



From the Desk of the CEO



Greetings & Happy Spring!

Since our last meeting there have been some very significant changes at the main office. We now have a new

Director of Human Resources, Mr. Jim Piotrowski, and a new HR Generalist, Ms. Chantal Froystein.

I am sad to report that Kathy Nolan, our CFO, is retiring at the end of May. Kathy has brought our financial reporting system to a level not seen prior to her starting her work for Life-Skills, Inc. ten years ago. We will miss her and wish her the very best in her retirement.

We also had a change in our Day Habilitation leadership. David Kline, former Director of Day Habilitation Services, who had worked at Life-Skills, Inc. for 27 years, left our employment to take an executive position at another Human Service Provider agency. Ms. Roxanne Melanson

who has worked for Life-Skills, Inc. for 16 years as a Case Manager and the Program Manager for our Greenfield Day Habilitation program, has assumed the position of Director of Day Habilitation.

On May 20, 2022 at the Legislative Breakfast, Ms. Lisa Morgan was recognized for her 29 years of outstanding work in "Building Brighter Futures", for the intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals served by Life-Skills, Inc.

We are continuing our slow but steady renovations of our residential homes. At this time, we are renovating two bathrooms at our Arland Drive home and have begun to do Spring painting in some of the residences.

Life-Skills, Inc. once again received a three-year Accreditation from the **Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)**, an international organization

dedicated to ensuring quality services for the disability community. Congratulations to the staff and management of our 6 day habilitation facilities for your work in providing consistent services at a very high level of effectiveness.

After we watched the snow blowing by our windows, we now move into summer and all of the outdoor activities that we look forward to. Enjoy the warmer weather, be safe and be careful, we need you and all the skills you bring in providing care and support to the individuals in our day, residential, and vocational services.

Sincerely,

Tom Amick, CEO

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On behalf of Life-Skills, Inc. Board of Directors, Mike Toomey, Board President, made a surprise visit to our main office to present a gift to our CEO, Tom Amick, in celebration of his 35 year work anniversary at Life-Skills, Inc.

35 Years!!! Congratulations, Tom, on achieving this great milestone, and thank you for your dedication and service to Life-Skills, Inc.

★ MVP MOST VALUABLE PLAYERS

January

Carol Krasnecky - Delaney Ave

February

Amber Baillargion - Delaney Ave

March

George Leaming - Delaney Ave

April

Tabitha Hermanson - Delaney Ave



WHAT STAFF ARE SAYING:

Jennah D., Developmental Assistant from our Day Hab I program said she "feels important" here, working with our individuals. She feels like she's "teaching" all the time as individuals "come to [her] for help."

SNIPPETS FROM "POWER OF STAY" INTERVIEWS
CONDUCTED BY HUMAN RESOURCES DEPT.
USED WITH PERMISSION

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



Here's some **GREAT** news on the hiring front from LinkedIn.

Dyslexic thinkers rejoice and be proud. You can now show your Dyslexia strength on your LinkedIn profile. Create or Log into your LinkedIn account, visit your profile and check off the "Dyslexic Thinking" box in the skills section. The workplace needs your problem solving, reasoning, visualization and communication skills. Employers need to know that you are a creative and innovative thinker!

It's long past time to let your Dyslexic ABILITIES shine!



Since 1996 Life-Skills, Inc. has been assisting unemployed and underemployed Worcester County residents acquire and maintain meaningful employment in a variety of appropriate work environments.

The Massachusetts' Ticket to Work program allows individuals receiving SSDI benefits to work and earn money without losing their benefits.

For more information:

- **Call:** (508) 943-0700, Ext. 2171
- **Email:** voctrainer@life-skillsinc.org

Visit:
<https://life-skillsinc.org/employment-services>

Are You Ready to...

- Increase your income?
- Explore your work options?
- Keep your Medicaid/Medicare while you work?
- Gain greater personal fulfillment through work?

Social Security's Ticket to Work program and Work Incentives can help you find meaningful work. If you're age 18 through 64 and you receive Social Security disability benefits, you can take advantage of these free services.



**Choose a Ticket to Work employment services provider.
Work with your provider to plan a better future.**

508-943-0700
ext: 2171

Are You Ready to Choose Work?

Information/Resources
Call 1-866-968-7842 or
1-866-833-2967 (TTY)
Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/work
www.facebook.com/choosework





virtual day programming

Virtual day programming has brought so many of us together, thank God for technology. Centre Place Day hab runs 4 different groups throughout the month. Groups are morning meeting, Current Events, Human Rights and Safety. Barbara runs the morning meeting group where she comes in costume (hat) showing a visual of what will be discussed that day from weather, sports, and national, along with holidays. She also shares information, asks questions to the group and gets feedback from everyone. Current Events is run by Nancy who brings us topics of different things going on in the world, events that

may be happening or that has happened in the past. Brittney runs our Human Rights group where she talks about each right of the month, asking questions, getting feedback and giving us good points on each topic. Philo runs the Safety group where she discusses the safety topic of the month from fire, falls, heat and other safety topics etc. These topics help us think about being safe in whatever we do. A lot of the topics, Philo will give a quick quiz which is fun to recap on what was discussed. I think everyone enjoys these groups and we hope they're able to use some of the information that is shared with them. Everyone appears to also enjoy the 2 music groups that are run weekly by

Mike Leo and Ethan who are both awesome and have been great with everyone. Some resources we use are YouTube videos on different topics we discuss if needed, information from the agency on human rights and safety topics, and also finding information on the internet or the newspaper for other information like national day, etc. They all seem to enjoy seeing their peers as some of them aren't back at the program yet. We've made new friends, get to see old friends, and just the enjoyment some of them get from seeing everyone, and being able to communicate through Zoom, has been great. Thank you to the Centre Place staff, I appreciate you all!



We made bird feeders with our individuals at Centre Place Day

Hab. We constructed these feeders using plastic water bottles cut on each end, a string, peanut butter, and bird food. Our individuals coated the bottles in peanut butter, and then rolled them in the bird food until fully covered. Each individual made their own bird feeder, and then we hung them out front on the tree for the birds to enjoy. In fact, there was a second round of production, because the birds enjoyed them so much!



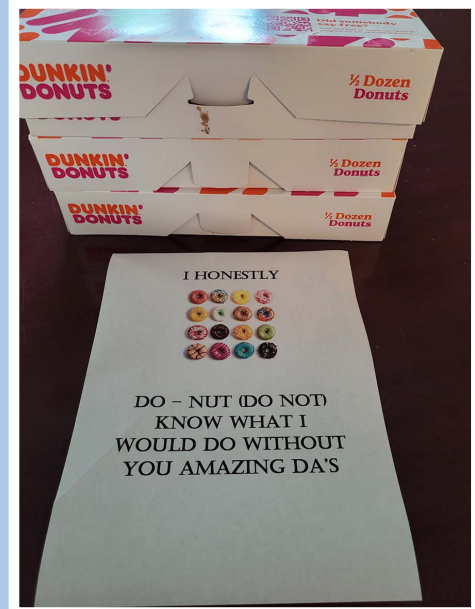
PEANUT BUTTER bird feeder



Submitted by
Charmaine Johnson, Program Manager



Direct Support Professional Week at Greenfield Day Hab. Staff were gifted with T-shirts and enjoyed various treats and lunch.



Greenfield Day Hab had some special little visitors - our individuals really enjoyed getting to look at, pet, and hold our new little furry friends!.



March 30th was “**National Take a Walk in the Park Day**” so MSDH and DH1 celebrated by taking a small group of clients to the Hopedale Parklands in Hopedale, MA.

We attended a guided trail walk in which a park ranger educated us on the park and its important role during the Industrial Revolution.

While it was a bit chilly out, our folks still enjoyed the opportunity to get outside, be active, and learn something new.

Thank you to the volunteers at the Hopedale Parklands for setting this event up and hosting us!

Submitted by:
Heather Socha, OTR/L

Congratulations!
ON YOUR
PROMOTION



Roxanne Melanson
Director of Day Hab Services

We are very pleased to announce the promotion of Roxanne Melanson to **Director of Day Habilitation Services** for north and south central programs.

Roxanne joined Life-Skills, Inc. in 2005 in a direct care staff position, she was promoted to Case Manager for north central day programs in 2007, and then promoted to Program Manager for Greenfield Day Hab in 2017.

Congratulations on your new position, Roxanne!



news from frs

FRS has spent the last few months getting back into full swing. We are back to our regularly scheduled programs. We have had Spirit Week with Crazy Hat Day and Weird Sock day! We ended the week with a lovely meal of Pizza and parfait.

We also had an Earth Day Clean-up. Some of our individuals went out and picked up around FRS and then throughout Webster.

We celebrated Easter with a yummy meal of Shepherds Pie and some lovely desserts. We were able to have some fun with the camera taking pictures of a bunch of us in a Bunny cut out.

As Spring has arrived, we got into the planting and growing fun and we continue today to enjoy this activity. For Mother's Day we were able to paint little clay pots and send them home with soil and seeds for a nice plant to give to the special caregivers in our lives.

As Spring comes to an end and we begin to look towards Summer, we are excited to plan some fun activities to look forward to. We will again access the Universal Access Program as much as we possibly can by going kayaking and

biking. We may also try our hand in some hiking and picnicking at Webster Lake.

In the program, we have been working hard on our therapy objectives and some of our folks are able to access new equipment such as a new stander. Many of our folks participate in different therapies that involve a lot of range of motion and we try to do this very creatively so they don't really feel like they are having therapy. This could include pulling Squigz's off the trays or putting puzzles together, as well as participating in the Virtual Zoom groups that always include Ethan's Music Hour and Mike's Music Hour. All of our folks enjoy the music, but our resident fan of the Zoom classes



is Austin, and it always brings a smile to our faces to hear him get so excited when he sees himself on Zoom.

A wonderful surprise befell us on May 18, as the **Dudley Women's Club** decided to gift us with "being bloomed". They came to our program and decorated our front lawn with colorful pinwheels that looked like flowers and told us we were bloomed. This was a pleasant surprise and very nice to be recognized.

This pandemic has not left us unscathed. Although we don't believe any of our friends succumbed to COVID, we still lost some who were near and dear to us. It is at this time we would like to remember with fondness the following members of FRS who passed since our closing in March of 2020:

Roger Lorange, William Valentin, Noble Brown, and Veronica Coat. We are also very sad to say we lost a long-time staff who just retired in December of 2019, **Donna Chamberland.** We remember all of these folks with love and joy in our hearts.

In closing, this is our favorite time of the year when we can enjoy the good weather and make wonderful memories. Until next time, we hope you all have a wonderful and safe Summer!

Submitted by: The FRS Team



Chip **in** FORE a **GREAT CAUSE**

18th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

We would like to thank everyone who came out to support our 18th annual "Chip in Fore a Great Cause" Charity Golf Tournament which took place on October 8 at Pine Ridge Country Club in Oxford, MA. It was nice to welcome many new golfers as well as so many familiar faces for a great day of golf for a worthy cause.

Through the support of all the participants, generous sponsors, raffle donors, and volunteers, we were able to raise over \$12000 for programs and services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Proceeds will help our individuals continue to receive the health benefits of virtual and on-site music therapy and drum circle groups, participation in adaptive recreational programs such as adaptive kayaking, cycling, swimming, and equine therapy, and also for adaptive furniture needed in our day habilitation programs.

Thank you to our tournament sponsor **TD Bank**, our Dinner Sponsor **Marsh McLennan Agency - New England**, and our Gift Sponsor **O'Connor & Co. Insurance Agency, Inc..**

Special thanks to **Pit Boss Grills**, **Foxwoods Resort Casino**, and our many generous raffle donors.

Thank you all for helping us to make a difference in the lives of the individuals we serve – we look forward to seeing you in 2022!



For future event info:
www.life-skillsinc.org

Click on
"News & Events"

Chip in FORE a GREAT CAUSE

Annual Charity Golf Tournament



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Congratulations to our Life-Skills, Inc. employees who celebrated Milestone Anniversaries in 2021!

We had 20 employees who celebrated milestones ranging from 5 to 35 years! Thank you for your many years of service and continued dedication to Life-Skills, Inc., and for helping us to "Build a Brighter Future" for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

To view the Employee Milestone Anniversary Yearbook:

<https://life-skillsinc.org/.../2022/03/YEARBOOK2021.pdf>

Employee Milestone Anniversaries

We are proud to honor the following members of our LSI team:

35 Years

Tom Amick

20 Years

Barbara Cordell

Rennee Harris

10 Years

Justine Buckley

George Durand II

Jerry Oduro

5 Years

Adewale Adewoye

Amber Baillargeon

Joseph Daniels

Angela Ithier

Margaret Jubin

Sabbatina Konadu

Shauna Kulczyk

Ian Lagasse

Christelle Celestin

Laguerre

Christopher Penalvert

Carmen Powell

Joyce Sechome



Current Role at LSI:

Director of Human Resources

Tell us a little bit about your background/how did you get your start in HR:

I worked the first 11 years of my career in Human Services agencies in CT and MA, as both direct care and as a manager. I started in Human Resources in 2001, for a classifieds publications called The Want Advertiser. Between 2003-2011, I earned my Masters Degree in Human Resources Management from Framingham State University.

What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?:

I enjoy the feeling that HR has solved a problem for an employee. There are times when it seems HR relies heavily on policies and procedures but we are also

very invested in a customer service approach to HR, and when we get some info or a form or a solution to an employee who has a real life issue, it makes our day.

Most challenging aspect of your role:

Helping people to understand that the agency's policies and procedures are not arbitrary, not our own creations, that they grow from real employment laws voted into existence often by citizens.

What are some of the goals you would like to achieve at LSI?:

To build a really strong team and to promote the credibility and value of the HR Department.

What would you consider the necessary ingredients to a successful work culture?:

A commitment to the mission (in some companies, it's broken down to "targets" or "indicators") and a sense of tolerance that most people come to work every day to do their best.

Best career lesson you have learned so far?:

That HR is really a customer service department where our coworkers are our customers.

What advice would you give to prospective candidates/current employees?:

To not be afraid to get to know and communicate with your state rep - <https://malegislature.gov/search/findmylegistrator>

On a personal note, hobbies and interests outside of work?:

Love to spend time with my wife, 3 grown sons and 2 grandchildren, love to canoe, hike, rent wave runners, go to concerts, watch the Patriots, travel, go to museums, sleep and eat.



"Building Brighter Futures since 1970"

Employee REFERRAL PROGRAM

*Earn Bonus Money!
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\$250



Our agency is always looking to grow our teams of talented staff. If you know someone who would be a good fit for our company, please refer them our way!

Have them apply online at our career page at: www.life-skillsinc.org/careers, apply on Indeed, or email their resume to Mspinelli@life-skillsinc.org. Please make sure to have them mention your name.

If we hire your referred candidate, you are eligible to earn a referral bonus up to \$250!

If you have any questions regarding referrals, please contact:

Melissa Spinelli, HR Recruiter
(508) 943-0700 x2112
Email: Mspinelli@life-skillsinc.org

31st annual legislative breakfast

HELP STRENGTHEN
THE NET
MAY 20, 2022



2022
Awards of
Excellence



Human
Services is the
Ultimate
Safety Net

building better futures award



Lisa began working at Life-Skills, Inc. on October 10, 1993, 29 years ago. She began her career as a Direct Service Professional in residential services. Her progression to the position of Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance resulted from a succession of increasingly responsible positions as a Residential Program Manager, Residential Coordinator, Day Habilitation Program Manager, and Director of Day Habilitation Services.

Throughout the entire period of Lisa's employment, she has taken the mission of the company to heart, and has ensured that our purpose statement "Building Brighter Futures" has been at the front and center of everything that she has done. Her work with the individuals in our programs has always ensured their safety, health, and enjoyment of life.

In her position as the Director of Compliance & Quality Assurance, Lisa was an integral part of our Continuity of Operations Plan that served to guide the individuals and the staff of Life-Skills, Inc. in meeting the demands imposed by the COVID pandemic. Lisa and the administrative team ensured that there were always sufficient supplies of protective equipment for all of the staff and individuals. In addition, Lisa established a network of contacts with the Department of Health in the towns where our programs are located. Lisa also re-designed two of our day habilitation programs to accommodate the company's need for protected and safe accommodations in which to quarantine individuals from our residential homes. The ultimate goal was to provide care and support that most closely represented the daily routines that they had been accustomed to receiving.

Another outstanding quality of Lisa is that she, throughout her time at Life-Skills, Inc., never lost sight of the individuals and their needs.

J. Thomas Amick, CEO

The Providers of Central Massachusetts hosted the 31st Annual Legislative Breakfast on May 20, 2022, at the College of the Holy Cross. The purpose of this event is to bring awareness to our legislators about the needs of individuals with disabilities in Massachusetts. Awards were also presented to employees from the attending agencies. This year, Tom Amick, CEO of Life-Skills, Inc. presented Lisa Morgan, Director of Compliance & Quality Assurance with the "Building Better Futures Award".

The focus on the event this year, was on strengthening the "safety net" for the agencies that families rely on for services. Together we can make the change and strengthen the net with funding, support, and advocacy.



recipes

submitted by Mary O'Brien, Accounting Dept.



INGREDIENTS

2 packages of Vanilla Instant Pudding
12 oz. Cool Whip
8 oz. Cream Cheese (Optional)
1 cup Confectionary Sugar
3 cups milk
1 1/4 lbs. Oreo Cookies



DIRECTIONS

Mix Cool Whip, pudding, and milk in a large bowl.
Mix Cream Cheese and sugar in a small bowl.
Combine large and small bowl together.
Crush cookies in a blender or food processor.
Layer 1/3 cookies, 1/2 pudding, and repeat.

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. shredded Cheddar Cheese
8 oz. shredded Muenster Cheese
1 1/2 cups sliced pepperoni
2 cups milk
2 eggs beaten
1 tsp. Oregano
1 1/2 cups flour

DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients together
Pour into greased 10 x 16 inch sheet pan
Bake 45 minutes at 350°
Cool at least 10 minutes
Cut into squares





#inthistgether

We are so grateful to the following supporters for helping us through this challenging time. We would not be able to do what we do without the generosity of our caring community.



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