

# Daily Life with COVID-19

Everyone has changed up their lifestyles while navigating this pandemic. The clients and staff have never ending creative minds. Games are being played— using ZOOM. Here is a look at some of the other fun everyone is creating while staying safe during these unusual times.

**OPPORTUNITY TIMES News & Views**



Josh along with staff, Kelsey, planting tomatoes.



Curtis with his car 'King Wildcat' for the Community Opportunities 500.



Teresa excited about one of the weeks' art classes.



Diana gave her helmet a makeover.



Diana, Yvonne, Jackie & staff Kim, modeling masks.

# EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

## ONE YEAR

Kim Brutsman  
Joshua Venable  
Nathan Simpson

## THREE YEARS

Brittany Doris  
Allison Fennewald  
Courtney Vanzant

## FOUR YEARS

Kirstie Tryon  
Angel Weathers

## FIVE YEARS

Carolyn Harman

## SIX YEARS

Teresa Gooch  
Marsha Sowell

## ELEVEN YEARS

Jeanette Smith

## EIGHTEEN YEARS

Donna Odom

## NINETEEN YEARS

J. Michelle Palmer

## FRIENDLY FACES

**Name:** Raymond Milton

**Family and pets?** 2 sisters & 3 brothers, Mom & Dad are deceased. Don't really like pets.

**Favorite vacation?** Never been on a vacation, but would like to go to Egypt.

**Who inspires you?** Raymond Burr

**What unique talent do you have or hobby?** Wood working and working on wheelchairs.

**What is the best surprise you have ever received?** Can't remember, I've lived in rehab facility most of my life.

**What is your favorite song?** 'Suspicious Minds' by Elvis Presley

**The movie version of my life should be titled?** 'Action or Horror'

**My favorite physical activity is:** swimming

**One thing people are surprised to find out about me is....** Family out-laws

**If I were a superhero I would be....** The Invisible Man

**What are you passionate about?** History

**What is your favorite family tradition?** None

**Pet peeve?** Teeth grinding

**What is the best meal you have ever had?** Favorite food is Mexican

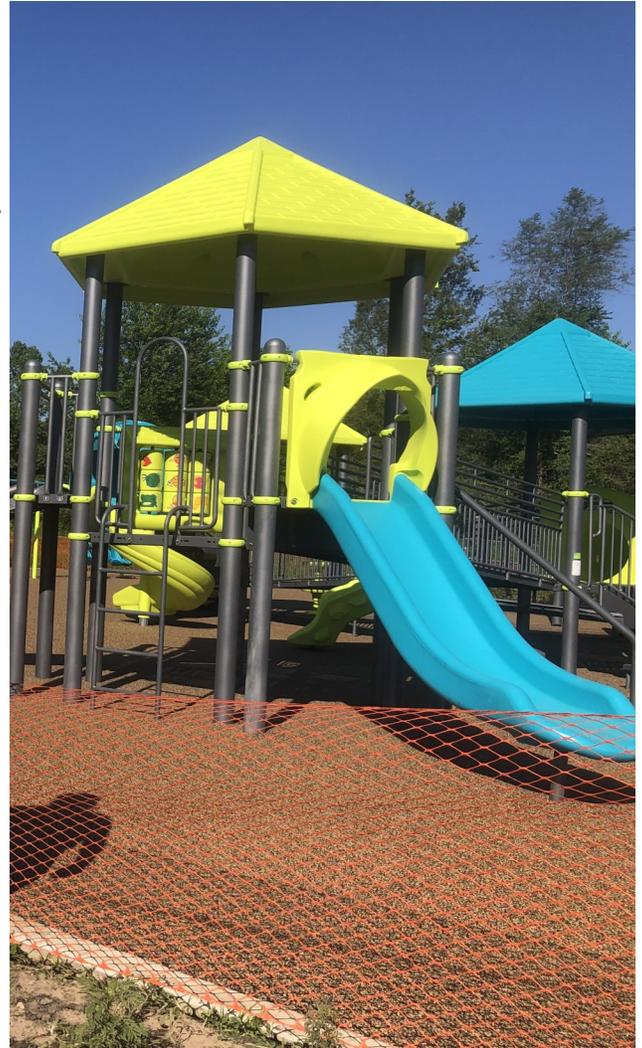


## It's Looking Like a Playground!!

Kiwanis Park, Phase 1 is really taking shape. The playground equipment is installed and the rubberized surfacing around the equipment has been poured. Accessible restrooms (donated by the City of Troy), a water fountain (donated by Hutchinson Recreation), fencing, a water feature and landscaping are the next projects to complete.

Phase 2 planning is already underway. In addition to the asphalt accessible trail, Phase 2 will incorporate fitness stations with instructional signs and exercise equipment, a splash pad (funded by the Troy Rotary Club) and a disc golf course (funded by the Troy Convention & Visitors Bureau).

We are so excited about this wonderful collaborative project between Troy Kiwanis, Community Opportunities and the City of Troy – as well as all of the many generous donors. It won't be long before the community has an accessible, recreational outdoor space for everyone!



# Zoom Garden Club

Lera and I are hosting a garden talk on Zoom, Thursday mornings at 9:30 am. We have 3 gardens at the administration building and two at the program building. The gardens at the program building are generally taken care of by the clients who attend Day Program and their staff.

However, everyone is invited to enjoy the gardening fun. There are tomato, pepper, zucchini, basil and flowers growing at the administration building. One garden at the program building was full of strawberries and the other garden contains various veggies. We also planted sunflower seeds and waiting patiently for the seeds to sprout. This is a community garden so stop by and check it out, feel free to pull any weeds and help water the plants. We all reap the benefits of a healthy life style.

Happy Gardening,  
Donna Jacobsen



## Cleaning, Painting and Planting! Oh My!

Jerry and Josh along with staff Marsha, have been busy planting flowers. Then everything needed to be cleaned up. Jimmy thoroughly enjoyed the leaf blower. Curtis painted a porch decoration for his house. Jerry & Steven—rocking the yellow sunglasses—enjoy sitting on the porch even more nowadays.



## Congrats DSP of the Quarter!

The DSP of the 1st quarter of 2020 is McKenzie Shannon!

Kenzie has worked for Community Opportunities for over 6 years total as a direct support professional. She worked her first couple years within the Residential department, took a couple years off and came back to work in Day Program and has become a favorite among the individuals who attend Day Program. The person who nominated Kenzie said "Kenzie is proud to be a teacher and works hard at ensuring each individual is as independent as possible in all areas of their daily life."

Thanks McKenzie for everything you do to support individuals with disabilities and congratulations on your award!



## Community Opportunities 500

The Community Opportunities 500 was held on June 9 via ZOOM.

There were a total of 19 participants in the race.

Steven took first place with his car "Red Racer"

Michele took second with "The Micker"

And there was a 3 way tie for 3rd.



Terry's car "Turbo Terry"

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Lera's car "Bolt"

John's car "Caffeine Cruiser"





This group stopped by the Program Building to serenade us with Garth Brooks' tunes!

## Payge walked 355 steps!

Payge has resumed her efforts to walk with her walker. After Payge gets off work, she and her staff, Cherie walk 3 times a week, Progress was slow at first, but she made it 355 steps. Great job Payge! Keep up the good work!



# Employment Services

## An Employment Department Shout-Out to Lera!

Lera has reached her one-year anniversary of being employed at the Asbury Methodist Pre-School as a childcare specialist. We are proud of Lera's achievement and her commitment to the children of our community. Way to go, Lera!

## We're Making Music

Employment Specialist, Mike Marx, has been hosting the wildly popular "Music With Mike" every Tuesday afternoon at 12:45pm for several months now. Music enthusiasts from all around town join in through the Zoom platform to enjoy the lively half-hour of musical entertainment.

Weekly guest, "Dr. Barbie" (Barbie Davis from County Connections), leads the musical exercise portion of the program, while Jessica Ruediger serves as the show director. The well-known-but-never-quite-seen Mr. Perry Winkle produces the show, with occasional appearances by The Squawking Chickens, a local poultry trio that has gained a small but devoted following.

Popular show segments include the Name That Tune challenge, This Date in Music History, The Mystery Instrument, and selected readings from the fan mail department. If you would like to join the fun, just send a request to show director, Jessica Ruediger. She'll be happy to send you the "Music With Mike" show link.

## Thank You, Thank You, Thank You!

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

Factory Connections  
Super 8 Motel  
County Market  
Wright Equestrian  
PALS

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!



**YIELD**

# Health & Safety Corner

Donna Jacobsen, H&S Chairperson



## BE PREPARED FOR EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat often results in the highest annual number of deaths among all weather-related disasters.

**If you are under an extreme heat warning:**



Find air conditioning.



Watch for heat illness, cramps and heat stroke.



Drink plenty of fluids.



Never leave people or pets in a closed car.



Avoid strenuous activities.



Wear Light clothing.

### New TV!

Michele recently purchased a new TV—so she can watch Elvis anytime she wants! Look at that smile!



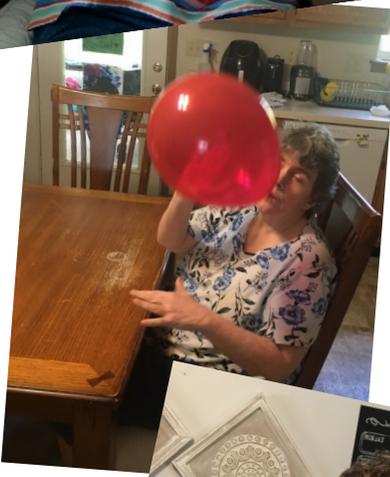
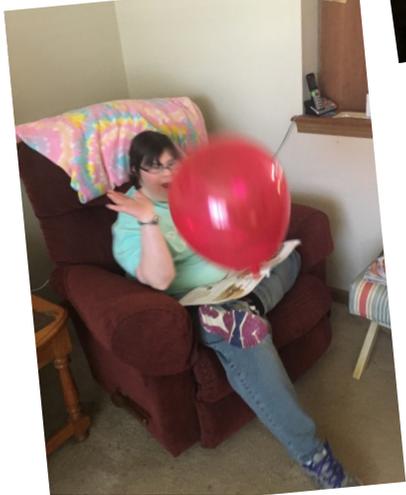
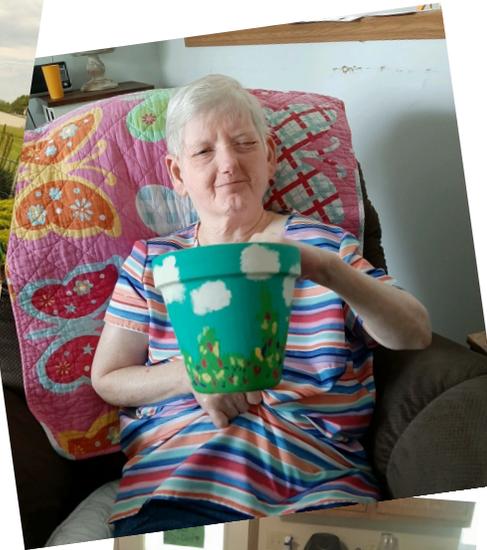
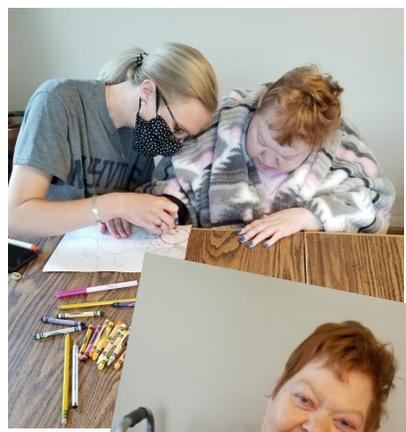
### Happy Birthday!

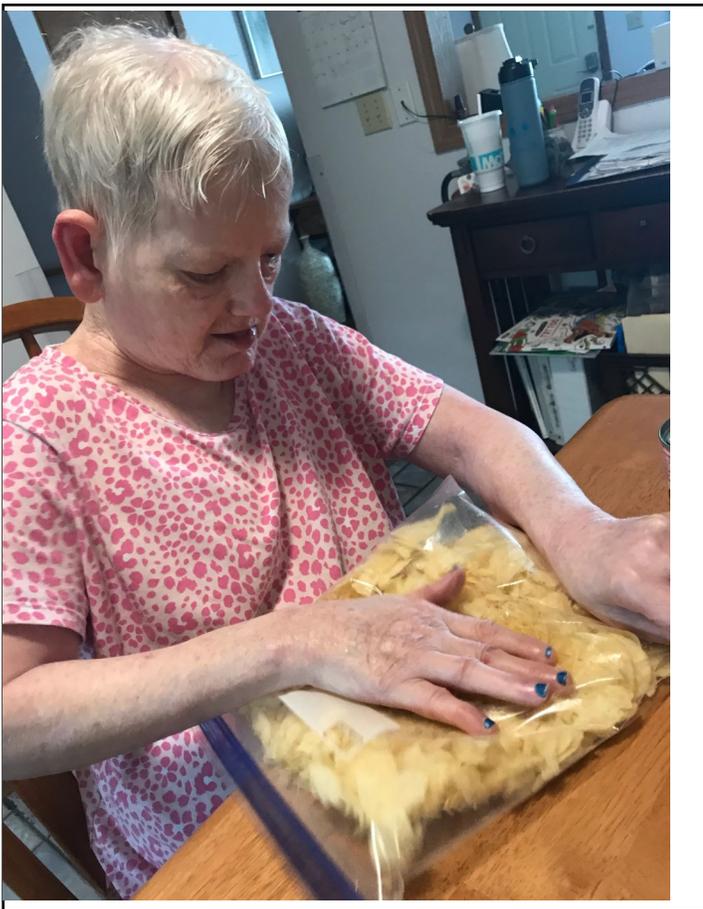
A new tradition has started where everyone can join in the celebration—birthday parades! Most recently, birthday parades have been held for Jerry, Donna & Jimmy.



Each week our clients have been participating in a variety of activities. By the looks on their faces, everyone seems to really enjoy them.







Diana helping out with dinner.

We had down time waiting for John's test. We went to Lone Elk Park. John laughed a lot. He thought it was hilarious that an elk was laying in the road blocking traffic.



## Moving Forward

We are moving to a new phase of normal in service delivery. We are now able to offer more on-site services to our clients. The folks in our Residential Services are going to be able to venture out into the Program Building and to a new location in Hawk Point. Susan and Jessica worked out the details for people to be able to get out a little more but remain safe and healthy. The three “groupings” of Residential clients (by CLS) will stay with their own groups and not “share” staff. However, they will be able to get out of the house! Many thanks to Cindy Stanek for arranging for additional space at the Hawk Point Community Center. The building use is being donated to us!

Day Service clients are getting out a little more too. Health and safety are always our top priority and it has taken lots of logistical strategizing and lots of team work to get to where we are today. Several day services clients have resumed volunteering with Meals—On—Wheels. They are delivering meals to people who are shut—in their homes which is a critical service. It is a touchless delivery system but they still get to wave at their friends and see that they are doing ok.

Many Day Service clients have returned to the Program Building too. They are staying in separate areas with separate staff. It's been an adjustment but everyone is doing great.

The team work between departments has been phenomenal. We all have the same goal and it shows! We are all interested in what is best for our clients. Staff and clients are social distancing and mask wearing. We are setting the example for the community. It is amazing to see how we have adjusted to the new normal that seems to change regularly. We are all in this together and will come out of it together too!

# 100 Day Healthy Challenge—2020

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Sonya DeMerchant, Director of Case Management services, initiated a Healthy Challenge to all staff and individuals served, including the staff from County Connections. 21 people from both agencies signed up and paid \$5 to participate in a Healthy Challenge for 100 days. They were placed into teams of 3. The teams were challenged with eliminating all sugar/sweeteners and flour ingredients from their diet and were asked to track and record their weight once a week. The participant and team with the most weight loss won the pot, plus additional contributions from the Community Opportunities board, which contributed \$100, and an equal match from the challenger, Sonya. Whomever stuck with the challenge until the end would be eligible for a \$25 gift card drawing.

Some of the participants dropped out pretty early on, and others made effort, but really struggled to be abstinent of the sugar/flour substances.

In the final days of the challenge, there were 8 participants who consistently tracked their weight and lost weight. During a global pandemic and difficulties with grocery shopping, limitations on recreational and physical activity, and being forced to juggle the demands of work and family and their eating habits, it was no easy process!

That's why the results of several of the participants are so remarkable – and noticeable!

## Here are our winners:

1st place – Gina Gipson lost 35 pounds

2nd place – Anna Jaggie lost 32 pounds

3rd place – Donna Odom lost 24 pounds

4th place – Tom Wehmeyer lost 18 pounds

5th place – Lisa Ann Colbert lost 16 pounds

6th place – Monica Kistner lost 13 pounds

Gina shared some of the positive side effects from the changes she made in her eating habits and cooking. Not only has she been able to go off the majority of her medications, including medication for inflammation, but her migraine headaches are much less severe and frequent. She said not only is she not personally consuming the amount of sugar she used to, but she's simply not keeping sugar or sweets in the house, which inadvertently caused her husband to also lose 20 pounds! Their large, backyard garden has been a source of many delicious and healthy meals, and she is teaching her boys how to care for a garden and how to grow their own food. They're trying vegetables they've never tried before! Gina says she's committed to continuing this new way of eating. Since the end of the challenge, she's lost more weight!

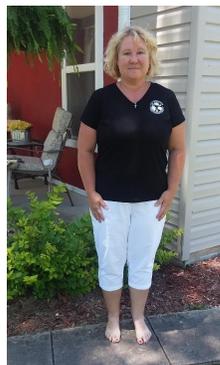
All of these individuals are an inspiration, and I hope their influence encourages others to get motivated to follow their footsteps to a healthier lifestyle.

We do not have to be at the mercy of the \$350-billion-dollar fast food and sugar industry. They are taking our hard-earned money and robbing us of our health. Support the local growers. Grow your own garden.

Eat whole – not processed – foods. Love yourself and care for each other. ❤️



Anna 2nd



Donna 3rd



Tom 4th



Lisa Ann 5th



Monica 6th