

ACCESSABILITY

SUMMER 2015

Siffrin

Empowering PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

from the chief executive officer: THIS & THAT



GOLF OUTING On September 21, Siffrin will be holding its 10th annual golf outing fundraiser at Brookside CC. This is our major fundraiser of the year and all proceeds go to the Siffrin HOPE Fund. The Siffrin HOPE Fund was established to cover the cost of items people served need, which are not covered by any other funding source and the

need is extensive. When someone comes to live at a Siffrin home and all they have is what they are wearing the HOPE Fund purchases bedroom furniture and the living necessities for them. When an individual passes away and has no family the Siffrin HOPE Fund allows for dignity even after death by paying for a funeral and head stone and final resting place. These are just two of the many needs taken care of by the HOPE Fund. Please go online and register for the golf outing and help Siffrin support people with disabilities.

CENTRAL OFFICE Siffrin has signed a purchase agreement for a new location for our central office. A new and larger office is needed to support Siffrin's growth in services, personnel and infrastructure. Our hope is after the 90 day due diligence period for inspections, we will be able to proceed and move in to the 3688 Dressler Road location.

STAFF APPRECIATION LUNCH It is always a pleasure to hold our staff appreciation luncheon at the Quarry Golf Club as our way of thanking Siffrin Staff for all they do for people served. The Direct Support Professionals are the backbone of this organization providing the support, encouragement and advocacy people need to make choices and succeed. We also acknowledged Kenan Advantage Group as our Community Partner of the Year for their support for over a decade. Award winners were Dan Reese and BJ Lindsey, the Mahoning County and Geauga Teams and Tami Pettis was named Staff of the Year. Congratulations and thank you to everyone.

HB 64 OHIO BUDGET The new fiscal year budget approved recently is an indication that Ohio has made a commitment to the developmental disabilities system and those it serves. Since 2001, Ohio's general revenue fund commitment to DD services has actually decreased by 6.83%. The new funding basically says Ohio has accepted the obligation to fund services for people with disabilities. These new funds will supply new waivers for crisis or emergency services or to people wanting to leave Intermediate Care Facilities, and reduce waiting lists. It also recognizes the workforce crisis providers are experiencing and will help provide a living wage for staff, these just to name a few.

Many individuals and agencies were involved in communicating to legislatures and advocating for the DD System. I want to give a large thank you to everyone who advocated for persons with disabilities and to the legislatures who believed.

what's inside?

GREENHOUSE PROJECT IN GEAUGA | SIFFRIN HC NETWORK | CELEBRATING JOHN

PRODUCE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Partnership grows vegetables, job skills

Siffrin, in partnership with the Geauga County Board of Developmental Disabilities and local business, Eddy Fruit Farm, is helping people with disabilities find meaningful work in hydroponic farming.

In the collaborative agreement, Siffrin oversaw a \$400,000 grant from the Metzenbaum Foundation to construct a greenhouse for hydroponic farming with the purpose of employing people with disabilities. The opportunity allows Siffrin to help people with disabilities overcome the difficult barrier of finding a job in the community. Currently, three people have been hired, and the business owner has plans to employ more as the business develops over time.

“The Geauga County Board of DD is committed to helping our clients live, learn, and earn in our community,” said Geauga County Board of DD Superintendent Don Rice. “This project helps three clients earn a paycheck while working with members of the community. We hope to see 10 individuals involved in this growing opportunity.”

Each organization involved with the project has specific responsibilities. The greenhouse is operated by Eddy Fruit Farm, who is also responsible for selling the produce to local restaurants and customers. The Geauga County Board used grant monies available to fund the construction of the greenhouse, and Siffrin is specifically responsible for identifying qualified people to work within the greenhouse.

The three employees working at the Eddy Fruit Farm hydroponic greenhouse, Lizz, Lawrence, and Jeremy earn minimum wage and have the opportunity to utilize their skills and talents to provide a great product to the local public.

“They have already learned so much,” said Tom Compisi, Siffrin Manager of Business Development. “When they first started they were responsible for basic cleaning tasks such as pots and planter trays. Now, they’re seeding, planting, pruning and harvesting produce. It’s a great experience and resume builder.”





MONTHLY TEAM MEETINGS SUPPORT THOSE WHO SERVE

Every person, every position, every task within Siffrin is important. With more than 250 staff, in more than 35 work sites, connecting with everyone can be a challenge. With the first meeting on May 21, the *Home Coordinators Network of Siffrin* was created and will continue to meet monthly to connect staff working at Siffrin homes throughout northern Ohio. The group's purpose is to allow opportunity to meet, problem-solve and further develop leadership skills.



Thirteen Siffrin Home Coordinators attended the first Home Coordinator Network meeting on May 21 at the Perry Sippo Library.

The Siffrin Home Coordinator (HC) position is an integral part of the Siffrin Supervised Living Team. Managers of Supervised Living (MSL) oversee several homes and supervise the HC. The HC is the team leader within a home, and supervises the Direct Support Professionals (DSP).

The HC, arguably, has the potential and ability to have the most direct and meaningful impact on the lives of those served by Siffrin because they not only provide direct care services, they also supervise the other staff in the home. The HC knows each person within the home, what they like, what they dislike and what they aspire to do. For some without, the staff in the homes along with the HC becomes their family.

“The HC’s play a huge part in the success of the homes, as they direct and support the DSP’s,” said Quality Assurance Coordinator and Family Liaison, Margaret Harity. “We all work harder when we feel appreciated and respected for the work we do. The HC Network meetings allow us to support each other, communicate and grow as effective leaders.”

Among the group of Siffrin HC’s who attended the first meeting, there was more than 55 years experience. The group has immense experience and knowledge, and now, with the Siffrin HC Network, they have a way of sharing it.

“The first meeting was very informative,” said HC, Shirley Stout. “It helped me to see that we all want the same things, and I’m looking forward to the next meeting to start getting the tools and information to help us become even more productive in our jobs.”

“It was nice meeting other HC’s, and I’m looking forward to learning more,” said HC, Wanda Smith.

In a position working directly with those they supervise, the Home Coordinators have a unique and, at times, difficult responsibility. To have a successful relationship, HC’s must lead their staff by example. They must be clear in what they expect, and always very respectful of their staff. A moment of frustration not handled well, could negatively impact the team’s cohesion and work environment - an environment that Siffrin staff work in, but those we serve live in.

“It’s crucial that our home staff work well together as a team,” said Margaret. “With direction from a positive MSL and HC, staff will work to make the home and service the best it can be.”

SAVE the DATE

Monday, September 21 BROOKSIDE COUNTRY CLUB

MORE INFO | SIFFRIN.ORG



TEAM COMMUNICATION

By: Kim Larson-Phillips, COO

As Direct Support Professionals (DSP), communication makes all the difference in the team. Whether we're talking with a physician to adjust someone's medication, informing a guardian of difficult news, or communicating with the person we serve, we must learn to adapt the way we receive and send messages.

"The goal of effective communication is to achieve mutual understanding. Effective communication requires skill. A collaborative exchange of verbal and non-verbal information toward mutual understanding demands that we listen, perceive and speak skillfully," taken from DSPATHS Communication training.

As part of the Siffrin team, I have had the opportunity to meet many amazing people. Every member of our team, including people we serve, their families and guardians, and Siffrin staff have valuable information to share for the betterment of those

we support.

Many times, it is during a challenge that a team can begin to weaken. However, if each of us keeps those we serve at the forefront of every decision and conversation, the team's integrity will never falter. When those difficult decisions are finally made, it is with the entire team, that we move forward undivided. A strong, united team makes the possibilities for what the person can achieve endless!



“Every member of our team... has valuable information to share.”



A small group of Siffrin professionals attended the 2015 DSP Summit on April 28. The conference, which is organized by Ohio Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (OADSP) featured training on leadership, team building and other topics relevant to Direct Support Professionals.

“It was such an educational and fun experience for me,” said Home Coordinator, Lisa Walters.

L-R TOP ROW: Chuck Hawley, Kim Larson-Phillips, Tier Sanders, Jessica Lloyd. BOTTOM ROW: Lisa Walters, Cynthia Speziale and Ryan Cavanaugh



Almond Datmeal Protein

176 CALORIES + 8.4G PROTEIN/BAR

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9-by-11-inch pan with cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, use an electric mixer to mix 1 cup almond butter, 3 oz vanilla plant-based protein powder, and 1/2 cup maple syrup. Beat in two eggs. Stir in 2 cups gluten-free rolled oats, 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut, and 1 tsp baking soda, and mix well. Firmly press stiff dough into the pan using the back of a spoon.
3. Bake for 12 minutes or until the top browns slightly. Cool pan on a rack, cut into 18 squares, and store leftovers in an airtight container.

Mahoning, Trumbull & Columbiana Connection



MESSAGE FROM REGIONAL DIRECTOR

By: Ryan Cavanaugh, RD

Moving forward with the Ohio's Employment First Initiative, Siffrin has been hard at work supporting and educating the people we serve to be competitively employed. We have forged a wonderful partnership with Tina Copeland and the job coun-

selors at Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), showing them that Siffrin is a very competent vendor for OOD consumers.

A year ago, we began developing our Employment First Services, and today we have a total of 12 people served, through both Employment First and OOD referrals. And, we are thrilled to have helped two people successfully find community employment.

In addition, Siffrin has been an active member in the Mahoning County Employment Networking Group. Providers from the area meet and discuss current job opportunities, necessary accommodations, what mistakes to avoid and other helpful information. The Mahoning County Employment Networking Group also created "Patronage Day", in which the group chooses a business each month that has hired someone with a disability, and promotes a day to patronize that business.



Bryan and Janice went to Pizza Hut with a handmade thank you card for the company's support of hiring people with disabilities. Pizza Hut was a "Patronage Day" selected business by the Mahoning County Employment Networking Group

SIFFRIN WELCOMES TIFFANY & TRAVIS

Two join the Siffrin team, doing a great job for people served



TIFFANY MATYI,
Employment Coordinator

Tiffany was hired in February, 2015. Originally from Jefferson, Ohio, Tiffany attended Youngstown State University for graphic design and Kent State University for nursing, and previously worked as a STNA in nursing home facilities.

In her role at Siffrin, Tiffany helps people seek employment, and helps them with interviewing and work skills. Upon hire, Tiffany also helps people learn the job and maintain employment.

"I like helping people," said Tiffany. "I hope to be able to teach people the steps to be successful in job interviews to be hired in a job they enjoy and can be successful."



TRAVIS BOWEN,
Manager of Community Integration Services

Travis was hired in April, 2015. He lived in Albion, PA but much of his career has been spent in Ohio in retail. He previously was a business owner in Girard, OH.

As Manager of Community Integration Services, Travis works to help each person become more active in their community each day. The Bridge focuses on activities and volunteer work that allows them to be more involved.

"I've enjoyed spending time with the people we serve to help them enhance the lifestyle they wish to live," said Travis. "In addition, I've enjoyed becoming a member of the Siffrin family where I have felt welcomed from day one."

JOHN'S CELEBRATION

Siffrin celebrates friend's life at game

John loved the game of baseball. He was often wearing his favorite teams' apparel and his bedroom was full of baseball memorabilia. In January, after 28 years living in a Siffrin Supervised Living home and receiving many years of services at The Bridge, John passed away. With a donation to Siffrin from John's life-long friends, Jim and Polly, The Bridge planned a day at the baseball field in his memory.

"As a kid, John was my grandfather's neighbor, so I've known him many years," said Jim. "We have stayed in contact with him, and when John moved in with Siffrin, it became his home and the other residents were his family."

As a participant at the Bridge, John was a close friend to many others who attend the program. As a way to help his friends remember John and say 'good-bye', 60 tickets were purchased to the June 22 game in the Duck Suite.

"It was a great day with perfect weather," said Director of Community Integration and Transportation Matt White. "I know John would have liked the idea of spending the day at the game with his friends."



Upper: John Mills' photo was displayed on the jumbotron as all his friends at Siffrin celebrated his life at the June 22 Akron Rubber Ducks game. L-R: Kevin, John & Tammie and a group of people in the lounge.

liveunited

There are many types of barriers that interfere with everyday life for people with developmental disabilities. Everyone should work together to identify and eliminate these barriers.

Barrier Category: FINANCIAL

Siffrin has regrettably said "goodbye" to several people who have passed away in the past year and a half. Most of those people have

Identify & erase barriers for people with disabilities.

been a part of the Siffrin Family for many years. For each person served by Siffrin, we consult with the family to make arrangements for end of life planning. For those without living family or the financial resources to plan, Siffrin, with the help of community members, does everything possible to provide dignified and respectful services.

Thank you, FAMILY MEMORIAL, for your help in providing those

SPOTLIGHT ON STAFF:

Emily Suzuki



Emily Suzuki has known she has wanted to work with people with disabilities since she was eight years old. In third grade, Emily joined the "Special Friends" program to socialize and interact with students with disabilities during school.

"It was such a good experience for me," said Emily. "The friends I made were so sweet and I just loved the group. Ever since, I have never thought of doing anything else."

Emily was hired at Siffrin in June as the Administrative Assistant at the Stark County office. Prior to, she worked as a Special Education Teacher's Assistant for several years. With an Associate's Degree in Applied Sciences, Emily is on course to graduate this year, in December, with her Bachelor's in Special Education and has plans to continue her education to obtain a Masters Degree in Early Intervention.

"For the last two years, I worked with three to five year old students," said Emily. "When one of the students proposed to me with a plastic flower ring, I knew I could do this for the rest of my career."

As a Teacher's Assistant, Emily worked with students ages three to 22. She assisted the teacher in class instruction and offered assistance based on each student's needs and abilities. In her role at the school, she was able to assist and serve

a younger population. Now, in her role at Siffrin, she has been interested to learn how adults are supported and served.

"I really enjoy the behind-the-scenes work to help everyone in the office and people served by Siffrin," said Emily. "Never working in adult services, I've really learned a lot about the different types of services available to people and the options they have in adulthood, which will definitely help me serve and prepare people for the future."

One of Emily's main functions at the Siffrin office is answering the phones and greeting people in the office, and is a position that requires a lot of contact and service to others.

"I appreciate Emily's past experience in this field, her professionalism and helpful nature," said Emily's supervisor Kim Larson-Phillips. "She is doing a good job and is a great addition to our team."

In Remembrance

Lorraine Clarke

After many years living in a Siffrin home, Lorraine passed away. She will be missed by her many friends and loving family.

Joe Eberhart

After 17 years of living in a Siffrin home and a very courageous battle against cancer, Joe passed away. He was a wonderful person, and will be dearly missed by his family at Siffrin, especially friends and staff at his home.

Mary Sue Hoiles

It is with a heavy heart that we say "goodbye" to Mary Sue Hoiles. Mary Sue has been in the Siffrin family for well over 20 years in both the Siffrin Community Support Services and Fiscal Services programs. She greeted everyone with a smile and was a pleasure to work with.

Marvin Smith

Sadly, Marvin Smith passed away May 20. Marvin lived in the Siffrin Supervised Living home on Southcrest in Akron for 24 years, and has been a joy to all those who knew him. Our deepest condolences to Marvin's closest friends within the Southcrest team.

CELEBRATE

ANNIVERSARIES: APRIL - JUNE

TWENTY YEARS
Jon Hegal

FIVE YEARS
Amy Stewart
Kenneth Long
Crystal Wike

THREE YEARS
Jodi Broll
Amanda Criss
Nick Boron
Krystal Weber



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mission

Siffrin empowers people with disabilities by encouraging self-advocacy.

suggestions

Ideas, Comments, & Suggestions:
Please send to Melanie White at
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