

CONTACT

Spring 2021

In touch with all things Cottonwood...



Happy Retirement!

Jill Baker - Celebrating 44 years!

**COTTONWOOD
INCORPORATED**

We help people with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



Welcome to our Spring, 2021 issue of CONTACT. As we reflect on the past year and the impact of the pandemic, we see that we have learned many things. For many of us, we learned the importance of community. Each of us intersects with many different communities of our own choosing – family, friends, neighborhoods, workplace, schools, hobbies, sports, etc. Most of all, community means people who are there for us, with common interests. The makeup of these communities is unique to each individual. Throughout this issue, we are highlighting some of the various communities and activities enjoyed this past year by the individuals we support. And while the pandemic limited all of us in certain ways, the individuals we support continued to live rich and rewarding lives of their choosing. We are grateful for all of our staff for their unwavering commitment to caring for the people we support and ensuring the high quality of care for which we are known. We continue to look forward to the future and eagerly anticipate the discovery of new ways for all of us to engage with our communities.

Sharon Spratt, CEO.

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Cottonwood, Inc. &
Salute Festival of Wine & Food



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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.





I GOT MY COVID-19



VACCINE !



We were successful in having our first vaccination clinic in mid-January so that by mid-February most staff and residential consumers were fully vaccinated with the help of the Federal Pharmacy Partnership Program. We also helped facilitate vaccinations for others in our Community Developmental Disability Organization (CDDO) area. Jill Baker, our beloved Administrator of Services, who is retiring after 44 years of stellar service to people with Intellectual/developmental disabilities, was the catalyst for, and shepherd of Cottonwood's early vaccination successes. This is just one shining part of her enduring legacy.



Remember Me! I/DD!

On Tuesday, March 16, 2021 over 20 Cottonwood persons served and staff participated in a Virtual Advocacy Day led by our state association, InterHab. Our Cottonwood contingent joined over 650 Kansans to actively advocate via Zoom for a variety of issues affecting the Kansas I/DD community. These issues include the Direct Support Professional Workforce Availability Crisis, Provider Capacity and a 5% rate increase for all HCBS waivers. Advocates heard from special guests Rep. Will Carpenter (one of our legislative champions) and Lt. Governor David Toland.



After a wonderful throwback video from School House Rock on how a bill is created and put into law, advocates were treated to several wonderful videos from DSPs, consumers, parents and service providers from around Kansas. Well done advocates! All advocates were encouraged to call and email our legislators after the program to continue the advocacy. Thank you to our friends at InterHab for organizing this amazing and motivating program!

Thank You!

Throughout the pandemic, Cottonwood has tried to manage with science, thoughtfulness, risk mitigation, transparency, and compassion as we worked to create safe, socially distanced work areas for the people we support. Through this work, we discovered a real need to upgrade and expand two of our restrooms in our Work Services space to include a changing area as well as create even greater accessibility. Through the generosity of our amazing donors, we will be able to create a more accessible environment as well as provide touchless entry in some areas and additional touchless water stations for use by staff and persons-supported as well.



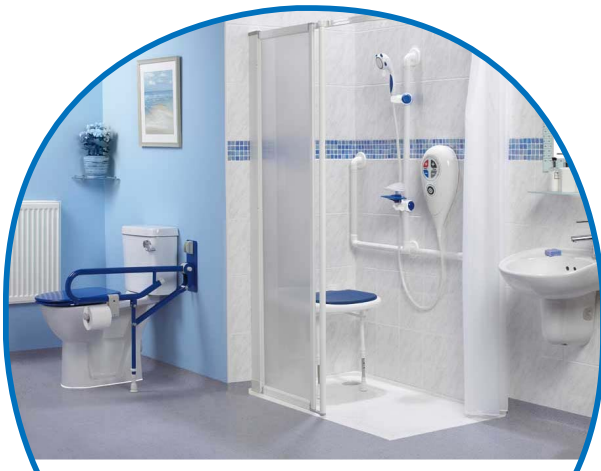
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We are truly appreciative of the generosity you have shown to Cottonwood and the people we support.

Congratulations Employers of the Month!

November - Buffalo Wild Wings
December - KC Clean
January - Jungle House
February - Cosmos
March - Sigler Pharmacy
April - Manpower

Employer Quotes:

"Being a partner with JobLink has been rewarding. We encourage other organizations to consider JobLink as a source for part-time employees. The partnership has strengthened our team and reinforced our core values of community involvement."

SIGLER
PHARMACY

"The employees from JobLink have been dependable. Additionally, the JobLink coach gives an added level of communication making things flow very smoothly."

Manpower

"JobLink is excellent with communication, asking us what we needed our new hire to learn in order of importance, and our job coaches helped us ensure those duties were learned and perfected. We also absolutely love working with Linda B. because she used her experience to place our current JobLink employee, Ale, in the environment that was not only conducive for her to flourish, but also was the perfect fit for our shop!"

**Jungle
House**

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



"I have worked at Pizza Hut for 7 years! I like having the responsibility of going to a job, doing what needs to be done, and being independent on the job. A good employee needs to be dependable, always show up to work, work hard and make sure the job gets done."

-Sarah, April Employee of the Month

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



November - Brandon

"I have worked at LMH since June 2019. I work in the Environmental Service area. I clean departments in LMH Health, for example; C-section, unit 1 & 2 and I clean the cath lab."



December - Roger

"I have worked at Drink Eat Well for 6 years. I am the palleting line leader and inspector. I am the last person in line that does quality checks and makes sure product is being palletted correctly. I also help run the line making sure it is running smoothly and do shipping and receiving."



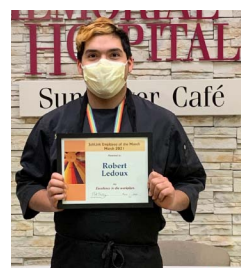
January - Doug

"I have worked at Salty Iguana for 12 years. I wash dishes. I like the routine and they are willing to work with my available schedule. My advice for being a good employee is to be nice and know how to resolve conflicts with coworkers. Show up early if you can."



February - Karrie

"I have worked at Target for 18 years! I take care of abandoned Target merchandise that is misplaced or defective. Target is a friendly atmosphere and I get along with my team members."



March - Robert

"I have worked at LMH Health for 2 years. My favorite task is cashing people out where I can socialize with them. My advice is to be on time and go above and beyond."



MAP (Manufacturing, Assembly and Production) is a program designed to expand Cottonwood's workforce to include people with ALL types of significant disabilities in accordance with the Federal AbilityOne Program.

We help people with barriers to employment meet goals, receive training in a production setting, learn new skills and grow while earning a paycheck.

Accommodations and supports can be provided to help with growth and to provide a platform for success.



What type of work will an AbilityOne Production Worker perform?

We are hiring staff for 30 + hours per week to perform various tasks such as assembly, collating, packing, labeling, sewing and quality control of product.

How do you qualify for this program?

- Cottonwood, Inc. follows AbilityOne standards when determining a candidate's eligibility for employment through MAP.
- Documentation of a Medical or Mental Health diagnosis will need to be dated, signed and provided by a Licensed Practitioner (physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, psychiatrist, psychologist or qualified mental health provider) in the form of a written report on professional letterhead.
- A list of the requirements for the documentation can be provided upon request.

If you want to learn more information about being a part of the Cottonwood Industries team, contact: Alyson Wingert 785-842-0550 or 785-312-3912 ajcwingert@cwood.org.

VOTED Top 5



Nonprofit & Best Place to Work

For the past 4 years



"Be somebody who makes everybody feel like somebody."

-Brad Montague

APPLY TODAY!

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



Roses Are Red...Individuals supported by Cottonwood received a special Valentine's Day surprise from our friends at Dillons Grocery.



Persons served and staff alike donned their Chiefs gear in anticipation of the big game! Specially themed cookies helped to make spirits rise even further!! Go Chiefs!!!!



Nothing brightens up a blustery and rainy March day in Kansas better than delicious breakfast and piping hot coffee treats delivered right to the front door! It was a great start to the day for our amazing Cottonwood staff!



Staff Spotlight Work Enrichment

Making a difference each and every day in the lives of the people we support--that's what Cottonwood's fabulous Work Enrichment Services (WES) staff does! The WES staff provides daily supports and services that promote independence and autonomy to meet individuals' goals, (including the opportunity for paid work), learning bursts to hone daily living skills and many community integration opportunities. During the stay-at-home order of the past year, this amazing and flexible staff eagerly upended their daily routine to provide Day Services in Cottonwood's Group Homes. Staff worked hard to create a reimagined, creative and vibrant day program which included opportunities to continue to learn daily living skills, arts and crafts activities, Music Therapy via Zoom, gardening skills with vegetables and flowering plants, cooking lessons and other organized Zoom activities. The staff also assisted persons served with participation in organized socially distanced events including Cottonwood Strong Day, visit from an ice cream truck, van scavenger hunts and "pop" up drive thrus, all structured within the safety regulations set forth by Cottonwood and the CDC. What a creative and remarkable team!!



Sheri Holmes, Work Enrichment Coordinator

- Sheri has worked at Cottonwood for 25 years, "I have always enjoyed working with the people receiving our services. I am also incredibly appreciative of the work that our DSPs do on a daily basis. Over the years, I have had some wonderful staff come through Work Enrichment and the thing they all have in common is the unique ability to make good things happen every day and especially during times of adversity."
- Loves live music events of all kinds but bluegrass holds a special place in her heart
- Fun Fact: Cannot hum while holding her nose

Chase Buck, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Chase has worked at Cottonwood for 2 ½ years.
- "I love meeting new people at Cottonwood and forming good bonds with our consumers"
- Fun Facts: Loves to play video games and watching anime; his favorite color is purple but he is not a K-State fan—Go KU!!



James Bermudez, Work Enrichment Team Leader

- Has worked at Cottonwood for 16 years
- Loves helping the consumers achieve their dreams of making money and giving each person choice in their daily goals
- James is excitedly anticipating being a grandparent for the 1st time!



Jaimie Korbe, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Jaimie has worked at Cottonwood three different times over a span of about 20 years
- "I enjoy helping people live their preferred lifestyle"
- Jaimie loves to spend time with her children and grandchildren and to spend a lot of time outdoors ("the sun gives me life!")



Corinna Wood, Work Enrichment Supervisor



- Corinna has worked at Cottonwood for 19 years
- "I like helping people live their preferred lifestyle and doing learning bursts involving body movement, ball tossing, using bubbles and outside activities"
- Fun Facts: Used to be on a roller derby team called the Victory Vixen.

Matthew Wilson, Work Enrichment Supervisor (not pictured)

- Matthew has worked at Cottonwood for 2 years
- "I like the consumers we serve and the staff. Each day, I talk with and listen to everyone's stories about what they did the night before and help them work and make money"
- "In my free time, you will find me on the farm with the cattle or in a tractor getting things that need to be done, Done!"

Christy Reeves, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Christy has worked at Cottonwood for 17 wonderful years in a variety of roles
- "I am passionate about the people I work with. I love to help others; I like to know consumers' schedules and meds (to check for side effects) so if someone is acting off, I can speak to a nurse and give them all the info they need to assist the consumer faster"
- Fun Facts: Unicorns and Pegasus are Christy's favorite mythical creatures



Shelby Velasquez, Work Enrichment Team Leader

- Shelby has worked at Cottonwood for 13 years
- "Through these many years, I have worked with many different individuals who have enlightened my life. I am the lucky one who gets to spend time learning all their quirks and seeing the growth and some amazing changes come about. Even though my patience has been tried at times, it has also allowed me to humble myself, face the challenges and continue to enjoy all of the fun-loving, hardworking, humorous and raw personalities of the people I work with"
- Loves spending time with family but especially her grandchildren; enjoys cooking, crafting, reading and sometimes baking.



Miranda Hernandez, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Miranda has worked at Cottonwood for almost 3 years
- "Cottonwood has been like my second home since I began working here directly out of high school. Spending my days in Work Enrichment has inspired tremendous growth in my life, goals and overall mindset. I love getting to know and understand the people we serve, and the fulfillment of being able to impact



lives everyday by just being myself and caring for others. The bond we have as a department is truly special and I'm grateful for the pivotal role my position at Cottonwood has had in my budding

adulthood."

- Fun Facts: "I am a huge fan of 'Game of Thrones'—I have a cat named Jon Snow and almost half an arm dedicated to House Stark tattoos!"



Tracey Turner, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Tracey has worked at Cottonwood for 3 years
- She especially likes the opportunity to work with so many inspiring people and working with consumers to help them meet their daily goals and helping them have an enriching day.
- Has competed in 5 marathons!



Steven Carter, Work Enrichment Call-In

- Steven has worked at Cottonwood for 7 years and enjoys the many people and life experiences that Cottonwood encompasses.
- A typical day is always a different experience. It could be doing a lot of hand over hand assistance with consumers or quality checking jobs for consumers that need his help or playing music for dance parties, playing bingo, walking with consumers outside on a beautiful day, or a myriad of other fun activities
- Favorite free time events are jogging, dancing and cooking and his favorite mythical creature would have to be the Ditto

Pam Osburn, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Pam has worked at Cottonwood since 2017
- "I like working at Cottonwood because the staff is friendly. I like building relationships with the consumers, helping them out and having fun."
- Fun Facts: Huge human-like skull collector; favorite colors are red, black and white; loves tattoos; Pam loves riding on the back of a Harley Davidson



RoxAna Covarrubias, Work Enrichment Specialist

- RoxAna has worked at Cottonwood for 15 years. She says the people we support are the highlight of working at Cottonwood and the staff are a close second
- "My favorite thing I get to do when I come to work is to go through the rooms and say hi to each person we serve. Seeing all the smiles, chatting, dancing, or just being silly for a few minutes always makes my day!"
- In her free time, RoxAna likes hanging out with family and friends, travelling, painting, shopping and reading



Cassandra Schultz, Work Enrichment Supervisor

- Cassandra has worked at Cottonwood for 2 years
- "I love coming to work every day; you never know what the day will bring. I love the fact that we are helping consumers earn a paycheck"
- Loves hunting and being one with nature; loves spending time with family and especially loves being a grandma



Community is

FRIENDS • FAMILY • WORK • HOME • ACTIVITIES...

TRENT



SHIRLEY



SAM



MELISSA



"Community" is unique to each of us

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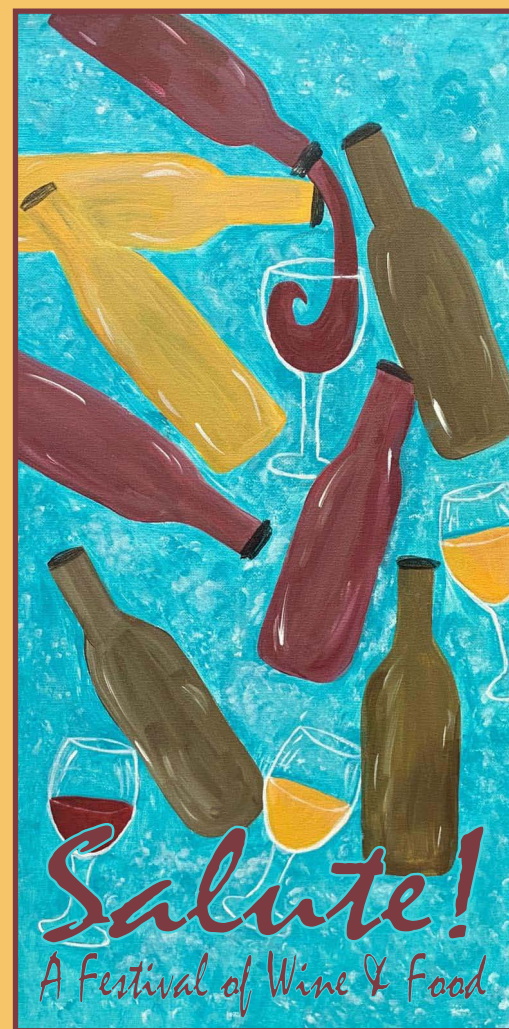
Salute 2021

While we were disappointed that we could not gather in-person for Salute in 2020, we were able to initiate our use of an on-line auction platform for the first time. Our on-line auction was one of the best auctions ever. As we manage with science, thoughtfulness, risk mitigation and compassion, we hope that we are able to gather for some in-person Salute events this year.

As always, we will work with our local and state partners and follow their guidance as the planning process continues. We are excited, however, to have our auction on-line again this year. Take a look at some of these fabulous items that will be offered for auction in support of Cottonwood, Inc.:



And don't miss out on our "Golden Ticket" raffle! Watch your inbox for additional information as we get nearer to July.



Salute Artwork

This year's Salute artwork was created by the wonderfully talented duo of Sheryl and Delilah. Sheryl receives supports from Cottonwood and Delilah is a JobLink Consultant. They worked together to make this wonderful masterpiece. You can own this fabulous artwork if you are the highest bidder during the 2021 Salute on-line auction (opening July 3, 2021)!



Farewell

After 44 years of service to Cottonwood, Jill Baker will be retiring in early May, 2021. In Jill's words from the 2020 Management Report, "I consider myself extremely lucky to have worked 44 years with compassionately passionate people, with all of us contributing to a caring and high performing nonprofit." Jill started out as a DSP in 1976, working at the Gold and White Houses. From there she became a Residential Coordinator, Residential Director and in August of 1994, was promoted to Administrator of Services. Jill has been integral in helping shape Cottonwood's services as well as contributing to state initiatives. She is well respected by fellow colleagues across the state of Kansas. All of us at Cottonwood will be forever grateful for all the talents Jill has provided over the years including leadership, knowledge, creativity and her sense of humor. We are happy for Jill as she takes some well-deserved time to relax and enjoy the next chapter of her life.



Happy Retirement, Jill!

Happy Retirement!

Best wishes to Jim Thomas and Don Nunley! Thank you for all you hard work and dedication. Congratulations on your retirement!



Jim Thomas, JobLink Employment Consultant -15 years

Don Nunley, JobLink Employment Consultant - 12years

Why I Give



of staff and other volunteers. Our donations provide consumers work, living and transit resources, as well as awards and gifts that brighten their lives. I am so grateful to be a part of Cottonwood and urge you to contribute your dollars and energies however much you can, too! And we are always happy to give you a tour of Cottonwood's "home!"

When I was busy building my career and raising three daughters, I felt inadequate next to my mother who gave her time and passion to nearly every great cause in her small community. She taught me how important it is to support people in need and services that benefit all of our lives in some way. She also told me that one day it would be my turn to give back to my community. Now it is my turn and one of the most amazing organizations I support with my time and money is Cottonwood, Inc. The people supported by Cottonwood are provided resources to live their lives to the fullest they possibly can, and I love being a small part of helping that happen! Whether it is attending Salute!, celebrating persons-supported and staff at the Cottonwood Classies, or sitting on the Cottonwood Foundation Board, it is rewarding to contribute however I can to the efforts



-Susan Arasmith

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.



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Many companies offer a company donation match.



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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

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Upcoming Events

- Salute Online Auction..... July 3rd - 10th
- Mass St. Mosey..... July 8th Downtown Mass Street
- Winemaker Dinner..... July 9th The Oread Hotel
- Cottonwood Golf Tournament...September 20th

Contact Ettie Brightwell ebrightwell@cwood.org/ 785-842-0550

COTTONWOOD



Classic