

Awarded Three-Year CARF Accreditation



Our agency underwent our tenth CARF survey November 18-19, 2019 conducted by a 3 person survey-team. The review of over 1078 implemented CARF standards were assessed during this survey. We are proud to announce CARF International has awarded our agency a three-year accreditation. This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation to be awarded to an organization and shows the organization's substantial conformance to the CARF standards.

An organization receiving this level of accreditation has to put itself through a rigorous peer review process. It has to demonstrate to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality. An excerpt from the survey team's report states, "Community Opportunities appears to be well respected in the community and has been recognized for various initiatives that have benefited clients. Examples include increasing employment and community engagement options for clients and enhancing transportation options."

Our agency's ability to provide the high level of quality supports and services in conformance with these stringent standards would not be possible without our amazing and dedicated staff!



Fall Activities & Holiday Fun!

Our bowlers returned to the lanes on Monday evenings at O'Fallon Bowl and basketball players to the courts on Tuesday evenings. Several folks took advantage of the great fall weather with Hay rides at Eagle Fork. Of course we can't forget the fall holidays...Halloween was celebrated with parties at Day Program as well as the annual agency party at LCCOA. The costumes this year were even better than last year!

A delicious Thanksgiving feast was prepared by Lacy Gambill and her family for residential clients who did not have other plans and served at the Program Building. The annual Christmas Open House was held at 17 Opp. Ct. with all friends and family being treated to an afternoon of holiday festivities and fine food. The guys really enjoyed preparing for their guests & everyone enjoyed their afternoon. The Special Olympics Christmas Banquet was held on Dec. 13 and Santa made sure everyone had a great evening. All enjoyed pizza and cookies as well as playing bingo.



Bowling & Basketball Fun!



Setting An Example For The Rest Of Us!



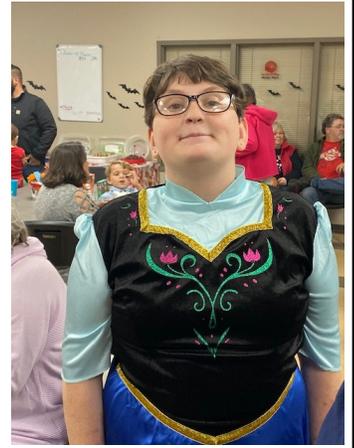
There are quite a few clients who work out on a regular basis. Pictured is Teresa, who spends a lot of time at Aquability swimming and Steven who frequents the YMCA. Doug, Jim, Michele, Reid Shelby and Terry also utilize the YMCA for exercise & to stay fit.

Everyone enjoys it and are proud to share stories about their achievements.

Keep up the good work!



Halloween Spooktacular!



Christmas Caroling & Celebrations



Merry
Christmas



Ring the Bell to Help Others

The Salvation Army had some of the finest volunteers helping them out this year. Many of our amazing clients and staff assist with this effort each year. Thank you to everyone who donated!



Door Decorating Contest!

The Community Services clients and staff participated in a door decorating contest again this year. Clients and staff teamed up and selected a door at the Program Building to decorate. This contest brought out the creativity and competitive side of participating groups & the doors looked amazing & festive! Winning doors & teams include:

- 1st Place:** Candis' Door: Donna K., Sammi, Kay, Nikki, Teresa and Courtney
2nd Place: Bathroom Lobby Door: Brenda, Crystal B, Amanda Hall, and Regina
3rd Place: Day Program Door: Erika, Jen W., Robert N, Alisha, and David S.



Merry Christmas to Our Maintenance Person ~ Kenny!

Our maintenance person, Kenny Hauser, does an amazing job keeping our buildings and vehicles in top shape. On many occasions, he has assisted our staff with personal vehicle issues...on his own time! In effort to express gratitude & appreciation for his hard work, our staff generously donated money to purchase Kenny some surprise Christmas gifts. Joan Story organized the collection, and it would be an understatement to say it was a success! A HUGE card was designed by one of our clients, Josh C. & signed by clients and staff. Along with his card, Eddie took the honor of giving him his presents, which consisted of gift certificates to Taromina's and Mustang Sally's along with a personalized engraved knife and all-in-one-tool.



Exciting Times!

Michelle adopted Carrie, a 9 yr. old mini poodle.

Michelle believes adopting senior pets should be more popular and hopes others give older dogs a chance at a loving home.



Lera celebrated her 20th birthday with Jaime, Lisa Ann and Bella at Dos Primos!

Steven celebrated his 65th birthday!





Amanda, John & Shawna went to see Cody while he was recuperating after surgery.

Adam brought Donna J. flowers for her last day in the Day Program. Donna has transitioned to part time in Residential and continues as the Health & Safety Chairperson.



Team-Building Fun!

The Residential Department conducts two meetings annually for training, sharing of ideas/brainstorming, support staff recognition and team building. This year, Director of Residential Services, Susan Mudd had the best team building experience yet—as you can tell by the smiles in the pictures.

Directed by Angie Ray, the teams were instructed to: stand on their ship (blanket) that had overturned, and as a team, turn their ship over without stepping off the ship or being lost to the icy waters and sharks below!

In addition to lots of teamwork and communication to ensure no one fell off the ship, there was lots of laughter. Misty's team was the first to get their ship turned over! The winning crew consisted of Sandy, Millie, Angela, Lisa Ann and Cathy.

In addition, the group reviewed a previous meeting's discussion - the "Qualities of Your Favorite Teacher". Everyone then identified one or more of those qualities in a fellow co-worker and supervisor.

Door prizes were won by: Melinda Land, Donna Odom and Angela Schnuriger.

The next Residential meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 9am-12 noon at the LCHD.



Tie Die Day in Day Program



Exceptional Rodeo

At the Exceptional Rodeo at the Lake St. Louis Equestrian Center, clients got to learn to rope, ride a horse, take a ride in a horse drawn wagon and pet Little Miss Tinkerbell, the miniature horse.

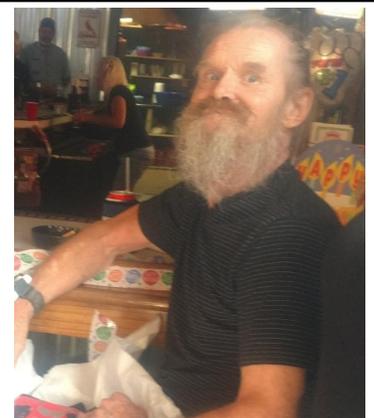


Farewell Friend



Our dear friend Daniel "Danny- Dan the Can Man" Schneider passed away November 22, 2019. Danny received residential services many years and worked, until his retirement, at Earthwise Industries. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife Gloria, who was also a client of our agency.

Danny will be greatly missed by many in the community. He loved collecting aluminum cans and frequenting Good Times bar to visit with friends in the community.



Congrats DSP of the Quarter!

Kelsey Cannon was selected as the 4th quarter DSP of the Quarter. Kelsie has worked for Community Opportunities as a direct support professional for 8 months. In her short time here, she has worked in both Day Program and Community Skills and has quickly become a favorite of the people she supports.

The person who nominated Kelsey said “Kelsey engages clients in their interests so they can enjoy their passions. She really makes others feel important when she validates their interests”.

Thanks Kelsey for everything you do to support individuals with disabilities and congratulations!



Employment Services

October was National Employment Disability Awareness month! Our very own Troy McDonald's was awarded a framed certificate of recognition in honor of their outstanding partnership with Community Opportunities and our clients seeking employment. The event was celebrated with a published story and picture in the Lincoln County Journal.

(From L-R) Tyler Burgess; Brooke Wisdom – Asst. manager; Kendra Faatz – District manager; Mike Marx Employment Specialist; Travis Barton.



The Employment Services department would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following businesses and agencies that have recently partnered with us by providing training opportunities for our clients:

Unique Treasures Liquidators ~ Lincoln County Council on Aging

North East Community Action Corporation ~ Troy R-III School District

A great big shout-out to our recently hired clients and their employers! We are proud of our young people and celebrate the supportive partnerships we enjoy with our local employers.

Brant Wilson: Production team member at Balzout LLC

Connor Williams: Crew member at Burger King, St. Peters

And remember, we're always looking for employment opportunities for our clients. If you know of a business that is looking to hire, please let one of our employment specialists know!



Hats Off to...

- ★ ... Julie, Jon, Nathan, Olivia, Kelsey, Lexi, Tessa, Brittney P., Joey, Brittney, Brandi, Patty, and Sheena for all your help with the Halloween Party this year.
- ★ ... Lacy Gambill and her family for organizing a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner for everyone to enjoy!
- ★ ...Josh Venable for organizing and teaching a painting class that is loved by all who have participated!
- ★ ...To all my staff (from Candis) for working hard to ensure all the T's were crossed and I's were dotted before our CARF Survey!
- ★ ...Kenny for always keeping everything running well greased at 21 Opportunity Ct!
- ★ ...Doug's residential staff for excellent personal care after his surgery to ensure his successful recovery!
- ★ ...Lacy Wilke for organizing a howlin' good Halloween party!
- ★ ... To Angela Schnuriger from Lisa Colbert: "Thank you for being a teammate to lean on, always there to be someone to bounce ideas off of and extremely caring. So blessed to have you as a team mate."
- ★ ... To Michele Palmer from Lisa Colbert: "Your organization skills are the bomb. I have implemented some at home, so I love my pantry now. You Rock!"
- ★ ...Ebony Linneman for taking care of everything at the Prog. Bldg. while Teresa was on leave!



Upcoming Training & Events

Check your agency e-mail at the beginning of each work day!

- ⇒ **CPR & First Aid class:** 2/6/20 3-9 pm at LCAD (Note: this class is usually the 1st Wed of each month)
- ⇒ **Cooking Class:** 1st & 3rd Wednesday each month. Class is \$2, from 5:30 pm-7 pm at the Program Building.
- ⇒ **Craft Class:** 2nd Thursday of each month. Class is \$3, from 4:30-5:30 pm at the Program Bldg.
- ⇒ **Art Class:** 4th Thursday of each month at 4:30 pm reserve your easel with Josh ext. 111. Class is \$3.
- ⇒ **Kiwanis Auction:** Feb. 29, 2020—At LCCOA, doors open at 5:30 pm
- ⇒ **DSP Conference:** March 18 & 19, St. Charles Community College
- ⇒ **Defensive Driving Class:** March 19—times to be determined
- ⇒ **All Residential Meeting:** Lincoln Co. Health Dept., March 26th from 9 am—Noon

Upcoming Holiday Closings:

January: BCI, Earthwise & Community Opportunities Closed Jan. 20, 2020, Martin Luther King Day.
February: Earthwise & Community Opportunities Closed Feb. 17, 2020, Presidents' Day.

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

ONE YEAR

Nicollette Paleta
Amanda Hall

TWO YEARS

Jennifer Grotewiel
Lisa Ann Colbert
Monica Kistner
Samantha Purvines
Sheena Dickinson

THREE YEARS

Diana Bechtel
Donna Hughes-Brown
Emma Farris
McKenzie Shannon

FOUR YEARS

Jennifer Bultena
Mildred Rhodes
Timothy Gilman

EIGHT YEARS

Olivia Jacoby

TEN YEARS

Angela Schnuriger

THIRTEEN YEARS

Cathy Dunlap

NINETEEN YEARS

Michael Robinson

TWENTY-TWO YEARS

Lacy Wilke

FRIENDLY FACES

Name: Mia Koonce

Family and pets? Mom Natalie, sisters Sarah & Amy, dog Elliott.

Favorite vacation? Going to Florida

Who inspires you? Mom

What unique talent do you have or hobby? I love to paint.

What is the best surprise you have ever received? Going to Disney World for my 21st birthday.

What is your favorite song? "Jesus Take The Wheel" by Carrie Underwood

The movie version of my life should be titled? *Miss Amazing!*

My favorite physical activity is: Bowling

One thing people are surprised to find out about me is.... I don't like chocolate.

If I were a superhero I would be.... "The Invisible Woman"

What are you passionate about? family

What is your favorite family tradition? Decorating the Christmas tree.

Pet peeve? Brushing my hair.

What is the best meal you have ever had? Chick-fil-A chicken nuggets.





Donna Jacobsen, H&S Chairperson

Maintain Your Distance—Don't Tailgate

Picture this: You are driving to an important appointment and get stuck behind a driver going a few miles per hour under the speed limit. What do you do?

Many drivers, some who are feeling impatient and others who do not realize they are doing it, follow the vehicle in front of them too closely. While this situation may be commonplace, it puts both you and the drivers in front of you in danger.

Understanding the Danger

Tailgating is an extremely dangerous practice. If there is a collision ahead, if the road is slick, or if traffic becomes heavy, everyone on the road should be prepared to stop. However, if you do not leave sufficient space, even if you are paying close attention, you will not have enough room to.

Two-Second Rule

Almost 10% of all accidents are caused by tailgating. To avoid joining those ranks, always follow the two-second rule.

If you are driving on a normal road in good weather conditions, there should be at least a two-second buffer between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Here is how to calculate your distance: Pay attention to the vehicle in front of you as the driver passes a fixed point such as a mile marker or a sign post. Once the vehicle passes that point, count until you pass that same point ("one thousand and one, one thousand and two..."). Should you reach that point before counting to two seconds, then you know you are following too closely. Slow down and try the test again with a new fixed point.

Inclement Weather

If road conditions are not good or if you are driving in bad weather, you should increase your distance even further. Conditions like rain, ice and snow not only make roads slippery, they also greatly reduce visibility, so you may not see a hazard farther in front of you to react in time.

Gas Mileage

A common misconception is that tailgating can increase the gas mileage of a vehicle, similar to when racecars "draft"; however, this is not the case. Racecars drive at speeds of 200 mph and must use a lot of energy to cut through the air. When racers ride close to the vehicle in front of them, they use less energy due to their speed. However, driving at speeds of 60 mph does not require nearly the energy to maintain the speed, and therefore, tailgating is not beneficial.

Speak Up

If you have any doubts about safety on the road or any other safety issue, contact your supervisor. At Community Opportunities, your safety is our first priority!

TASC Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) Year-End 90 day Runout Period



Just a reminder to full-time staff who have had medical deductible expenses during the past calendar year that has exceeded \$1000...you are entitled to reimbursement from your HRA!

Even though our medical plan through United Healthcare (UHC) is on a 'plan year' (October 1st through September 30th), our HRA is set up on a calendar year. Our medical plan currently has a \$5000 deductible; you are only responsible for the first \$1000. Deductible expenses in excess of that amount can be reimbursed directly to you from the HRA. (Our board funds the HRA.)

Please note, our HRA has a year-end runout period of 90 days. This means, that you **MUST** submit reimbursement for eligible deductible expenses within 90 days of the end of the calendar year, or forfeit reimbursement.

HRA Reimbursement for is for qualifying (employee only) medical expenses (dental & vision are excluded).

How Does This Work?

Once you receive your Explanation of Benefits (EOB) summary from UHC (register at www.myuhc.com to access them), fax or mail a copy of it along with a completed "DirectPay Request for Reimbursement Form" –which you obtain by contacting TASC. You can also submit a "Direct Deposit Election Form" if you would like your reimbursement electronically deposited versus waiting to receive a check via mail.

Once you receive your reimbursement funds from TASC you must use the money to pay your provider for the remainder of your deductible. TASC Customer Care can be reached at 1-800-422-4664.