

## Green Chimneys Children's Services: Serving the Mission By Updating Accounting

Green Chimneys Children's Services (GCCS) is the kind of nonprofit that makes a special impact on people's lives. The organization runs a farm/camp in a picturesque part of New York State. At this amazing location, they offer everything from outdoor learning and activities to therapeutic special education. Kids from all backgrounds have an unparalleled opportunity to interact with animals, connect with nature, and develop as individuals in a supportive and structured environment. Not surprisingly, kids and parents alike absolutely love what GCCS has to offer.



Multiple funding sources sustain the mission including direct giving, corporate support, and stock donations. By the late 90s, the nonprofit was relying on a custom-developed program called TESCO to handle accounting. According to McMillon Chatham, Accounting Manager at GCCS, the software had become woefully outdated by that point.

"The main problem with the system was that it was DOS-based. It wasn't very user-friendly and it couldn't generate allocated reports, which is what we really needed. We ended up doing most things in Excel."

Even though this solution was custom-developed, it had long outlived its value. By the early 2000s, GCCS was eager to find a solution that made accounting easier, not harder.

### UPDATING ACCOUNTING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

"Our main priorities for a new system were a better interface and expanded reporting capabilities. Being able to avoid Excel was especially important for us. We wanted one system that could run all our allocated reports on demand," says Chatham.

"We learned about Community Brands MIP®, and through them, we learned about JMT Consulting. After several meetings, we felt confident this was the right product and the right provider, so we decided to move forward with implementation."

Given the inadequacies of the previous fund accounting system, GCCS was eager to get a stronger solution up and running as quickly as possible. The local community is extremely supportive of GCCS, so much so that a woman with relevant experience and extra time volunteered to come in to help with the data transfer. Her generous efforts combined with guidance and assistance from the team at JMT helped GCCS embrace an entirely new approach to fund accounting.

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**MCMILLON CHATHAM**  
ACCOUNTING MANAGER  
GREEN CHIMNEYS

## ACCOUNTING WITH EASE AND ACCURACY

Working with JMT Consulting and MIP has transformed how GCCS thinks about its finances.

Chatham says the user-friendly interface adds a lot of efficiency to how the team works. "Getting information into this program is incredibly easy. It's a piece of cake compared to our DOS program. We used to have to key everything in by hand. Now it takes a couple of clicks to upload the data we need into MIP."

Working with the data is equally improved. "We also like the vast variety of reporting options. It helps us with analysis, with our 990s, with auditing, all the different reporting we need to do for federal agencies. MIP has made life so much easier."

Saving time has led to higher productivity across the accounting department. But the benefits don't stop there. GCCS has a mission of "helping our young people maximize their potential by providing residential, educational, clinical, and recreational services." Great accounting plays an important role in that according to Chatham:

"MIP supports our mission in that it allows us to file various state reports that are instrumental for maximizing our funding. The accounting infrastructure in MIP also helps us comply with accounting rules, resulting in a clean audit every year and keeping us in compliance to preserve our funding."

Community Brands MIP®, in no uncertain terms, helps GCCS sustain and expand the amazing work it does. The partnership with JMT Consulting has been just as productive. "It's always been positive," says Chatham. "They are only a 2-3 minute drive from our location. Having them local provides peace of mind because you get to know the team on a personal level and you get answers to questions immediately. They are professional in all their interactions and we have a very smooth working relationship. The annual Innovate Conference that JMT hosts is also really helpful. We definitely plan to continue working with them."

GCCS is like a lot of nonprofits – working with accounting tools that can't keep up with their ambitions. No amount of patience or workarounds will fix an underwhelming and outdated system. Using a modern solution with guidance from a nonprofit partner makes life easier on accountants. More importantly, it makes mission-based organizations stronger overall. GCCS is proof.

### CHALLENGE

Handling fund accounting using a DOS-based system that lacked user-friendly features or developer support. Excel was used to conduct most accounting workloads, which ate up a lot of time and resources yet offered minimal reporting capabilities.

### RESULTS

GCCS got precisely what it was hoping for – a suite of user-friendly tools with expansive reporting capabilities. Once MIP was in place, efficiency increased, errors decreased, and reporting became an asset that made the entire organization stronger.

### SOLUTION

Relying on JMT Consulting to replace the old system with Community Brands MIP® for fund accounting.

### Ready to optimize your back office processes?

Nonprofits count on us to deliver the finance, development, and productivity solutions that these unique organizations require to meet their goals of sustainability and mission effectiveness.

Let us show you how we can help your organization, too.