



CARF Survey & Accreditation Awarded

The agency underwent our 11th CARF survey December 12-13, 2022 conducted by a 3 person survey-team. The review of over 1168 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 is well respected and highly valued as a service provider and resource in Troy, Missouri, and is well respected by the community... Community Opportunities incorporates the CARF standards in its day-to-day business functions and services delivery practices, and its practices reflect that it embraces continuous quality improvement. Persons served, families, funding sources, and other stakeholders expressed a high level of satisfaction with and appreciation for the organization, its services, and its personnel."

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! Keep up the good work and be proud in knowing our agency continues to go above and beyond in ensuring the individuals we serve are provided the highest quality services -as reflected in our continued accreditation!



HALLOWEEN *Costume* CONTEST

Congratulations to the winners of the Day Program Halloween Costume Contest!



First Place: Margaret and Amanda as Cindy Lou Who and The Grinch.

Second Place: Cyndy as "The Crazy Cat Lady."

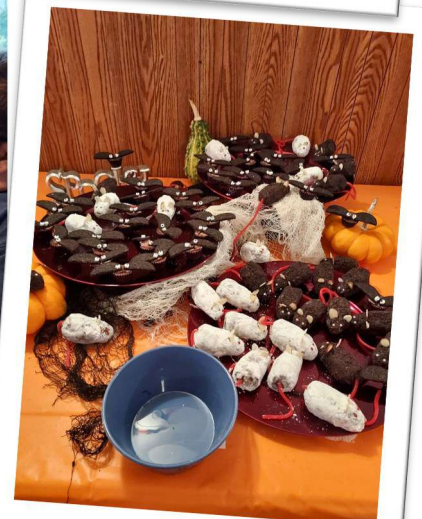
Third Place: Brandi and Kelsey as "The Spice Girls."



Spooktacular Craft!

Jerry, Josh and Ray not only completed a noodle art project for their home, they also had a scream making spooky critter snacks for the Agency Halloween Party!

These guys worked together to create an amazing Halloween faux candle centerpiece that would put skilled crafters to shame!



Community Opportunities Halloween Party was a Screaming Success



We were thrilled to once again host the Annual Halloween Party. There were over 90 people in attendance. Sacred Heart Knights of Columbus donated the hall for this event and the Ladies Auxiliary prepared and donated the food, a delicious taco bar.

Decked out in fun and creative costumes, attendees arrived frightfully delighted by spiders, ghosts and ghouls. A mixture of spooky tunes, music and Karaoke, allowed attendees to light up the dance floor and show off their singing and

dancing skills.

Special thanks to Jacks-R-Better DJ and Karaoke owner and operator Jack Wilke, for donating his time and services. The costume contest was enjoyed by all. Winners received a variety of prizes donated by local businesses and staff. Donated items were also used as door prizes. The "Scary Good Dessert" contest was also a huge success. The first place winner, Brittany P., who won with an Apple Spice Graveyard Cake, took home a beautiful prize basket, filled to the brim with baking goodies.

Community Opportunities would like to thank the following businesses and organizations for their support of our Halloween Party: Sacred Heart Knights of Columbus Council 6525; Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary; Jack, Wilke DJ karaoke services; Peoples Bank and Trust, Jim Trenary Automotive Network; Bank of Old Monroe; K. Flynn Insurance; F&S Collision & Customs; Wal-Mart and West End Salon.



Steven (pictured right) is proud to pass out milk, juice, and yogurt on his Meals-on-Wheels route.

Jackie went through her books at her home and found several she wanted to donate to two different little free libraries, one in Troy and one in Winfield.

Yvonne and Cyndy were busy donating canned goods to their local Blessing Box.



SNOWBALL FIGHT!

Snowball fight, anyone? What else would you do on a cold day? Our skilled Direct Support Professionals are always looking for FUN ways to incorporate sensory activities! After completing community service projects and eating lunch, our Community Skills Teachers broke out the snowballs and the attack was on!

Reid, David, and Em, were just a few people who took part in throwing snowballs at friends.

Benefits of Sensory Activities for Adults:

- Relieves Stress
- Improves Brain Function
- Stimulates the mind and boosts creativity
- Improves relationships and your connection with others
- Keeps you feeling young and energetic



Tips for Managers and Employers:

It's tempting to think that the best way to cope with increasing workload is to push employees longer and harder. However, it's important to remember that recreation pays off. It relieves stress for overwhelmed workers, it creates a lighthearted work atmosphere that in turn encourages employees to take creative risks and come together as a team. This leaves staff loving their jobs and creates longevity in your workplace.

Other Sensory Activities:

- Putting together puzzles and playing board games
- Nature walks & bird watching
- Listening to music or talk radio
- Baking and cooking



Not pictured: Staff, I know they were throwing snowballs, too!

So, are we all work and no play.....No Way!!



Giving Thanks

Day Program visited the pumpkin patch and went on a hay ride at Eagle Fork. Then, they joined together and gave thanks for friends, family and for friends that become family. Everyone shared what they were thankful for by writing it on a leaf and posting it on the Thankful Tree, painted by Kelsey M. Pictured to the right is Lizzy posting what she is most thankful for. Day Program also made a variety of homemade pies.

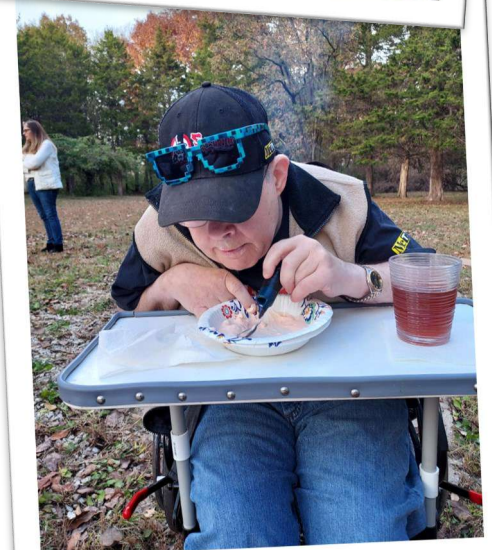
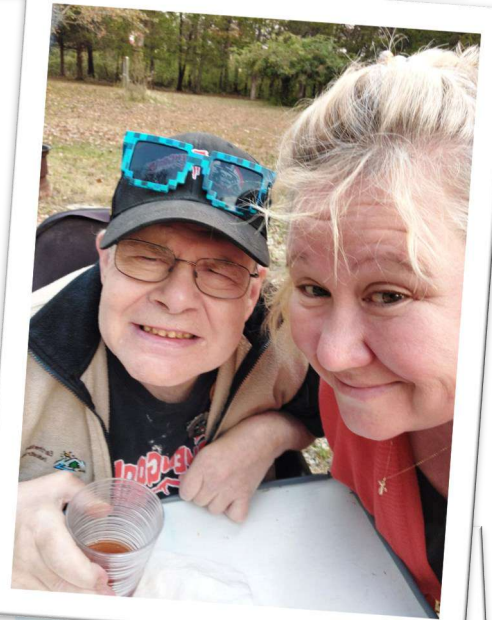


FALL Picnic

Angie Ray hosted her annual fall picnic with the guys and staff at her home. It was an evening of games and food. Beef and chicken chili on the menu with all the fixings.

Everyone played several rounds of corn-hole. Jerry was the man to beat. Curtis was keeping score letting us know when we missed.

It was a nice time around the fire swapping stories. Finishing off the night with brownies, cookies, and the annual bowl of orange fluff.





Celebrating Christmastime

The Christmas party at Day Program included a saran wrap ball filled with gifts, music, fishing for candy canes and music! Lizzy was excited to decorate the Christmas tree and Santa was at the Roadrunner Christmas Party.



Residential celebrated with a Christmas dinner and gifts for everyone! Doug approved, giving the night a thumbs-up!



Crafts in Community Skills & Day Program



Doug and Kelly (above) are beading on pipe cleaners to make candy cane ornaments for their Christmas trees.

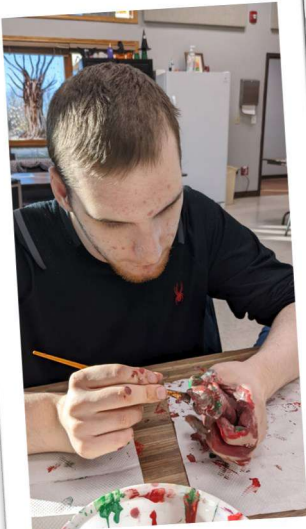
Creative
ARTS

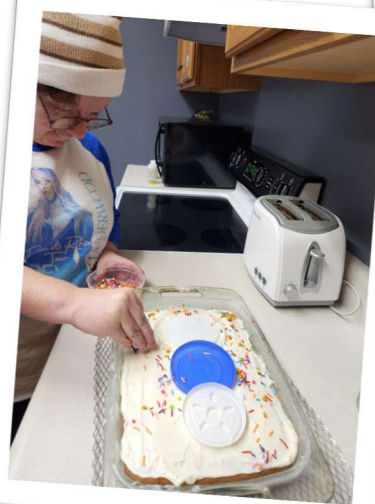


Craft class made these cute popsicle stick décor for Halloween.



What a unique craft! While in South Carolina, Margaret brought back palm tree fronds. The fronds were painted, decorated and transformed into reindeer. Donna O. helped Jerry put his in the Christmas wreath. Thank you Margaret for this fun idea!





Jackie showing the steps in baking a homemade yellow cake during a snow day at Day Program.

Getting Their Exercise!



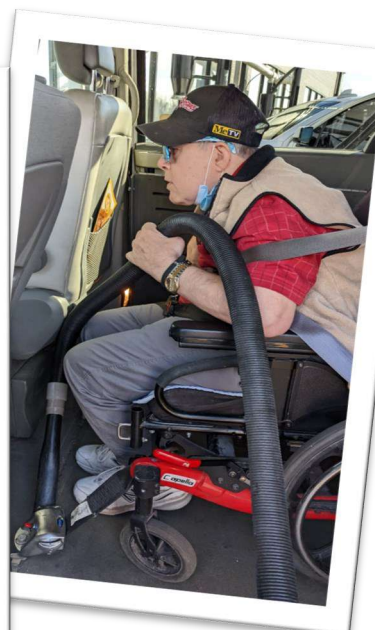
Doug's favorite exercise is lifting weights at the gym.



Jim doesn't need a gym. He got in his workout outdoors by picking fruit from the garden at the YMCA.



Steven enjoys cycling and then assists with cleaning out the van!



Just a Reminder...

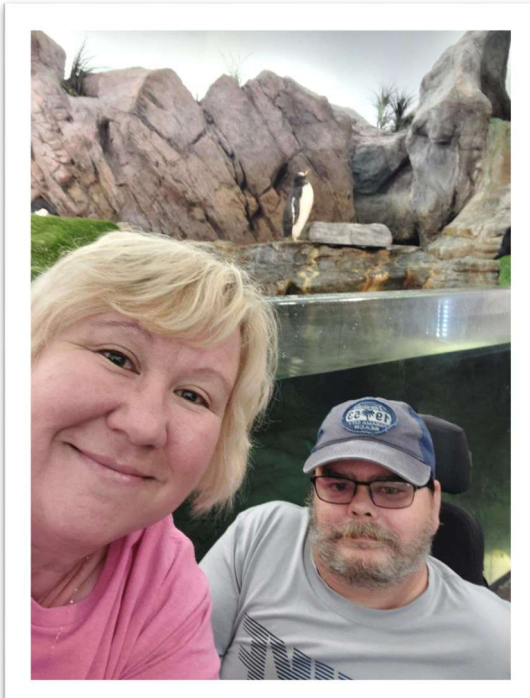
**Offices and
Day Program will be closed:
February 20, 2023
Presidents' Day**



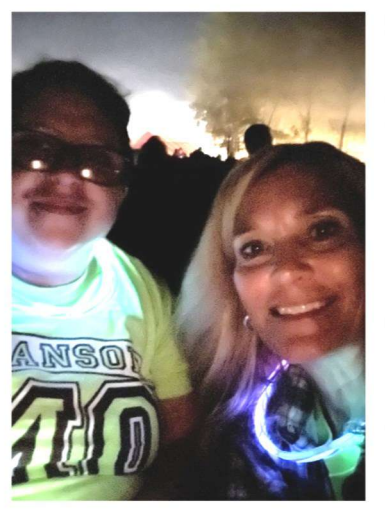
Ray and Donna had a great time at the St. Louis Zoo. The weather was beautiful for the first day of October. The animals were all out to enjoy the weather as well. A little peek-a-boo with polar bear. Ray enjoyed the penguin house and he took lots of pictures to remember the day!



St. Louis Zoo Winter Hours
January 3 through March 3, 2023
10am-4pm Monday-Friday
9am-4pm Saturday & Sunday



Lera and Tammy spent the evening enjoying Sky Wars. Sky Wars is a choreographed series of the most exciting firework displays produced by the nation's finest pyrotechnicians



Lillie and the guys at 17 Opportunity Court enjoyed game night. Pictured above is the gang playing Swoop!



A Special Thank You!

We are so thankful to the Knights of Columbus, Sacred Heart Council #6525 who generously donated \$592.72 to the agency from their annual Tootsie-Roll Drive. Pictured are CJ Brown and Jack Wilke, KoC members, presenting 'the check' to Connie and Lanny. This money will be utilized for recreational activities for individuals we serve!



2022 Holiday Door Decorating Award Winners

Special thanks to **Fast Bryant Consulting** for assisting us with selecting the winning doors and to everyone who submitted votes on **Facebook!**



1st Place Admin. Bldg. winner -Angela Hager



1st Place Prog. Bldg. winner -Ebony's door (painted/decorated by Tori Linneman and Jim. J.)



2nd Place Prog. Bldg. Kitchen Door (decorated by Tori Linneman, Margaret Hill, Jim J., Eddie, Tammy T., and Angel W.)



2nd Place Admin. Bldg. AND People's Choice Award Winner -Candis Pratt



3rd Place Admin. Bldg. winner -Angie Ray



3rd Place Prog. Bldg. -Janelle's Door (decorated by Tammy Tipton)

It literally PAYS to refer! If you refer someone who is hired and completes their training period, you get paid a \$100 referral incentive! Our staff are our best recruiters because you know the job better than anyone... so spread the word and possibly earn yourself **EXTRA CASH!**

Congratulations, Quinton Burks! You will be receiving a \$100 referral incentive for referring Austin Doria!

Congratulations, Austin, for completing your trainee period!



Employment Services

As 2022 came to an end the Employment Services Department had an exciting fourth quarter!

It started off in October being National Disability Employment Awareness Month with our clients Rosie, John and Travis being interviewed about their success at their current jobs.

In November Eric successfully completed 90 days of Independent Employment at Cuivre Park Elementary!

Austin Butler started Employment Services! Welcome Austin!

We also want to welcome Winfield High School for allowing us to come in for Job Club, such a fun group of kids!

December started off amazing!! We were part of the 3 year survey by CARF where we were told by one of the surveyors that our Employment Department was the best she has ever seen!! YAY

John successfully completed 90 days of Independent Employment at Polar Station!

Bree started her new job at Main Street Elementary joining the Latch Key staff!

Austin started his new job working as a stocker for Budget Boutique!

From the Employment Services staff we want to say Congratulations to our clients on their new adventures and want to wish you all a very HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

Congratulations Nathan!



The DSP of the 4th quarter of 2022 is Nathan Honerkamp!

Nathan has worked for Community Opportunities for just over 2 years as a Life Skills Teacher in the Residential department on the 41/ISL team. Nathan is known on his team for his calm, relaxed approach and demeanor.

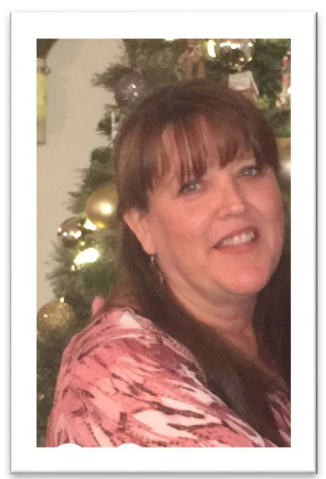
The person who nominated Nathan said, “Nathan takes the time and effort to learn the likes and dislikes of the clients he supports. He looks for activities within the community that match his client’s interests and encourages participation.”



Thank you, Nathan, for everything you do to support individuals with disabilities and congratulations on your award!



&



By Connie West, H&S Chairperson

Winter Safety Tips for People with Disabilities

Winter weather can be dangerous for anyone, but these risks are particularly acute for seniors and people with disabilities. However, there are several ways you can prepare yourself for extreme temperatures and inclement weather.

Dress In Warm Clothing

One of the best ways to stay warm in cold weather is by wearing multiple layers of loose, lightweight clothing. Laying multiple pieces allows you to remove clothing or add to it depending on your body temperature. As air is trapped between layers of clothing, it provides extra insulation.

We lose most of our body heat through our heads, making hats one of your most important winter accessories. It's also a good idea to wear a scarf to cover your mouth and nose to protect your lungs from freezing air.

You also lose a lot of body heat through your hands, so you'll want to invest in a good pair of gloves. Consider thermal driving gloves with thinner material at the fingertips, which can help prevent slipping as you grip a wheelchair or walker. If opening your fingers is difficult, go with a pair of mittens instead.

A good pair of snow boots and wool socks go a long way toward keeping you comfortable in cold weather. Make sure your boots have a good tread that grips the snow and helps you avoid slipping. Your footwear should also be well-insulated and waterproof to keep your feet warm and dry.

Closely Monitor Your Physical Health

People with disabilities and the elderly are often more susceptible to health problems in cold weather, including hypothermia and frostbite. As a result, it's important to keep close tabs on your physical health during winter.

Hypothermia: It can be difficult for older people to determine when their body temperature has dropped too low. Symptoms of hypothermia include sleepiness, confusion, slurred speech, cold extremities and violent shivering.

Frostbite: Frostbite manifests as white, waxy skin that feels hard and numb. People with circulation issues and heart disease are particularly susceptible to frostbite. Frostbite typically affects your face and extremities. If your skin turns dark or red and starts to hurt, go inside immediately to warm up.



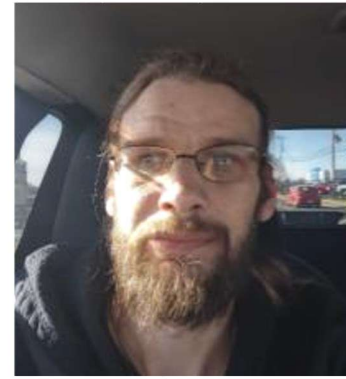


Sean Jackson



Sean is a 32-year-old man living independently with his partner of many years in the Hawk Point area. They own their home together.

Sean receives Case Management services from Community Opportunities to keep his benefits up to date and to find socialization opportunities in his area. He is seeking a part-time job, and has had some promising interviews lately!



Healthy Living

By Sonya DeMerchant –Director of Case Management

The Importance of Reporting Near Falls

As I was going through hours of training for DMH’s new Health Risk Screening Tool (HRST), which will be required for all individuals receiving Medicaid Waiver services, I was reminded of the importance of reporting and tracking near falls. In other words, falls that don’t make it all the way to the ground, because either a staff was able to catch the person before they went down or they fell into furniture that if it wasn’t there, they would have assuredly gone to the ground.

We don’t currently track those near falls, but we will be expected to when the HRST goes into effect later this year. The reason for tracking near falls is for the same reason we track falls that reach the floor: underlying medical conditions that could be going untreated, side effects from medications or medications no longer working, and higher risks of severe injuries, which can lead to premature fatalities. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities notes:

Having a developmental disability might put a person at greater risk for falling if they have a vision impairment, muscle weakness, gait and balance difficulties, use multiple medications for multiple diagnoses or medications with sedative effects, or have a sedentary lifestyle. Risk of falling can stem from seizure disorder, incontinence, orthostatic hypotension (sudden drop in blood pressure), vertigo, peripheral neuropathy (lack of feeling), or dehydration. Age can also be a factor. Falls are the leading cause of injury-related hospitalization and death among Ohioans 65 years and older.

Because our staff are so attentive to the needs of our folks and typically catch them before they fall, we could be unintentionally overlooking an underlying condition or medication issue which could be treatable. **Please make sure you document those near falls in your notes and report them to your supervisor.**

Equity &



In the riveting and incredibly well-researched biography written by Kate Moore, **The Woman They Could Not Silence: One Woman, Her Incredible Fight for Freedom, and the Men Who Tried to Make Her Disappear** she writes about Elizabeth Packard, who is described as being a self-educated, well-spoken housewife and mother of six, who begins speaking out against slavery at the beginning of the Civil War, and the similarities of the suppression of women and other marginalized groups.

All throughout history, women have long been silenced for speaking their minds. Women who refused to be quiet were publicly scolded, beaten, tortured, and incarcerated. They were conveniently labeled “crazy” and commonly committed to mental institutions – formally known as insane asylums, by their husbands, brothers, fathers, and even other women in the family or community who were ashamed by the “brazen” behavior of the outspoken woman. They had no legal rights to defend themselves in the court of law, not only because they couldn’t vote, but because once married, they were the property of their husbands.

“It’s a book that is set over 160 years ago. A lot has changed. A lot hasn’t. We are only just beginning to appreciate exactly how a person’s powerlessness may lead to struggles with their mental health. With that understanding, statistics showing higher rates of mental illness in women, people of color and other disenfranchised groups become translated into truth: not a biological deficiency, as doctors first thought, but a cultural creation that, if we wanted to, we could do something about. So, in the end this is a book about power. Who wields it. Who owns it. And the methods they use. And above all, it’s about fighting back.”

Author’s Note: This history is our history. Every one of us must speak up for those who have no power or voice to speak for themselves. Everyone has the constitutional **right to due process** because of vocal advocates like Elizabeth Packard.

Congratulations, Mike!

Mike Miller retired from the board after serving from 2009-2021. He was celebrated at the December 8th board meeting and presented with a plaque commemorating his service. He was a dedicated board member serving as the Treasurer for many years.

Thank you, Mike, for your service!

Pictures is Sarah Burkemper, Board President, presenting Mike his plaque.



Tips for Answering Calls Professionally



FRIENDLY FACES



Brian Scott, Employment Specialist

Family and pets? Wife, 3 Kids, 1 Granddaughter, 2 Dogs

Favorite vacation? Navarre Beach, Florida

Favorite saying or quote? "Be the Change You Want to See."

What unique talent or hobby do you have? Coaching Baseball and Soccer

What is the best surprise you have ever received? A Car for My 16th Birthday

What is your favorite song? AC/DC Thunderstruck

The movie version of my life should be titled? Welcome to the Show (If you know, you know)

If I won the lottery I would: Buy my Favorite Football Team, the Kansas City Chiefs and live there

One thing people are surprised to find out about me is: I'm Really Shy

If I were a superhero I would be: The Hulk

What are you passionate about? Making Sure Inclusive Happens

What is your favorite family tradition? Going Black Friday shopping

Pet peeve? Being Late

What is the best meal you have ever had? Bacon Cheeseburger Pizza and Cheesy Garlic Bread

Employee Anniversaries

Quinton Burks (1)

Jamie Chambers (1)

Sheila Dove (1)

Kevin Duke (1)

Tammy Mathews (1)

Allison Harmon (2)

Nathan Honerkamp (2)

McKenzie Aubuchon (5)

Jennifer Grotewiel (5)

Jennifer Bultena (7)

Timothy Gilman (7)

Mildred Rhodes (7)

Olivia Jacoby (11)

Angela Schnuriger (13)

Michael Robinson (23)

Lacy Wilke (25)



New Employees!

Mary Mitts 11.01.2022 - Residential

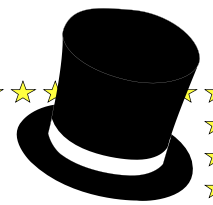
Chris Smith 11.07.2022 - Residential

Cindy Short 11.21.2022 - Community Skills

Paul Arseneau 12.06.2022 - Community Skills

Hattie Franklin 01.09.2023 - Employment

Hats Off to...



- ★ ... Community Skills staff for planning the Halloween Party!
- ★ ... Kelsey C. for being a FUN MC; nice job introducing people in their costumes!
- ★ ... Donna O. and the guys at 17 for making such cute critter snacks for the Halloween party!
- ★ ... Tammy T. for all the extra picking up you do everyday!
- ★ ... Tori for remembering to turn on the front light!
- ★ ... Marsha for double checking things and following up on receipts and PPF's!
- ★ ... Quinton & Roger for always being ready to help out with vehicles!
- ★ ... Donna J. for establishing our OUTSTANDING Health & Safety standards as mentioned in our CARF survey!
- ★ ... Employment for exceeding CARF standards!
- ★ ... Angela H. for presenting our agency CARF standards and the work we all do to the CARF auditors in a professional matter!
- ★ ... Margaret for remembering to start the dishwasher and locking the back door everyday!
- ★ ... Emily M. for your positivity and high-energy approach with staff and co-workers!
- ★ ... Jeanette for personally providing her Meals on Wheels friends with Christmas gifts!
- ★ ... Kim W. for keeping the team guided while Janelle is on maternity leave!
- ★ ... Bob & Sharon M. for the hot cocoa and fruit enjoyed during the Christmas celebration!
- ★ ... Reid's mom for providing Christmas cookies for the party!
- ★ ... Duke for picking up Tori, Kim and their group when the van wouldn't start!
- ★ ... Joanie for all of your help with the Halloween party & getting decorations!
- ★ ... EVERYONE that donated baskets for the Halloween Party, it was a big success!



Classes & Clubs @ the Program Building



- 1st Tuesday every month 4p-6p Sci-Fi Club- hosted by Greg L.
- 2nd Tuesday every month 4p-6p Anime Club- hosted by the group
- 3rd Thursday every month @ 4pm –Craft Class \$3/attendee
- Last Thursday every month 4-5p Sit 'n Fit Chair Exercise

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

Check the monthly activities calendar for more activities & changes.