

Game On!

Two Game Nights were held at the Program Building for our Residential clients. The events were hosted by Angie Ray, Misty Todd, Candis Pratt and Susan Mudd and supported by their DSPs.

Participants not only played board and card games such as Kerplunk and Yahtzee, but also enjoy physically interactive games such as Corn Hole and Toss Across.

While everyone had a great time, a few individuals proved to be quite competitive players! Even with some enthusiastically fierce game strategists, everyone kept the competition friendly.



After several rounds of games everyone finished the night with a delicious Root Beer Float.





Employee Anniversaries

TWO YEARS

Kim Brutsman
Josh Venable

FIVE YEARS

Kirstie Tryon
Angel Weathers

SEVEN YEARS

Marsha Sowell



ELEVEN YEARS

Erika Park

TWELVE YEARS

Jeanette Smith

NINETEEN YEARS

Donna Odom

TWENTY YEARS

Jennifer Michelle Palmer

FRIENDLY FACES

Brent was hired as the agency's first ever FT Life Skills Teacher/Maintenance person June 28, 2021. Brent has a Bachelors Degree in Industrial Education and a Master's in Special Education. He has a wealth of experience in construction (worked as a construction teacher) and working in I/DD services (worked in Case Management and Direct Services). We are excited to welcome him to the agency!

Name: Brent Dale

Family and pets? Married & have 4 girls (21, 16, 16 & 13); 3 cats and 4 dogs

Favorite vacation? British Columbia

Who inspires you? My wife

What unique talent do you have or hobby? Being able to spot snakes and run backwards

What is the best surprise you have ever received? Trip to Banff for my 50th birthday

What is your favorite song? *Dream On* by Aerosmith

The movie version of my life should be titled? The Waltons

My favorite physical activity is: Fishing

One thing people are surprised to find out about me is: I'm still raising young kids

If I were a superhero I would be ...Iron Man

What are you passionate about? Spending time outside

What is your favorite family tradition? Eating dinner together after prayers

Pet peeve? Drivers driving slow in the passing lane

What is the best meal you have ever had? Ribeye steak cooked on an open fire while camping



Welcome New Trainees!

Noah Chambers 05.19.2021—Residential

Brent Dale 06.28.2021—Residential & Maintenance

Sheena Dickinson *Rehire* 04.19.2021—Day Program

Lisa Edinger *Rehire* 04.19.2021—Community Skills

Allison Fennewald *Rehire* 06.08.2021—Community Skills

Julie House 05.25.2021—Community Skills

Cydney Jordan 06.01.2021—Employment Services

Michael Marx *Rehire* 06.09.2021—Employment Services

Kelsey Mathews 05.25.2021—Day Program

Emily Mixson 05.25.2021—Community Skills

Cynthia Reynolds 06.14.2021—Day Program

Brady Scott 04.05.2021—Community Skills

Carolyn Wehmeyer 05.19.2021—Residential



Congrats DSP of the Quarter!

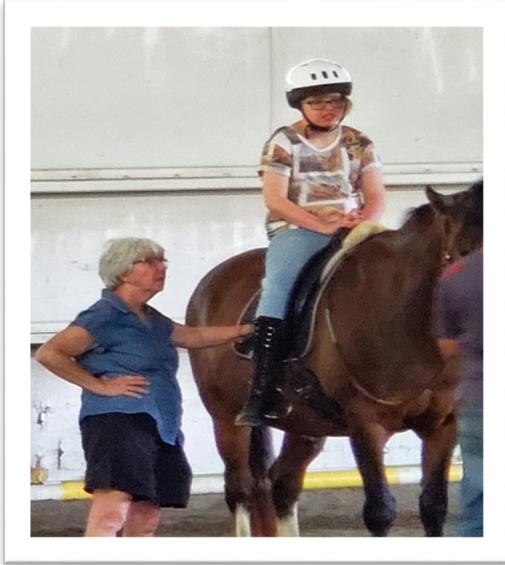
The DSP of the 1st quarter of 2021 is Malinda Derr!

Malinda has worked for Community Opportunities for over 16 years as a direct support professional. She is a Life Skills Teacher in Residential and works primarily at 21 Opportunity Ct. Malinda is a reliable and consistent representative of our organization. The person who nominated Malinda said “Malinda is instrumental in the safety and health of those she supports. Her focus on details allows her to detect medical concerns that could have critical consequences on the health of those she supports”.

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



Case Management Update



Madison is a 23 year old woman who lives in Moscow Mills with her family and receives Case Management services through our agency. If there is one thing Madison loves, it is riding horses! After more than a year of being closed to the public, TREE House of Greater St. Louis (formerly known as Therapeutic Horsemanship) is back open for business, and Madison couldn't be more thrilled.

TREE House (Therapy, Recreational, Educational and Exploration), is located in St. Charles County on 90 acres. It is a unique and welcoming place where individuals with disabilities and their families can find acceptance, tackle mental and physical challenges, and express their spirit in a peaceful and natural setting. Their programs serves individuals from age 2 through adulthood who have physical, mental, emotional, social and/or learning disabilities. This program relies heavily on the support of volunteers. Madison receives funding for this

invaluable service through the Medicaid Waiver program. After a long year of waiting, we are glad to see her back in the saddle again!

Busy in Employment

The last few months sure have been busy in the Employment Department. The team has worked hard to build some new business partnerships with JR Diamonds and the Wentzville, MO Walmart. We have also seen a few new faces coming through doors this quarter. Please join us in welcoming Dale and Kim to the program!



Congratulations to Abraham (pictured left) for accepting a position with the Wentzville, MO Walmart as a Digital Team Member. If you order groceries online, he might just be the one loading your vehicle for you.



A great big shout-out also goes out to Rosie - Aide at Troy Manor, Cauy - Golf Attendant at Sun Valley Golf Course, Brant - Team Member at Sonic (pictured right), and Zoie - Self-Checkout Host at the Troy Walmart! These four are all working hard on completing 90 days of Independent Employment! Keep it up guys!



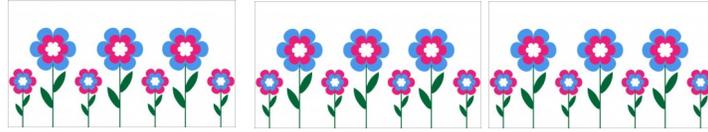
The Employment team continues to evolve: We were very happy to welcome *back* Bandy Dowell (full-time) in April, and Mike Marx (per diem) in June. We were equally excited to welcome

Cydney Jordan (per diem) in June to the team. Mike and Cydney are assisting with the Summer Work Experience Program (SWE). There was eleven students enrolled in the SWE program. The students worked at County Market in Winfield. There were two sessions (morning and afternoon) to accommodate so many students. We appreciate County Market for continuing to be such a great partner with this program!



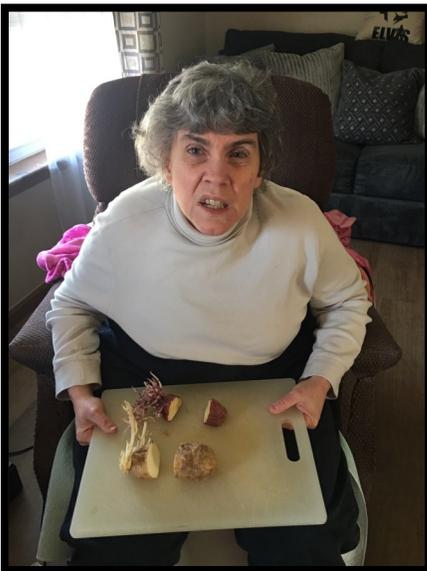
A Bountiful Spring

Ray and Steven enjoyed the beautiful spring weather and planting some flowers. The colorful blooms look amazing outside their house. Both gentlemen did a great job sprucing up the planters!



The Circle of Life

The ladies at Lyons, along with staff, started a project in March of growing new potatoes from old ones. The idea 'sprouted' when they found some of their potatoes in the pantry had sprouts growing from the eye of the potatoes. Instead of throwing them away, they cut the potatoes in 1/4th's, let the cut side callus/dry for a couple of days, then planted them in a pot to grow & produce. Below are pictures from beginning to the end result.



Jerry B. turns 69!

In April, Jerry B. celebrated his sixty-ninth birthday with a delicious cake, which he graciously shared with his housemates and support staff. Wishing you many more happy, happy birthdays!



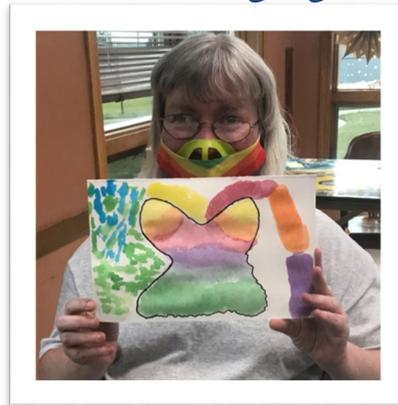
Hidden Treasure

Jackie Q. & staff enjoyed a beautiful day visiting the Lay Center in Louisiana, MO. The Lay Center for Education and the Arts is a nature lover's dream. Visitors are welcome to explore the grounds, which offer art and history amid a beautiful setting. Guests can walk in a sculpture park; read, play and picnic in a themed children's area; and visit a peaceful cemetery that dates back nearly 200 years — all in an atmosphere that invites learning and reflections.

<https://www.slu.edu/lay-center/index.php>



So Crafty!



June's Craft Class topic was Pride & Transformation. Participants used watercolors and markers to make these butterfly pieces. Butterflies were a perfect symbol of the beauty in transformation! Each artist's individuality was truly expressed through their artwork!

Eric, Adam, Eddie and Yvonne, along with their staff Brandi, Margaret and Kelsey, took advantage of the nice weather and took craft day outside. They taped their name on

cardboard and painted over it. They then peeled the tape off to reveal a beautiful piece of art work with their name. They all loved how their artwork turned out.





Angels Among Us?

While out and about in Moscow Mills, MO, Curtis G. could not resist having his photo taken in front of the beautiful wing mural on the building across from Harry J's Steakhouse. Check it out and spread your wings!

There are two sizes of wings to pose in front of –so everyone can get *their wings!*

Megan & Michele and staff explored Jake's Field of Dreams park in Wentzville. The park benches & trash cans were decorated with crocheted blankets. Named after a little boy whose brief life inspired a community, Jake's Playground is a destination playground that is designed for all children, particularly those with disabilities.

We are very excited that Troy will soon also have an accessible playground, as Phase 1 of Kiwanis Park is near completion!



Zoo Day

Some of the Day Program participants visited the St. Louis Zoo. It was nice to return to an activity the pandemic had temporarily halted.



Fruits of Labor

The raised garden beds are looking lush, thanks to our Day Program gardeners. They tended the beds & picked a haul of cherry tomatoes. Luckily the weather was amazing for the group to care for their thriving plants.

Volunteers in Action!



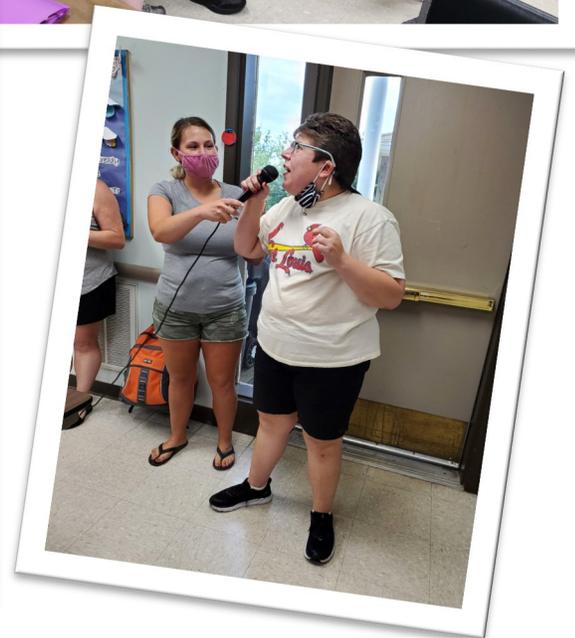
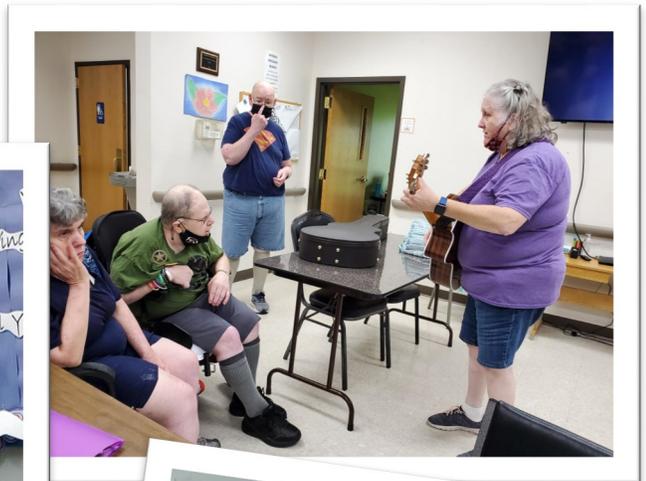
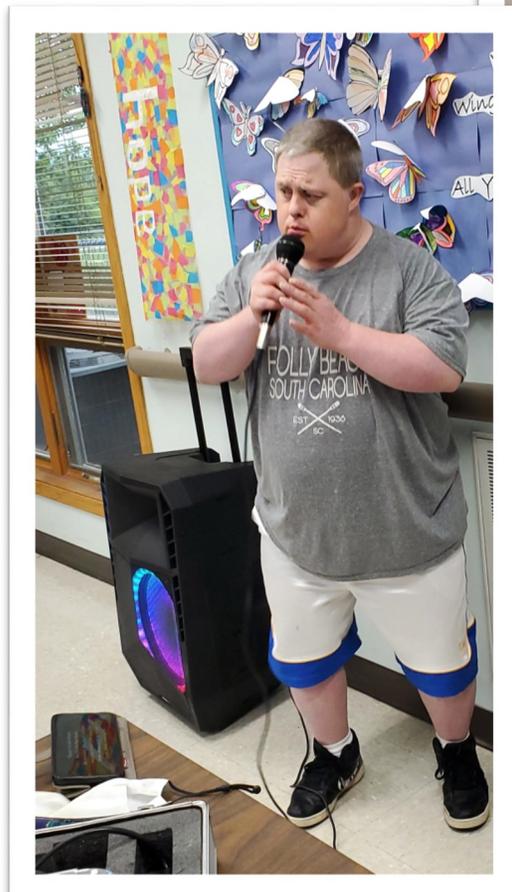
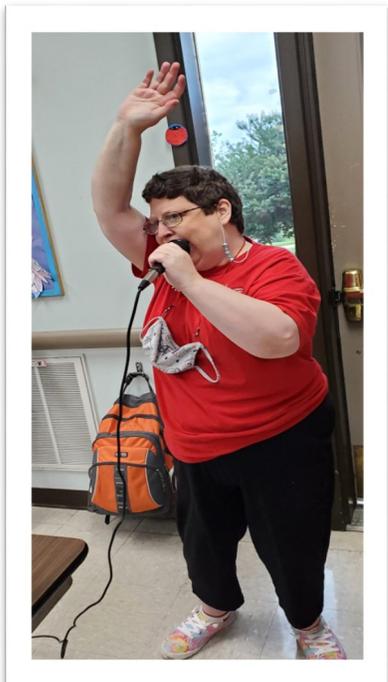
Everyone does great work at their volunteer job cleaning the Silex Assembly of God Church.

These guys and gals do an amazing job ensuring the church is clean from top to bottom!



Karaoke Fun

The Program Building was Rocking Out! A huge thanks to Diana Bechtel for performing with her guitar. She wasn't the only performer though, several individuals joined in the Karaoke fun! There were a variety of performers –some quite charismatic in their performance!



In Person Classes & Clubs Return @ the Program Building

1st Tuesday every month 4p-5p Sci Fi Club- hosted by Greg L.

2nd Tuesday every month 4p-6p Anime Club- hosted by the group

3rd Thursday every month 4:30p-5:30p Art with Josh – led by Josh Venable

4th Wednesday every month 4:30-6p Cooking Class- hosted by Jade and Lacy

Space is limited. Contact your CLS or CSS if you would like to participate.

We will be adding a craft group 1x per month starting in August- haven't picked a day/time yet....stay tuned!



The most recent book study being offered by DMH's Mental Health Equity & Inclusion Alliance is "Belonging at Work: Everyday Actions You Can Take to Cultivate an Inclusive Organization".

Do you feel like you belong at work? Studies show **61%** of the American workforce do not feel they can express their identities (such as their religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political ideology, etc.) and fully be themselves when they're at work. As a result, they "cover" aspects of themselves they feel will not be accepted. "Covering" one's identity(s) has been proven to engender loneliness and isolation and can impact teamwork and productivity.

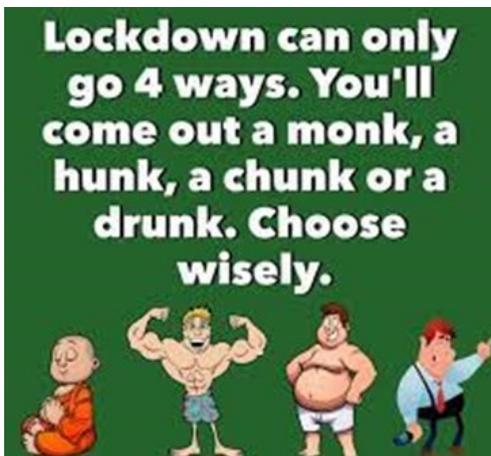
In order to promote belonging at work, the organization's leadership has to "walk the walk and talk the talk" by encouraging open dialogue and differences of opinion and expression.

To feel valued, employees have to believe what they're doing supports the mission of the company, be able to express themselves and their identities without recrimination, and feel like their work makes a difference.

So, be yourself! And if you ever feel you've been discriminated against, talk to your supervisor or Angela Hager, our HR Coordinator. We need and want you to feel you belong!!!

Recommended reading:

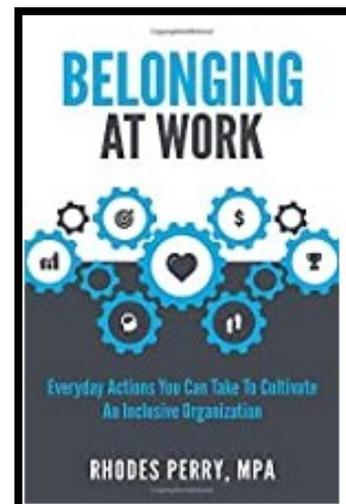
Healthy *living* Corner



I'm sure everybody has seen these memes! The pandemic has caused many of us to resort to some bad eating and drinking habits, which can have long term effects on our health.

A smaller number of us have managed to improve our health by developing meditation practices and exercise routines, which are both known to reduce stress and increase positive energy and happiness.

Let's choose our habits wisely!





It Pays To Refer!

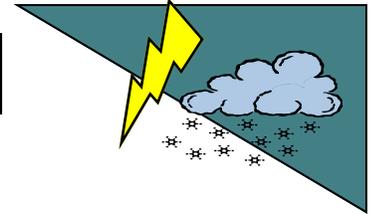
Community Opportunities employees will receive a \$100 referral incentive for recruiting new staff. Applicants must state you referred them on their employment application & once they complete their 3 month/equivalent trainee period you receive \$\$! There is no limit to the number of paid incentives you can receive...so start referring!



Donna Jacobsen,
H&S Chairperson

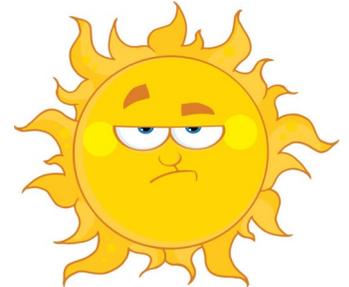


Health & Safety Corner



Preventing and Responding to *Sunburns*

Many people work outside, unknowingly exposing themselves to harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. In fact, even on a cloudy day, people outdoors can capture up to 80% of UV rays. On a hot, sunny day, UV rays can be even more intense—potentially causing exposed people to experience a red, painful skin reaction, also known as sunburn.



Sunburn occurs after excessive exposure to UV rays. The symptoms of sunburn often appear a few hours following initial exposure and typically peak between six and 36 hours after such exposure. Sunburn symptoms are usually temporary and subside in three to five days. However, sunburn can cause permanent damage to the skin's DNA. Further, all it takes is just one bad sunburn to cause long-lasting damage and increase the risk of skin cancer. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) states 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer at some point in their lives.

There are steps you can take to prevent sunburns while outside. The AAD recommends using the “ABC” method to lessen the risk of sun damage:

Away—Keep away from direct sunlight and try to avoid prolonged exposure—especially during periods when UV rays are the strongest (usually between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.).

Block—If you must be outside, be sure to use sunblock, which should be a minimum of SPF 30. Apply sunblock 30 minutes before sun exposure, and reapply it liberally every two hours throughout the day.

Cover up—In addition to applying sunblock, wear appropriate clothing—such as long sleeves, hats or sun glasses—to keep your skin and eyes safe from exposure to UV rays.

If you do experience sunburn, apply aloe gel or 1% hydrocortisone cream to the affected area. Consider taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain management, and drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

If your job requires you to be outside, it's imperative to avoid getting sunburn. Following the proper precautions can make all the difference in keeping your skin safe.



Tips and strategies for managing stress

Stress is part of life. A certain amount of stress can be useful. That tells you it's time to take action. But you don't want to let it build up to the point that you experience stress overload.

Here are some suggestions that can help you lower your stress level and avoid adding new stress.

- **Follow the basics.** You've heard it a million times before: Eat right, exercise and drink plenty of water. For some of us though, stress increases our desire for salty, sugary and caffeinated foods and beverages. Stress can zap your energy, making you feel like you would rather sleep than exercise. Fight the urge to sit in front the T.V. and eat a bag of potato chips. You can decrease your stress level by grabbing an apple and going for a walk
- **Get plenty of sleep.** Although stress can lead to the desire to sleep, many people who are under stress have difficulty sleeping. It can be helpful to focus on the following ways to get a restful night's sleep: - Make sure your bedroom is dark, cool and free of distractions. - If you can't fall asleep after 30 minutes, get up. Do something relaxing such as reading for 20 minutes then try to fall asleep again. - Write down your thoughts and concerns. - Focus on your breathing; nice slow inhales and full exhales.
- **Know the source of your stress.** What's causing your stress? Knowing the source of your stress allows you to focus your stress-fighting efforts. Try keeping a stress journal. Write down when you feel stress and the events that led to these feelings. Think about one or two changes you can make to reduce this stress. Reward yourself when you've made a positive change.
- **Organize your life.** Did you know clutter can raise your stress level? If you have a house, car or office with excess clutter, you're increasing your stress level daily. Get organized by setting up a system that encourages you to always put items in their place. If you don't know where to start, don't worry. Dedicate 10–15 minutes every day to organization and start anywhere.
- **Manage your time.** Do you plan your day or do you just let it happen? Planning your day with beginning and end times for tasks and events helps you stay on track. Good time management can help cut the stress that comes from being rushed.
- **Relax.** Think about what you find relaxing, such as listening to music, gently stretching, meditating, spending time alone, reading or enjoying a hobby. Make sure you give yourself time each day to engage in these relaxing activities.
- **Keep a positive outlook.** We all have an internal voice. What's your voice telling you? We can make our internal messages positive by focusing on good thoughts and letting angry or stress-filled thoughts go. Reassure yourself that this stressful time will pass.

If you'd like some help reducing your stress, Resources for Living EAP can help. Confidential FREE support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Resourcesforliving.com User Name: Community Op Password: EAP

Phone #: 888-238-6232 (TTY: 711)