

How a Sugar Plum Vision Came to Life

The year was 1999. The place was Atlas Diner in Virginia Beach. Sugar Plum board president Charlie Malbon, past board president Joyce Schmidt, future board president Thad Nowak, and board member Tim Rivas were deep in conversation. Their concern? Finding a way for Sugar Plum Bakery to construct a new building without losing a lot of business.

The meeting was reminiscent of others that had taken place in the mid-1980s. That was back when Rev. John Jordan, the former pastor of Galilee Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach, organized a grass-roots group. The group's mission was to create a nonprofit training center where individuals with disabilities like the reverend's son, Hartley, could learn job skills that would help them become productive citizens.

The result was Sugar Plum, Inc. Now after 16 years of training and employing people with disabilities, Sugar Plum had reached a pivotal point. Housed in a small, outdated, 60-year-old structure, the two-story building wasn't even handicapped-accessible. Kitchen workers were practically on top of each other. There wasn't an inch of room to expand programs and services to help the growing number of people in need.

"I remember going into the building one day during a rainstorm," Thad Nowak says, "and water was gushing through the wall where an old dishwasher had been removed. We tried to figure out how to fix it, but we finally realized it was unfixable."

Before the Atlas Diner meeting, the Sugar Plum board had been considering two options: relocating the bakery or constructing a new building on the

bakery's existing Laskin Road site. Moving the bakery would require selling the land it was on in order to buy a new site, which would mean Sugar Plum would have to close for nine months to a year. That's why Charlie Malbon felt strongly about finding a way for the board to pursue the second option.

I remember going into the building one day during a rainstorm and water was gushing through the wall where an old dishwasher had been removed. We tried to figure out how to fix it, but we finally realized it was unfixable.

Like everyone who gets involved with Sugar Plum, Charlie had come to care deeply for the organization in a short time. It had been only three years since Joyce Schmidt had approached him about Sugar Plum.

"One day at Wareing's Gym," she remembers, "I went up to Charlie and asked him if he had served on any boards. I hardly knew him and thought he'd probably turn me down, but instead he said he might be interested. Then he

brought Thad to the board, and Thad brought Tim and we really got cookin'.

At Atlas Diner, Thad told his three colleagues that he had worked on another successful Capital Campaign in Virginia Beach, which involved the fundraising consultants of The Curtis Group. He suggested that the Sugar Plum board contact The Curtis Group about conducting a feasibility study to see if the community would help fund the bakery's new building. The board agreed.

Community jumps on bakery bandwagon

Results of the feasibility study indicated that Sugar Plum could in fact raise the \$900,000 needed to fund a new building on the current site. Architects were also consulted; they reported that there was enough room for a new building to be constructed behind the existing one. That meant the bakery would have to close only for six weeks during the transition, rather than the nine to 12 months required if it relocated. "That was far better than having to shut it down for a long time," Charlie explains.

And so the Sugar Plum Capital Campaign was launched, with a goal of \$900,000. "We knew we had to have a

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DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



We're almost there. What a whirlwind it's been!

First, on behalf of the Sugar Plum board of directors, I'd like to thank everyone involved with making our new building a reality, from our construction team to our generous donors, volunteers, and employees. All of you have worked extremely hard to create Sugar Plum's new home. And our clients are getting more excited every day about moving in.

But there's no time to rest on our laurels.

Now that we've achieved this major goal, it's time to start looking ahead. The new, larger building will allow us to start expanding Sugar Plum's job training programs. With the additional space, new programs can be added and more clients can be trained in employment skills. As the number of disabled people grows every year, Sugar Plum's mission of helping disabled people become employable has become invaluable to our community.

Also with the new building, Sugar Plum will again have an outdoor café, a feature missed by many of our customers. I hope you'll join me there this summer, as we sip lemonade, savor a Sugar Plum pastry, and reflect on what we've been able to accomplish with the extraordinary support of all of our donors and volunteers.

Here's to the future of Sugar Plum!

Thad Nowak
President,
Sugar Plum Board of Directors

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Mission Statement

The mission of Sugar Plum, Inc. is to serve the needs of persons with developmental disabilities through employment, education, and training. Sugar Plum, Inc. will promote integration of mentally and physically disabled persons into society by helping them become independent and evolve into working, contributing members of our communities.

The organization strives to achieve this mission by:

- Operating a competitive retail bakery business;
- Providing supportive and rehabilitation services and training for persons who are severely disabled;
- Seeking community-based, competitive employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities;
- Advocating supported, competitive employment opportunities for disabled persons so that they can become financially self-supporting; and
- Increasing community awareness of the worth of persons with disabilities and of the importance of integrating them into our lives through education and example.

Sugar Plum Bakery Capital Campaign Contributors

You couldn't have been sweeter.

The Sugar Plum board, staff, and clients would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our donors for bringing our new building to life. Thank you for being the reason that Sugar Plum will soon have a new building. We're overwhelmingly grateful to each and every one of you for your willingness to become the most vital ingredient in the Sugar Plum recipe for success.

Donors as of March 31, 2003. Contribution total: \$1,197,000

\$100,000 and above

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Thanks to the following who contributed to the Brick-by-Brick Campaign (as of March 31, 2003)

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Help Build Sugar Plum Brick by Brick

Here's your opportunity to become part of the special family that's building Sugar Plum Bakery's brand-new home. For only \$100 each, you can honor someone special, create a memorial to a loved one, or mark a birthday or anniversary with a tribute brick that will exist for generations. Each brick will be engraved with



two lines, 14 characters per line, and placed on the front patio of Sugar Plum's new building. To order, complete the form below and return it to Sugar Plum Bakery, 1353 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23451. Questions? Call 757-422-3913. To order additional bricks, attach the information with the order form.

SUGAR PLUM'S BRICK-BY-BRICK CAMPAIGN

___ Yes, I want to reserve ___ brick(s) today and become a part of Sugar Plum history. Enclosed is my \$100 contribution for each brick, for a total of \$ _____. I would like my personal inscription to read:

Line 1:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Line 2:

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Note: Each brick may contain two (2) lines with up to fourteen (14) characters per line (lines will be centered). Spaces and punctuation such as commas, periods, and hyphens are counted as one (1) character.

Name _____

Company or Organization (if appropriate) _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Phone Number, Day _____

Evening _____

Method of payment:

Check

VISA

MasterCard

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Name on Credit Card: _____

Signature: _____

Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.

Be a Sugar Plum Sweetheart

If you love Sugar Plum as a customer, imagine how you'll feel as a volunteer. There's no better way to have fun and help a great cause. If you can spare a little time, Sugar Plum needs volunteers to help us move into the new building.

Also Sugar Plum can put the following donations to very good use. We really need:

- ♥ Landscaping for the new building
- ♥ Plants for the new building
- ♥ Computer software, including WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and Excel
- ♥ Toner cartridges for Canon copier PC920, HP LaserJet 4 printer, LexMark Z32 printer black #17G0050, color #17G0060
- ♥ An upright vacuum cleaner
- ♥ A fax machine

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commitment from the whole board," Joyce says. And the board quickly stepped up and set the tone for the Campaign by giving a total of \$130,750.

The next step was approaching key community leaders for major gifts. The first one came from Tom Lyons of Tidewater Hotels and Resorts, whose gift provided a big boost to the Campaign. Soon afterward, the Campaign received generous major gifts from Joyce and John Fain, Maureen and Tim Miller and family, and The Patricia and Douglas Perry Foundation.

Another key moment in the process was when Patricia Rakes Clark became Sugar Plum's executive director on May 8 of 2001. "Getting Trish was critical," Thad says. "We knew we had to have someone very well-qualified to run the operation, especially after it moves into the new building."

As the Campaign gifts and contributions poured in, the board began to realize that a one-story building wouldn't allow the Sugar Plum organization to expand its programs and services to the extent needed. Could they raise the goal of the Capital Campaign and construct a two-story building instead?

The rapid success of the Capital Campaign told them the answer was yes. In spring 2002, a new design for a two-story building was approved and the Campaign goal was raised to \$1.2 million.

"With a two-story design," Tim Rivas says, "we'll have a facility for the future. The larger building will enable the bakery's kitchen operations to be streamlined and more efficient," Tim explains, "by allowing ingredients to flow in one side and product to flow out the other."

And so on June 6, 2002, ground was broken for the brand-new Sugar Plum Bakery. With Thad serving as emcee at the groundbreaking ceremony, Virginia Beach Mayor Meyera Oberndorf confessed to a Sugar Plum sweet tooth, and director Patricia Rakes Clark fought back tears as she expressed her gratitude to the hardworking Sugar Plum employees and volunteers.

Since then, donations to Sugar Plum's Capital Campaign and the Brick Tribute Campaign have continued streaming in. As of press time, only \$3,000 was needed to reach the \$1.2 million goal.

Despite a winter full of bad weather, the new building is rapidly moving toward completion. In mid- to late May, Sugar Plum will close for five to six weeks to make the transition from the old building to its brand-new home. The grand re-opening of the bakery is set for July.

How will board members feel when the new building opens? "We'll be very proud, number one, and relieved," Thad says. "We might take a short rest but we know our work doesn't stop there."

Help us reach the dream.



We're so close, but we still need your help. We only need \$3,000 to reach our Capital Campaign goal of \$1.2 million. Every little bit makes a difference, so whatever you can spare will bring our newest Sugar Plum vision closer to reality. Remember, you're the most important ingredient in the Sugar Plum recipe for success. Thank you for any support you can offer.

Let Them Eat Cake

Sugar Plum's mouthwatering cakes are now **20% off** the regular price. Stop by today and treat yourself to your favorite Sugar Plum cake!



Hours of Operation: Closed Monday
Open Tuesday - Saturday 7am - 6pm
Sunday 8am - 4pm

Sugar Plum Visions is published by the board of directors of Sugar Plum, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides an employment program for the developmentally disabled. If you have questions or comments, please call Patricia Rakes Clark, Executive Director, Sugar Plum Bakery, 1353 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451, (757) 422-3913.

