

### CUSTOMER PROFILE

Chimes International offers a wide range of support for people with disabilities and special needs. It helps more than 17,000 people annually by emphasizing and promoting the unique abilities of individuals while achieving and sustaining each person's well-being and independence.

### BUSINESS SITUATION

The organization wanted to update its aging financial management system with new software built specifically for nonprofits' needs.

### SOLUTION

Chimes chose Serenic Navigator with its familiar platform to replace the Microsoft Dynamics NAV system it used for more than 12 years.

### BENEFITS

- Time is saved, with remote office data rolled into one consolidated report.
- Complex financial records can be stored electronically and easily found for queries, reports and audits.
- Conserved costs can be spent on mission-critical services versus back office systems.

## Serenic<sup>®</sup> Helps Chimes International Expand Opportunities To Provide Its Services



*"For organizations like ours that heavily depend on federal and state government funding, being able to look at what things are costing from a variety of perspectives with Serenic Navigator's dimensions is a plus. In intangible ways, it makes us better stewards of the limited resources we have."*

— MARTIN LAMPNER, CHIMES PRESIDENT

Chimes International and its subsidiaries, the Chimes Family of Services, offer a wide range of support for people with disabilities and special needs – from employment and educational programs to residential and behavioral health services. With a rich history spanning six decades, the organization helps more than 17,000 people each year in six states, the District of Columbia and Israel by emphasizing and promoting the unique abilities of individuals while achieving and sustaining each person's well-being and independence.

Chimes has 3,600 employees – 1,500 of whom are people with disabilities – that support the organization's many federal contracts, such as providing janitorial services for the Library of Congress and the Pentagon. According to Chimes' President Martin Lampner, who previously served as the organization's chief financial officer, complexities multiply due to operating as a parent company with 10 subsidiaries and \$185 million in revenue. Some of the operating companies share common costs, and some perform services for the others. For example, an insurance bill might be paid to one company, but need to be allocated across several other Chimes subsidiaries.

## Time For A Technology Change

*“It saves labor for us and significantly enhances the accuracy of our work. What would take people a good portion of the day before now takes just a few seconds.”*

— **MARTIN LAMPNER,**  
**CHIMES PRESIDENT**

The need to easily transfer money and track transactions across its companies was a huge requirement when Chimes looked to upgrade its financial management software from its aging Microsoft Dynamics NAV system.

“The sore spot for us was using an increasingly outdated software package that was designed before systems were built specifically for nonprofits,” Lampner said. “We had added a ton of special functions over time, so it was too costly to continue updating because it required rewriting code each time. Moving to Serenic Navigator was a logical choice.”

Choosing to stick with a familiar technology platform, Chimes selected Serenic Navigator Enterprise – built upon the stable and scalable foundation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV – over Great Plains and other solutions that would have required modifications in order to function well in its complex, nonprofit environment. For implementation, the organization turned to AVF Consulting, a Serenic Navigator partner, which Chimes had worked with for more than two decades through its evolving financial management technology needs.

## New Financial System Helps Chimes’ Financial Operations Flourish

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When its 20 active users were up and running with Serenic Navigator, Chimes could track financial information more easily at its main office in Baltimore and at its accounting office in Pennsylvania. “The ability to have our remote application roll-up into parent company numbers without someone transferring data is a huge benefit,” Lampner said. “It saves labor for us and significantly enhances the accuracy of our work. One of the places we’ve saved tremendous time is producing a consolidated statement in a fraction of the time. What would take people a good portion of the day before now takes just a few seconds.”

From an operational perspective, Lampner appreciates how well Serenic Navigator integrates with Chimes’ document management system. The organization had 35 filing cabinets full of paper records and check stubs, which are now available in electronic form. Its accounting department used to dread audits, because pulling paper copies of hundreds of utility bills from its group homes, for example, was so cumbersome. When its fiscal year ended in June, the organization recognized audits were already simpler with Serenic Navigator in place for mere months.

“We knew that the cost of storing hard records was disproportionate to their worth,” he said. “Square footage of a building is valuable to us, and we were devoting large portions to holding accounting records. The cost savings really is significant.”

Lampner noted Serenic Navigator’s ability to query the system is far easier than its predecessor, giving users better control to perform analysis with a better reporting engine. He said Serenic also makes it much easier to build separation of duties and other business rules into the process, which especially helps with authorizations.

## Change Enables Growth Opportunities

Going through the transition to a new financial management system encouraged Chimes to consider helpful process changes. Now that users are comfortable with the changes, Lampner wonders why they waited so long. He noted that when organizations are getting the job done reasonably well with their current software systems – not fixing what isn’t exactly broken – it can actually be more expensive, because they are spending extra time to upgrade their outdated systems. So for nonprofits, he thinks resisting change is sometimes more costly.

"Accountants are a conservative lot, and we don't like change," Lampner said. "The fact that people at Chimes are not complaining now is a big deal. No one wishes they had our old system, so it was worth the temporary disruption to change. Our auditors could easily see it was going to make their lives easier."

AVF Consulting helped ensure there was a smooth transition and that Serenic Navigator will work well with Chimes' current systems and workflow processes.

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He explained that Serenic Navigator is making it possible to do more with the same workforce, giving the organization more potential to grow into new areas as opportunities arise.

"We knew our workers couldn't handle more volume," he said. "With Serenic, we have been able to serve more people. We can do more of the active work of the agency without adding more staff to do so. Each dollar I have to spend on back office functionality is a dollar I can't spend on a service, so this is important."

That service-oriented attitude has helped fuel Chimes' growth and the entrepreneurial spirit that has led to successful changes. From a new project that will leverage remote solar power for its group homes to installing its new Serenic Software system for strengthened financial management, Chimes honorably serves the individuals who inspire its mission.

## About Our Partner

AVF Consulting Inc. is a full-service Microsoft Certified Partner serving nonprofits for more than 25 years. With a deep understanding of organizations' needs related to fund accounting, encumbrance accounting, grants management and budgeting, AVF Consulting is considered one of the leading Serenic Navigator implementation and support firms in the country.

AVF's experienced and dedicated staff serves clients including the American Psychological Association, the Maryland Zoo, Carnegie Institution for Science, Habitat for Humanity, SCO Family of Services and more than 50 other nonprofit clients. Visit [www.avfconsulting.com](http://www.avfconsulting.com) to learn more.

## About Serenic Software

Serenic Software develops and delivers mission-critical ERP software solutions for public service organizations including: K-12 school districts/boards, public sector, nonprofits (NPOs), and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Serenic is a Gold ERP and ISV vendor and a development partner for Microsoft. Serenic public service solutions are trusted by over 1,000 organizations around the globe. You can learn more about Serenic Software at [www.serenic.com](http://www.serenic.com).



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