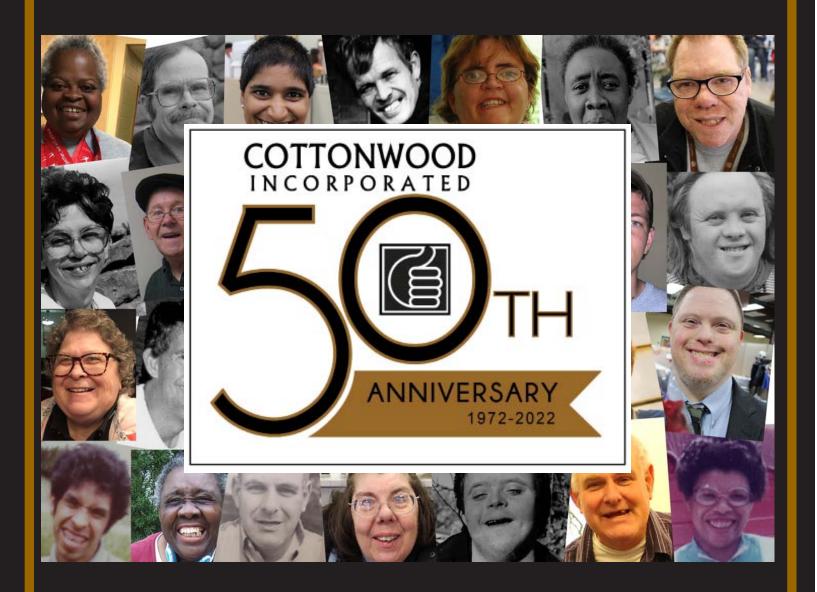
CONTACT Spring 2022



COTTONWOOD INCORPORATED

We help people with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



As many of you know, I will be retiring this spring from Cottonwood after nearly 33 years, 28 of which I have had the honor of serving as CEO. From my early days and throughout my tenure, I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by people who believed in me - my boards of trustees, the people we support, staff members, the community at large and most importantly, my family. Together, we have accomplished so much. We have expanded direct services options with the addition of Life Enrichment and Retirement Services, broadened our business scope with the acquisition of two federal contracts through the Department of Defense, increased 10 fold the number of individuals served by JobLink through the employment division, built new and accessible homes in neighborhoods throughout Lawrence and generally improved the quality of life for individuals

with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. In 1995, we took on additional responsibilities as the Community Developmental Disabilities Organization (CDDO) for Douglas and Jefferson counties. Cottonwood's mission, helping people with disabilities to shape their own future, guides us daily as we strive for excellence.

2022 marks Cottonwood's 50th Anniversary!!! It is a very important year in many ways and there will be celebrations throughout the year. I invite you to come see us and tour Cottonwood if you haven't been here in a while. We are a vibrant organization and with COVID in the rear view mirror, we are excited to see you in person and show you what all we do. It's amazing. This issue of CONTACT showcases some 50th anniversary memories.

While I am excited to begin this new chapter, I would also like to extend my deep and sincere appreciation to the individuals we support, board members, staff, donors, and the community at large for your trust and belief in our mission. We are excited about the future and all that it offers. We are Cottonwood Strong!

Shaw Spratt, CEO.

Board of Trustees



COTTONWOOD INCORPORATED

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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.



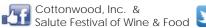








Follow Us! Like Us! Share Us!









ppy Retiremensharon Spratt!



In her 50th year of working on behalf of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and during Cottonwood's 50th anniversary jubilee, Sharon Spratt will retire as Cottonwood's CEO. The confluence of these two remarkable benchmarks is truly momentous.

Sharon's advocacy, foresight, astute business sense, unparalleled collaboration, and talent for futures planning has positioned Cottonwood as a premiere service provider. Her leadership and contributions will continue to serve Cottonwood well into the future.









Bess Stone Activity Center opened at 809 Ohio to provide activities for people with developmental disabilities.



1972 40 acres in south Lawrence. She wanted to assist

Petey Cerf donates families in providing activities for persons with disabilities.



1990

Retirement Services are offered to older adults who no longer want or need full time work-oriented services. The retirement facility is located in downtown Lawrence.



1988 Jon Hellebust named Executive Director.

1983

A 10,000 sq.ft. addition is completed, enabling Cottonwood to provide Work Services for 84 clients.



1999

Salute! A Festival of Wine & Food began as a benefit for Cottonwood, Inc. It is presented by Standard Beverage Corporation and has become the major fundraiser for Cottonwood, Inc., raising almost \$2 million to date.



1994 Sharon Spratt named **Executive Director**



1999

Cottonwood, Inc. awarded five-year NISH contract with the Department of Defense making cargo tie-down straps.



1972

Condra

hired as

Executive Director.

the first

Gary

1972

A collaborative group of parents who wanted 🖁 to have a community based option for services for their children with developmental disabilities who were no longer in school was instrumental in founding

Cottonwood, Inc. Their support and guidance can still be seen in Cottonwood today.



1982

Howard Hasler named Executive Director.



Articles of Incorporation are filed for Cottonwood Foundation, Inc. creating an affiliated nonprofit organization that solicits and facilitates the contribution of funds for the benefit of Cottonwood, Inc.

Three more homes are built for Residential Services.



1989

Supported community employment, Health & Individual Support Services are added.





2000

19,740 square foot addition is completed.



DD Reform Act is enacted. Cottonwood became designated coordinator of Home & Community Based Services for



Douglas and Jefferson counties (Community Developmental Disability Organization-CDDO)



This new 16,000 sq.ft. facility replaces the production and warehouse space at 2420 W 31st which had been leased from Reeves-Wiedemann for the last 18 years.



2006

A newly fully accessible five bedroom residential home was constructed to replace 819 Ohio, one of the three homes identified to be replaced in the Residential Feasibility Study completed in 2005.



2009

5 Millionth cargo tie-down strap was produced.



The Cottonwood Choir is formed.



2017

7 million cargo straps produced.



2008



2010

8 million cargo straps produced.



New residential home built.



2019



Cottonwood celebrates 50 years!



2022

CEO Sharon Spratt retires.

Congratulations **Employers of the** Month!

December - KU Dining The Market January - Torchy's Tacos February - Pawsh Wash March - Sodexo/LMH

April - KU Dining The Underground

Employer Quotes:

staff from JobLink

works with new hires until they have mastered their job responsibilities. Bobby and Louise are both

part of our team of original hires that have been with us since day one which in itself is an accomplishment. Bobby started out as a busser but now he runs food and helps with catering events. I would like to share that I have always supported the idea that if someone wants to work then give them a job. You pay them and they pay you back with loyalty and hard work.

"Over the years, JobLink referred excellent candidates and provided wonderful coaching and training to support our entire team. Seagan is an outstanding employee. Extremely reliable, observant, helpful and honest. We appreciate the

great qualities and hard work Seagan brings to our team.



Throughout the last 7 years, we have benefitted so much from our partnership with JobLink. Not only great employees, but fantastic support and resources. We love what JobLink does for the Lawrence community and we will always partner with this program.

"We have used JobLink in the past and have had a mutually beneficial relationship. It



has been a joy to work with the many different JobLink employees.

The JobLink employees are hard workers, are

always eager to do more/ask questions, and show up on time ready to work JobLink makes it easy matching individuals to job specific duties and following through with job performance on specific needs

We appreciate your partnership!

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

For more information contact Phil Bentzinger 785-840-0550 or pbentzinger@cwood.org



Employee of the Month





November - Bonnie

"I worked at Dominos from 2007-2015 then retired. But then I came back in 2017 and have been here ever since! I fold boxes and they say I'm faster than any other employee!"

December - David

"I have worked at Tractor Supply Co. since July 2018. I do online orders, load outs, load and stock feed, help customers, clean ,train new employees. I like my job because it gives me exercise. I like the kind people and it gives me something to do during the



February - John

"I have worked at KU- Mrs. E's since 2007. I do pots and pans. I wash them, rinse and put them away. I like my job because it keeps my hands and feet busy at all times. When Mrs. E's isn't busy, I do extra cleaning."



March - Christine

"I have worked at Cosmos Indian Market & Café since July 2021. I like the people I work with. It's been interesting learning about the Indian food and culture. I like helping customers find products in the store."



April - Emilio

"I work at Christal K-9 taking care of dogs. I like the environment and the people I work with. My advice is be willing to work hard but have fun. Go beyond what you're supposed to do. Be nice, no one wants to work with grumpy co-workers."



Cottonwood Industries is bringing new technology to its manufacturing floor by means of

- fully automated conveyors
- impulse package sealing
- sewing equipment
- adjustable case sealing

to enhance our capabilities to support our AbilityOne contracts and ultimately the Troop and Aviation departments in the US Military.

The new process will have a continued emphasis on safety. It will allow Cottonwood Industries to cut the time to complete an order by 50% while allowing the people that we serve to learn new job skills that could lead to increased earning opportunities.





Choose Cottonwood Industries to perform all the jobs in your order fulfillment cycle, or choose just those jobs that we can perform most cost-effectively for you. Contact us today to discuss your needs. Robert Bieberle, Cottonwood Industries Business Development Manager, at 785-842-0550 or rbieberle@cwood.org.

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!



Chris Conde Lawrence Journal World



Dr. Lewis and Shannon Kimball (USD497)



Brandon Graham



l awrence Business Magazine



Tim Mock and Carrie Parker

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.



Leadership Lawrence



On March 9, 2022, 20 persons-supported and staff traveled to Topeka to advocate in person with other Kansans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Cottonwood was also represented virtually by our folks in Work Enrichment Services and Retirement Services. After a wonderful program and tasty lunch, many of the advocates at the Capital visited legislative offices to drop off cards urging the legislators to support proposed action for rate increases. Thank you to all who participated.



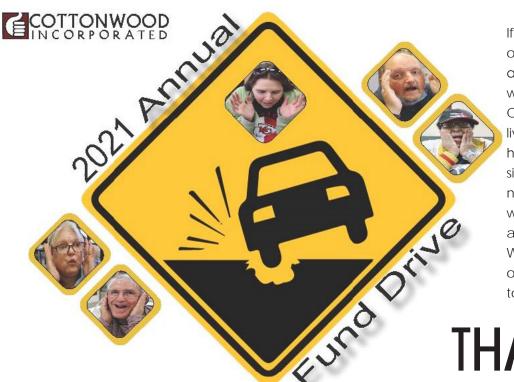


Penny Hotchkiss, JobLink Consultant, provided meaningful and heartfelt testimony to the Health & Human Services committee on what the proposed rate increase means to her and other Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).









If the past few years have taught us one thing, it is to learn to be adaptable and flexible as we learn new ways to navigate our lives. Here at Cottonwood, we didn't expect to live this navigation literally, but we have. At several of our residential sites, the driveways were in serious need of repair. Holes in the concrete were making accessibility and safety an issue for the people we support. We have a special THANK YOU to all of our fabulous donors who helped us to "Plug the Holes!"

THANK YOU!

Ms. Sally Agin Mr. & Mrs. Mike Ahlen Dr. & Mrs. David Ambler Mr. & Mrs. Darron Ammann Mr. & Mrs. James Flory Mr. & Mrs. Doug Anderson Mary Elizabeth Atwood Mr. & Mrs. Steve Atzeni Ms. Heather Bahnmaier Ms. Jill Baker Mr. & Mrs. Joe Baker Mr. & Mrs. Dave Baloga Mr. & Mrs. William Bartscher Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Glasgow Mr. & Mrs. Smitty Belcher Mr. & Mrs. Phil Bentzinger Ms. Martha Berger Ms. Cristy Bidinger Dr. & Mrs. Lee Bittenbender Ms. Marilyn Bittenbender &

Ms. Johanna Branson Mr. & Mrs. Vic Brightwell Ms. Ettie Brightwell Ms. Theresa Browning Ms. Lois Brubaker Mr. & Mrs. Dave Bryan Mr. & Mrs. Gayle Bryant Ms. Jane Buttenhoff

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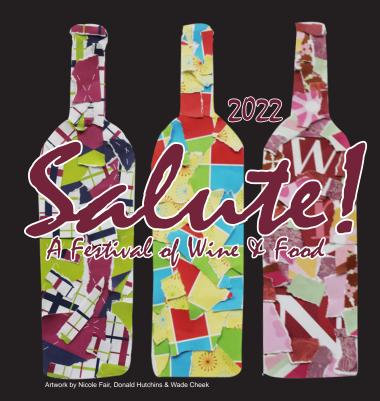
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Mr. & Mrs David Zupancic





Save the Date



Tickets on sale June 1, 2022

www.salutewinefest.com 785-840-1604

Attendees at all events must be at least 21 years of age with valid ID.



Salute! 2022 is coming July 14, 15 and 16! And all three events, the Mass Street Mosey, Winemaker Dinner and the Grand Tasting will be in-person events this year.





2022 marks the 23rd year for Salute, and we are all working hard to make it the best one yet. Tickets go on sale on June 1. They are limited, so get in early to get yours. Proceeds from these events benefit Cottonwood, Inc.

Have a great time and at the same time, help us drive our mission of helping people with disabilities to drive their own future.



Staff Spotlight

Congratulations to Kara Walters, Administrator of Services!

Kara was the recipient of the prestigious President's Award for Leadership at the 2021 InterHab Conference in October, 2021. Kara began working at Cottonwood as a DSP (Direct Support Professional) in 1987. She soon became a Residential Coordinator and in 1994 was promoted to Residential Director. In 2021, Kara was named Administrator of Services for Cottonwood, Inc.

We are so lucky to have Kara at Cottonwood, she's amazing and so deserving of this prestigious award.







Congratulations to these 2021 Employees of the Quarter!

Employees of the Quarter are nominated by their peers for their excellence in service and performance and their demonstrated support of Cottonwood's mission and values:

• Customer Satisfaction

- Teamwork
- Courtesy and Respect
- Self Determination and Personal Growth Community Partners
- Support

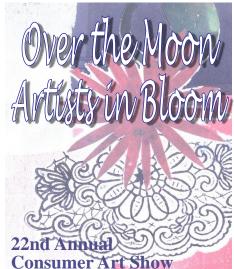








4th Quarter RoxAna Covarrubias, Work Enrichment



40 beautiful and creative art pieces for the show. Proceeds from the art go directly to the artists. Cottonwood is proud to have such amazing artists in our family. Thanks to the Lawrence Arts Center for its partnership!



"Over the Moon, Artists in Blooom", the 22nd annual Consumer Art Show took place on April 29, 2022 at the Lawrence Arts Center. Over 18 persons-suppported submitted







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.



Cottonwood benefits include:

- Company paid medical, dental and vision
- KPERS Retirement
- Paid sick and vacation



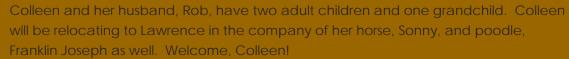
Contact Matthew Moore, Human Resources Coordinator, mmoore@cwood.org





Welcome!

We are excited and pleased to announce that **Colleen Himmelberg** has accepted the position of Cottonwood, Inc. CEO with a start date of May 2nd, 2022. Colleen is from Washington, Missouri and has worked in the non-profit field her entire career and specifically in disability services for more than 10 years. Her most recent position began in 2013 at EMPAC GROUP in Washington, Missouri where she was the Executive Director of Operations overseeing employment/work services for persons with I/DD. She has been a CARF surveyor in the past, where she was exposed to a variety of service models and funding systems.





New Inc. Board Members



Robert Day is an Oklahoma native, but has been a resident of Kansas for the past 18 years. He has been with Evergy for the entirety of those 18 years. Robert and his wife, Stephanie, have 2 boys. Robert enjoys activities with his boys, travel with family, boating, skiing and golf.

Beth Easter is a Kansas native with more than 10 years of banking experience with INTRUST Bank. She earned her undergraduate degree in human biology from KU and she is also a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking Colorado and Bank Leaders of Kansas. Beth and her husband Greg have 3 children. Beth enjoys running, traveling, reading, cooking and volunteering.

New Foundation Board Members



Brandon Graham was raised in Lawrence, attended KU and met his future wife, Andrea, there, then followed her to Kansas City. Six years later, they had triplet boys and moved home to Lawrence to be closer to family and their new business in downtown Lawrence—Jefferson's Restaurant. In 2018, Brandon acquired Jefferson's Franchise Systems and moved the headquarters from Nashville to Lawrence. Brandon enjoys his sons' activities and interests and golf.

Tim Mock graduated from KU and has spent over 10 years in the banking/finance sector, most recently with MeriTrust Credit Union. Tim and his wife, Terelle, have 2 daughters and Tim says he "...loves being a girl dad". There is always an activity—softball, cheer, soccer and dance. The Mocks love living on their 6 acre plot of land outside of Lawrence. Tim enjoys music, golf, networking and non-profit support.





Carrie Parker was born and raised in Oklahoma, graduated Magna cum Laude from Washington & Lee University where she says she "...was lucky enough to meet a nice Midwestern boy". The day after she graduated from the Oklahoma University Law School, she and her husband, John, moved to Lawrence where it quickly felt like home. Carrie has practiced law with Joseph, Hollander & Craft for 10 years. She and John have 2 children.

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



ONE-TIME GIFT Your gift makes a big difference!



MEMORIAL & HONORARIUM Honor your loved one with a gift today.



MONTHLY GIVING

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



QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DEDUCTIONS

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



PLANNED & ESTATE GIFTS

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

\$+\$\$ 6

COMPANY MATCHMany companies offer a company donation match.

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



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



AmazonSmile donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to Cottonwood, Inc. Support Cottonwood, Inc. by shopping at smile.amazon.com and designate Cottonwood, Inc. as your non-profit recipient.





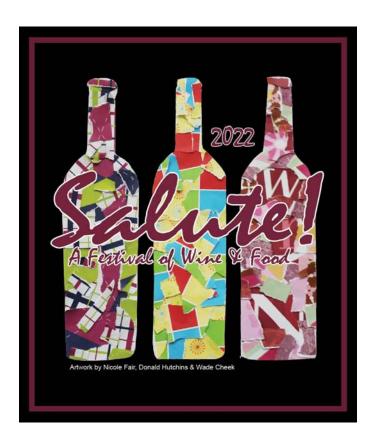
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SAVE THE DATE

July 14-16, 2022

Thursday, July 14th 5-8pm **Mass Street Mosey**

Friday, July 15th 6:30pm

Winemaker Dinner

The Oread Hotel

Saturday, July 16th 6:30-10pm

Grand Tasting & Auctions

The Oread Hotel

Tickets on Sale JUNE 1st

www.salutewinefest.com 785-840-1604

Attendees at all events must be at least 21 years of age with valid ID.