

The CommUNITY Buzz

Hello Everyone,

As we turn the calendar to July and celebrate our country's independence, it got us discussing how we can foster more independence with our supported individuals. I think that we can all agree that most people with IDD have the desire to be more independent. We are the people that care for and about individuals with IDD, and it is our responsibility to help them learn and lead their lives with the least amount of assistance necessary to ensure their safety and well-being.

There are over 100 opportunities to make choices every day. We make these choices for ourselves without even thinking; like what to wear, what to eat, how to style our hair, what music to listen to, etc. Offering choice making to our supported individuals is an excellent way to foster independence. I encourage you all to think about this as you go about your daily interactions at work. Often it can be easier and faster if we complete tasks and make choices for them, but we need to find the right balance to help our individuals develop skills and lead independent, productive, and meaningful lives.

In fiscal related news, Alternatives is proud to announce that we made its first 401K match into participating employee accounts on June 30th. Thirty employees shared over \$86,000 when Alternatives matched up to 6%. If you haven't already, go check out your individual 401K account with Great American to see your match! We also are diligently working on our health insurance renewal for September 1st. There will be some big changes made to the current plans due to the tremendous increase in the cost of insurance. Please keep an eye out for important information and our open enrollment meetings later this summer.

We've had a great start to summer activities with many groups headed out to concerts, vacations and enjoying the warmer weather activities. You'll see many pictures in this newsletter. A huge congratulations to Beth and her team @ Lakeside for a citation free Department of Public Health inspection on July 3rd. Be sure to mark your calendars for our company picnic on Thursday, September 7th. The festivities will include a live band, food, raffles, and the honoring of the Employee of the Year!

Thank you,

Kelly Callahan
Executive Director

July Employee of the Month: Rose Sauer ★

About Rose

Rose is a full-time employee at our Day Program in Naugatuck. She has been with Alternatives since May of 2022. She was recruited by our day program manager, Beth and Tracy, a DP participant and resident with Alternatives. They both knew her from their days together at St. Vincent's in Stratford and both knew that she would be a great fit!

Rose had been working at St. Vincent's for about nine years prior to joining the Alternatives team. Before entering human services, she was employed in administrative support roles. She took a chance and branched out and began her career working with people. She excels in this field. "When others are proud of themselves for things that they can accomplish, it brings me a lot of joy" says Rose.

Rose has a great smile and infectious laugh. This combined with her patient personality and kind ways, brings out the best in the people around her. Rose is flexible with her schedule, always up for community outings, and supports team decisions.

Rose was born and raised in Bridgeport and is anticipating a move to Naugatuck soon. Her son is completing renovations at a new home for her and when completed her commute will be just minutes down the road!

Rose has three adult children and two grandsons, ages 14 & 4. They keep her busy in her free time. She is an animal lover and has 4 cats that she has adopted and cares for.

Rose is making a difference in people's lives, especially the ones here at Alternatives. We thank you for all you do Rose and are so happy to have you on the Alternatives team. Thank you!

Messages

Rose has been instrumental in helping several Alternatives' Day program participants connect with friends from a former day program they stopped attending due to Covid 3 years ago. Not only did 10+ people get together, the laughs and stories flowed as if they had never been apart! Rose never forgets someones birthday and uses these special days to help our participants call friends and former staff to wish them well. Her "taking the extra step" has made a difference in many lives and is a lesson to all.

-Beth Jezierny, Day Program Manager



ALTERNATIVES & INDEPENDENCE

Staff help me to be **independent** by helping me to get in my wheelchair and do what I have to do. The computer table makes me **independent** because I can operate it myself and am able to use the computer more easily. I like to be **independent** because I like to do stuff for myself. I don't need everyone doing everything for me.

-Tracy Daley, Goldbach



Staff makes sure I have my food utensils, they help me get something when I can't reach it, and they open bottles for me. I can be more **independent** when they help me with things. I like being able to dress myself, put on my slippers and throw away my dish; it makes me feel **independent**.

-Kyara Jackson, Longview



The staff helps me with what I can't do or what may not be safe to do like cooking and cleaning. I like to do pretty much everything myself like listening to music, watching tv and playing games. It's good to be **independent** because it keeps your mind going and keeps you from being lazy. The more you keep doing **independent** things the more you can do.

-Charlie Valen, Goldbach



Staff helps me with anything I need to be **independent**. I want to and like doing things for myself. Things I do on my own are diamond art and puzzles. It makes me happy to do it by myself and be **independent**.

-Tanya Scalo, Longview



★ I like to teach everyday living skills. I work with the individuals side by side and teach them hands on. I take my time and I'm patient when teaching something. You have to be understanding and sometimes go over things several times.

-Deb Hans

★ I like to see how they can boost their self esteem when they can do something for themselves. I think it's important to encourage individuals to do things they can do by themselves instead of them asking for assistance because they learn how to be independent.

-Rose Sauer

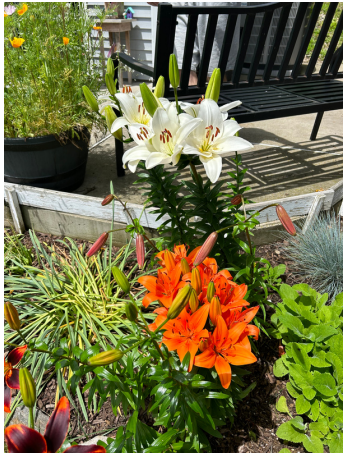
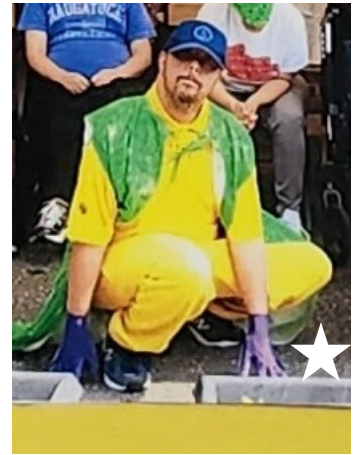
★ It makes me happy to see the individuals be free and independent. I like to show them how to do things in their daily lives that they can do themselves. I assist them with activities and let them do it themselves if they can. I like to think of myself as the arms and hands for individuals who can't use theirs fully.

-Michelle Rodrigues

★ I like to help individuals grow stronger and advance and to see the excitement in them when they do things for themselves. It is what our job is all about. I try to do as much as possible to help them be independent and do more for themselves. I encourage them and tell them yes they can do it! It helps build their self esteem and allows for them to have freedom.

-Sandy McFarland

What's the Buzz?



Anniversaries

1 Year

Alyssa Acevedo, Highview

10 Years

Kimberly Benson, Lakeside

15 Years

Brian Edwards, Highview

Birthdays

Dagmara Kaczmarczyk	July 1st
Sashery Mella	July 4th
Nakisha Staton	July 8th
Walter Hunt	July 12th
Robert Krantz	July 14th
John Valen	July 15th
Karen Custis	July 15th
Victoria Burrell	July 16th
Beth Jezierny	July 21st
Armando Silva	July 22nd
Elizabeth Watts	July 24th
Tammy Cosenza	July 25th
Eustace Elliot	July 27th
Mike Reyes	July 27th
Shaelin Descoteaux	July 30th
Shara Williams	July 30th

★ **WINNER OF THE SAFETY MAN
COUNT & \$25 DOLLARS!** ★

Beth Jezierny

Thank you for all those who participated. The number of Safety Men in the June newsletter was 17.

For this newsletter find and count all the **stars**. Email the total amount to Kristina at kmauriello@alt-inc.org. If your guess is correct, your name will be entered into a raffle for a cash prize!



Thanks to Sandy, Naki, Rose, Debbie and Michelle at Day Program for being reliable and flexible during our staffing shortage.

Thanks to Tammy, Quiana, Marcus, Carla, Jessica and Thea for filling in at day program and keeping us whole.



-Beth Jezierny, Day Program Manager

A BIG SAFETY shout-out to Imma DiMeo at Redwood!! She averted a med error by finding that pharmacy had incorrectly packaged meds. Thank you for your thoroughness, it takes a village to keep everyone safe!!

-Robin Marino RN BSN MHA CDDN,
Director of Health



A HUGE shout out to the entire team at Lakeside. On 7/2/23, we completed a citation free inspection from Department of Public Health. Well done! You all make this agency very proud. Thank you!

-Kelly Callahan, Executive Director

A shout out to all the team members @ Highview. We want to thank all employees that have stepped up while Vicki has been out. Each one of you have made this difficult time a bit easier. Special thanks to Cecilia MacDonald, LPN and Jason Dozier, LPN for their extra effort in taking the lead. Thank you!

-Kelly Callahan & Deb Godbout

We want to recognize Beth Jezierny as an awesome leader! She is creative, funny and abides by agency policies and rules. She is spontaneous yet organized. She is consistent with her treatment of her staff and always finds time if they need to talk personally. She has been a wealth of good ideas for the Day Program and the agency! We are delighted and grateful that she joined us on 4-18-22.

-Deb Godbout & Kelly Callahan

We want to recognize Beth Philbrook as a superior manager. She is steady, consistent, sensitive, reliable and trustworthy. She is a hard worker and extremely dedicated to her job and her individuals. She pays attention to the needs of her staff. She bakes for them or buys them lunch to show her appreciation for them. She always offers to help other programs with their paperwork and book completion. She started with us as a DSP then a nurse and now manages 2 homes residentially and medically. Thank you Beth Lee!

-Deb Godbout & Kelly Callahan

RECIPE

July is National Hot Dog Month, try these Regional Hot Dogs!

Chicago Dog



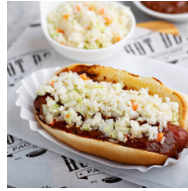
Yellow mustard, dark green relish, chopped raw onion, pickle spear, sport peppers, tomato, celery salt and poppy seed bun

New York Dog



Steamed onions and a pale, deli-style yellow mustard

Carolina Dog



Chili, chopped onions, and cole slaw

Seattle Dog



Cream cheese, grilled onions, jalapeños, and sriracha

Kansas City Dog



Sauerkraut, Swiss cheese, and sesame seed bun

New Jersey Dog



Pizza bread, onions, peppers, and deep fried potatoes

Cleveland Polish Boy



Cole slaw, french fries and BBQ sauce/hot sauce

Coney Island Dog



Meaty chili sauce, chopped onions and mustard

ACTIVITY

Sparkler Firework Craft

Activity from kidscraftroom.com

- Colored Cellophane Sheets
- Tin Foil
- Jumbo Straws
- Sticky Tape
- Scissors

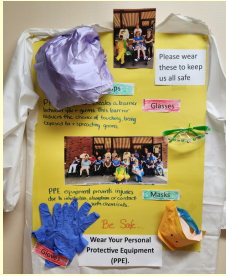
1. Cut a sheet of tin foil to the same size size as the A4 cellophane. Choose two colors of cellophane and sandwich the tin foil between them.
2. Lengthways fold the 3 layers in half or nearly in half. Here we've folded it nearly in half which gives different lengths of tassels in the finished firework craft.
3. From the open end cut strips towards the fold being careful not to actually cut through the fold itself. Continue cutting strips all along the length of the sheets of cellophane and foil.
4. Wrap the cut cellophane and foil tightly around the end of straw using sticky tape every now and again to secure it. If you don't like the look of the sticky tape you could use glue.
5. Continue rolling until all of the cellophane and foil is tightly wrapped and stuck around the end of the straw.
6. Gently open out all the individual layered strips to give a wonderful pom-pom like head to your homemade firework sparkler toy.



SPARKLER
Firework Craft

June was Safety Month: Safety Poster Contest

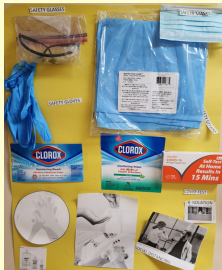
Day Program



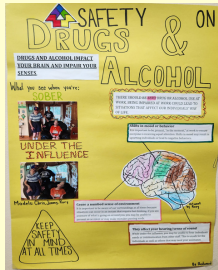
Genoa



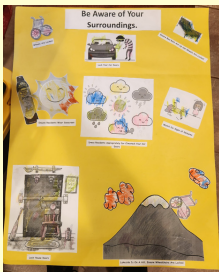
Goldbach



Redwood



Lakeside

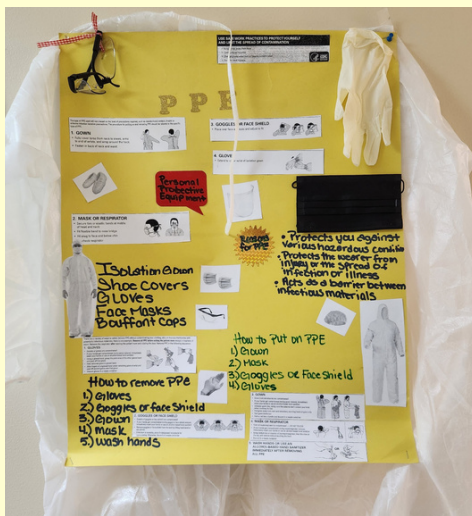


Hewey



WINNER!

Middlebrook



JULY

★ 9 FUN THINGS TO DO ★

1. Midsummer Fantasy Ren Faire, July 8th-9th
Ansonia, CT (Warsaw Park)
2. Sand Sculpture Contest, July 9th
Milford, CT (Walnut Beach)
3. Celebrate National Ice Cream Day
July 16th
4. Oxford Fire Dept. Carnival, July 19th-22nd
Oxford, CT (Oxford High School)
5. ConnectiCon, July 20th - 23rd
Hartford, CT (CT Convention Center)
6. Ridgefield's Summer Fest, July 29th
Ridgefield, CT (Main Street)
7. Summer Concert Series
Naugatuck, CT (Naugatuck Town Green)
Tuesdays, Jul. 11th - Aug. 27th
- Redding, CT (Redding Town Green)
Sundays, Jul. 9th - Aug. 27th
- Stratford, CT (Paradise Green Gazebo)
Tuesdays, Jul. 11th - Aug. 29th
8. Go Blueberry Picking
Evergreen Berry Farm - Watertown, CT
Jones Family Farm - Shelton, CT