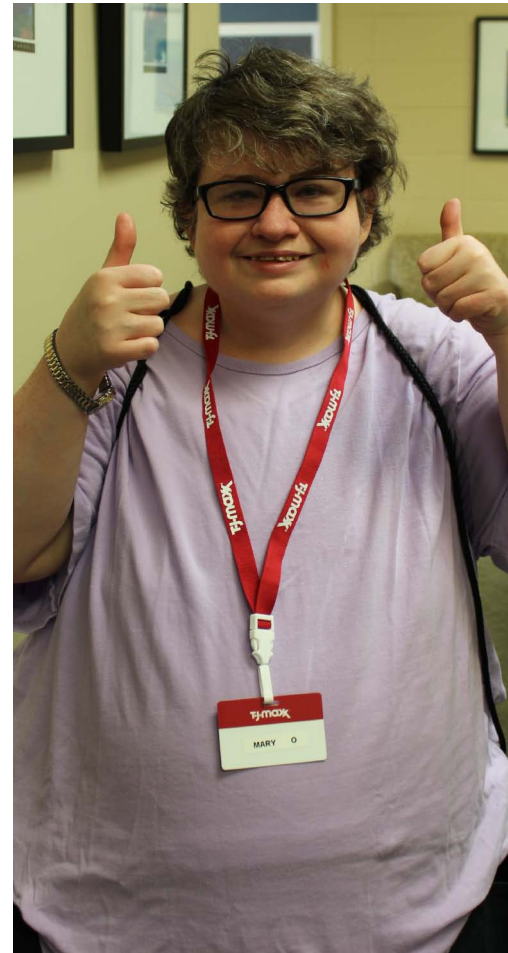


CONTACT



Fall 2021

In touch with all things Cottonwood...



**COTTONWOOD
INCORPORATED**

We help people with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



As the days grow cooler and the leaves begin to fall, it reminds me of harvest and the season of thanksgiving. Although the past 18 months have been like none other, we all have learned some new ways of living – to treasure the good times more when we get them and also to realize we can handle the lows with flexibility, creativity and enthusiasm. We see these wonderful abilities expressed each day in our amazing staff and the people we support and we are so grateful. Human touch is vital – life without hugs, high fives or holding hands is a life void of sunshine and joy – and we have learned that fist bumps are almost as good! Thankfully, our services have been open again on site at Cottonwood for several months now and we are stronger than ever.

Thank you to all of the individuals we support, our staff, our boards of trustees and our community partners for believing in us and supporting us during this time. As always, your support was instrumental in bringing a successful conclusion to our Salute' Wine Festival events, as well as the Mini-Masters and Cottonwood Classic golf tournaments. We appreciate your support. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Contact Newsletter. From all of us at Cottonwood, have a joyous Thanksgiving!

Sharon Spratt, CEO.

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COTTONWOOD INCORPORATED

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Follow Us! Like Us! Share Us!

 Cottonwood, Inc. & Salute Festival of Wine & Food

 @cottonwood_inc

 cottonwoodincorporated

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 individuals 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.





Direct Support Professionals Week

September 13th-17th, 2021 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 shout-out signage for all to see how much we appreciate our DSPs. On Tuesday, our staff was treated with delicious pastries, breakfast tacos, and coffees from the Uplift Coffee Jeep. Wednesday was a day of Gift Card Give-Aways from establishments around Lawrence. Eileen's Cookies headlined the treat for Thursday and on Friday, we celebrated our DSPs with a special DSP Appreciation Cooler Bag and gift card. Our DSPs are the most amazing, caring individuals. Thank you, DSPs, for all you do!



Happy Days Are Here Again!

This group was super excited to participate in some Lawrence Parks and Rec activities again! We love Annette Deghand and all she does for Cottonwood and Lawrence Parks and Rec Special Population Division!

Congratulations Employers of the Month!

May - Checkers

June - SPIN! Pizza

July - Six Mile Chop House

August - One of a Kind Childcare

September - Standard Beverage

October - Kansas Memorial

Union Custodial

November - Kurt Goesser State

Farm Insurance

Employer Quotes:



"We take pride in the diversity of our team as we serve our community, and this helps our service to all."



"Joblink has provided us a hard worker who

is an absolute joy to be around. Anytime we have a question, needs, or changes, they accommodate however is needed.

Dan is an exceptional worker and person. He prioritizes the job but also enjoys his partnership and relationship with our team.

Don't hesitate to contact Cottonwood/Joblink, to discuss your needs. Find a good fit, you'll not only receive quality service but feel good about your contribution to the community."



"We decided to hire Bea on to our team because we want to provide equal opportunity for people with disabilities. We had a need for a job, and she continues to show up and fulfill her

job requirements every shift. She has always been very reliable. All we have to say is, if you hire through JobLink you won't regret it. Hiring Bea has changed all of the lives here at Six Mile for the better!"

**We appreciate
your partnership!**

With JobLink, you'll find that we share your commitment to quality.

For more information contact
Phil Bentzinger 785-842-0550 or
pbentzinger@cwood.org.

JobLink



...a division of Cottonwood, Inc.

Employee of the Month



June - Hilary

"I have worked at Weaver's since February 2012. My favorite task is checking in jewelry and makeup! I like being on a team, and I like all my co-workers, especially Debbie in the shoe department because we talk about the KC Chiefs and Royals."



May - Lisa

"I have worked at Mrs. E's for 4 years. I work at the salad bar, dining room, serving pizza or in the dish room. I like my job because I get paid and they treat me like family!"

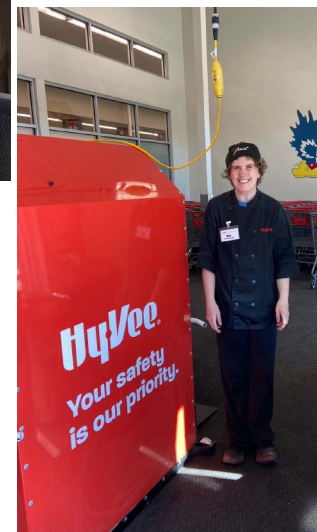
July - Jackson

"I have been at KC Clean for a year. I keep everything clean. I like working at my own pace and I like how nice the customers are. My advice about being a good employee is to always ask if there's anything else you can do!"



September - Elaine

"I have worked at Voight Global Distribution for 4 months. I package seals by weight. I like unrolling the tape while taping labels on the bags. I enjoy the simplicity of the job and it's not too overly complicated for me."



October - Nina

"I wash dishes and tidy up the kitchen area at Hy-Vee. I have been there for 8 years! My favorite task to do is interacting with the customers and co-workers."



There always seems to be a flurry of activity at Cottonwood Industries. For over 87 months (that's over 7 years!) in a row, there has been over 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.



Very positive feedback from an end user to Churchill who is our customer about the performance of a 700,000 piece plastic cup job we just produced and delivered in the last few weeks. This is real praise and shows the partnership we have with Churchill that they shared the compliments with us.

"Often times we limit our communication to dealing with issues, bringing up problems and finding solutions and any sort positive feedback tends to fall by the wayside. I wanted to take this opportunity to break that trend and thank you guys for being a great partner. "

"Me and my Receiving team have truly appreciated the professionalism and excellence you and your team have shown in shipping us this massive PO.

Your shipments always arrive in great condition, pallets are stacked neatly and consistently, SKUs are not mixed - they're organized, only one partial pallet per team, pallets are labeled and color-coded by team and the packing slips are always accurate. We were able to receive the over 200,000 4-packs with relative ease in a manner that kept our DC running smoothly and efficiently. Please make sure your team understands our appreciation.

We look forward to a continued partnership with you guys."



The Cottonwood Classic Golf Tournament was held on Monday, September 20, 2021 at Eagle Bend Golf Course. It was a perfect late summer afternoon in Kansas, with the rain holding off until the last golfers finished their rounds. Congratulations to the Championship Flight team winners: 1st Place: Brandon Young, Casey McLenon, Darron Ammann, Duane Dickson; 2nd Place: Chris Hutchens, John Catlin, Marty Yost, Mark Buhler. Our Flight B winner was the team of John Ross, Harry Herington, Bobby Jones, Robbie Vannaman; 2nd Place went to Mike McCaw, Scott Dudley, Michael Turner, Dean Alamo. Thank you to all of our players, volunteers and sponsors!

Cottonwood Classic



1st Place Championship Flight



2nd Place Championship Flight



1st Place Maybe Next Year Flight



2nd Place Maybe Next Year Flight



Thank you, Michael Turner, American Century Investments and Mike and Tana Ahlen for sponsoring the golf lunch!

Thank you, Sigler Pharmacy for the golf towels!





Congratulations Trent & Yvette!
Trent was the Champion at
the Mini-Masters and Yvette
was the runner-up!



The Cottonwood Mini-Masters returned albeit slightly reimagined on Thursday, September 23, 2021! We held the miniature golf tournament at Cottonwood's offices in Lawrence. It was an absolutely beautiful evening in Lawrence. We all enjoyed a wonderful pizza dinner thanks to Toppers Pizza. The Kona Ice truck was a much anticipated addition to the event as well. Thanks to Travis Walsh and Lawrence Mini Golf for the amazing miniature golf set up. The course definitely received a work out from the Cottonwood consumers, staff and family members playing on it throughout the evening. The street dance and fish pond were so much fun as well!! What a fun night with all of our friends! Can't wait until next year!



Cottonwood Mini-Masters

Tours

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



Kinedyne Corporation



Kathy & Todd Harriett



Leadership Lawrence



Leadership Lawrence



Truist Credit Union



Thank you Sigler Pharmacy for providing vaccinations for our staff and consumers! We always love seeing Jeff and Suzi and appreciate all they do for Cottonwood!





The 20th annual Cottonwood Classies were held on Monday, November 1, 2021 at Southwest Middle School. This event is truly a celebration of all that is Cottonwood and what makes Cottonwood such a uniquely wonderful place. The Classies is Cottonwood's way of honoring those who excel in their lives and jobs, making a difference in the lives of the people we serve and in the communities in which we live.

Caring & Commitment Awards
Ladina Miller & Delilah Tidzump

Shining Star Award
Sam Branson & Karrie Metzger

Distinguished Service Award
Tom Mulinazzi

JobLink Employer of the Year
Heartland Homecare Pharmacy

Cottonwood Industries Business Partner of the Year
Churchill Container



Congratulations
To Our Winners!



Staff Spotlight

The staff of Cottonwood's Support Services Department provide consistency and support as persons-served create their own support plan to shape the life which they want. Support Services Coordinators (aka Targeted Case Managers), it has been said, must be "a coordinator, clinician, coach, educator, consumer, advocate and administrator. Their job is to be up-to-date, adaptable, a motivator, tech savvy, a Sherlock Holmes." Let's meet the wonderful individuals that so cheerfully and creatively fill these roles:

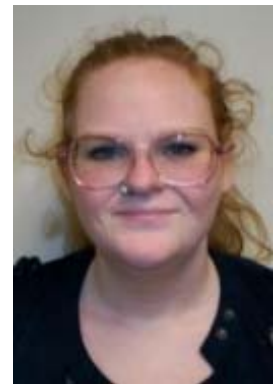


John Dunlap, Support Services Coordinator

- John has worked at Cottonwood for almost 25 years.
- "I love interacting with everyone at Cottonwood. When I close my eyes at night and look back on the day, I often hear the sounds of joy and laughter, both of consumers and staff as they go about their daily routines. I look forward to going to work each and every day. I truly appreciate the outstanding support, leadership, and the long-term commitment put forth by the administration to create such an enjoyable atmosphere and quality workplace."
- Fun Facts: John admits he is an incurable dumpster diver.

Andrea Pike, Support Services Coordinator

- Andrea is the newest member of the Support Services team, starting at Cottonwood just over one month ago.
- "My first day of work was lovely. I look forward to working with our consumers and getting to know everyone."
- Fun Facts: Andrea grew up in Kansas, but has lived in New York for the past 13 years, but moved back to Kansas to be closer to family. Her favorite mythical creatures are fairies and unicorns because they are beautiful and magical.



Logan Pope, Support Services Coordinator

- Logan has worked at Cottonwood for 3 years, starting in Residential and recently moving to Support Services.
- "I like the positive atmosphere/ work environment here."
- Fun Facts: Logan likes to draw, ceramics and taking her dogs to the park. If she were an inanimate object, she would be a Koosh Ball!



Chris Seal, Support Services Coordinator

- Chris has worked for Cottonwood for 6 years—3 years in Residential and 3 years in Support Services.
- "I like being able to improve consumers' lives and working with friendly staff."
- Fun Facts: Swam in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico on the same day.

Paula Pratt, Support Services Coordinator

- Paula has worked at Cottonwood for 31 years.
- Paula describes her daily routine as "Lots of paperwork, paperwork, paperwork!"
- Fun Facts: Favorite vacation spot is Las Vegas and Paula loves to read.



DéAntay Bourn, Records Management Specialist

- DeAntay has worked for Cottonwood for 9+ months.
- "I really like the friendly and laid back work environment at Cottonwood."
- Fun Facts: Wants to go skydiving and swim with Orcas!





Caitlyn Hendershott, Support Services Coordinator

- Caitlyn started in Residential in 2013, moved to Retirement for 5 years and then made the move to Support Services.
- "My absolute favorite part of my job is interacting with the people on my caseload. I really look forward to Person Centered Support Plan meetings, where the whole team can get together and talk about the wonderful things a consumer has accomplished in the past year."
- Fun Facts: Caitlyn majored in Linguistics and learning languages is a passion for her. When she was a child, she taught herself 2 of the Elvish languages from Lord of the Rings. The "Legend of Zelda" is her favorite video game series and she is determined to learn Hylian next!

Jeff Whittier,
Support Services Coordinator

- Jeff has worked at Cottonwood for 19 years.
- "I appreciate that the mission and culture of Cottonwood encourages people served to take reasonable risks and learn from life experiences, and that this is supported by a collaborative relationship between service areas."
- Fun Facts: Jeff has the "third-longest at Cottonwood, but second-shortest" departmental tenure in his department. And he also hired his current boss!



Connie Farmer, Support Services Coordinator

- Connie has worked at Cottonwood for almost 7 years—first as a Job Coach in JobLink and now in Support Services.
- "Everyone is friendly and supportive. Not a day goes by that you don't hear the roar of laughter throughout the office which makes for an uplifting and positive atmosphere."
- Fun Facts: Loves having adventures with her 5 year old son and their trusted, furry friend, Daisy Mae and likes to watch football—Go Chiefs!!



Drew Diedel, Support Services Coordinator

- Drew has worked at Cottonwood for 11 years, starting in Work Enrichment in 2010 and becoming a Case Manager in 2012.
- "I really appreciate having a job where I feel like I make a difference in someone's life in a positive way."
- Fun Facts: Favorite movie is "Nightmare Before Christmas" and loves dragons.





2021 marked the 22nd anniversary of Salute! A Festival of Wine and Food. And what a treat to be able to gather for a few events again! The Mass St. Mosey kicked off the festival on a beautiful Thursday evening, July 8. The weather was perfect for the sold out event.



Salute continues to be Cottonwood's largest fundraising event and this year was no exception with almost \$120,000 raised for Cottonwood. A special thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, donors and volunteers for their continued support. Proceeds from Salute enable us to provide upgraded medical equipment and supplies, repairs on homes and vehicles and many other vital supports for the people that Cottonwood supports.





Todd Izzo, independent wine consultant for Scotto Family Cellars, eloquently guided attendees through an amazing evening of food and wine pairings.



This year's Winemaker Dinner was hosted by The Oread Hotel on Friday, July 9 and featured wines from Scotto Family Cellars.



A huge THANK YOU to our outstanding Salute Chair Couple- Diane and Andy Vigna!



While we made the difficult decision not to gather for the usual Grand Tasting event on Saturday, we were able to give a huge THANK YOU to our fabulous sponsors with a smaller yet still wonderful Sponsor Event held on Saturday, July 10.

Welcome!

Doug Anderson is the Executive Director for Keystone Learning Services USD #608 (Jefferson County). Over the past 18 years, Doug has worked in school districts and special education cooperatives ranging in size from 500 to 50,000 students. He has a Low-Incidence teaching endorsement and has also worked in special day schools for students with emotional disabilities. Doug also teaches an administrative leadership course at WSU. He has his doctorate in special education (from KU) with his dissertation topic being in the area of transition.

Doug and his wife, Becky have two children, both of whom are enrolled at KU. Becky is a physician assistant in family medicine in Lawrence. During his college years, Doug worked in one of the Cottonwood group homes.

He tells us that "I learned a lot from those gentlemen and credit them with influencing my chosen profession!"

Welcome Doug!



Happy Retirement!



Best wishes to Betty Tyler, Marion Babb and Gene Planker. Betty worked in the Finance Department for 25 years, Marion worked in Support Services as a Case Manager for 26 years, and Gene was our Residential Maintenance Manager for 20 1/2 years! Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. Congratulations on your retirement!



Why I Give

The strength and health of our communities come from those who invest in them. We all have choices in how we spend our time, talents, and money. For each of us, the passion we place on making our communities great comes in a variety of forms. For me, the ability to support Cottonwood in a financial way allows the entire organization to thrive. Every dollar counts—from providing valuable resources to persons served, to supporting the staff and organization as a whole to continue to achieve their mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future. I hope you will join me in supporting the work and value that Cottonwood provides to our community. Together, we can make a difference!



- Kirsten Flory

Giving Back



We are grateful for the work Kansas University Center for Community Outreach did on the grounds of Cottonwood for KU Super Service Saturday! Thank you!

You can make a lasting difference!

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 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 in the lives of the people we support and helps ensure the future of Cottonwood.



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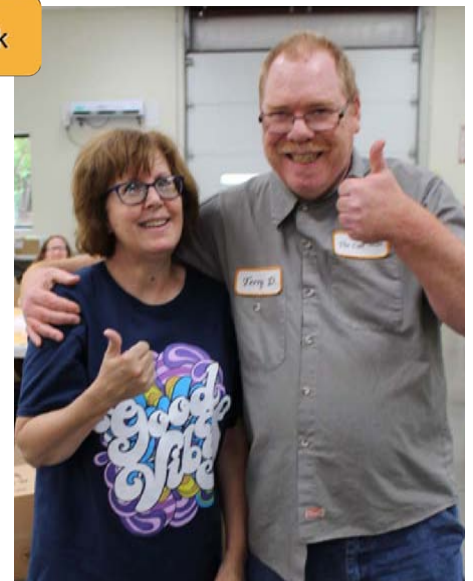
VOTED Top 5



Nonprofit &
Best Place to Work
For the past 4 years



Do you know someone who
is looking for a job that is truly
rewarding and interesting?



Cottonwood will give you a welcoming work experience that broadens your understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of our fellow community members, sharpens your problem solving strategies, hones your organizational skills, provides numerous teamwork and collaboration opportunities- the list is long. Cottonwood employment also ties in directly with many fields of study: social work, speech/language pathology, healthcare, etc.

Visit www.cwood.org/careers for available positions
Contact Matthew Moore, Human Resources Coordinator, mmoore@cwood.org for more information