



October 10, 2008

Dear Friends:

I'd like to introduce myself and our agency to you. My name is Barry Chauvin and I serve as the Director of Options for Independence, a 501c3 nonprofit social service agency based in Houma, LA. Options began sixteen years ago in order to assist people with disabilities to receive home and community-based services to avoid institutional care. Since that time we have grown and expanded our services and our impact on people's lives. Our services reach out to people with developmental disabilities, serious mental illness, homelessness, chronic unemployment, physical disabilities, alcohol and drug abuse challenges and people affected by disasters. We provide service coordination, counseling, life skills training, employment services, emergency shelter and outreach to more than 1,300 children and adults each year. Our mission is "building better communities, one person at a time". We serve children and their families as well as adults in a seven (7) parish area. Our services are funded through state and federal service contracts and we take pride in our ability to sustain ourselves on self-generated dollars. Through hard work and our focus on delivering quality services on time and on budget we have been able to build our organization without seeking donations from the general public and we have generally kept a low profile in the community. While we are well known in the state's human service delivery system we are not as well known in the general public and we are actively beginning to promote our services.

Due to our recent growth and plans to deliver more services and reach out to more people, we are beginning fundraising activities to generate local dollars to be used to achieve the following goals:

- build a solid financial base of operating capital to sustain current programs;
- hire a full time grant writer to secure funding for new and expanded programs;
- supplement salaries to retain our qualified and caring staff;
- provide local funds to meet matching requirements for state and federal grants.

The "Options Bass Open" was our first annual fundraising event and we were very excited to bring it to the community this past January. We will bring this event back each year and build on the previous year's success. We are beginning our second fund raising initiative which partners with local schools to produce school calendars that will highlight the artwork of their students. The proceeds from the calendar sales will be shared equally with the schools to assist them in educating our youth. We are also partnering with local artists to feature their artwork in a community calendar that we will market. I hope that you will take the time to review the materials in this packet and consider partnering with us to continue our mission of "building better communities, one person at a time."

Please give me a call at any time if you would like to discuss participating with us in this fundraising project. I or one of my staff will be glad to come out and meet with you at any time.

Sincerely,

Barry Chauvin, Executive Director

