

# Gem State News

## Season's Greetings

Greetings, I hope this message finds you and your household well. With the end of the 2013 calendar year, on behalf of our entire organization, we wish to thank you for the opportunity to work with your child and adult participants. In addition, we wanted to personally express our appreciation to you for your ongoing coordination, collaboration, and invaluable support.



We are extremely pleased and excited about several positive and noteworthy strides that your child and adult participant made during this calendar year.

Typically, your child and adult participant exceeded our expectations and made noteworthy progress towards greater independence and self-direction.

In anticipation of the new 2014 year, we are extremely optimistic that through creativity, innovation, and hard work, we'll successfully continue to provide services and supports in sufficient quality and quantity to all requesting for our services and supports. We will continue to strive towards common goals and objectives towards increasing each individual's activities in daily living, self-reliance, strengths, and quality of life.

It has been a pleasure to work with you.  
Have a wonderful holiday season.



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### Special points of interest:

- Season's Greetings from our staff
- Christmas Poem
- Looking for "Amazing" Individuals
- Meet Nampa's Supervisor—Tim Schank

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## Autism Night Before Christmas

Twas the Night Before Christmas and all through the house  
The creatures were stirring... Yes, even the mouse  
We tried melatonin and gave a hot bath  
But the holiday jitters they always distract

The children were finally all nestled in bed  
When nightmares of terror ran through my OWN head  
Did I get the right gift the right color and style  
Would there be a tantrum or even, maybe, a smile?

Our relatives come but they don't understand  
The pleasure he gets just from flapping his hands.  
"He needs discipline," they say "Just a well-needed smack,  
You must learn to parent..." and on goes the attack

We smile and nod because we know deep inside  
The argument is moot let them all take a side  
We know what it's like to live with the spectrum  
The struggles and triumphs, achievements, regressions...

But what they don't know and what they don't see  
Is the joy that we feel over simplicity  
He said "hello", he ate something green!  
He told his first lie! He did not cause a scene!

He peed on the potty who cares if he's ten,  
He stopped saying the same thing again and again!  
Others don't realize just how we can cope  
How we bravely hang on at the end of our rope

But what they don't see is the joy we can't hide  
When our children with autism make the tiniest stride  
We may look at others without the problems we face  
With jealousy, hatred or even distaste,

But what they don't know nor sometimes do we  
Is that children with autism bring simplicity.  
We don't get excited over expensive things  
We jump for joy with the progress work brings



## Autism Night Before Christmas (cont.)

Children with autism try hard every day  
That they make us proud more than words can say.  
They work even harder than you or I  
To achieve something small to reach a star in the sky

So to those who don't get it or can't get a clue  
Take a walk in my shoes and I'll assure you  
That even 10 minutes into the walk  
You'll look at me with respect, even shock.

You will realize just what it is I go through  
And the next time you judge I can assure you  
That you won't say a thing  
You'll be quiet and learn,  
Like the years that I did

When the tables were turned.....

~ Cindy Waeltermann





## Greetings from the Gem State Children's Program!



### Season's Greetings,

It's hard to believe it's almost the end of 2013! It has been a whirlwind of a year for our children's program from the Children's System Redesign, to developing our new summer and afterschool programs. We are happy to report that the changes in our program have been successful and we have been able to make the most out of all of these changes. Our program is now centered around the theme of PIECES; practicing skills, independence and self-identity building, exploring interests, community integration, expanding and reinforcing skills, and socialization and friendship building.

For the past couple of months we have noticed how well each child has been able to build a healthy and positive identity from how they view themselves and how they fit in with others. Too often are children with disabilities put into categories and labeled by people who haven't taken the time to get to know them or see what they have to offer. Finding ways for each individual to express who they are and be seen in a positive light by their peers and members of the community has become a goal of mine. Like every person they have their own interests, dislikes, frustrations, hopes, and dreams that should be heard and seen by whoever is around them. Spending the time to notice who they are and how they communicate is one of the best things you can do for any child.

The activities that have been planned at the centers and in the community have provided opportunities for them to practice communicating, cooperating, and socializing with others who do and don't share the same interests. Each month a piece of character is picked that everyone is encouraged to understand and practice with words and actions. For the month of October the piece of character was respect and by the end of the month the children were using the word in their own in conversations and actions without much help from the staff. Each month the piece of character has given each individual a better understanding of who they are, and how they relate to or affect others.

These children teach me something new every day and we are so thankful for the time that we have had to get to know them. As the holiday season and end of the year is upon us we also hope that you see the same progress that we have seen and that each child continues to see themselves in a positive way.

By Meghan Barker

## Meridian Adult Center Holiday News

This fall, the Meridian Adult Program was very happy to welcome several adults from A New Leaf. This has been a great challenge to manage so many new people starting the program in such a short period of time. Meeting new people, making new friends and hiring new staff has been a great experience. We are so grateful and happy to have the opportunity to work together. This endeavor has been a reminder that we continue to strive for and have exceptional service for extraordinary people!

Merry Christmas, Happy Chanukah, Season's Greetings, Happy Holidays!



### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Idaho Miss Amazing Pageant

It's that time of year to think about being a part of "The Idaho Miss Amazing Pageant"! With its first year a huge success, there's no doubt that this upcoming year will have more contestants highlighting what makes them **"AMAZING"** and an outlet to showcase their **"ABILITIES"**!

This year's event will be at the Boise State University Special Events Center in February 2014.

For those interested in learning more about the Miss Amazing Pageant, to be a female contestant, male escort, or volunteer, please go to their website: <http://www.missamazingpageant.com>.



The deadline is December 31, 2013, so it's still not too late to sign up. It's guaranteed to be another fun year of captured moments and treasured memories for all.

By Lori Jo Poole and  
Jessica Lowry



## A New Face at our Nampa Adult Center

### Nampa Adult Program Clinical Supervisor

All of us at Gem State Developmental Center would like to proudly announce the newest member to our developmental disabilities agency team, Mr. Timothy "Tim" Schank.



Tim has been providing developmental therapy services since 2009. Beforehand, he worked in the Vallivue, Nampa, and Meridian School Districts and Hope Christian Academy in Marsing. He received his Associate of Arts Degree from Antelope Valley College, California in 1999 and Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Science Education from Boise State University in 2001. He subsequently met the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's Habilitative Intervention certification requirements and received his Habilitative Intervention certification.

The specialized skills and expertise that Tim brings is a welcome addition to our company. Tim will add value to those that receive services, to those that render such quality services and supports, and others that's a part of each participants' success. We are confident that the same high standards of professionalism, teamwork, and assurance will be sustained.



By Corey Makizuru

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