



11828 Lackland Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63146

WHAT'S INSIDE:



Innovative
Practice
Award



3-Year
CARF
Accreditation



GivingTues-
day is
November 30!

THE CENTER FOR HEAD INJURY SERVICES

GRAY matters

Shaping brighter futures

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Make a donation today!

Your donation will make a difference in the lives of the people we serve. The Center relies on generous contributions to supplement program and general operating costs and to purchase much needed equipment. Your donation is essential to our mission.

You can make a secure donation online through Network for Good using a credit card. Please visit headinjuryctr-stl.org/give.

If you prefer to send a donation by mail, please mail to: **11828 Lackland Rd. St. Louis, MO 63146**

For questions, please contact Alyssa Bergman, Assistant Director of Development, at 314-983-9230 x1110 or abergman@headinjuryctr-stl.org. Thank you for considering a donation. You are making a difference!



Beating All Odds



Here are Samantha Dean, Michael Smith and Catherine Spence with Sam on his first day of work.

When Sam came to The Center, the odds were against him. At 60 years of age, he had never worked a "traditional" job - ever! His most recent job was working for a Chinese restaurant going door to door handing out menus. He was paid only \$10 per day. Sam has a visual impairment. He was referred to The Center by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind's (RSB) vocational rehabilitation counselor, Catherine Spence. Catherine believed in Sam and knew he had the skills to be employed. Through The Center, he completed a **Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation**. Catherine and Center staff Samantha Dean, worked together to identify his strengths and barriers to employment. They found that Sam had many hands-on skills. He did amazingly at all tasks and challenges during his Evaluation. Catherine and Samantha thought Sam would do well in warehouse work or even custodial.

Sam's next step was to transition to **Job Development Services**. Sam worked on perfecting his interview skills and making sure he understood how the world of work operates. During job development, Sam was very motivated; participating in **Job Club** and completing all tasks he was given.

Sam applied for a custodian position with the St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS). He went through all the necessary steps to become employed with a school district including background checks, fingerprints, TB tests, and COVID tests. He did this all independently with Samantha supporting him in making appointments online. Sam took buses to each of these appointments and did what it took for him to be successful. He recently reached his 90 days of continuous employment and his case is now closed. Sam enjoys his position with SLPS and feels he is valued and appreciated.

I am so proud of Sam for sticking with it," said Kenda, Director of **Career Development Services**, "Sam is a great success story and shows what amazing things we can accomplish when we all put our heads together for the success of a client. Watching him overcome his barriers and continue to be motivated is inspiring."

Order Your Holiday Treats Now!

Destination Desserts is ready to make your holiday season even sweeter! Order cookie trays now for your coworkers, friends, and family. **Wags In a Bag** is also providing holiday gifts this year! Grab a gift basket for the furry friends in your life today.

View the menu at destinationdesserts.org. To place an order, please call 314-227-7070 or email holidayorders@headinjuryctr-stl.org. Order by November 30th.

Successful CARF Accreditation Survey

CARF International announced last month that the Center for Head Injury Services' programs have been accredited for three years. A three-year accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to an organization. The latest accreditation is the eighth consecutive three-year accreditation that the international accrediting body has given to The Center for Head Injury Services.

Thanks "fore" everything!

On September 27th, the Center hosted the 18th Annual Gray Matters Charity Golf Tournament at Winghaven Country Club! This year, we raised over \$23,000! Thank you to the Golf Committee, Sponsors, Golfers, and staff members that made this annual event a success again this year.

For information about sponsoring in our golf tournament next year, please contact Alyssa Bergman at abergman@headinjuryctr-stl.org.

Innovative Practice Award

In June, Samantha Dean, Assistant Director of Career Development, nominated the Center's Career Development team for the Innovative Practice Award through Missouri Rehabilitation Association.

The focus of the nomination was how the team created a **Virtual Job Club**, via ZOOM, to supplement the in person Job Club that met once a week at the Center, as a way they could continue to provide work readiness training and social interactions to clients during the pandemic.

It is not unusual to see over 20 people attending Zoom Virtual Job Clubs at once! Students from the Talent Connect Program were able to participate, as well.

Another great benefit to this **Virtual Job Club** opportunity was the ability to expand the reach of clients. We are so proud of the team coming together to provide a solution to this problem. Since the nomination, the Career Development team continues to provide this virtual platform while holding safely distanced in-person job club ensuring that those who benefit from virtual services can still receive in-person services.

The team was notified in September that they received the Innovative Practice Award!

Four staff members attended the Missouri Rehabilitation Association Conference in October to accept the award in person. **Congratulations to the Career Development team!**



Giving Thanks for MAAP and Day Program

There is never a dull moment for clients in **MAAP (Midwest Adults with Autism Program)** and **Day Program** here at The Center. Whether it's a day out at the St. Louis Aquarium or a Hat Day fashion show, the Center's supportive and innovative staff have folks moving and grooving every day.

This quarter, MAPP is looking forward to planning their annual Thanksgiving potluck party and decorating MAAP rooms for the holidays. The MAAP team is enjoying more group time each day to discuss current events and the "This Week in History" series,

where an historical event is explored each week through hands-on activities.

Day Program participants have been conducting experiments in the lab and in the kitchen in Mad Science class with Travis and Cooking with Style classes with Colleen. The Ugly Thanksgiving Sweater party- yes you read that right- is just around the corner for Day Program. Each year, ugly sweaters are decorated with fall-inspired décor and presented in a fashion show- may the ugliest sweater win!

The Center would like to thank Day Program participant and long-time friend Beverly Stiger for donating proceeds from her home business to our MAAP and Day activity fund. You can purchase Bev's Body Butter at butter713@gmail.com or donate directly to our program activities fund at: headinjuryctr-stl.networkforgood.com



Save the Date for November 30

GIVING TUESDAY

GivingTuesday is a movement that unleashes the power of radical generosity not only around the county, but around the world.

Again, this year, the Center for Head Injury Services is participating in this annual day of giving. GivingTuesday's message of hope, connection, and community have never been more needed. It's an opportunity for people to stand together in unity and the Center is proud to be a part of this global celebration of generosity.

Mark your calendars for November 30th. **Here's 5 ways to give:**

1. Give your voice: amplify our message to spread disability awareness.
2. Give money: make a donation on November 30th at headinjuryctr-stl.org/givingtuesday.
3. Give goods: donate items from our Wish List (visit our website for information).
4. Give kindness: call out disability discrimination when you witness it.
5. Give your time or talent: volunteer your free time to help with projects and events happening at the Center.

We can't do this without you! Help us kickoff our year-end giving campaign with this wonderful day of hope and community!

Become a member of the Center for Head Injury Services' Sustainer Circle

The **Sustainer Circle** is a special group of monthly donors who go above and beyond to sustain the Center's vital employment, independent living, day programs and medical services for people with cognitive disabilities. Setting up monthly donations allows you to choose a gift amount and a payment method and forget about it. Your donation is automatically deducted on the day of the month you choose. You can stop or adjust your gift amount at any time. In January, you will receive an annual acknowledgement of your gifts during the previous year for your tax records.

New **Sustainer Circle** members also receive a thank-you gift certificate (of your choice) from Destination Desserts or Wags in a Bag as well as recognition in our annual report and on our virtual donor wall. Join now with a monthly gift of \$10 or more by going to our website: headinjuryctr-stl.org/donate/sustainer-circle/.



Leadership Spotlight: Career Development Services

In summer 2020, Kenda Curativo became the Center's Interim Director of Career Development Services. In December, she permanently took over the role.

For 10 years, Kenda was a general manager in the fast-casual restaurant industry. The Center's employment team came to her restaurant to introduce the idea of becoming partners with the Center. Kenda started interviewing, and then hiring, the job placement participants from the Center. Little did she know that she had a natural talent for disability services. Without realizing it, Kenda was turning her interviews into career assessments and was creating disability accommodations needed for the employee to meet expectations and be successful.

In 2017, Kenda began working at The Center as a Vocational Evaluator. Kenda took initiative to improve the department and increase value offered by using strategies from the corporate sector. She also became a Certified Autism Specialist so The Center's vocational evaluation and job placement services could offer more expertise and improved quality to our employment services for people with autism.

Kenda's approach to leadership is to motivate people to grow and to set goals that challenge them, so they do not fall into complacency. Her philosophy is to keep everyone "aligned with a vision that our work is not about us, it is not about an agency, but about many parts working together for the good of the individuals we are serving."

In her new leadership role, Kenda is most excited to continue growing the department. The pandemic has changed businesses, but Kenda has seen some of these changes be better for employees and jobseekers with disabilities.



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Helping people with brain injuries, autism and other disabilities reach their maximum potential by developing skills, creating opportunities and shaping brighter futures.

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