

# A Life in Pursuit of Thriving for All

The story of and by Chris and his lifelong pursuit of  
a thriving future - all thrive forever.



*“all thrive forever”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

Gary “Chris” Christopherson

Founder, Thrive! – Building a Thriving Future

Founder, HealthPeople – Building a Healthy Future

Sculptor, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

Former Senior Executive, U.S. Federal Government

Nelson, WI

University Park, MD

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**DEDICATION AND THANKS  
TO**

*People who help build, achieve,  
and sustain a healthy and thriving  
future for all forever.*

*Dr. Patricia N. Haeuser, Friend and Supporter*

*Irene and Lynn Christopherson, Nurturing and Supportive Parents*



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# About Chris

## A Life in Pursuit of Thriving for All

This is the story of and by Chris [Gary “Chris” Christopherson] and his lifelong pursuit of a thriving future – all thrive forever. It begins and ends in rural western Wisconsin. But so much happens, much in Washington (DC), in the intervening 70+ years.

Chris has spent his college and adult life preparing for and pursuing a thriving future for all. The powerful vision is “**All Thrive Forever**”<sup>®</sup>. “All” is every human, all other creatures and Earth. “Thrive” is everybody and everything doing well. “Forever” is as long a future as possible.

At this time in human history when we desire to thrive, when we need to survive, when our future is most endangered, and when we are most capable, **Thrive!**<sup>®</sup>, all of us together, can and must build, achieve and sustain this thriving future. This is why Chris created Thrive! and **Thrive! Endeavor**<sup>®</sup> and why he continues its mission. [ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org)

Chris dedicated his life to public service in a career that spanned over 30 years. Throughout his career, he worked toward building a thriving and surviving future. Initially focused on health (**HealthePeople**<sup>®</sup>). Later focused on everything that determines survival and thriving. (Thrive!) Much of this public service, as Senior Executive, was with U.S. Federal government. Much took place in Washington (DC). [HealthePeople.com](http://HealthePeople.com)

Chris created the Thrive! Center. Created from restored/renovated 1885 farm with farmhouse, beehouse and barn and located on Mississippi River bluffside in rural Wisconsin. Center houses Thrive!, HealthePeople and Thrive! Sculpture by GChris. Center is nestled within public Thrive! Park. Chris is a sculptor of abstract art, creating over 200 “Thrive! Sculptures by GChris” over 50 years. He has had his own galleries. He wrote and illustrated several fiction books for children and people of all ages. All sculpture and fiction supports the Thrive! vision and mission. [GChris.com](http://GChris.com)

Chris created Thrive! to push a positive view and future. Thrive! manifests itself in Chris’ many nonfiction books, websites, blogs, and eMedia messages and images. All advance the Thrive! vision and mission.

All this is for and is the thriving future Chris has been and continues pursuing with Thrive!. Though time is running out, Chris still has hope. Chris still believes that humans can move beyond current selfishness and shortsightedness and build and achieve a thriving future for all.

All Thrive Forever!







## **Chapter 1. Personal Life in Pursuit of Thriving for All**

This is the story of and by Chris [Gary “Chris” Christopherson] and his lifelong pursuit of a thriving future – all thrive forever. It begins and ends in rural western Wisconsin. But so much happens, much in Washington (DC), in the intervening 70+ years.

### **Birth (1948) Through High School (1966) Through Present**

Gary’s (Chris’) life began on February 25, 1948 in St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Wabasha (MN), a small rural community on the Wisconsin and Minnesota border and along the Mississippi River. The total bill for his prenatal care and hospital delivery was about \$125.

Gary was born to Irene and Lynn Christopherson, a farm family living in a valley just about five miles east of the Mississippi River and less than ten miles from the hospital. He had two Siblings - Bonnie (older sister) and Randy (younger brother).

Their original home was partly a log house with additions. Later a new house was built near where the old house had been.

In the original home, heating was by a large basement furnace that used both wood and coal. The furnace tended to either produce too much or too little heat in the winter. The firewood for the furnace was stored in a woodshed and was carried into the basement by hand. Gary was often the person who carried the firewood.

## ***Relationships***

*During his life, Gary was extremely fortunate to have close relationships with three women. To protect their privacy, he does not go into detail about those relationships. The first close relationship was with Lana Cook during his senior year in high school (1965-66) and for a short time later. The second, closest and longest relationship began in college with Patricia Haeuser whom he married in 1970, remained married for almost twenty years, divorced by mutual agreement, and remained closely connected for the next thirty plus years. The third close relationship was with Aimee Ebersold starting in 2016 and ending after about two years.*

In the early days, the original house had no internal plumbing. The bathroom was a multi-holed outhouse just west of the house. Later, the house gained a fully functioning bathroom and running water. The water came from a hillside windmill powered pump feeding a cistern that fed a pipe down into the house and barn.

The kitchen had a somewhat slanted floor that provided great opportunity to roll things down it. The kitchen stove was a wood stove which provided challenges for my mother to cook on and in. Sometimes in the winter, the area behind the stove became a temporary home for baby pigs who needed a warm place to survive. They were very cute.

When people are asked for their first phone number, some older people may give a four or five-digit phone number. Not in this house at this time. The first phone number for Gary's family was a simple long and a short and a long. This was accomplished by hand crank on side of a wooden phone box with separate speaking and hearing parts. Privacy was not to be had as the phone was on a party line. When the phone rang, everyone on the party line knew whose it was and could listen in. It was a bit challenging for Gary, as well as the rest of the family, if he wanted a private date-related conversation.

Near the house was a very large willow tree which served as a major play area for Gary and his siblings. Big limbs to climb. Sitting in the large crotch of the large tree provided a great opportunity to peruse the surrounding world.

Further west of the house was Trout Creek, a small creek with few if any fish and no trout. A few spots in the creek were just deep enough for a small bit of swimming. Next to the creek was a marsh, home to many frogs being very loud at night. The whippoorwills could be heard at night.

The farm was nestled in a valley between two hills in the Driftless Area. Though smaller at the time of his birth, it ultimately covered 655 acres of tillable and wooded land. Characteristic of farms of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a farm with a mix of animals and crops. Diversity as a way to ensure a basic income. Animals included dairy cattle, beef cattle, chickens and pigs. Crops included corn, hay and oats. It also had a fairly large garden partly tilled and cultivated by two older work horses, Pearl and Jewel.

Compared to other farms of its size, it had just a small amount of equipment. A small Ford tractor (8N), plow, disk, cultivator, manure spreader, wagon and loose hay loader. Harvesting of the corn and oats were mainly done by hiring other people. In the early days, the oats and straw were separated by a community crew using an old-time threshing machine.

The dairy cows were milked using a hand-carried milking machine moved from cow to cow who stood in stations. Sometimes the cows would express their dissatisfaction by kicking the person milking. Milk was carried into the milk house and prepared and stored in milk cans to be picked up. The heavy cans had to be lifted up into a truck. Later the milk was held in a bulk tank before being picked up. One time Gary forgot to turn on the bulk tank for cooling and the milk was pretty much ruined.

As was indicated by the milking process, farming was not easy. Cleaning barns by hand in cold winter or hot summer. Pulling milk weeds every summer in the hot sunny fields. Gary hated the heat, the weed pulling and the sticky hands. Hated following the cultivator on a hillside corn field and uncovering the corn covered over by the cultivator unable to stay within the hillside corn rows. He sometimes walked nearly a mile to get the dairy cows in the dark with only their dog, Sparky to help find the cows. Sometimes, he had to listen for mooing cows to locate them in a large pasture.

In both summer and fall, oats and hay needed to be harvested. For the hay, especially in August, the hay mow was getting full, nearing the roof. The late summer heat made the hay mow almost unbearable. Dust filled the air. Gary was moving hay bales and stacking them near the top of the hay mow. For the oats, Gary would be in the top of the granary shoveling the oats as they were pushed in. It was hot. The granary was full of dust so thick it was hard to see or breathe. In both cases, only a loose bandana limited the inhaled dust.

Then there were times when the work became almost too routine. Hiking up a bluff road to retrieve cattle one day, Gary was just walking along the bluff road as he had many times before. Oblivious to his surroundings. Maybe halfway up the bluff road, he heard a sound. Behind him. He turned to see a coiled rattlesnake coiled up in the center of the bluff road. Just about a foot from where he had just walked. Fortunately, rattlesnakes are pretty docile and are not prone to bite unless seriously provoked. They reserve their bites and venom for food, small creatures. Gary was not a small enough creature and not really rattlesnake food.

**Early Education**

	<b>Name and Location of School</b>	<b>Area of Study</b>	<b>Degree Received</b>
<b>Grade School</b>	Trout Creek School, Alma, WI Nelson Grade School, Nelson, WI	General	Grade School Graduation
<b>High School</b>	Alma High School, Alma, WI	General	High School Graduation

Education began in a one-room schoolhouse just south of the family farm and about a mile from the house. The school had one teacher and eighteen students. They covered all the grades, except the third grade. There was apparently a “bad” year in which no Trout Creek area babies were born. One winter the stove was left on overnight and overheated the schoolhouse. Morning came with almost all the crayons melted inside the student desks. Playtime was play for all the grades together. One of the excursions was to go down to Trout Creek for frogs and fish. Unfortunately, there were not trout, only chubs. Sometimes the creek was referred to disparagingly as Chub Creek.

For Gary, this one room schoolhouse was perfect. Every day he sat in the front row. He could see, hear, and absorb not only his first grade learning but also the learning from all the other grades. This would prove to be a great benefit after the one-room schoolhouse was closed and he began school at the Nelson (WI) School.



Trout Creek Grade School, 1955, rural Alma (WI)  
Gary is the student in the front desk.

Gary's favorite toy was a red dump truck that he could sit in and pedal. Never easily, as the only place to go was the fairly rough lawn and path. He did lots of pretend play, especially when he would go get the milk cows and hike in the valley and the hills.

Once in his life, Gary got to go trick or treating by going from the farm into the big Village of Nelson (population of about 400 people) where his friends and he went out and essentially covered the whole Village in one night. Before going out, he watched TV for one of the first times, watching the cartoon Tom Terrific. His family would get television a few years later.

The Nelson school had once been both an elementary and high school. The high school was closed just before Gary began grade school. Every day he would ride the yellow school bus through the valley and over the hills picking up other students. He spent his second through eighth grades at the Nelson School.

One of the benefits of it having been a high school was that it had a lab on the upper floor. Much of the lab apparatus remained. Gary and another student would often sneak up to the lab and play around with the lab equipment.

It also had a small high school gym. Gary played basketball in it. Since he was one of the tallest eighth graders, he got to play center. This height advantage would never happen again. He was never particularly good but just good enough to play for a small grade school. The gym had one issue. The ends of the court were also the walls. Not an easy or safe place to do a layup without crashing into the wall.

Going to the Nelson School was not always a good thing. Like many students, Gary was bullied.

Outdoor entertainment was often softball in a large field between the school and the bluff. Always great fun but a bit challenging for a left hander. In those days, there were almost no left-handed softball gloves. As a result, Gary, usually playing in the outfield, would have to catch the ball in the glove, drop the glove and then throw the ball.

Entertainment was limited. Occasionally, Gary and others would go down into a large drainage ditch by the school with a large pipe going all the way to the Mississippi River backwaters. It was dark, long and not very tall. Often at lunch time, Gary and others would walk down to the main street grocery store and buy penny root beer barrels. They made the trip back up the hill to the school a bit sweeter.

The church minister tried to get Gary to become a minister but Gary had no interest. One last attempt by the minister was to have Gary play a minister in the Christmas program and wear the black minister robe. Nice try but it did not work.

In the summertime, Gary often attended vacation bible school. Often, kids would play on the school ground outdoor basketball court. Playing kickball one day, Gary ran to catch a flying ball over his shoulder. He was running as fast and as hard as he could. What he did not realize was that he was running to the large metal structure housing swings and a slide. Running at full speed, he hit a large horizontal bar right on the bridge of his nose. Knocked him to the ground and bleeding. Later, it was clear the nose was broken. It was never reset. As a result, Gary has somewhat restricted nose breathing all his life.

Cattle often made life interesting. One time, Gary's family and he were moving Hereford beef cattle up the hill behind the barn. A mother cow thought he was threatening her calf and proceeded to angrily chase him up the steep bluffs. Finally, just when she was about to catch him, he instinctively reached back his hand. That broke her concentration. She slipped and stopped. He made it safely away. Very lucky.

Graduating from the Nelson School in the last full year before the school closed, Gary went on to high school at the Alma (WI) High School, a public school with less than 200 students total. Because of his work on the farm, Gary was not allowed to do sports. Probably not a great loss since he was never particularly good at sports.

Gary went deer hunting once. Fell down a snowy, slippery hillside and cut his hand on the shotgun trigger area. Bleeding badly, he decided he did not like hunting or killing deer. The deer had won.

Gary's first car was burgundy Corvair, a fun car but not the greatest for staying on the road. During his later high school years, Gary had lots of car accidents, mostly due to his falling asleep. One night coming home, he ran off the road and down an embankment, left the car leaning against a fence and went home and slept. Waking before dawn to help milk cows, he told his father. Together and still fairly dark, his father and he went to get the car, sawed through the bottom of a fence post, cut the wires, drove the car out and patched the fence. Not sure what was thought when fence owner found the sawed off fence post just sitting loosely on top of the base.

It was during Gary's senior high school year, that he met and dated Lana Cook. A sophomore student who transferred into the school. They were very close throughout the year but went different ways after he graduated.

His senior year was a tragic year. It was Easter weekend 1966. He lost his Father, Lynn Christopherson. In spring of 1966, his father, his grandfather, and he were relocating a television wire from the west bluff to the east bluff. A single wire was used to connect a blufftop antenna down to the house's television. His father was pulling the wire up the bluffside and Gary and his grandfather were down near the house.

At one point, the wire got stuck on a tree on the bluffside. His father pulled hard on the wire to get it unstuck. When it came unstuck, it bounced upward. It hit a high tension power line. A flash. Then no sound. Everyone knew something awfully bad had happened. His father did not respond to calls. Gary ran up the bluffside and into the woods. He found his father lying on the ground. His father had been electrocuted and died immediately. A major tragedy for the family.

The rest of the summer was spent farming and figuring out what to do next with the farm. That fall, Gary was to begin his studies at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. His father was always clear that Gary was not to be a farmer, was not to stay and was to leave and get a college education.

Fortunately, Gary was a very good student, earning very good grades throughout his high school years. He graduated with honors. At graduation, he was selected to give one of the graduation speeches. As was somewhat prophetic, he chose the theme “Profiles In Courage”, a link to President John F. Kennedy.

His mother sold the family farm the year after his father died. She moved to Nelson WI with his brother Randy and went to work at Alma School. She worked there for over a decade. She lived the rest of her life in the same house in Nelson. She passed away peacefully one night at age 98.

### ***Pets***

*During his life, Gary had five close pets. The first was farm dog, Sparky, a “hybrid” dog and part English Shepherd. The second was a Hereford calf named Princess. The third was Jacy, a “hybrid” dog who he shared with Patricia and who is buried near Camp David. Also shared with Patricia was Taj, a purebred Golden Retriever. She is buried on a mountain in Shenandoah National Park. Also shared with Patricia was GTI, a black cat who ran away one night and never returned.*



In college, Gary had a modified British racing green MG Midget. It was a fun nice car but it always had trouble with locking in second gear. This would require him to lie on his back, get under the car, open up the transmission and use two screwdrivers to unlock the gears. He even did so one New Year's Eve when it was around zero degrees. Driving it down a Nelson country road one night at a pretty good speed, he realized, at the last second, that he was on a T road rather than crossroads. He could not stop in time and went flying off into a cornfield. He used it one summer painting houses to earn college money. A great image was his very big adult friend trying to get out of the car with a big ladder sitting across the top of the car.

During years 1969-70, he started dating his greatest love, Patricia Nelse Haeuser. He had met her earlier when she was dating his freshman college roommate. They married on Memorial Day in 1970. Marriage was in the back yard of the house in which they were renting the upstairs. Attendees were just the immediate family, close friends, and their dog Jacy. The reception was at her Uncle's farm. Patricia, their friends and he spent that night on a sand bar in the Mississippi River. Visited often by a turtle.



Wedding photo, 1970, Madison, WI

Their marriage was based on a true partnership. One example was each supporting the other's effort to achieve a Doctor's degree. Patricia, strongly supported by Chris, successfully completed and received her Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee. Also strongly supported by Patricia, Chris completed most of his coursework and thesis work before deciding not to complete his Doctorate of Science at Johns Hopkins University in favor of a new position with the U.S. Congress.

During this time was the military draft and the draft lottery. Gary drew a fairly low number. He had to go for the draft physical in Minneapolis (MN) area which was then red light district. The draft physical was uncomfortable.

Rather than going into the military and facing going to war which he opposed, Gary became a conscientious objector (CO). When he was preparing his defense as a conscientious objector, Patricia and his friends helped prepare him by strongly challenging his views. He had great written support from a Wisconsin elected official, senior political leaders, the head of UW student affairs, two college professors and a high school teacher. His mother was very supportive, including going to the draft board. Patricia was a very strong supporter.

Gary's local draft board turned him down on the CO but he won on an appeal by a 3-2 vote of the State Board. He was re-classified from 1-A to 1-O. He was required to do two years of non-military service.

Beginning in 1971, Gary spent much of his conscientious objector service with the Center for Conflict Resolution. The Center for Conflict Resolution provided good learning about conflict resolution, creative problem solving, and integrative solutions. For the last portion of service beginning in 1972, he switched to Problem Solving, Inc. He completed his service in March 1973.

<p><b>NOTICE OF CLASSIFICATION</b></p> <p>This is to certify that</p> <p><b>Gary A. Christopherson</b></p> <p>(First name) (Middle initial) (Last name)</p> <p>Selective Service No.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">47</td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">48</td> <td style="width: 30px; text-align: center;">24</td> </tr> </table> <p>is classified in Class <u>1-O</u></p> <p>until</p> <p>by Local Board unless otherwise checked below:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> by Appeal Board vote of <u>3</u> to <u>2</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> by President</p> <p><u>11-4-70</u></p> <p>(Date of mailing)</p> <p><i>Oliver C. Norton</i></p> <p>(Member, Executive Secretary, or clerk of local board)</p> <p><i>Gary A. Christopherson</i></p> <p>(Registrant's signature)</p> <p>SSS Form 110 (Rev. 5-25-67) (Previous printings are obsolete) (Approval not required)</p>		47	6	48	24	<p>Gary Christopherson, Selective Service Classification as 1-O, Conscientious Objector</p>
47	6	48	24			



“conscientious objection”, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

One of the challenges for Gary throughout his professional career was that he always spoke too fast when he did speeches. One tool that helped was that he used to wear a rubber band on his wrist to remind himself to slow down. He also used to write the word "slow" on his speeches as another reminder. He was much better in later years but still speaks a bit too fast.

Over many years and continuing, Gary created and maintains a series of tools utilizing Excel spreadsheets. He uses them for laying out future strategies, personal resources, contact info, job opportunities and analysis, options for his property and living circumstances, etc.)

In 1983, Patricia and Chris purchased the home at 4327 Claggett Road in University Park, MD in the greater Washington, DC area. Patricia and Chris lived there for several years. For nearly 30 years (1983-2012), Chris lived in this home.

While shopping for a replacement vehicle in 1998, he decided to look at Jeeps. Out of the corner of his eye, he spied a red Jeep Wrangler. Though far from practical, he thought it would be fun to drive for a few years. He has already owned it for over 20 years and probably will never sell it.



Jeep on Skyline Drive in Shenandoah National Park

In 1999, Gary purchased a  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre wooded lot in Reads Landing (MN) as potential second home. It was a great place facing and along the Mississippi River with lots of eagles. Later, the property was donated to the University of Wisconsin Foundation to help support the Thrive! Scholarship Fund. Unfortunately, Wabasha County changed the rules for building and decided the lot was unbuildable. The result was that the lot lost almost all its value, at least \$25,000. Essentially, nothing was available to be used for the scholarship fund. Gary argued and fought against the change but the County would not budge.

In 2003, Gary purchased the E298 Cleveland Street, Nelson property and started restoring/renovating it for what would become the Thrive! Center.

He wrestled whether to live in Nelson or Washington, DC. He always loved living in the greater Washington (DC) area. But he had a great affection for the newly acquired Nelson bluffside property. For a while he was inclined to stay in the University Park (MD) house and maybe keep the Nelson property as well.

In 2012, he decided that it no longer made sense to have two homes located 1100 miles apart. He liked them both and decided to put both the University Park home and Nelson property up for sale at the same time. He was comfortable with going with whichever sold first. He decided he would try selling the University Park home himself. He had some help from a friend realtor.

In eight days, he sold the University Park home for full price of \$449,000, a price that was a bit higher than expected. The new owners wanted to move in as soon as possible. This forced Chris to move very quickly. He moved to the Nelson home in late October 2012.

But the move did not go well, Wheaton movers did the moving and destroyed or damaged several sculptures. After much back and forth, they paid damages of \$10,000.

As of 2012, Chris lives in the Village of Nelson (WI) at E298 Cleveland Street on a beautiful 30 acre Mississippi River bluffside property with an 1885 farmhouse, barn and beehouse that he fully renovated and with bald eagles (winter) and turkey vultures (summer) overhead. He lives there year-round. He set up the Nelson property as GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery using house, barn and two cargo containers. This property is now the home for the Thrive! Center.

In 2016, Gary was recruited to and agreed to serve as the President of the Alma High School Reunion for 2016, his 50<sup>th</sup> school reunion. Recent reunions suffered from declining interest and participation. He worked with his committee to give this and future reunions a better chance of surviving and thriving. Fortunately, the reunion was the best attended and most successful in the past many years. To help ensure future success, he created the model and recruited the leadership for the next three reunions.

Also, in 2016, Gary was recruited for and agreed to help with the Nelson School Reunion for 2016. This is the grade school that he attended second through eighth grades. Only intending to do so for a year, he continue to help in subsequent years.

He found a new close friend in 2016 named Aimee Ebersold. They became very close friends and were together for about two years.



Blufftop photo, taken about 1900, of Nelson property (lower center buildings and land) and surrounding area, Nelson (WI)

To be supportive of the shift from gas to more energy efficient electric powered vehicles, he bought a new blue Chevy Bolt in October 2017. To help with charging, he added a garage charging station. He also had an electric utility vehicle which he uses to maintain his property and Thrive! Park.



Chevy Bolt, All-electric Car

In 2019, his Mother, Irene Christopherson, passed away at age 98. While she had some health issues, it was her heart that finally gave way. She had an enlarged heart resulting from childhood health issues and a problem valve. Gary always told her she had a “very big heart”. She passed away in her sleep, just as she said she wished.

Over the years he lived on the Nelson property, he has been visited by many types of wildlife. Many types of birds – eagles, indigo buntings, hummingbirds, turkeys, turkey vultures, piliated woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, other woodpeckers, owls, red-tailed hawks, rose-breasted grosbeaks, goldfinches, and many others.

Many types of other animals – deer, raccoons (see three baby raccoons in bird bath photo), woodchucks, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, bobcat, and possum. By far the most impressive was the cougar in 2017 that walked by his house, set off the road alarm, stopped for a short time under a light by the barn, and cut an impressive figure standing crossway on the road with tail curled. Chris has “adopted” most of them (not the cougar) and feeds them daily.



Three baby raccoons in Chris’ bird bath, Nelson (WI)





## Chapter 2. Preparing for a Life in Pursuit of Thriving for All

### College Years (1966 – 1974)

#### College Education

	<b>Name and Location of School</b>	<b>Area of Study</b>	<b>Degree Received</b>
<b>College</b>	University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI	Political Science	B.A. (1970)
<b>Graduate School</b>	University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI	Philosophy	Graduate Courses (1970-71)
	University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI	Urban & Regional Planning	M.S. (1974)
	Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD	Health Services Administration	Graduate Coursework (1981-83) (Toward Sc.D. Degree)

Preparing for life in pursuit of thriving took its next step. Gary began his studies at the University of Wisconsin – Madison (UW). Earlier, he had considered going to Rice University but that was not financially feasible. UW-Madison was a great school at an affordable price and not too distant from his family.

The educational challenge he chose was a large one. Gary chose to begin his college education in pursuit of a degree in Nuclear Engineering. He had always been fascinated by the potential of nuclear energy to solve many of our energy supply issues. His main interest was in exploring the potential of nuclear fusion as a power source. At that time, very little had yet been done to explore that potential.

Unfortunately, Gary's high school education did not prepare him for the rigors of nuclear engineering. He did not do well. His grades were low. It was not going to work for him. He would have to find another path. He changed to Political Science.

In his freshman year, Gary lived in one of the lakeside dorms, common for freshmen. He loaned one of his reference books to another student in a nearby room. The student, accidentally, broke the book. Gary was not happy. For reprisal, Gary got into the student's room and placed a water balloon trap above the door. It worked quite well. The student, DS (Richard Schnetzler), is one his best friends.

In 1968, Gary was a student volunteer with the Bobbie Kennedy for President campaign. He campaigned door-to-door and attended a rally in Whiting, Indiana. All that ended when Bobbie Kennedy was assassinated. This was devastating for Gary.

Staying involved in politics in 1968, Gary worked on Wisconsin State democratic politics for a while with the State Party. He helped lead the student effort for Les Aspin (Treasurer), Richard Cudahy (Attorney General) and Fred Risser (State Senator).

Gary traveled to and attended parts of the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago. He was involved in the effort to get Teddy Kennedy drafted for the presidential nomination. Not successful. He was not really involved in the protests but experienced it all.

During these campaigns, he became good friends with an African-American Democratic activist who lived in southside Chicago. He invited Patricia and Gary to a party in his neighborhood.<sup>1</sup> When they arrived, they found they were the only white people at the party. It was a major education as to what it feels like to be a minority. Still, it was only for a few hours. His friend was a very gracious and supportive host.

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia always knew and referred to Gary as Chris.

Gary and Patricia participated in many demonstrations and marches while at UW, but always just as marchers. There was lots of tear gas. One scary moment was Gary coming across a machine gun mounted on a military jeep positioned behind Bascom Hall. Neither Patricia or Gary ever committed any violent or destructive act.

To help pay for college, Gary needed to work. Not being qualified, he still applied for job as light mechanic in a service station. Fortunately, the owner was sympathetic, hired him and trained him to be a light mechanic. He also allowed Gary to do repair work on Gary's Pontiac LeMans.

Gary received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science (1970) from the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

After the Bachelor's Degree, Gary did graduate work in Philosophy. He was known as someone who could not communicate well through writing. Several times he had to verbally explain to his professors what it was he was trying to communicate in writing. They were very accommodating.

Hegel and Plato were his two favorite philosophers and helped inspire much of his thinking. Key for Gary in philosophy was Plato's form's concept. He especially valued Plato's **The Republic**. Another key for Gary in philosophy was Hegel's Absolute Knowledge and the path to it. Gary rejected the use by some of Hegel's work as a justification for Hitler. Though very difficult to read, Gary found Hegel's **Phenomenology of Mind** to be a great and meaningful piece of philosophy.

By 1972, he had changed his graduate studies from Philosophy to Urban and Regional Planning. He took a wide range of courses, including from the Business School and Industrial Engineering (Ideal Systems) School. He created the concept of PLIMP (planning and implementation) and BEM (behavioral effectiveness model). During this time, Gary did an internship with the Goals for Madison project doing a citizen participation project in the City of Madison Planning Dept. His Master's thesis was entitled "People Planning - Increasing Planning Effectiveness by Working with User and Implementer Behavior." Gary received his Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Wisconsin – Madison in 1974.

Much later, during 1981-83 and while working full time for Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions on a program for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, he did doctoral work in health policy and management at the John Hopkins University School of Public Health. He completed almost all his coursework with high grades. He had chosen his doctoral thesis topic and had collected most of his thesis data.

But Gary decided to discontinue his pursuit of a Doctorate of Science from Johns Hopkins when he was offered the position of Director of Health Legislation for the House Select Committee on Aging. Patricia and he both wanted to move to Washington (DC).



## Chapter 3. Creating Thrive Sculpture and Thought

### 1970 Through Present

**Sculptor of Abstract Art.** Focuses on mobile and stabile sculptures and having created over 200 sculptures, primarily working in copper and American black walnut wood. ([GChris.com](http://GChris.com) )

He has his GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery in the Thrive! Center, Nelson (WI). It was formerly in University Park (MD) and Georgetown, Washington (DC).

His sculptures with their messages can also be viewed on his websites – [GChris.com](http://GChris.com) [GChris.org](http://GChris.org) [ThriveSculpture.com](http://ThriveSculpture.com) and [ThriveSculpture.org](http://ThriveSculpture.org).

Gary's art and writing career spans 30+ years. He is known as Chris and uses the signature "GChris" for his sculpture,. What began as helping his best friend Patricia with an art project then became a lifelong passion.

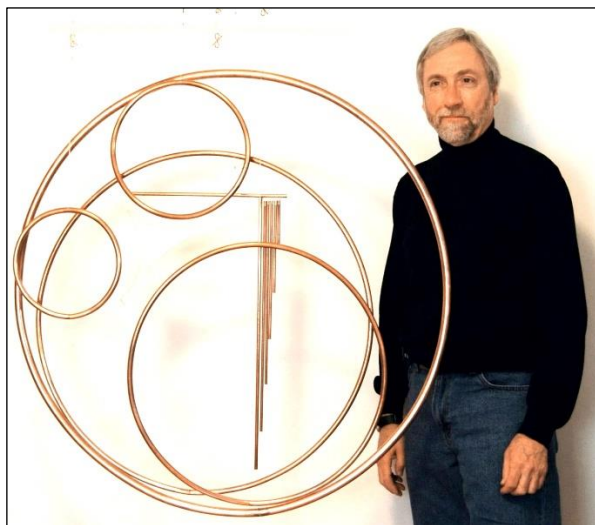
Creating sculpture was never something which Chris planned to do with his life.. Not sure where the art and carpentry talent and interest came from but he suspects it was his Grandma Rose and her husband (he passed away before Chris was born). But an event changed all that. Patricia, his woman friend and future spouse, was taking an art class. Her assignment was to create an Alexander Calder type mobile sculpture. This was not easy for her and she asked for some help from Chris. Being somewhat good at creating things with his hands, he helped her.

They both discovered that they could and liked creating mobile sculptures. For a time, both created mobiles and sold them, including on a tree at an art fair near the University of Wisconsin – Madison main library. Her parents provided the copper wire that would become an important element in Chris’ sculptures. Much of his sculpture uses copper in one form or another.

As time passed, Patricia decided she was not progressing and chose to stop creating mobiles. Patricia has always been extremely supportive of Chris’ efforts, a support that has continued for over 50 years.

This is where Chris began labeling his sculpture as GChris Sculpture. It was a way to shorten “Gary Christopherson” into a more usable form. Something both Patricia and he did. Later as Thrive! became more important, Chris refers to the sculpture as Thrive! Sculpture by GChris.

Chris is a self-taught artist by choice. His rationale is that he would develop his own technique by applying his basic skill set. Develop his style consistent with how he viewed and valued art. Develop his images from the filter of his own mind viewing the surrounding world and his own imagination. And develop his messages consistent with the “thriving” perspective he continues to develop.



*“encircled but free”, Thrive! Sculpture with Chris*

Alexander Calder was Chris' primary art inspiration. But he took a different approach. Calder worked primarily in steel, painted much of his sculpture, and, generally, did not create his sculpture based on message or mission. Differently, Chris worked primarily in copper and wood, generally did not paint his sculpture, and used message and mission to drive his sculpture work. Starting after 2012, Chris added color to many of his sculpture using a differential heat technique. Using an oxyacetylene heating torch, he would vary flame temperature and duration to create colors from dark red to blue and green and to scorched black. Calder and he both had a whimsical side to their sculpture. For Calder, it was often a circus theme. For Chris, it was a whimsical or creature theme.

Throughout many days, nights and weekends, Chris sculpted abstract art, focusing on mobile and stabile sculptures, and creating over 200 sculptures, primarily working in copper and wood media. Thrive! Sculpture by GChris is what he termed "progressive art" and is mission-driven toward "saving the world" and building a thriving future for all forever. GChris sculpture supports our creating and sustaining large, positive change and achieving a thriving future.

Chris' sculpture has gone through several phases, some overlapping. In the 1970s, he was just developing the sculpture with general messages. In the 1980s, he was developing sculpture around "creatures". That is where the "whimseys" developed and became the characters for his illustrated children books.

Next he would focus on human creativity and progression, in part focusing on maximizing the human potential.

Vulnerability emerged as a next theme with a focus on how to avoid and minimize human vulnerability. Interspersed in these works was the "healthy" theme with a focus on preventing injury and illness, getting healthy and staying healthy. Then he focused for a time on his "save the world" sculpture.

The final phase and highest level focuses on "thriving". In this body of work is both the risk of early extinction and the potential for "all thrive forever" where "all" includes humans, all other creatures and Earth.

### ***GChris Furniture***

*Over the years, Chris has designed and built much of his homes' furniture using American black walnut, including:*

- *Armoires*
- *Beds*
- *Armchair (arch dining room)*
- *Armchair (living room)*
- *Coffee table*
- *Dining room table*
- *Holder for Grandfather's pool cue holder*
- *Mount for Grandparent's outside dinner bell*
- *Bat house*
- *Stairway for Thriving (outdoor staircase)*
- *Loveseat / Couch*



*Early furniture (built because they were inexpensive) included a monster chair (built using 4x4 timbers) and the first of the special open back and winged "love seats". The love seat went through three generations until the final one in walnut, pictured above. All generations retained a few elements to provide continuity.*



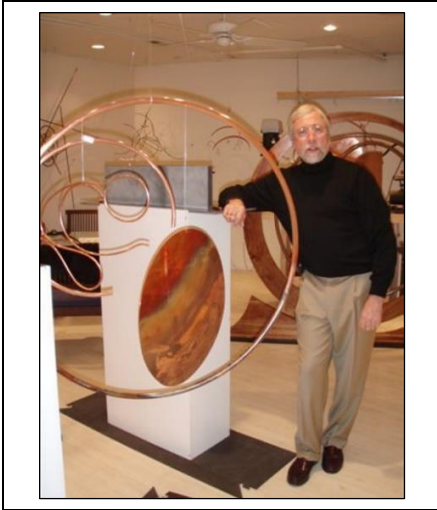


*“all thrive forever”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

While creating sculpture like Chris', there is always a bit of personal risk. Working with an oxyacetylene torch risks burns, explosions and damaged eyesight. Working with power tools can damage hearing, injure an eye, or take off a finger in a second. In one case, he dropped a drill and jammed the drill bit deep into his wrist. Lots of blood and pain but no permanent damage. He would often say that a good weekend was one after which he still had ten fingers.

Over the years and in addition to his home studio and gallery, Chris has displayed his sculpture in his own Georgetown gallery, another private Georgetown gallery (Washington, DC), the Torpedo Factory (Old Town Alexandria, VA), the Stumptown Gallery (Alma, WI), and the Anderson Center (Red Wing, MN).

Chris decided that he would like to have his own GChris Art Gallery in historic Georgetown (3144 Dumbarton Street, first floor) in Washington (DC). He had it open for about a year starting in 2006. Setting and operating it was a lot of work, money, and fun. It was great getting to know the Georgetown people – artists, gallery owners, business owners and residents. They all were very supportive of the gallery and the sculpture.



Chris in GChris  
Sculpture Gallery,  
Georgetown,  
Washington (DC)

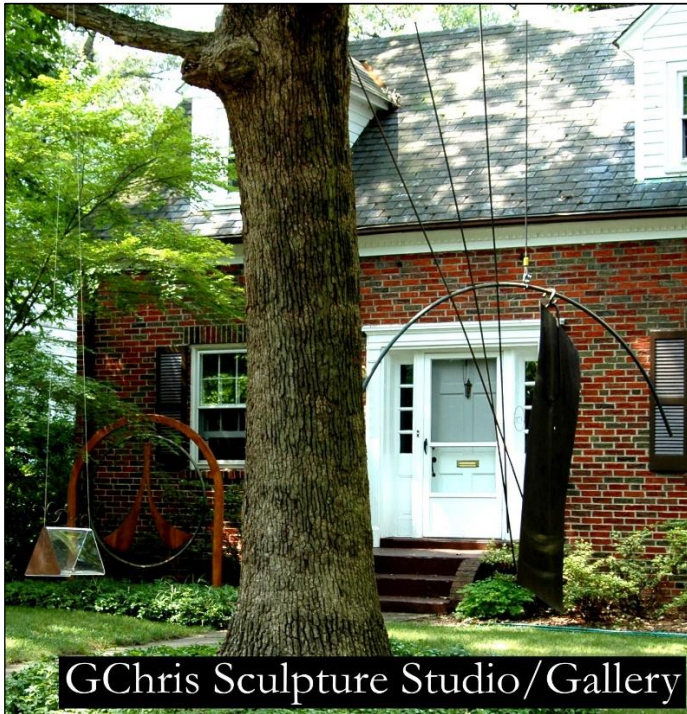
While enjoying the experience as the only Georgetown person who was both an artist and a gallery owner, it again reminded him that he enjoyed creating art much more than selling it.



GChris Sculpture Gallery, Georgetown, Washington (DC)

As he does today in Nelson, his house in University Park also served as an informal art gallery. Sculpture was displayed throughout the house and a new gallery space he created in the back of the property. Several sculpture hung outside. His workshop/studio occupied the whole basement.

While Chris sold some sculpture through his Georgetown and University Park galleries, much of the sculpture was sold online through his website, [GChris.com](http://GChris.com). In later years, selling sculpture online became more challenging as scammers began to cause problems.



GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery, University Park (MD)

One of the fun experiences was having the Capitol Hill Day School and their 20+ first graders come to his house gallery to see and learn about the sculptures. They were great guests. Very energetic. Very curious. Great questions. Also important was ending their visit with freshly baked chocolate chip cookies. In return, they were kind enough to send him thank yous and pictures to celebrate the visit.

During these visits, he asked the busload of kids what they wanted to call him, Gary or Chris. The unanimous shout was “Chris”. Chris always says he bows to the wishes of his audience.



Capitol Hill Children with Chris in GChris Studio/Gallery,  
University Park (MD)

After moving to Nelson and for the first time in 2014, Chris joined the Fresh Art Tour and its Spring and Fall Tours. The tour features a wide range of local artists in their home studios and galleries. His studio/gallery was visited by about 400 people over the two tours that year. At the Tour’s invitation, he rejoined the tour in 2018. The sculpture “envision earth embraced, sustained & thriving” was one of the featured sculptures for the 2018 tour.

He was scheduled to do the Fresh Art Tour again in 2020, but the COVID-19 virus interfered. Chris still has had visitors to his studio/gallery in 2020 but only with safe physical distancing, something he could do easily with his multiple building gallery.

First published in 2016, Chris wrote and published a new art book - **Thrive! Sculpture and Thought. Sculptural Vision of a Thriving Future for All** . This book, updated almost yearly, displays many of Thrive! sculpture along with messages. Paperback and eBook are available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



*“envision earth embraced, sustained & thriving”*,  
Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

Currently, GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery is located at the Thrive! Center in Nelson (WI). The Studio/Gallery is spread across three restored/renovated farm buildings dating back to 1885. Every building is a gallery with its own sculpture collection. The upper level of the barn houses some of the larger sculptures. Most recently opened is the beehouse, a unique building that once held 27 beehives and now houses some of the oldest and newest of his sculptures. The largest collection of sculpture, about 50 sculptures, is housed in the two story farmhouse. The lower level of the barn is the workshop/studio where Chris creates his sculptures.



Chris' Studio/Workshop in lower level of Nelson Barn, Nelson (WI)

Surrounding the Studio/Gallery is a nearly four acre area. Surrounding that is Thrive! Park, a 25-acre public park, that Chris created and donated to the Village of Nelson. It is filled with hiking roads and trails that Chris created and provide hiking access to the 500 foot tall Mississippi River bluffs with 20 mile views.

Since moving to the Nelson property, Chris no longer “sells” his sculpture. Financially, he does not need to use of the payments to support himself. He now donates any payments. If someone wants to acquire a sculpture, they make that payment to the Thrive! Scholarship Fund and they get the sculpture. The list of the available sculpture and “acquisition costs” is posted at [GChris.com](http://GChris.com).



GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery – Farmhouse Gallery, Nelson (WI)

### ***Donated Public Sculpture***

*Over the years, Chris has donated sculpture for public use. Among the donated sculpture are:*

- *“ 911 ” - Town Hall, Town of University Park, MD*
- *“end the darkness, here comes the sun”, Alma School, Alma, WI*
- *“peace on, with and beyond earth”, Community Hall, Village of Nelson, WI*
- *“a more perfect union”, Buffalo County Court House, Alma, WI*

Chris continues to create sculpture, as many as dozen in a year. He continues to experiment both with messages and technique. As mentioned earlier, he has been experimenting with and using differential heat as a technique to add color to his sculptures. Dark colors (red, blue/green and black represent messages related to endangered or early extinction. Bright copper represents messages related to hope and thriving.



*"sustain", Thrive! Sculpture by GChris*

Now, more than ever, and for the future, Chris' sculpture is Thrive! Sculpture, sculpture that serves to help build a thriving future for all forever.



***GChris Sculpture Featured in  
"all things" Episode of X Files***

*Six mobiles and stables were selected by Gillian Anderson [Actress, Director] and rented by the X-Files for use in episode # 17, "all things" on April 9, 2000. They were:*

- *a flight of whimsies*
- *the soft embrace of being [Sold for \$4,600; Owned by Actress and Director Gillian Anderson]*
- *upward reach to asymmetry*
- *bordering on the edge of freedom*
- *fractured but being whole*
- *being just in balance [Sold for \$1,900 in Gillian Anderson's charity auction. Chris donated sculpture.]*

*It all came about when Chris received a late night call asking if the show could rent several sculptures that the Director (Gillian Anderson) wanted for the first episode she directed. After agreement on six sculptures, next was a mad dash to get the sculptures packed and shipped via FedEx out to the studio in time for the shoot. Almost did not make it in time due to being temporarily lost in Fox Studios. Later, Chris went out to Los Angeles for job interview while the X Files episode was playing. He went on the internet to communicate with those watching the show. X-Files staff gave Chris a personal tour of the studio on which X Files episodes were shot.*







## Chapter 4. Creating Thrive Fiction

### 1991 Through Present

Gary's fiction writing career, where he is known as Chris, spans 20+ years. During this time, he wrote and published several fiction books, **black box** [a science fiction novel] being his first book and **Angel, Creator of Artful Things** [a children's book] being his first children's and illustrated book.

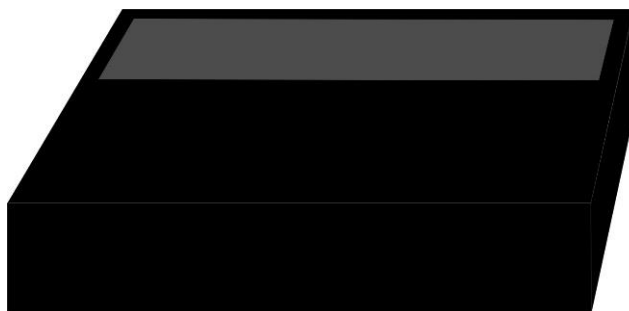
He wrote **black box**, first volume of the "save the world, complex" series and later known as the Thrive! series, to challenge himself to write a full length fiction book. To do this, he took several months off in 1991 and buried himself in his office. His dog Taj, lying next to him on the floor, kept him company while he wrote 8+ hours a day over three months. It was written on a NEC lunchbox computer in the time before laptop computers.<sup>2</sup>

Once written, there was some frustration for Chris over not being able to get it published. He tried. Later, he decided it was most important to get it to people and self-published it with [Lulu.com](http://Lulu.com) in 2007. He also made it available as a free download at [GChris.com](http://GChris.com). Self-publishing and free downloads are something he continue to do with both his fiction and nonfiction books. This book was updated in 2011 and 2019.

Below is an excerpt from the book.

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<sup>2</sup> When "black box" was written, laptop computers really did not exist. This is important because the black box in the book resembles a laptop computer. An extraordinarily powerful one.



# black box

The anticonversionists' rallying call was "destruction," complete destruction of the black box. For them, the box was not only a threat for what it could do, but was being blamed for much of the world's past and current evil. Many anticonversionists came to embrace the view that the box was on Earth for some time. Along with that, they now believed that the black box was used in that distant past. They saw the black box as the devil's hand reaching into Eden. Without the black box, many believed that God's original plan would still be in place and Eden would still exist. The black box was the source of original sin or the result of it.

To conversionists, the black box was the equivalent of the "holy grail" and sought with the same fervor. Government's hiding of the box was seen as no less an outrage than Christ's crucifixion or a wall around Jerusalem. They demanded the right to conversion. Court suits were filed. Laws guaranteeing access to the box were introduced. The pressure to bring the black box out into the open grew quickly.

Politicians were scared. Already, politicians on each side of the issue won and lost elections on this issue. Most of them wished the box never existed. But it did. There was a time when the destruction of the box was an easy solution. No longer. Now the ramifications of its destruction were potentially as great as its being accessible to the public.

As was the case here, science fiction, movies and books, was of high interest to Gary. **2001: A Space Odyssey** is probably his favorite movie. But he is also a great fan of **Metropolis**, a very early, silent science fiction movie from the 1920s. And to add to one debate, he is more of a **Star Trek** than **Star Wars** fan. **Star Trek** was more of thinking and exploration science fiction and much less about war.

Below is the list of Chris' fiction writing:

### Chris' Fiction

**black box - First Book in the Thrive! Series.** Lulu. 2007.

Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace 2011. Smashwords 2011.

Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace 2019. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**“The Thrive! Endeavor – Second Book In Thrive! Series”.**

Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. November 2016 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**Angel - Thriving Creator of Artful Things.**

Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. November 2011 & February 2019 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**T!rrific [terrific] - What will you do to thrive?.**

Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. November 2015 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**Thrive Or Not To Thrive? – That Is The Question. A Tale Of Two Tomorrows.** Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. February 2017 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

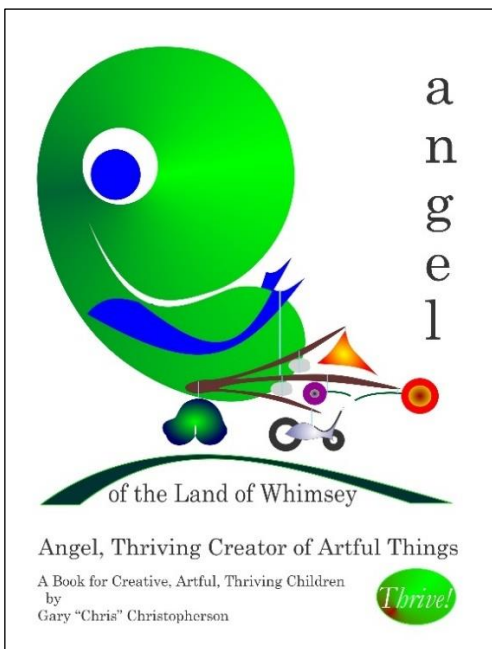
**Extinction! – The Failure to Thrive.** Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. February 2017 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**Thrive! – Escape from Extinction.** Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. April 2017 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

**Xtinct – Universal Justice for Earth.** Amazon/Kindle/CreateSpace. April 2018 [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook.

Started in 2007 and completed in 2009, Chris wrote **Angel, Creator of Artful Things**. This was his first illustrated children’s book. He had editing help from his neighbor Robin Earnest. The Angel character, a “whimsey”, first appears in his early sculpture, as mobiles and a stabile.

The book was updated in 2011 and 2019 with upgraded graphics and story. The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://www.GChris.com) . Below is an excerpt from the book.

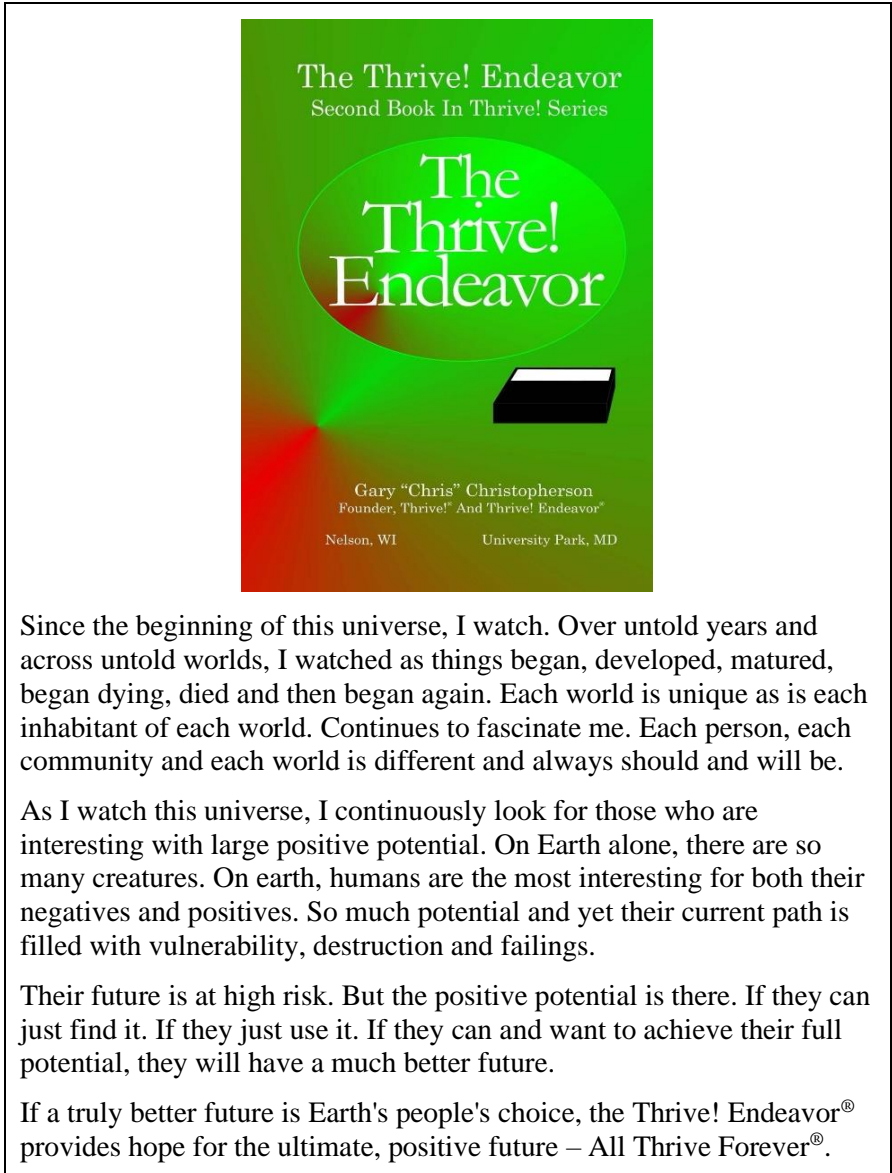


Meet my friend Angel, the most creative, artful and thriving Whimsey ever. Whimseys are wild and whimsical, brightly colored, and from an amazing land far, far, away.

This is the story of how Angel becomes a thriving creator. Angel is powerful by being whimsical and creative. Angel becomes even more powerful by joining others to create thriving, artful things.

This is a heroic story. Whimseys face their greatest enemy, Dark Cloud - a very evil, powerful cloud. Can Whimseys survive? Even more, can they thrive?

In 2011, Chris began outlining a second science fiction novel which was entitled **The Thrive! Endeavor** and follows on from the story in **black box**. The book is available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](http://GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.



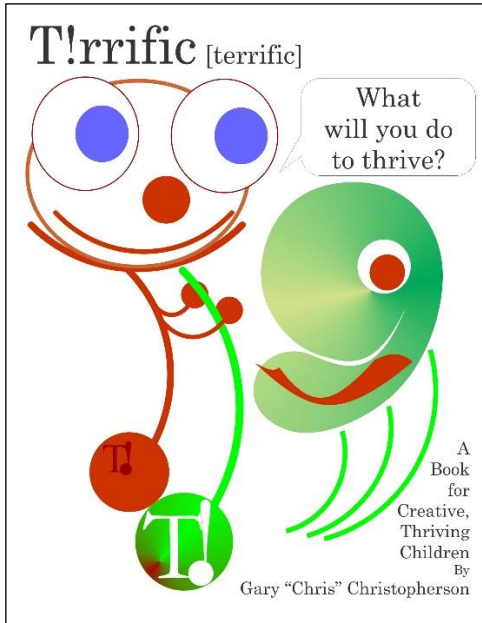
Since the beginning of this universe, I watch. Over untold years and across untold worlds, I watched as things began, developed, matured, began dying, died and then began again. Each world is unique as is each inhabitant of each world. Continues to fascinate me. Each person, each community and each world is different and always should and will be.

As I watch this universe, I continuously look for those who are interesting with large positive potential. On Earth alone, there are so many creatures. On earth, humans are the most interesting for both their negatives and positives. So much potential and yet their current path is filled with vulnerability, destruction and failings.

Their future is at high risk. But the positive potential is there. If they can just find it. If they just use it. If they can and want to achieve their full potential, they will have a much better future.

If a truly better future is Earth's people's choice, the Thrive! Endeavor® provides hope for the ultimate, positive future – All Thrive Forever®.

Chris wrote a companion illustrated children's book to Angel in 2015 entitled **T!rrific [terrific] - What will you do to thrive?**. The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.



From far, far away in space and time travels a dark object.

Only now does it near the world of Whimseys. Whimsey world is in BIG trouble. BAD future. Will they change? Can they?

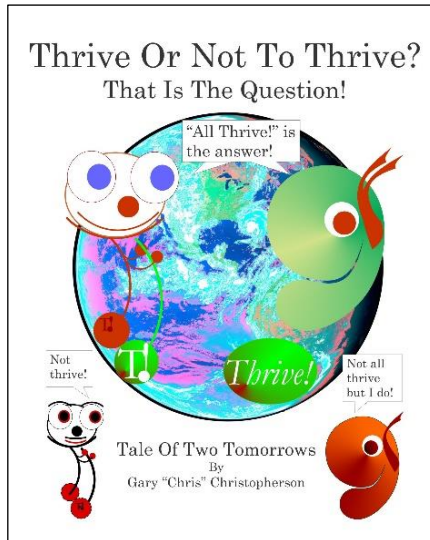
T!rrific (T! for short) is space and time traveler who (in the Thrive Endeavor) travels through space and time to help worlds.

T! meets Angel (a very smart, creative Whimsey). They must choose between CURRENT future (BAD), SURVIVING future (JUST OK), or THRIVING future (THRIVING).

Will Whimseys find creativity, bright colors, artful things, caring and thriving? Will Whimseys and their world build future when ALL THRIVE FOREVER? Will they THRIVE!



The third illustrated children's book was written by Chris in 2017. It was entitled **Thrive or Not to Thrive? That is the Question! A Tale of Two Tomorrows**. In some ways, it is the most serious of his children's books. It asks children to face the tough choice of what tomorrow do they want. Asks if they will act to build a better tomorrow. The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.



A tale of two tomorrows.

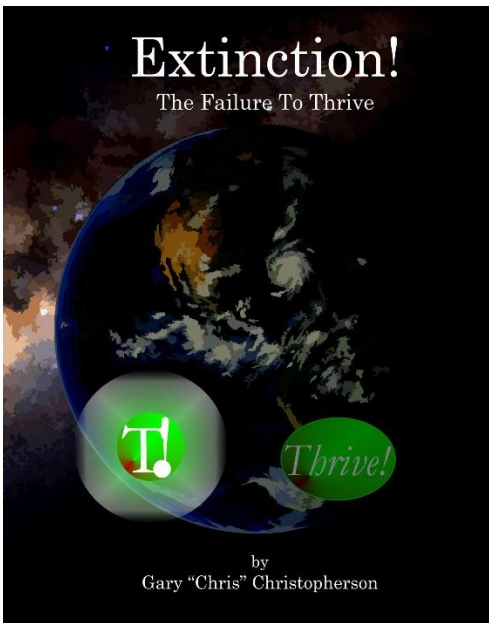
Far, far away is Whimsey World, a world filled with wonderful creatures known as Whimseys. For a very long time and with much effort, Whimsey World has been thriving, maybe best of any world. But Whimseys are losing their thriving future.

Today they must choose which future they want. Current future will end thriving. Selfish future will allow some to thrive and many not to thrive. Whimsey World will go dark. Thriving future, like their past, is best. All Whimseys and Whimsey World thrive, maybe forever. Not only must they choose, but they must build and sustain that future.

Can Angel and T!rrific lead Whimsey to a thriving future? Will Wily and T!rrible push Whimsey to a selfish, destructive future? To thrive or not to thrive? That is the question!

The latest set of three illustrated books are not children's books. They are clearly targeted to adults. Built around the opposing futures of early extinction and thriving, they clearly message the risk we face. If we stay on our current path, early extinction will be our fate. But if we choose a better, thriving path, we can still avoid early extinction and achieve a thriving future for all people, all other creatures and Earth.

Written by Chris in 2017, the illustrated adult book is entitled, **Extinction!** - **The Failure to Thrive**. This book ends badly. Humans could have chosen and built a thriving future. But Humans choose badly. They act badly. The result is early extinction for humans and many other creatures and great damage to Earth. The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.



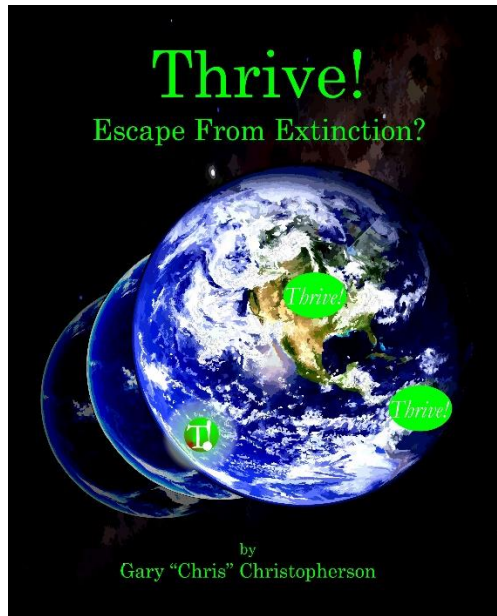
Since beginning of the universe, we have observed many worlds. Many have thrived throughout their existence. Many continue to thrive. Some fail to thrive.

This is the story of one that failed. One that failed by its own actions.

This is the story of humans. This is the story of Earth.

This is the failure to thrive. This is extinction.

The second of the adult illustrated books, also written by Chris in 2017, is entitled, **Thrive! - Escape from Extinction**. This book gives hope. Hope that standing at the edge, humans chose to avoid early extinction. Chose to build a thriving future. But it was close. The result is escape from extinction and a thriving future for humans, many other creatures and Earth. The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.



Since the beginning of the universe, we have observed many worlds. Many thrive throughout their existence. Many fail to thrive. Some go extinct.

This is the story of one that stood at the edge of extinction. Can it escape extinction? Can it possibly survive and thrive? Can it do so by its own actions.

This is the story of humans. Their attempt to escape from extinction. Their Thrive! Endeavor. This is the story of Earth.

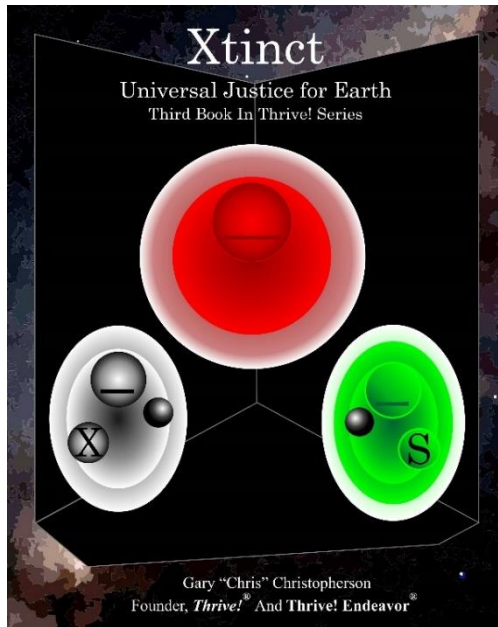
Is this the end? Or is this the future when all thrive forever?

To thrive or not to thrive?

The third of the adult illustrated books, written by Chris in 2018, is entitled, **Xtinct - Universal Justice for Earth**. It connects this series with the **black box** and **Thrive! Endeavor** books. Two powerful non-human forces, Xtinct and Shepherd, play critical roles in what will be universal justice for humans and Earth. This is no longer just about Earth but about humans' role on Earth and in the greater Universe. What will be the final judgment? What will be the fate of humans and Earth? The book is available from [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and as a free download at [GChris.com](https://www.GChris.com). Below is an excerpt from the book.

Note that in the original **black box** book, the black box had the shape of a laptop computer and generally required humans to touch the black box to make it active and do what it was designed to do. In **Xtinct - Universal Justice for Earth**, the black box has evolved into a black sphere with no visible markings. The mind of the user is all it takes to activate it and to have it do what the user intends. In both cases, the black box has enormous power.

For Chris, it remains an open question as to whether there will be any more fiction books. Or, has enough been said by him.



In the past, Shepherd and black box came to Earth. Mission was to build a thriving future for Earth and all its creatures. Shepherd had friends Taj and Jason helping achieve the mission. They faced many challenges.

After many struggles, commitments were made by Earth's most capable species, humans. Some progress was made via global Thrive! Endeavor.

But no longer. Now Earth and all its creatures face early extinction.

Humans are the primary cause. Earth's humans are behaving badly.

Even worse, humans are now an emerging threat to other worlds.

Humans are reaching further beyond Earth. They desire colonizing another planet like Mars.

Because of bad human behavior, Earth must now face universal justice.

Coming to Earth, Xtinct is both judge and executioner. Shepherd is humans' only hope.

What will be universal justice for Earth? May be extinction for part or all of Earth. May be extinction for Earth's offending species, humans.

The end or not the end?





## **Chapter 5. Building Toward Healthy People and Communities [First Phase]**

### **1974 Through 1982**

In the initial years of Gary's pursuit of thriving and the first phase of his working life, the focus was more on health and mostly on local level communities. The primary community of interest was Milwaukee (WI).

**Coordinator (1974-75) -- Milwaukee Blood Pressure Control Program**, Medical College of WI (Milwaukee, WI) 8701 Watertown Plank Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (office was in City Health Dept building in NW Milwaukee). 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$14,500.

As Gary was graduating with his Masters in Urban and Regional Planning, he was approached about heading up a new high blood pressure control program in Milwaukee. It was being led by Dr. Harold Itzkovitz of the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Though Gary's background had nothing to do with health or high blood pressure, he was intrigued by the challenges that health provided. He loved complex systems. Here he would be designing much of the system under the guidance of Dr. Itzkovitz. Health was incredibly complex. Humans, the central element in human health systems, were complex. He was committed to better supporting those poorly served. Much but not all the focus of this program would be on poor and minority people. He was interested in putting his management education to good use. Here he would be leading the effort and managing its staff and operations.

Gary developed and managed this program to detect, refer, educate, treat and follow-up on people with high blood pressure. With his staff, he developed automated tracking systems, obtained grants and in-kind contributions, and provided technical assistance to State and local agencies.

The Milwaukee High Blood Pressure Control Program was very successful. It was sometimes referred to as the traveling blood pressure show. Sometimes it even used a converted truck van and went to shopping areas and in the inner city. Sometimes the program went onsite at businesses. It always did the Wisconsin State Fair. Based on the design and execution, it became the national model high blood pressure control program in the United States.

One of the challenges for Gary was commuting to Milwaukee (90 miles) daily so that Patricia could stay working in Madison. He drove down on Monday and drove back on Friday. In between, rode the Badger Bus, almost two hours door-to-door each way, to and from Milwaukee.

**States Coordinator (1975 -1977) -- Kappa Systems, 1501 Wilson Boulevard, Rosslyn VA, contractor to National High Blood Pressure Education Program (Bethesda, MD). 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$18,700.**

Because the Milwaukee High Blood Pressure Control Program was so successful, he was recruited to serve as States Coordinator and managed State efforts for the National High Blood Pressure Education Program in the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in the National Institutes of Health. This was in the Program Development Section of contractor Kappa Systems.

Gary developed and supervised annual survey and inventory of health organizations, provided technical assistance to State and local public and private agencies, and served as liaison to Health Resources and Services Administration, State Health Officers, and Health Education and Welfare Regional Offices.

In this role, Gary traveled throughout much of the United States, especially the Southeast. This was the first part of his United States business travels that would result in him visiting all 50 States.



For Patricia and him, this was the first opportunity to live in the greater Washington (DC) area, something they both really wanted to do. Living in a rented house in Bethesda (MD), they played the role of tourists for two years and explored much of what Washington had to offer.

**Director, Special Projects (July 1977 -- December 1980) --- City Health Department (Milwaukee, WI).** 500 North Broadway, Milwaukee WI. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$29,000.

For some time, Dr. Connie Panagis (Milwaukee City Health Commissioner) and Gary had been discussing the building of an inner city health system for Milwaukee. During Gary's time with the National High Blood Pressure Education Program, the two of them re-connected and made a plan to do just that.

Dr. Panagis offered for Gary to come back and initially serve as Director of the Milwaukee Mother and Infant Care Project. This was the only paying job he could offer Gary. In the meantime, the City, County and Medical College were putting together a the Milwaukee Medical and Health Services Project to be partially funded by a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

When Gary arrived and while designing and managing the Mother and Infant Care Project, the larger inner city health system project design and grant writing had begun. Sitting in on one of the planning meetings, it became clear that they were having problems and did not have a clear path to how to win the grant.

As was often the case throughout Gary's career, he suggested some changes that might improve their grant chances and offered to help. They incorporated his changes. Shortly, he was designated the lead for the effort. From that point on, he wrote and negotiated the grant with the Foundation and, subsequently, the Medicare and Medicaid waivers.

Milwaukee was selected as one of five grantees by the Foundation. Gary served in several roles almost simultaneously. He was Director of Special Projects (the overall managing role), Director of Mother and Infant Care Project, Director of Project Life and Health and Director of the Municipal Health Services Program project (the Foundation grant). He developed and managed the comprehensive preventive and primary health system for Milwaukee's inner city. It was a large public-private partnership involving City, County, Medical College of Wisconsin, Children's Hospital, Mount Sinai Hospital, Marquette Dental School, and several nonprofit groups serving the inner city.

The result was a four-clinic system that provided preventive health, medical care, social services, financial assistance, mental health and dental care. Tying all this together on behalf the people served were Nurse Coordinators. Their new and unique role was to make sure that care was coordinated and each person received all the high quality care they needed.

During this time, Gary designed, developed, and managed Project Life and Health, a unique community preventive health program funded by the City of Milwaukee. This project focused on how to get and keep people healthy using a range of tools, including health risk appraisals and health support.

Of the four health centers, the most unique health center was acquired by Gary from the Milwaukee Public School System. Formerly the Fifth Street School. Attending many school board meetings, he was able to get the school building donated. He was able to get Community Development funds to do most of the renovation. The Marquette School of Dentistry built out two dental clinics with over a dozen dental chairs each. An elevator was added to ensure access for people with disabilities. Working with the old classrooms, clinic and office rooms were created. Gary had the top floor gym redone as an open format office space for his staff and him. It became known as the Harambee Community Health Center.

This inner city system lasted for about 30 years before running out of steam and support. This system also was the first and rudimentary example of a Thrive! System, providing a wide range of personal support to people.

Based on two independent reviews of the project, it was shown that this system could improve health and social service access and quality care and carefully use very broad Medicare and Medicaid waivers while keeping costs down.



Harambee Community Health Center, Milwaukee WI

**Deputy Director (January 1981 -- October 1983) -- Municipal Health Services Program** based at Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Baltimore, MD) 600 North Wolfe Street, Baltimore, Maryland. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$40,000.

The Milwaukee project, designed and managed by Gary, was seen as best of the five city program. This success led to Gary being asked to come to the program's national office as its full-time Deputy Director. The Director was a part-time faculty member. This office was based at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore (MD).

Gary served as Deputy Director for the Municipal Health Service Program and managed the \$15 million grant program for five cities improving health care for inner city residents. In this role and based on his success in Milwaukee, he provided technical assistance to the five cities. He also served as liaison with Health Care Financing Administration, the US Conference of Mayors, and the American Medical Association.

At the same time that he was full-time managing this program, he worked on a doctorate degree at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. He successfully completed most of the classwork with high grades, He had developed his thesis topic and collected most of the needed data. It was based on the five-city Municipal Health Services Program. Ultimately, he would abandon this doctoral effort in favor of moving to Washington for a new position as Director of Health Legislation for the US House Select Committee on Aging.

Patricia and he both liked Baltimore but wanted to return to Washington (DC). Also, this Federal position potentially opened the door to other national and governmental positions.

Gary always considers this building of the Milwaukee inner city health and social service system with nurse coordinators to be one of his most interesting and best efforts. It also served as the first rudimentary instance of a Thrive! System, supporting people across much of their lives and giving them a better chance to survive and thrive.



## **Chapter 6. Building Toward Healthy People and Countries [Second Phase, Part One]**

### **Congress (1983) Through White House (1994)**

During part one of the second phase of Gary's life, he would shift his focus to the whole country of the United States. He began his service in the U.S. Federal government, starting with serving with Congress and eventually serving in the Clinton-Gore White House.

**Director, Health Legislation (October 1983 -- December 1990) -- Select Committee on Aging, U.S. House of Representatives (Washington, DC). 712 House Annex 1, Washington DC. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$52,000.**

In 1983, Johns Hopkins was approached by the U.S. House Select Committee on Aging looking for a person to become the Committee's Director of Health Legislation. The Committee had a new Chairman, Ed Roybal of California who was replacing the long-time and iconic Chairman, Claude Pepper of Florida. Chairman Roybal was a longtime advocate for the poor and for minorities.

That perspective fit very well with Gary's values. He had pretty much finished his work with the Municipal Health Services Program and was ready for a change. Importantly, this position would give Patricia and him a chance to return to Washington (DC), something they both had wanted since living there in the 1970s. He also had a strong interest in working at the nation level and within the Federal government.

In this new role, Gary directed the health and overall budget policy activities of the full Committee on Aging. He managed a small number of professional staff as well as Congressional interns and Fellows.

Gary developed authorization and appropriations legislation and associated hearings addressing Medicare and Medicaid reform, the un- and under-insured, reducing beneficiary costs, health care quality, rural health, mental health, Alzheimer's disease, and the Federal health budget.

He worked with House leadership and authorization and appropriations committees, drafted health legislation, and developed and managed hearings.

Because the Chairman and he had very similar values and goals, Gary had great latitude when it came to proposing hearings and legislation. The Chairman pretty much supported everything that Gary proposed.

Gary wrote legislation the Chairman introduced to protect the un- and under insured. Wrote legislation the Chairman introduced to reform Medicare and Medicaid. Helped lead the bipartisan and bicameral effort to increase Alzheimer's research funding many fold.

Much of the Chairman's and Gary's effort was focused on the un- and underinsured. In their view, everyone, starting with birth, is aging and within the purview of the Committee. More importantly, they needed the Committee's support. Gary wrote and the Chairman introduced two major health reform bills. One was the Medicare and Medicaid Reform Act which used a mix of the public programs and private insurance to get every American covered with health insurance. One was the USHealth Act which used the Medicare program and expanded it to cover all Americans with health insurance. Both bills also had provisions to ensure high quality health care and to contain costs.

In the run up to the 2020 election there was a heavy push for "Medicare for All" by the Bernie Sanders campaign. Other candidates also support it. This idea was far from new. It was embedded in several proposals that came after Medicare and Medicaid were enacted in 1965. Gary had his own proposals as noted above. The USHealth Act was one approach using Medicare to cover all. In part, Gary developed and the Chairman introduced the USHealth Act to once again put life into the position that all should have health insurance. The bill. The hearings. They were all designed to ignite an interest in health insurance for all.

While USHealth wasn't the only approach, it was one with which people were familiar and generally liked. To some extent, it set the stage for the discussion around the Affordable Care Act enacted in 2010.

Gary found writing legislation presented new challenges. How to write legislation that accomplished just what was wanted? How to let good people to the good things they were already likely to do? How to prevent bad people from doing the bad things they were likely to do? How to ensure people in the middle did the good thing without the legislation and its implementation being negative? A delicate balance. Required understanding people's ability, motivation, and behavior. In writing several bills, Gary learned more and more how to achieve the best balance.

There are many hearing stories. One centered around one of the major anniversaries for Medicare and Medicaid. The theme was that it was a bittersweet celebration. Sweet that much good was being done by both programs. Bitter in the high out-of-pocket costs for the elderly and the many people still uninsured. Supporting the theme were bittersweet plants positioned around the dais, Ghirardelli bittersweet chocolate bars (donated by the San Francisco chocolate company) in front of each Representative, and a celebratory bittersweet chocolate cake (provided by the Confectioners Union). For some hearings and to generate press and public interest, Gary brought in "stars" such as Burt Lancaster, Dr. Albert Sabin and Dana Andrews.

In one case, a movie star was key to having an Administration witness appear. Chris had a formula for the hearings to get press coverage. A five witness hearing, all on one panel. A victim. An expert. An advocate. An Administration leader. And a "star". Press would stay and cover the whole hearing. For one hearing the Administration witness knew this would be an adversarial hearing with the Committee pushing hard for better support for Medicare and the un- and underinsured. The Administration witness sent a message to Gary that the witness was unwilling to be on a single panel. The witness and Gary knew each other fairly well. However, the witness was willing to be on a separate panel alone. Gary sent the message that if the witness were to testify on the five witness panel, Gary would seat the witness next to the movie star witness, one the Administration witness admired. Very quickly, the Administration witness said yes. The five witness panel all sat together. Administration witness next to the movie star, maybe even with a smile.

Fighting against budget cuts into Medicare and Medicaid and increases to the elderly's out-of-pocket costs, Gary produced budget analyses of President's budget. He had the press release mostly drafted based on information he had gleaned. He got a copy of the budget as soon as it was handed out in early morning. He finished the press release and had it released early the same morning the budget came out. It received national coverage as a counter to the Administration's proposed cuts.

The Chairman and Gary both had an interest in increasing research funding for brain research and especially Alzheimer's research. They held hearings on the issue. Working in a bipartisan and bicameral way, they were able to increase Alzheimer's research funding from about \$5 million eventually to about \$500 million annually.

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During this same time and in 1988, Dr. Bob Berenson and Gary initiated and co-chaired Campaign '88 effort with the Democratic National Committee for the national Presidential ticket.

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<p><b>Executive Director (January-May 1991) -- National Gray Panthers Project Fund (Washington, DC). 1612 K Street, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC . 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$55,000.</b></p>
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For a brief time in 1991, Gary was recruited for and directed the national office of the multigenerational Gray Panthers. He was responsible for the direction and management of the national office under policies set by the Board of Directors.

He had left the Committee on Aging looking for a challenge that would improve people's lives. The Gray Panthers had done a lot of good advocacy over the years. But this was no longer the Gray Panthers of the past. Shortly after arriving, Gary found that it had lost a lot of its membership and funding and was likely facing its end.

In a last ditch effort to save their future, Gary tried to bring the Gray Panthers into a better place. He proposed re-inventing and re-invigorating their multigenerational advocacy efforts and renaming themselves the Advocates. They chose not to make the necessary change. He understood. Unfortunately, Gary got there too late to save them. He moved on.



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Gary took three months off before starting his next position. It was during this time that he, with his dog Taj at his side, wrote his first fiction book entitled **black box** on his lunchbox computer.  
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**Executive Director (October 1991 -- October 1992) -- National Capital Chapter, March of Dimes (Arlington, VA). 2700 S. Quincy Street, Suite 220, Arlington VA. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$77,500**

Later that same year, Gary was hired to direct the National Capital Chapter, one of three flagship chapters for March of Dimes Foundation. He directed and managed the large chapter covering the District of Columbia and parts of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia. He managed the activities of 20 plus staff and a budget of nearly \$2 million and served as the Chapter's primary spokesperson. He worked in coalition with national and local and public and private organizations supporting healthy families and healthy babies.

For Gary, this connected him back with work he had done in Milwaukee as the Director of the Mother and Infant Care Project.

Over the year he was Director, it became clear that the national office was much more interested in the Chapter's fundraising for the national effort than it was in the Chapter serving the greater Washington (DC) community, a high need community. Gary challenged that position and argued there should be a better balance. The national office disagreed. The March of Dimes and Gary agreed to go separate ways.

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Again in between jobs, Gary took time off. For a time, he volunteered to work with the disability community in support of the Clinton-Gore Presidential campaign.

After the election and Clinton and Gore had won, Gary volunteered to help in the Presidential transition office. He started out handing out passes. Once they learned more about his background, they asked if he wanted to go help the transition office of Presidential Personnel. His role was to serve as a Search Manager for the Department of Health and Human Services. His workspace was in the center of that effort where he got to know many of the key players, including the former Governor who was to become the head of Presidential Personnel.

As a side note, working in Presidential transition required very long days and seven days a week. The office building for transition was located in what was kind of Washington's red light area. The running observation was that Gary and other transition people would arrive to work in the very early morning, before the "red light" workers left, and would leave in the late night, after the "red light" workers began their work.

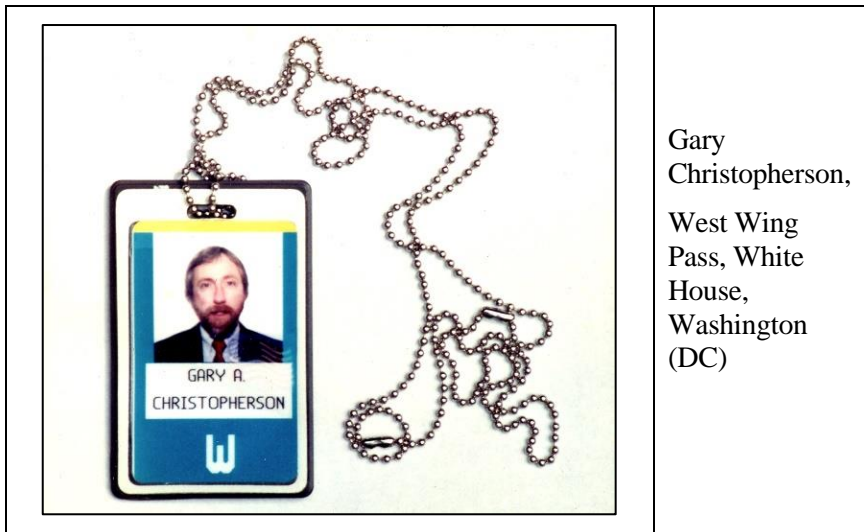
Few people coming to the transition office understood the role of Presidential Personnel. Many campaign workers and advisors came looking to the transition office to influence policy and/or to get jobs. Presidential Personnel was pretty much ignored in the early days. Then one day, the light bulb went off. People realized that Presidential Personnel was where the jobs were. Lots of people started showing up at the office. So many that the doors were locked and a guard posted. People would come to the door and motion to Gary and others to come out and take their resume. They would make their case, briefly, for why they should get a Presidential appointment.

One day as the transition office was preparing to disband and it was preparing to formally start the Office of Presidential Personnel at the White House, the leadership asked him to come into a room just like a small number of others had. He was asked if he would like to work in the White House as paid staff in the Office of Presidential Personnel. Gary quickly said yes.

**Associate Director (January 1993 -- September 1994) -- Presidential Personnel, White House (Washington, DC).** White House, 155 Old Executive Office Building Washington DC. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$85,000

During 1993, he served as Search Manager with Presidential Personnel in the White House. His office was on the first floor of the Old Executive Office Building, part of the White House complex. Initially, he managed Presidential Appointments (PAS/PA/SES) for the Department of Health and Human Services.

During 1993-94, he was promoted to Associate Director. In that expanded role and as one of two Associate Directors, he managed Presidential appointments (PAS/PA/SES) for thirteen of fifteen cabinet level agencies (Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Energy, EPA, Health & Human Services, HUD, Interior, Labor, State, Transportation, and VA).



Gary was particularly known for creating his matrix system, using Excel spreadsheets, covering many hundreds of senior appointed positions laid against thousands of potential candidates. This was expanded as he moved from being Search Manager to being an Associate Director.

In the earlier days, Gary also carried out some of the vetting of potential candidates. Vetting was the process of checking on a candidate's background to make sure there were not any issues that would disqualify the candidate. One of Gary's methods, after doing the usual question and answer vetting, was to ask the candidate, "Is there anything in your background that would be potentially embarrassing to the President of the United States?". Gary paused, leaned back in his chair and sat silently as the candidate considered the gravity of the question and the need to provide an honest answer.

There are many stories about that time. For example, there was lots of excitement coming into work at the White House on the morning a small plane flew into the lower level of the White House. As Gary was coming to work, he had to navigate to his parking spot which was where all the emergency equipment was. From the Old Executive Office Building upper floor, he could look down and see the plane perched against the White House.

There was a big celebration for President Clinton's birthday. Gary has a photo of him with President Clinton with Diet Coke in hand. Crosby, Stills and Nash appeared at the White House for the birthday and performed for the President and his staff on the White House lawn. Gary was in the front row.

Gary's role was to match potential candidates with high level Presidential appointments. He created a matrix of people and positions. He often spoke of creating a "tapestry". While he managed the need to take care of politically connected candidates, his priority was also to get people appointed who were highly qualified and who added diversity (minorities, people with disabilities, women for positions generally held by men and gay and lesbian people). He was successful.

He was also successful in that the President accepted every one of his recommended candidates, except one. On that one, the message back to Gary was that the President needed to let a Department Secretary have that one even though the President thought Gary was correct. That candidate did not do well and did not last long.



Gary Christopherson & President Clinton,  
President's Birthday, White House, Washington (DC)

The leadership of Presidential Personnel changed often. Finally, Gary's frustration with Presidential Personnel's new leadership became too high in 1994, he asked to leave and go back to his health career. The opportunity came to go Senior Advisor for Health Affairs at the Department of Defense. They agreed.

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In 1997, after he left the White House, there was scrutiny of one of the appointments that went through his Presidential Personnel office. Gary was called to testify under oath before Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. The focus of the scrutiny was on the President and not on Gary. His appearance before the Committee was delayed by a day due to the hearing going long. Gary decided that to keep his focus and control by wearing the same suit, braces and tie the next day. His testimony went well and the Committee had no issue with his work. Some of his colleagues back at DoD suggested it was helpful to have someone testify next to him that was very bad at testifying. Many at DoD watching the testimony live wondered if Gary would be fired. Gary went back to the DoD office to all those who had seen him testify. It was positive. Gary told the truth and it carried the day and beyond. The scrutiny ended without any action against the President or Gary.

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Much later, there was the farewell celebration as the Clinton-Gore administration was ending. Rock group Fleetwood Mac, a favorite of Gary's, reunited at the White House with a surprise performance for President Clinton playing the song that became a signature of his 1992 race, "Don't Stop (Thinking About Tomorrow)." Gary was at the front.



## **Chapter 7. Building Toward Healthy People and Countries [Second Phase, Part Two]**

### **Defense Health Affairs (1994) Through Veterans Health Administration and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2006)**

In part two of Gary's second phase, he put Congress and the White House behind him and proceeded into the U.S. Federal Departments. First with the Department of Defense. Later with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

**Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (February 1998 – July 2000) and Acting Assistant Secretary (March 1998 – May 1998) -- Office of the Assistant Secretary (Health Affairs), Department of Defense (DoD) (Washington, DC)**

**Senior Advisor for Force Health Protection (June 1999 -- 2000) -- Office of the Assistant Secretary (Reserve Affairs), Department of Defense (DoD) (Washington, DC)**

**Acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary (April 1997 – January 1998) and Senior Advisor (September 1994 -- January 1998) -- Office of the Assistant Secretary (Health Affairs), Department of Defense (DoD) (Washington, DC)**

3E1082 Pentagon, Washington DC 20050. 40+ hour/week. Salary: \$133,477 (limited to \$130,200 by salary cap).

From 1994 to 2000, Gary served with the Department of Defense (DoD) in several roles. He was a political appointee in the Senior Executive Service (SES). Some at DoD were not happy to see Gary there and thought he would just be a political hack. That view changed as they got to know Gary and see his work.

Starting out as a Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) for Health Affairs, he knew he had to build a trusting and valued relationship with the Assistant and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. The same with the Surgeons General of the three Services. He decided the best way to do that was to take on all the nasty and difficult issues and fix them. Which he did and did well. Illnesses resulting from the Iraq war and other conflicts. Payment for the care of military retirees. Protecting service members from the threat of biological and chemical weapons, particularly the highest threat from Anthrax. Building a better future for the military health system.

So-called Medicare subvention was one of the issues that Gary took on when he went to DoD. It had been a long standing, unresolved issue of getting better coverage for military retirees. Chris created a compromise solution that protected Medicare and gave better coverage. He led the negotiation with and got it approved by the Health Care Finance Administration and the Office of Management and Budget. Initially, it was a demonstration called Tricare Senior and later, enacted into law, it was called Tricare for Life.

As a result of taking on these very challenging issues and handling them successfully, he gained the trust of military health leaders and helped his being promoted to Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) for Health Affairs.

Gary had great help from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Dr. Ed Martin, as a mentor and the one who promoted him to Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary.





Gary Christopherson, Official DoD Photo

As Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) for Health Affairs, Gary managed policy, the Defense Health Program budget, performance of the Military Health System, including force health protection and TRICARE.

Gary directed and managed the \$16+ billion Military Health System (100 hospitals and 500 clinics worldwide) and oversaw policy and budget development and performance management for MHS' TRICARE managed care program. He led the Military Health System reengineering effort collaboratively with the Surgeons General, the force health protection for military deployments, the outcome-based prevention program, the Medicare demonstration, the Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program, the partnership with the Veterans Health Administration, the work with the Food and Drug Administration on medical countermeasures, and the Military Health System information system (including computerized patient record and Y2K).

The Department had determined that Anthrax was the greatest biological and chemical threat to service members. Gary and the Director of the Joint Chiefs of Staff took the lead in developing the strategy for best protecting service members. The proposal was to vaccinate all service members. This effort would be more challenging because the available vaccine required several doses over time. Gary and the Director took the proposal up through the leadership up to the Deputy Secretary. When the Deputy Secretary was asked to support the proposal, his response was that we had to and that we all would take it to the Secretary quickly. In the subsequent meeting, the Secretary agreed but said we had to take it through the Department's decision makers. Gary and the Director agreed but proposed that the decision makers would have only 24 hours to concur or non-concur. The Secretary agreed. All the decision makers concurred within 24 hours. The Anthrax vaccination program began. Gary took one of the first anthrax shots to demonstrate leadership and continued them until he left DoD in 2000.

During this time, Iraqi war illness was a major issue and concern. Some in the Department leadership were convinced there was no such illness. Gary took a different position. He decided that it remained an open issue and needed more and better research. But he also decided that we needed to act now. First action was to commit to taking care of our service members no matter what the cause of illness or injury was. The second action was to commit to full Force Health Protection as the strategy to prevent and reduce future health issues in future deployments and conflicts. Both were agreed to. Congress and the White House, which had been critical, were now supportive when Gary met with the White House and testified before Congressional committees. The military services and the Joint Chief of Staff both supported the Force Health Protection program. It continues.

Gary took one of the first anthrax shots to demonstrate leadership and continued them until he left DoD in 2000. Late on a Friday, Gary received a call from a colleague at the White House letting him know they would be hitting DoD on Gulf War. Gary said he understood but suggested that might cause political problems for the President. He suggested instead that the President direct DoD to do a program of force health protection and a longitudinal health record. The White House agreed. Gary had already been setting this up with the Joint Staff. Gary proposed, developed and obtained Presidential and Joint Chiefs of Staff approval for “force health protection” for military service members. It still exists as indicated by DoD’s words: “Ensuring force health protection is one of the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) most critical priorities, and global health engagement is an essential part of that initiative.”

Since biological agents, delivered by nature or by humans, were a major concern not only for DoD but for the whole U.S. and world, Gary proposed a national and international infectious disease surveillance and response system and helped set one up in DoD. He co-lead the effort with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and involving all the health agencies in the U.S. government. Much work was done but it was not completed. As Gary was no longer in a position to co-lead the effort, it was left to CDC to lead.

Chris traveled across much of the United States during his service with DoD. A major international trip was when he traveled to South Korea when he was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. It was a very important trip on ensuring service member health in what was essentially a warzone. He traveled across South Korea by plane and helicopter. He visited several health care settings. He went to the Defense Militarized Zone (DMZ) where he discussed with the Commander the horrific battle and human losses that would be inflicted in the first 24 hours of a conflict with North Korea. Much of his time on this trip was spent making sure the health services would fully support service members in peace and during conflict.

During Gary's time, as well as before and after, the defense health budget was a major issue. It was gobbling up more and more of the Department's budget. He was getting pressure from DoD leadership. Jointly with the Surgeons General, Gary held a series of meetings on improving the Military Health System and better containing costs. The Surgeons General agreed on a strategy to re-invent the Military Health System and better control costs. The Comptroller of the Department accepted the changes and the budget. He suggested that the military health system could now be seen to get additional resources in the future.

While Gary was Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, a new Assistant Secretary was appointed. During the years Gary was with DoD, he had built up a very strong and trusted relationship across DoD, one which continued with the coming of the new Assistant Secretary. Though Gary saw this as a way to help the new Assistant Secretary and the Department, that view was not shared by the new Assistant Secretary. Gary was moved to a new position.

At the end of his time with the Department of Defense, he served as Senior Advisor for Force Health Protection with the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs focusing on DoD's largest force health protection effort, protection against anthrax. An effort Gary had started. Gary's focus was on protecting the health of the troops and their families with a special focus on the Guard and Reserves. A primary responsibility was the success of the program to protect the troops against anthrax, the primary biological warfare threat. The anthrax program was the new model for how to best protect troops against military biological and chemical threats.

One of the major changes that Gary made was to rename and refocus the military medical and health system. He changed it to the Military Health System. The reasoning was that the system should focus on the health of service members, their families and retired service members. The system should not just be about "medical." After some intense discussion and some disagreement, it was accepted. Continuing today, it is known as the Military Health System.



Gary's Proposed  
Military Health  
System Logo,  
Department of  
Defense,  
Washington (DC)

**Chief Information Officer, Veterans Health Administration (July 2000 – January 2005) -- Department of Veterans Affairs (Washington, DC).** 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20420

**Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health, Veterans Health Administration (January 2005 – March 2006) -- Department of Veterans Affairs (Washington, DC).** 810 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20420

**Deputy Director, Quality Improvement Group. On detail from VHA. (February 2005 – September 2005) – Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (Baltimore, MD).** 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore MD

**Senior Advisor to the Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. On detail from VHA. September 2005 – March 2006) – Department of Health and Human Services (Baltimore, MD).** 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore MD

40+ hour/week. Grade: SES 5. Salary: \$152,900. (limited by federal salary cap).

As Gary was preparing to leave the Department of Defense, he became aware of the Operating Officer position vacancy with the West Los Angeles Medical Center, flagship medical center for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). He applied for the position and was tentatively accepted. When it was being reviewed in the central VHA office, another option came to light, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Veterans Health Administration.

The Under Secretary for Health offered Gary both options, both being career rather than political positions. Gary had worked with the Under Secretary when Gary was at DoD. Gary was fairly open to both and asked the Under Secretary if he had a preference. He preferred Gary become the CIO. Gary accepted.

Gary moved from political positions to a career position, adhering to all the rules for making that transition. He went through a probation period. He completed career Senior Executive Services (SES) probation and became a Career SES in 2001.

The interesting thing about Gary being CIO is that he had never had a computer or health information system job in his whole career. And this was the largest health information system in the world.

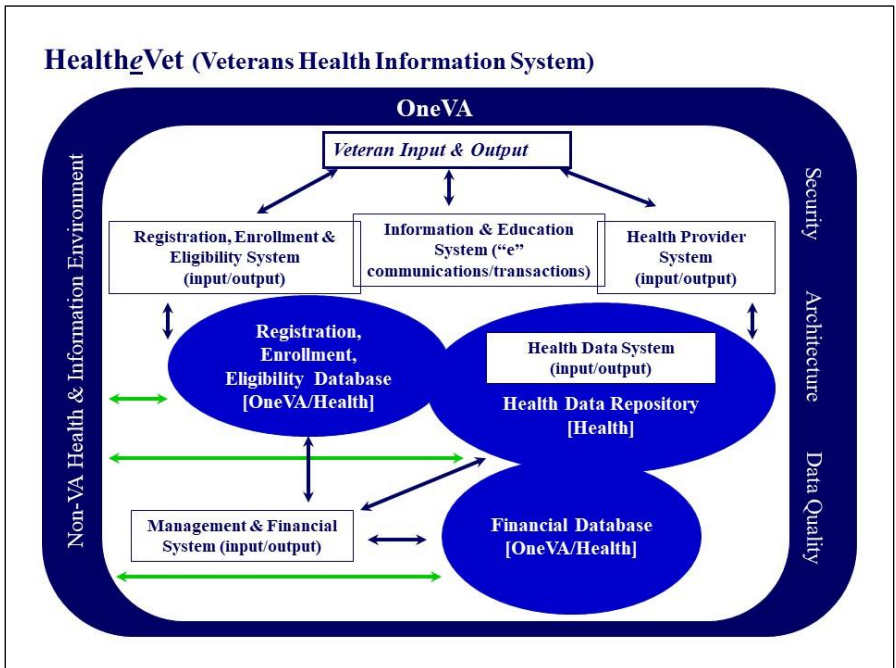
Gary had a strong interest. As Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, he had overseen the parallel effort at the Department of Defense. VHA chose him because he had a reputation as a good manager, as a good innovator, as one who knew a lot about health information systems, and as one who could communicate and work with health people and information technology people.

Gary served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) for the Veterans Health Administration beginning July 2000. As CIO, he managed information systems throughout the \$20+ billion veterans health system, the nation's largest integrated health system.

He managed and oversaw development of VHA's nationally known VistA applications, software and systems, maintenance of over 140 national databases, and customer support for information technology to VHA facilities and offices nationwide. He supervised over 800 people directly and a budget of over \$300 million and oversaw VHA information systems budget of approximately \$1.4 billion annually.



While the existing VistA health information system had many strengths, it had been neglected and needed a major upgrade of technology and capability. After about a month of consultations throughout VHA, Gary proposed a new approach – HealtheVet VistA. He did it using a presentation that featured a blue oval logo and blue ovals in the system elements. It was often referred to as the “blue oval strategy.” A diagram of the new HealtheVet VistA system is below.



HealtheVet Veterans Health Information System as Proposed and Funded

Gary achieved strong support for the HealthVet strategy and the system it would produce. In fact, the VHA leadership added \$125 million per year “out of hide” to his budget to help with the development. He had almost total support within VHA. Support of the Department of Veterans Affairs overall and information technology leadership. And support of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and the key Congressional committees.

With his staff, contractors, and medical center staff, he developed and managed this future VHA health information strategy under the title of HealthVet ensuring success of VHA’s strategy for the next generation of VHA’s nationally known VISTA systems.

A big issue, when Gary was at DoD and continued while at VHA, was appropriately sharing information on service members who became veterans. DoD and VHA had very different health information systems that could not share data. While working on the long term solution where health records could be shared seamlessly, when authorized, Gary and his staff created a bridge that enabled DoD and VHA medical staff to see a veterans health record in both health record systems. The long term solution would require new or greatly enhance health information systems and information standards on both sides. Gary was working toward that. The new HealthVet-VistA system would enable the VHA side.

On Sept 11, 2001, day of the 911 attack on New York’s World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Gary was at the VA, one block from the White House, one of the targets. He spent the day in the VA Crisis Center helping coordinate VA’s effort. The Pentagon plane flew into exactly where his old office was a year earlier. Fortunately, his old office and staff had moved about a month before. Much in that space was under construction. None of his former colleagues were injured.

After a couple of years, the Department of Veterans Affairs leadership, including the information technology leadership, made a strong push toward centralizing many elements of the Department, including of the Veterans Health Administration. A key battle was fought over the future of HealthVet. Gary was able to hold off centralization for quite some time. Eventually, centralization of information technology was approved by the Department. Rather than go along with what he thought was an ill-advised change, Gary left the CIO position.

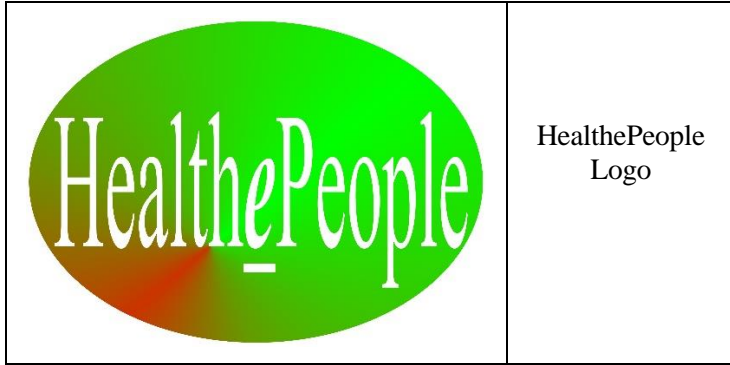


Prior to his leaving the CIO position, there was a Department retreat. As the retreat was ending, there was a push for everyone to sign on to an agreement that pushed the centralization issue. Gary refused to sign as he saw it being detrimental to VHA and its mission. Gary had developed and led a carefully blended mix of centralization and decentralization at VHA. Sitting in a large room, Gary was now alone and surrounded by those pushing him to sign, including Department leadership. Some supportive colleagues argued privately to him that he had to sign or his career would be over. Gary still would not sign. The Department Secretary was arriving soon. A compromise was offered and reached, though not one Gary agreed was a good one. Reluctantly, he then signed. He was never forgiven for holding out as long as he had. It led to his losing the CIO position.

After leaving the CIO position, Gary then became Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health. He developed the national “virtual health system” model for bringing to bear electronic health record systems, personal health/record systems, standards and interoperability. He developed the “person-centered health” model used by VHA, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Institute of Medicine. He developed the “care in the community” model for extending care beyond health facilities’ walls. Care in the Community was developed as a way to move more health to the person and the community and for extending care beyond health facilities’ walls.

He oversaw the development of My HealtheVet, the personal health information system for veterans. My HealtheVet was an eHealth initiative for transforming VHA into an even more veteran-centered health system.

He also developed further collaboration amongst public and private sector organizations under the title of HealthgPeople (overall and federal). He led HealthgPeople, an initiative to improve health delivery systems (person-centered health; care in the community; quality improvement; health behavior), adopt health information standards, and improve the availability, affordability and performance of health info systems nationally and internationally.



Key to appropriately sharing health information across settings and with the person was the development of standards for data and the sharing of data. Gary launched a public-private initiative to make this happen. That effort proceeded until there was tentative agreement among Federal agencies, information technology companies and organizations, health care organizations and the White House. Gary changed the leadership of the effort to get even more buy-in. The White House joined as co-leads. The meetings were moved to the White House offices. Though there was agreement, a new Health and Human Services Secretary arrived and put a hold on the effort. The effort died and, at best, some parts of it were revived much later. The whole effort is still not fully completed.

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While serving as Senior Advisor, Gary took on other initiatives. He served as Senior Fellow, Institute of Medicine (March 2004 – December 2005) – National Academy of Sciences (Washington, DC) He assisted their efforts. He focused on reducing vulnerability in vulnerable populations person-centered health, virtual health systems and care in the community.

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Starting in 2005 and on detail from the Veterans Health Administration, Gary served as Deputy Director of the Quality Improvement Group at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

The Director of the Quality Improvement Group and Gary knew each other from their respective work and were traveling back on the train from New York during part of a hurricane. The trip became a long one with frequent interruptions for track issues. As they had much time to kill, they started talking about what Gary was going to do next. They started talking about Gary being detailed to CMS to work with the Quality Improvement Group, the Deputy position was vacant. Before making it home in the storm, they agreed that Gary would make the move.

As Deputy Director, Gary helped lead the staff. He focused on improving quality and performance via overall CMS quality performance improvement strategy and the Quality Improvement Organizations (QIO). The QIOs were spread across the U.S. They reviewed health care quality and helped health care organization improve the quality of provided health care.

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Later and into 2006 and as his last Federal service, Gary served as Senior Advisor to the CMS Chief Operating Officer. The CMS Chief Operating Office knew Gary's reputation from his time at DoD. Gary's position at DoD was similar in many ways to the CMS COO position. He had also seen Gary work in the months he was the Deputy in the Quality Improvement Group. The Chief Operating Officer approached Gary and asked if would be willing to shift and become his Senior Advisor. There were a number of management issues that Gary could help with. Later it became clear that one initiative would be for Gary to lead the effort to build a Strategic and Operational Strategy and Plan for the future of CMS.

In this role, Gary focused on strategic and operational planning, pay for performance, quality improvement and person-centered health. He led and developed CMS' Strategic and Operational Plan for 2007-12. He developed the Strategic Management System to ensure its successful execution. In developing all this, he spent much time consulting with all parts and all levels of CMS staff. Though the Strategic and Operational Plan received a number of approvals, it did not get the final sign-off from the Department of Health and Human Services. In many ways, it was seen as too bold and encompassing for that Administration.

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Believing he had done all he could do in Federal service, Gary took an early retirement from Federal service in March 2006. With some negotiation with Veterans Health Administration leadership, he left with strong performance reviews, all his sick leave pay and his full retirement.

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After 20 years of senior Federal service, Gary felt some frustration over having given so much and absorbed so many "bullets and spears" (his words) and then having supervisors who did not protect him, fully use his talents or value his accomplishments. Though, by Gary and his staff, it was often remarked about his ability to "absorb bullets and spears" and remain undaunted.

Undaunted, Gary was able and committed to create much of his own world and produce many partial and full successes.

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He now needed to move to his Third Phase, what was to become Thrive!



## **Chapter 8. Building Toward Thriving People, Communities, Countries and World [Third Phase]**

### **2006 Through Present**

Chris<sup>3</sup> dedicated his life to public service in a career that spanned over 30 years. Throughout his career, he worked on national issues on building a thriving and surviving future, on health and human service strategy, policy, systems, models, performance, reform and management and on reducing vulnerability and improving health. Thrive! is his newest, boldest and most important public service.

Even before leaving Federal service, he independently developed strategy, management, policy and performance models and tools for creating, managing, and sustaining large scale change and for building a thriving and surviving future for people, communities, States, countries, and world. This work can be seen at [ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org) and [HealthePeople.com](http://HealthePeople.com) and draws from 30+ years of experience in creating, managing, and sustaining large scale change at national and local levels in public and private sectors.

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<sup>3</sup> From this point on in this book and as it was for his sculpture and fiction books, the nickname “Chris” will be used. Once Chris left Federal service, this seemed more appropriate. He had used “Chris” in his personal relationships going back to his relationship with Patricia. He had used it in his fiction writing. He had used it in his sculpture work. Once he asked a group of very young students on a bus outside his studio/gallery to choose whether to call him Gary or Chris. They unanimously voted for “Chris”. For his work on Thrive!, it just seemed to better fit the mission.



Thrive!, Building a Thriving Future for All Forever

[Photo adapted from NASA photo.]

### **We Are Vulnerable.**

In the early years and as far back as 1989, Chris focused on vulnerability. He developed a national model for “reducing vulnerability and maximizing thriving”. The effort to reduce vulnerability dates back even further to his work in Milwaukee in the late 1970s and it continues today within the Thrive! framework.

Chris incorporated "Vulnerable In America", "VIA" in 1989. Subsequently, he pursued and was granted tax-exempt status. Finding that status was not important to his work, he later dissolved the tax-exempt status without ever activating it.

He continues the effort to reduce vulnerability. He developed the website [via2000.org](http://via2000.org) and then [VulnerableInAmerica.org](http://VulnerableInAmerica.org) . More recently, he developed the website [WeAreVulnerable.org](http://WeAreVulnerable.org) He continues the vulnerability effort in his sculpture, fiction books, and Thrive! work.

We are all vulnerable! Families and friends. Communities. Countries. The world. The whole future is! [WeAreVulnerable.org](http://WeAreVulnerable.org) Humans will be even more vulnerable in our future unless humans fix what is broken and build a surviving and thriving future.

## **viaFuture.**

He developed strategies, models and tools for creating and sustaining large, positive change. As part of that he developed and launched viaFuture as seen in the website [viaFuture.org](http://viaFuture.org) For Chris, the name “viaFuture” means “path to the future”.

The vision for viaFuture is a future in which we survive and thrive in our communities, regions, countries, and world. A future in which we and the rest of the world survive and thrive together. The mission is to create and sustain large positive change and a thriving and surviving future for all forever. The strategy is that together, we fix community, region, country, and world problems and create and sustain large, positive, and timely change. Thrive! is the successor to viaFuture.

### ***Senior Fellow, National Academy of Public Administration***

*In 2006, Gary was nominated to become a Fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). NAPA helps government leaders solve their most critical management challenges. Gary was nominated for and inducted as a Fellow in 2006.*

*He has served on three projects: “Achieving Green and Healthy Homes and Communities in America,” “A National Dialogue on Health Information Technology and Privacy”, and “Recruiting and Retaining a Diverse High-Performing Workforce.”*

*In 2012 and 2013, he served as NAPA committee member for nominating new Fellows.*

*He volunteered substantial time in the headquarters to help strengthen NAPA.*

*He remains a Senior Fellow.*

## **HealthPeople®.**

As noted earlier, Chris continued the HealthPeople® effort as an important element of the overall Thrive! effort. He founded and leads HealthPeople to help build a healthy and thriving future for individual persons and communities (local, State, regional, countries, world) ([HealthPeople.com](http://HealthPeople.com))

While Chris with Thrive! has moved beyond just health, HealthePeople® continues within the Thrive! context. He wrote the book, first version in 2017, now entitled **HealthePeople® - Achieving Healthy People, Communities, Countries and World via Thrive!** The book serves as both a policy and how-to book on how to achieve healthy people and a healthy future. The book was updated in 2020.

To show what an ideal health system might be for people and their communities, the Thriving Health Systems (THS) model and strategy are detailed. Why THS are different and make a substantial positive difference. How THS are organized. How THS help achieve healthy people and communities. A First People Thriving Health System for First People is offered as one example. <sup>4</sup>

HealthePeople focuses on why and how to build, achieve and sustain a successful health system, healthy people and a and a healthy future. To achieve this, the book describes, speaks to the importance of, and walks through how to use ideal health systems, healthy behavior and person-centered health. With these and using HealthePeople as a vision, mission and strategy, the book describes how to build, achieve and sustain healthy people, communities, countries and world.



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<sup>4</sup> By First People, Chris includes indigenous people, Native Americans and every other people who were the first to inhabit and nurture a geographic area.



## **Healthy First People.**

Recognizing the unique and more difficult challenges facing the health of First People, Chris created a separate policy and how-to book in 2020 focused on them. It is entitled **First People Thriving Health Systems – Achieving healthy and thriving First People.** This book focuses on achieving healthy and thriving First People.

Chris suggests this can be accomplished via a strategy of First People Thriving Health Systems for all First People everywhere. Thriving Health Systems are self-perpetuating, very affordable, easily accessible, “e” enabled, person-centered, prevention-oriented, high quality and are producing high health and well-being outcomes and status. Such Thriving Health Systems, partly physical and partly virtual and put into place by collaborative private and public partnerships, will greatly improve accessibility, quality, and affordability for all First People everywhere. Especially important, Thriving Health Systems must be led by First People.

## **Thrive!®**

In this third phase of his life starting around 2006, his Thrive!® work begins and focuses on the highly ambitious mission and vision of building a thriving future for all forever. He founded and leads Thrive!® which helps create, manage and sustain large positive change and build a thriving future for all (persons, local, State, regions, countries, world).<sup>5</sup> ([ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org)) It is the overarching vision, mission and strategy within which Chris’ efforts continue.

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<sup>5</sup> Within the Thrive! framework, Chris has acquired and holds several trademarks since 2006. They include Thrive!, HealthePeople, Thrive! Endeavor, All Thrive Forever, T!, What Will You Do?, and Thrive! System. Pending are two - Thrivism and Thrivist.

### **Thrive! Vision, Mission, Strategy**

Thrive! vision, mission, strategy, and supportive tools help create and sustain large, positive and timely change and build a thriving future for all forever. To build a thriving and surviving future:

- Vision: All thrive forever. All includes you, your communities, and our world. All includes humans, all other creatures and Earth.
- Mission: Large, positive, timely change achieving surviving and thriving future for all forever.
- Strategy: A joint Thrive! Endeavor and call to action builds a thriving future for all forever.

Currently, Chris does much of his Thrive! work at the Thrive! Center. There is where his office and home are located. He is surrounded by the Mississippi River and Thrive! Park's Mississippi River bluffs and forest trails.

**Why Care?** All want and need this thriving future because of our endangered future and our human need to survive and desire to thrive in the current world and a sustainable future world.

To truly satisfy this need and desire, humans need the following:

- humans need to survive and desire to thrive,
- humans depend on other humans for survival and thriving, especially in the long term,
- human need and desire applies to both current and future world,
- human future survival and thriving depends on there being a future world, and
- future world must be sustainable and sustained to fully meet human need and desire.

For these reasons, building, achieving and sustaining this future forever (to the maximum extent possible) is the human endeavor and the ideal. This is why all should care about this future.

Because it is humans who have broken much of the world and endangered its future, it is humans who must care about and must fix what is broken and build a survivable and thriving future. Because it is only humans who can change our future, it is humans who must build, achieve, and sustain this future.

**What is Thrive?** It is a thriving and surviving future forever for all (humans, all other creatures and Earth). All thrive forever®.

**Why Thrive?** Unique among Earth's species, humans need to survive and want to thrive both near and long term. Thrive! works to achieve thriving future - thrive and survive, low vulnerability, avoid early extinction of humans and other creatures, and avoid extensive damage to Earth. Works to avoid current endangered future - not thrive and not survive, high vulnerability, early extinction of humans and other creatures, and extensive damage to Earth.

**Is Thrive truly different and better?** Thrive is not just getting by or achieving a surviving future. Is achieving thriving future. Thrive is not just for some people. Is for all people. Thrive is not just for current and next generation. Is for current and all future generations. Thrive is not just for humans. Is for humans, all other creatures and Earth on which we depend.

**Can we achieve Thrive?** We can if we act now. It is still our choice to make. But time has almost run out. We can if we use our full ability. We have the ability as we are most able in all human history. We can if we care enough about self, everyone, everything else, and Earth. We must stop selfishness. We can if we care enough about both near- and long-term future. We must stop shortsightedness.

**How to achieve Thrive?** Immediately, we successfully develop and use strategy, tools and actions to successfully build and execute strategies and actions to build thriving future. [like in **Thrive! - People's Guide To A Thriving Future**] Immediately, all of us together build thriving future for our families and friends, communities, countries and world. [like the **Thrive! Endeavor®** [ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org) ] Immediately, each and all of us separately and together stop negative actions and take only positive actions. Immediately, start with who and what you care about and move from vulnerable to surviving to thriving. Chris challenges us to act now! Together build thriving future now!



**Thrive! Endeavor**<sup>®</sup>. Within Thrive!, Chris created the **Thrive! Endeavor**<sup>®</sup> (TE!) to help create and empower a vast, sustained human endeavor building and sustaining thriving and surviving future for all forever.

He asks people to join the Endeavor by helping build thriving future for our whole world. Start by building a better future for your family and friends. Start with a better future for your community. Start with your country. Start with who and what you care about and move from vulnerable to surviving to thriving.

If successful, we and all future generations achieve the surviving and thriving future for all forever, to the maximum extent possible. At this time in human history when we desire to thrive, when we need to survive, when our future is most endangered, and when we are most capable, the **Thrive! Endeavor**, all of us together, can and must build, achieve and sustain this future for all forever.

***Thrive! Scholarship Fund***

*In 2015, Gary endowed the Thrive! Scholarship Fund at the University of Wisconsin - Madison. A Memorandum of Agreement with UW Foundation was signed with the scholarship to be administered through UW Political Science Department. To initiate it, he gave \$10,000 as initial endowment. He also donated his Reads Landing property, independently appraised at \$49,000. He also set up so that any GChris sculpture payments would go directly to the Scholarship Fund. In exchange, the donor would receive that sculpture.*



*“The Thrive! Endeavor”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

**Thrive! System.** More recently and within the Thrive! framework, Chris designed the **Thrive! System**, a design for how to implement Thrive! in a community or country. It builds off and goes beyond the successful experience with the Milwaukee inner city health system.

The System has persons and their communities at the center. At the center with persons are their Primary Personal Support (PPS) surrounded by all needed and wanted Personal Support (PS). It adjusts when locations, time, person, and community change. It takes into account all of personal and community characteristics and all of health and well-being. It understands personal and community environment and its impact on thriving. It understands and uses the full range of thriving support to improve and sustain thriving. It connects all of these, with information and other support, into a fully integrated and supportive system for persons and their communities.

**Thrivism.** A key Thrive! effort was to create, develop and advance **Thrivism** (Thrive!), a path to, belief in, and vision of thriving future for all – all thrive forever. It is hopeful path. Inspiring vision. Positive belief system. Positive way of life. [**Thrivism – Path to Thriving Future for All.** Paperback & eBook.]

Its vision is a thriving future where all thrive forever. Its mission is to help a person, all people, all other creatures, and Earth strive for and achieve a surviving and thriving future. Its foundational belief is that humans, as person and people, have a unique need to survive and desire to thrive in the current world and a thriving future world.

A **Thrivist** actively follows Thrivism path, embraces its belief system and lives its way of life. A Thrivist helps build and sustain a thriving future with and for all – each person, all people, all other creatures and Earth.

Thrivism is a philosophy and a religion. It is a pull. It is positive. It only lays out what we should do. We have to think through what not to do. It accepts people who believe or do not believe in god. It is as you believe. As fits best with you. When it refers to god, it is with a small g, without gender and without race. It does not address any religion as the right religion. Thrivism calls upon humans to care for all creatures and earth and to help all (humans, all other creatures and Earth) thrive forever.

### **A People's Constitution.**

Chris has even gone so far as to call for "A People's Constitution" He believes that, as we do for the United States, we as people should embrace and live by:

**"A People's Constitution"**

“We the people commit to a thriving future for all forever.”



*“Thrivism – path to thriving future”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

### **Thrive! Books, Articles and eMedia.**

To advance the Thrive! effort, Chris authored many public policy books and articles under *Thrive!* These books and articles draw on 30+ years of experience in creating, managing, evaluating, and sustaining large positive T

Published in 2011, the first book was **Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future for All**. This “manual” argues that we are now at a “tipping point” when our future is most endangered and we are most capable. Large, positive and timely change must happen now. Creating and sustaining a thriving future requires understanding that it is we who have broken the present and endangered the future. It is only we, working together that can create and sustain the necessary large, positive, and timely change for building a thriving future for all forever.

Several of the subsequent books expand on this manual or focus on a particular Thrive! element like the Behavioral Effectiveness Model. They are listed below:

## Chris' Thrive! Related Public Policy Books and Articles

[Almost all books can be downloaded free from Thrive! websites.]

**Thrive! Endeavor - All Thrive Forever.** Amazon/CreateSpace. May 22, 2015. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Joint Thrive! Endeavor and call to action builds thriving future for all forever.

**Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future for All.** Amazon/CreateSpace; Smashwords. [Self-Published] November 2011 & January 2019. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Manual providing greater depth on strategy and tools.

**Thrivism – Path to Thriving Future for All.** Amazon/Kindle. January 1, 2020. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Lays out path to, belief in, and vision of thriving future for all

**Thrive! – Quick Guide to a Thriving Future.** Amazon/CreateSpace; Smashwords. December 2013 & January 2019. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Quick, more user-friendly guide.

**Thrive! – People's Guide to a Thriving Future.** Amazon/CreateSpace; Smashwords. [Self-Published] December 2013 & January 2019] Paperback & eBook. More user-friendly guide.

**Thrive! System!® - Achieving Thriving Future For All.** Amazon/Kindle. February 12, 2020. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. System for people and communities to help achieve thriving future for all.

**Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM): Building Thriving Future Using Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM).** Amazon/CreateSpace. June 29, 2015. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Building thriving future using Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM).

**Thrive! - All Thrive Forever: What Will You Do? ® The Game. The Challenge.** Amazon/CreateSpace. May 27, 2015. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. The game. The challenge.

**The Thrive! Philosophy: Thrive! - All Thrive Forever.** Amazon/CreateSpace. May 24, 2015. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Underlying philosophy of Thrive!



**HealthPeople® - Achieving Healthy People, Communities, Countries and World via Thrive!**. Amazon/CreateSpace. June 2017 & January 2019 & May 2020. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Policy and how-to book on how to achieve healthy people and a healthy future.

**First People Thriving Health Systems – Achieving healthy and thriving First People.** Amazon/Kindle. February 10, 2020. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. Achieving healthy and thriving First People. Policy and how-to book on how to achieve healthy First People.

**Thrive! Sculpture and Thought. Sculptural Vision of a Thriving Future for All .** Amazon/Kindle. November 2016 & March 2019 & November 2019. [Self-Published] Paperback & eBook. This book, updated almost yearly, displays many of the Thrive! sculpture along with their messages.

First published in 2015, the **Thrive! Endeavor - All Thrive Forever** book calls for a joint Thrive! Endeavor and calls for action to build thriving future for all forever. A thriving and surviving future for you and all of us. We want and need it. We can achieve it. Now we are at the “tipping point” when our future is most endangered and we are most capable. The **Thrive! Endeavor®** helps by motivating governments, private sector organizations and people of all backgrounds and generations to work together to build and sustain a thriving future.

Both in his Master’s Thesis and in the later book, **Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM): Building Thriving Future Using Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM)**, Chris developed the Behavioral Effectiveness Model (BEM) by integrating several cognitive and behavioral models. Initially it was use for designing, operating, and evaluating land use planning, then later for health services, and, most recently for Thrive!. Ineffectiveness in building a better future can be traced to inability and lack of motivation to deal positively with human behavior. Chris developed and uses BEM as an effective model for understanding and improving positive behavior and change efforts and building a better, thriving future.

One of the latest books, first published in 2020, is **Thrivism – Path to Thriving Future for All**. **Thrivism (Thrive!®)**, as mentioned earlier, is a path to, belief in, and vision of thriving future for all – all thrive forever. It is hopeful path. Inspiring vision. Positive belief system. Positive way of life. Thrivism.world

### **Chris' Thrive! Related Public Policy Articles**

***Thrive!*** - A Philosophy of 'Thriving' (Survive and Thrive Together). Included as chapter in ***Thrive!*** - Building a Thriving Future. July 2011.

"HealthPeople: Person-Centered, Outcomes-Driven, Virtual Health System" in **Person-Centered Health Records - Toward HealthPeople**. Edited by James Demetriades, Robert Kolodner, and Gary Christopherson. Health Informatics Series, Springer Science+Media Inc., New York, NY. March 2005.

"Creating and Sustaining Change", in *Transforming American Governance: Rebooting the Public Square*. Edited by: Alan Balutis, Terry F. Buss, and Dwight Ink. M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, NY. March 2011.

"Person-Centered Health", in *International Journal of Person-Centered Medicine*. The International Network for Person Centered Medicine (INPCM) & University of Buckingham Press, Buckingham, UK. December 2011.

"Care in the Community" in *E-Health: The Advent of Online Cancer Information Systems*. Edited by Pamela Whitten, Gary L. Kreps, and Matthew Eastin. Hampton Press, New York, NY. June 2011.

As the world shifted to more and more use the internet, Chris used the internet to advance the Thrive! mission through websites, blogs and use of eMedia. All of the websites and blogs below were and are built, funded, and maintained by Chris.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Initially, he used Microsoft FrontPoint software to build and maintain websites. Later, he used Microsoft Expression Web hosted with Arvixe.

### **Thrive! Related Websites**

Thrive! Endeavor - Join endeavor to build thriving future.

[ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org)

Thrivism - Join Thrivism to build thriving future for all. [Thrivism.world](http://Thrivism.world)

Children Thrive Forever! - Aspire to future when children thrive forever.

[ChildrenThriveForever.org](http://ChildrenThriveForever.org)

All Thrive Forever - Aspire to better future when all thrive forever. [AllThriveForever.org](http://AllThriveForever.org)

We Are Vulnerable - Reduce and avoid vulnerability for better future.

[WeAreVulnerable.org](http://WeAreVulnerable.org)

Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future - Strategy/tools to build better future.

[ThrivingFuture.org](http://ThrivingFuture.org)

The Thrive! System - Helping you and your community survive and thrive. [TheThriveSystem.org](http://TheThriveSystem.org)

Thrive! - All Thrive Forever - "Play" strategic game in real-life. [ThriveForever.org](http://ThriveForever.org)

Endangered Future - Endangered more than ever before in our history.

[EndangeredFuture.org](http://EndangeredFuture.org)

HealththePeople - Use Thrive! to build healthy and thriving future.

[HealththePeople.com](http://HealththePeople.com)

GChris Sculpture - Thrive! sculpture supporting endeavor to build thriving future. [GChris.com](http://GChris.com)

### **Thrive! Related Blogs**

Thrivism Blog - Blog key messages and suggested actions. [Thrivism.blog](http://Thrivism.blog)

T! Blog - Blog key messages and suggested actions. [ThriveBlog.org](http://ThriveBlog.org)

T! Blog - Blog asking and challenging "What will you do?"  
[ThriveBlog.net](http://ThriveBlog.net)

T! Blog - Thrive! sculpture and thoughts/messages. [WordPress Blog]  
[ThriveSculpture.com](http://ThriveSculpture.com)

T! Blog - Thrive! sculpture and thoughts/messages. [Website Blog]  
[ThriveSculpture.org](http://ThriveSculpture.org)

### **Thrive! Related eMedia**

[LinkedIn Thrive!](#)

[Facebook Thrive!](#) [Includes Thrive!, Thrivism, All Thrive Forever, HealthPeople, GChris Sculpture]

[Twitter Thrive!](#)

[YouTube Thrive!](#)

[Tumblr Thrive!](#)

[Flickr Thrive!](#)

[ello Thrive!](#)

[MySpace Thrive!](#)

[Pinterest Thrive!](#)

[Medium Thrive!](#)

Starting in 2011 and to help protect intellectual property rights and appropriate use, Chris filed for, received and maintains several trademarks for the US Patent and Trademark Office. They include:

- Received a trademark for HealthePeople in December 2011.
- Received a trademark for Thrive! in October 2012.
- Received a trademark for Thrive! Endeavor in 2015
- Received a trademark for All Thrive Forever in 2015
- Received a trademark for T! in 2015.
- Received a trademark for "What will you do?" in 2015.
- Received a trademark for "Thrive! System" in 2019.
- Filed for trademarks for Thrivism and Thrivist in 2020. Pending.

While Chris has produced a large body of work in support of Thrive!, he has not yet made, in his view, substantial progress toward achieving the vision of “all thrive forever”. Currently, his best assessment is that humans will continue on their current selfish and shortsighted path which will lead to early extinction of humans, extinction of many other creatures, and great damage to Earth.

Not yet willing to give up, Chris continues the Thrive! work and the effort to find a solution that will result in “all thrive forever”.

### ***Mentoring***

*Throughout his career, Chris has been mentoring early and mid-career staff as a way to enhance the people working in government.*

*He mentored University of Wisconsin Political Science students when they were in Washington for their summer internships. He also did sessions with the students on the topic of creating and sustaining change.*

### ***Thinking and Travel***

*While living and working in Washington, Chris spent much of his time trying to develop and achieve the Thrive! vision and mission. This took place in many places, including home and office in University Park (MD) and Nelson (WI).*

*One of his favorite getaway places was Shenandoah National Park (VA), about an hour and a half from his home in University Park (MD). The summit of Hawksbill Mountain in Shenandoah National Park was Gary's "retreat". He would leave home at 3 or 4 in the morning and enter the Front Royal park entrance before dawn. Usually he would get up on Hawksbill Mountain shortly after dawn and spend hours up there by himself. Once in a while, he would meet a black bear on the trail. There was delight in the peregrine falcons fast, acrobatic flying, especially the young ones. Tremendous creativity, captured with many yellow post-it notes, occurred during those visits.*



*Hawksbill Mountain, Shenandoah National Park, Virginia*

*Over the years, Chris traveled much of the United States. Patricia and he took many trips, including to much of western Europe, Toronto (CN), southern California, and the Rocky Mountains. Traveling alone from about 1990 on, Chris has traveled to the West Coast, the Four Corners (New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah), New Orleans, Maine, Assateague Island (MD), southern Canada, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Outer Banks of North Carolina.*

*While camping on Cape Hatteras National Seashore (NC) with his dog Taj, they tent camped overnight. During the night, a huge rainstorm and windstorm struck the island. Chris and Taj hunkered down to keep the tent from flying away. When they awoke in the morning, theirs was the only tent and they were the only visitors. Everyone else had escaped during the storm and night.*



## **Chapter 9. Creating Thrive! Center - Home for Thrive! Park, Thrive! Sculpture, HealthePeople and Thrive! [Third Phase].**

**2003 Through Present**

The Thrive! Center is a multi-faceted center to support all the elements of Thrive!. It is the home of Thrive!, HealthePeople, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris, and Thrive! Park. It is on the site of an 1885 era farm perched on a Mississippi River bluffside. It is also where Chris lives and works daily.



## Purchase of Thrive! Center Property.

Around the year 2000, Chris was looking for property in and around the Nelson (WI) area. It was to be a place to live and work and to enjoy some leisure time. Thrive! had not yet emerged. In 2003, his mother, Irene Christopherson, called him one day and indicated that there was a property for sale that might interest him. She hesitated to tell him as she was not sure it was a good idea. Actually, she thought it was a bad idea.

Chris quickly traveled out to check out the property. When he got there, he found the buildings were a disaster. The house was a mess, except for one room. The question. Could it be saved? Should it be saved? The barn was falling apart with the roof and floor both in terrible shape. The side facing the bluff had partially caved in. The beehouse (not yet known it was a beehouse) had a caved in roof and floor. The barn was the only building Chris knew he would save. The buildings were worth less than nothing.

Then he focused on the land. 29.5 acres. The heavy oak, shagbark hickory and black walnut forest. The 500 foot tall Mississippi River bluffs. The 20 mile views of the Mississippi River Valley. He was convinced. Buy it for the land. Figure out what to do with the buildings later. He bought it.



Summer View of Thrive! Center and Environs from Pikes Peak Blufftop



## **Restoration/Renovation of 1885 Era Farm Buildings.**

Then began the extensive renovations of the 1885 buildings. Most of Chris' family thought the house should be bulldozed. A new house built. The cost of either would be similar. The first question was whether there was enough of the house to save. After a lot of demolition and removal of two layers of siding, Chris found the original 135 year old siding, covered since 1902. Most of the floors were restorable. The original two-foot thick stone foundation was fairly sound. The rest? Not so good. Chris decided to rescue the house and proceed with the renovation and restoration.

What partially drove Chris' decision on preserving the buildings was the fact that so many of the pre 1900 building were being lost for one reason or another. Along with the building, a substantial part of history was being lost. Chris believed there was a substantial value in preserving key parts of history. In this case, history was a small bluffside farm built by a family over 100 years earlier.



Thrive! Center Main Building, Renovated/Restored Farmhouse, 1885 Era

The renovation strategy for the house was to make it look like it would have looked in 1885 but with all modern mechanicals (heating, air conditioning, electrical, plumbing), new drywall, refinished floors, new roof, and new doors and windows. All that took almost a decade to get done. While he contracted for much of the restoration work, Chris traveled several times each year to do parts of demolition and renovation. It was essentially done by 2012 when Chris moved back from Washington (DC).

The barn was the one building Chris had always planned to restore/renovate. When he bought it, the roof was weakened and the center of the roof was sloped downward. The side of the barn toward the bluff had caved in from the pressure of the bluffside. The lower level had a dirt floor and the woodchuck. Unfortunately for it, the woodchuck had to be evicted. The upper level floor and support system had to be replaced. When fully restored/renovated, the barn had new roof bracing, new metal roof, partial replacement siding from similar age barn, new upper floor and floor joists, new concrete floor in lower level, and a new storage section on the upper level replacing what had been destroyed by the hillside pressure.



Thrive! Center Barn, Renovated/Restored, 1885 Era

The beehouse is a unique story. When the property was purchased, the center of the roof had caved in and the floor and support system had caved in. At that time, no one knew it was a beehouse. All that was known is that it had 27 small openings for a purpose unknown. Chris' initial approach was just to protect the building by putting on a new roof and floor system. After that, he left it alone for years.

Later, while working in the beehouse, Chris noticed that the old stone chimney did not open through the roof but did open inside the beehouse. There was a five-foot high space underneath that had a stove feeding into the stone chimney. Then is when he finally figured out it was a beehouse. The best thinking is that the chimney and stove were used to “smoke” the bees to make them easier to handle when working with the hives.

In talking to many beekeepers, including European beekeepers, the story unfolded. It is likely that it was a Swiss type beehouse. The honeybees would have been brought to the U.S. from Europe as honeybees are not native to the U.S. It had housed 27 beehives. It was more than twice the size of most European beehouses. The extra space was likely used to process the honey and the wax (for things like candles). And, none of the U.S. bee people had ever seen such a beehouse in the U.S.



Thrive! Center Beehouse, Renovated/Restored, 1885 Era

Also and later, Chris found a photo of the property looking down from Pikes Peak dating back to around 1900. There was the beehouse with a cupola. As the final restoration/renovation, Chris built a new cupola, slid it up onto the roof, and installed it. All by himself. He then had a new metal roof installed. It now houses many GChris sculptures and is part of the GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery.

A bit of irony. One day, Chris was looking out his office window and noticed a cloud-like image. On closer examination, it was a honeybee swarm. Very shortly, they moved in through a crack between the fireplace chimney and living room wall. Many of the usual efforts were made to encourage them to leave. To no avail. They really liked their new home. Finally, a local beekeeper and Chris suited up, opened the living room wall, and carefully vacuumed out the bees. The honeybees were pretty docile. Only one or two bee stings for Chris. Probably 95 percent of the bees were saved and placed in a new beehive. Later, the beekeeper estimated about 15-20,000 bees were in the wall. The irony is the honeybees choosing the house wall when there was a beehouse just 20 feet away. Actually, the living room wall, warmer in winter and cooler in summer, was their better choice. The swarm had a very smart scout bee.

Even in 2012, Chris was not sure if he should stay in the University Park house or move to the Nelson property. He decided to put both the University Park house and Nelson property up for sale at the same time. He was willing to go either way. He put the University Park house up himself as a sell by owner. A neighbor realtor provided free advice. In only eight days, Chris sold the house himself for full price of \$449,000, a bit higher than he had originally expected. The challenge was that the new owners wanted to move in as soon as possible. That forced Chris to move quickly.

The big challenge was to move the household and all sculpture quickly and safely 1100 miles. That did not work out so well. Loading went well. The moving company had trucking problems and unloaded and reloaded Chris' goods more than once. In Nelson, one of the moving trucks pulled up, opened the truck's back, and revealed a disaster. Piled in one corner was a pile of copper rod and sheet. The crew on this truck did not realize this was "art". While the moving company had been selected because of their reputation for moving art and the loaders had been very careful with packing, not so by the end delivery. After much back and forth, the moving company admitted its mistake and paid damages of \$10,000

### **Bluff Hiking Roads and Trails System.**

To build a good hiking road and trails system, Chris wanted to make best use of existing farm and logging roads. They were cleaned up to make them more usable and user-friendly year-round. But how to get to the bluff tops? The old bluff farm road was no longer usable as it went partly through a neighbor's property. The solution was to build a hiking trail system off the old farm and logging roads.

Over a few years, Chris built the system of hiking paths linked to the farm and logging roads and going up to the two sets of bluff tops that were part of his land. The key was to build them so they required as little maintenance as possible. Using natural openings in the forest and prairies. This is where the partnership between Chris and the deer began. Chris used some of the deer trails and kept them clear. Later, the deer used some of his trails and helped keep them clear. A symbiotic relationship.

### **Bluff Top and Prairie Restoration.**

But the bluff prairies and tops were nothing like they were in the 1950s, let alone the 1880s. Many trees, especially cedar, had grown in. A lot of buckthorn and prickly ash had grown in. Then Chris had the idea to do prairie restoration on the two sets of bluff tops and prairies.

Starting in 2015, Chris started prairie restoration with substantial funding from US Fish and Wildlife Service and Buffalo County. He contracted with 'Ku Le Forestry out of LaCrosse (WI). This was extremely challenging work for them. Chris supervised the work. This first effort was finished by December 2015. It includes the bluff tops and prairies of two of the Three Sisters and the Lost Brother and the bluff top and prairie on the east side of Pikes Peak. Chris also worked with neighbor Dennis Hetrick who did the same work on the west side (front) of Pikes Peak, owned by the Hetrick family.



Chris on Thrive! Park Sisters / Lost Brother Hiking Trail, 2016

In 2019 with this land now being Thrive! Park owned by the Village of Nelson, the Village with funding support from Chris, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Buffalo County did a second phase of restoration. Here the focus was on the forest below the Sisters and Lost Brother bluff prairies. Chris supervised the work. Quercus Land Stewardship did the work to create the transition forest, removing all brush and trees except oak and shagbark hickory. A couple of very old birch trees were kept that were deep in the forest. They also conducted a prairie burn on the main prairie below and on top of the Sisters and Lost Brother. As noted above, this was done after Chris had donated and transferred the bluff tops and prairies to the Village of Nelson to be used as Thrive! Park.



Thrive! Park Bluff and Prairie Restoration, Before and After

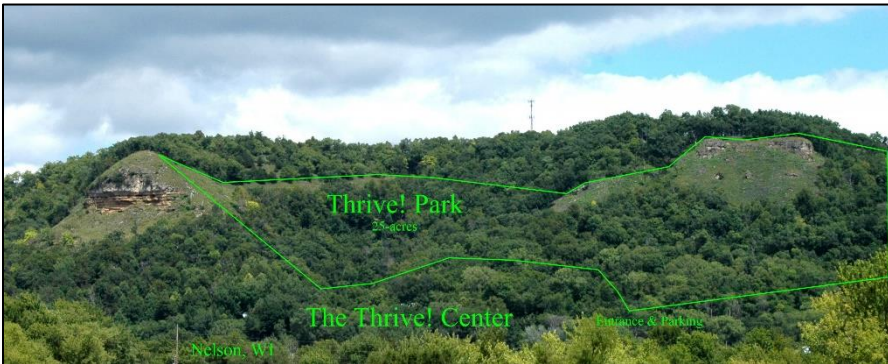
### **Thrive! Center - Thrive! Park.**

Chris wanted to find a way to preserve as much of the Thrive! Center property as he could. He explored a wide range of options to protect the land. The only option that could protect the property in perpetuity was to make it a public park. He looked into who might be willing to accept and maintain the property as a public park. He talked to Buffalo County and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Neither was sufficiently interested. Chris soon settled on the Village of Nelson in which the property was located.

After a series of discussions, Chris offered and agreed to donate about 25 acres of his bluff and prairie land for a new public park named Thrive! Park. The Village of Nelson agreed. The agreement was signed March 2015. After the prairie restoration was completed, Chris told them we should move to complete the transfer by February 2016. In 2016, the property was transferred and Thrive! Park was born.



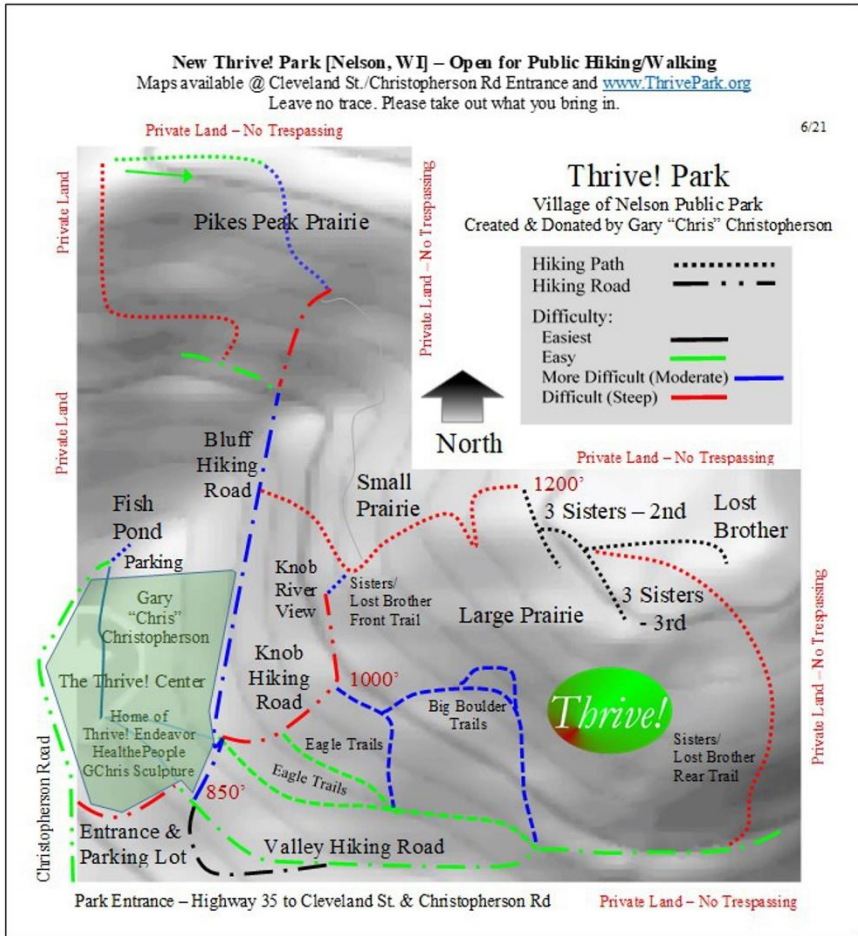
Thrive! Park by Village of Nelson



Thrive! Park, View from Mississippi River, Nelson (WI)



In 2016, Chris finished the Thrive! Park setup including signage. He donated and installed much of the hiking road and trail signage. Trails were also marked with blue paint and yellow tape. A large Thrive! Park sign with the park's name and indicating Chris as the donor was provided by the Village. In 2016, the Village installed a parking area and park entrance for Thrive! Park. Chris created and maintains the Thrive! Park website - [ThrivePark.org](http://ThrivePark.org) .Chris also created the Thrive! Park map and handout to help guide visitors.



Thrive! Park Map of Hiking Roads and Trails

To make the park more user friendly, new and easier trails have been built. Chris added a loop trail on the park's west side. The Eagle Trail, a loop trail, was built as Max Benish's Eagle Scout project by he and the Alma (WI) Boy Scouts. They also added benches. The Alma (WI) High School Shop class, with materials supplied by Chris, built two picnic tables and two swinging benches that are now in the park. Chris also donated two park benches which are located on top the Sisters and Lost Brother bluffs.

One of the favorite sites for children (and adults) is the Fish Pond. Currently, it is home to several hundred small fish and, at times, dozens of frogs and tadpoles. Built in the 1970s, the 30' by 30' pond is spring fed. Near it is an old stone spring house with an active spring as well. Though the pond is less than three feet deep currently, the fish keep surviving and have since 2003. The spring at the upper end of the pond likely plays an important role in fish survival.

Since its inception, Chris has played the role of "first volunteer". He has done much of the park's trail maintenance. He serves as a guide to help park visitors make the best use of the park. The Village of Nelson will be taking on more and more of the maintenance work as time passes.



View of Mississippi River Valley from Park Bench,  
Sisters Bluff Top, Thrive! Park



View of Mississippi River Valley from Park Bench,  
Lost Brother Bluff Top, Thrive! Park

Chris retained about 3.6 acres of the original 29.5 acres which includes the restored/renovated 1885 era buildings. This is where are located most of the Thrive! Center activities related to Thrive!, HealthePeople and Thrive! Sculpture.

### **Thrive! Center – GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery.**

When Chris acquired and restored/renovated the Thrive! Center property, it was his intent to use much of the space for the GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery. Over the years, he kept refining the spaces to accommodate the workshop/studio and the multiple galleries. All can be visited.

The GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery now occupies all of the restored/renovated farm buildings, including the farmhouse, the upper and lower barn and the beehouse. Sculpture also occupies the two cargo containers he purchased and installed. All these are located on the 3.6 acres retained by Chris.



GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery, Nelson (WI)

On the upper floor of the farmhouse is Chris' office. There is where he designs sculpture. Sometime by hand. Mostly in later years, on the laptop computer using CorelDraw software. Using the software, Chris can better manipulate the designs, work with different dimensions and proportions, reduce errors, and better use the expensive copper and American black walnut wood.

The first floor is the main floor and the main display space for the gallery. It houses about 50 sculpture at any one time.

What may now be Chris' best studio/workshop is in the lower barn. It was renovated specifically for this purpose. In it are several of his most recent sculptures and any sculpture in the process of being created.



GChris Sculpture Gallery, Main Gallery, Farmhouse, Nelson (WI)



GChris Sculpture Workshop/Studio, Lower Barn, Nelson (WI)

To create sculpture, Chris has and uses many tools. Stationary power tools including a large lathe, a radial arm saw, grinders, a planer, two band saws (one for wood and one for metal) and a drill press. Hand power tools are many, including the jig saw and random orbital sander. For brazing and coloring copper, he uses an oxyacetylene torch. Also, in the workshop/studio is some of the materials – copper and American black walnut wood – that he uses to create sculpture.

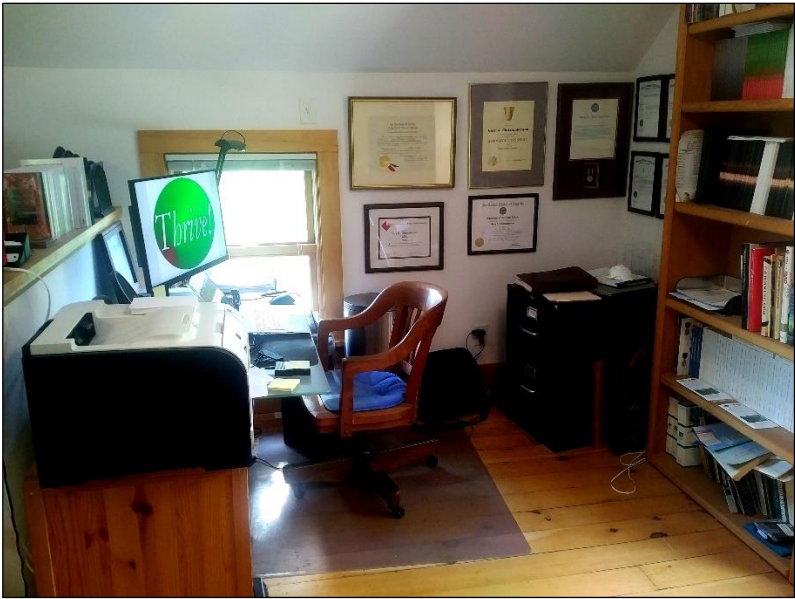
### **Thrive! Center – Thrive! and HealthePeople Public Policy.**

Since Chris moved to Nelson in 2012, the Thrive! Center" serves as physical and virtual space for HealthePeople and Thrive!.

Visitors can visit and meet with Chris and learn about, discuss and/or join Thrivism and the Thrive Endeavor. Visitors can read and discuss the several nonfiction and fiction books in the Thrive! book collection written by him. Visitors can learn about and discuss the overall vision, mission and strategy of Thrive! - a future where all thrive forever.

In his second-floor office in the restored/renovated Thrive! Center farmhouse, Chris has written several books and articles. Chris continues to write books and articles in support of HealthePeople and Thrive!. He continue to develop the websites and blogs that support Thrive!, HealthePeople and Thrive! Sculpture. He continues to push Thrive! on a wide range of eMedia sites.

In Thrive! Park and in the restored/renovated Thrive! Center farmhouse, Chris continues to strategize ways to fulfill the Thrive! mission and achieve the Thrive! vision of “all thrive forever.”



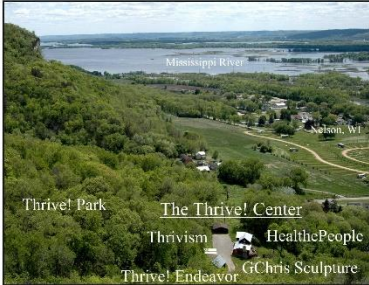
Chris' Office, Thrive! Center, Nelson (WI)




Winter View of Thrive! Center and Environs from Pikes Peak Blufftop

In response to many questions about the Thrive! Center and Thrive! Park, Chris wrote and published a new book - **Story of Thrive! Center and Thrive! Park**. This tells the story of how they came about and what they are. Book has photos of both Center and Park. It is available in paperback and eBook via Amazon.com or as a free download at [GChris.com](http://GChris.com).

**Story of Thrive! Center and Thrive! Park**



by  
Gary "Chris" Christopherson  
Founder, Thrive! – Building a Thriving Future  
Founder, HealthePeople – Building a Healthy Future  
Sculptor, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris  
Former Senior Executive, U.S. Federal Government



Nelson, WI
University Park, MD

**The Thrive! Center**


Since Chris moved to Nelson (WI) in 2012, The Thrive! Center serves as physical and virtual space for GChris Sculpture, HealthePeople and Thrive!

Center operates out of a restored/renovated 1885 era farmhouse, barn and beehouse on bluffside overlooking Mississippi River and adjacent to Thrive! Park.

Thrive! Park is 25+ acre public park created and donated by Chris and located on restored Mississippi River bluff sides and tops. Park has system of hiking roads and trails built and maintained by Chris.

Visitors can view GChris sculpture and tour the workshop/studio. Visitors can learn more about sculpture Chris creates and how he creates them.

Visitors can visit and meet with Chris and learn about, discuss and/or join HealthePeople, Thrivism and Thrive Endeavor. Visitors can discuss several Thrive! nonfiction and fiction books written by him. Visitors can learn about overall Thrive! and HealthePeople vision, mission and strategy.



**Story of Thrive! Center and Thrive! Park.**

**Thrive! Center – Future as Part of Thrive! Park**

When Thrive! Park was donated, a question remained as to the future of the Thrive! Center. After donating the 25+ acres for Thrive! Park, the Thrive! Center consists of the historic house, barn and beehouse and the remaining 3.6 acres of land. Chris’ interest was in finding a long-term home for the Thrive! Center.



After discussing a potential home, the discussion focused on donating the Center to the Village of Nelson and making it part of Thrive! Park. Ultimately, the discussion resulted in an agreement signed in May 2021 for Chris to donate the Thrive! Center to the Village of Nelson and for the Village of Nelson to accept the donation. As with the Park donation, the agreement has certain protections built in for both the Village and Chris. While the agreement is signed and in place, the actual transfer will not take place until Chris dies or decides to make the transfer.

Chris' intent is that the Thrive! Center would continue to be a place for the public to come to enjoy the historic buildings, Chris' sculpture and easier access to the Park's hiking roads and trails and scenic view. Chris is already making the Center more open to the public.





## **Chapter 10. Building Toward All Thrive Forever [Final Phase]**

### **2012 Through The End**

Chris' lifelong pursuit of a thriving future for all forever goes on.

When he sees the current path, he finds little cause for optimism. The current path, full of selfishness and shortsightedness, will lead only to early extinction for humans and most other creatures and great damage to Earth.

There are some who still believe that humans can and will change. That humans will go to the brink and then change. But by then it will likely be too late. Early extinction, in all or in part, will no longer be avoidable. If humans are to avoid early extinction and great damage to Earth, they must change now. Not in small ways but in very large ways. Well beyond the changes we even consider today. Not many years in the future but now. The longer we stay on the current path the more difficult will it be to get off that path and on a path leading to a surviving and thriving future.

As Chris often states, we are at a moment in human history when humans, all other creatures and Earth are most at risk and when humans are most capable of changing their behavior and their future. But humans are failing to act, except to destroy their future.

In all this, Chris has not given up. He continues to pursue a thriving future for all forever. He continues Thrive! and the pursuit of a thriving future for all forever.



*“all thrive forever”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

Again, Thrive!, a thriving future, is different and arguably better than anything tried or achieved in human history. Not just getting by or achieving a surviving future. A surviving future is necessary but not sufficient. It is this future for all humans and all future generations. Not just for some humans but for all humans. Not just for the current or next generation but for 50+ generations. It is this future forever, to the maximum extent feasible. It is for Earth on which we live and depend, not just for humans.

For family and friends, this future is a better life now and for the near and long term future and for current and all future generations.

For a community, this future is a better life now and for the near and long term future and for the whole community and all who live in it.

For a country, this future is a better life now and for the near and long term future and for the whole country and all who live in it.

For the world, this future is a better life now and for the near and long term future and for the whole world (humans, all other creatures and Earth).

For all that humans care about, it is a much better life and future with less vulnerability, with surviving and with sustained thriving.

If and when this future is achieved, families and friends, communities, states, countries and the world will be well. Performing well, Well-off (financially), Well nourished, Well housed, Well protected (exposures, crime), Well educated, Physically and mentally well (people), Growing/developing well, Living within good habitat, Physically well (Earth, plants, animals, environment), Not vulnerable, Producing personal and public goods, Living within a stable, positive climate, and Sustained.

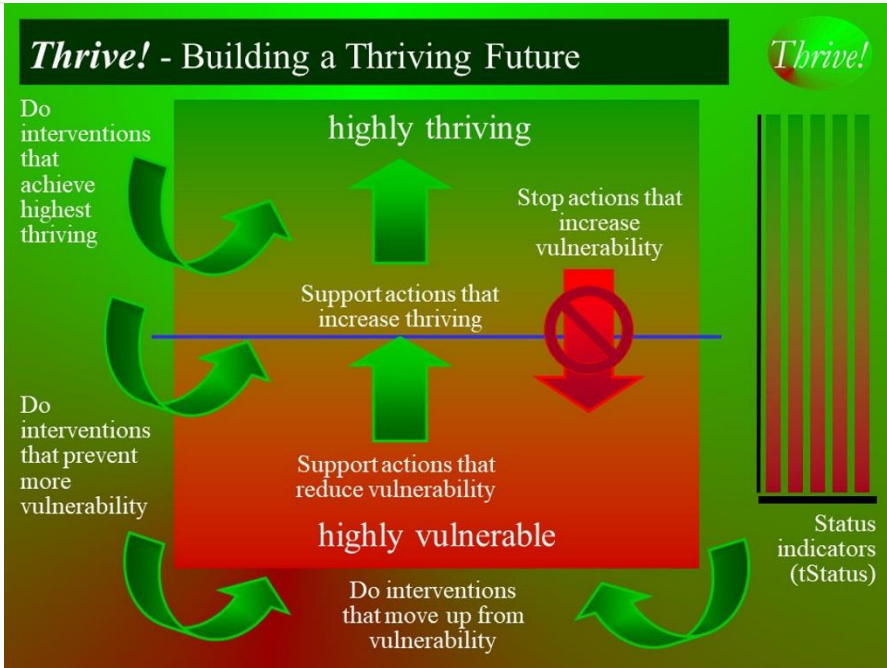
This is the thriving future Chris has been and continues to pursue. He still has hope. But it is fading.



“hope (that all thrive)”, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris

To achieve this vision and succeed with this mission, Chris continues to push the **Thrive! Endeavor**, all together, striving to energize and empower humans to build a thriving future for families and friends, communities, countries, and world.

If and when all this comes together, all will have built, achieved and sustained this future. This is the **Thrive! Endeavor** where all together, build, achieve and sustain this future for all forever.



Thrive! Graphic for Building a Thriving Future

Only all joined together can succeed due to the scope (all), level (surviving and thriving), duration (forever) of the challenge. The **Thrive! Endeavor** is all together building, achieving and sustaining that future. "All together" include individuals, groups, private sector organizations and governments. "All together" includes current and future generations. "All together" includes every family and friends, and every community, and every country, and every part of and the entire world.

All humans should develop and take as many positive actions as possible and avoid as many negative actions as possible. The more positive actions taken, the better for all. All should help build, achieve and sustain this future for family and friends. For community. For country. For the world, including the Earth on which humans depend. Via these actions and the **Thrive! Endeavor**, all together should build, achieve, and sustain this future.

When successful, current and all future generations achieve the surviving and thriving future for all forever, to the maximum extent possible. At this time in human history when humans desire to thrive, when humans need to survive, when human's future is most endangered, and when humans are most capable, the **Thrive! Endeavor**, all together, can and must build, achieve and sustain a thriving future for all forever. That is the **Thrive!** vision and mission. This is Chris' vision and mission.

All thrive forever.



*“thriving eagle”*, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris







## Appendix – Chris’ eMedia Sites

**These eMedia sites access online information on Thrive!,  
HealthePeople, Thrive! Sculpture by GChris, Thrive! Park and  
the Thrive! Center.**

### **Thrive! Websites:**

- Thrivism - Join Thrivism to build thriving future for all.  
[Thrivism.world](http://Thrivism.world)
- Children Thrive Forever! - Aspire to future when children thrive forever. [ChildrenThriveForever.org](http://ChildrenThriveForever.org)
- All Thrive Forever - Aspire to better future when all thrive forever. [AllThriveForever.org](http://AllThriveForever.org)
- We Are Vulnerable - Reduce and avoid vulnerability for better future. [WeAreVulnerable.org](http://WeAreVulnerable.org)
- Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future - Strategy/tools to build better future. [ThrivingFuture.org](http://ThrivingFuture.org)
- The Thrive! System - Helping you and your community survive and thrive. [TheThriveSystem.org](http://TheThriveSystem.org)
- Thrive! - All Thrive Forever - "Play" strategic game in real-life. [ThriveForever.org](http://ThriveForever.org)
- Endangered Future - Endangered more than ever before in our history. [EndangeredFuture.org](http://EndangeredFuture.org)
- HealthePeople - Use Thrive! to build healthy and thriving future. [HealthePeople.com](http://HealthePeople.com)

- GChris Sculpture - Thrive! sculpture supporting endeavor to build thriving future. [GChris.com](http://GChris.com)
- Thrive! Park – Village of Nelson public park donated by Chris. [ThrivePark.org](http://ThrivePark.org)

### **Thrive! Blogs:**

- Thrivism Blog - Blog key messages and suggested actions. [Thrivism.blog](http://Thrivism.blog)
- T! Blog - Blog key messages and suggested actions. [ThriveBlog.org](http://ThriveBlog.org)
- T! Blog - Blog asking and challenging "What will you do?" [ThriveBlog.net](http://ThriveBlog.net)
- T! Blog - Thrive! sculpture and thoughts/messages. [WordPress Blog] [ThriveSculpture.com](http://ThriveSculpture.com)
- T! Blog - Thrive! sculpture and thoughts/messages. [Website Blog] [ThriveSculpture.org](http://ThriveSculpture.org)

### **Thrive! eMedia:**

- [LinkedIn Thrive!](#)
- [Facebook Thrive!](#) [Includes Thrive!, Thrivism, All Thrive Forever, HealthePeople, GChris Sculpture]
- [Twitter Thrive!](#)
- [YouTube Thrive!](#)
- [Tumblr Thrive!](#)
- [Flickr Thrive!](#)
- [ello Thrive!](#)
- [MySpace Thrive!](#)
- [Pinterest Thrive!](#)
- [Medium Thrive!](#)



## Appendix – Chris’ Bio

Throughout his career, Gary has worked on strategic and operational planning, policy, systems, models, management, reform and performance toward reducing vulnerability, improving health and building a thriving future.

He founded and leads *Thrive!*<sup>®</sup> and **Thrivism** which help create, manage and sustain large positive change and build a thriving future for all (persons, local, State, regional, national, global). [ThrivingFuture.org](http://ThrivingFuture.org) Similarly, he founded and leads **HealththePeople**<sup>®</sup> which helps build a healthy and thriving future for individual persons and communities (local, State, regional, national, global). [HealththePeople.com](http://HealththePeople.com) He authored seven public policy books under *Thrive!* These endeavors draw on 30+ years of experience in creating, managing, evaluating and sustaining large positive change at national/local levels in public and private sectors.

He was elected to and serves as a Senior Fellow with the National Academy of Public Administration.

Through early 2006, he served as 1) Senior Advisor to the Chief Operating Officer of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and 2) Senior Advisor to the VA Under Secretary for Health. As Senior Advisor with CMS (on detail from VA), he led the strategic/operational planning effort and helped lead pay for performance, quality improvement and person-centered health. He also served (2005) as Deputy Director of the Quality Improvement Group with CMS (on detail from VA). He took an early retirement from Federal service in March 2006.

As Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Health, he led several initiatives, incl. person-centered health, care in the community, personal health systems (incl. My HealtheVet), virtual health systems (incl. HealthePeople) and health info standardization. HealthePeople is an initiative to move to person-centered health, improve health delivery systems, adopt health info standards, and improve availability, affordability and performance of health info systems nationally.

For 2004-05, he was a Senior Fellow / Scholar-in-Residence with the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences focusing on vulnerable populations, person-centered health, virtual health systems and care in the community.

Previously, beginning in 2000, he served as Chief Information Officer (CIO) for Veterans Health Administration. As CIO, he managed info systems for the \$20+ billion veterans health system, the nation's largest integrated health system, and info-related, system-wide expenditures of over \$1 billion annually. In addition, he developed and obtained approval and expanded funding (additional \$125M/year) for HealtheVet, the next generation health information system.

From 1994-2000, he served with the Department of Defense (DoD), including as Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (PDASD) for Health Affairs. He managed policy, the Defense Health Program budget, and performance for the \$16 billion Military Health System, including force health protection and TRICARE. He was also Senior Advisor for Force Health Protection with the Assistant Secretary for Reserve Affairs focusing on DoD's largest force health protection effort, protection against anthrax. Earlier, he was Health Affairs' Acting PDAS and Senior Advisor and managed relationships with the White House and Federal agencies.

In 1993-94, he was Associate Director, Office of Presidential Personnel, The White House and managed Presidential appointments (PAS/PA/SES) to the Department of Health and Human Services as well as eleven other Departments.

Earlier, he served as Executive Director of the National Capital March of Dimes (1991-92). In 1991, he was Executive Director of National Gray Panthers Project Fund.

From 1983 to 1991, he was Director of Health Legislation for House Select Committee on Aging. He worked with House leadership and authorization/appropriations committees, drafted health legislation, and managed hearings on Alzheimer's, quality assurance, health costs, underserved populations, health reform, Medicaid and Medicare.

Earlier, he was Deputy Director of the Municipal Health Services Program (1981-83), based at Johns Hopkins and funded by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. During 1977-80, he served as Director of Special Projects for Milwaukee and developed a nationally recognized inner-city health/human service system with funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Medicare, and Medicaid. Previously, he was senior consultant and States Coordinator with Kappa Systems (1975-77), contractor to NIH's National High Blood Pressure Education Program.

He is a sculptor of abstract art, focusing on mobile and stabile sculptures and creating over 150 sculptures, primarily working in copper, wood and stone media. ([GChris.com](http://GChris.com)) He has his GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery in Nelson, WI. Previously, he had his GChris Sculpture Studio/Gallery in Georgetown, DC and University Park, MD. He authored several science fiction novels and children's books (@ [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com)).

In the early '70s, he received his Bachelor's Degree in Political Science (1970) and his Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning (1974) from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. During 1981-83, he did doctoral work in health policy and management at the John Hopkins University School of Public Health.





## Appendix – Chris’ Leadership, Management & Accomplishments

### Leadership/Management Positions

- Founded and leads **Thrive!**<sup>®</sup> and **Thrivism** to help create, manage and sustain large positive change and build a thriving future for all (persons, local, State, regional, national, global) ([ThrivingFuture.org](http://ThrivingFuture.org))
- Founded and leads **HealthPeople**<sup>®</sup> to help build a healthy and thriving future for individual persons and communities (local, State, regional, national, global) ([HealthPeople.com](http://HealthPeople.com))
- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, DoD
- Senior Advisor to Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DHHS
- Senior Fellow and Scholar-in-Residence, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences
- Senior Fellow, National Academy for Public Administration [Current]
- Associate Director, Presidential Personnel, Executive Office of the President, White House
- Chief Information Officer, Veterans Health Administration, VA
- Senior Advisor to Under Secretary, Veterans Health Administration, VA
- Director of Health Legislation, House Select Committee on Aging, U.S. House of Representatives
- Deputy Director, Quality Improvement Group, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, DHHS
- Senior Advisor to Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs, DoD
- Deputy Dir., Municipal Health Services Prog. (funded by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; based at John Hopkins)
- Director of Special Projects and of Municipal Health Services Program, Milwaukee Health Department
- States Coordinator, National High Blood Pressure Education Program
- Coordinator, Milwaukee High Blood Pressure Program

## **Accomplishments**

- Developed strategic/operational approaches to building and sustaining a better and preferably thriving future
- Developed strategic/operational approaches to building a healthy future for persons and communities
- Developed strategy, management, policy and performance models and tools for creating, managing and sustaining large positive change
- Led and developed Strategic and Operational Plan for Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Managed \$15+ billion Military Health System for Department of Defense
- Managed \$1.4 billion health information system for Veteran Health Administration
- Designed and obtained new funding of \$125M per year for next generation HealthVet health info system
- Developed national “virtual health system” model for bringing to bear electronic health record systems, personal health/record systems, standards and interoperability
- Developed “person-centered health” model used by VHA, CMS and IOM
- Developed national model for “reducing vulnerability and maximizing thriving”
- Developed “behavioral effectiveness model” for designing, operating and evaluating health services
- Developed “care in the community” model for extending care beyond health facilities’ walls
- Wrote legislation introduced to protect the un- and under insured.
- Wrote legislation introduced to reform Medicare and Medicaid
- Was lead staff for Congress’ hearings on un-/underinsured, Alzheimer’s, long term care, health care costs
- Helped lead effort to increase Alzheimer’s research funding many fold
- Developed and obtained Presidential approval for “force health protection” for military service members
- Designed, developed and managed inner city health and human service system in Milwaukee, WI
- Managed national grant program for The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Acquired grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Medicare/Medicaid waivers from HCFA
- Designed, developed and managed Project Life, a community preventive health program
- Managed State efforts for the National High Blood Pressure Education Program, NHLBI, NIH
- Developed and managed national model high blood pressure control program in Milwaukee, WI



- Wrote **A Life in Pursuit of Thriving for All**. Story of and by Chris and his lifelong pursuit of a thriving future.
- Wrote **Story of Thrive! Center and Thrive! Park**.
- Wrote **Thrive! Sculpture & Thought: Sculptural Vision of a Thriving Future for All Forever**.
- Wrote public policy books –
  - **Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM): Building Thriving Future Using Behavior Effectiveness Model (BEM);**
  - **Thrive! - All Thrive Forever: What Will You Do?®;**
  - **The Thrive! Philosophy;**
  - **Thrive! - All Thrive Forever;**
  - **Thrive! Endeavor - All Thrive Forever;**
  - **Thrive! – Quick Guide to a Thriving Future;**
  - **Thrive! – People’s Guide to a Thriving Future;**
  - **Thrive! - Building a Thriving Future.**
- Wrote fiction books –
  - SciFi –
    - **black box;**
    - **The Thrive! Endeavor;**
    - **Thrive! – Escape from Extinction;**
    - **Extinction! – The Failure to Thrive;**
    - **Xtinct – Universal Justice for Earth.**
  - Children’s –
    - **Thrive or Not to Thrive – Tale of Two Tomorrows;**
    - **Angel – Thriving Creator of Artful Things;**
    - **T!rrific [terrific] - What will you do to thrive?**
- Owns/developed websites/blogs:
  - [ThriveEndeavor.org](http://ThriveEndeavor.org),
  - [AllThriveForever.org](http://AllThriveForever.org),
  - [WeAreVulnerable.org](http://WeAreVulnerable.org),
  - [ThrivingFuture.org](http://ThrivingFuture.org),
  - [ThriveForever.org](http://ThriveForever.org),
  - [HealthePeople.com](http://HealthePeople.com),
  - [ChildrenThriveForever.org](http://ChildrenThriveForever.org),
  - [GChris.com](http://GChris.com),
  - [ThriveBlog.org](http://ThriveBlog.org),
  - [ThriveBlog.net](http://ThriveBlog.net),
  - [ThriveSculpture.org](http://ThriveSculpture.org)
  - [Thrivism.world](http://Thrivism.world)





## **Appendix – Chris’ Health**

### **Early Years**

Though relatively healthy, Gary had most of the childhood illnesses, including measles and mumps.

While at Vacation Bible School, Gary ran into a set of metal playground equipment. He hit on the bridge of his nose and was knocked to the ground. His nose was broken but not reset as it was not known that the nose was broken. Throughout his life, he has had restricted breathing and primarily breathes through his mouth.

He had mononucleosis during his senior year and was hospitalized due to a terrifically sore throat. As expected, it took a long time to fully recover.

The rest of his health for this period was good.

### **Health (1974 – 2006)**

In 1995 and by luck Gary found out he had osteoporosis by routine chest Xray showing thin rib bones. No treatment was available at that time. Over next year, tests showed his bones were rapidly deteriorating. He was high risk of catastrophic bone failure in a few years. Fortunately, Fosamax, a new drug, became available for women but was untested for men. With it being the only option, Fosamax was tried starting in 1997 and successfully reversed the deterioration. Over several years much of the bone was restored. It had been a very dark time in that he thought he would become disabled and might die very young.

Later in 2010 and to help with the osteoporosis, he had surgery to remove one of four parathyroid glands that was enlarged but benign. Surgery was successful and the remaining three glands responded appropriately.

The rest of his health for this period was good.

### **Health (2006 – Present)**

Like most men, he had common prostate issues.

In 2012, Gary had a gastrointestinal blockage and was admitted as emergency admission to Washington Hospital Center in Washington (DC). He went through many tests, including fluoroscopy, CT scan and MRI which showed the blockage in the small intestine. Then the blockage appeared to go away. As a result, his doctors decided not to do surgery. There was no clear agreement on what happened.

In 2012, Gary had a second gastrointestinal blockage and was admitted as emergency admission to St. Mary's Hospital and Mayo Clinic in Rochester (MN). He went through many tests, including CT scan. The next day, Saturday, they did emergency surgery. While doing exploratory surgery, they found a carcinoid tumor in the small intestine. Doctors removed it and about a foot of small intestine. Surgery went well. He recovered pretty quickly.

In March 2015, Mayo doctors discovered new tumor as part of a routine follow-up. Gary had his second cancer surgery at Methodist Hospital and Mayo Clinic in Rochester (MN). This time, doctors removed everything they could find in that area and about six inches more small intestine. Surgery went well. Again, he recovered pretty quickly. No sign of recurrence since 2015.

In Spring 2016, Gary experienced substantial hearing loss in left ear. After going through examination, the diagnosis by Mayo doctor was acoustic neuroma (aka vestibular schwannoma). Doctors carried out a surgical removal of the acoustic neuroma that summer. The follow-up exam that December showed complete removal. As a result, he lost left ear hearing. He recovered most function except the hearing and some balance. No sign of recurrence since 2016.

In 2019, Gary's and his local optometrist discovered he had vision issues in his right eye. The Mayo Clinic ophthalmologist diagnosed it as an occlusion. The decision was to receive eye injections of Avastin about monthly for up to two years. Initial indications are that the eyesight has improved and the eye has recovered substantially. Unclear how long treatments will need to continue.

Through all this surgery, other medical procedures and a bit of high blood pressure, Gary's health has been quite good, especially for one over age 70. His core health remains strong as he exercises regularly and improved his diet. Part of that exercise is maintenance of Thrive! Park and the Thrive! Center. He often likens himself to Monty Python's Knight who loses many body parts but never loses his core resolve to persevere.