person with a disability, this information is important.

There is no cost to attend this workshop. However we ask you call ahead to make sure our presenters have enough handouts. Please contact Cindi Birse-Swanson at Holy Spirit Catholic Community: 630-922-0081.

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