



DECEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Edited by Erica Allcorn
Published by Cheyenne Freeman

FROM THE DESK OF TRAVIS DEMOSS

Thankfulness

I'm not usually the kind of individual that makes everyone at the Thanksgiving table sit what they are thankful for. It seems to make people more uneasy than anything and I figure if I'm on their thankful list, I already know it. I know it because I have people around me that don't withhold that information from me until there is a holiday. In return I don't withhold that information from them either. The majority of my phone conversations with my

family and friends ends with an "I love you". You never get a second chance to make that known should the unthinkable happen. And although Thanksgiving may have a more universal purpose of gracefulness and a time for expressing gratitude for our blessings, those people closest to me deserve to hear that regardless of the holiday date on the calendar. Do yourself a favor and don't wait around for a holiday or special occasion to let the special people in your

life that you are thankful for them. I can assure you, the rewards will come back to you ten-fold.

MPOWER'S VISION STATEMENT:

We are committed to the belief that promoting an individual's hopes, wants and dreams is the first step to achieving self-determination.

MEET THE TEAM

Erica Allcorn	Angela May
Kellie Berry	Shayla Mitchell
Dakota Cantwell	Erica Rennison
Christy Coslet	Alex Rutledge
Erica Cox	Sonia Setzer
Diana Crouch	Kristyn Siegel
Travis DeMoss	Tanya Steele
Jessica Elgin	Jessica Stratton
Tyler Emerson	Jennifer Trent
Dana Evans	Tim VanBebber
Cheyenne Freeman	Tammy Waggoner
Nik Langston	Elizabeth Washington

MESSAGE FROM HR

- MPower will be closed December 22nd and 25th
- MPower will be closed January 1st
- Happy Holidays to all :)



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FROM THE DESK OF ELIZABETH WASHINGTON

Including Everyone in the Holidays

The Holidays can bring great time together with family and friends. It can also cause stress and be overwhelming. When planning for the Holidays with Individuals with developmental disabilities here are a few tips:

1. Talk to your loved one. Include them in planning. How do they want to spend their time this Holiday season?
2. Prioritize Traditions: The holidays are a time of celebration and joy but we can't do it all. Speak with your family about favorite traditions and prioritize the top two or three.
3. Avoid triggers when possible: We often understand our loved one's triggers better than anyone.

Triggers can include a new situation, specific foods, new people or loud noises. Taking potential triggers into account when planning for holiday activities and traditions will help minimize meltdowns.

4. Keep it comfortable: Dress Comfortably. If you must dress up, can there be compromises.
5. Schedules: Schedules are important. If there are going to be changes with routine, meals or sleep schedules. Talk about it and prepare with them for it.
6. Plan for transitions: Let your loved one know time expectations. For example: "We'll be leaving in 10 minutes", "Games will start in 5 minutes".
7. Be Prepared: Think ahead, be prepared by planning for quiet space. Do you need to bring

headphones or sunglasses? Should you plan downtime or an exit strategy? Think about the menu. Will your loved one have options, or do you need to bring a few favorites? Consider potential challenges and come prepared.

8. Take care of You: As a caregiver, holiday preparations add to your workload. Make sure you get enough sleep, eat well, exercise, and plan time for yourself. If you're stressed, holiday celebrations can become more difficult for you and your loved one. Remember sometimes less is more and that is okay.

<https://ablelight.org/blog/9-holiday-tips-for-people-with-disabilities-and-loved-ones/>

FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR

By Tammy Waggoner

Can you gain independence once you've moved into residential placement?

The simple answer is yes. I have known 3 such individuals: Gari Fletcher, Lea Butler and Ashleigh Miller.



Ashleigh was moved into a Host Home while she was under the care of Children's Division, since she turned 21, she has moved to a Host Home her choosing. Under the care of her new hosts she has blossomed in the last few years. She's goes into the community to get her hair done without staff, she can be alone in her

home for 2+ hours and she now gets to walk around the neighborhood independently. How awesome is that? Ashleigh has earned this independence by showing her guardian that she is ready to be more independent, even while living in a host home.



Gari was living with her mom, then her dad and then her grandparents. Now she lives in a stable home, but she also gets to manage her money, manage her medications and gets to go on trips to the lake with her grandparents and her grandparents get to enjoy Gari's company without the fear of not being about to care for her.

When I met Lea she was getting ready to have her parents become her guardian. Now she lives with her best



friends, has staff that assist her with the chores she just doesn't want to do, manages her money, manages her medications and has the supports in place to assist her to be healthier.

All of these ladies have goals of no longer living in residential placement, they have plans to eventually move out with remote supports in place. So just because you or a loved one needs to move into an ISL, Group Home or Host Home that doesn't mean that they have to stay there forever. They can learn skills to assist them to be independent and to eventually live on their own again.

FROM THE DESK OF ASHLEA WITHERS

2023 is almost over! This year has flown by in the blink of an eye. We've had lots of changes and challenges throughout the calendar year. I mean, the list is long! We've moved to a new building, we've welcomed new Service Coordinators to our team, we've trudged through the "efficiencies" that DMH has implemented, and attempted to manage the ever changing world of services. And those are just the big highlights of the year.

The one thing that hasn't changed? Our dedication to help individuals live their best lives. I have not seen that waver even once through all

the tough stuff. It's heart warming to see so many people from both of our offices just take a challenge on and think outside of the box to assure we are doing the best we can for those we serve. I have seen Service Coordinators research new services and all of the assistive tech options that are out there now. I have seen Service Coordinators advocate and work their tails off to secure residential services when that is the best option to support an individual. I have seen Service Coordinators celebrate the little wins with their individuals.

There are a lot of days that may seem mundane or just "the same ole" but let me tell you, even those everyday tasks are done with poise, dedication, and thoroughness. We are a small agency but we are committed to providing exceptional services to every person we are able to serve. There is nothing we won't look into, research, and try until something works! So we are ending this year on a high note. It has come with growth, change, and improvements. And I am thrilled for 2024 and all the things to come.

FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR

Natalie Holliday is a 45-year-old sweet, funny young lady. Natalie is very soft spoken but her personality brings a smile to anyone who meets her. She is mild mannered and a gentle person. She resides at Twin Oaks with her roommate that she has lived with for many years.

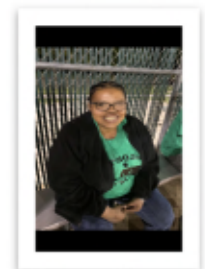
Natalie loves being able to live in an ISL through Twin Oaks. This has allowed her to be as independent as she can be and still be able to see her family. With the help of Twin Oaks, Natalie is learning daily skills that she will continue to need throughout her life. She is learning how to cook and clean. Her favorite thing to make is fried chicken and hamburgers. She enjoys making dinner for staff and her roommate. Natalie's favorite chore is vacuuming and her least favorite

chore is doing the dishes. Natalie will often be found outside or in her bedroom listening to Gospel music on her TV or on her CD player. She enjoys going to Christian Concerts and was recently able to go see her favorite gospel band in Kansas City with her family.

Natalie also utilizes day habilitation services through Twin Oaks. Natalie typically goes a few times a week. She enjoys doing crafts especially the holiday crafts and being able to be with her friends. Everyone at the day habilitation facility enjoys having Natalie and likes working with her. The day habilitation has allowed her to work on social skills and she has made many friends at her day habilitation.


I have known Natalie for over a year now. She has been a delight to work with. Natalie loves to give hugs, is always smiling and loves to get compliments. I always look forward to visiting with Natalie because she is always in a great mood and has such a sweet demeanor. Natalie continues to want to be as independent as she can be. She has done a great job with her staff to accomplish goals to help her with this. I can't wait to see what Natalie is able to accomplish in the upcoming year.

By Erica Cox



Natalie Holliday


COMMUNITY INFORMATION



Christmas through the ages

Marshall Christmas Parade
December 1, 2023

- **4:00pm Marshall Cinema**
First free showing of Elf
- **4:00pm - 7:30pm First Christian Church**
Chili & Soup Supper + Selfie Station Benefitting 12 Local Organizations
Meal: \$8.00 adults, \$5.00 kids 4-8 y/o, free kids 3 & under
- **5:10pm Christmas Parade Stage**
Broadway Bound Dance Studio - Performance
- **5:30pm Christmas Parade Stage**
Shapes Dance and Acro - Performance
- **5:45pm Community Bank**
Free Cookies & Hot Cocoa
- **6:00pm Marshall Square**
Christmas Parade starting at the Marshall Homestore, going backwards around the square, and exiting at Wood and Huston Bank
- **6:40pm Saline County Courthouse Rotunda**
Santa Photos
- **7:00pm Marshall Cinema**
Second free showing of Elf



COME CHECK US OUT ON
THE WEB!!!

WWW.MPOWERTCM.ORG

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MPOWER'S MISSION STATEMENT

*Empowering people to manage the
direction of their life.*



MPOWER

Derived from the word "Empower" and meaning "to promote the self-actualization or influence of one's self".

Welcome to MPower, an agency developed to meet the Targeted Case Management needs of adults with disabilities in Pettis and Saline Counties. At MPower, we have dedicated ourselves to providing the highest quality case management services available in Central Missouri. We believe that the individuals we serve deserve an advocate that is highly trained, well-educated on the latest trends and highly motivated to assist people in navigating the intricate systems of State and Federal funding sources and the growing list of qualified providers.

We believe in you, we believe in your hopes, wants, and dreams. We believe that when you are "MPowered" to make your own choices and have the proper supports, then you have the greatest potential for success.

It is our pleasure to walk beside you.