



317-371-7315



larcher@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Laura Archer, Field Coordinator

Laura provides daily operational support to supervisors and case managers in the Northeast Quad and Marion County. Laura provides case management for the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I was drawn to this field when my youngest son was involved in First Steps. I felt the pull to be more involved in learning everything I could about his needs as well as ways that I could help others, so I became a Service Coordinator with First Steps. Throughout this time, I made the decision to become a behavior consultant where I spent many years providing behavior supports for families through in-home programming, ABA clinics and private pay consultation with families. I then moved into offering behavior supports through Waiver. It was during that time that I felt the pull again to maximize my passion for advocating the needs of individuals and their families, so I made the transition to Case Management.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I enjoy photography and have taken photos at many events in the community including some local autism events in the past. I play the flute and toured Europe during my high school years playing. I still have the album/vinyl we made where I have a solo part. I also like to build miniature dollhouses in my spare time.

What do you love most about your job?

Advocating for my individuals and their families comes first; however, I also love watching individuals grow and accomplish their dreams. Once I made the decision to move into Case Management, there was never a doubt it would be with Connections. I love the team approach and all the support we offer each other. I'm proud to be a part of this family.

Do you have kids or pets?

I have four children (3 girls and 1 boy), four grandchildren (3 boys, 1 girl), two cats and one very spoiled Golden Retriever.

~ Laura



317-748-2233



sedwards@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Sheila Edwards, Coordinator

Sheila provides community outreach, produces Connections' Internal and External newsletters, and supports our team with community resources. Sheila provides case management for the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

When my son was diagnosed with autism, I wanted to learn all I could about available resources and supports for him. I then began to serve as a mentor to other parents in the community, which led me to leave the field of education and take on new roles as a parent liaison and health coach, then case manager. I love offering support to others, and my work also helps me learn new things each day that can help my own family and myself to grow and thrive.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I like to write music and create original songs on the piano. I can also play by ear and (roughly) pick out a melody after hearing it a few times.

What do you love most about your job?

My favorite part is seeing people achieve their goals, and the joy and pride on their faces when they do so. I also love finding resources and learning new things. It really makes me happy when I visibly see the sense of relief that washes over someone after a good conversation, because they felt heard, gained new ideas, or learned that they can reach out with questions and additional support going forward. The power of hope is real and inspires me.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

Gardening and being in nature are among my favorite activities. I also love time spent with my family and friends, baking, reading, and playing city-building games.

Do you have pets?

We have a spunky cat named Maizy who decided she lived at our house on Thanksgiving Day a few years back. When it became apparent that she needed a home, we said she could stay. She somehow knows who has had a rough day and goes to them for comfort. She also tries to follow us on our neighborhood walks, trailing behind us on the sidewalk and stopping a short distance from our house. She waits there until we come back so she can follow us home.

~ Sheila



STAFF

Spotlight

Amy Glaub, Field Coordinator

Amy provides daily operational support to supervisors and case managers in the Southeast Quad and Marion County. Amy provides case management for the Aged & Disabled, Traumatic Brain Injury, FSW, and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I have always enjoyed working with and assisting people. My brother has Down Syndrome this led me to work in the social service field while I was in high school and throughout college.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I am a very simple individual who likes the simple things life has to offer, such as sitting around with family and friends reminiscing, sitting on the back deck with my husband, or watching a good movie from the comfort of my couch.

What do you love most about your job?

Being able to connect people to resources that help them achieve their goals.

Do you have children?

3 sons

Do you have a career success story to share?

Every day that I am able to help someone make progress toward their hopes and dreams is a success!

~ Amy



812-841-8949



rharden@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Rick Harden, Field Coordinator

Rick provides daily operational support to supervisors and case managers in the Southwest Quad and Marion County. Rick provides case management for the Aged & Disabled, Traumatic Brain Injury, FSW, and CIH Waivers.



What lead you to the social services field?

I double majored in college in the Social Sciences. After graduation, a co-workers wife worked at a local Community Mental Health Center and encouraged me to apply. They brought me a “paper” application to complete. I began working at an entry level position on the inpatient unit and knew I had found my calling, as I quickly fell in love with the clientele. I have now worked in this field for the past 25 years in a variety of positions from direct service provider to management positions.

What do you love most about your job?

Working with the individuals we serve, hands down! I love being able to provide resources and opportunities to allow them to grow! Being able to see someone, reach their goals and dreams are the highlights of this position.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

I enjoy spending time with my family, and I like anything outdoors: camping, hiking, kayaking, mountain biking, etc.

Do you have children or pets?

Yes, both I enjoy spending as much time with my wife and son, Liam. We also have two cats, Sophie and Lilly, and two dogs, Rockie and Morgan.

~ Rick



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513-315-7675



ahouse@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Abby House, Training Coordinator

Abby coordinates and facilitates all training curriculum for new hires and ongoing employees. Abby provides case management for the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I worked as a public-school teacher in special education for seven years before having my first child. While staying at home with her, I made a wonderful friend that worked at Connections. After a few months of friendship, I learned more about what she did and found a new home within Connections!

What is a random fact about yourself?

I have been to Australia and India, both by myself!

What do you love most about your job?

I enjoy getting to meet all the new hires that come through our doors! I love teaching them new content to assist them in their transition to becoming a case manager.

Do you have a career success story to share?

One of my favorite pieces of this job is getting to apply for home and/or vehicle modifications for our clients. I find it very rewarding when we can assist with getting the proper paperwork in place to provide a tactile need for a client!

Do you have kids or pets?

We have a sweet Bichon named Bud that loves being a big brother to his sisters, Libby and Ava.

~ Abby



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317-501-2514



mrussell@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Molly Russell, Crisis Intervention Coordinator



Molly responds to, addresses, and collaborates on urgent interventions as needed. She provides mentoring and training support to case managers for unusual or sporadic situations, as well as monitors and tracks incident reporting and trends. Molly provides case management for the FSW and CIH waivers.

What led you to the social services field?

For me, the question I am often asked is not only what led me to social services, but what keeps me here? I was led by the nose to the social services field at a young age and without awareness that working in social services would become a lifelong passion. While I was in grade school, I became an advocate although back then I had no idea what being an “advocate” was.

Advocacy was not what the school called it when I was growing up, believe me. While I was busy having words with the grade school bullies in my “playground office,” the school administrators were trying to figure out what to do with me. I had a bleeding heart for those kids getting picked on. It upset my being, to the core, that they were being chastised for not being like everyone else. My playground office meetings landed me in a beautifully decorated principal’s office – often! Thankfully, this led to an early High School graduation to work in a “segregated special needs school” as a one-to-one teacher’s aide. I was an aid for the most amazing and beautiful 3-year-old little boy. This little gift was visually impaired with a long list of other diagnoses although he knew nothing of that. He knew how to get everyone’s attention and all of his needs met, quickly at that! Really, I thought of this kid as my hero and as a genius! And off I went to let everyone know about it! I was mentored by the principal of that school to take my passion and use it in a way that could make a difference for others. And so, it began.

I have grown and matured during my work in the field, starting in High School, through college and the following decades. So many different roles, and lessons learned from those I have been fortunate to serve. Lessons that changed me for the better. I learned grace. I developed hope. I watched true strength in action, love in so many forms, resilience, and perseverance. I consider myself blessed and fortunate to have been witness to so much “Good Stuff”. With that said, I also never question what keeps me here.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

Spending time and doing most anything with my people. This would primarily be my family, close friends, and our dogs. Our grandchildren own my heart! In my spare time, I enjoy putzing around the house or spending time in nature. I love projects and always have a few going. I feel accomplished when finishing household projects although I am tickled taking trash and turning it to treasure, gardening and digging in the dirt, making jewelry with cool tools, taking classes of interest, and making/creating all sorts of goodies with the grandkids.

~ Molly



STAFF

Spotlight

Amanda Sparks, Field Coordinator

Amanda provides daily operational support to supervisors and case managers in the Northwest Quad and Marion County. Amanda provides case management for the Aged & Disabled, Traumatic Brain Injury, FSW, and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I have always been passionate about working in this field and serving those with disabilities. I have an older brother with Autism that is on the waiver as well and he is a HUGE reason why I am so passionate about this field and who lead me to work in this field and help others. I grew up witnessing how hard working my parents are and loving when it came to helping my brother and witnessing that really drew me into this field and wanting to help other individuals/families and make an impact on their lives as my brother has made on mine.

What is a random fact about yourself?

My favorite animal (besides dogs) is a dolphin! Ever since I was little, I have loved dolphins and have always been fascinated by them and how smart they are!

What do you love most about your job?

I think what I love most about this job is seeing my individuals/families succeed and further their independence. I love talking to people about their "Good Life" and seeing that happen and become a reality for them is really cool! Not only do I get to be a part of their journey and make an impact on their lives, but my individuals also make an impact on mine daily and remind me of my why.

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

I love traveling and going to see live music with my husband! We love seeing our favorite bands and discovering new bands/singers as well.

Do you have pets?

DOGS! We have two dogs, Callie (German Shepard) and Peyton (Korean Jindo/Huskey Mix). I am a huge dog lover and for now, they are our very spoiled kids, and we love them very much...a little too much! 😊

~ Amanda



STAFF

Spotlight

Lindsey Walters, Technology Coordinator

Lindsey coordinates technology for Connections. She provides training and support to Connections' team. Lindsey provides case management to the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I have always been passionate about helping others. I grew up wanting to be a teacher, thinking it was the best way to help. After going to college for special education and elementary education, I was drawn to assisting and supporting not only the child, but the whole family. When I decided to make the switch from teaching to case management, it felt like I was finally able to use my passions in the correct capacity!

What is a random fact about yourself?

I am a huge board game fan! My family and I track board game wins for the year! Even though I have never been the yearly winner, I still enjoy playing and learning new games. We try to play weekly with my sister-in-law and her family!

What do you love most about your job?

I love the supportive family atmosphere of Connections! I get so much joy out of helping others with technology, but also learning from others at Connections! As for working with my individuals, I love supporting them to reach their goals and dreams!

What is a favorite pastime you enjoy?

I enjoy spending time with my family. I have a fabulous husband and two beautiful children! Our children keep us busy and always moving! We love being active outside and playing games.

Do you have pets?

We have 1 dog, Zoey, who we adopted about 10 years ago. She is old but will always be our fur-baby.

~ Lindsey



Connections
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317-778-3683



kwelder@connections-in.com

STAFF

Spotlight

Kathryn Welder, Caseload Coordinator

Kathryn coordinates caseloads in transition for the Connections Team. She provides case management for the FSW and CIH Waivers.



What led you to the social services field?

I have always known that I have wanted to work with people, but I did not quite know what that would look like. I have always been very passionate about helping and serving others, and I genuinely love people. I graduated with a psychology degree, and I was introduced to direct support with a residential provider. I loved supporting individuals to live their best lives in their homes and community. I was humbled and grateful that they allowed me to be a part of their journey. I quickly learned that I wanted to do more, and I met with the Connections team soon after. I have felt right at home as a case manager ever since, knowing that this is exactly what I am supposed to be doing.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I love to spend time in and with nature. I am mostly barefoot in the summer and focused on planting as many flowers as I can. I can also be found hiking or camping frequently.

What do you love most about your job?

I love everything about my job, but most of all, I love being an advocate and facilitating strength-based conversations to be focused on the individuals that I serve. I am committed to supporting individuals and their teams to support the individual in living their good life, whatever that look likes for them.

Do you have a career success story to share?

Throughout my career, I have had an open mind and heart to any opportunities that have been presented to me. It was quite the risk to pursue a psychology degree on the notion that I wanted to work with people, but with no concrete goal in mind. However, it has led me to be a part of programs and projects much bigger than myself that have shaped me into the person I am today. I have supported people from all walks of life and each one of them has taught me something new or different. I take what I have learned, and continue to learn, and apply it to my life too. This field has truly changed me as a person and has encouraged me to live my best life as well, which in turn, pours back into my career. It is a wonderful cycle that I never thought was possible and I am truly grateful for it all!

Do you have pets?

I have two cats, Georgie and Elsa and a pit bull mix, Sasha. We found Georgie and Elsa in my grandma's property in the woods, and Sasha was a rescue from the Hamilton County Humane Society. Sasha came to me as a stray with many health issues, but she is now healthy and enjoys daily walks. Sometimes I think it's their world and I am just living in it.

~ Kathryn