



### Spring is in the Air

Spring is a time of growth and renewal. This spring newsletter highlights some of the ways Mission Project 2 and its participants are growing. We have a new program, expanding fundraising initiatives, and a new member. Participants have taken advantage of many opportunities to enhance and expand their knowledge, skills, and creativity. It's an exciting time for MP2!



**Mission Project 2** (MP2) enables capable young adults in their 20s and 30s with developmental or cognitive disabilities to live independently and safely in their own apartments, integrated into the general community with minimal support.

We work towards a comprehensive vision: To establish and maintain support structures for our participants, to enable them to live independently in a safe environment with the opportunity to engage in meaningful work, social interaction with peers, educational opportunities, physical fitness, training and recreation.

### MP2 Art Club

## New Avenues for Expressive Creativity

2015 saw the launch of a new Art Club program for Mission Project 2 participants. This twice-monthly activity gives them the opportunity to create art in a variety of media, such as screen printing and watercolors. In the initial session, participants learned the history of masks and created their own in clay. Future sessions will focus on drawing, painting, pottery and photography, as well as exploring local galleries and museums.



These sessions, held at Sylvester Powell Jr. Community Center, are facilitated by Jessica Hays, who is a floor supervisor and studio art instructor at Imagine That! Kansas City. Jessica has taught printmaking, screen printing, ceramics, spray painting, and mural making. She is also experienced in facilitating the creation of exhibition-ready artwork by adults with developmental disabilities.

According to Jessica, her supervisory responsibilities have reduced the amount of time she can devote to teaching, and working with Mission Project 2 participants gives her the opportunity to do more of what she loves. "I am very excited to be here," Jessica says.

She includes an educational component in each Art Club session, and participants have learned about such topics as screen printing in the Pop Art movement and the Chinese influence on watercolors. In Jessica's words, "Art is all skill sets. Teaching people skills is what teaching is all about. I love teaching skills people can use outside the classroom. For example, if I teach them how to use watercolors, they can use that skill on their own to create greeting cards."



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## Expressive Creativity in MP2 Art Club

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Jean Belancio, co-chair of the program, is thrilled that the participants are excited about exploring their creativity in new forms. “Just in the first few sessions, I am amazed at the insight, personality and point of view that they are expressing through their artwork. We couldn’t have asked for a more perfect person than Jessica to direct our Art Club.”



Jack’s screenprint creation.

Initial funding for the program came from the first Mission Project 2 Art Show, held last October at Boveri Realty Group during First Friday in the Crossroads. This year’s fundraiser will take place on October 2nd, 2015, at the same location.



### *Preparing for New Growth*

## MP2 Community Garden Ready to Spring to Life

The spring thaw will bring new life to the Mission Project 2 Community Garden. Last year, participants worked hard to clear the site, install six small planters and plant flower bulbs.

On February 8, Club participants visited the Kansas City Garden + Remodel Show to explore new ideas and techniques for their garden.

At their March meeting, participants eagerly sealed and installed the distinctive stepping stones that they created last November.

Last Fall, Boy Scout Cagney Bustamante, from Troop 118, supervised his fellow Scouts in the construction and installation of three raised beds for the garden as his Eagle Scout Project. Now Scout Joseph Pennington has plans to work with the same Troop to install a fence and arbor for the garden, once the ground thaws. And then...let the plantings begin!



### *Community Partners*

**Hy-Vee** just awarded Mission Project 2 a One Step Community Garden Grant, championed by Dan Welsh, Store Director of the Mission grocery store. This program funds projects in the community that teach individuals about health and nutrition through planting, tending and harvesting their own fruits and vegetables.



**Thrivent Financial** also granted MP2 funds from its Action Team, monies that are designed to strengthen communities, helping us purchase the soil and seeds for our spring planting.

## MP2 Participants Continue to Learn & Grow

In addition to their regular Community Strong meetings, in which MP2 participants work on strengthening their independent living skills, participants frequently take advantage of other opportunities to enhance their knowledge and abilities. Special sessions are organized with experienced members of the community, and Mission Project 2 members and participants are grateful for the expertise that these professionals share with us.

Here are some examples:

- Several MP2 participants attended a tour given by registered dietitian **Louann Dent**, wellness coach at the Hy-Vee store in Mission. They enjoyed learning about a nutritional scoring system called the NuVal System, which the store has implemented throughout its stock. This system assigns a number from 1-100 to most of the food products in the store. The higher the score, the more nutritious the food. Participants quickly learned where to locate the scores and how easily they could be used to make healthy choices when shopping.
- **Janet Woodward**, employment services coordinator, meets regularly with MP2 participants who receive services from Kansas Focus to discuss job-related scenarios and enhance their employment skills.
- **Lisa Womack** from Medical Training Management is Project Director for On the Move, a program of the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority that helps residents learn how to use city buses to get around more independently. She met with participants and families to discuss bus routes and services as well as the individualized training programs that are available.



- **Captain Dan Madden** from the Mission Police Department met with participants, as well as their families and service providers, to discuss important safety topics. He talked about Internet safety, interacting with strangers, using the Do Not Call Registry, and walking safely around the neighborhood.

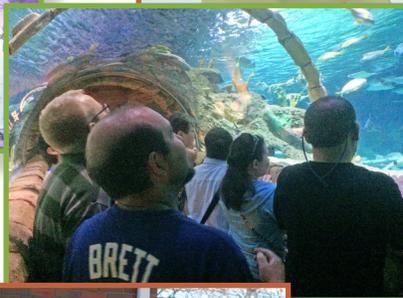


### We Welcome Kenzie

Mission Project 2 members and participants are thrilled to introduce our newest participant, Kenzie. She is very outgoing and loves to talk about current music and celebrities. Kenzie also enjoys movies, computer games, swimming and basketball. She has already been regularly taking part in several MP2 activities, including Bunco, Movie Club and the new Art Club.

Kenzie is a welcome addition to our organization, and she is scheduled to move into her own apartment in early Summer 2015.

# || Snapshots ||



## *We Thank You for Your Support*

*Community & friends came out to support Mission Project 2 at two lively events in March. Funds raised from events such as these help pay the costs to provide transportation to and from work for MP2 participants, and educational, cultural & recreational activities.*



On March 8, MP2 held a successful benefit concert at Trinity Lutheran Church in Mission. **The Kansas City Metro Men's Chorus** performed inspiring music selections before a large audience. Since its first performance in 2002, the Chorus has been contributing all proceeds from its concerts to charitable organizations. Our members and families are most grateful to the Chorus, Trinity Lutheran Church and the generous attendees.



**The 2nd Annual Texas Hold 'Em Tournament** benefiting MP2 was held on March 28 at Lucky Brewgrille in Mission, KS.

Table sponsors for the event included the law firm Foland Wickens, the Zeitz family, American Screw Products, Boveri Realty Group, Robert Burks with RBC Wealth Management, attorney John P. O'Connor, and JibJab Bros. Productions. Everyone had a great time, and we give our thanks for their support of MP2.



When MP2 participant Jacob originally moved into a Merriam, KS, apartment on his own in 2008, he and his parents had high hopes for his personal and vocational growth. It wasn't successful. Without support, Jacob struggled with organization, planning, and focusing on tasks. Keeping up with healthy eating, cleaning, and laundry was an everyday struggle. The frustration he experienced temporarily cost him the opportunity for independent living.

But Jacob never wanted to give up his quest. "I always knew I could live on my own," said Jacob. "I realized that I had to straighten up. I never wanted to quit." Enter: The Mission Project.

In Fall 2010, Jacob began to participate in several Mission Project activities, befriending many participants. "I really felt accepted by them," Jacob said. "I felt like I was part of their group." Soon Jacob realized he wanted to give independent living another try. Although The Mission Project was at capacity at the time, another opportunity was on the way: a new affiliate organization, Mission Project 2.

Jacob became the third MP2 participant to move into his own apartment, and quickly began to experience a new life. A caring and supportive community of participants and their families, coupled with the help of personal care assistants, had given him the emotional lift he needed.

Jacob's favorite MP2 activities include Movie Club, Travel Club, swimming, Community Strong and working out at Sylvester Powell Jr. Community Center—pursuits that have played a vital role in his personal growth. "They help me build better relationships with friends," he said. "They encourage me to think better about myself, and I'm a better person than I was."

Jacob's skills in cooking, cleaning, and scheduling have also improved thanks to the services of caregiver staff. "I've been able to cook healthier meals, like homemade stew, and that has helped me learn the value of healthy eating."

Steady employment has also played a crucial role in Jacob's development.

While working at a local fast food restaurant, Jacob developed some vital kitchen skills. "I learned how to work a broiler and other areas, and that helped me learn how to take care of a kitchen better," he said. His ten years with the Wal-Mart Lawn and Garden department helped him appreciate the delicate nature of plant life. He learned how to prune flowers and clean patio furniture. Jacob's experience busing tables and working in the kitchen at a local assisted living facility gave him firsthand knowledge of the needs of the elderly. "I understand now that you have to be careful what kinds of food and drink to serve them," he said.

He now works at a local pharmacy automation firm in a maintenance position that has already taught him some valuable lessons about a crucial part of independent living. "I like keeping the rooms clean," said Jacob. "It makes a healthier environment, and it makes me want to keep my apartment clean."

Managing money and meeting schedule commitments are crucial parts of independent living—and challenges Jacob is determined to meet. "I want to be able to accomplish tasks in a more timely manner," he said. "That will make me feel better about how I'm doing."



# News & Upcoming Events

## Mission Project 2 on Facebook

Our new Facebook page will give you the most up-to-date information about the participants' activities. You don't have to be a member of Facebook to see our latest updates, so visit us at [facebook.com/missionproject2](https://facebook.com/missionproject2). While you're there, please Like Us!

### Donate to MP2



With our website, we can offer the convenience of secure online donation, including the ability to make level payments on a monthly ongoing basis. Go to [themissionproject.org](http://themissionproject.org) and [click on the MP2 logo](#) to enter our site, or capture this QR code on your smartphone.

As always, mail-in donations are welcome! Our address:  
**Mission Project 2**  
**5960 Dearborn, Ste. 240, Mission, KS 66202**

## *Mission Project 2* **2nd Annual Art Show Fundraiser**

**First Friday in the  
Crossroads**

**Friday, October 2nd  
5-9 pm**

Held at  
**Boveri Realty Group**  
**1819 Wyandotte**  
**KCMO 64108**



5960 Dearborn, Ste. 240 Mission, KS 66202