ADAPT

September 2022

Summer Spotlight

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Skiler: Is a senior at Coldwater High School and is 18 years old. His favorite thing to do during the summer is watching movies, playing games, and running. This has been his first job and he loved working at Meijer. His favorite part was doing the carts. His perfect job in the future would be working at Meijer. His attendance was awesome, and he is a joy to work with!

Skiler shows us what hard work looks like. Great Job!!

David: Is 15 years old and is a sophomore at Coldwater High School. He loves the summer because he can play with his friends and go to Craigs Cruisers, driving the go-carts. He loves animals and his favorite is his cat, Snowball. David worked through another program last summer at Envirolite. His favorite part of working at Meijer is getting paid and doing so many different jobs. His perfect future job would be to be a Police Officer.

David is impressive with his positive attitude and can-do mood.

Ben: Is 18 and a senior at Coldwater High School. His favorite part of the summer is going to Cedar Point, camping, and watching movies. This is Ben's first job, and his favorite part is getting paid. His future plans consist of living independently and working at Meijer stocking the cheese section.

Ben is a team player stocking shelves at Meijer.

Attendance with these young men has been perfect and they are more than willing to try any new job. Such fun and such a great group of young people!

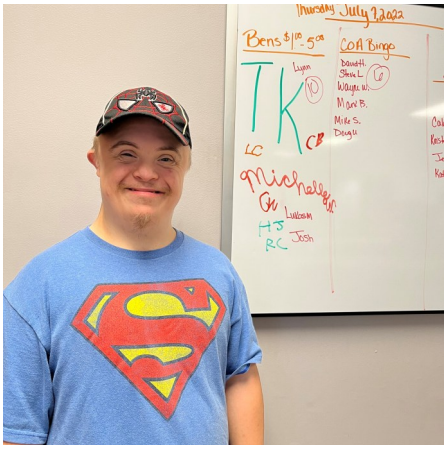
Tammy has attended the Coldwater CLS program for a "very long time". She loves that her friends attend alongside her. Recently, the Coldwater CLS Program made some changes to highlight the individual's choice. Tammy enjoys deciding on how to exercise to become healthier. She loves playing on the Wii, especially the boxing and bowling games. When she isn't practicing her bowling skills on the Wii, she competes in a league with her peers in both Coldwater and Sturgis CLS Programs.

Tammy is playing the Wii, showing off her skills with boxing.

Cindy said she has been attending the CLS Program in Coldwater since she was young. She was full of giggles as she described her friends and fun time at the CLS Program. The most enjoyable part of the CLS program, Cindy explained, was completing her puzzles on her own. When asked about the new changes to the Coldwater's CLS Program, she was very excited about how she tracks her own progress with her person-centered goals!

Cindy is full of giggles as she shows off her art skills.

Lukas attends the Sturgis CLS Program and loves his friends. Each morning he and his friends get together to dance (morning exercise) then choose their activity for the day. Lukas was excited to show that he was traveling to Shipshewana's Ben's Pretzels. Lukas said his favorite thing about the CLS Program is, "Everything, getting to ride the bus here too. When we go Snack Class shopping, for stuff like cheese and crackers to make for 2:00. I like to eat my lunch with my friends. And coming outside to listen to music with my friends before I go home. "



Lukas proudly shows off his name on the white board that attendees use to choose an activity.

Cody loves popcorn and sweets. He was very eager to attend the showing of *Secret Life of Pets 2* and purchase his popcorn. He was excited to try a new popcorn seasoning and hoped for something sweet. Cody has many friends at the Sturgis CLS Program where he enjoys learning and socializing with his long-time peers. Cody's ideal day at the CLS Program would be, "I like to be happy, my favorite is when we go to the park. I like to play outside and when I get to see my friends. We go for lots of walks cause that's my choice"

Cody is thrilled to go buy popcorn and watch a movie with his friends.

Christina and her best friend, Torrie, are joined at the hip! They both selected the Ben's Pretzel activity in Shipshewana. Christina expressed her favorite part of the CLS Program in Sturgis is choosing where to go and what to do while attending the CLS Program.

Torrie's vision of a perfect day at the CLS Program would be, "When I get to meet up with my friends. Shopping for the building and hot lunch to make with staff. I like to volunteer to shred papers after I eat lunch. Then get to hang out outside with everyone before I go home."

Torrie and Christina gearing up for their adventure to Shipshewana.

Eric attends the Coldwater CLS Program Monday through Friday. He enjoys cleaning, as it reminds him of when he worked through Waldron Center at the hospital. He enjoys being helpful and takes pride in his ability to help around the building. He loves to swim, as he lives near a lake and "can swim any time I want". His ideal day at the CLS Program would be spent "half working in the community and half with [friends] in the community bowling and other things I enjoy doing".

Eric is standing in front of the CLS Program's "goal wall". Eric is proud of his choice in goals!

Adapt Advocates for Higher Wages for Direct Care Workers

In April of 2022, Adapt embarked on a letter writing campaign to our Senators and Representatives for Branch and St. Joseph Counties advocating for Direct Care Workers (DCW's) to earn a starting wage of $18 per hour and for funding of this increase to be made permanent in the State's budget. Adapt belongs to two professional associations, Michigan Assisted Living Association (MALA) and Incompass Michigan (formerly known as MARO). These two organizations have collaborated in an effort to urge local lawmakers to recognize the value of DCW's and pay these workers accordingly. Everyone in our field recognizes this is a difficult job with a lot of responsibility and workers should be compensated with these facts in mind. The following is an excerpt from the letter composed on behalf of Adapt stakeholders:

> We are so very grateful for the people who continue to come to work, especially in our Residential program, which requires 24-hour staffing. Many of these dedicated people are working more than ever, with fewer days off and less help while at work. As you know, there is a shortage of Direct Care Workers (DCW's), and this negatively impacts the people we serve as well as our hundreds of employees.
>
> Adapt belongs to two organizations, Incompass Michigan and Michigan Assisted Living Association (MALA), that are part of a coalition of advocacy groups for people with disabilities. This coalition released a position statement dated March 16, 2022, advocating for the "baseline hourly rate" for Direct Care Workers be increased to $18 per hour. The statement also proposes wage increases for direct supervisors and annual cost-of-living increases to "stabilize the DCW job sector" in the future. The temporary wage increases have assisted us with maintaining some of our workforce, but as we compete with other industries offering higher wages, we have experienced increased turnover and very few new hires during the past 18 months. This is an area in need of immediate remediation. It is difficult to offer employees a sense of security within our industry when the threat of having temporary wages discontinued looms at the end of Fiscal Year 2021/22. Our field will not recover and grow stronger if DCW's are not fairly compensated for a job that is full of responsibilities. The people who take care of our most vulnerable need to be able to take care of themselves and their families. They are essential workers, and they should be paid as such. (end of excerpt—cont. on page 5)

We learned this summer that the State of Michigan approved the continuation of the $2.35 premium pay for DCW's. While this is not what we had hoped for, the continuation of this additional pay is vital to all organizations that work with people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

In the middle of the 2021/22 Fiscal Year (which covers 10/1/2021 through 9/30/2022), Adapt was able to secure an 8% wage increase for the DCW's working in the Residential Program. This allowed Adapt to offer a starting wage of $16/hour and gave existing employees and supervisors an 8% wage increase. While we asked for much more, we are very appreciative of both Pines and St. Joe Community Health Agency for approving the increase we received. This mid-fiscal year increase demonstrates their understanding of the severe staffing shortage as well as the increase in everyone's cost of living, while keeping in mind that a wage increase needs to be sustainable by the funding sources.

All employees are encouraged to continue writing lawmakers in the future, spread the word that Adapt is hiring, actively recruit people you know, and to like our Facebook page and share posts. The more positive we share, the more likely we are to attract new employees, which benefits the people we serve as well as our dedicated employees who are working long hours. Thank you to everyone who has stuck with Adapt and continues to give their best to the people we serve!

Employee Assistance Program

Beginning in June 2022, Adapt enrolled in an Employee Assistance Program with Ulliance (pronounced YOU-liance). We will have more details and materials at a later date. To summarize, this is a service available to ALL employees and their family members whether they have our medical coverage or not. Ulliance provides mental health services, and legal and financial advice on a short-term basis for urgent needs. This is a service that is at no cost to our employees and immediate family members. Ulliance sponsors webinars on a variety of topics that may be useful to all employees. Please watch for more information on this new program on our website which is currently being updated!

Adapt Operates Summer Youth Employment Program

Employment Resources, Adapt's Supported Employment program, once again, operated the Summer Youth Program. The Summer Youth Program provides students aged 15 -18 years work-based learning experiences. This year we had 12 students from local high schools participate in the program which is a collaborative effort between Adapt, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Coldwater Community Schools, and the Branch Intermediate School District (BISD). Employment Resources assisted with transportation and provided Job Coaching to the students.

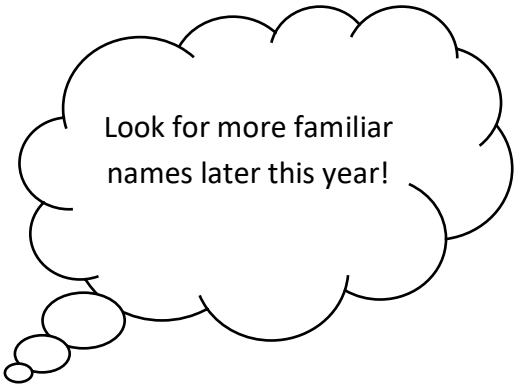
Each student spent two hours in soft skills training (interacting with peers and supervisors, how to dress for work, attendance, etc.) to prepare for their real work experience. Students completed a four-week paid work experience, working three hours a day, earning minimum wage. During the first two weeks, students worked at the Coldwater Meijer rotating between stocking shelves, retrieving carts from the parking lot, completing janitorial duties, and working in the bakery, produce, and clothing departments. Students worked at Auto Zone in Coldwater during the second two weeks of the program, completing janitorial and stocking duties. The program started on June 11th and Vicci Marson, Program Supervisor, was very pleased with the students who she described as a pleasure to work with because they are "smart and very friendly". Amy Stevens provided most of the job coaching, with Vicci and Robyn Hanson providing hands-on and administrative support. The program concluded on August 5th.

Annual Satisfaction Survey Time….

If you have not received an Annual Satisfaction Survey, please contact the office. Adapt conducts a survey every year and we use the information for quality purposes. We would like to hear from all consumers, stakeholders, and employees - so please take a few minutes to anonymously complete one!

Anniversaries!

Shawna Notestine 7 years
Katie Benton 2 years
Natalee Davenport 4 years
Stephanie Smith 5 years
Heather Hall 6 years
Teri Rathbun 10 years
Faye Potter 6 years
Renee Adams 8 years
Michael Wooten 8 years
Heather Rakoske 1 year
Rebecca Thacher-Arias 3 years
Diana Cruea 3 years
Kitty Nottoli 1 year
Samantha Adams 6 years
Priscilla Bathgate 7 years
Brandy Rusley 1 year
Katharynne Nusbaum 4 years
Mary Anne Nieman 4 years
April Blanchard 5 years
Tarrah Davison 1 year
Amber Webster 15 years
Julie Mackey 1 year
Anna Frantom 1 year
Christina Jaramillo-Estrada 8 years
Anthony Basile 1 year



Outlook's Transitional Employment Program

Outlook Clubhouse has two Transitional Employment sites that offer current members an opportunity to gain employment experiences in different fields of work. Transitional Employment is for members that want to work, gain different work experiences, and build their resume. Outlook's Advisory Board member, Amy Short, works very closely with Outlook. She has been instrumental in developing and maintaining meaningful employment opportunities with the members. Outlook's two Transitional Employment sites are located at the Lamp Lighter and Short's Root Beer Stand, owned by Amy and her husband, Ted Short, where employees either prepare food or work in customer service. Ray Spencer, Outlook Clubhouse's supervisor, has spoken very highly of the partnership with Amy and Ted, expressing his appreciation of the skills members learn on the job during the Transitional Employment experience.

Transitional Employment is unique to the Clubhouse model. The goal of Transitional Employment is to provide structured opportunities to Clubhouse members at a competitive wage, working in jobs throughout the community but **not** maintaining employment in one location. Clubhouse members will typically work 90-180 days at one job then move to the next Transitional Employment site. Members who work and maintain Clubhouse membership have had a higher success rate with employment and improving skills that go beyond the employment sector.

Outlook's members who are currently employed:
Darcie and Kira through Transitional Employment with the Lamp Lighter and Short's Root Beer Stand
Joel through Supportive Employment with The Laurels
Russell, Kat, Greg, Dana, and Kim- Independent employment with Adapt's Workshop
Brittany– Independent employment with St. Charles

Professional Marketing Services

Adapt recently contracted with 2nd Story Marketing in Coldwater to help boost our visibility in both counties. We have seen the population of Branch County change significantly in recent years with an influx of people from other regions and they are not familiar with Adapt as are many lifelong residents. We have also had a lower profile in St. Joe County historically, with other providers being present in that county. 2nd Story Marketing has assisted us with updating our logo and boosting our Facebook presence. They are currently redesigning our website making it look more current and user-friendly. One of the goals is to give interested parties the ability to complete an application online as well as give the site a more professional look. We are currently working with them to achieve this goal. This is one of our tools in increasing our employee recruiting efforts. The new logo is featured on the first page of the newsletter. Anniversary gifts are also in the process of being updated with the new logo on new item and clothing options!

WELCOME TO THE TEAM!!!

We would like to welcome Gary Walp to the Maintenance position in Branch County. Gary began working for Adapt on June 6, 2022. He retired from the State of Michigan as a Corrections Officer in 2017. He most recently worked at the Hillsdale Senior Center in Maintenance. Gary has many years of experience with repair, renovation, and maintenance. He loves to fish in his free time. He has hit the ground running since his first day on the job and we have seen so many repairs and improvements over the summer! Welcome to Adapt Gary!!!

Adapt has seen so many changes over the last couple of years. We have had changes in our Supervisory Staff. Below is a list of the Home/Program Supervisors and Administrative staff and their number of years at Adapt. Thank you to all of you for all of your hard work! The "new" supervisors started their positions within the last month.

Angie Boyd (new supervisor)	Midas Home	17
Becky Boyd	Argosy Home	16
Jacob Buckley (new supervisor)	Polaris Home	2
Troy Figel	Mercury Home	4
Nicole Force	Payroll Coordinator/Accounts Receivable	24
Becky Glant	Gail Ann & Westbrook Homes	30
Brenda Haas	Workshop/Safety Committee Chair	35
Michael Houck	Director of Services—St. Joe	3
Tammy Hurley	Branch Co. CLS Day Program	36
Tammy Jackson	Human Resources/Sub Super.	30
Tracie Johnson	Quimby & Pierson	19
Donna Kershner	Nurse—Branch and St. Joe Counties	8
BJ LaPratt	Haven	8
Kari Lennon	Graceland Home	1.5
Michelle LeTourneau	Financial Controller	5
Chris Maher	St. Joe IHS & CLS Day Program	14
Linda Marshall	Administrative Assistant	10
Vicci Marson	Branch IHS & Employment Resources	37
Tina McGrath	Administrative Assistant/Accounts Payable	9
Kristy McLatcher	Northridge	12
Greg Mitchell (new supervisor)	Wood Drive	5
Mickey Powell	Residential Supervisor—St. Joe	14
Mellisa Rice	Program Excellence Advocate/Compliance	4.5
Emily Rose	Training	12
Michelle Sandahl	Executive Director	20
Bridget Singleton	Ivanhoe	2
Angela Snyder	Director of Services—Branch	37
Ray Spencer	Outlook Clubhouse	4.5
Brittni Towery	Rosewood	10
Gary Walp	Maintenance—Branch	3 months
Gerald Wofford	Maintenance Supervisor—St. Joe	5