

MEMORANDUM

To: All OGC Families, Staff and Volunteers
From: Kyle Hauth, Executive Director
Subject: **OGC Update**
Date: January 2, 2008

The Orange Grove Center will host a luncheon on Monday, January 7th at the Chattanooga Convention Center with special guest Gene Stallings (Former Head Football Coach, University of Alabama). This function will take place at Noon and should conclude shortly after 1:00 p.m. This luncheon will be an excellent opportunity for us to share our progress on the capital campaign thus far. If you would like to join us for this luncheon, please give me a call today or tomorrow and I'll make certain to save you a seat.

We are making very good progress on bringing our new medical Doctor to Orange Grove. Although it has taken much longer than we anticipated, it appears that all of the red tape and reams of paper necessary to convince U.S. immigration officials to allow him to immigrate from Canada and come to work for Orange Grove are properly assembled. We have a top U.S. immigration attorney working on this case and he feels that the documentation that has been assembled is formidable and should gain him his acceptance into our country. We are so excited about Dr. Cheetham joining our team of medical professionals and becoming an integral element of the OGC Augustus McCravey Health Clinic. It has certainly been a long wait for all of us, but I can assure you that he is worth the wait. Dr. Cheetham is undeniably an internationally renowned physician, advocate, researcher, and teacher who has extensive experience in the field of developmental disabilities. He is a hands-on physician who is up-to-date on all of the latest medical advances in our field. He has written numerous publications and taught extensively regarding the provision of best medical practices in our field. His first love is treating patients and is dedicated to providing the highest level of care.

Our regularly scheduled parent meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 22nd, at 7:00 p.m. Since this program is expected to generate a much larger crowd, we plan to meet in the OGC cafeteria. This special meeting will highlight the Orange Grove Capital Campaign. Tom Cox will share our progress as well as our needs, and we are most hopeful that everyone will make a special effort to join us on the 22nd.

I have been contacted by some local Boy Scouting affiliates who are interested in helping the people we serve to form a Boy Scout Troop. There are special provisions which allow individuals older than 18 to participate in the Boy Scouts, if they have cognitive disabilities. Some very successful troops have been formed in agencies like the Orange Grove Center across the nation, and I have heard some inspiring tales of how these experiences have greatly enriched lives and broadened horizons. The only way for a successful scout troop to develop at OGC would be for a volunteer to come forward who has a passion for the idea and is willing to work to make it happen. If you are interested in this idea and would like to have more information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation Services (DMRS) recently informed all providers that we will receive a 6.1% decrease in our funding, effective January 1, 2008. The reason given for this sudden and unprecedented decrease in the middle of a fiscal year is a notable deficiency between the demand for home and community-based related expenditures and available funding from state and federal sources. Essentially, what has happened is the State overextended itself with contract and service obligations and now intends to balance its budget by taking the funds from community agencies. Obviously, the State run developmental centers will not experience a reduction in their funding nor is it likely that they will even make substantial cuts. If you are interested in protesting this move by the State, please contact me and I'll be happy to give you contact information for you to direct your letters to. At this point, the only real impact we can have on this unfolding tragedy is through political persuasion and posturing. If everyone affiliated with Orange Grove wrote the Governor and their State legislators, we could possibly see a change of strategies.

Thank you for your attention in these matters.