

GMSS REPORTER

Volume 9, Issue 3

October 2023



ALOHA!

It may have been early October in Vermont with bright leaves coloring the trees but at GMSS in Morrisville, the day had more of a tropical vibe.

About 70 members of the GMSS community recently gathered for a Hawaiian-themed event to celebrate all GMSS participants. Live music filled the parking lot for the day, performed by Jason Allen, prompting foot wagging and hip shaking. Cornhole, an art station, a photo booth, and raffle items were popular attractions while folks mingled and shared smiles and sunshine all while adorned in bright leis.

Prize baskets were on display, part of two separate raffles that were held – one by GMSS and the other hosted by Jimmy Kavanaugh for Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports Group.

The grill was fired up for hamburgers and hotdogs, along with another that was filled with a colorful stir fry and grilled pineapple slices. Tables lined along the entrance way were loaded with Hawaiian punch, salsa, meatballs, fruit platters, and “beach balls” (cheese balls.) Lunch wrapped up with bowlfuls of donated Ben & Jerry’s ice cream – the perfect treat for a beautiful day.

Thank you to all of the volunteers and members of the community who made this celebration possible, allowing GMSS to celebrate all participants. It was a day of great reward!

More photos, page 5



GMSS REPORTER

GMSS fully designated; finances are back in black; and other great news!

Dear GMSS Community, What a joy it is to be able to tell you that we are once again fully designated! The hard and sustained work of our staff, shared living providers, board members, and friends at CCS made this possible and each member of our community should be proud for we had not imagined being able to accomplish so much in just six months. Thank you for your belief in our mission and your commitment to the people we serve. Hurray, team!

And there is more good news! After six months of steady improvements, we have finally rounded the financial corner and are now back in the black. We are operating with a responsible, balanced budget and we are no longer losing money each month.

It's a delight to continue with good news! Our Service Coordination team is full, after an extended period with unfilled positions and our newest hires come to us with experience, skill, and deep commitment to person-centered values. Our brand-new Operations Director and HR Generalist both hit the ground not just running but at Olympic-level sprints. We have also just welcomed to the Front Desk a new

Administrative Assistant who brings a warm smile and deep appreciation of GMSS' values. Please say hello to our newest team members when you stop in.

We move into fall invigorated and with some new priorities. Our service coordinators will be talking with all of our shared living providers during the month of October to assess our readiness for compliance with the Settings Rule. The DDSD Quality Services Review will also be taking place this month. This will be an opportunity for us to celebrate our successes as well as to get feedback on those areas where we have continued room to improve.

In a change from the past several months, this monthly update does not include a detailed report of our performance metrics. (We collected the data and I'll share, in summary, that it was again excellent!) It has become clear



ELIZABETH WALTERS

*INTERIM
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR*

that to sustain long-term excellence, we need to invest in a thoughtful, comprehensive quality plan. Toward that, we will be adding a Quality Director position to our leadership team. This position will ensure legal and regulatory compliance; be responsible for drafting, monitoring, and reporting on the agency's quality assurance/quality improvement plan; and will help guide the agency toward a continuous quality improvement mindset.

We've just enjoyed the most wonderful, Hawaiian-themed celebration of those we serve. This event was inspired by the suggestion of our long-serving and just retired, DSP, Gina Brown. A couple of months ago, Gina reminded us that it doesn't take a lot of money to have fun and that it's important, perhaps especially when times are tough, to celebrate, live our values, and have some fun together.

The famed anthropologist, Margaret Mead, is credited with saying, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Gina, and the committee that formed to help realize her idea, proved that true. DSPs change the world every day.

UPCOMING GMSS BOARD MEETING

The next GMSS board meeting will be held Thursday, Oct. 19th from 5:30 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.

GMSS REPORTER

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GMSS welcomes Beth Hammond to the team!

Professional background that brought you to your current position: My professional experience includes marketing communications positions at Cathedral Square and SASH, as well leadership and program development positions at Heineberg Community Senior Center and Living Well Group, which owns assisted living facilities in Burlington and Montpelier. I co-founded Burlington's Support Buddies, a COVID response program that recruited volunteers to check-in on and deliver groceries and meals to hundreds of older adults suddenly isolated at home. I have a Bachelor's degree in business administration and international business from Northeastern University in Boston.



Beth Hammond
OPERATIONS DIRECTOR

Passion(s): Professionally and personally, I am passionate about doing all I can to bring out the best in others and removing barriers so others can do what they love as well.

Physical location: I grew up in Burlington, Vt., with family roots in the Barre area. I currently live in Burlington with my 16-year-old son, two rescue dogs, and a cat. I also have a 19-year-old daughter who lives in Florida.

A random tidbit of fun: I love all kinds of creative arts (many years ago I freelanced as a web and graphic designer) and spending time outside enjoying all that the Vermont seasons have to offer.

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GMSS welcomes Katelyn Locke to the team!

Professional background that brought you to your current position: I went to college for psychology because I enjoyed working with the public and wanted to make a difference. Through my career path I started working in healthcare where I fell in love with Human Resources.



Katelyn Locke
HR GENERALIST

Passion(s): I enjoy working in a structured setting and being organized. My goals are to make lives better for my team members so they can focus on making a difference directly in the communities we serve. I enjoy problem solving/finding solutions, being organized, supporting my team members, and making a work environment positive and enriching.

Physical location: I was raised in Vermont and have been in Lamoille County since 2020.

A random tidbit of fun: Spending time with my family, hiking, kayaking, and being active part in my kids' lives.

Anything else you want share: Being a part of the LGBTQ+ community I have a great appreciation for people who support minority groups, want to reduce stigma, increase awareness, and make lives better.

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GMSS welcomes Corey Cayton to the team!

About Corey Cayton: My name is Corey Cayton. I'm a tried and true Gen X kid that made his way into mid life! I grew up in Hershey, Pa., and came to Vermont in 2002. I was a long-time carpenter who stopped



Corey Cayton
SERVICE COORDINATOR

swinging hammers to work with youth at Laraway Youth and Family Services for 8 years in the Footebrook resi-

dential home, which I later case managed. During Covid, I left the field to work with my wonderful wife Lea on her food truck and later in her restaurant. Now I'm back in service with GMSS as a support coordinator. Besides my wife and I, we have two amazing sons, Owen and Nyezi, and another baby on the way! And a pittie dog named Chase. That about brings us to the present. Besides all that, I play music, mostly with my fam, I am a chaplin, and advancement chairperson in the SBSA as well as a cubby den leader. I am also very active in freemasonry here in the Morrisville lodge. I look forward to meeting and working with you all!

SLP's applaud, share testimonial about GMSS service coordinator

Participant's sister reports: "G.M. is no longer surviving, he is thriving. We were ready to give up on the agency until Lindsay Barup (GMSS service coordinator) came along and

gave G.M. a new purpose for life."

D.G. (SLP) reports: "Everything is going great, I even learned how to do documentation properly and feel like the team has been

repaired. We have great support and I no longer feel helpless. G.M. is healing and is smiling more than I have ever seen. We are a happy team."

GMSS REPORTER

Board applauds GMSS community

Over the past 7 months, Elizabeth Walters (Interim Executive Director of GMSS), with the support of Beth Sightler (Executive Director of Champlain Community Services), has done a fantastic job of gracefully leading GMSS through obstacles and challenges, finding solutions and implementing new approaches. Staff have been learning new processes and procedures, continuing and strengthening client care and support. Direct Service Providers and Shared Living Providers have continued to provide

incredible, compassionate care. Together, the GMSS family steadied and improved the organization, which was recognized by DAIL, leading to the re-designation by the Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) on Sept 13, 2023.

The Board of Directors would like to thank the DAIL Commissioner for her continued faith in our ability to improve, Elizabeth and Beth for their unwavering leadership and passionate dedication to our clients, staff, DSPs and SLPs for your dedicated

support and service to Vermonters with disabilities, and the community at-large for your willingness to work with GMSS as we rebuild.

There are still improvements to be made and we are open to hearing them and working together to make them a reality. As we move forward, we will continue to be guided by our dedication to the compassionate care of Vermonters with disabilities.

In deep appreciation and gratitude to the GMSS community at large,

– *The GMSS Board*

Medicaid renewals

Vermont is again required to see who can still get Medicaid and Dr. Dynasaur. Why? For the last three years, states have been required to keep people on Medicaid with a few exceptions. Vermont is prepared for the end of this requirement. We have made an “unwind” plan to ensure Vermonters continue to have positive health care options.

REFRESH your contact information to receive important notices, resources, and alerts by logging into your account or by calling 1-855-899-9600. Make sure your mailing address, email address, and phone numbers are correct.

REVIEW information in the red-stripped envelope you receive in the mail.

REPLY with any needed information as soon as possible to renew.

Long Term Care (LTC) Medicaid members working with a specific eligibility specialist can update them directly or call Customer Support at 1-800-250-8427.

Take action to stay in charge of your Medicaid or Dr. Dynasaur coverage! Have questions? Please call 1-855-899-9600 or write to AHSVTHHealthConnect@vermont.gov.

Onward with efficiency!



Christiane Eid, a long-serving SLP, electronically signs a document at the Morrisville office on Tuesday, Oct. 3, 2023. GMSS has stepped forward into a new era with fully electronic contract signing. SLPs now also have the option to upload contract-related documents directly to a secure site, While the first hour of the day brought some hiccoughs and learning, by mid-morning the new practice settled. Seen behind Eid, from left: Program Manager Stephanie Lindgren, Program Director Mary Ellen Platt, Program Manager Karen Luangrath, Operations Director Beth Hammond, and Systems Analyst Fawn Lanpher.

GMSS REPORTER



UPCOMING TRAININGS

* **Therapeutic Options** – All dates in Morrisville. All sessions will be held from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

* Wednesday, Oct. 11th

* Wednesday, Nov. 15th

* Wednesday, Dec. 13th

* **DDSD QSR “Work Days”** – Oct. 10th, 11th, 13th, 16th, and 20th. Preliminary feedback meeting will be Nov. 7th from 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

* **Medication Administration Refresher:** All classes will be held in person in the Roberts Room at the GMSS Morrisville office:

* Tuesday, Oct. 17th, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

* Monday, Oct. 23rd, 10:00 a.m.-noon

* Monday, Oct. 30th, 10:00 a.m.-noon

* Tuesday, Nov. 7th, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

* Monday, Nov. 13th, 10:00 a.m.-noon

* Tuesday, Dec. 5th, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.

October Employee Anniversaries

Hellen Bard – 2021 (2 years)

Shari Douglass – 2021 (2 years)

Sabrina Rossi – 2022 (1 year)

Mary Serkalow – 2019 (4 years)

Green Mountain Support Services
93 James Road
Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone: (802) 888-7602

Fax: (802) 888-1182

Email: newsletter@gmssi.org



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

gmssi.org