

Summer 2023 Newsletter



Behind the Gears!

From The Corner Office, A little something from our President

Greetings from OWC's corner office, for this edition of our Newsletter I would like to recognize two people who made a very significant difference this month. The first person is Mr. Doug Price of Ellington CT. Doug has been a friend of mine for almost 40 years. He is a retired software developer and avidly trained wood worker, specializing in 17th century reproductions. Through Doug I was introduced to Mr. Jon Jenkis of Wilton CT. Jon is a retired Wall Street executive and philanthropist. He has dedicated many years to supporting battered women's programs and domestic violence victims in his area. He is an avid target shooter and skeet shooter, an excellent golfer, and an accomplished wood worker. Jon has recently decided to close his extensive woodworking shop. After meeting with Jon and telling him about the work we do at Opportunity Works, he decided to donate his entire collection of high-end wood working tools and machinery if we could take everything. Which of course I said Yes! With the help of Tony Lowe, a mover from New London CT and friend of OWC, we were able to pack up everything and bring it to our Vernon location. As you can see from the photos on the next page, it was a vast collection! We are now in the process of setting everything up. These new tools will make it possible to build more and better projects to sell online and in the Gifts of OWC Store.

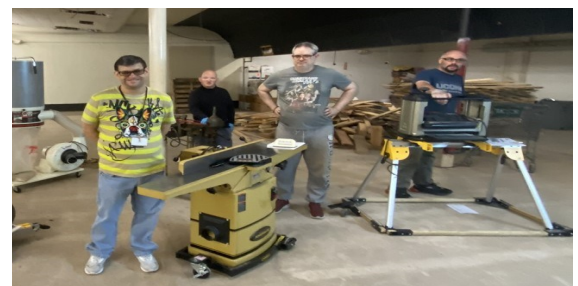
If you have any wood, you think OWC could use, please reach out to us. It can be dropped off or we may possibly be able to pick up!

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

Sincerely,

William Paluska

President



Equipment Donation by Jon Jenkins



These are pictures of recently donated equipment for the woodshop. We send our thanks and are eager to start using it all!

New Hires

Jay Freitas

Worked for New England Behavioral services.

Lives in Vernon with his wife and daughter

Has a family with a wife, daughter, and 3 pets.

Likes to go hiking, listen to music, and enjoys going to Disney World

What Jay likes about OWC is that people are great, everyone is friendly, and looking forward to working with adults.



Jessica Stewart

Worked at Fedex, Warehouse in Willington CT.

Lives in Hartford CT with her dad.

Likes to go on hikes, read, and relax with entertainment.

Likes the friendly environment, and new opportunity



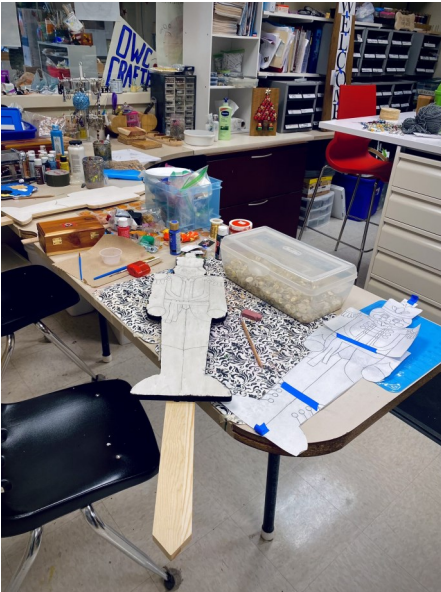
Group Supported Employment (GSE)



Some of the items that have been created recently in our GSE work areas.
Our FULL on-line store coming soon!

Design Department

Our staff are busy creating all kinds of creative projects to support our store, Gifts of Own and our 2 large events coming in October and November of this year.

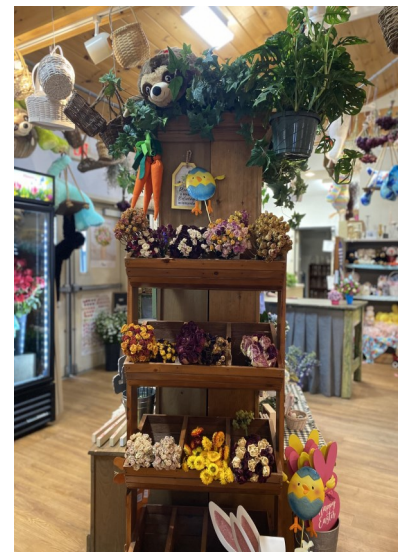
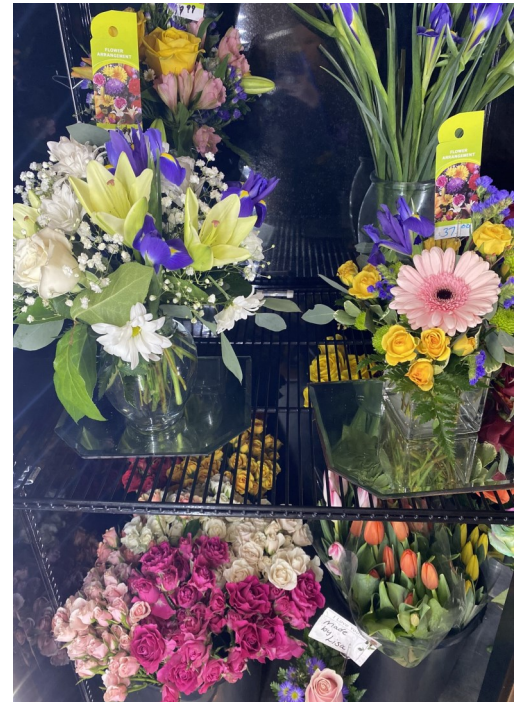


The Florist

We have been very busy this season at the florist! May was our largest month yet for gross sales! We are looking for another creative staff to join our team at Floral and Gifts of OWC!



Don't forget about our online ordering system, scan the QR code !



Our Vernon DSO

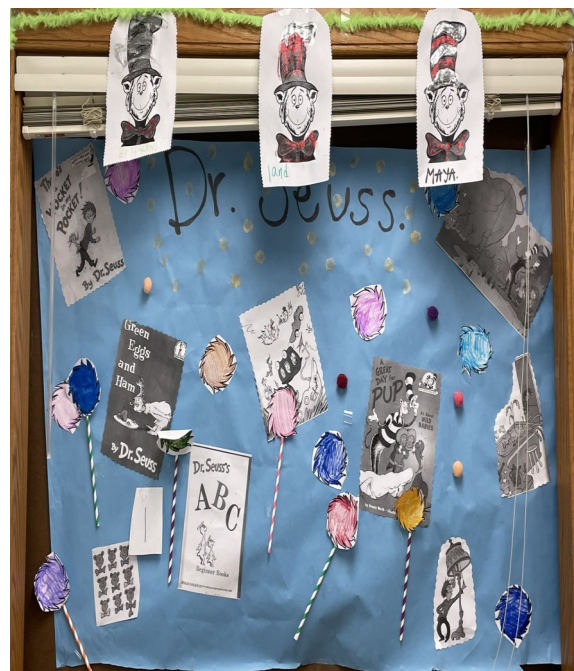


DSO took a trip to the Dr. Seuss Museum and Oh Boy, did they have fun!!

Oh, the places you can go

See more pictures on the next page too!

More fun at the Dr. Seuss museum!



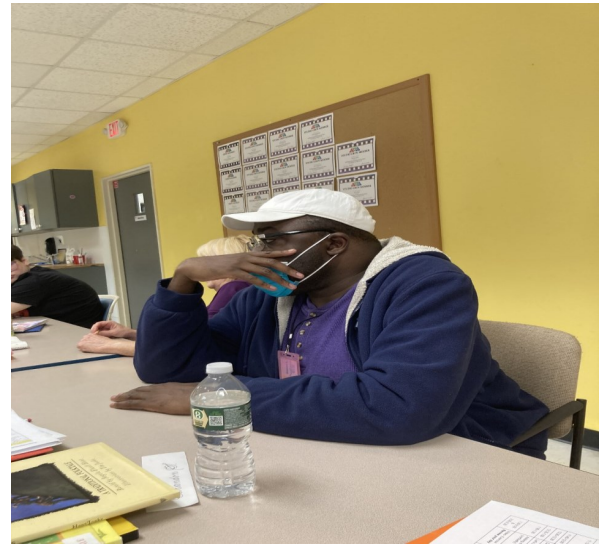
Relaxing community adventures with the Vernon DSO program!



Transitional Services



Talia presenting her leadership series that took place over 4 weeks. .



Brandon listening to Talia.



Lexi and Kevin participating in the leadership discussion.



Jacob answering a leadership question.

Transitional Services (continued)



Matthew and Sarah at completion of CVC workshop



Group photo during CVC workshop



Jacob and Kevin learning how to operate the control room



Jacob in the control room during 1st taping of You and Me and OWC



Sean manning the camera



Brenden manning the camera too

Transitional Services Part 3



Shane and Ime getting ready for lights, camera, action



GSE and Transitional attending the first showing of You and Me and OWC



Brenden is pictured here celebrating with UConn's Adama Sanogo after the Huskies won their 5th NCAA Men's Basketball Championship.

Bay Path OT Intern Program

May 2023 Newsletter~OT Corner~Sensory-Friendly Activities

Spring is a great time to get out and do fun activities with your family! Sometimes it can be difficult to find sensory-friendly activities for your loved one. Sensory-friendly activities are catered to individuals who may struggle with being in loud or noisy places, and may have behaviors due to feeling overwhelmed. We found a few fun and interesting activities that you should check out with your loved one this spring! Daniel's Music Foundation: Activities for Adults with Disabilities
<https://www.danielsmusic.org>

Free virtual music and movement activity videos that you can enjoy at your own pace and on your own schedule and they are for all ages and abilities.

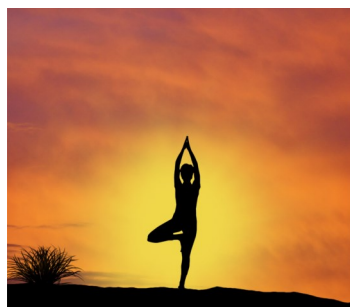
- Free virtual live events that are free; Some of these events include dance parties for different ages and even open mic nights for performers. Creative Living Community of CT: Recreation & Social Events Farm to Table Dinner coming up July 15th (Coventry)

<https://creativelivingcommunityofct.org>

- They have recreation and social events for adults with Autism and other intellectual and developmental disabilities; including Yoga at the Farm or via Zoom, Bowling Nights, trips to Dave & Busters, social gatherings at their Coventry Farm, advocacy events, and other gatherings throughout the year.

- Typically events are scheduled for Wednesday evenings. Chuck E. Cheese: Sensory Sensitive Sundays (Manchester, CT) <https://www.chuckecheese.com>

- Additional sensory spaces outside of the theater such as coloring tables and quiet spaces are provided if individuals need a break during programming.



OT Intern Program Continued:

- Arcade-loving kids can enjoy a quieter, less-crowded dining and entertainment environment, dimmed lighting, and a sensory-friendly arcade experience during Sensory Sensitive Sundays at the Manchester location on the first Sunday of every month from 9am to 11am. Mystic Aquarium: Sensory Friendly Evening (Mystic, CT)
- Every August, Mystic hosts a very popular (and free) sensory-friendly evening for children on the autism spectrum.
- Kids can explore all the usual aquatic exhibits, with sound and motion effects turned down or off. There are also quiet corners to allow children to take breaks and supportive staff on hand.
- They also provide Headphone Zones that indicate that sensitive guests may want to wear ear protection due to increasingly loud noises/higher noise levels. AMC Movie Theatres (Plainville & Southington, CT) <https://www.amctheatres.com/programs/sensory-friendly-films>
- Sensory friendly film showing of Guardians of the Galaxy and Fast X for the month of May. They choose different movies each month.
- The theater turns the light up and the sound down.
- The individuals can get up and walk around as they please. Children's Museum at Holyoke (Holyoke, MA) <https://www.childrensmuseumholyoke.org>
- Offers activities that target proprioceptive, tactile, auditory and vestibular input depending on an individual's needs!
- Activities include music, water, climbing, exploring, running around and much more!
- Admission: Adults \$8.00; Seniors (62+) \$5.00 The Bushnell (Hartford, CT) <https://bushnell.org/shows-concerts?categories=20> • The Bushnell provides sensory-friendly/relaxed supports available to the public. Individuals have the opportunity to walk through the theater before the performance to feel comfortable in the space. • Fidgets, earplugs, noise canceling headphones, and visual schedules are all available to use.



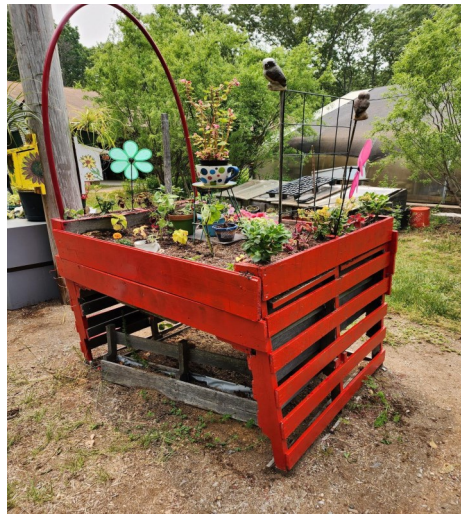
Fast X for

Camp Q



Every one at Camp Q is getting ready for summer and prepping for camp!! We will be working with all of the Day Campers in the therapeutic horticulture arena. We have created many projects & gardens, including sensory gardens to achieve this with the campers.!

Camp Q



Check out our new Hydroponic garden! We want to extend a huge thank you to Gardening Knowhow for the generous \$1000 grant that they gave us for this project. We are super excited that we have it in place for the 2023 camp

The activities of the Own Wood Shop



OWC Store



OWC Store (Continued)



From The Director's Desk:

Happy warm weather!

To my staff: As we approach the end of our fiscal year, I look back at all of the things that have been accomplished this past year and I sit in awe....I am so grateful to the team that we have at OWC and the dedication and love that each member puts into their jobs and the people that they support. I know that my administrative and management staff are feeling pressure and stress with all of the changes happening and all of the reports and applications and accounting that we are going through to end our year but I say to them "WAIT!" You need to look at all of the good that has happened here, what would our individual's world look like had you not been involved with our programs and living our mission? Everyone matters and everyone contributes, the pictures in this Newsletter show that to be true. The difficult times come and go but the one constant is what we can achieve by contributing to making someone else's life better and I know that is what keeps my staff here. Thank you all!

"Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all." Sam Ewing, author

UPDATES for all:

- We have funded all of the construction and finishes to the sensory room, now we will be fundraising to get the hardware and software to put in to the room, about \$40,000 more and we are ready to provide quality sensory activities in a beautiful space.
- OT is sponsoring a July 4th event on June 21st after hours here, contact your program manager if you'd like the information on attending
- WE have created a 3 year plan for our busdiness, most of year one is tightening up on all of our processes and policies as well as increasing the way we sell and market the items created by our individuals. We will have a full update at our next parent group meeting on August 16th at 6:30 at Vernon and on Zoom, I hope we have a lot in attendance.
- We will be changing out notification system, we currently use Network For Good and will be changing to a platform called Donorview. This will take some time to implement but will allow us better contact lists, on line ticket sales, on line auction capabilities and it connects to our accounting system, just to name a few improvements. We will keep you all posted as we navigate through the migration.
- I want to thank every one for your continued support of our mission and programs, please reach out to me for any questions: rlambert@owct.org

Rene Lambert, ED

Opportunity Works CT





45 West Main
Street Rockville
CT 06066

Helping people with *amazing abilities* lead whole-
some roles in their communities.

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 bring their full, authentic selves to work.

Our Mission

Opportunity Works Connecticut (OWC) is a non-profit agency that supports people with intellectual, cognitive and physical disabilities in Eastern CT. We are committed to enhancing the lives of people through meaningful and gainful employment services. We embrace the idea that all people can live a fully productive life within their community.

OWC supports these adults in their journey to live successfully by setting the standard in providing program excellence, skill training, mentoring and advocacy. OWC provides services that aid in positive self image which will foster a sense of respect and dignity for the individuals we serve and enable them 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 45 West Main St Vernon, CT 06066