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**National Chapter Director: Joe Tremontozzi • 321-480-9806
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Dear Friend,

I appreciate your interest in starting a Special Touch Chapter. Chapters are birthed and led by passionate, dedicated volunteers longing to serve the concerns of people impacted by disability. There are a staggering 58-million people with disabilities in America, the largest unreached people group in our nation. Statistics indicate that over 80% of people with disabilities do not attend church at all. By starting a Chapter, you have an opportunity to make a difference in their lives and your community. I hope you will seriously consider becoming a part of the Special Touch Chapter team.

The process it takes to become a Special Touch Chapter may seem slow, but in order to make a difference in your community, it is critical that you build a strong team of committed leaders. In some cases, the person with the passion to initiate a chapter is not necessarily the leader who organizes the team.

Over the last 20 years, Special Touch Ministry, Inc. has developed a training program that will walk you through each step and give your team all the tools necessary to lead a healthy and lasting Special Touch Chapter in your community. The following pages will explain more of this process.

I am really excited about your interest in developing this life-changing and powerful ministry in your community. People with disabilities are waiting for you to give them the chance to be a part of something great! I hope to hear from you soon and look forward to the opportunity of working together!

It is my privilege to serve as the Special Touch National Chapter Director. Please contact me with any questions or concerns you may have. Thank you for your interest!

Sincerely,

Joe Tremontozzi

Rev. Joe Tremontozzi

U.S. Missionary to People with Disabilities & their families

Special Touch Chapter Director

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Chapter Program Information

Marketplace Chapters

In 1989, the first Special Touch Chapter was birthed in Beaver Dam, WI. Since then, Chapters have spread to cities across America. Our overall mission... **to ease and enrich the lives of people impacted by disability.** Through each Chapter, connections are made between the community of people with disabilities, their families, specialized groups, and area churches. Special Touch Chapter meetings include fellowship, worship, fun activities, devotions, prayer, fundraising, and opportunities for people with disabilities to serve.

Special Touch Chapters also provide an opportunity to raise community awareness. Sponsors, donors, and annual Fundraisers help supply each Chapter with an operating budget, giving them the ability to respond to the vast needs of people with disabilities in their community.

Benefits of being a Special Touch Chapter

- Credibility & Exposure through a National Organization with over 30 years of ministry experience
- Access to a Network of speakers, presenters and sources of information
- Reliable Fundraising Opportunities
- Regular and Ongoing Training
- Word Walk Chapter Curriculum
- Limited Liability Insurance Coverage for Chapter Meetings
- Brochures, Chapter logo, and access to tools for successful operation
- Nationally promoted web listing

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Special Touch Chapter?

A faith-based friendship group that meets regularly, enriching the lives of people with disabilities through the exchange of helpful information, resources, mentorship, encouragement, and opportunities for fun and friendship. Special Touch Ministry has Chapters in local communities all across the United States.

What is 'Marketplace Ministry'?

It's a concept that takes ministry into the community, outside the walls of the church building, opening doors for broader exposure and with that a greater opportunity to make a difference in more lives.

Outside of spiritual reasons, why is starting a Special Touch Chapter so important?

People who take part in support groups believe they can live healthier, happier lives if they spend time with others. Having emotional support makes it is easier to deal with health and social problems. The bonds formed between members of these groups help them feel stronger. They claim that sharing feelings and experiences within the group can reduce stress, fear, and anxiety and help to promote healing. People with disabilities are often encouraged by health care professionals to seek support from groups of people who have experience with similar issues. Being a part of a Special Touch Chapter, gives people with disabilities an opportunity to be involved with something bigger than themselves, thereby not allowing their disability to possibly consume them. In these ways, Special Touch Chapters can improve the quality of life for many people with disabilities.

What help will I receive in operating a Chapter?

A Special Touch Chapter has access to experienced leaders in disability ministry who are able to answer questions and guide the Chapter down a path of success. In addition to personal guidance a Special Touch Chapter receives a wealth of tools and materials designed to ease operations.

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Benefits of joining a Special Touch Chapter

- New Friendships with other people impacted by disability
- Support & Encouragement through shared experiences
- Fun Activities & Games

Goals of the Chapter Ministry:

- To provide support, resources, & opportunities to all people (including friends, family members, and caregivers) impacted by disability in the local community.
- To mentor our friends with disabilities to become involved in their community by serving others.
- To reach the unreached with the message of God's love, providing opportunities for friendships with other believers and inclusion in a church able to meet their needs.
- To raise a continuing generation of ministry to people with disabilities.

Mission: to ease and enrich the lives of people impacted by disability.

Vision: to provide faith-based support and response to the needs that arise in the disability community.



serving the concerns of people with disabilities

Frequently Asked Questions *(continued)*

Where do Special Touch Chapters meet?

By beginning the local Special Touch Chapter in the community the goal of connecting people with disabilities to a church of their choice can be better achieved. Special Touch Chapter monthly meetings take place in public locations that are easily accessible. A community center, YMCA, hotel conference room, park, or Christian school are great locations for meeting. Easy access to public transportation is also considered when choosing a meeting location.

How much does starting and running a Special Touch Chapter cost?

When core leaders commit to starting a Special Touch Chapter they are taught how to successfully raise funds for operation and acquire a charter Fee of \$1200 per year. Special Touch Chapter attendees **will not be** assessed admission or membership fees. There are no monthly dues based on the number of participants. The basic costs are the annual charter fee and 5% donation processing fee. Tools and Materials are optional and available for additional costs.

How much time would a Chapter leader be volunteering?

Time spent for each person in the Special Touch Chapter is different. While some people may work full-time jobs, others may be retired. In the beginning core leaders may put in a lot of time, but as other leaders and volunteers are trained to assist, that is reduced.

What does being a Special Touch Chapter legally mean?

Special Touch Chapters are official entities of Special Touch Ministry, Inc. Special Touch Chapters are included in the Special Touch Ministry 501(c)3 nonprofit status. As a Special Touch Chapter applying for a separate local EIN or tax exempt number, state business and solicitation registration, bank account, or regular tax reporting to federal, state, and local governments, is unnecessary. Special Touch Ministry takes care of government reporting for all Special Touch Chapters.

As a member of a 501c3, a Special Touch Chapter can legally solicit funds and donors will be able to claim tax credit (based on applicable IRS tax donation laws). Special Touch Chapter meetings are covered under the Special Touch liability insurance policy. Special Touch Chapters also receive other services as outlined earlier.

Who are Special Touch Chapters accountable to?

Special Touch Chapters are accountable to the leadership and board of Special Touch Ministry, Inc.



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SPECIAL TOUCH CHAPTER START-UP GUIDE

1. Gather as many people as possible interested in being a part of a Special Touch Chapter in your community. Have one or more informational gatherings to share your vision and find out who is committed enough to join you.
2. Once you have 12 dedicated people, most are part of two or three churches and are committed to being a part of the Special Touch Chapter (Core Group), Contact the Special Touch National Chapter Director. You will receive **Request to Organize** and Chapter **Community Sponsorship** paperwork as well as access to the online Chapter Manual.
3. Hold a meeting with your core group. (While you will begin the meeting with prayer, this is a business-style meeting, so you will not have worship or bible study.) At this meeting you will review the Special Touch Chapter manual with the Core Group in order to better understand what is required of everyone. Complete the **Request to Organize form** and return to the Special Touch National Office.
4. The core group then begins the process of gathering sponsors for the Special Touch Chapter (explained in the **Community Sponsorship** section of the manual).
5. When \$1200 has been sent in, contact the Special Touch National Chapter Director to receive a **Special Touch Chapter Application Kit**. (only sent Oct 1-March 31)
6. Promptly hold a meeting with the Core Group in order to complete the **Special Touch Chapter Application Kit**. Return all completed forms to the National Office **within 60 days of receiving**. Any incomplete or inaccurate paperwork can delay your application process.
7. After paperwork is processed, you will receive **Official Special Touch Chapter Certification** (Welcome Packet) from the Special Touch National Office.
8. The **Welcome Packet** contains a few additional forms you will want to return in order to receive more tools for the successful running of the local Special Touch Chapter.
9. Call a Special Touch Chapter Business Meeting (Core-Group Meeting) to ratify the Special Touch Chapter Officers, determine additional fundraising needs and plan “kick-off” of the first local Special Touch Chapter meeting.
10. HOLD THE FIRST OFFICIAL SPECIAL TOUCH CHAPTER MEETING IN YOUR COMMUNITY!!!
CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

All materials including this Chapter Start-up Guide, the Chapter Manual, all Chapter Informational and Application Packets, and all Special Touch Ministry, Inc. printed, video formatted, or web based materials are federally protected by the copyright laws of the United States. Copying of materials without the written permission of Special Touch Ministry, Inc. is expressly prohibited.



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Chapter Core Group

The Chapter Core Group will support the vision of Special Touch Ministry, Inc. While many of the monthly operations are led by the Chapter Officers, within the Core Group, the remaining core group members create a partnership in leading and overseeing the local Special Touch Chapter.

Qualifications: Special Touch Chapter Core Group members are leaders and as such they need to be trustworthy, optimistic, decisive, self-motivated, and passionately share a commitment and dedication to the Special Touch Ministry vision. Special Touch Core Group members can be business owners, pastors, or other community leaders.

Responsibilities:

- Meet on a regular basis to discuss and coordinate Special Touch Chapter business, approve spending, per budget and collectively make all decisions concerning the local Special Touch Chapter in alignment with mission, vision, policies, and guidelines outlined in the Chapter Manual (suggested monthly)
- Ensure that the Special Touch Chapter is current in reporting requirements (monthly)
- Participate and assist in Special Touch Chapter Meetings and Community Events
- Participate and assist in all fundraising endeavors (Community Sponsorship Program, National Fundraiser as well as other local fundraising events)
- Gather annually to review Special Touch Chapter Officer positions, plan the annual Chapter Calendar and Budget, and complete all necessary renewal paperwork
- Be accountable to each other and to the Special Touch National Chapter Director in fulfilling the ministry vision

All Chapter Officers:

- Born-again believers in the Lord Jesus Christ
- Regularly attend a Bible believing church,
- Regularly read the Bible, have a basic knowledge of God's Word, and seek daily fellowship with the Lord
- Exhibit leadership abilities
- Have the agreement of spouse (if married) - While a husband and wife may serve in the Special Touch Chapter Core group, it is not recommended that both hold Officer positions
- Commit to regular participation in all Special Touch Chapter meetings and events
- Are in full agreement with Special Touch Ministry, Inc. Vision & Policies
- Submit to an annual application process, including criminal background check and reference review
- Are capable of using current communication technology (internet, phone, email, etc) and have a working email address. **All officers will be required to regularly communicate by email.**
- Mentor youth and Chapter constituency to serve in ministry roles within the Chapter

Chapter Officers

Chapter President

Qualifications: Along with the qualifications of all Chapter Officers listed above, a Special Touch Chapter President needs to be able to communicate verbally and in writing at a professional level. This individual needs to have the ability to effectively communicate, interact, and work with a wide range of constituencies in a diverse community. The ability of the Chapter President to motivate individuals and groups as well as simultaneously manage several projects is crucial to the success of a Special Touch Chapter. **Again, this person will be required to regularly communicate by email.**

Responsibilities:

- Is the local Special Touch Chapter spokesperson
- Presides over all Chapter Meetings
- Works with the Core Group in promoting the Special Touch Chapter to the local community for the purpose of fundraising and increasing attendance
- Develops, with input from the Core Group, the entire Chapter Calendar of Events for the year. This includes Monthly Chapter meetings, Core group business meetings, fundraisers, and Special Touch Chapter community events
- Develops, with input from the Core Group, the annual budget for the Chapter
- Works with the Chapter Secretary to develop a process of regular communication to Chapter leaders and constituency
- Works each month with Chapter Core Group and Volunteers to produce public Chapter Meetings
- Regularly meets and develops connections with local business contacts and community leaders
- Regularly verifies communications, reports, and financial requests between the local Chapter and Special Touch National Office are effectively and efficiently being handled

Chapter Vice-President

Qualifications: The Special Touch Chapter Vice-President needs to meet similar qualifications to those of the President. In the event that the Chapter President is not able to perform the duties of this office, the Chapter Vice-President should be willing and able to fill-in their role. **Again, this person will be required to regularly communicate by email.**

Responsibilities

- Assists, where necessary, the Chapter President and other officers in performance of their duties
- Assumes all duties of the President upon the President's absence

Chapter Secretary

Qualifications: A Special Touch Chapter Secretary also needs to be able to communicate verbally and in writing at a professional level. Having a general understand of word processing and promotional design programs is also important. The Chapter Secretary typically performs the role of Chapter contact person (see below). To effectively perform their duties, the Chapter Secretary should have access to a working updated computer fully compatible with all office programs and connected to the Internet.

Responsibilities

- Works with the Chapter President and Core Group to develop and produce all Chapter Promotion and Correspondence
- Each month, provides all reports and other communication to the Special Touch National Office using online forms provided
- Gathers, compiles and provides copies to the National Office of all local Chapter promotions, advertising, published articles, testimonies, and photos
- Facilitates the communication between the Special Touch National Office and the local Chapter

Chapter Treasurer

Qualifications: A Special Touch Chapter Treasurer also needs to be able to communicate in writing at a professional level. Having an understanding of business finances as well as being comfortable working with budgets and financial statements is crucial to successfully performing all the responsibilities of the Chapter Treasurer. The Special Touch Chapter Treasurer will receive regular financial communication and reports, by email, from the Bookkeeping staff of the Special Touch National Office. **Again, this person will be required to regularly communicate by email.**

Responsibilities

- Works with the Special Touch Core Group to complete an annual budget. Holds the Special Touch Chapter Core Group accountable to the annual budget set in place.
- Collects and handles all Chapter money, mailing along with the correct paperwork to the Special Touch National Office in a timely manner
- Works with the Special Touch National Office Accounting Department on matters related to budget and finance
- Follows all Special Touch Chapter Financial policies as outlined in the Chapter Manual

Policy Note

Along with an initial application process, Special Touch Chapter Officers and Core Group Members will be required to complete annual paperwork. This is outlined in Chapter 6: **The first Year** of the Chapter Manual.

Chapter Contact Person

The Chapter Contact Person is chosen when creating a Special Touch Chapter. Typically this individual is the Chapter Secretary. **Again, this person will be required to regularly communicate by email.** If it is another Chapter Officer the following is required:

- Has a valid email address and phone number which will be printed on business cards, web listing, and ministry promotions
- Has computer experience and access to a computer and printer
- Returns all communication (phone and email) in a timely manner
- Informs Special Touch National Office of any Special Touch Chapter meeting or contact changes along with upcoming events

Chapter Event Coordinator

This officer position is not required for a Chapter to initially begin as the entire Chapter Core Group can fulfill the responsibilities of this position. It is highly recommended that a Chapter find someone to serve as Chapter Event Coordinator by the beginning of the first renewal. **Again, this person will be required to regularly communicate by email.**

Qualifications: A Special Touch Chapter Event Coordinator needs to be an effective facilitator. Having the skills to implement a plan, delegate responsibilities, as well as asking for donations are key factors in being an effective event Coordinator. Self-motivation and multi-tasking skills are a must.

Responsibilities

- With input from the Core group, this individual plans, coordinates and facilitates all Special Touch local Chapter Events (such as Disability Awareness Day) and fundraisers (National fundraiser and all local fundraisers).
- Works with the Special Touch National Office to make certain legal and financial requirements are met for Special Touch Chapter fundraising and other special events
- Promotes Special Touch Chapter events to local media (Newspaper, Radio, Television, etc.)

Chapter Volunteers

There are many opportunities for people to serve as volunteers of a Special Touch Chapter. Volunteers can make meals, help with crafts and activities, lead and perform worship, as well as be a part of community events and fundraisers.

Policy Note

Only Chapter Officers and volunteers who have been approved by the Special Touch National Office (through an annual application process) are allowed to serve in “hands-on” positions. **Hands-on** positions would be ones in which a volunteer needs to be in the personal space of an individual in order to assist them. In order to keep costs affordable we are asking that Chapters do not have more than 10 combined total of Officers and Hands-On Volunteers per year.

Chapter Constituency

As a Special Touch Chapter first develops, the Chapter Core-Group determines the type of constituency they desire to serve. As the Special Touch Chapter program is not designed to provide hands-on or respite care to those attending meetings... teaching, service, and fellowship for an independent group of people with physical disabilities differs greatly from that given to an entire group of people with intellectual disabilities attending with their Caregivers.

As a Chapter grows you will find many other people impacted by disability, those types you are not serving, along with friends as well as family members who have specific spiritual needs your Chapter may desire to fill.

Serving varied abilities of constituents means providing additional meetings or events tailored specifically to them. In order not to become overwhelmed, please consult with Special Touch National Chapter Director before adding additional Chapter services outside what is outlined in the following section.