



From the Desk of the CEO



Greetings to our staff, families, friends and to the individuals that we serve. As I look out my office

window, it is difficult to believe that it is already the end of August and that area schools have opened for the start of a new academic year.

I hope that everyone had a fun and safe summer and had the opportunity to visit nearby lakes for swimming, boating or just relaxing in the sun.

In early August, we completed the renovations on our newest property at 163 West Main Street, in Dudley, MA. This beautiful and very functional building is now the site of our **FRS Day Habilitation Program**. Everyone is very excited to be in the new space and we are looking forward

to a continuation of the outstanding services offered by our staff of direct care professionals.

The new location is also going to provide the opportunity for expanded growth. We will be conducting an open house at our new location, and will announce the date once we have that confirmed.

Welcome to all of the new staff who are working in the day and residential programs across the corporation. I sincerely hope that you will enjoy your work experience at Life-Skills, Inc., and that I will see you at the staff appreciation dinners that mark your tenure as a valued employee when you reach your 5-year milestones.

Please visit us online at: www.life-skillsinc.org for updates on programs, fundraisers and other opportunities offered by our corporation.



Tom Amick, CEO

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life-skills
INC.

building brighter futures
since 1970

With the long cold spring behind us and summer rolling on by, we are pleased to announce that over the past several months **Employment Directions** has experienced a record number of job placements with both the **Ticket to Work** and **Mass Rehab** consumers. Historically, we see a slight up-tick in placements as the weather warms and employers offer more seasonal and outdoor opportunities, but this year job seekers are coming to the table with more determination than ever. Could the ups and downs of 2017 have created a "take action" kind of attitude? Maybe. I would also like to believe that now more than ever, people are seeing that progress is difficult, even impossible, without a willingness to work together, to compromise, to try new things, to take that small step forward and keep working on the details. Our Employment Directions clients of late are displaying more motivation, flexibility and willingness to work as a team, and the results speak for themselves.



TICKET TO WORK UPDATE:

The process for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries to refer

themselves for Ticket to Work Employment Services has been greatly improved thanks to the new link, recently added to our Life-Skills, Inc. website. With one click, disabled job seekers can complete a brief referral/inquiry form, connect with a service provider and take that first step towards finding work. Thank you Tammy Lewandowski for your hard work getting this up and running smoothly.

MASS REHAB NEWS:

Moving day arrives for the Sturbridge Mass Rehab office. The closure of the Sturbridge MRC office has been a looming concern for the past several years and due to recent budget cuts the closure has become a reality. The office will be closed for the move on July

30th and 31st and will reopen at its new Southbridge location on August 1st. Services previously provided at the Sturbridge office will now take place at an area designated for MRC counselors, in the Career Center, located at 5 Optical Drive, Suite 200, Southbridge, MA and remotely. Although this change may take some getting used to, we look forward to continuing to provide quality Employment Services for MRC clients living in the towns of Southbridge, Sturbridge, Webster, Dudley, Oxford, Charlton, Spencer, all the Brookfields, Brimfield, Holland and Warren.

Submitted by:
Kim Lapworth
Vocational Trainer
Employment Directions





Life-Skills, Inc. is currently seeking new board members for our organization.

Life-Skills, Inc., is a CARF accredited non-profit corporation providing a wide variety of services to individuals with intellectual/developmental, physical, and emotional disabilities throughout Central and Western Massachusetts.

Formerly known as Southern Worcester County Rehabilitation Center, Inc., we have served area citizens for over 45 years, and currently offer Residential, Day Habilitation and Community Based Day Support programs in Auburn, Dudley, Fitchburg, Gardner, Greenfield, Lancaster, Leominster, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Webster, Winchendon, and Worcester.

Responsibilities:

- * Understand & support the organization's mission, services, policies and programs.
- * Help to promote & enhance Life-Skills, Inc. public profile and network within the business community.
- * Ability to attend monthly board meetings.
- * Support corporate fundraising activities through donations, participation and activism.
- * Oversight, review, and approval of the policies and procedures of Life-Skills, Inc.
- * Financial management, including adoption, oversight and approval of the annual budget.
- * Actively recruit, orient, and train new board members.
- * Term commitment: 3 years.

Experienced volunteer candidates for our Board of Directors with expertise in the following areas are needed:

- * Law
- * Finance
- * Advocacy
- * Corporate Governance, Strategic Planning
- * Outreach, networking, peer support groups
- * Real Estate
- * Fundraising

Benefits of Serving:

- * Leadership Opportunities
- * Personal & Professional Development
- * Experience to serve this unique population
- * Networking

Community minded candidates interested in getting involved and helping to build a brighter future for adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities, please contact:

Mike Toomey, Board President at (774) 200-8241 or email: mit@actleasing.com

www.life-skillsinc.org



March

Anthony Ashon, Chestnut Hill Dr.
Emmanuel Barjolo, Auburn
Michelle Crombie, Delaney Ave.
Bibiana Kagendo, Francis Ave.
Marriah Miller, Brodeur Ave.

April

Terry Beeso, Francis Ave.
Stacey Bonczek, Delaney Ave.
Elizabeth Crete, Sawyer St.
Dawnn Williams, Brodeur Ave.

May

Ashleigh Cumming, Mason Rd.
Emma Fahey, Brodeur Ave.
Pamela Lessard, Chestnut Hill Dr.
Stephanie Pastor, Francis Ave.
Rosdely Perez-Carrion, Auburn
Tracy Pierce, Delaney Ave.

June

Gail Raymond, Brodeur Ave.
Patience Siah, Auburn
Nicole Lawless, Delaney Ave.



inside scoop

Hi, my name is James and I wanted to tell everybody about my awesome weekend in New Hampshire. Every year I attend the Nascar racing with my brother where we spend the whole weekend. We've been going for several years now. It was a hot, sunny day but I remembered to use sun screen and wear my big hat to protect me from the sun.

We talk about sun safety a lot at the day program so I was very proud I remembered my hat. We ate hotdogs, chicken nuggets, and I had a nice cold soda. I had so much fun, I can't wait to go back next year!

Submitted by: James H.
Centre Place Day Hab



Submit content to be
featured in
future newsletters!
tlewandowski@life-skillsinc.org

highlights from human resources

Thank you

How to Master the Art of Saying Thank You

Do you say “thank you” like you mean it or do you just say it casually and almost apologetically? And when you thank someone, just how appreciative are you really being? The key is very simple – you really have to mean it when you say thank you!

People get it when you genuinely mean something and also when you are just going through the motions. Put yourself on the receiving end of being thanked – you probably remember well the few times when someone has truly shown their appreciation.

Here are some tips for mastering the art of saying thank you:

1. Say “Thank You” Like You Mean It

This is key – say it like you really mean it from your heart. Pause and even slow down your speech when you say the words.

2. Look for Opportunities to Thank Others

Every time someone does something for you, it's an opportunity for you to thank them.

3. Look People in the Eye

When you say thanks and look at people in the eye at the same time, your words will have great meaning.

4. Use Their Name

If you don't know someone's name, then it's easy to find out – just ask!

5. Be Specific About What You Are Thanking People For

Sometimes it means even more when people know what they are being thanked for.

6. Send a Thank You Note

Due to the use of texts and e-mail, people are far less personal in conveying their thanks. If you can't thank them face to face, don't hesitate to call someone or send a handwritten note.

Let's start appreciating people! You have a choice in how you behave towards others. You can be generous, considerate and caring to the people around you – or you can be selfish, self-centered and always put your own interests first.

Remind yourself that every interaction with another human being is a gift and an opportunity for growth and contribution. Everyone you meet is an amazing teacher. Let us all begin thanking people today!

Thank you!

Submitted by:
Eileen Beringer, HR Director



Life-Skills, Inc. has an **Employee Referral Incentive Program** to encourage our staff members to recruit other excellent employees. If you know of someone who would be a great addition to the Life-Skills, Inc. team, have them apply and name you on the application as the person who referred them. If they are hired and remain successfully employed, you will receive a bonus!



comfort dog program launches at greenfield day habilitation program



The Greenfield Police Department launched their new Comfort Dog Program at our Life-Skills, Inc. Day Hab

Program in Greenfield, MA. The Greenfield Police Department announced

their latest recruit - a 9-week-old Saint Bernard puppy. The dog, named **Officer Donut**, will serve as a comfort animal alongside 7-year-old **Officer Clarence**, an adult Saint Bernard with years of training.

The new program was announced with Officer Donut and Clarence at a

small event with staff and individuals from Greenfield Day Hab. Special thanks to Lieutenant William Gordon and Officer Laura Gordon for organizing this visit.

To request a meet and greet with Officer Donut or Clarence please contact Lt. Gordon at (413) 773-5411 ext. 1313



Submitted by: **Roxanne Melanson, Greenfield Day Hab**



Here at Greenfield Day Hab we have a lot of SPIRIT! The week of May 14th through the 18th we celebrated our spirit. Monday was **CRAZY HAT DAY** where we saw many fun and creative hats. Tuesday was **CRAZY HAIR DAY**, and boy did people get creative! Wednesday was **TIE DYE DAY** which was SO MUCH FUN! We enjoyed tie dying shirts, socks, and tank tops. Thursday was **BEACH DAY**, we looked so cool and were all ready to hit the beach. Friday was **DISNEY DAY** and everyone loved dressing the part of their favorite Disney characters or wearing clothing with Disney characters on them. We ended the day with Disney Karoke which was so much fun. We actually now have Karoke parties every Friday!



Submitted by: Chestnut Hill Drive

The guys at Chestnut Hill had a great spring, and are very happy to have the summer weather here at last. We all enjoyed having our first family cookout for Memorial Day, and hope to make it a tradition. Gustavo has been enjoying spending time outside visiting local walking, biking, and hiking trails. All of the recent carnivals have been exciting for Nik, Kenny, and Sean. Arthur has been enjoying spending time outside, building his very own Pride Rock in the back yard. The guys were sad to learn about the closing of Kasbar, but are excited to find new opportunities for weekly dances. They are also

looking forward to the summer concert series that are starting up in local communities.

We have had some major staff changes recently. Dayna Riley, has moved on to become a Residential Behavior Specialist, serving Brodeur Ave., Mason Rd., Arland Dr., Delaney Ave., Francis Ave., and the Auburn program. Dayna started her career at Life-Skills, Inc. working as a Developmental Assistant at Day Hab 1, and after leaving for a year to care for her child, she returned to Chestnut Hill as a 1:1 staff, and she quickly moved up to become the 2nd Shift Supervisor. Dayna

has provided so much to our program, and we will truly miss her. Dayna is an incredibly dedicated employee, and has a true passion for working with the people who we serve. We know that she will excel in her new role, and wish her the best of luck.

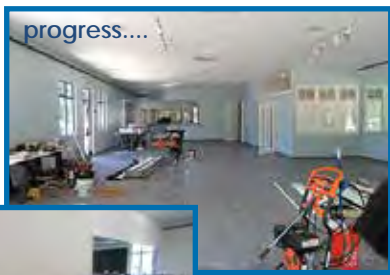
We would like to welcome Christopher Penalvert as our new 2nd shift supervisor. Chris has been with us at Chestnut Hill since May of 2016. He has shown that he cares deeply for all of the guys that we serve, and is always willing to do whatever he can to enrich their lives. We are very excited for Chris to take on this new role within the program.

Submitted by: Karen Kell, FRS



We here at FRS have spent the last few months getting ready to move in to our forever home. All of the staff and individuals have been over to see the new place and cannot wait to get in permanently. Once we are in there we will be having a "Welcome Home Party" for all of the FRS family. We will also be planning an open house for everyone to come over and share our new found home. We are all very excited and happy about the upcoming move.

While we wait for all the finishing touches on the new building we have been busy doing all the things we normally do. There have been trips to the movies, the art museum, YMCA and Community Cat Connection. The cats really seem to enjoy our homemade treats! We also have our usual once a month parties. Fun! Fun! Fun!



Homemade Cat Treat Recipe:

(found on Pinterest)

1 can tuna (undrained)

1 cup cornmeal

1 cup flour

1/3 cup water

Mix all ingredients, roll into 1/4 inch balls and place on greased cookie sheet & bake for 20 minutes.





ADAPTIVE KAYAKING

Submitted by Heather Socha, OTR/L

Adaptive kayaking has been a longstanding program we have offered to our individuals thanks to the efforts of our dedicated COTA, Steve. The program is organized by **All Out Adventures** and runs for 6 consecutive weeks starting late July. Our individuals look forward to participating in this program every year.

We ride in tandem kayaks that provide our individuals with specialized 1:1 attention. Our individuals are encouraged to assist with paddling if they are able to, or else they can sit back and enjoy the ride.

Therapeutic benefits of this activity include, but are not limited to: socialization,

building self-esteem, upper body/core strengthening, and establishing great rapport between staff and individuals.

This program is great for our individuals who really enjoy the outdoors and the water, but do not have the opportunities or resources to access them.





with Mike Leo

Mike Leo is a local resident of Dudley, MA who was able to visit the Life Skills, Inc. day habs and share his love for music with our individuals. He was able to answer a couple of questions for us about his background and how he got started doing what he does.

Q: How long have you been playing music/offering the drum circles?

A: I've been playing guitar and singing for about 26 years. My grandmother had an old acoustic guitar in her closet that I would always mess around with. After I taught myself some chords, I had the opportunity to play in lots of bands over the years. There was always a drum kit set up in our practice rooms and I learned how to play drums just by messing around with those kits before and after rehearsals. I facilitated my first drum circle at the Adult Day Health program I worked at back in 2006, the tricky part was, we didn't have any drums. We used empty 5 gallon water jugs. You know what? It sounded amazing and the participants LOVED it. I did weekly drum circles there for over 2 years with 30-40 people just using those water jugs.



Q: What's your favorite part about the sessions?

A: The smiles. The unity. The joy. The experience of putting a group of people together and creating something

unique. Each drum circle contains so many different people from so many backgrounds and levels of ability. Everyone has a voice, and I love how these drum sessions allow for everyone, of any ability level, to equally contribute their voice to creating something beautiful.

Q: What are some of the names of the instruments you bring to the circles?



A: I bring drums from all over the world: congas and bongos from



Latino and Spanish heritage. Djembes and tubanos from Africa,

Darbukas from the Middle East and South Asia.

I also bring a variety of hand percussion instruments such as shakers, bells, maracas, tambourines, boom whackers, claves, and chimes.

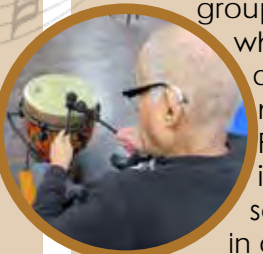
Any other information you'd like to share:

I am blessed to be able to connect with agencies such as Life Skills, Inc. and bring these programs to your amazing folks. The idea of

"ownership" or "authority" over something is a natural part of human behavior, whether it be a child playing with a doll, a teenager playing a sport, an adult with a job, hobby, garden, or anything in between. One of the fringe benefits of these drum circles is that it gives all of these folks the opportunity to make decisions, to decide what instrument they would like to play and how they would like to play them. They get to decide what voice they are going to add to the collective whole.



The joy of making music together comes from so many levels, and I believe that one of them is the freedom of expression that is offered to a group of people for whom so many decisions are made for them. For that hour, in that drum session, THEY are in charge of what happens.



Our individuals took much joy participating in the drum circles sessions and are looking forward to having Mike provide this service on a regular basis. It was great to see so many of our individuals come out of their comfort zones and become immersed in such a therapeutic and unifying experience.

Submitted by:
Heather Socha, OTR/L



meaningful employment

Reflecting a commitment to a robust and competitive American labor force, the 2018 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme is **"America's Workforce: Empowering All."** Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and provides education on the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to provide education on disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

"Americans of all abilities must have access to good, safe jobs," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. "Smart employers know that including different perspectives in problem-solving situations leads to better solutions. Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens their business, increases competition and drives innovation."

Source: <https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/>

Studies have shown that people with disabilities:

- * are more aware and conscientious of safety in the workplace than their counterparts without disabilities.
- * take less absent days.
- * are highly motivated, leading to increased productivity.
- * are more likely to stay on the job longer than workers without disabilities.
- * are consistently ranked as good or very good on work quality, motivation, engagement, integration with co-workers, dependability and attendance.
- * help promote an inclusive culture that appeals to the talent pool organizations want to attract.

Source: "The Advantages Employers Receive from Hiring People with Disabilities." Bizjournals.com, The Business Journals, www.bizjournals.com

Life-Skills, Inc. will be celebrating the progress and accomplishments of our individuals throughout the year, and also highlighting the businesses who employ our individuals.



LONG SUBARU
WEBSTER, MA



Brian's favorite parts of his job are "taking out the trash and making money!"

Brian H. is reaching his 5-year milestone as a Service Department Assistant at Long Subaru in Webster, MA! The owner and employees of Long Subaru are committed to their community and giving back, and they have been incredibly supportive to Life-Skills, Inc. and the individuals employed. Brian's job duties consist of janitorial tasks for the main building and service area. He also take the tires and used parts to the recycle area which is a tremendous help to the service technicians.



horticultural therapy



Creating opportunity through horticultural therapy – Best Buds Greenhouse.

Our Best Buds Greenhouse was developed to provide unique employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It operates from March through July, and our individuals are involved from seedling to mature plant. Plants are sold at our Take 2 Consignment and Closet Classics Thrift store locations. Special trips were also made to DDS in Southbridge, Worcester, and Milford.



Some of the benefits of horticultural therapy for our individuals include stress reduction, problem solving, socialization, creative expression, and physical activity. (Before and after photos show the results of their efforts). Sales from our plants this season was just under \$5,000 – this was a great year considering how challenging it was with the lack of



warm weather this spring. Our hanging baskets & specialty plants are always well received. This was a great accomplishment for everyone involved from Morris Street Day Hab.



11th Annual
East Meets West
Health & Business Fair



Sponsored by:



Visit our Facebook page to see more photos, for updated info, and future events:
www.facebook.com/lifeskillsincorp



On behalf of everyone at Life-Skills, Inc., we would like to thank all who attended and participated in our 11th Annual East Meets West Health & Business Fair and American Red Cross Blood Drive on April 28 at Bartlett High School in Webster, MA.

A HUGE THANKS to members of our community who came out to support the fair, and all who contributed either as a donor, supporter, participant or volunteer in this year's fundraising event. Thank you to Bartlett High School, Al Bercume, & Page Chiropractic. Thanks for supporting our mission!

This fair was also made possible by the generosity and support of our sponsors Cam's Oil Service, Inc., Berkshire Bank, and Fallon Health.

*Proceeds from this event support programs and services for Life-Skills, Inc. individuals. Thank you for your part in helping us to continue to build a brighter future for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Please support these businesses who support us!



Chip ⁱⁿ **FORE a GREAT CAUSE**



Great Day on the Links for Life-Skills, Inc.!

On Friday, June 29, we hosted our 16th annual "Chip in Fore a Great Cause" Charity Golf tournament at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford, MA. It was a fantastic event with beautiful weather – and with nearly \$10,000 being raised!

We would like to thank all of the golfers who came out to share the day with us and enjoy a fun game of golf in support of our mission. Thank you to our volunteers for your time and effort, and special thanks to all of our generous sponsors and donors who helped to make this tournament a fundraising success!

Proceeds from this event will go towards the purchase of a Sara Lift and therapy equipment for our day habilitation programs.

Thank you again to all who participated and supported – you are playing a vital role in helping us to "build a brighter future" for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. See you next year!





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building brighter futures
since 1970

44 Morris Street
Webster, MA 01570

 save the date

9th
ANNUAL CHARITY
BASS
FISHING
Tournament



1st Place
\$1000!

Guaranteed based on 25 boat field.
Payout will be adjusted higher or lower
depending on number of participants.



Sunday, October 14, 2018
8 am - 4 pm

Memorial Beach (Webster Lake)
Webster, MA 01570

Entry Fee: \$110 per team
(Includes Parking)

Register Early—Payment order will determine launch order

Phone: (508) 943-0700 x2105
Email: tyeulenski@life-skillsinc.org



Lunker Pool
Small & Large Mouth