



FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Edited by Erica Allcorn
Published by Cheyenne Freeman

FROM THE DESK OF TRAVIS DEMOSS

Reality

My neighbor yelled across the road the other day, “hey, I think we have a cold spell coming”. The temperature was 4 degrees with a wind chill of minus 18. I had a shovel in my hands and he had a grin from ear to ear. I know he was just making lite of a chilly situation but part of me was not impressed with the Caption Obvious impersonation. The reality of the situation was that I was well aware of the weather I was standing in, and aware that there was

nothing I could do about it. It was bitter cold and was going to be bitter cold for a couple of more days. Sometimes it doesn't have to be spelled out, it just is what it is. That said, I hope you don't mind if I yell across the road to you that MPower has a great service going on for you. We've never had such a talented group of Service Coordinators, our support staff and administrative team and functioning on all 8 cylinders and our board continues to keep the mission alive by keep the

people of Pettis County at the forefront of their funding agenda. My neighbor may have had it right, some things just have to be said out loud. Caption Obvious would be proud.

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

MESSAGE FROM HR

- MPower will be closed February 19th for President's Day



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ADMIN NEWS	1
MARSHALL NEWS	2
SEDALIA NEWS	3
RELATED NEWS	4

FROM THE DESK OF ELIZABETH WASHINGTON

Embracing Everyone in February

February is not just about love, it's also a time to embrace diversity and raise awareness about Developmental Disabilities. As we travel through the month of love, let's open our hearts to the amazing abilities individuals with Developmental Disabilities have.

Developmental Disabilities affect individuals in various ways, cognitively, physically and socially. This February let's let the light shine on all the strengths and abilities that individuals with disabilities bring to their communities. In the month of December, I was

blessed to attend Christmas parties. While at a Christmas party I connected with one individual who was excited to tell me about the time they were going to spend with their family over Christmas and the traditions they share every year. Recently while picking up a birthday cake at Dairy Queen, I ran into an individual who helped me pick out the perfect cake and told me about their experience working at Dairy Queen and how inviting the team had been to them. Just last week while shopping at Wood's Grocery I encountered a gentleman that always has the best greetings and ensures an excellent customer experience. There

are a few ladies I always seem to run into at Wal-Mart and they are always smiling and chatting with everyone around them. The smiles I see them bring to people they encounter are unmatched.

In the pursuit of life, love, and happiness this February let's foster an environment that everyone feels valued. By promoting awareness, we can break barriers and create a world that is more compassionate and understanding of everyone's abilities.

FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR

As a Service Coordinator you form great relationships with the individuals you serve. Each day is a new day to help each person on your caseload get the resources they need to ensure a safe, successful, and happy life. Along the way you get to know the smiling faces, the laughs, and the hugs. It's my favorite part of the job. Sometimes, however, the steps to ensure that someone is happy, healthy, and thriving are also the steps that will take them off your caseload and out of your everyday life.

This is the case with Gary Fudge, or as I like to call him, Fudgey. This funny 65-year-old man has been on my caseload since I started at MPower and I look forward to every visit with him. From watching him practice his dance moves, to telling me to go home when I interrupt his morning nap, to watching Family Feud and judging everyone who gets the answers wrong, he has been a complete joy to get to know. He has a big personality and never fails to make my day brighter.

This month, Gary is leaving Saline County for a new home in Columbia where he can be closer to his doctors and his family. He'll get to know a new Service Coordinator and a new team will get a chance to know all his fun quirks. It's bittersweet, sending him off to the hands of a new team when I've grown to care about him as much as I do. But that's the nature of the work we do. Even when it hurts to say goodbye, you do it with a smile because you know it means good things and exciting new beginnings.

So, I'll send Gary off with a list of notes to his new team like a mom might send her kiddo off to camp with a list of important tidbits his new team might need... Team... please remember – Gary is a Halloween birthday boy, so beware he might have a trick or two up his sleeve. He likes a good sock war and may toss one at your head and laugh, so be prepared for retaliation. That also goes for finger guns - he carries those in his pocket, so watch your back. He's a great dancer and can win any

dance contest. He loves Taco Bell and Mountain Dew above any other food group. Unless you count ranch, but ranch goes on everything (even applesauce) so that doesn't count. If you're nice, he might draw you a picture. He tells a mean knock, knock joke and he is fiercely independent. He loves dogs, but really hates rubber duckies (we're not sure why, but we don't talk about it). But above all, he is an amazing guy and each day, you're going to learn something new and wonderful about him. I know you'll add to this list and I'm excited about the new adventures that await him. Still, this Service Coordinator is really going to miss him.

By Kelly Berry

FROM THE DESK OF ERICA RENNISON

February is filled with many strange observances such as Serpent Day (1st), Gumdrops Day (15th), Do a Grouch a Favor Day (16th), Tell a Fairy Tale Day (26th), etc. There's a day for everything. One of my favorite and most impactful days is Random Acts of Kindness Day (17th).

Wikipedia defines kindness as: "Kindness is a type of behavior marked by acts of generosity, consideration, rendering assistance, or concern for others, without expecting praise or reward in return. It is a subject of interest in philosophy, religion, and psychology." (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindness>)

Showing kindness is free, easy, impactful, and can provide an opening to connect with others without saying a word. As this day approaches, I think of how I can intentionally incorporate kindness into my day to day. One thing that comes to mind is to start the day with a question; "How can I show kindness to others today?" Then look for those opportunities throughout the day. At the end of the day, reflect about my actions and ask myself "In what ways did I show kindness to others today?" Doing this each day until it becomes second nature is a way to start a new pattern in my day to day actions. I

encourage you to look for these opportunities not only on February 17th, but every day.



FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR

Helping Hearts ♥

Charli Ackerman serves as the Pettis County Public Administrator because she has a heart to help others. Charli is hosting the 21st annual Helping Hearts fundraiser throughout the month of February. Donated funds will be used to provide financial assistance to individuals served by the Public Administrator's office to meet various needs that are not covered by insurance and/or other resources.

Donations may be made in honor and/or in memory of a loved one.



Donations may be mailed and/or dropped off at the Pettis County Courthouse:

Charli Ackerman
 Pettis County Public Administrator
 415 South Ohio Avenue/
 Suite 104
 Sedalia, Missouri 65301



photograph by Faith Bemiss:
 fbemiss@sedaliademocrat.com



Special thanks to Charli Ackerman for sharing this information with our stakeholders. ♥

COMMUNITY INFORMATION



TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Join us at the 34th annual Boys & Girls Club auction gala - An Evening Under The Stars, presented by The W-K Family of Dealerships!

We are bringing back our exclusive VIP cocktail hour, an elegant dinner buffet, and live entertainment brought to you by SUPERSTAR MAFIA!

Want to know more about the event or what to wear for this year's theme? <https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2024auctiongala/>

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.