



OUTLOOK

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Letter from the CEO

KATHRYN SUSANO-MORRIS

It looks like summer is off to a great start!

I wanted to take a few minutes to mention some of the great things our people are doing. Our DuBois region is working with We Care for Kids, a nonprofit that supports the DuBois school district. You can read the article in this newsletter to learn about this exciting partnership. Nearby in the Indiana Region, David Fye and a couple of our residents represented us at the Community Inclusion Revolution Days. In Fayette County, individuals have also been busy. They have taken trips to Erie, Cincinnati, local fairs, Deep Creek, and Pirate games.

It is great to see our people getting involved in their communities and making a difference in the lives of others. I am proud of all that they are doing.

Finally, I would like to add a few words about our employee spotlight, Erik Morris. I have had the pleasure of knowing Erik for 33 years. We met when he was a DSP, and over the years, we have become coworkers, friends, and, finally, family. Erik is one of the most caring people I know. He has a special way of connecting with individuals with disabilities, and he always goes above and beyond to ensure they are happy and comfortable. For example, Erik shared his home and family with AJ for 22 years, and he was truly part of their family. Erik is a true asset to our team, and we are lucky to have him.

Let's finish up summer with a bang.

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MYSTERIOUS RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS MYSTERY SOLVED

While visiting her mother-in-law, Angel Elridge, a DuBois area CPS Direct Support Professional, saw small beaded dogs sitting on a shelf in her home. When Angel inquired about the tiny trinkets, she learned that her sister-in-law had found one while visiting Orlando, Florida.

So, what exactly did Angel learn about the small dogs? They are small gifts that contain tiny messages of kindness. The stewards of all things good and kind who make and share them place them throughout their communities to be found by strangers, who hopefully are overjoyed to find the little treasures and continue to share the kindness with others. The idea is to start a cycle of kindness in a community.

Angel's mother-in-law, who had learned how to make the kindness-spreading trinkets, was more than happy to teach Angel when she inquired about them. Angel returned to work at the DuBois CPS program and brought the idea and supplies with her, and the Kindness Dogs from CPS were born.

Participants from Sykesville CPS assist with bagging the dogs and inserting a note card containing a kind message and information about spreading kindness. The individuals place the Kindness Dogs within various community areas while on outings. CPS program participants decide when to spread kindness and plan their kindness-spreading outings.

Angel took it a step further and created a Facebook group called "Kindness Dogs" to show CPS program participants how far their kindness could spread and how it affected their neighbors. Remember the little notes included with the Kindness Dog trinkets? They guide those who find a dog to share their finding on social media.

In addition to sharing this activity with everyone at the DuBois CPS program, Angel has also shared this activity with her children. "CPS participants love this activity and making people smile, and you never know what someone is going through," Angel said of the project. "And finding one of the Kindness Dogs can brighten their day. It's always the thought that counts."



Indiana Region Participates in Inclusion Event

On June 15, the Indiana region of Fayette Resources attended a Community Inclusion Revolution Awareness Day at IRLC Park in Indiana from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. The event was sponsored by the Arc of Indiana and Community Options Inc. The event was established to celebrate the inclusion of residents, students, and individuals with intellectual disabilities, developmental delays, and other disabilities. The event promoted area service providers, non-profit organizations, programs, and agencies offering support, resources, employment opportunities, and residential services to Indiana County.

Regional Director David Fye was joined at the event by Katelyn and Brooke.

The event allowed community members to meet some of the local service providers in the area.



SIGN-A-THON Pittsburgh's Annual Sign-a-Thon event was held on April 15th at The Mall at Robinson. It is sponsored by The Center for Hearing and Deaf Services. Anthony, Peter, and Jeremy all attended with staff and family members.



Attendance is coordinated through the program specialist. The Sign-a-Thon gives members of the deaf community a chance to come together as a group. Some people haven't seen each other since school. There is always a variety of vendors and entertainment. There is also new technology on display. The guys always proudly display their new Sign-a-Thon shirt after the event. Peter always wants the newest video phone technology.

Anthony was so excited to see friends from school that he hasn't seen in several years. Peter enjoys seeing all of his friends from outside the agency and old friends from school. Jeremy enjoys meeting new people every year.

For staff, being in the hearing world all the time, even knowing sign language, and working with people who are deaf, being immersed in deaf culture is a huge eye-opening experience. Everything is different from the hearing world; you rely on touch, goodbyes are an event themselves, and everyone knows everyone! This is a large event that these guys look forward to each year.



PA'S GREAT LAKEFRONT ROAD TRIP



For the second year in a row, Direct Support Professionals from five Fayette Region homes worked together to plan a vacation for the residents they support. They again settled on a waterfront adventure in Erie, PA. Last year's trip had been so fun and memorable that they decided to return and continue to explore the Great Lake region of Pennsylvania.

The team of DSPs who organized this lakeside adventure consisted of Linda Ohler, Shelley Abel, Mike Brennsteiner, Stella Lewis, and Paula May. They planned a two-night stay at a waterfront hotel and filled their time with lake adventures such as boat rides and fishing.

Shelley Abel said they chose Erie for a second year because it is beautiful and has much to offer. A highlight of the trip was a relaxing boat ride. Everyone enjoyed the beautiful sites, and they learned a lot about the history of Erie. Mike Brennsteiner said, "Mike (resident) talked about the boat ride to everybody when we got back."

Mike, a resident on the trip, enjoyed fishing with Mike Brennsteiner, a DSP who works with him. Mike B. said they "enjoyed fishing up there, although we didn't catch anything." Mike also enjoyed his late-night talks with his friends Susie and Ashley.

Planning a vacation is stressful. It is a big task to think of all the details that make it fun and memorable. Planning a vacation for so many people and thinking of all the things that each person needs to have a fun, stress-free good time is complicated. Fayette Resources is grateful we have dedicated DSPs who create everyday lives for our program participants. DSPs provide support for daily needs but also support the more exciting things that makeup life. Thanks for making memories with the people we support.



Employee Spotlight Erik Morris

My name is Erik Morris. I am the Deputy Regional Director for Fayette Resources in the Fayette Region. I have been employed with Fayette Resources since January 1990. I earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Waynesburg University. I have been married to my wife, Gigi, for 29 years. We have two adult sons, Kishaun and Kerik.

I worked as a DSP for 3 1/2 years for Life Management Consultants, which became Fayette Resources on July 1, 1991. I also worked as a Program Specialist for several years before becoming a Residential Director.

I have had the opportunity to see Fayette Resources grow from 15 homes when I started, to 40 homes in our Fayette Region, as well as expansion to the Clearfield-Jefferson, Indiana, and Allegheny Regions.

My role as Deputy Regional Director is to ensure all sites are in compliance with state regulations and to write plans of correction for any violations that were cited from state inspections. I was a Family Living Provider for 22 years and enjoyed sharing my home and adding to my family.

I enjoy seeing the individuals Fayette Resources works with living their best lives, and I am proud of the growth of Fayette Resources in being a quality provider of residential services to individuals with intellectual disabilities.

I enjoy attending church and sporting events. I am also on the board of a local recovery house that aids in addiction recovery.



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