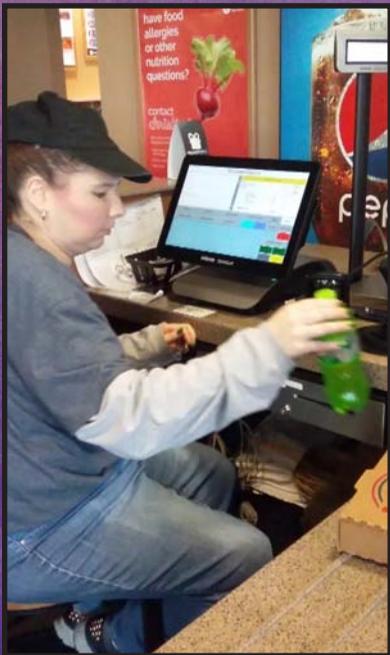


# CONTACT



Fall 2019

In touch with all things Cottonwood...



**COTTONWOOD  
INCORPORATED**

We help people with disabilities shape their own future.

# A Message from Our CEO



There is a special energy and spirit at Cottonwood that drives our mission of “helping people with disabilities shape their own future.” The pursuit of happiness and meaning are two of the central motivations in everyone’s life and even with all of the constant change we experience in our increasingly complex world, our focus at Cottonwood never veers from that pursuit for the people we serve. It’s the reason each of us comes to work each day. With our entrepreneurial spirit, we are always striving to find new options to match the choices and preferences of the people we support. We applaud our amazing staff for their unwavering energy and spirit as they work so hard each and every day to meet and anticipate the needs of everyone we serve. We also want to recognize and give praise to our dedicated Boards of Trustees and to the communities throughout Douglas and Jefferson counties for your ongoing generous support of Cottonwood. Cottonwood has a proud history and we look to the future with excitement and optimism. Thank you for being part of our legacy!

*Sharon Spratt, CEO.*

## Board of Trustees



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### Follow Us! Like Us! Share Us!



Cottonwood, Inc. & Salute Festival of Wine & Food



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### On The Cover:

Cottonwood consumers pictured as they enjoy work and leisure activities. Renae participating in the Sunrise Project, Laura working at KU Underground, and Wade working on cargo tie-down straps at Cottonwood Industries.

CONTACT is published for the friends and supporters of Cottonwood, Inc. by the Community Relations and Development Department: Ettie Brightwell and Kari Bentzinger.

Cottonwood, Incorporated is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization that serves children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Cottonwood provides an array of employment options, onsite and in other parts of the community, residential, and case management services. Cottonwood is a member of Interhab, the Resource Network for Kansans with Disabilities.

Cottonwood is partially funded on a contractual basis with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services. Cottonwood receives some funding from Douglas and Jefferson Counties. Cottonwood is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer. We do business in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law. (The Fair Housing Amendment Act of 1998)

Labeling and mailing services for this newsletter have been provided by men and women of Cottonwood.

An adapted version of this publication and other materials are available by calling 785.842.0550 or by visiting us on the web at [www.cwood.org](http://www.cwood.org).



# Celebrate



September 9th-13th, 2019 was designated as **Direct Support Professionals (DSP) Week**. DSPs are our hardworking professionals who work directly with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We do so appreciate the hard work that our DSPs put in each and every day, but this week gives us special opportunities to show them how important they are to us and the people we serve. The week kicked off with delicious cookies from Eileen's. Mid-week, the Management Team served breakfast for our DSPs. Thank you to McDonald's for donating breakfast. Raffles were held throughout the week for gift card drawings from places around Lawrence. And on Friday, we celebrated our DSPs with a special DSP Appreciation Treat Bag. Our DSPs are amazing, caring individuals. Thank you, DSPs, for all you do! This year, we invited our state legislators to participate in a very unique opportunity—"DSP For A Day." This time gave several of our legislators a firsthand view of how hard these DSPs work and how important our DSPs are to us at Cottonwood and to the larger community. Thank you to Dennis "Boog" Highberger and Mike Amyx for joining us.



There always seems to be a flurry of activity at Cottonwood Industries. For over 60 months in a row, there has been 100% work availability. The contracts procured by Cottonwood Industries provide the people we serve many varied opportunities to learn, maintain, and hone valuable skills while earning money and completing meaningful work for a variety of local and regional businesses.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Cottonwood workers have produced almost 8 million cargo tie-down straps over the life of the contract.
- Cottonwood workers sew and package approximately 3000-4000 straps per day.
- Cargo tie-down straps are used by all branches of the military.





Christopher

## Congratulations to our JobLink Employees of the Month!

### May - Christopher

"I have worked at Downtown Lawrence Inc. & City of Lawrence for 9 years! This job is great for me as it is flexible, helps me get exercise and a paycheck."

### June - Jerry

"I have been working at SPIN Pizza for 1 year. I clean tables, chairs, floors, windows, patio - anything they need help with. I want to be a manager here one day."

### July - Jordan

"I have worked at Wendy's for a little over 1 year. I work the fry station and do food prep. My favorite task is working the grill and cooking burgers, I like to be busy. I like my job because I get to meet new people and learn new skills"



Jerry

## Congratulations to our Employers of the Month!

May - Bon Bon

June - Pizza Hut -23rd St.

July - Raintree Montessori

August - Merchants Pub & Plate

September - Arby's- 23rd St.

October - Ramen Bowls

**JobLink** candidates have a variety of skills and abilities with an array of educational levels and work experience. JobLink is your employment agency resource for dedicated and talented employees in the Lawrence, Kansas area. You'll find that we share your commitment to quality. For more information contact Phil Bentzinger 785-842-0550 or pbentzinger@cwood.org.



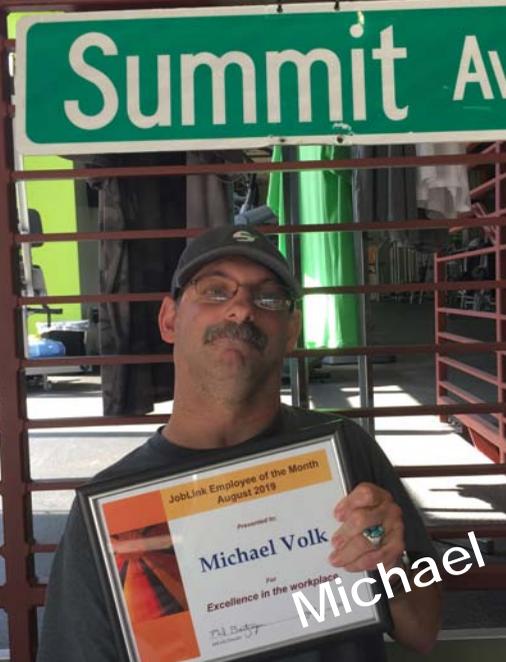
Jordan

## Here's What Employers Have to Say...

"JobLink helped make our hiring decision easy. They found a qualified candidate, supported the hiring and training process, and continue to be a resource to ensure the employee's success."  
- Merchants Pub & Plate

"While they have disabilities they bring great energy and amazing attitudes. They are able to perform key tasks that are critical to our operations. Many organizations could benefit from employees like Albert and Sabrina. They are great teammates and give their all. They are value added to Culver's."  
-Culver's

"Everyone deserves a chance to have a job. Give people with disabilities a try because you never know if it will work and when it does, it is a win for both of you."  
- Pizza Hut (23rd St.)



Michael

### August - Michael

"I have worked at The Summit since January 2019. I make sure everything is clean and everybody is happy. I like the environment, it's quiet. My advice about being a good employee would be to show up on time and treat the customers good."

## Karen is celebrating 30 years at Raintree Montessori School!

### September - Karen

"I clean the lobby area, do recycling with the help of the older kids, and help out in the kitchen. My favorite task is working in the kitchen. I like my co-workers and my boss, Leanna. My advice about being a good employee is to do the best job and show up for work."



Karen



Once again, the **Cottonwood Mini Masters** miniature golf tournament was held at The Lodge in Baldwin City, Kansas on May 23. We all enjoyed a wonderful hamburger barbecue thanks to Peach Madl and her fantastic crew. The mini golf course received a work out from the many players on it throughout the evening.



The street dance and fish pond were so much fun as well! And thanks to the weather cooperating this year, we were able to have our good friends from Dunn's Landing join us with horse drawn wagon rides through Baldwin City. What a fun night with all of our friends! Can't wait until next year!



# FORE!

The Cottonwood Classic Golf Tournament was held on Monday, May 20, 2019 at Eagle Bend Golf Course. It was a perfect Spring afternoon in Kansas—not too hot at the start of the sold out tournament with some overcast skies to keep the sunburns to a minimum. As most of the golfers headed for their 6th hole, the rain started with a few sprinkles at first followed by torrential downpours! We had a few teams who almost made it through the course, but then the lightning came and it was time to join everyone else in the clubhouse.



Congratulations to the Championship Flight team winners: 1st Place: Personalized Family Dental; 2nd Place: Stoneback Appliance. The Maybe Next Year flight winner was the team of Mize Houser & The Trust Company.



# Salute!

## A Festival of Wine & Food



2019 marked the 20th anniversary of Salute! A Festival of Wine and Food. And what a festival it was! Salute continues to be Cottonwood's largest fundraising event and this year was no exception with over \$220,000 raised for Cottonwood. A special thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, donors and volunteers for making this year our best ever!



### *The Mass St. Mosey*

The Mass St. Mosey kicked off the festival on a beautiful Thursday evening, July 11. The weather was perfect for the almost 500 folks who attended.



### *Winemaker Dinner*

This year's Winemaker Dinner was hosted by The Oread Hotel and featured wines from our very own Schnaer Family Wines. Dan Duryee, winemaker for Schnaer Family Wines, eloquently guided attendees through an amazing evening of food and wine pairings.



# Celebrate!



## Grand Tasting & Auctions

The Grand Tasting, also held at The Oread Hotel, was a perfect ending to a wonderful 3 days with food offered from 10 local eateries and over 200 wines and spirits offered as well. And the live auction was the most exciting one yet!

## Thank You!

We would like to give a very special shout out to those Grand Tasting attendees that participated in our 'Raise the Paddle.' We raised over \$24,000 with this effort alone which enables us to be able to provide upgraded medical equipment and supplies, repairs on homes and vehicles and many other vital supports for the people that Cottonwood supports.





# Shaping Futures- My Choice

For each of us, having options is key to shaping the future we desire. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The people served at Cottonwood

drive the shaping of their lives, with the assistance of their support teams, choosing how and where they want to live, work and enjoy their lives. My Life, My Choice!





## Health & Safety Fair 2019

Thank you Natural Grocers, Lawrence Police Department, Dr. Mateo, LMH Health, & Brandy Williams from Reclaimed Fitness. Also, thanks to Cottonwood staff, Steve and Gary, for leading warehouse safety training.



Every Tuesday, a group from Cottonwood works in the garden at Sunrise Project.

Thank you, Melissa Freiburger at Sunrise Project for this opportunity! Its accessible raised beds have been a HUGE success and are enabling community members of all physical abilities to enjoy the many benefits of community gardening.



# Tours



Free State High School - Interpersonal Skills Class

We are very proud of the work that is done at Cottonwood to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Come see for yourself all that Cottonwood does. If you are interested in finding out more about Cottonwood and/or touring our facilities, please contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations/Development at (785) 842-0550 or [ebrightwell@cwood.org](mailto:ebrightwell@cwood.org).



Mary Bowman, Linda Boochever & John Schwartz



Diane Vigna and Mike Norris



Representative Steve Watkins



Tom DeAgostino - KU Mechanical Engineering Department

# Tours



Leadership Lawrence Class



Office Depot



Office Depot

These wonderful visitors from Office Depot and Leadership Lawrence had the unique opportunity to not only tour Cottonwood but then they worked one-on-one with the people that we support. If your group would like to volunteer like these groups, please call Ettie Brightwell, 785-842-0550 to schedule a time.

Pennie enjoyed seeing her employer and JobLink business partner, Justin Heitz, Owner/Operator, Chick-fil-A on Iowa Street, when he came to tour Cottonwood. Justin had the opportunity to visit Pennie at her other job, Cottonwood Industries.



Dawn Hill - Great Plains Media

# Cottonwood Classics

Monday, October 28, 2019

7-9pm/Southwest Middle School

This evening is a wonderful celebration of all the things that make Cottonwood special—the people we support, the incredible staff who serve them and the community leaders who volunteer their time and treasure to assist in Cottonwood’s mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future. Thanks to all of our very special Cottonwood family!

## 2019 Award Winners

### Caring & Commitment Award

Jane Bowers & Karyn Todd

### Distinguished Service Award

Harry Gibson

### JobLink Employer of the Year

Berry Global

### Cottonwood Industries Business Partner of the Year

Koller Products



## Shining Star Award Winners

“Ralph is one of the individuals at Cottonwood still alive that came out of the institutional setting so prevalent in the first half of the 20th century. It is a tribute to Cottonwood’s founders and Ralph’s hardiness that he still roams among us and is still one of the hardest workers that Cottonwood has, earning big paychecks every month.”

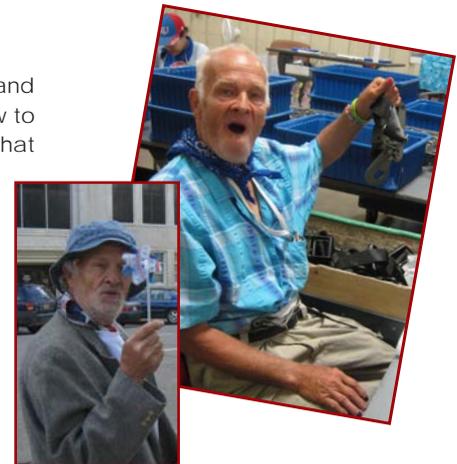
- Jill Baker, Administrator of Services

“Ralph is extremely creative. He is a self-taught person and doesn’t need much direction. Once you show him how to do something he just goes with it. I think that’s part of what makes him unique.”

- Sarah Brown, Retirement Services Coordinator

“Ralph is his own person, he sees beauty and purpose in the most unlikely places and items. His view of the world as a place that is abundant and full of opportunity is absolutely inspiring.”

- Kara Walters, Director of Residential Services



“Michael is a Shining Star because of his extraordinary movement towards his goals- reducing hoarding and wanting a more challenging job in the community. He is proud of his home, he now invites people over and has kept it clean. I think it’s the most incredible achievement I’ve ever seen. He’s been at KU Dining Services at Burge Union for 3 years now. He’s dependable, he’s happy, he’s flexible and he’s learning new skills. He went from being somewhat depressed to happy every day because of his job.”

-Paula Pratt, Support Services Coordinator



“Michael is just doing great in his house. I’m really proud of him! He’s lived at his house for 19 years. He went from being a hoarder to keeping a clean house.”

- Barbara Grandstaff,  
Michael’s mother

“Michael, in general, is a Shining Star- very bright, very personable and there’s no one he’s not going to say hi to. He almost takes it upon himself to make other people happy. He is in charge of getting dishes clean and put away correctly. He is very appreciative of new tasks he’s given. Michael is excited to talk about his cars. He is an avid toy car collector as well as going to car shows. It’s pretty neat to hear that passion he has for those hobbies.”

-Tommy Gunter, KU Union, Executive Sous Chef, Catering

# Shaping Futures

## Why I Give

"I was very fortunate in my early life to see firsthand how generosity impacts not only those we serve but our own lives and personal fulfillment. My grandfather struggled with addiction early in his family and career life, certainly well before I knew him as a mentor and example for how to live mine. I only knew the man he became after conquering his demons....a man with a strong faith and unrelenting desire to support others. His impact was profound and long lasting. Still to this day he is the bar I use to compare or evaluate my own decisions.



I have always aspired to have the same impact on my community and family that I know he had. This requires proactive measures...maybe it's serving on a board or financially supporting an event. We all have our own unique gifts, talents and interests to share with the world. It is important we don't miss the opportunity to share them for the benefit of others. There really is no greater joy than to give of our time and resources to advance a cause or effort. Cottonwood has always been a special organization, serving such a special community. I am very proud to be a part of their team and hope many more will join us, in whatever way works best for them."

-Kurt Goeser  
Cottonwood Foundation  
Board of Trustees



## You can make a lasting difference!

The Cottonwood Foundation is a charitable organization, and gifts are tax deductible. Contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations and Development, at (785) 842-0550 to learn more about how you can have an impact on the lives of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities by making a donation. For more information about Cottonwood, Inc. as well as the Cottonwood Foundation, visit [www.cwood.org](http://www.cwood.org).



### Community Rewards Giving More Back to the Community!

Dillons is committed to helping our communities grow and prosper. Dillons Community Rewards makes fund-raising easy...all you have to do is shop at Dillons and swipe your Plus Shopper's Card!  
Sign up today! Visit [www.dillons.com](http://www.dillons.com)



AmazonSmile donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to Cottonwood, Inc. Support Cottonwood, Inc. by shopping at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com)

## Happy Retirement!

Best wishes to Rob & Cristy! Thank you for all your hard work and dedication. Congratulations on your retirement!



Rob Wurtz,  
17 years  
Residential Night  
Assistant

Cristy Bidinger,  
19 years  
JobLink  
Employment  
Coordinator



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## Opportunities to shape the future



The Cottonwood Foundation is a separate but affiliated 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization established to facilitate the contribution of funds for the benefit of Cottonwood, Inc. The Foundation's purpose is to promote and further the advancement of services at Cottonwood. With increased competition for limited philanthropic funds, gifts have become even more critical to help ensure a long, healthy future for Cottonwood, Inc. Contributions to the Cottonwood Foundation can be made in a number of ways, including cash, securities, real estate and personal property, life insurance, retirement plans, in-kind gifts, and planned gifts through a will or trust. Each contribution makes a difference and helps ensure the future of Cottonwood.



**ONE-TIME GIFT** Your gift makes a big difference!



**QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DEDUCTIONS**

Individuals who've attained age 70 1/2 may make QCDs.



**MEMORIAL & HONORARIUM**

Honor your loved one with a gift today.



**PLANNED & ESTATE GIFTS**

Learn how to leave a legacy through a Will or Trust.



**MONTHLY GIVING**

Help shape the future of the people we support year-round with a monthly automatic gift.



**Company Match**

Many companies offer a company donation match.

Contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations/Development, for more information.  
ebrightwell@cwood.org or 785-842-0550.