

From the Desk of the CEO



Greetings!

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season and that your hopes and wishes for the new

year are realized.

We have added several new staff administratively and programmatically, and I would like to welcome all of them to the Life-Skills, Inc. family.

Welcome to our newest class of direct care professionals, I sincerely hope that you will find fulfillment in the care and training that you provide to the individuals at Life-Skills, Inc.

A special welcome to Jorge Morales, the new Program Manager for the Morris Street Day Habilitation and Vocational Services program.

I am also very pleased to say that we officially welcomed a new Human Resources Director on November 18, Ms. Jennifer Greenfield. Jennifer

comes to us with significant Human Resources experience. I hope that you will take an opportunity to stop by her office and welcome her to the corporation. Things are hectic at this point due to open enrollment and many other initiatives; however, the plan is for her to get out to visit all of the day and residential programs.

As I am sure most everyone knows, Lynn Flynn retired in early December. Our new Human Resources Coordinator is Kim Derby, please welcome her to the corporation as well when you have an opportunity.

I am very excited about the new year. We will be adding a new residential facility in Greenfield, MA, and another in Gardner, MA. Renovations should be starting shortly on the Greenfield home and we are hoping for an early spring ground breaking on the Gardner facility.

We are also welcoming three new members to our Board of Directors. Mr. Marc Martin will be joining the Board as the Treasurer. Mr. Martin is

a retired Acoustics Engineer for the BOSE Corporation. Ms. Kara Westerman is the Director of Student Services for the Spencer/East Brookfield Regional school district, and Ms. Sandra Durand is the Director of Operations for the Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center.

We are also looking forward to another great year of fundraising activities including our 13th annual East Meets West Health & Business Fair on April 25 at Bartlett High School in Webster, MA, and our 18th annual Chip in Fore a Great Cause Golf Tournament on July 10 at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford, MA. Save the date cards will be sent out as reminders this spring.

Enjoy the remaining months of winter, be safe and remember, every day that goes by brings us closer to spring and all of the outdoor activities available in New England.

Tom Amick
Tom Amick, CEO

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September

*Catherine Ackah – Brodeur Ave.
Emmanuel Barjolo – Auburn House
Katelynn Healey - Delaney Ave.
Mercy Jubin – Delaney Ave.*

November

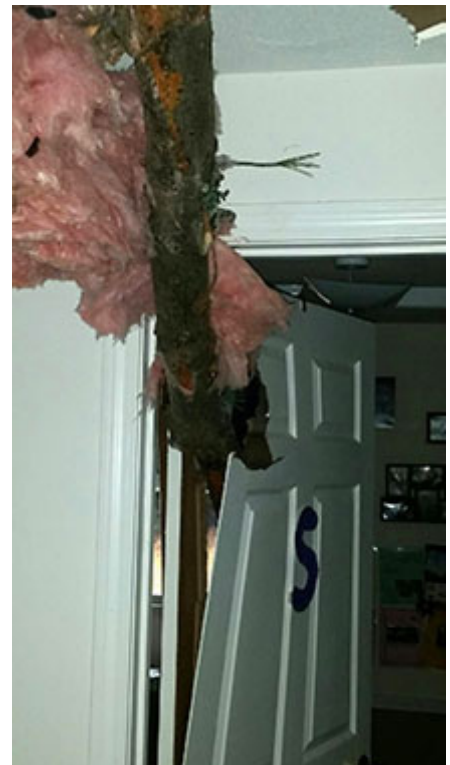
*Rachael Hicks – Auburn House
Stacey Krasnecky – Brodeur Ave.
Gayle LaCasse – Delaney Ave.
Kristina Mundell – Chestnut Hill*

M
V
P

In October, in the very early hours of the morning, there was a wind storm that broke down a huge tree that crashed down on to the roof of our residence in Winchendon, MA. The most extensive damage was at the end of the home where two individuals were asleep in their bedrooms. When the tree fell it flattened a large section of the roof, and tore through the roof leaving size-able openings where large amounts of rain poured in. One of the limbs that penetrated the roof wedged itself into a bedroom door, requiring firemen from the Winchendon Fire Department to pry

open the door so that the individual could exit the room. Fortunately, no one was injured. However, due to the damage sustained to the roof and the electrical system, the building inspector felt that it was unsafe to occupy the house and everyone was evacuated to the Colonial Inn in Fitchburg, MA where they stayed through the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday.

They were able to move back into the restored home after the new year started.



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



I just wanted to send a short note about the staff Life Skills, Inc. has at our Sibley program.

We've been back in the program a week today!

They have done the MOST AMAZING job from start to finish during this crisis.

Things you might not know is:

In the 3 months of displacement (90 days): I had only 2 call outs - staff were the most dependable in this time of need.

I had zero MOR or serious IR.

The individuals continued to get out in the community and have family visits.

Staff decorated the hotel rooms during the holidays to make it special for them.

They baked home made meals and baked goods.

They sang, danced and read to them in their two small hotels rooms.

They loved, cared for, and

comforted a special lady when her mother passed unexpectedly. Two staff joined her on their own time for her mother's "Celebration of Life".

From the 2 a.m. phone call to report the fallen tree, evacuation, settling the rooms, cleaning and putting everyone's room back together, making their house a home again, etc. - these staff are the poster children for ABOVE and BEYOND!

In the human service world, where we sometimes lose the MOST important word... HUMAN, I can say that the staff I have are true heroes.

I wanted to take the time to also note the Day Habs that helped with meals at their programs to elevate some of the pressure.

Thank you to the maintenance department for all their help.

Through this whole process the ladies were happy, healthy, and cared for like

family, and for that I'm proud to send this on behalf of my staff!

We have a small amount of organizing and filing left to be 100% set, but I am confident it will be done without hesitation.

Submitted by:

**Roxanne Kakitis,
Program Manager**

"...There is no way to prepare for a disaster of this type, however the response to the aftermath is where all of you stepped up and ensured that the daily lives of the affected individuals was the best that it could be..."

"...thank you for everything that you did during the crisis, and for continuing to provide the excellent care that ensured that every individual's special needs were taken care of."

- Tom Amick, CEO

staff spotlight



has been rewarding. I am heading into my 5th year in a management role and LSI is only helping me grow!

Favorite part of the job: My favorite part of the job is brainstorming new ways for the individuals we support to reach their goals and objectives. Being creative and thinking outside the box is so important to avoid complacency with staff AND individuals! Watching individuals meet and surpass their anticipated goals is very rewarding.

time and bowling, or taking a cruise down to Newport for Flo's Clam Shack and the gorgeous views from Ocean Drive.

Something about you people may not know: My husband and I adopted our beautiful son, taking him home from Yale New Haven hospital when he was just 8 days old. He was a "safe haven baby"! Biggest blessing to come into our life. His official "gotcha day" is December 19th, 2014. He is now 6 and in the 1st grade.

Current Role at LSI: I am the Program Manager at Day Hab I.

Why did you want to work at LSI: I was looking for a new challenge and I love working in the human service field. I have worked in a residential setting and an in-home support setting. So far, Day Hab is my favorite!

How has LSI helped you in your career development?: I am gaining a lot of knowledge and experience managing Day Hab 1. I come to LSI with knowledge surrounding Connecticut DDS practices which is helping our Day Hab grow diversely including CT individuals. Learning Massachusetts DDS and DMA policies has been challenging, but also nice that they are fairly similar to CT! I am continuing to expand my experience in management which

Most rewarding experience so far: Walking in to an amazing team of women who work so hard to ensure every individual has their needs met. Change is never easy for anyone; however, my team has been open to the positive changes I am bringing to the program. I cannot wait to see what the future holds for Day Hab 1!

Most challenging: Being short staffed! I must say though, the staff at Day Hab 1 ROCK it when we are down - pulling together and being creative! They always manage to surprise me and make me proud to manage this program.

Things you enjoy doing outside of work: I love spending time with my 6 year old son Gavin and husband Dustin! We go on "adventures" all the time whether it's just down the street to the bowling alley for some arcade

FAVORITE:

Food/restaurant: Whistle Stop

Movie/TV Show: Grey's Anatomy & Good Doctor

Music: Country, Hard Rock, and Pop

Sports Team: Patriots!

Quote: "6+3=9 but so does 5+4. The way you do things isn't always the only way to do them. Respect other people's way of thinking"





The PBS Leadership Team would like to announce the addition of the "Quarterly Universal Implementation Champ" (QUIC) Award! This award is for programs who excel at the implementation of Positive Behavior Supports at the Universal Level. Each quarter, the PBS Leadership Team will vote for a program that meets the criteria and the winner will earn the ability to display the QUIC trophy in their program and have breakfast cooked for them by the PBS Leadership Team!

In September 2019, the PBS Leadership team presented our residential program in Auburn with the QUIC award and put on a breakfast for their staffing team. Auburn was the first site to receive this award. They not only submitted monthly PBS data early and met all their PBS benchmarks, but they have shown an enthusiasm about the implementation of universal strategies and have worked hard to embrace the culture of PBS. Thank you to everyone at Auburn and congratulations!



In December 2019, the PBS Leadership Team voted for Greenfield Day Hab to receive the QUIC award. Greenfield has worked on Universal Supports for almost 3 years, and they are the "most improved" program. They have submitted their data on time for the last year and have shown an extra effort to prioritize PBS principles. The PBS Leadership team will be presenting them their award in January, 2020! Who will be next...?



OFFICER DONUT RETURNS

Submitted by:
Greenfield Day Hab



JUNE 2018

To celebrate National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day, Greenfield Day Habilitation invited members of the Greenfield Police Department to pay our program a visit to pick up freshly baked cookies and allow our staff and individuals the opportunity to thank them for their service.

We were also delighted with a return visit from Officer Donut, the department's comfort dog, who last visited us in June 2018.....my how you have grown!

Thank you to all of our police officers who keep our communities safe!

Life-Skills, Inc.'s Greenfield Day Habilitation program held a collection of socks called "Warm Their Soles" for a local emergency shelter in the month of December. Several individuals and staff donated socks to be delivered to those who need to warm their soles.

Thank you all who donated!

**Submitted by Debbie Zuron, COTA/L,
Greenfield Day Hab**



News from FRS



Staff and individuals from our FRS Day Habilitation were treated to a morning of song from a very talented group of singers from the Shepherd Hill Regional High School "Mystique" Choir.

The choir performed a collection of holiday and pop classics, and certainly spread holiday cheer throughout our program.

Thank you Becky Bussierre, Choral Director and the Mystique Choir for stopping by.

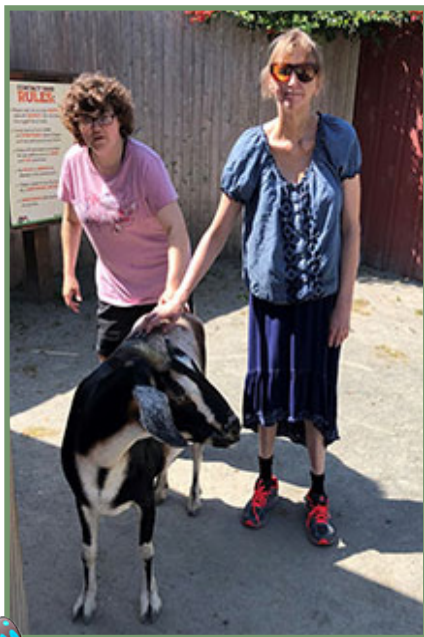


Sean, Nik, Arthur, Kenny, and Gustavo were very excited to throw their annual Halloween Party again this year. It was a fun-filled night with plenty of delicious food, dancing, and games.

Thank you to all of the programs for contributing food and drink, and thank you to all of the hard-working staff that made it possible.

Submitted by:
Courtney O'Toole (Levesque)
Program Manager
Chestnut Hill Drive Residence





The ladies at Delaney had fun this summer. We all enjoyed a trip to Magic Wings Butterfly Museum. The butterflies loved landing on AS and MA. A few even landed on CS and PZ. We were able to see all kinds of beautiful colored butterflies, and we even saw an iguana.

We traveled to Yankee Candle in Deerfield, MA, where we made our own candles and even dipped our hands in wax. We were able to choose which colors we wanted our waxed hands to be. Parents of our individuals were excited



when we gave them their colorful waxed hands.

Our next outing was to Roger William's Zoo in Rhode Island. We loved watching the elephants and the giraffe eating and the bear playing in the water. We went in to pat the goats and we were also able to feed them. We were even able to pat an armadillo!

We went to Douglas State Park for swimming and had a picnic lunch. We all had a great time!

PZ was able to go to Old Orchard for a day. She had a great time swimming in a heated pool, enjoying the water and almost having the pool to herself.

MA went with her sister to Waterville Valley in

New Hampshire. She went shopping and then swimming in her pool. A few weeks later, MA and her sister went to Disney World for a week! She went to see Mickey Mouse and all of his friends. She had a great time seeing all the wonderful shows, riding the fun rides, and enjoying the water parks.

CS had a fun weekend at Cape Cod for her cousins wedding. Then went to Old Orchard Beach with her family for a week. She enjoyed the ocean every day.

AS had a surprise visit from her grandmother. She enjoyed her visit and had lunch with her. Of course, there were a few gifts involved, which made the visit extra special.



Submitted by: Nancy Hill, Residential Manager, Delaney Ave.

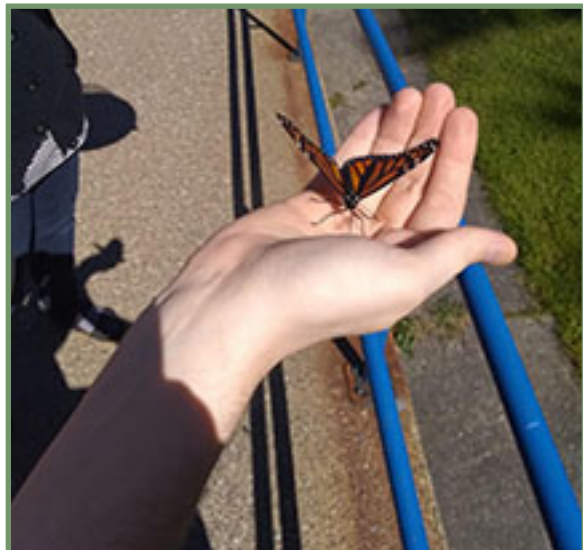
DAY HAB I ACTIVITIES:



- * The addition of our new attending room!
- * We planted a garden over the summer and grew veggies!
- * September 13, we had an end of summer luau!
- * Laura from Fiber Art Goddess came to the program to show individuals the life cycle of monarch butterflies. Each person was able to create a watercolor butterfly that we hung in the windows and on the ceiling. Arthur was able to release a butterfly. He named it Mariah Carey and sent her off to Mexico.
- * Laura also came to program and taught individuals how to weave using mixed media! Roy already had weaving skills which he learned while he and his family visited home (Nigeria) over the summer months! Elaine had a blast creating the piece for her new bedroom.
- * Jim Stahr comes 2 - 3 times per month for sing-a-longs with his acoustic guitar. Everyone loves his visits, and enjoy singing and dancing along to the music.
- * We enjoyed a Thanksgiving Feast.

- * Shepherd Regional High School Show Choir "Mystique" performed for the program on December 18. We also had a special visit from Santa and had a Secret Santa Gift Exchange!
- * We celebrated Crazy Hair Day December 17, and PJ Day December 24.
- * On December 20, ten individuals from our program attended the play, "A Christmas Carol" at The Hanover Theater in Worcester, MA.
- * Yoga once a month with "All Can Do Yoga".
- * We went on several trips to Patriots Place, movies, library, bowling, Fort Hill Farm Corn Maze, Foxwoods, summer \$1 movies at the Solomon Pond Mall, and Webster Lake.
- * We are looking forward to meeting new individuals coming into the program over the next couple of months.
- * Staff do such a WONDERFUL job providing meaningful supports to the individuals who attend DH1. They should be very proud of their work.
- * Congratulations to Kendra Tortolani who accepted the position of Case Manager for Day Hab I, as Rhianna Curotto accepted the Program Manager position. Kendra is doing a stellar job in her new role!

Submitted by:
Rhianna Curotto,
Program Manager, DH1





This past spring and summer were jam packed with adaptive activities out in the community! Clients from our southern programs were able to participate in: adaptive swimming, kayaking, and hiking. We even had the opportunity to visit a horse farm which we will be partnering with in Spring 2020 to bring back adaptive horseback riding.

This year was the first year adaptive swimming was available through Easter Seals and the Universal Access Program. This program ran for 6 weeks during the summer on Friday's, and was located at Bennett Pool in Worcester, MA. The program focused on learning basic swimming skills/strokes, water safety, as well as fostering a safe environment to have fun and make new friends. Our clients definitely loved it and we look forward to continued involvement next year. The cost for participation in this program is \$5 per session per client.

Adaptive kayaking really blossomed this year! Thanks

to the help and extra funding from Blackstone Valley Corridor, DCR added two more kayaking sessions this summer. This allowed our therapy staff to take a larger number of participants and give more of our individuals an opportunity to try this fun activity. The program ran for 8 weeks on Thursday's and was mainly located at Lake Quinisigamond in Worcester, MA. One session was offered at Wallum Lake in Douglas, MA, which was a nice change of environment and closer to home for our guys. Kayaking is always such a fun whole day experience filled with lots of joy

"I loved the experience of kayaking with Heather. We both had so much fun & we got our exercise as well, but all and all I had a great day with Heather." - Mary M.



and laughs. The participants especially enjoy our picnic lunches in the park afterwards. The cost for participation in this program is \$8 per session per client.

"I liked it! It was good!" - Alfie

Life-Skills, Inc. has decided to work with Canterbury Acres located in

Spencer, MA to re-introduce adaptive horseback riding to our individuals. Some of our individuals had the opportunity to visit the farm this past July. It was amazing to see the power of animals with our population. Some of our individuals immediately connected with

the horses, wanting to pet and brush them, while others were extremely cautious. Towards the end of the day, the owner took a horse out of its stall and secured it inside the barn. She encouraged the individuals to approach and pet the horse, brush it, and even give it hugs. While participants engaged with the horse, she worked on education and memory skills (i.e. parts of the horse, name of the horse, etc.). By the end of the visit, everyone was so comfortable being in close proximity to a horse and wanted to come back. The cost for participation in this program is \$40 for a half hour private session per client.

The benefits of these adaptive programs are so *substantial and priceless*. I love being able to foster individual growth by providing new experiences for our individuals who might not have been able to try these activities otherwise. By being immersed and participating in these community experiences, our individuals learn valuable life skills that can't be taught.



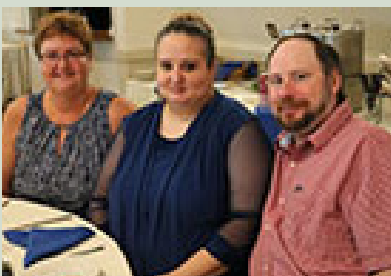
Submitted by: Heather Socha, OTR/L



Employee Milestone Anniversaries

2010 2013

"In the arena of human life, the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action." -Aristotle



On September 25, Life-Skills, Inc. honored 33 employees celebrating milestone anniversaries ranging from 5 to 30 years at Pine Ridge Country Club, in Oxford, MA. Tom Amick, Life-Skills, Inc. CEO began the ceremony speech with, "In the opening to this year's Employee Milestone Yearbook, there is a quote from Aristotle, a 3rd Century Greek Philosopher, which says, 'In the arena of human life, the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action'. This to me sums up why we are here tonight, to reward and honor each of you for the positive qualities you have exhibited throughout the years, and have dedicated to the individuals supported by Life-Skills, Inc."

Congratulations all of our honorees on these milestone achievements:

30 Years – Nancy Marlborough

20 Years – Sandy Hardy

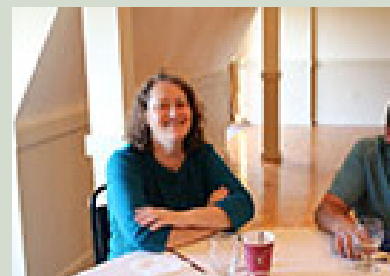
15 Years – Esterceley Caraballo, Donna Chamberland, Dorothy Claydon, Kenneth Fairclough, James Kiely, Debra Lovewell, Nurys Rosa

10 Years – Ruben Burgos, Nancy Hill, Kim Lapworth, Rachel McHome, Tracy Pierce, Francis Scott, Laura Walker, Debra Zuron

5 Years – Michael Bernier, Serena Bettez, Joann Chausse, Raimee DeMars, Nicholene DeOrio, Julia Dinardo, Kimberly Gravelle, Mary Johnson, Danielle Jolly, Jennifer Lopez, Richard Mwangi, Terence Ober, Stephanie Penniman, Rosdely Perez-Carrion, Heather Roberts, Catryna Smith

Thank you all for your years of service and dedication!

Visit our Facebook page for more photos!
www.facebook.com/lifeskillsincorp





A shout out to our local public libraries!

It is refreshing to see that so many towns have responded with resilience and a new perspective about the important role that the public library plays in every community.

Over the years, I have had the pleasure of utilizing their warm meeting spaces, free computer, internet, printer, and fax services necessary to find and apply for jobs. With the limited number of affordable internet options available, the local library has been a valuable and accessible alternative for an increasing number of job seekers working with our Employment Directions program through both Ticket to Work and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

Additionally, on any given day at any local library, I may witness children attending a story hour, knitting groups quietly working and chatting, an art enthusiast admiring new exhibits by local artisans, a young father checking out a children's museum

pass, tutors helping ESL learners or GED students, patrons using the internet to connect with friends and family, to do research, or to listen to music or a favorite podcast, play online games, and, of course, to search employment boards and apply for jobs!

If you have not visited your local library in a while, I invite you to do so, and be sure to let your town government know that these treasured spaces are important to all and worth the funds and resources necessary to keep up with these changing times.

Submitted by:
Kim Lapworth
Vocational Trainer
Employment Directions

NOW RECRUITING VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS:

MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT LIFE-SKILLS, INC.

We are currently seeking energetic, community-minded individuals interested in volunteering their time and expertise to help build a brighter future for adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities, and to serve on our board of directors for a 3-year term.

This is a great opportunity for professional development and personal growth. You can make a difference while giving back to your community in a meaningful way!

To learn more, or for info on the application process, contact:
Mike Toomey, Board President - Email: mjt1963@charter.net
Janice Smith, Board Secretary - Email: janicesmt@gmail.com



13th Annual
East Meets West

Health & Business Fair



**VENDORS, CRAFTERS,
SPONSORS!**

This is a great opportunity
to market your business
while supporting a great
cause!

*Proceeds benefit programs & services for adults with intellectual & developmental disabilities

Saturday, April 25, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Bartlett High School Gymnasium

52 Lake Parkway

Webster, MA 01570

FREE to Public
Free Screenings * Demos * Samples *
Raffle Prizes & More! Indoor & Outdoor Vendors!

Conventional and Holistic Vendors, Crafters & Local Businesses
Featured. Something for Everyone!



Vendor & Sponsors Opportunities:
Call: (508) 943-0700 x2130 or
(508) 943-0700 x2125
Email: frs@life-skillsinc.org
Event info: www.life-skillsinc.org

**SAVE
THE DATE!**



For online registration or
sponsorship, please visit:

www.life-skillsinc.org

Chip in **FORE a
GREAT CAUSE**

18th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

to benefit adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Gather your favorite foursome and join Life-Skills, Inc. at Pine Ridge
Country Club for a great day of golf for a great cause!

* Shotgun Start at 8:30 a.m. *

Friday, July 10, 2020

Pine Ridge Country Club * 28 Pleasant Street * Oxford, MA

Contact Info: Dave Kline (508) 943-0700 x2103 * Email: dkline@life-skillsinc.org

18 Holes of Golf * Best Ball Format * On-Course Games * Cookout Buffet

10th ANNUAL CHARITY **BASS FISHING** *Tournament*

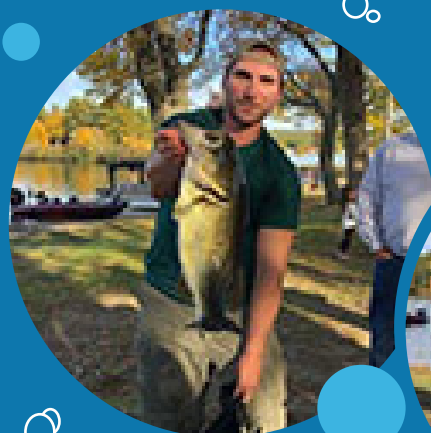


Our 10th Annual Hooked on Life-Skills, Inc. Charity Bass Tournament was held on October 13, 2019. We had 45 boats participate in very comfortable and relaxing fishing conditions with partial sun and temperature rising above 60 degrees. The

fishing was very tough for the majority of the field, but as usual, some teams are always able to find them on Webster Lake!

The event raised \$4500, which will be used to support therapeutic community

based experiences and much needed items for all Life-Skills, Inc. day habilitation programs. Special thanks to all of our generous sponsors and donors who provided us money and raffle table prizes to reach this total.



Congratulations to the winners of the tournament:

- 1st place - Kompel/Jaskolski - 14.50 lbs. (\$1,100)
- 2nd place - Langlois/Thibeault - 11.50 lbs. (\$700)
- 3rd place - Warhurst/Martin - 11.20 lbs. (\$500)
- 4th place - Gaboriault/McCarthy - 11.00 lbs. (\$400)
- 5th place - Rivet/Larivee - 10.80 lbs. (\$300)
- 6th place - Moorey/Moorey - 10.15 lbs. (\$225)
- 7th place - Hancin/Iveno - 7.90 lbs. (\$150)
- 8th place - Johnson/Bernardo - 5.25 lbs.

(Free Entry) Lunker Largemouth Bass - Kompel/Jaskolski - 5.50 lbs.
Lunker Smallmouth Bass - Langlois/Thibeault - 2.55 lbs.

Thanks to everyone who participated!

Visit our Facebook page for more photos!



THANK YOU SPONSORS



BARRY'S
Bait & Tackle



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SERVICES, INC.

Paul Starzec Custom
Masonry

Team
KLINKER/CHAULK

The Allaire
Family



Stephen
FLYNN





building brighter futures
since 1970

44 Morris Street
Webster, MA 01570



Thank you for supporting our initiative to **Go Green**. Subscribe to our Portraits of Progress email newsletter and get updates on our agency delivered straight to your inbox!

<https://life-skillsinc.org/newsletters>