

GMSS REPORTER

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February 2024



Green Mountain Support Services staff who attended the January all staff meeting pose in front of the building sign, which shows the new agency logo (also seen below right.) See more photos from the day on page 3.

New look. New energy. Same mission.



January's all staff meeting introduced some changes for the agency. These changes will help better communicate with those we serve and our communities. A big thank you to Savannah's Sweet Treats, a Burlington bakery, who made the beautiful – and delicious – GMSS logo cookies!

The following is a list of highlights:

- A new agency logo was introduced.
- Our website underwent a complete redesign AND the web address changed. The new site also includes a new SLP resource page and employee SharePoint site to help us better communicate activities and learning opportunities with everyone on our GMSS team.
- Go to www.gmssvt.org to see the new look! All GMSS team members are welcomed to submit content ideas for our newsletter and social media through a form on the website.
- Employee email addresses have changed. The new addresses will follow this format: **firstname.lastname@gmssvt.org**. Ensuring network and email security prompted these changes.
- Beginning in March, our newsletter will be sent electronically and only mailed to those who request a hard copy. We ask that you please sign up using the link on our website to indicate how you would like to receive future newsletters. As always, everyone will still have access to our newsletter through our website.



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Statewide system changes on horizon

It's early February which means we are through the longest and darkest ten weeks of winter, and the skies are brightening! In this edition, you'll learn about numerous changes we've just made to our IT infrastructure. These changes were important for many reasons including compliance with modern security protocols, effective internal and external communication, and efficient file storage which, once we are over the learning bumps, will free up our service coordinators to spend less time looking for forms and files and give them more time to interact with those we support and their teams. Please be sure to check out and bookmark our new website and update your address book. Special thanks go to Beth Hammond, Mary Serkalow, Andrea Mayo, and Jeanine Chalue for their work to accomplish these significant updates!

We are delighted to announce the opening of our dedicated drop in space for the people we support. This space, just off the

front foyer, is reserved for their use and will provide a welcoming space for lunch, computer use, conversation with friends, etc. For larger group activities, a conference room can still be reserved but we are pleased to now have this 'always available' space. We thank the people we serve (and their loved ones) for communicating to us how valuable this would be, and we thank Danielle Samuelson, Amy Gillilan, and Andrea Mayo for the heavy lifting that made it possible.

There are tremendous changes coming to our statewide system that everyone needs to be aware of. One of the biggest is 'conflict of interest-free case management,' often referred to by the shorter 'COI' ('see-oh-eye.') This a change required by the federal government and it will affect every Vermonter



**ELIZABETH
WALTERS**
*EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR*

receiving HCBS services; that's everybody we serve in the BIP, DS, and AFC programs. It will require certain aspects of what we think of as service coordination – namely, determining need, writing the annual person-centered plan, and monitoring progress – to be pulled out of the service coordination role. Beginning in 2025, those tasks will be performed by an independent case manager, someone who will be employed by another agency or company. GMSS service coordinators will remain in place to oversee service delivery, but each person receiving services will have a new person joining their team in addition.

There are many details yet to be worked out and we will keep you informed as this change comes closer. Meanwhile, if you'd like to know more, I will host an information session at noon on February 12 to talk about this and other changes: HCBS Updates and Q+A.

Please continue to reach out with questions, concerns or suggestions.

UPCOMING GMSS BOARD MEETING

The next GMSS board meeting will be held Thursday, Feb. 22nd, 2024, from 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. via Zoom. All members of the GMSS community are welcome to attend board meetings. The board will designate a public comment period at each meeting during which community members may ask questions or offer comments.

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Kevin O’Riordan award winners named

The GMSS Board of Directors were quite impressed with the caliber and quality of the nominations for the annual Kevin O’Riordan Award this year. This award honors GMSS staff and shared living providers who demonstrate dedication to the GMSS mission, extraordinary caring and commitment, and are true advocates for those we serve.

In reviewing the nominations this year, the board struggled to identify one that stood out - as all nominations strongly demonstrated all of those characteristics. Ultimately, we chose Mary Hunt and Rebecca Greenleaf who were nominated together. Together Mary and Rebecca provide “King M” with superior care, support, laughs, and fun. In “King M” time with Mary and Rebecca, he has become more verbal, more engaged with the family and



GMSS Board Treasurer Dave McAllister announces the winners of the Kevin O’Riordan award during the all staff meeting in January.

community, and has settled into this loving home. As the nominator noted “I really feel they deserve this award and recognition for the amazing work they do and how much of a difference they have truly made in M’s life”.

The board is honored and humbled to give this year’s award to these two amazing women. We thank them from the bottoms of our hearts

for all they do to support and comfort “King M”s.

We are all in deep gratitude for the patience, dedication, and energy you – staff and SLPs – provide all of our community members who we serve. If you nominated someone this year and continue to feel strongly the person you nominated deserves this recognition, please nominate them again!



Staff listen to Operations Director Beth Hammond, far right, explain some new IT and website updates during the all staff meeting in January. The driving force behind many of the changes was to ensure network security.

SAVY MEETING

Come join us for a SAVY meeting! Meetings are held on the second Thursday of every month at 10 a.m. in the Roberts Room at GMSS. SAVY is a member-run group for individuals with disabilities which gives them a voice to speak on issues that are important to them. The group teaches members to speak up for themselves, spreading the word about self-advocacy and providing the opportunity to work on projects that benefit themselves and their community.

February Employee Anniversaries

Christina Bell – 2017 (7 years)

Stephanie Lindgren – 2015 (9 years)

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Ensuring Our Neighbors with Disabilities
are at Home in their Community.

gmssvt.org

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