


“Putting the Person Back in Person Centered Planning”

March 5, 2007

Tom Lewis and Patti Scott

Real Life Choices: Tom’s story of self-direction
in New Jersey



*If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If
you can dream it, you can become it.*

- William Arthur Ward

Real Life Choices Self-Direction in NJ

Services

Providers
Direct Hires
Non-traditional Providers
Housing Specialist
Employment Specialist
Community Connector
Staff Connector

Family & Friends

Support
Coordinator



Mentors
Peer &
Family

Monitor

Let me begin by saying, I live most of the day in a wheelchair. I was born with Cerebral Palsy 32 years ago. My muscles in my legs can't support my weight in walking. I'm legally blind. But, my mind is very sharp. I use my brain as a tool. I memorize my lessons and know where the keys are on the computer. I may not be able to read a book, however audio is the way for me.

I am in the process of getting my BA from Thomas Edison College. I have readers who assist me with my studies and my papers. I have a 3.0 average and have one more class to complete before graduating this fall. I had planned to become a minister. I have always had a strong belief system and this seemed the road to travel in order to help people. My life was planned.

My friend John Rivera, a professional musician, collaborates with me. I use computer technology to compose all my music. John has recorded the guitar and singing and I have recorded the drums and we combine small pieces of music provided by others on a program called Acid Pro.



I wrote a song for my nephew Drew when he was born four years ago. We share the same birthday....February 27th.



Then I met Ronnie (my Support Coordinator).
I met her first speaking on the telephone.
We talked for hours. I know she was doing her job,
but I felt an instant connection. She was able to draw out of me
that music is my passion. It's the way I relax and convey
my feelings and dreams.



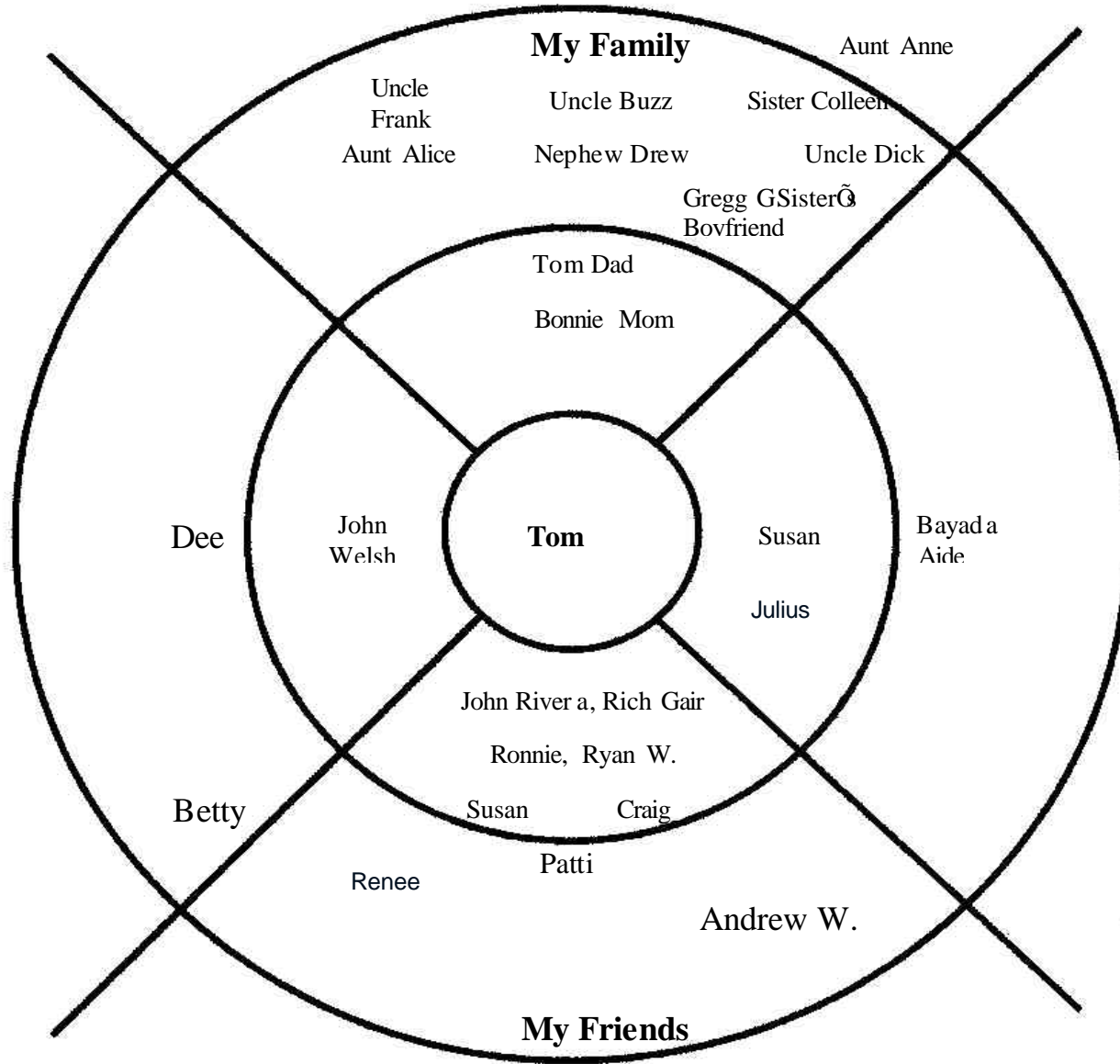
John and I had thought about making a CD and had quite a few songs written, but this project was on the back burner. John has a full time job and weekend gigs, and I was taking two classes a semester.

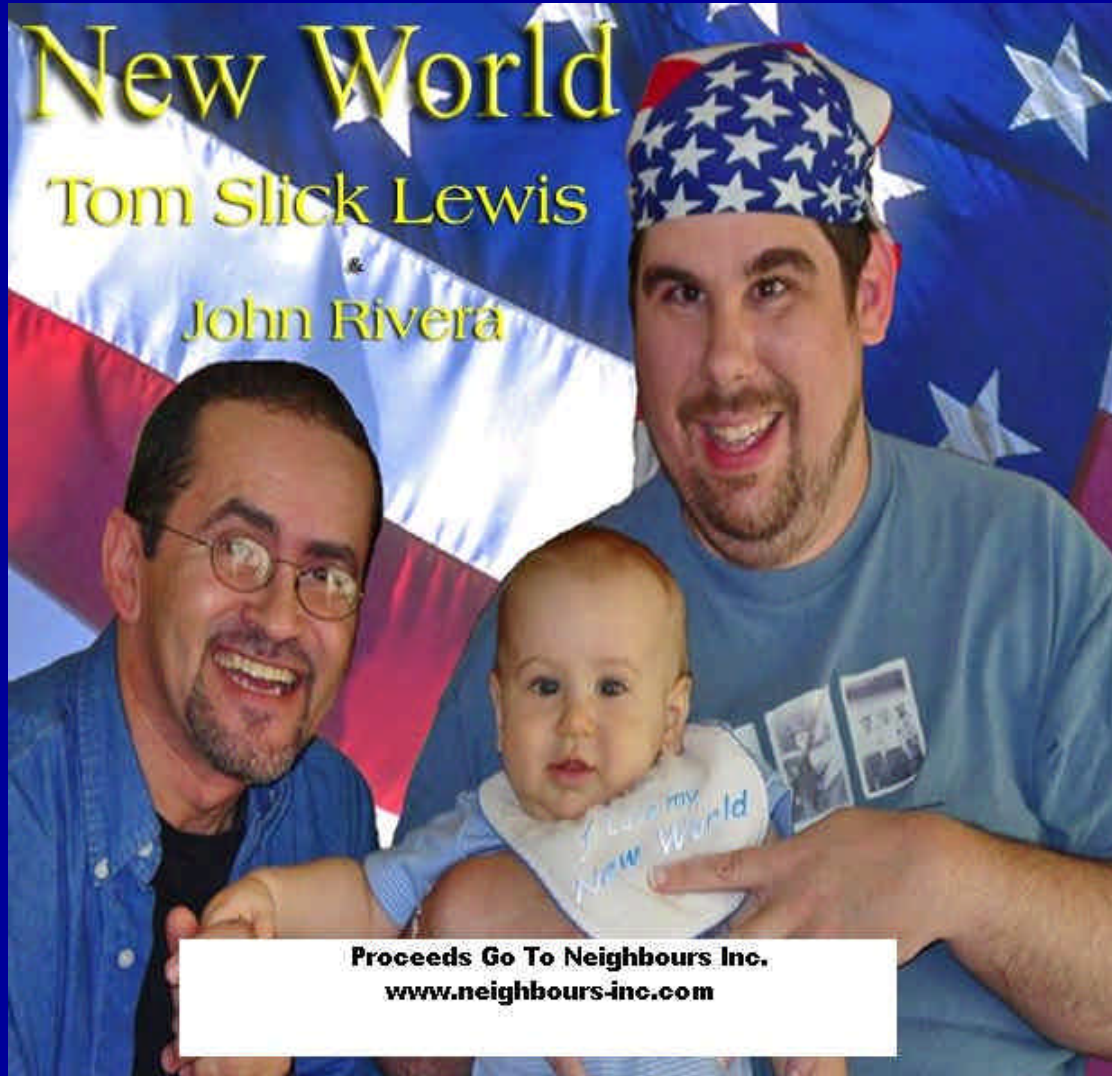
After Ronnie heard this, she began urging me to finish the CD. She said it would be a great vehicle to help other people. I was stoked. John and I went to work again and before we knew it we had about ten songs completed and the front and back covers designed.

My Map

People who support me at work, school, training

People whose job to support me at home and other places





New World

Tom Slick Lewis

&

John Rivera

Proceeds Go To Neighbours Inc.
www.neighbours-inc.com

I have met so many people in the past year.....

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

...we even had a premier party to launch my first CD.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.



Friends, my parents, and associates gathered at my home and brainstormed for hours. I had a wall full of hopes and dreams to accomplish in my life. I will share with you my dream about becoming a recording artist driving a customized bus from gig to gig. But for now, I have the courage and confidence to pursue my dreams.

I thought I could sell the CD and give the proceeds to a family or an individual who needed help. I am selling enough CD's to be able to help a family build a fence so their loved one with a disability has a safe and secure place to enjoy the out doors.

I am also working on my second CD. It's upbeat, happy and fun music to hear. For now I'm writing music and helping those I can. This makes me extremely happy.

Tom's Websites

<http://mywebpages.comcast.net/tlewis140/>

<http://www.myspace.com/tomslickandjohn>

Neighbours, Inc
49 Woodbridge Ave
Highland Park, NJ 08904
neighbours-inc.com
patti.scott@earthlink.net