



## Direct Support Professionals Week September 10th-16th 2023

“Our fingerprints don’t fade from the lives we touch” - Judy Blume

We take great pride in supporting our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) all year long and we especially enjoy showing our appreciation, for the vital work they do, during DSP Week!

Monday at the Movies, Troy Movie House, featured “Beetlejuice” and “The Cat in the Hat,” serving popcorn and soft drinks to all viewers.

Crossroads Coffee Camper greeted DSPs and friends on Tuesday morning with a hot cup of joe! With a wide range menu selection, there was something for everyone.



Agency logo shirts and jackets were presented to DSPs on Wednesday! We are looking snazzy out and about in the community in our new gear!

Jamie, with Magnolia House of Healing, visited on

Thursday and provided chair massages to support the well-being of our fabulous DSPs.

Friday, a meal from Slim Chickens was delivered to DSPs during their shift or available for pick up from those not working at the time.

The work of a DSP is deeply fulfilling. Often, strong bonds are developed with individuals they support and to witness their progress is rewarding. Our DSPs are here because they love what they do and the personal success of those they support is a priority to them.

Thank you, to each and every Direct Support Professional on the Community Opportunities team! We greatly appreciate all that you do to support our friends in the community, at home, at work and with their personal goals. You really are the BEST! Thank you to all of those who worked so hard in making this week such a success, especially, Jessica R., Angela H. and Roger.



# Residential Services



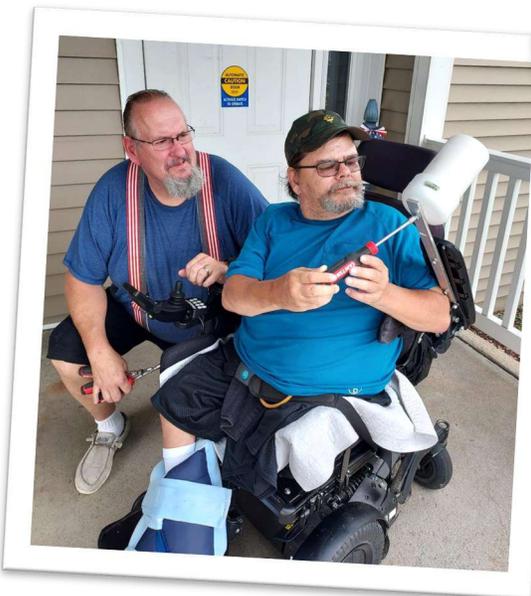
Ray, Curtis and Donna headed to the Lincoln County Old Threshers tractor pull.



Jerry and Yvonne sharing a picnic lunch.



Jim and Liv at The Muny.



Duke and Ray work together to make a cup holder accessory for Ray's chair.



Sarah celebrates her independence on Independence Day!



Doug makes the best chocolate brownies!



Angel, Ty, Yvonne, Jerry and Sandy enjoy a show at The Muny.



Lera, Jackie and Yvonne taking a break at Emerge Fitness after getting temp. tattoos. They had an appreciation day with face painting, tattoos, hot dogs and snow cones.



Catherine, Sarah, Teresa, Allison and Donna head to a Cardinals game.



# community Skills



Josh visiting the Delmar Loop with Kelsey C.



Shelby celebrates Cat Day at Day Program.



Lera, you are so BRAVE walking the rope at camp!



David gives the swing at Day Program a thumbs-up!



From left to right, Kenzie and Mia picked the harvest from the Day Program garden. Eddie took care of water the veggie plants. Em and Mickey size up the beautiful sunflowers that were planted this year! Thank you, Kenzie, for leading the garden effort and to all of those who helped!



It was a group effort in cheering on the Cardinals this year. Our friends certainly did their part! Lots of laughs and a good time!

# Employment Services

*As summer comes to an end we have many great things to share from Employment Services. Summer Work Experience was great success at Cuivre River State Park and County Market. The students that participated were able to experience different responsibilities at each location. At Cuivre River State Park the students painted the parking curbs throughout the park, helped clean the barracks, and picked up trash throughout. The students at County Market were able to stock the shelves, work in the bakery and deli and bag groceries for the customers. They all did an excellent job!*



*A few clients started new jobs. Jared is at Sonic as a dishwasher and Kaden is at County Market as a cashier, Amanda started at Troy Manor in house-keeping and Isaac is at McDingerz as a busser. Good Luck to you all!*



*Tyler, Breonna, Jason and Natalie completed their 90 days of Independent Employment! Awesome Job!*

## Congratulations Jen!



**The DSP of the 3rd quarter of 2023 is Jen Winter!**

Jen has worked for Community Opportunities for 4 years as a Community Skills Teacher in the Day Program. Jen is a reliable employee who is known for her calm, kind personality. The person who nominated Jen said that “Jen is smart and compassionate. She is very easy going and handles spur of the moment changes well. Jen is always respectful to clients, her coworkers, and people in the community.”



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



# HEALTH

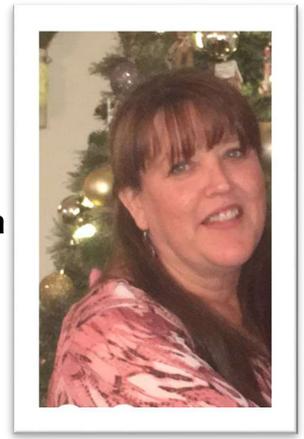
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# SAFETY



## FALL SAFETY

By Connie West, H&S Chairperson



Fall is my absolute favorite time of the year. It is such a relief from the heat (I am a fair weather fan) and the colors are beautiful!! Since it is fall, what a great time to talk about fall hazards.

Many of our clients need a little assistance and maybe some reminders when walking about so they do not fall, especially those that tend to shuffle their feet when they walk. Rugs are a huge issue for those that shuffle and those that use walkers. Maybe consider not placing rugs in their pathways.

Falling leaves are pretty to look at but they too can pose a threat to some folks. Try to keep your outdoor walking areas free from leaves and other debris.

Get outside and enjoy the weather and beauty of fall! A drive through the State Park this time of year will not disappoint.



Hypertension is a disease of our lifestyle choices, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). On Tuesday, September 19, 2023, WHO released a report on the life-threatening effects of high blood pressure, which is one of the world's leading risk factors for death and disability. Hypertension is categorized as a blood pressure reading of 140/90 or higher. It commonly leads to a number of serious health problems including stroke, heart attack, heart failure and kidney damage. The WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated in his news release that "Hypertension can be controlled effectively with simple, low-cost medication regimens, and yet only about one in five people with hypertension have controlled it."



Besides medication, eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, getting regular exercise, avoiding tobacco and alcohol and lowering daily sodium intake will significantly reduce your risk of developing high blood pressure, and if all of these strategies are implemented together after already developing it, the disease can be potentially reversed and medication no longer needed.

(From CNN article titled "Proper treatment for hypertension could avert 76 million deaths globally by 2050, WHO says" written by Amanda Musa)





## Equity & Inclusion

One year ago, Zack's support team encouraged him to get out of his home and just go watch a practice night with DASA athletes.



DASA (Disabled Athletes Sports Association), is where anyone who lives with a physical disability is given the opportunity to participate in adaptive sports, recreations programs, and fitness activities designed to improve self-esteem, strength, independence and well-being while instilling family values.

After that first night, Zack was hooked on boccia ball. In just a few short months, Zack was not only able to learn a completely new sport, but he was such a quick learner he ended up at a National competition this summer, Zack competed alongside athletes who have been playing boccia ball for years and he performed like a champ!

We are so proud of Zack for placing 7<sup>th</sup> overall in Nationals for boccia ball with his DASA league. Zack will be attending a special training camp in October to prepare him to qualify for the upcoming Paralympics!

**Congratulations, Zack Winkle!**

Please visit our updated webpage at [www.commopps.org](http://www.commopps.org) and follow us on the following social media platforms:



Community Opportunities has made strides in our initiative to increase awareness and support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB) for not just the individuals we serve, but for our employees.

First, we created a DEI Committee earlier this year, which initially included Sonya DeMerchant, Gina Gipson, Candis Pratt, Connie West, Kailey Miller, Allison Harmon and later, Mary Mitts. The committee determined the need to survey employees, and we achieved a significant response rate of 58%.

We then established a Mission Statement: **Our agency strives to create and maintain working and learning environments that are inclusive, equitable, and welcoming.**

Next, based on the results from the survey, we created measurable goals for our committee:

- 1) The DEI Committee meets at least quarterly for planning, training and education.
- 2) The DEI Committee provides cultural awareness education and information on a variety of DEI topics through our quarterly newsletter.
- 3) The DEI Committee provides DEI training to each department & team a minimum of one time per year.
- 4) The DEI Committee surveys employees annually to assess satisfaction with the agency's DEI initiatives and the committee's value and effectiveness.
- 5) The DEI Committee provides support to employees with any concerns related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging in the workplace.

The committee is working on its first team training this fall. However, two of our members needed to step down recently due to other commitments. We are looking for their replacements!

**We would welcome anyone on the committee, and would love some participants with differing cultural backgrounds. Please contact Sonya DeMerchant if you're interested at [sonya@commopps.org](mailto:sonya@commopps.org)**



## WE ALL SCREAM FOR ICE CREAM!

The enjoyment of simple pleasures like ice cream with friends can boost overall well-being and happiness. Josh C. and Kelsey C. organized an ice cream social, which was a five-scoop success! Community Opportunities provided ice cream and friends were welcome to bring their favorite topping to share! With over sixty attendees, there was no topping shortage. Thank you Josh and Kelsey for organizing this event! It provided a great opportunity for people to visit and reconnect.



**For Fun:** St. Louis has a notable place in ice cream history because of the 1904 World's Fair held in the city. At the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, the ice cream cone is said to have gained widespread popularity. According to legend, an ice cream vendor ran out of cups, and a neighboring waffle vendor rolled his waffles into a cone shape to help serve the ice cream. This led to the creation of the ice cream cone as we know it today.



## It's Raining Cats and Dogs!



In today's fast-paced and often stressful environments, there's nothing like the presence of our furry friends to bring joy, relieve stress, and foster a sense of camaraderie among friends. Pet Day, a rising trend in many workplaces, has become a favorite occasion for clients, employees and their four-legged companions.

One of the most significant advantages of Pet Day at work is the instant stress relief it provides. Mia, pictured top-right with CiCi, agrees that just a few moments spent petting a dog or playing with a cat can lower cortisol levels and release endorphins, promoting mental well-being.

Dude, (pictured lower-right) took a seat and assisted Jessica in her office.

Pet Day at work is more than just a fun diversion; it's a boost to morale, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. The joy and stress relief that pets bring to the office cannot be underestimated. The regular occurrence of Pet Day can positively impact company culture, contributing to a happier, more cohesive, and motivated workforce. So, if your workplace hasn't embraced this trend yet, consider advocating for it—it's a simple and effective way to make your workdays not only productive but also delightfully memorable.







## FRIENDLY FACES

I'm Liv Linneman, I've been a Community Skills Teacher for over a year and a half. I work in Community Skills and sometimes help out in Day Program. My family includes my mom, Ebony, my dad, my older sister, Tori, and two younger brothers, Gabriel and Wyatt.

Pets... I have cows.

My favorite vacation was a week long road trip through several of the Northern states.

Who inspires me is St. Joan of Arc, because she is literally a saint and is one of the best human examples of holiness and what a woman should be.

My unique talent or hobby is that I can vibrate my eyes.

My favorite quote is, "I was born to do this." -St. Joan of Arc

The best surprise I have ever received... my baby brother, he "surprises" me everyday!

My favorite song is, "Amarillo By Morning", by George Strait.

The movie version of my life should be titled, "Liv, Laugh, Love."

My favorite physical activity is lifting weights, but I like basketball (I play for MBU) and anything outdoor-physical-activity, volleyball, kayaking, hiking, etc.

If I won the lottery I would purchase land and live in the middle of no where. Oh, and a Jeep!

One thing people are surprised to find out about me is that I like to read. A lot!

If I were a superhero I would be Elastigirl!

I am passionate about really almost anything I spend my time doing.

My favorite family tradition is going to church every Sunday.

The last book I read was, *Air of Fire Throne of Glass, Book III, by Sarah Maas*

My pet peeve is when people have attitudes for no reason!



## Classes & Clubs @ the Program Building



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

1st Thursday every month 4:30p Craft Class \$3/hosted by Emily

2nd Tuesday every month 4-5p Music Class/hosted by Diana

2nd Thursday every month 4p-5:30p Anime Club/hosted by Kelsey C.

3rd Thursday every month 4-5p Karaoke & Dance/hosted by Jen W., Amanda & Katy

4th Wednesday every month 4p Cooking Class \$3/hosted by Lacy

Last Thursday every month 4-5p Sit 'n Fit Chair Exercises/hosted by Kelsey M.

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

**Check the monthly activities calendar for more activities & changes.**





## INCREASED Employee Referral Incentive Could you use \$250?

Who needs extra money for the holidays???

**Congratulations, Gina Gipson** who will be receiving the \$250 employee referral incentive for referring Stephanie Null. **Congratulations, Stephanie**, for completion of your 3-month trainee orientation period!

It literally PAYS to refer! If you refer someone who is hired, and completes their three-month training, you get paid a **\$250 referral incentive!** Please remember, all employees are eligible to receive this paid incentive (an unlimited number of times)!! Our employees are our best recruiters –you know the job better than anyone!



October 11th, 4-6pm, Halloween Movie Night featuring, **Killer Klowns from Outer Space**, at the Program Building, hosted by Josh C. & Kelsey C. Bring a snack to share and popcorn will be provided.

October 18th, 4p, Movie Night, featuring, **Vacation**, at the Program Building, hosted by Joey G. Bring your own drinks and a snack to share.

October 27th, 5:30-9pm, Halloween Carnival at LCCOA, food, games, prizes, music, raffle and costume contest. RSVP before October 13th.



October 30th, 1:30-3p, Trunk or Treat at the Program Building.

**RSVP to your CLS or CSS if you plan on attending these FUN events!**



happy holidays!

Day Program  
Closed:  
November 23rd



Offices & Day Program Closed:  
November 24th- Thanksgiving

December 25th- Christmas

January 1st- New Years Day

