

A Look Inside

I went on to explain to the Southgate Lions that Melwood trainees and staff had already dug the foundation and poured the concrete. Now we needed materials and technical help to put up the walls and a roof. Those frowning faces quickly started smiling again, radiating warmth and appreciation for Melwood's mission and efforts of self-help. Three weekends later we had our new extension. It gave us space for tools, equipment, a potting bench, a couple of desks, and filing cabinets. It thrilled us as much as any architectural masterpiece. After all, many a million-dollar industry in America has been started in someone's garage.

Probably the best part was seeing the Lions Club members—lawyers, farmers, sand and gravel owners, an optician, a gas station owner, a brick mason, plus a couple dozen other professionals—working with us to finish the building. We all had fun. When I presented that \$250 challenge in Southgate, I really lucked out. Especially because my only job that weekend was to keep the liquid refreshments cold and flowing. The whole endeavor was like the Peace Corps at its best.

MELWOOD FAMILIES

The Wilkersons

Karla Wilkerson is an independent job placement success story. An attractive woman whose shyness only adds to her bright personality, Karla was raised by her father after her mother died young. As a girl, Karla attended a Catholic boarding school where she made little progress and few friends. The school offered little encouragement about her future. By chance, her father heard about Melwood. Looking back, he says: "Melwood was a blessing. It gave Karla the support she needed, and it created within her a desire to become more independent. Before Melwood she had little to say to anyone. She has come out of her shell

and she will happily talk your ear off!"

Over 20 years ago, we placed Karla in a job in a cafeteria at Andrews Air Force Base. There she has found stability and a home away from home. Though a good worker, Karla still finds making friends a bit difficult both at work and in her community. The Melwood Alumni Association is ideal for her – it provides social opportunities to make friends with whom she can communicate and share activities. The next step for Karla and her dad is to start thinking about residential services, for the day will come when he can no longer provide Karla with a home and the other supports she needs.

Melwood: A Story of Empowerment

In an all-type book, what's the best way to highlight key elements? For this history of an agency that serves adults with developmental disabilities, we worked with Melwood's design firm to find a simple but elegant solution: brief profiles of Melwood families in a different typeface, peppered through the text. (The book does have photos. They are grouped in a color insert, which helped Melwood keep to its modest nonprofit budget.)

Some profiles span a few pages. For example, Melwood CEO Earl Copus and his CorporateHistory.net coauthor, Marian Calabro, wanted to report on the movement to encourage richer social lives and healthy sexuality among America's seven million people with developmental disabilities. A "Love and Marriage" section candidly describes the experiences of four Melwood couples.



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www.corporatehistory.net

info@corporatehistory.net