



Fall 2022 Newsletter



Behind the Gears!

From The Corner Office, A little something from our President

Fall is here and the days are getting cooler, I hope everyone is ready for a great holiday season. We started off the holidays this year with the New England Christmas Festival. We will be selling all our handmade Christmas Crafts; our elves have been very busy this year. If you can't make that weekend, keep in mind our Gifts of OWC store located in Vernon, we will be open Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm as well every Saturday 10am to 2pm until Christmas.

Our new Sensory Room has been moving right along. All walls have been finished, painted and the new ceiling tiles have been installed. The four smaller rooms have been carpeted and carpet for the remaining areas has been ordered and should be installed by the end of the year. We are waiting for a few more donations before we can order fixtures for the handicap bathroom. The Sensory Room will be a big plus for OWC and our individuals when it's completed. If you can help in any way, OWC and the individuals we serve would greatly appreciate it.

We are still accepting bottles and cans for recycling as well as what ever you may need shredded. For large quantities feel free to call and we can arrange a pickup.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely

Bill Paluska

New Hires

Dwight Palmer

**Worked at Stop and Shop,
Lives in East Hartford,
Has a wife, kids, and a granddaughter
Likes to shoot pool and play Xbox.
Likes making everybody smile**



Briana Pare

**Worked at a dental office.
Lives in Broad Brook CT.
Has a older sister and twin sister.
Spends time with her 2-year-old son.
Likes working with everybody.**



Jeanne Hemmingsen

**Worked for Network Inc,
Lives in Willington CT,
Has 4 children and a husband,
Likes cooking and gardening.
Likes working with individuals at OWC**



Bay Path— OT CORNER

While the weather still permits, take advantage of all that nature has to offer. Here are just a few examples of how nature can affect us.

The benefits of being in nature...

- Promotes mental and physical well-being.
- Boosts immunity through sunlight and fresh air.
- Stimulates cognitive development such as new learning, attention, working memory, and cognitive flexibility.
- Promotes improved self-regulation and self-control.
- Can lower stress levels.
- Helps stimulate feelings of happiness.
- Fosters positive social interactions and bonding.
- Make connections in your community.
- Improves self-confidence and self-esteem
- Encourages learning about your community.

12 Things you can do in nature this fall...

1. Have a picnic at Henry Park.
2. Hike the easy trail at Valley Falls.
3. Find an accessible hiking trail in CT: https://www.accessiblenature.info/?page_id=328
4. Walk on the Rails to Trails throughout Connecticut.
5. Take a scenic drive to Saville Dam in Barkhamsted, CT.
6. Go to a local fair and walk around.
7. Take a walk around Dinosaur State Park in Rocky Hill-it's only \$6 per person!
8. Do a nature scavenger hunt around your neighborhood.
9. Go apple or pumpkin picking.
10. Check out Oak Grove Nature Center in Manchester!
11. Check out the flowers at Elizabeth Park.
12. Go on a hayride or make a scarecrow

Also....

New OT students are coming in January 2023!!! Anyone interested in participating in the free OT services, please be sure that OWC has a signed consent on file. If anyone has any questions about the OT services at OWC, please contact:

Melanie @ mmorrisonriddle@baypath.edu for DSO or Nancy @ nanclark@baypath.edu for the Transitional program.

Transitional

1



2



3



4



5



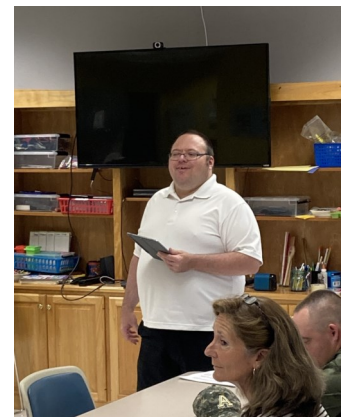
6



7



8



1. Brenden is seen at the White Oaks learning how to work in a dining room. 2 Sarah is seen at the White Oaks putting glasses on the tables. 3 Group photo of Brenden, Sarah, and Jacob posing in the dining room. 4 Chelsea, new to OWC, can be seen with her cooking creation. 5 Kevin, also new to OWC can be seen with his cupcake too! 6 Group photo of our cooking group waiting to frost their cupcakes. 7 Emily is seen with her calligraphy name tags that she created for assigned seating in the classroom. 8 Varian, DDS Self-Advocacy Coordinator, is seen presenting a self-advocacy presentation to our Transitional program.

Our transitional program is always growing and changing. Since the beginning of summer, we have gained six new individuals and now have 20 individuals in total! Since June, we have focused on monthly themes such as, Self-Advocacy, Self-Regulation, Self-Confidence and Self-Direction. Day to day in our classroom includes working with money, work with analog clocks and functional writing. We've been incorporating resume writing, cover letters, and writing professional emails to strengthen communication skills. We also incorporate functional reading such as, reading maps, reading community signs, and reading job descriptions. We introduced a new block to our classroom in September called, Let's Chat About It. This gives our individuals the opportunity to discuss their opinions and thoughts to the group, while working on their public speaking skills, as well as their conversational skills. For October, we introduced a new challenge to the individuals, how many ways can you make \$1.00 out of coins?! Turns out there is 293 different ways! We had a great summer and are looking forward to the cooler weather. Stay tuned, we're always evolving! – Brittany Kellner

Woodshop and Crafts Department



Fred and Matthew completing a custom bench for Mumford Cove, CT



Our fairy birdhouse line, with roofs crafted from

Bill T. painting a Christmas tree



Matthew is ecstatic at the completion of a project!



Keychains galore! Come select your favorite ones!



A newly completed tic tac toe with owls – nice work, Dan!



Vinny and Dan working on the clay pieces for the tic tac toe boards



Lauren is ready to trace ornaments onto the tree

ISE Updates

Scott continues to expand his skills as the Front Office Assistant, working on greeting visitors, inquiring whom they are here to see, and then connecting them with the appropriate OWC staff. He answers the phone, transferring calls or taking messages. Scott is also responsible for publishing the quarterly newsletter. He works very hard to pull the newsletter together, soliciting articles and pictures from all of the OWC administrators and managers, and then distributing copies digitally and by hand. Since you are reading this article, you are enjoying the fruits of his labor!



Jessica continues to work as a cashier at Walgreens in Stafford, displaying outstanding customer service skills. Some of the new managers have also taught her new hard skills like printing out photo orders, “tabbing” sales items, making mylars, and printing posters. This summer she was recognized as Employee of the Month for the second time since being hired in November 2021 – Go Jess! Recently, Jess took the initiative to explore other employment options by applying to a few different jobs. We’ll see what the future holds for her.



Shanice continues to work as a lunch aide Monday through Friday at Keeney School in Manchester. She distributes breakfast to the kindergarteners and supervises the children during their lunchtime. She is always willing to do whatever is needed and is well liked by staff.



After requesting a meeting with the store manager, Logan has added Wednesday afternoons to her Tuesday and Thursday schedule as a bagger at Geissler's in Somers. She has a positive and friendly attitude, works hard, and is pleased to be earning more money!

Diane continues to take precautions to avoid contracting COVID. She has begun to venture out in public a bit more and will hopefully feel comfortable going on more community outings soon.

DSO Loves Fall Most of All!

As the leaves begin to change to and the weather gets cooler, DSO prepares for a wide array of Fall activities. From pumpkin picking and carnivals to contests and celebrations, here are some photos of our favorite occasions!

STEM Recycled Material Group Challenges

Sleeping Under The Stars Theme



Down On The Farm Theme



DSO Bowling at Spare Time!



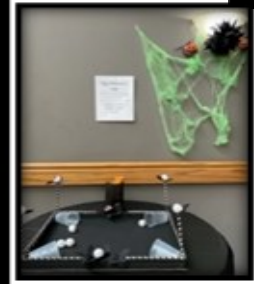
DSO Halloween Carnival!



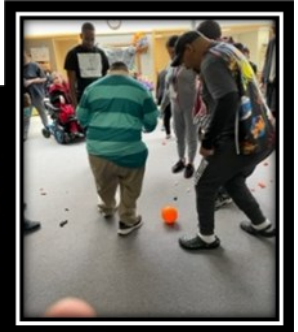
Goolish Games



1st, 2nd, 3rd Place
Costume Winners!



Orb Catching



Darlene rings the Witches
Hats



Jeffrey at Mr.
Bones Sensory Dig



Harold taking down the ghosts
in Boo Bash



Popping Pumpkins



Zombie Spots Musical Dots



Alicia & Taylor take down the
Monster Blocks

The Garlic Festival—Bethlehem, CT

October 8 & 9, 2022



Our birdhouse kits were a huge hit!
We sold 30 of them!



A nice variety of birdhouses to choose from.



We are ready for the event! The booth set up SAT morning



Tic Tac Toe and Boat kits also sold well. Many compliments on the creativity of the designers.

This was our 1st multi-day selling event and it went well. We sold \$5100, thanks to our volunteers: Lori Muckler, Deb Potvin, Brian & Kim Welch, Jon & Rene Lambert, Jeanne and husband Hemmingsen, Chris Donald, and Amy Szozda.

Mohegan Sun - Christmas craft show

November 5 and 6, 2022



A much smaller booth than at the garlic fest but it is also packed with all our products



Fruit feeders and seed sticks were our best sellers



We sold 15 large and 28 small trees! Pretty good for a new product!

We sold \$7400! Only due to our wonderful Volunteers: Deb Potvin, Kim & Brian Welch, Robin Kilton, Kaly Jones, Rene Lambert, Jeanne and husband Hemmingsen, Larry Mann & husband.

OWC Store

THE GIFTS OF OWC

Special Holiday Shop Hours

Every Saturday until **Christmas!**

- *November 5th
- *November 12th
- *November 19th
- *November 24th
- *December 3rd
- *December 10th
- *December 17th



Closed on Christmas & New Years

Bring bottles & can donations on any of these days and enjoy 10% off any purchase at Gifts of OWC!

Open from 10AM – 2PM

**45 West Main Street
Rockville, CT 06066**



From The Director's Desk The cold weather has finally snapped!

The holiday season is in full swing. On Nov. 29 Fox 61 will be here to do a story on our work departments and our store! More info to come on that. On Dec 1 (Thursday) from 3p-8p we will be having an open house at our Vernon location, The store will be open and we will have lite bites & cider that day. Come start your Christmas shopping and see all the new things we are doing ! We would love to see you all! We will be having our all-staff holiday party at Vernon 12/14/22, a Pot Luck. More info to come regarding all individual Holiday celebrations to come. I want to take this holiday season to thank all of OWC's staff volunteers, families, group homes, and individuals for making 2022 another successful year! Remember...

“Gratitude can transform ordinary days into Thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.”
William Arthur Ward

Happy Holidays, *Rene Lambert, ED*



Camp Q



Our Horticulture Program has been busy the past few months helping DDS with a Haunted Trail on Camp Q grounds, doing the fall clean up and prepping for the winter. Everyone worked hard to decorate the gardens and grounds and the Haunted Trail was a success, with a great turnout from the community!



Helping people with *amazing abilities* lead wholesome roles in their communities.

45 West Main Street Rockville CT 06066 (860) 454 - 4016

OWC Equity Statement

Everyone is welcome. Diversity. Inclusion. They are the hard-and-fast principles guiding how we build our teams and cultivate our leaders. Through inclusion we are building a culture where differences are valued. We strive to build & nurture a culture where inclusiveness is a reflex not an initiative and where everyone can

Our Mission

Opportunity Works Connecticut, Inc. (OWC) is a non-profit agency that supports people with intellectual and physical disabilities in Eastern Connecticut. We are committed to providing the best individualized supports to assist everyone to find meaningful vocational activities and/or gainful employment opportunities that fit with their personal goals. We work together to foster a sense of respect and dignity which enables our participants to work and live with quality of life.

Please consider a tax deductible donation to OWC's programs

Name: _____

Phone number: _____

Address: _____

How much do you wish to give?

\$20__ \$40__ \$100__ Other: _____

Email: _____

Card : MC VISA AMEX DISC

Card #: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Security Code: _____

Or make checks payable to: Opportunity Works CT