

"LIFESONG" SINGS IT'S SONG AT JOSEPH'S HOUSE

"Every life tells a story and every story sings a song. So we want to let our life song sing for you." "That's really our mission statement, the very core of what we are", says Philip Catchpole, Executive Director of "Lifesong", a new company whose mission is to prepare developmentally disabled adults for the world of work and more. Catchpole has a 20-year career serving this population in day habilitation. "Essentially day habilitation provides the space for individuals to focus on meaningfully and successfully completing the many areas of daily activities in each person's life, coupled with exposure to pre-vocational skills in a workplace context." Catchpole states. "What we want to do is to assist our clients in not only pursuing a successful work life but a successful meaningful life, in every aspect." This has led Lifesong to develop programming, which not only includes pre-voc and vocational skills but a curriculum, which includes volunteering, social interactions and recreational activities. "We want to build a community among our clients, staff and supporters," Catchpole says.

About a year and a half ago several families came to him asking him to consider building his own agency to serve their children. The approach he had been taking with them, a holistic, humanistic and pragmatic approach was unique in service provision. After months of weighing the pros and cons Catchpole and his wife, a mental health professional as well decided to take the plunge and began Lifesong with 8 clients and 2 additional staff. "Families and former colleagues began coming to us asking us to either serve their children or to work with us. It really confirmed us in our decision."

In July of this year Catchpole contacted Paul Dellio, Community Liaison at Joseph's House, to see if the Shelter would be interested in having some of his clients as volunteers. "Paul was very deliberate about it. We had several phone calls, met with me, discussed it with the Joseph's House staff and met with me again before finally agreeing



Philip Catchpole and JH Kitchen Manager Tammy Papa await the arrival of Lifesong clients to prepare the day's lunch for Shelter guests

to have us start volunteering. His care in beginning the process gave me confidence that this was a good place for Lifesong to serve." 4 clients and a staff person began to volunteer at the Shelter on September 8th and have been coming every Thursday morning since. "Without the support of Tammy Papa our Kitchen Manager, I could never have done this. Tammy is great with the group, never creating busy work, always including them in her activities and coordinating with me if she needs some of the group to work in other areas of the Shelter. It's evident that she enjoys working with the group and they love working with her." Dellio says. Joseph's House has become such a popular work site for Lifesong clients that Catchpole has changed his original plan of having an established group working

at each site to rotating clients among sites to accommodate client requests. "When the first group returned to our site that first afternoon, they were so enthusiastic about Joseph's House that other clients asked when they could go to the Shelter as well. Now we insure that all our clients get a Joseph's House experience once a month," Catchpole says. "These guys have become a part of my kitchen staff. I look forward to Thursday so I can catch up on what's going on in their lives" Tammy shares.

"Joseph's House lets us achieve our goals for each client" Catchpole states, "to equip, enhance, inspire and love each young person we have the honor to serve. It's a very special place."

