



MY VOICE, MY CHOICE, MY LIFE

MAY 2023 NEWSLETTER

Edited by Erica Allcorn
Published by Cheyenne Freeman

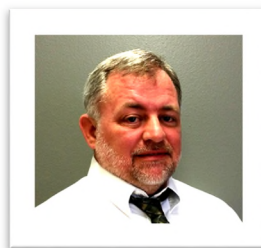
FROM THE DESK OF TRAVIS DEMOSS

Defending Excellence

There is a growing trend in the labor market of lowering the bar of your hiring standards in order to fill a position. If you are an employer you will have experienced the outright disappearance of valid candidates for the position you are trying to fill. This goes for bankers as well as plumbers. I have a friend who owns a plumbing company and he reports having to use unskilled workers and training as they go just to keep up with the workload of any given day. I noticed a sign on the door of a local diner

that stated this, Hiring full and part time. Qualifications: Must have a clue. From what I can tell, it doesn't matter what you are hiring for, it's going to be rough. We have experienced this for the last two years, with no signs of improving. What we will not accept however is a lowering of the standard. MPower has used a strict process of interview and assessment for 15 years. This process has a proven track record over time. It's a process that we continually scrutinize and challenge with each potential employee we look at. We receive relevant data that

we add to our unique profile giving us an always relevant look at what our top performer profile looks like. Our philosophy for hiring has been and will always be "hire right". Only with this attitude can we keep fulfilling our mission.



Travis DeMoss
Executive Director

MPOWERS 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 Erica Rennisson
Kellie Berry Alex Rutledge
Dakota Cantwell Sonia Setzer
Christy Coslet Tanya Steele
Erica Cox Melissa Stockwell
Diana Crouch Jennifer Trent
Travis DeMoss Tim VanBebber
Jessica Elgin Tammy Waggoner
Tyler Emerson Elizabeth Washington
Cheyenne Freeman Ashlea Withers
Nik Langston Ashley Weir
Angela May

MESSAGE FROM HR

- MPower will be closed on May 29, 2023 for Memorial Day
May is one of my favorite months, Garden's start to bloom and its also my Son's Birthday.
May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Here are some tips:

https://www.nlm.nih.gov/health/topics/caring-for-your-mental-health#part_8630

Get regular exercise.

Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated.

Make sleep a priority.

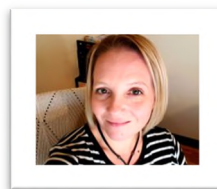
Try a relaxing activity.

Set goals and priorities.

Practice gratitude.

Focus on positivity.

Stay connected.



Cheyenne Freeman
Manager of Administrative Services

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Table with 2 columns: News Category and Page Number. Includes Admin News (1), Marshall News (2), Sedalia News (3), and Related News (4).

FROM THE DESK OF ELIZABETH WASHINGTON



*Elizabeth Washington
Saline Supervisor*

May 28th is National Hamburger Day!!!!



May 28th celebrates National Hamburger Day! I choose to remind and share in the celebration of this day as it is a reminder that warmer weather is coming. Days of spending time outside whether reading books, working, gardening or grilling are coming! Whatever type of Burger you desire there are so many choices from the burger to the

toppings and the bun. What is your heart's desire? Turkey Burger, Hamburger, Mushroom Burger, Veggie Burger, Cheeseburger, Bacon Burger. Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo, Tomato, Onion, Pickles, Lettuce or even eggs. What will you top that Burger with? On to the Bun what will it be so many choices; White, Wheat, Kaiser, Ciabatta, Onion, Sesame, Potato, Texas Toast or simply some sliced bread. Whatever it is that you would like I do hope that you take time out of this busy month to enjoy a Burger of your choice.

P.S. – I know this one may be a little out of the normal. I choose to celebrate National Hamburger Day as a reminder that everyone needs an opportunity in this busy world to stop and enjoy something that makes you happy. If it's not a Hamburger, I do hope that you find time to stop and enjoy what makes you happy.

<https://www.holidayinsights.com/moreholidays/may/national-hamburger-day.htm>

FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR



Sean Rea

Sean Rea lives in his home in Marshall and receives residential supports from Northwest Community Services. He also receives employment supports from the Center for Human Services. Sean loves to socialize, read, and write. He also enjoys playing Magic: The Gathering, a card game that inspires his creativity. Whenever he gets his paycheck, he likes to purchase cards to further his gameplay. Being surrounded by creativity is very important to Sean. He is described by his friends and staff as dedicated, intelligent, creative, and hard-working. And as of this year, he can also be described as a published author! (Typing that sentence was an absolute thrill for this service coordinator!)

Some of Sean's original poems were published in the most recent Marshall Writer's Guild Anthology. Sean writes short stories and

poetry and is always writing down his ideas for new ones. He has been a member of the guild and submitted his work for them to consider publishing. He was absolutely thrilled to learn that they chose some of his poems and a celebration was held in his honor earlier this year. Sean states that he is inspired by the people around him, as well as by the books he reads. Sean happily shows his service coordinator his book collection during monthly service monitoring visits. They share a common interest in Star Wars, so those conversations can sometimes take a while because of the extensive library of those books he has! Sean is always reading or writing and loves to share what he has learned or accomplished with those around him.

Sean's residential staff have always gone above and beyond in providing supports for him. They have

encouraged him to break out of his comfort zone and pursue his dreams. Being published is one of those dreams he has made come true. This service coordinator has spoken with several of his staff and they have all declared the same thing—working with individuals such as Sean is more than just a job. They love helping individuals become the best version of themselves, especially by making their dreams a reality.

Every individual should be encouraged to pursue their dreams and aspirations. It takes dedication on their part, as well as having a team who will go above and beyond to support them. Sean's team is proud of him and looks forward to seeing more of his accomplishments in the near future!

(Photo provided by NWCS)

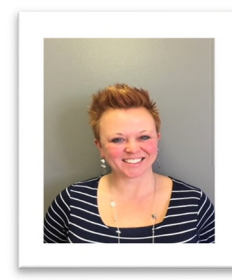
By Angela May

FROM THE DESK OF ERICA RENNISON

Join me in celebrating **Elizabeth Washington**. She is our MPower Supervisor in Marshall and on June 4th, she will be celebrating her 15-year employment anniversary. Elizabeth and I started with CHS as Service Coordinators around the same time. We moved through many changes together during our tenure in Service Coordination, starting with CHS, being promoted to Supervisors, and then Managers, and then transition-

ing to MPower. I have really enjoyed working alongside Elizabeth. She is someone that leads with her heart. She has such compassion for others, not only individuals we serve, but her team and everyone she encounters. Elizabeth is easy to strike up a conversation with and has taught me a thing or two about being humble. Join me in thanking Elizabeth in June for her dedication to our MPower team and to our agency

mission and values. Thanks for all that you do to represent our agency, Elizabeth.



Erica Rennison
Manager



FROM THE DESK OF A SERVICE COORDINATOR

Neurodiversity: A Term Worth Learning About

With April having been Autism Awareness month, the terms neurodiversity and neurodivergence have been viewed more on social media platforms lately. For individuals with Autism and their support systems, neurodiversity may be a familiar term. For those who are unfamiliar with the term, it simply means *differences in brain function*. (<https://rightsrain.uwmedicine.org/>) Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Dyslexia are often referred to as examples of neurodivergence. Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Depression, other Learning Disabilities along with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are other examples of neurodivergence, due to the ways these conditions can alter brain function.

There is a Neurodiversity Social Justice Movement brought forth by Judy Singer, an Australian sociologist with Autism, in the 1990s. The term *neurodiversity* was also coined by Judy Singer. The movement focuses on changing the way our society views people with neurodiverse or *different* minds. The movement emphasizes that neurodiverse minds are just that, diverse or different, but that certain conditions should not be labeled as *disorders*. Another belief

in the movement is that support systems and strategies should focus on enhancing strengths and unique talents and less on teaching individuals to conform to traditional beliefs based on what a *neurotypical* or *normal* person should act like or look like. The Neurodiversity Movement refers to people with neurodiverse minds as “neurological minorities” and that different brains and their functions should be celebrated and not discriminated against. Support systems can provide help for areas where help is needed but tend to focus on promoting natural strengths. Another important aspect of this movement is the belief that we, as a society, should be focusing on improving our environments, whether it is the workplace, schools, parks and other community settings, churches, stores, etc., to include *ALL* minds, both neurodiverse and neurotypical, alike. (childmind.org) Often, kids and adults are socially isolated from their communities due to differences in the way their brain functions. The movement pushes for full inclusion for everyone, in all settings.

Whether you agree with all the beliefs of the Neurodiversity Social Justice Movement, there are some components of the movement that I would like to believe we all agree on, or we would not be working in the field of developmental disabilities. I

believe that MPower staff, supervisors, and service coordinators practice aspects of the Neurodiversity Movement without even realizing it. We use “person first” and “person-centered” language; we focus on strengths, likes and dislikes, cultural beliefs, hopes, wants, and dreams of individuals enrolled in DMH/DD services; we work together to find beneficial resources that focus on individual strengths and interests, and we work as a team to help advocate for and promote independence and community inclusion with all individuals we interact with. Many of us have learned to embrace and implement the medical model for supporting individuals with developmental disabilities throughout our personal and professional experiences. I encourage everyone reading this to continue to learn about diversity, including neurodiversity and the Neurodiversity Social Justice Movement by visiting the websites listed below.

<http://www.myspectrumsuite.com/meet-judy-singer/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDOQxduRbQs>
<https://rightsrain.uwmedicine.org/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8075160/>
<https://childmind.org/article/what-is-neurodiversity/>

By Tanya Steele



COMMUNITY INFORMATION



Event by Center for Human Services - Missouri and Yeager's Cycle

Public · Anyone on or off Facebook

Mark your calendars for our 6th Annual Poker Run! Saturday, May 6th 2023. Registration opens at 11:00am at Yeager's Cycle in Sedalia.

All wheels welcome! Route is up to 100 miles in Sedalia and surrounding areas.

Your ride supports our mission to serve nearly 10,000 children, adults, and families, affected by poverty, intellectual, developmental, or other disabilities in 47 counties.

Schedule of Events Saturday, May 6th 2023:

- Yeager's Cycle Sales, Inc. 3001 S Limit Ave, Sedalia, MO 65301
- Registration opens at 11:00am (Registration fee \$30/person - Includes event shirt)
- Kickstands up at 1:00 pm
- Bikes in at Endzone by 6:30 pm, 3129 W Broadway Blvd, Sedalia, MO 65301
- Mail registration forms to 1500 Ewing Dr., Sedalia, MO with a check, online using our event link, or call 660-826-4401 ext. 368 to register with a credit card

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.