

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Issue 3

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MESSAGE FROM THE HEART



"Advocacy is for all of us; advocacy is a way of life." — Alice Wong

MISERICORDIA CELEBRATES THE AMAZING ABILITIES OF OUR RESIDENTS 10 FUN FACTS ABOUT YEAR-ROUND MISERICORDIA PROGRAMS

- Through the Amina Grace program, residents, in the Greco Gardens, start planting 600 veggie seedlings that go to different gardens all over campus. The residents care for them and have the reward of a great harvest. These harvests are shared out among the residential areas.
- Every Wednesday, residents assist selling bakery items by utilizing their assistive technology devices for the Red Heart Cart.



Pictured: Residents participating in Gardens, Boccia, Art programs, and Music in the Gym.

- We use a variety of adaptive equipment in our gym during DT. Our residents bowl and play boccia while using adaptive ramps, balls, and pins!
- Every Friday at 1:30, staff Justin, hosts Music in the Gym. Residents and staff alike celebrate the end of their week by dancing and singing along to the music!
- A resident assists with our "Welcome to DT session" for the new DSP class each month. They join a resident panel and share their experiences living at Misericordia.
- CDS has 92 people working in the community throughout the week. Plus, another 30 going on community experiences daily.
- On Tuesday mornings residents from both the Village and Mercy Glen participate in gym wheel activities. After the session ends the residents put on a show for their peers and staff.
- McAuley programs from birth-three through DT are making hats and blankets with looms to donate to NICUs and cancer centers through the organization Knots of Love Thank you to our art instructor, Elizabeth, who found this unique way for our residents to be able to give back to the community!
- Through McAuley DT, the residents worked on creating the Chagall Windows to be auctioned off at this year's AIA.
- Between Conway and Holbrook, DT has 42 programs that are provided for residents every weekday. These activities range from art, horticulture, health & wellness, education, technology, & employment.

MARCH IS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH!

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)



RESIDENT PROGRAMS

MISERICORDIA RECREATION AND LEISURE UPDATES



There have been some recent changes within the Misericordia Recreation and Leisure teams.

The McAuley Recreation and Leisure team is currently looking at how they deliver services and looking at creative ways to enhance the program offerings on evenings and weekends. Deb Hays, director oversees the team, which consists of Bri Walker, Allyson Byrne and Ashleah Martin. Bridget Gondek supports this team in the role of music therapist.



Pictured: Residents participating in various March Recreation activities.

The Recreation and Leisure team that provides services to all other residential areas is overseen by Gail Wojciechowski. Gail's team consists of Jacob Green and Tessa Kammer, who oversee our Performing Arts programs such as Heartbreakers, Showtime, and the upcoming Theatre groups. Tim Connelly is also part of this team in the role of head Special Olympics coach. Maria Perozo and Santi Almada support this team in programs.

Jordan Atkins, was recently hired to oversee large scale events for all areas. Jordan works with area representatives on RSVPs. He is also responsible for acquiring outside talents for performances and shows, resident attendance at the events, and supervises the actual events. Jordan is concentrating on having two larger scale events a week. He is also meeting with areas so they have the most current schedules.

This department is looking forward to continued growth.

AN UPDATE ON THE MOORE FITNESS CENTER

We are excited to announce that we will be embarking on a comprehensive fitness assessment for the residents of Misericordia. As an organization dedicated to providing care and support for individuals with special needs, we understand the importance of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle.

This assessment will allow us to determine a baseline fitness level for each resident, enabling us to design personalized workout regimens tailored to their individual needs. Our goal is to help residents improve their strength, cardiovascular endurance, and overall well-being through structured, guided fitness activities.

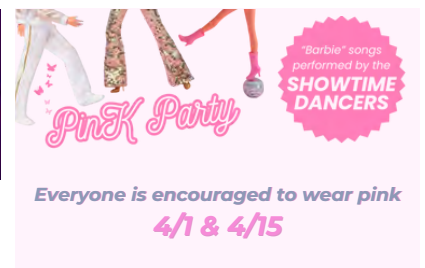
We anticipate this process will take approximately 6 to 8 weeks to complete, ensuring that each resident receives the attention and evaluation necessary for a successful fitness journey. Throughout this initiative, we will work closely with staff to create a supportive and engaging environment that promotes long-term health benefits for all participants.

Attached you will find a [fitness assessment example](#) and a [detailed workout example](#) to give you a comprehensive idea of the process our training staff will be following. These documents outline the evaluation criteria and structured programs we will implement to ensure the best outcomes for each resident.

It is so important that we share what is happening in the Fitness Center. We need all DSPs, DT and CDS staff to help support these initiatives. Being actively engaged and supporting our residents in their fitness journey is vital to the success of the program. We need staff to help ensure the residents are following their exercise plans while in the Fitness Center. We look forward to working together to enhance the well-being of Misericordia residents through fitness and movement. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this initiative further, please don't hesitate to reach out.

UPCOMING EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

MARCH 30 - APRIL 15



CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

PHOTOGRAPHING MISERICORDIA'S COMMUNITY OF STAFF

On behalf of the MFA, we would like to thank you all for your willingness to be photographed during our recent picture-taking blitz through Misericordia. We appreciate your gracious acceptance of our often-silly methods for getting you to relax.

Thanks for sharing your joy with us. We hope you feel the end result honors you and shows our appreciation for each and every one of you!



Pam Capraro and Margaret Dillon

THE BEST BIRTHDAY EVER

FROM SETH'S MOM



Pictured: Seth P. at his mom's party with bestfriend, Shanti S.

My son, Seth, loves to plan. He likes to know what the schedule is each day so he can plan what he's going to do. He likes to plan for summer camp. He likes to plan the weekend he and his dad are going to a Nascar race. Honestly, sometime he likes to plan more than he likes the actual event.

Recently, Seth planned a surprise birthday party for me at his home, McGowan. Well, it was supposed to be a surprise but he was too excited to keep the secret; he spilled the beans a month in advance. He planned everything: ordering the cake from the Mis bakery—with very explicit instructions on how it should be decorated, selected party supplies online and supervised how the common room was decorated, planned games for his niece and nephews, and made sure everyone was exactly where they were supposed to be when I arrived. While Seth was the master planner, he certainly didn't—and couldn't--do this by himself. It was the wonderful McGowan staff who made it happen, but they also made sure that Seth felt like the party was 'his.' They made a planning document for him, encouraged him and complimented him on what he'd accomplished—which would not have happened without their help. At one point during the party, Seth felt overwhelmed so his Q took him aside—and he came back all smiles. Seth also worked with his art teacher for weeks to create a beautiful painting as my gift.

I can tell you that this was my best birthday party ever—thanks to my sweet planner, Seth, and thanks to the amazing McGowan staff. This is the magic of Misericordia.

SOLVING PROBLEMS TOGETHER



Pictured: Developmental Training Instructor Jeremy W (pictured far right) with Direct Service Professional Shannon G (left center) with residents from the Village outside of Northwestern University's Engineering Design Center.

Once again, Misericordia has partnered with Northwestern University's design engineering program to make adaptable devices for our residents.

This quarter, our project sponsors included Nora O (CILA) and Jena C (Dental) who helped students design prototypes for three-sided, adaptable toothbrushes intended to support the adaptive, sensory, and dental needs of users who face challenges with everyday brushing.

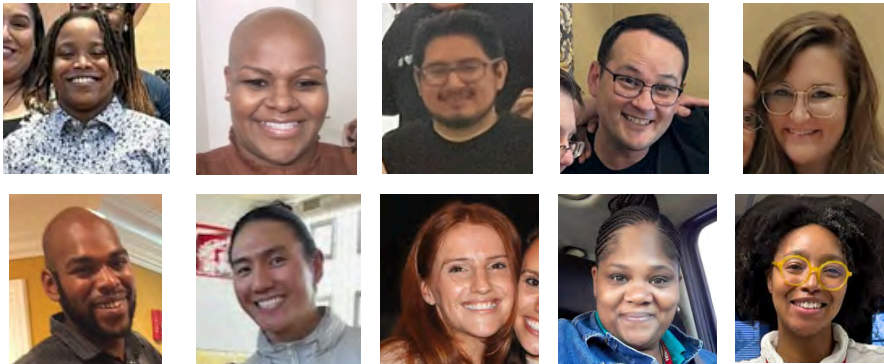
Developmental Training Instructor Jeremy W also worked with students on designing Computer Model Building Kits for his Technology-Enabled Learning program.

Next quarter Jeremy will once again work with students on building robots. Developmental Training Direct Care Professional Lark L will also be participating as a project sponsor, helping the students design prototypes around adaptable attachments for walkers and transition chairs. We look forward to highlighting how their projects evolve!



HIGHLIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

YOUR CULTURAL AMBASSADORS ARE HERE



Pictured L to R (top row): Rolanda W. (Quinlan/2 years); **Letisha N.** (Marian Center/4 years); **Saul H.** (Staff Development/4 years); **Ken G.** (Mercy Glen/4 years); **Alison S.** (CDS/8 years); **Pictured L to R (bottom row): Joshua T.** (CILA/8 years); **Andrew A.** (Culture & Communications/ 4 years); **Brigid B.** (CDS/ 4 years); **Nicole W.** (Marian Center/ 4 years); **Tiffany J.** (Culture & Communications/ 14 years).

Campus Connections is pleased to announce Misericordia's Cultural Ambassadors Team. Comprised of second-year to 15-year employees across areas and departments, these people were selected to foster a culture of connection and community through fun, creative, and supportive workplace initiatives. We can expect to see their imprint on many upcoming events, such as the first- and second- year anniversaries, department appreciation lunches, and many more staff engagement and recognition efforts.

ADVOCATING AT OUR NATION'S CAPITOL



Pictured (L to R): Misericordia's Vice President of Strategy, People and Culture, Geana C and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky; Geana with fellow members of the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF).

This month, Misericordia's VP Geana C traveled to Washington, D.C. with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) colleagues to meet with Illinois legislators and highlight the devastating impact of Medicaid cuts on individuals with I/DD. These cuts threaten essential services that enable independence, community inclusion, and quality care for thousands of Illinois residents.

S.E.E.D. Skills Enhancement | Employee Development



JOIN US THIS
SPRING & SUMMER...

Fit for Success: Tier 2 Essential Skills for Teamwork

Learn practical strategies that will further your growth as a leader AND a strong team player!

OPEN TO ALL STAFF WHO HAVE COMPLETED EITHER TIER 1 OF FFS OR PROFESSIONALISM

Applicants must be in good standing and employed at Misericordia for at least 6 months. Applications are available in ADI (under Resources in the Forms Library) or at HR and **are due April 28 to HR**. Classes begin May 15 and will meet for 6 sessions. End date for training will be determined after applications are received. Any questions, contact Mary Ann Goode (maryann@misericordia.com, x4730) in Staff Development.

[CLICK HERE TO ENLARGE](#)

2025 TOGETHER FOR CHOICE CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY
MISERICORDIA HEART OF MERCY

JUNE 18-20, 2025

The 2025 Together for Choice (TFC) Conference will take place at Misericordia from June 18 to 20. This year's conference will invite speakers and attendees from across the country to share best practices in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Topics will include policy updates, fundraising strategies, workforce recruitment and retention, and the impact of collaboration.

To learn more about TFC, [click here](#), and stay tuned for more details about the conference.

The Prevention Protocol

Monthly Infection Prevention Series

Norovirus

C. Auris

CRE

H. Pylori

Shingles

Throughout the next months, we want to spotlight a handful of common infectious diseases. Let's learn together and if you have any suggestions on other infections you would like to learn about, please contact us at the email below!

NOROVIRUS



What is Norovirus?

Norovirus is a very contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhea. Sometimes called the "stomach flu" or "stomach bug", norovirus is not related to the flu at all. Norovirus causes acute gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach or intestines. Symptoms are typically severe, but only last 1 to 3 days.

How Norovirus Spreads

Norovirus spreads very easily and quickly. You can get norovirus from those infected with norovirus and through contaminated food, water, or surfaces.

You are most contagious when you have symptoms of norovirus or during the few days after you feel better.

How to Prevent Norovirus

Wash hands with soap and water well and often.

*Hand sanitizer is not effective against norovirus, but soap is!

Never prepare food while sick.

Clean and sanitize utensils, laundry, and all surfaces.

Stay home when sick for 48 hours after symptoms stop.

For More Info from the CDC:



Contact us at: infectionprevention@miserericordia.com



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

WELLNESS AND BENEFITS EDUCATION CORNER

We are excited to announce that we will be starting an employee's Wellness and Benefits Education corner! We will be introducing monthly topics on wellness and benefits. For the month of March, we would like to share how Nutrition is important and its link to not only your body but also boost brain health.



Pictured: Photo from the article of a heart-shaped plate containing foods that boost brain health.

[Click here](#) for a short video on on Grocery Tips for Balanced Meals from the American Heart Association.

[Click here](#) for the article on Nutrition to Boost Brain Health.

THE FUNDAMENTALS REFRESH SERIES

Throughout the year, all staff will complete trainings as part of the Fundamentals Refresh Series. These trainings are designed to enhance and strengthen your skills as well as make sure that you are up to date on key topics and changes to help you continue to succeed in your role.

The Fundamentals Refresh Series includes:

- OIG Rule 50 Abuse & Neglect Training (ends March 30)
- **Expo Part 1:** Health & Safety (April 14 - May 18)
- Bystander Training (TBD)
- **Expo Part 2:** Campus Safety (TBD)
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (TBD)
- **Expo Part 3:** Staff-Related Policies (TBD)

Completion of this series helps to foster a culture of integrity, support staff's personal and professional growth, and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all.

These trainings will be offered on Infinitec. If you have any questions, please reach out to training@misericordia.com.

BREAK THE ICE WITH THESE CONVERSATION STARTERS WITH CO-WORKERS



Courtesy of [Teambuilding.com](https://www.teambuilding.com)



If you could try any food, what would it be?



What is your favorite type of sandwich?



You can only eat one food again for the rest of your life. What is it?



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

LOCAL BUSINESSES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

EXILE IN BOOKVILLE

410 S. Michigan Ave. 2nd Flr, Chicago, IL 60605
[details here](#)

BATTER & BERRIES

2748 N Lincoln Ave. Chicago, IL , 60614
[details here](#)

ODA MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

5657 N. Clark St., Chicago IL 60660
[details here](#)

GALLERY GUICHARD

436 E. 47th St., Chicago IL 60653
[details here](#)

INSIDE CHICAGO WALKING TOURS

LOCATION VARIES
[details here](#)

AIN'T SHE SWEET CAFE

526 E. 43rd Street, Chicago, IL 60653
[details here](#)

Check out [this page](#) from the American Library Association for more Minority and Women-Owned Businesses in Chicago.

Additionally, [click here](#) to read all about the past events and celebrations around the Chicago area honoring the remarkable contributions of women throughout history for Women's History Month.

Send us a tip! If you have recommendations for any local minority and women-owned businesses that Misericordia should know about it, [click here](#) and tell us about their goods and services. We may highlight your suggestion in future issues of Campus Connections!

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

WOMEN DISABILITY ACTIVISTS AND ADVOCATES



Alice Wong Wong is the founder and Project Coordinator of the [Disability Visibility Project \(DVP\)](#), a project collecting oral histories of people with disabilities in the US that is coordinated with [StoryCorps](#).



Helen Keller was a renowned author, activist, and lecturer who became the first deaf-blind person to earn a college degree. Keller also spoke out for women's suffrage, [personal autonomy], and peace.



Barbara Jordan was a leader in civil rights for people of color, LGBT individuals, and people with disabilities (Jordan had suffered from multiple sclerosis since 1973). She was the first black U.S. Congresswoman from the Deep South, a civil rights lawyer whose legacy stretches across the United States.



Haben Girma is a disabilities rights activist. She was born deafblind and her passion for [inclusion] motivated her to [become a lawyer and consultant](#) for companies to make sure they make accessible products.

Courtesy of the CDC, [click here](#) to learn about how you can raise awareness and help support the needs of women with disabilities.

QUARTERLY D&I RESOURCE GUIDE

[Click here](#) to access our quarterly D&I resource guide for January, February, and March. The content includes media recommendations, web articles, activities for residents, and other content around the values of belonging and connection!

The content in the guide was gathered by members of the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee and/or submitted by staff. If you would like to contribute, please email campusconnections@misericordia.com.



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS



Joey

Residence: CILA

- recently discovered his passion for swimming
- loves to watch award shows
- rate red carpet looks



John

Residence: Village

- likes to watch movies
- likes to play sports on the PlayStation
- likes to make people laugh



Michael

Residence: Village

- likes to travel
 - Disney and NYC
- loves to go to games
- loves to draw and paint

DEPARTMENT APPRECIATION

March follows another round of monthly appreciation for the various departments on campus. This month we hosted a special luncheon for the following areas:

- Behavior Services
- Human Resources
- Maintenance
- Reception
- Staff Development

We thank all our celebrating staff for all they do to support are residents.

Check out what some of our celebrants had to say about what makes their department special:

- *"Staff Development is a group of individuals who are deeply committed to the mission of Misericordia and strongly supportive of one another :-)" - Sarah W. (Staff Development)*
- *"Teamwork makes a dream work." - Andrew G. (Maintenance)*
- *"Our team takes the time to listen to specific needs and concerns of our employees to help explore and implement meaningful benefit offerings." - Michelle O. (Human Resources)*
- *"Hey! I'm new in the PEP department and I just wanted to give a shout-out to the entire team! Everyone has been so welcoming, helpful, and eager to help me in my new position. Thanks y'all!" - Tatiyana K. (Behavior/PEP)*
- *"We as Receptionist work as an exceptional team together. We work together to keep all of Misericordia safe with the Security team. We are the first faces that people see and we provide them with their first impression of Misericordia so that they have a great impression of Misericordia." - Santana B. (Reception)*

MARCH ANNIVERSARIES

- 44 Laura Schulz
- 37 Maria Rivera
- 32 Allan Hernandez
- 30 Lily Devey
- 29 Damon Laws, Tony Bethel, Juana Harnett, Sharon Keane
- 26 Ceretta Carter, Nourisha Mohammed-Ali
- 24 Bryan Perry
- 23 Megan Nykiel
- 20 Malgorzata Raszyk, Nancy Kremer, Christopher Centeno, Pha Heng
- 19 Stephanie McGee, Amy Vonderembse
- 18 Jennifer Ayala
- 16 Joe May, Marcia Reinhard
- 14 Mariana Montes-Truss, Marina Galindo, Tara Reffett, Stacy Trammell, Anita Paulin
- 13 Tiffany Roper, Aleta Stallworth, Sue Arias, Bryan Lee
- 11 Erick Arrieta, Jesmina Memedova, Diana Hernandez De La Vega
- 10 Nicholas Viveros Jr, Tracey Craig, Shannetta Jackson, Crystal McHenry
- 9 Agata Brej, Liz Donaldson, Michael Faught, Lisa Hager, Shantie Harris, Erika Simpson, James Sommer
- 7 Sarah Walker, Natasha Carey
- 6 Mary Isho, Lisa Harris
- 5 Steve Quesada, Michael Drew, Joana Galindo, Eva Kutsche, Matthew Preciado, Samuel Bower, Svetla Panagonova, Phillip Sackmaster, Fatoumata Toure
- 4 Megan Wortel, Amy Marek, Cristina Martinez, Robyn Shimmin, Eric Pinon, Jasmine Meredith, Yuliana Pena
- 3 Michael Lyons, Daray Brown, Marquess Larry, Carolyn Marcantonio, Tamara Vance, Lisa Vann, Amy Koetz, Soraida Antunez, Kenton Field, Conor Korbisch, Bart Winters, Germaine Samuels, Rabekah Asbury
- 2 Ora Knowles, Patrick Reppen, Mahnaz Yousefi, Meena Satpathy, Carol Bude, Yolanda Loggins, Millionaire McShan
- 1 Selina Head, Kristina McLendon, Alula Mena, Beyonace Rogers, Jesse Vail, Nancy Villalobos, Kylo Watson, Rachel Wisdom, Clementina Amarteifio, Mayra Ayala, Marie Sandstrom, Aisha Barry, Giselle Hernandez

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Calvin, John (Security); **Magana, Sarah** (Main Nursing North); **Picart, Richard** (Mercy Glen); **Akinlabi, Adenike** (Village); **Allen, Asia** (McAuley); **Almodovar, Michael** (Village); **Arellano, Luis** (Marian Center); **Arellano, Magali** (Village); **Borrou, Elijah** (Village); **Cooney, Daniel** (DT); **Costello, Shannon** (CILA); **Faith, Luci** (Rosemary Park); **Freemon, Ashley** (Connelly); **Fregoso, Angelina** (DT); **Garcia, Ariadna** (Rosemary Park); **Garcia, Ivan** (McAuley); **Goldberg, Nico** (Rosemary Park); **Grangent, Jada** (McAuley); **Holloway, Mary Ella** (Mercy Glen); **Huffman, Harrison** (Rosemary Park); **Jobczynski, Mary Ellen** (Rosemary Park); **Johnson, Neisha** (Mercy Glen); **Kieres, Nicole** (Main Nursing North); **Knuckles, Quanise** (Quinlan); **Leflore, Simone** (Quinlan); **Ludwick, Evelyn** (CDS); **Nelson, Betty** (McAuley); **Olugbodi, Kayode** (CILA); **Piedra, Angel** (Main Nursing); **Price, Shannon** (Village); **Rycraw, Christian** (Village); **Salgado, Johanna** (Main Nursing North); **Sanders, Skyla** (Quinlan); **Smith, Jamie** (Rosemary Park); **Smith, Lee** (Village); **Soglohoun, Ablavi** (McGowan); **Thomas, Paige** (Quinlan); **Sharif Umar Hedaya** (Rosemary Park); **Wallace, Victoria** (Marian Center); **Williams-Johnson, Catherine** (CILA); **Wisdom, Rachel** (Rosemary Park); **Warrior, Bria** (Marian Center); **Young, Devinley** (Quinlan); **Roti, Lexi** (Therapy Intern); **Steele, Carlos** (Laundry Housekeeping Main Bldg); **Tchamba, Solange** (Mercy Glen); **Vanecko, Bobby** (Social Service)



Stay tuned for weekly Campus Connections updates sent via email. You can also find previous issues of Campus Connections in ADP and [here](#) on our website. If you have any questions or feedback for us, send your messages [here](#)! Be sure to include your name, work area, and an email we can use to contact you!