

GMSS REPORTER

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September 2023



GMSS CELEBRATES DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS

Green Mountain Support Services recently celebrated Direct Support Professionals and all of their hard work at the office in Morrisville. The day of appreciation began with a painting event, which was led by instructor Sherrie Bull. DSPs were guided and encouraged to relax and let their creativity shine in what Bull refers to as a meditation-like process.

After the paint brushes were washed and canvases were drying, GMSS Interim Director Elizabeth Walters offered car washes to any participant interested. As the

line of cars formed, lunch was served inside and board games were brought out for some downtime. After lunch was cleared and the parking lot was filled with squeaky clean vehicles, guest speaker Amy Roth, former DDSD Assistant Director, provided a lecture that highlighted the importance of the work DSPs provide for the community.

Thank you to all DSPs for both their participation and their dedication to building relationships with the people we serve. You are all so appreciated!

**More photos on page 3.*



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Board approves budget, elects treasurer

We continue to make steady progress rebuilding and strengthening the agency. This past month, our board approved our FY 24 budget, adopted revised by-laws, and elected Dave McAllister – Executive Director of Laraway Youth and Family Services – to the finance committee. The board’s next meeting will be in person, at GMSS, on Thursday, September 21 (5:30). All community members are invited to attend and there will be time in the agenda for public comment. The board can be reached by email at board@gmssi.org.

We celebrated a wonderful “DSP Day” on August 23 for our employees who ‘make it happen’ as DSPs. Special thanks go out to Hellen Bard, Andrea Mayo, and Sharlotte Williams for their support in planning the day. In honor of the upcoming National DSP Week, there will be a special event happening at the State House in Montpelier on September 14. We’d like to have a strong showing of appreciation for all those who do DSP work – our employees as well as our contracted shared living providers – by having a huge GMSS turnout. Stay tuned for more details which will be emailed. If you are an SLP and you aren’t getting announcements by email, please reach out to Andrea Mayo.

We are excited to announce that there will be a celebration of those we serve on Monday, Oct. 2 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. It will be a Hawaiian-themed event with food, fellowship, and fun, held at the agency. Please mark your calendars and watch for more details to come. Our thanks go to Gina Brown for suggesting this event and to Gina, Lisa Tilton, Fawn Lanpher, and Mary Serkalow who volunteered to lead event planning.

The Federal “Settings Rule” is now in effect and Vermont agencies are working to come into compliance. The purpose of

this is to better protect the rights of people served in community-based settings and it will require some changes to how we do things. Information is being sent to all of our shared living providers.

In closing, here is the data that was reported to DAIL in August. We have continued to perform well and the feedback we are getting has been positive.

COMPLIANCE WITH SHARED LIVING HOME INSPECTION REGULATIONS

DS – 60 Homes [95% compliance]
57 Compliant (56 fully approved; 3 housing in progress and late; 1 accessibility in progress and timely)

3 Non-compliant (all three in progress and scheduled for state inspection 8/14/23)

BI – 6 Homes [83% compliance]
5 Compliant (5 fully approved; 1 accessibility in progress and late)

AFC – 44 Homes [100% compliance]
44 Compliant (41 fully approved; 2 new housing in progress and timely; 2 accessibility in progress and timely)

MONTHLY IN-HOME VISITS BY SERVICE COORDINATOR

Across all programs, 108 of the 108 (100%) people receiving residential services had completed service coordination/visit notes for the month of July.

Of the 108 completed visits, 102 were conducted in-home. 6 visits were conducted virtually; 2 due to illness and 4 due



ELIZABETH WALTERS

*INTERIM
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR*

to roads being inaccessible following the flooding.

COMPLIANCE WITH CMS REGULATIONS FOR CIR REPORTING

12 of 14 (86%) CIRs submitted to DAIL in July were submitted on time and without error. One was submitted one business day after it should have been. A second CIR was submitted on time but did not reflect guardian notification, which was made the following day; this was flooding-related.

MONITORING OF RESPITE PROVIDERS

Another review of five randomly selected notes was completed this month and it showed that service coordinators have continued to check for new respite providers, assess training needs, etc.

ADULT FAMILY CARE AND BRAIN INJURY PARTICIPANT REASSESSMENTS

AFC – 2 ILAs were due in July and both were submitted within the required time frame. All program participants have current assessments in place.

BIP – 0 reassessments were due in July. All program participants have current assessments in place.

INTAKE

Due to serious staffing needs as well as to our commitment to ensuring that new/transferring SLPs complete all pre-service training requirements before placement, we did not accept any new program participants in July; our commitment remains to accepting new participants only as we have the capacity to appropriately meet their needs. We have been transparent in our communication with the several individuals who are currently in intake about our anticipated timelines. Related and also significant challenges to onboarding include DSP and SLP shortages.

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UPCOMING GMSS BOARD MEETING

The next GMSS board meeting will be held Thursday, Sept. 21st from 5:30 p.m.-7:00 p.m. at the Morrisville office. 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.

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

GMSS welcomes Jared Coolum to the team!

Professional background that brought you to your current position: I've been working in human services since 2009, first as a DSP, then as an academic coordinator for an organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities through education. Aiding individuals find their own strength and empower themselves to live their best lives has been near and dear to me for almost 15 years. I look forward to this new journey with GMSS, continuing that ideal.

Passion(s): One of my continuing passions professionally is helping people grow and thrive. I truly believe that with the right support and opportunities, everyone can achieve any goal and make a positive impact on their lives and the lives of others. Personally, I have a passion for teaching and learning. I absolutely love learning new things. I'm astounded by how much we learn each day and how we can utilize that information and apply it to situations in our lives, even if the information doesn't seem important to us at the moment.

Physical location: I grew up in Hyde Park, Vt., went to High School at Lamoille Union High School, then went to college at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vt. Even though my wife and I knew each other previously, we didn't reconnect until after college. We got married in 2011 and have three wonderful sons. One of the happiest moments in my life happened in December 2021 when I was finally able to adopt my oldest son. I had always felt that I was his dad, but it was nice to make it official.

A random tidbit of fun: I'm really invested in stories in any format, i.e. books, movies, television, video games, poems, etc. I think a good story can resonate with anyone and can have lasting impacts on all of our lives. I love taking family trips when we all are able and spending quality time together, such as watching family films, playing a board or card game, or just relaxing together.



Jared Coolum
SERVICE COORDINATOR

DSPs celebrated for all their work



UPCOMING TRAININGS

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

* Wednesday, Sept. 13th

* Wednesday, Oct. 11th

* Wednesday, Nov. 15th

* Wednesday, Dec. 13th

* **DDSD Training for Service Coordinators** – Friday, Sept. 8, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., in person only at office; lunch will be provided.

September Employee Anniversaries

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

Deborah Bollinger-Elkhoury – 2022 (1 year)

Matthew Douglass – 2021 (2 years)

David Fleming – 2014 (9 years)

Kristie Johnson – 2020 (3 years)

Emily Kittredge – 2022 (1 year)

Jessica Lafountain – 2021 (2 years)

Fawn Lanpher – 2022 (1 year)

Mark Patenaude – 2021 (2 years)

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

gmssi.org