

A message from Karla Block

Director of Community Services for the Developmentally Disabled

As we enter into our final month of changes, we pause and reflect on the tremendous amount of work completed by individuals, families, and staff in shifting to the new Skill Building services model. Staff have demonstrated tenacity and flexibility in their work and positive outcomes are now being witnessed in the lives of those we support. Similarly, we honor the willingness of those we support to step into and consider new opportunities, and to self-author new elements within their lives. Each day stories and accounts are emerging about individuals finding engaging volunteer activities, with some moving on quickly to finding jobs in their communities. People desire these kinds of outcomes, and it's reassuring to see these outcomes occurring!

We recognize that some individuals may still be struggling to find their "right fit" in the newly formed service array. We know that this change process is immense, and is meant to be ongoing. Change, for any of us, is often not a one-time moment, but instead is comprised of an ongoing shift through a learning process, including many high and low points. For people who find that choices they made during this change are not ideal, please remember that new choices can be made! Case Managers and Skill Building Specialists are key sources for help when looking at new options, so please reach out to these staff with questions or ideas to explore further – staff are committed to supporting people through this change period and onward.

Spotlight Stories

Erin Parcell, MA, LPC | Transitions Coordinator

I am once again excited to bring you a story of the power of motivation, hard work, and a great community. Today, we meet Scott. Scott shifted from Transitions Central, where he had been engaged in volunteering at Potter Park, to Community Skill Building in June. With this fresh start, he made it his goal to explore new volunteer opportunities in the area. By July, Scott began volunteering two afternoons a week at the Helping Hands location in East Lansing. The initial need was after lunch clean-up, but soon grew into so much more, with Scott finding new things that he believed needed to be done. Scott's duties included wiping down furniture, restrooms, windows, vacuuming, mopping, and watering the flowers outside.

In August, the Executive Director at Helping Hands, Yvonne Fleener, expressed her gratitude for the hard work Scott was doing as a volunteer, and shared her desire to hire him. Scott accepted the job offer and is slated to work 15 hours a week with competitive wages starting at the end of August. Yvonne said: "I had let my old cleaning staff go due to poor attitudes. We had a need to fill and Scott came up in a staff meeting as an option because of his positive energy, willingness to take on whatever we hand him, and his confidence." He has asked that the Skill Building technician transition into a job coach to help him fade into working with only the natural support of his co-workers, and is "feeling fine coming to work on my own." In speaking with Scott, he expresses that he "loves his job."

We can all better succeed when we have a great support team walking along with us. Yvonne shared, "We go to Scott directly during his shifts. He is part of our team and we are excited for getting him more hours in the future." Scott said he feels "real good about the people that [he] works with." In addition to supportive co-workers, Scott has an amazingly supportive sister and brother in-law. His sister told his Skill Building supports directly that they aren't concerned about Scott's employment affecting his benefits; they just want him to be able to earn a paycheck. When asked what advice he has for other who want to get a job, Scott said, "you need to work hard." Congratulations to Scott on his new job!





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Check out these community resources!



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2019
TRI-COUNTY
RECREATIONAL
RESOURCE
DIRECTORY

In the spirit of supporting individuals and staff working toward community inclusion and enhanced independence, CMHA-CEI's Prevention and Outreach staff developed the Tri-County Recreational Resource Directory to highlight local opportunities for recreation and leisure.

Opportunities and activities listed in the directory include things like swimming, libraries, and community centers – many of which are free or low cost. It is the hope of CMHA-CEI that this resource will be something individuals and families can look at regularly to find helpful resources and interesting activities in their communities.

You can find this resource on CMHA-CEI's website at the following link, titled "Recreational Resource Directory": <http://ceicmh.org/localresources>

Additionally, copies of the directory are being printed. If you would like a hard copy, please contact Customer Service at 517-346-8244 to request a copy.