

Opportunity Times News & Views

Fall Agency Picnic

On Saturday, October 7th, the agency hosted an Agency Fall Picnic/Open House. All agency staff, clients, board members and their families were invited. We had a wonderful turn out with about 120 people in attendance!

Pictured top right is four of our Department Directors/CLSs serving lunch to guests. Our wonderful maintenance man, Duke, grilled burgers and hotdogs for everyone.

Attendees enjoyed playing yard games, such as giant Connect Four and disk golf. Attendees received a professional grade disk (for disk golf) with the agency logo as an attendance gift. Jerry, Jim and Josh are pictured competing in a game of disk golf.

It was a beautiful day and an amazing opportunity to meet the families of some of our outstanding staff, board members and clients!

Many hands made light work of this fun event. Special thanks to everyone who participated & contributed time to help make this a successful and fun occasion!

Thanks also to Powell Library for the yard games. If you haven't checked out their "Library of Things", they have amazing items you can check out (with a library card). Check them out at:

https://www.troy.k12.mo.us/2873_3



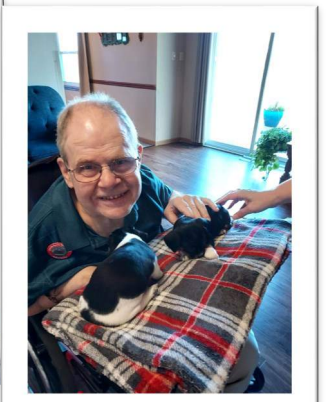
Residential Services



Josh and his friends celebrated his birthday at his favorite local restaurant, Golden Wok.



Terry picked out the perfect pumpkin!



Misty brought her puppies in. Josh and Steven enjoyed the cuddles. Thank you, Misty!



Celebrating Christmas in Residential Services with a dinner, gifts, music and friends. Pictured left to right, Curtis and Ray, Jim and Jerry, Ryan and Josh and the crew that made it all possible! Thank you, Candis, Angela, Misty and Susan!



Teresa celebrated her 66th birthday in December with many dear friends.

Teresa entered her eternal rest a few weeks later.

Teresa, also known as 'Fern,' received residential services from us since 1990, retiring from Day Program in 2018.

Though you will be deeply missed, Fern, we are

thankful for the opportunity to create forever-memories and to share paths for a short while. May your light continue to shine upon us.



Josh and Donna worked together to make this tree decor for Josh's front porch. Awesome job!

community Services



From left to right, first row: Mikey is proud of his building- such a fine line, Chloe, enjoying the outdoors before the winter weather arrived. Second row: Thanksgiving games in Day Program, Em & Tori playing Plukin' the Turkey, Mickey's pic on top of the turkey shoot and Em & Amanda competing in a turkey feather race! Last row: Eddie and Doug picking up marshmallows, Eddie with his "air fiddle" and David making tunes, and Lizzy with her festive holiday snack—Enjoy!



Employment Services

The year is coming to an end and what a last three months we in Employment have had! In October Caden started with D & E. Caleb finished his 90 days of independent employment at Friendship Farm. Joel started SE job placement, Lanny started working at Sonic, Zoie started working at OPAA Food Management at Silex and last but not least Madison started ES job placement.

November kept us busy also! Amanda finished her 90 days of independent employment at Troy Manor, Cauly started working at Chartwells Ninth Grade Center, Kaden finished his 90 days of independent employment at County Market and Dylan started working at Market Grill as a dishwasher.

December slowed down just a bit. Joel started working at Walmart as a cart attendant, Hannah started working at Mercy Hospital as kitchen help and Linsie started D & E.

All of us in Employment want to wish all our clients and fellow employees a wonderful, healthy and happy New Year! -Submitted by Kim Brutsman, Employment Specialist



Congratulations Allison!

The DSP of the 4th Quarter of 2023 is Allison Harmon!

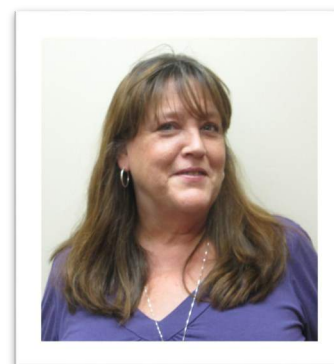
Allison has worked for Community Opportunities for just over 3 years as a Life Skills Teacher in the Residential department. The person who nominated Allison said "Allison is dedicated to the happiness and independence of each client. She supports clients with participating in activities that enrich their lives and allow them to be a part of their community."

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





By Connie West,
Health & Safety Chairperson



With winter weather fast approaching, below are some Winter Driving Tips:

- Before bad weather hits, check that your wiper blades are in good working order, check your battery and tire tread.
- Make sure you have an ice scraper in your vehicle.
- Put a blanket, gloves, boots and emergency supplies in your vehicle.
- In the event of bad weather:
- Give yourself extra time to reach your destination.
- Be cautious of others on the road.
- Watch for black ice on roadways.
- Adjust your speed to road conditions.
- Give snow plows plenty of room to work.
- Keep your gas tank full in case you become stranded.

I'm sure there are many others, but I hope you find these helpful. Stay



Healthy Living Corner

10 ways to break free from an unhealthy lifestyle:

- 1) Adopt a balanced diet
- 2) Get regular exercise
- 3) Manage your stress with mindfulness techniques, such as meditation, yoga, and deep breathing
- 4) Get sufficient sleep
- 5) Avoid smoking and substance abuse
- 6) Limit screen time
- 7) Stay hydrated
- 8) Get regular health checkups
- 9) Maintain a strong social support network
- 10) Engage in hobbies and recreational activities

Benefits of a healthy lifestyle:

- 1) Reduces risk of chronic diseases
- 2) Enhances mental health
- 3) Improved immune system
- 4) Maintain a healthy weight
- 5) Increased energy levels

Article taken from healthshots.com written by Natalia Ningthoujam 10/17/23



WE ARE HIRING

Become a part of our team

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

- \$18-\$22 per hour
- Paid time off
- Health insurance
- Retirement plan



February 27th—

Digital Days, 4:30-6:30pm at the Program Building. Door prizes! Registration information coming soon!



March 21st—**Human Trafficking Education Training**, 4-5:30pm at the Program Building



Equity & Inclusion

15 Activities to Promote

Diversity and Inclusion for Your Team:



Congratulations, Earl!

Earl recently received the award of Employee of the Year at BCI. He has worked at the Moscow Mills BCI location since 2019. He has made great strides in learning every job that is available to him. Earl has set his standards and expectations to the highest levels, and he displays those standards daily when he is at work.

Earl will not stop until the job is done, even when he is exhausted from a long day. Earl gets along very well with everyone he encounters and has earned the respect of the staff and employees at BCI.

According to his supervisor, he has been, “doing so much better this year, and has really matured as a person.”

-Submitted by April Walsh, Case Manager

1. **Start a Book Club** that supports marginalized writers.
2. Host a potluck: “**Dishes, Diversity & Discussion**”; share family or cultural recipes & stories.
3. **Build Belonging**: during a team meeting, open a discussion for staff to share a time when they felt out of place and a time when they felt welcomed by a group or person.
4. **Maintain a DEI Calendar** that includes cultural, religious and secular events & holidays and celebrate different, non-traditional holidays.
5. Have a team discussion about **understanding Allyship** and how to be a better Ally.
6. Create/offer an **anonymous DEI Suggestions Box**.
7. **Volunteer Day** – partner with other organizations that support and strive for change for underprivileged and marginalized voices.
8. **Social Media sharing**: ask employees to share what an inclusive workplace means to them on the agency Facebook page. #MyTeamValues
9. **Bring in a speaker** from a DEI-focused organization.
10. **Donation Drive**: pick a charity that upholds some of the DEI values central to our agency and donate as a team. Employers can offer to match employee donations to certain amount.
11. Draft a DEI Statement (Done!)
12. **Host a Viewing Party** from “Movies that Can Broaden Your Understanding of Diversity Issues in the Workplace” & share takeaways after the viewing.
13. **All-Hands** (show & tell) – allow team members the space and platform to share or present about something they love or that’s very important to them.
14. **Safe Space Chats** – encourage staff to meet with new team members who they haven’t had a chance to talk to or get to know.
15. **Gift Local** – send employees a small gift or gift card from a local LGBTQ or BIPOC-owned business!

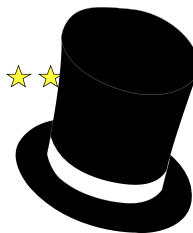
Please visit our updated webpage at www.commopps.org and follow us on:



Please contact Sonya DeMerchant for feedback, suggestions or interest in participating in the DEI Committee.

sonya@commopps.org

Hats Off to...



- ... Nathan H. for supporting your clients and coworkers with a positive attitude all of the time!
- ... Mitts Electric for donating time and materials for a new outlet in Michele's room, so she can sit in her lift recliner and look out the window!
- ... Angela H. for organizing and ordering the agency shirts for everyone!
- ... Sonya M. for instructing her first L1MA training!
- ... Jenny G. for being a wonderful supervisor and coworker! Her patience and understanding is unmatched!
- ... the Day Program team for organizing all the fun holiday activities over the last three months!
- ... Misty's team and staff at 21OC for the smooth transition with the moves that took place!
- ... Tammy M. for finishing the cleaning and organization in the basement at Lyons!
- ... Margaret H. for always helping an anonymous coworker out of shenanigans and for being the first person to offer her assistance, to give a pointers, or to help clean up!

Employee Anniversaries



- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Paul Arseneau (1) | Tammy Mathews (3) | Tim Gilman (8) |
| Quinton Burks (2) | Allison Harmon (4) | Mildred Rhodes (8) |
| Mary Mitts (2) | Nathan Honerkamp (4) | Angela Schnuriger (15) |
| Jamie Chambers (3) | McKenzie Aubuchon (6) | Mike Robinson (24) |
| Kevin Duke (3) | Jenny Grotewiel (6) | Lacy Wilke (26) |
| | Jennifer Bultena (8) | |



New Employees!

- Latosha Bobo, 10.26.2023, Case Management
- Dustyn Briggs, 12.07.2023, Community Skills Teacher– Welcome back!
- Xandyr Nash, 12.11.2023, Life Skills Teacher



Congratulations, Mary Mitts who will be receiving the \$250 employee referral incentive for referring Allyson Ferguson. **Congratulations, Allyson**, for completion of your three-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!



FRIENDLY FACES

I'm Latosha S. Bobo, I've been a Case Manager with Community Opportunities since October of 2023.

My family consists of individuals residing with me ... myself, my son, my fur baby, my dad, and my 3 cousins

Pets... my mixed breed (German Shepard/Pitbull), Mr.Polo Butters

My favorite vacation was... New Orleans

Who inspires me is... my best friend

My unique talent or hobby is... cooking; not a pro, just enjoy feeding people

My favorite quote is... more of a bible scripture "To whom much is given, much is required"

The movie version of my life should be titled... She makes it. The end!

My favorite physical activity is...walking

If I won the lottery I would... pay off all my debt, my mom's house, my best friend's house

One thing people are surprised to find out about me is.... that I have a 20-year-old son

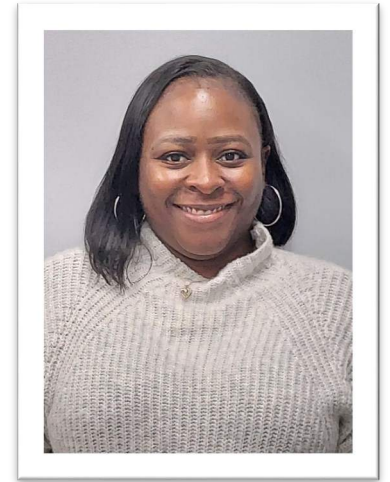
If I were a superhero I would be.... Superwoman

I am passionate about... people; helping people and loyalty

My favorite family tradition is... getting together on Holidays

My pet peeve is... people not putting things back in its respective place

My favorite meal is... seafood boils



Classes & Clubs @ the Program Building



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

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

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

2nd Thursday every month 4p Anime Club/hosted by Kelsey C.

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

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

Last Thursday every month 4p 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.

