

February 2023

The CommUNITY Buzz

Hello everyone and welcome to our newest Community Buzz!

With spring just around the corner, we're gearing up for an exciting few months ahead. Before we dive into the content, I wanted to extend a massive thank you to all our team members who have set up their new company emails. As promised, a little extra incentive has been included in this week's paycheck, so don't forget to check your inbox.

We have some exciting updates regarding our fleet vehicles! As previously announced, all our vehicles have been equipped with our newest cameras and GPS systems, ensuring even greater safety and security for our team while on the road. We appreciate everyone's patience during this important process and are happy to report that driving with the new technology has been excellent. However, we've noticed that our biggest challenge on the road is often properly preparing to drive. Read helpful hints on preparation in this edition.

At Alternatives, we prioritize the safety and security of our employees, clients, and facilities. To further enhance our measures, we are announcing the installation of external security cameras at all our ICF locations starting Monday, March 6th. Our Stratford locations will also be outfitted with these cameras in the near future. This added layer of security will help ensure the continued protection of our people and assets.

The sounds of music filled the halls of Day Program on Valentine's Day when they hosted their first Music with Matt event. Matt, a talented musician, had everyone singing, dancing, and smiling with his upbeat tunes. The event was a hit, and participants are eagerly awaiting for Matt's return on March 7th. Keep an eye out for pictures capturing all of the fun in this edition!

As always, I appreciate each member of our community. Thank you for all you do and all your support.

Kelly Callahan
Executive Director



February Employee of the Month: Sherri LaCroix

About Sherri

We are pleased to announce that one of Alternatives original employees has been selected as our employee of the month. Sherri LaCroix, or known to some as "Cheery Sherri", has been with Alternatives since 1995. She started with the former agency NCCI, as direct care staff in 1991. She stayed on through the transition to Alternatives while working at our Fieldstone & Yorktown locations in Naugatuck. In 1996, she received her LPN license after completing her course work at Kaynor Tech in Waterbury, after that she started on her long and successful career as an LPN with Alternatives.

Over the years Sherri has been our "pinch hitter". She always takes on whatever is asked of her and does so with a terrific attitude! She has worked at every single program in some capacity or another and has gotten to know all our supported individuals. She has been a health specialist for our CLA's & CRS programs, acting manager in an ICF, trainer to LPN's and Direct Support Staff and one of the most incredibly caring LPNs that Alternatives has employed.

She loves meeting everyone and being a nurse. Her favorite part of her job is taking care of our supported individuals. She builds a special connection with everyone she meets. If you are lucky enough to know her, you have gotten one of the best HUGS!

Sherri has lived in Naugatuck for the past 31 years with her husband Craig. They have one son, Thomas and a black cat, Artie. In her free time, Sherri likes to read, spend time outdoors, make friends, adopts anyone that needs a family, and enjoys the kids in her neighborhood. Sherri is a Christian, has married 3 Alternatives employees, and she wants us to know that she feels "truly blessed to be here".

Sherri, you a true inspiration on how to live and treat others. We are very lucky to have you on the Alternatives team. Thank you for all you do!

Manager's Message

I've known Sherri for over 35 years personally and professionally. Sherri loves what she does and it shows. She goes above and beyond for our residents and everybody who knows her loves her. Sherri always has a smile on her face and makes the work place a positive place to work for residents and staff. As a manager I know that I can always count on Sherri to go above and beyond. Sherri is a truly valuable part of our team.



-Beth Philbrook, Lakeside Residential Manager

I have had the pleasure of working with Sherri for the past 3 years. Sherri is a valuable member of Alternatives. She always puts the individuals first, she is a true advocate and a team player. She is always willing to help in any way she can. She always has a smile on her face and creates a warm work environment!! Alternatives is truly blessed to have Sherri as one of our nurses.

-Jessica Murray RN BSN, ICF Nursing Supervisor

TO DAY PROGRAM STAFF

I would like to recognize the staff at Day Program who performed above and beyond in the midst of many different challenges during the “Great Flood” of February. Over the weekend of February 4th, a pipe burst within the building causing a massive amount of water to flow through the ceiling, down the walls and across the floors.

The condition of the interior of the building posed significant risks for all. Therefore, the building was “Closed” and the staff were relocated to several group homes. On a daily basis, **Elizabeth Canady, Debra Hans, Jessica Jean-Baptiste, Greg Marcelin, Amanda Milton, Michelle Rodrigues** and **Rose Sauer** were assigned and reassigned to Goldbach, Hewey, Longview and Middlebrook. The staff independently ran “Day Program” from the houses so that the disruption to everyone’s routine was minimal. Staff engaged the residents with board and card games, arts and crafts and storytelling. Lunch time meal prep, laundry and bedroom cleaning became opportunities for teaching and reinforcing skill sets. Staff went on medical appointments, made pay stub deliveries, took a trip to the playground, met health needs and had a bit of fun.

Sandy McFarland remained back at the building attending to equally important aspects of assistance. She opened the doors to cleaners, insurance adjusters and other vendors we needed. She photographed the damage, mopped incessantly, purged books and cleaned the kitchen.

Armed with things to do from a familiar face, maybe the most important component the staff gave the residents was the reassurance that “everything would be ok” back at our building and we all would get back there soon. Monday February 13th brought everyone back under one roof, a little crowded but with faces of pure joy at seeing each other.

We have a great group of men and women at Day Program who certainly showed their commitment to those we serve. I believe their efforts met the criteria of Health, Safety, Time, Mind and Spirit in so many ways during this week that I feel their efforts should be recognized.

Beth Jezierny, Proud Manager of Day Program Services

A graphic of the words "THANK YOU" in a playful, multi-colored font. The letters are thick and blocky, with each letter in a different color: T (purple), H (orange), A (blue), N (yellow), K (green), Y (purple), O (blue), and U (orange). The letters are arranged in a slightly staggered, overlapping manner.



MARCH IS CEREBRAL PALSY AWARENESS MONTH

What is Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral Palsy is a group of neurological disorders which affect balance, movement, and muscle tone. It is caused by brain injury or abnormal brain development before or during childbirth, or in early childhood.

Types of Cerebral Palsy

Monoplegia



Affects one limb, usually an arm

Hemiplegia



Affects one side of the body

Diplegia



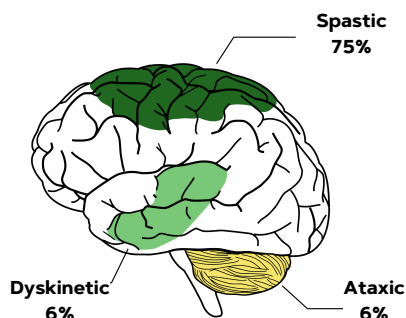
Affects either both arms or legs

Quadriplegia



Affects all four limbs and trunk

Motor Types



Spastic:

Most common form. Muscles are tense and contracted.

Ataxic:

Poor balance and coordination.

Dyskinetic:

Uncontrollable movements.

Mixed:

Combination of two types.

Associated Conditions

1 in 3



Unable to walk

1 in 4



Unable to talk

3 in 4



Experience pain

1 in 4



Has Epilepsy

1 in 2



Has an intellectual disorder

1 in 10



Has a severe vision impairment

1 in 25



Has a severe hearing impairment

1 in 4



Has a behavioral disorder

1 in 4



Has bladder control problems

1 in 3



Experiences hip displacement

1 in 5



Has a sleep disorder

1 in 5



Has saliva control problems

What's the Buzz?



Anniversaries

1 Year

Andrea Frank, Highview
Jessica Johnson, Lakeside

3 Years

Jessica Murray, ICF Nursing Supervisor

5 Years

Tammy Cosenza, Goldbach
Tameeka Pettway, Middlebrook
Jemiah Terry, Goldbach

15 Years

Lakeena Redd, Hewey

PRE-DRIVING CHECKLIST

Follow this checklist to make sure you are all set to drive without any distractions.



ADJUST SEAT



ADJUST MIRRORS



REVIEW MILEAGE LOG



INPUT DIRECTIONS



PUT PHONE IN HOLDER



BUCKLE SEATBELT



I'd like to recognize Brian Edwards and the team at Highview including their fearless leader, Vicky. Brian played an integral part in helping the Highview gang get ready for a temporary move while their floors were replaced. Brian moved items over the weekend, he assisted his wonderful coworkers with transportation to and from work and overall displayed a fabulous work ethic which is indicative of what we strive to promote!! Brian, many thanks to you, Vicky and to the wonderful team at Highview. You guys ROCK!

-Deb Godbout, Programs Director

Shout out to Amanda Milton, DSP in our Day Program. The Day Program recently experienced a sewer line emergency, she was quick to clean, rally clients to other areas and notify the right people. Throughout, she remained calm which reassured our clients. Great job Amanda!!

-Robin Marino RN BSN MHA CDDN,
Director of Health

This shout out goes to Karen Custis. Karen is one of the most agreeable and flexible managers at Alternatives. She manages both Goldbach and Middlebrook and does it all with a great smile. Karen was instrumental with the recent Middlebrook remodel and continues to assist in getting that program settled. Karen is quick to offer help and recently took it upon herself to solve a problem with one of your more difficult vendors, Frontier. Thank you, Karen not only do you do a great job, but you also saved me a long phone call to Frontier, I really appreciate that.

-Kelly Callahan, Executive Director

Shout out to Tracy Daley from Goldbach. For the past couple of months she has come to the office to help me get the newsletters ready to give out, along with stamping and labeling envelopes for guardian newsletters. She always stays until the job is completed. She has a great work ethic! You've been a great help, thank you!

-Kristina Mauriello, HR Specialist

RECIPE

Pot of Gold Donut Pops

Recipe from cheftini.com

- 1 15 oz box Donut Holes
 - 1 lb. Melting Chocolate
 - 24 lollipop sticks
 - 2 Packs Air head extremes
 - Gold crystallized sugar Like Wilton
1. Melt chocolate in microwave safe bowl (gradually).
 2. Line a tray with parchment paper. Evenly line up 24 donut holes, flat side up on tray.
 3. Dip ends of lollipop sticks into chocolate and gently insert into center of donut pop. *Careful not to go out the other side. Let sit to harden. When all pops are done, refrigerate 10 mins.
 4. Cut the air head extremes into about 1" strips. Set aside.
 5. While chocolate is still warm dip each donut pop into the chocolate and swirl around until fully covered. Gently shake off excess and place flat side down onto tray. Press down slightly as you set the pop down to create a flat bottom. Repeat with remaining pops. Refrigerate 5-10 mins to harden.
 6. Take each donut pop and hold upright with one hand, dip the tines of a fork into the melted chocolate and quickly drizzle across the top of the pop. Dip in gold sugar.
 7. While chocolate is still wet, stick the cut air head extreme into the pop so it looks like a rainbow is shooting over the top. Place in a glass jar to dry.



ACTIVITY

Mini Shamrock Piñata

Activity from countrypeony.com

- 1 Roll of Duck Tape® in Green and Neon Green
 - 1 Roll of Duck Tape® Masking in Light Green
 - Poster Board
 - Scissors
 - Craft Knife
1. Using poster board, cut out two shamrocks and a 1 in. thick strip. Next, cut a flap into one shamrock to put the candy in.
 2. Use masking tape to attach strip of poster board to the entire edge of one shamrock. Then place the other shamrock on top and tape to secure edges together.
 3. Create tape fabric by cutting a strip of Duck Tape, laying it on a flat surface and attaching another strip directly on top.
 4. Cut a thin strip from the tape fabric. Fold into a loop and tape to top of piñata. Attach another thin strip to the inside of the flap on the back of the piñata for easy access.
 5. Create another tape fabric strip and cut it in half. Then, cut strip about 2/3 down at about 1/4 inch apart to create the fringe for the piñata. Continue to create the fringe in different colors to prepare for the piñata assembly.
 6. Starting on the front (no flap), apply the first layer of fringe to the bottom with tape in same color. Alternate colors as you continue upward until fully covered. Be sure to cover the sides. Repeat for back of piñata.
 7. Trim the fringe in the corners to reveal the shape.
 8. Fill your piñata with your favorite candy and enjoy!

