

NEEDS

North East Educational and
Developmental Support Center

WINTER

NEWSLETTER

Update From The President

Hi all. I am happy to report, that we are pretty much back to pre-pandemic programming across all areas of The NEEDS Center. Thank you to all of you for your patience and support as we have navigated the many challenges that have been presented over the past couple of years. I believe that our organization has emerged from this time period stronger across the board, and in particular stronger in terms of our relationships between our employees, the people we support and their family members.

We are anticipating a very busy year in 2023 both in terms of activities, and in new projects that we are involved with. The biggest issue or concern currently facing the NEEDS Center is our ability to hire high quality staff members for our vacant positions. We currently have about a 35% vacancy rate in terms of overall positions within the NEEDS Center. This is obviously a high number, and we are working diligently to find the right people for our open positions.

We are currently working on developing an international hiring program. We are optimistic that this will help us as we try to fill our open positions. We will keep you posted on our progress with this as we move along. In addition to this initiative, we are also addressing our hiring needs in the following ways:

- Have hired additional recruiters and added positions to our HR team
- Have increased sign-on and referral bonuses
- Have increased our presence with in-person job fairs and college fairs

As always we hope you will enjoy this edition of the Newsletter. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns.

Jim Sperry, President and CEO

The NEEDS Center

jsperry@needsctr.org

978-216-0315



New Developments

Massachusetts DDS has a time limited financial incentive for agencies like the NEEDS Center to open new homes, and place individuals within these homes between now and 1/1/2024. Given this incentive, we are planning to do a bit more expansion this year than originally planned. At present here are our new development/expansion plans for our Massachusetts Division (note – these plans are tentative with the aforementioned hiring needs being the biggest factor on when the homes will open):

Day Services

We are opening a new Day Program in Beverly, MA on April 3, 2023. This new site will eventually provide day services to 40 people.

Residential Services

We plan to open 4 homes in the North East Area (DDS Region 3), which will provide new homes to 16 people. For Cape Cod, we are planning to re-open our home in Marstons Mills, and are working to open homes 3 and 4 in Orleans as part of the Cape Cod Village project.

It will be a very busy year of new development for us at The NEEDS Center, and our plan is to take a bit of a break within Massachusetts in 2024.

Corporate Compliance Corner

Welcome to the Corporate Compliance Corner!

To help all staff understand what corporate compliance is, the NEEDS Center is asking each staff person to take a 30 minute training in Relias titled "*Basic Corporate Compliance*". This training has been uploaded in Relias for each employee to complete. The training will answer general questions that employees may have regarding corporate compliance. Please log into Relias to complete this training.

Thank you!

Kelley Campbell
Director of QI and Compliance



RELIAS

Welcome To The NEEDS Center!

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new staff members to The NEEDS Center!

Abdourhaman Diako - Program Specialist

Alexcia Edwards - Program Specialist

Amarilis Concepcion - Assistant Director of Operations

Angela Diaz - Staff Accountant

Annet Tumusiime - Program Specialist

Ashley Appel - Senior Recruiter

Brooke Gates - Program Specialist

Carine Simo Tawokam - Relief

Carline Michel - Program Specialist

Carlos Marin - Relief

Charrelle Degennaro - Program Specialist

Christina Warren - Program Specialist

Chynna Donahoo - Program Specialist

Dominic Priolo - Program Specialist

Elizabeth Tveter - Registered Behavior Technician

Erika Wiggins - Program Specialist

Freddricka Ruise - Assistant Program Coordinator

Gweah Daylue - Program Specialist

Jael Jara - Program Specialist

Jalissa Palmer - Program Specialist

Jasmin Johnson - Assistant Program Coordinator

Jocelin Joseph - Program Specialist

Joelitz Gomez - Director of Residential Services

John Axford - Program Specialist

Joseph Boyan - Program Specialist

Juliet Wolubah - Program Specialist

Kellie Barlow - Assistant Program Coordinator

Kinaysha Masso - Program Specialist

Leandra Herring - Assistant Program Coordinator

Lisa Smith - Training and Development Manager

Lucy Kisio - Program Specialist

Mariann Clark - Assistant Program Coordinator

Mark Boilard - Senior Director of Residential Services

Marlaina Johnson - Program Specialist

Mary Anjiankeng - Program Specialist

Patricia Richardson - Program Specialist

Priscille Fogue - Relief

Rachel DiVerdi - BCBA

Rachel Sibiga - Program Specialist

Rashad Murray - Program Specialist

Richard Sarro - Program Specialist

Rochelle Wilson - Assistant Program Coordinator

Roodeline Banks - Program Specialist

Sharon Kazinzimiya - Program Specialist

Shemech Patterson - BCBA

Shenea Howell - Program Specialist

Stephanie Cheek - Relief

Steven Gandia - Program Coordinator

Thaddeus Brown - Program Specialist

Theostene Louis - Program Specialist

Tiambi Fossett - Program Specialist

Tiatiarra Vazquez - Program Specialist

Tiffany Lee - Assistant Program Coordinator

Tina Hawkins - HR Generalist

Torri Goss - Program Specialist

NEEDS Employee Growth

We would also like to take this opportunity to announce that both Senior Program Coordinator, Patcheco Vincent and Senior Program Coordinator, Ethan Walsh have been promoted to the position of Assistant Director of Residential Services. Congratulations Patcheco and Ethan!



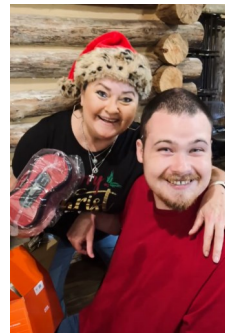
Ethan Walsh



Patcheco Vincent

Return of a Tradition

We recently held a party for the individuals we support and their families, a tradition for the Florida division for the past 15 years. We were so happy to be able to extend the invitation to family members this year after a couple of COVID years when we couldn't. We all met at the log cabin at Camp Chownaw in Green Cove Springs, FL, a few miles down the road from Orange Park. It is a beautiful facility along the shores of Black Creek and was perfect for us. This year we had dinner served from Texas Roadhouse! Following dinner came a visit from our own in-house Florida Santa, aka DJ John, aka John Mortensen. Gifts were provided and wrapped by the PC's and opened most enthusiastically by each guest. John has been our resident Santa for over a decade but a few years back he ditched the red suit for cooler, more tropical, attire. John also provided us with music and a guest vocalist, his girl, Sara, aka Mama Blue, a local musician who got us all singing. Everyone looks forward to getting together each year and we look forward to continuing our most favorite tradition next year!



Believe It or Not, Florida!

The people we support from FL went on an outing to Ripley's Believe It or Not in St. Augustine! From the mind-bending illusions to the fascinating oddities, there was never a dull moment!



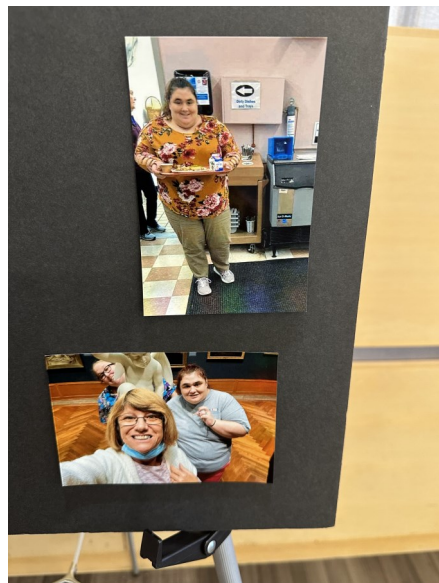
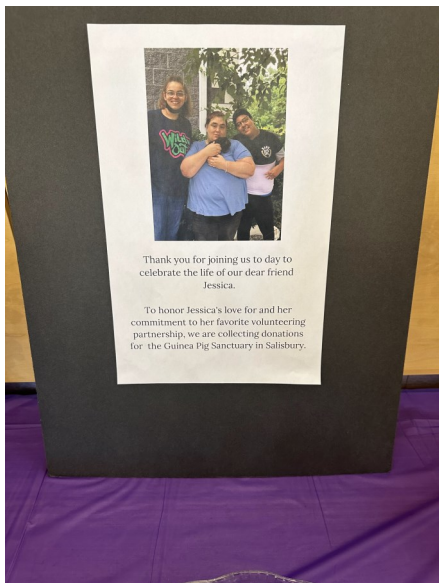
To the Big Apple! 🏙️ 🍏

New York, we're in love! Tiana and Avi had the time of their lives exploring the Big Apple - taking in the sights, sounds, and tastes of this amazing city! From the neon lights of Broadway to the breathtaking skyline views from the Empire State Building, they soaked up everything NYC has to offer. And let's not forget the amazing food - hot dogs, pizza, bagels, and more! Thanks for the memories, New York!



In Memoriam

On January 31st, 2023, Jessica C., a resident of our Oak Ridge home and a participant in the Opportunity Works Day Program, passed away suddenly. Her absence will be deeply felt by The NEEDS Center community, particularly her fellow housemates, friends from the day program, and the staff members who had the privilege of working alongside her.



Awe-Inspiring Ice Castles

The guys from River Road recently took a trip to the Ice Castles in North Woodstock, NH, and were left in awe of the stunning beauty of the winter wonderland. As they entered the ice castles, they were immediately greeted by the sight of towering ice walls and intricate ice sculptures that sparkled in the moonlight. The group enjoyed exploring the many tunnels and passageways, all carved out of ice, and even found themselves sliding down ice slides and posing for photos in front of the shimmering ice formations. It was a truly magical experience, and the group left feeling inspired by the power and majesty of nature.



We Are Ready For Our Close-Up

A group of individuals from the Tewksbury day program recently had the opportunity to have their photos taken by staff member, Linda Kenfack, who happens to be a talented photographer. The group was thrilled about the shoot. Linda was able to make everyone feel comfortable and at ease in front of the camera, resulting in beautiful and natural-looking photographs. Thank you Linda for using your expertise and creativity in such a meaningful way.



Get To Know: Ryan M

How do you feel about snow, and do you want a “snowy winter”?

“Heck yeah!, I really like snow days.”

What fun winter snow activities do you like to do?

“Building a snow man, only if there’s enough snow. Helping shovel the snow- its good exercise”

What is your favorite holiday food to enjoy?

“Cheesecake”

What is your favorite TV show or movie to watch on a snowy/cold/rainy day?

“Michael Myers”

What are some activities that you like to do you’re your group home?

“Haunted Houses, Canobie Lake Park, Van rides, Dollar store trips”

If you could be any superhero in the world, who would you be?

“The Hulk”

What is something important about yourself that people should know when they meet you?

“I am a nice guy. I like tattoos , I like exercising, I love music, I am working on losing weight and getting healthy- I do CrossFit 4 times a week.”



Diversity & Inclusion Committee

During the last Diversity and Inclusion meeting, the I/D committee discussed black history month where we highlighted some historical figures. We also discussed how to include the people we served more. The committee is working with NEEDS Center's clinicians to develop a way to get our individuals more involved in the committee. This month, the topics discussed during the I/D meeting will be discussed during the individuals monthly meeting at each program. The "NEEDS To Give" was also a topic in our last meeting, we are still collecting items to donate to Liberia. Our next winter event will be "NEEDS Got Talent" which will be a karaoke style type of event, where our individuals and staff will showcase their singing talents.

- Diversity & Inclusion Committee Co-Chairs

Patcheco Vincent

pvincent@needsctr.org

Sopheaklizabeth So

sso@needsctr.org



+ Healthcare Corner +

Facts About Sleeping:

- Teenagers need between 8.5 and 9.25 hours of sleep per night.
- REM (rapid eye movement) sleep occurs during the early morning hours of 3:00 AM to 7:00 AM.
- One complete sleep cycle is 90 minutes.
- 10% of the people who snore while sleeping experience “sleep apnea,” a disorder that can make the snorer stop breathing up to 300 times a night.
- Beauty sleep is a thing! During sleep, your skin repairs damage (UV rays, dirt, etc.) and regenerates new skin cells.
- Sleeping less than 7 hours a night makes it 3 times more likely to catch a cold, due to a weakened immune system.
- A 10 to 20-minute nap is all you need to refresh your mind if you’re feeling groggy or tired.
- The sleep disorder “insomnia,” in which a person has difficulty falling and staying asleep at night, is more prevalent in women than with men. Insomnia also increases with age.
- The act of sleep talking is known as “somniloquy” and takes place during overlapping states of consciousness. The brief outbursts last only 1 or 2 seconds.
- More than any other light, blue light suppresses the secretion of “melatonin,” a hormone that controls our body’s internal clock. Experts say to decrease blue light a few hours before sleep to get optimal sleep.
- Getting less sleep means having a bigger appetite because the leptin levels (an appetite-regulating hormone) decrease.
- Research shows that in the days leading up to a full moon, people go to bed later and sleep less, although the reasons are unclear.
- If it takes you less than five minutes to fall asleep at night, you are probably sleep-deprived. Ideally falling asleep should take 10-15 minutes.
- Tiredness peaks twice per day; Around 2am and 2pm for most people. That is why you are less alert after lunch.



Contact your doctor if you think you have sleep apnea as this can be a dangerous and sometimes deadly condition.

For more information please visit:

Clevelandhealthclinic.org

Speepfoundation.org



Jamy Whitcomb
Vice President of Health Services

Stakeholders Meeting

We continue to offer virtual stakeholder meetings on a monthly basis. We thank everyone that has participated in these meetings, and encourage anyone else receiving this newsletter to feel free to join us as well. If you are interested in joining the meetings, but have not received an email invitation please reach out to Tim Sobezenski and he will add you to our email list. tsobezenski@needsctr.org.

Summary

Thanks for reading the Winter edition of our Newsletter – we hope you enjoyed it! We look forward to another great year in 2023. If you have any suggestions for making improvements to the newsletter, please contact Matthew Seidell via email at mseidell@needsctr.org.