

FALL 2023

CONTACT

In touch with all things Cottonwood.



COTTONWOOD
INCORPORATED

We help individuals with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



Fall is in the air, bringing cooler weather and beautiful changing colors. I love to see the Kansas sunflowers! It is my favorite time of the year. The past several months have been full of excitement, change, fun and some stress! I continue to be filled with gratitude and excitement for the positive changes and remarkable growth we have achieved to date.

Cottonwood's most valuable asset is undoubtedly its dedicated and passionate staff who have been incredibly busy the past few months. We have opened our new activity-based day service—CORE—which brings new, non-work opportunities and community connections for the individuals we support. New contracts in Cottonwood Industries have brought challenging and creative opportunities for our consumers to learn new skills and have options for meaningful work. We conducted one of the most successful fundraising events, in Cottonwood's history, Salute! 2023. The incredible teamwork, resilience, and creativity of the staff seems to know no bounds.

As we celebrate these positive changes and growth milestones, we must also keep our eye on the future. Our journey continues and there are exciting prospects ahead. We will remain agile and adaptive in the face of challenges, continuously innovate, and maintain our commitment to excellence.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude to every one of you for your unwavering support, hard work, and dedication. Together, we are achieving remarkable things, and I am confident that our shared future is brighter than ever before.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Cottonwood family.

Colleen Himmelberg

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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 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.



Celebrate



Congratulations to Barclay and Josh for their sizzling 1st & 2nd place finishes!



It was quite the celebration as the Cottonwood Mini Masters returned to the Cottonwood property on Thursday, September 28, 2023!! It was an absolutely beautiful evening in Lawrence.

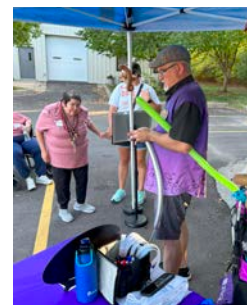
We would like to give a huge shout out to Meritrust Credit Union for their sponsorship of the MiniMasters event and to Midwest Exterminators for sponsoring the t-shirts. There was delicious pizza from Toppers Pizza and an icy sweet treat from the Kona Ice Truck for all participants.

Thanks once again to Travis Walsh and Lawrence Mini Golf for the amazing miniature golf set up. The course definitely received a workout from the Cottonwood consumers, staff and family members playing on it throughout the evening.

There were some serious dance moves displayed in the ever-popular street dance while other folks displayed expert fishing skills by hooking prizes at the fishpond! Yet again, the Cottonwood MiniMasters did not disappoint. What a fun night with all of our friends! Can't wait until next year!



Participants flocked to our newest addition to the evening, an airbrush tattoo artist!



Dale, the Balloon Twister did not disappoint with his unique and wonderful balloon art.





May - Drew

I have worked at Fuzzy's Tacos for 8 years. I clean & dust to help the shop get ready for business. I like my job because I like meeting new people.



June - Pennie

I have worked at Chick-fil-A for 4 1/2 years. My favorite task at work is taking food to customers and talking to them. I like my job because I get to interact with customers. My team members and bosses are so nice and brag about me! My advice for being a good employee is always have a smile on your face. Be sure to have a good attitude.

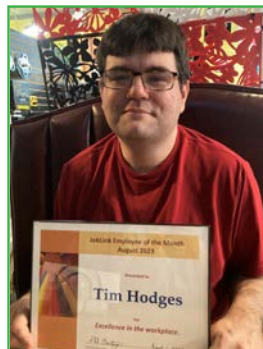


July - Barclay

I have worked at Watkins Museum for 1 year. I like sweeping the exhibit floors. My jobs pays well and I'm working hard and hanging in there! Work hard, make money and do the very best that you can.

August - Tim

I have worked at Cosmos since May 2021. I do dishes and clean. I like the boss and my co-workers. My advice is to make a good resume.



September - Markham

I have worked at Wendy's for 4 years. I like doing the dishes and the people. I have fun. Come in with a smile on your face, stay focused, do your job, and get along with everybody.



October - Henry

I started at The Dentists in July 2019 and Pizza Hut in November 2019. I fold bags at The Dentists and I fold boxes at Pizza Hut. My advice is do your tasks, show up and be happy.



Congratulations to the JobLink team on being named #1 Staffing Agency in the Best of Lawrence for the 2nd year in a row!

Employers of the Month!

May - Pizza Hut 23rd Street

June - Weaver's

July - Cellar Door

August - Walgreens 23rd Street

September - USD 497 Custodial

October - Lucky Dog

Employer Quotes



"Assume competence and let people impress you with what they are capable of doing when given tools and space to learn."

-Cellar Door



"Job coaches provide outstanding mentoring and support for the client and the employer. We have found that people with disabilities are extremely loyal, dependable and appreciative to have the opportunity for employment."

-Weaver's Department Store



"I know many businesses including Lucky Dog who have gained excellent staff members through JobLink. I can't recommend them enough."

-Lucky Dog Pet Grocery & Bakery

We appreciate your partnership!



Poppies are Popping!

There always seems to be a flurry of activity at Cottonwood Industries. For over 113 months (that's over 9 years!) in a row, there has been over 100% work availability. In addition to using our new conveyor belts for the cargo line, we also use the conveyor system to produce poppies for our VFW contract. Consumers, sewing operators and A1 production workers all had the opportunity to work on the line together. On average, the consumer wage increased by \$.85 per hour due to the use of this automation.

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.



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 Robert Bieberle, Business Development Manager, at 785-842-0550 or rbieberle@cwood.org



Cottonwood launched its new day activity program, CORE, on July 24, 2023 and it has been a flurry of activity from Day 1! CORE stands for Community Outreach Recreation and Enrichment. The dynamic and exciting new program offers person-driven experiences focused on community access and opportunities. Some individuals will participate full-time, having indicated that they are no longer interested in and/or are not best served in a work (income earning) environment. Others will continue to perform paid work activities part-time in Cottonwood Industries, and also take advantage of the new CORE program the rest of their week.



I love to do art whenever I want to. - Jessie



Going on outings to the park to play games. - Andy



Going on trips to Petworld. -Monique





Cottonwood Industries Anniversary Celebrations
Each month, we celebrate milestones for person-supported working in Cottonwood Industries. It is such fun to see the excitement, joy and pride on everyone's faces as they are recognized for their outstanding work achievement!

Zoe, Yvette, and Taimee were welcomed by Governor Kelly's staff into her office. She signed a proclamation declaring October 2023 as the 77th anniversary of Disability Employment Awareness Month. The governor met and chatted with them, signed the proclamation, and took photos. They even got a signed copy of the proclamation to take back to Cottonwood!



Celebrate!



Salute! A Festival of Wine & Food



2023 marked the 24th anniversary of Salute! A Festival of Wine and Food. The Mass St. Mosey kicked off the festival on a moderately warm (for July, anyway!) Thursday evening, July 13th. It was a great time to reconnect with friends and make new friends over a taste of wine and delicious bite of food at 12 Mosey stops.

Salute continues to be Cottonwood's largest fundraising event and this year was no exception with over \$185,000 raised for Cottonwood. A special thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, donors and volunteers for their strong, continued support. Proceeds from Salute enable us to drive our mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future and lead their best lives.

Presented by:



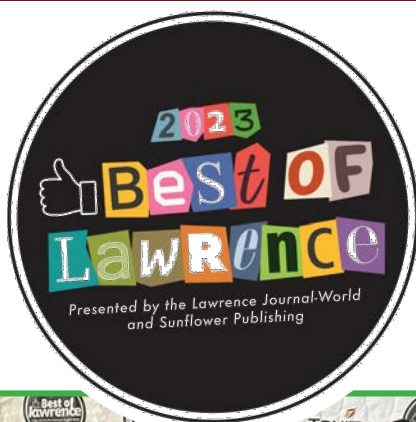
This year's Winemaker Dinner was hosted by The Oread Hotel on Friday, July 14th and featured wines from Trinchero Family Estates. The 5-course meal was amazing and attendees enjoyed the guided tour through the wine and food pairings led by Chase Thompson of Trinchero Family Estates.



As a culmination to the Wine Festival, over 400 people gathered on Saturday, July 15th at the Oread Hotel for the Grand Tasting. Participants enjoyed up to 200 wines, beers or spirits and had food tastings from ten local restaurants or caterers. The bidding was spirited in the live auction led by our friends, the Nigro Brothers Auctioneers!



Celebrate



JobLink 1st Place!!
(Best Staffing Agency)

Cottonwood 2nd Place
(Best Non-Profit)

Cottonwood 2nd Place
(Best Place to Work)

Cottonwood 3rd Place
(Social Media)

Jane Bowers 3rd Place
(Administrative Assistant)



What a great place
to work with a great
mission! Thank You
Lawrence!
We appreciate our
community's support!

The 22nd annual Cottonwood Classies will be held on Monday, November 6, 2023 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. Congratulations to all of our award winners:



Caring & Commitment Awards

Sandy Duersch &
Lisa Totten

Shining Star Awards

Robert Mitchell &
Jordan Platt

Distinguished Service Award

Zak Bolick

JobLink Employer of the Year
KU Memorial Unions

**Cottonwood Industries Business Partner
of the Year**

VFW: Veterans of Foreign Wars



WE OUR DSPs!

Celebrate



We appreciate all you do!

September 11th-15th, 2023 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 the entire community to see how much we appreciate our DSPs. On Tuesday, we had a day of Gift Card Give-Aways from places around Lawrence. The Uplift Coffee Truck came to Cottonwood to treat our hardworking DSPs to a delicious breakfast on Wednesday. Cookies from Eileen's Colossal Cookies headlined the treat for Thursday and on Friday, we celebrated our DSPs with a special DSP Appreciation stainless steel tumbler filled with candies and a special thank you.



Our DSPs are the most amazing, caring individuals. Thank You, Thank You, Thank You, DSPs, for all you do!

Tours



LMH Fellowship



Rehrig Pacific



LMH



US Bank



DCCF & Friends

We are very proud of the work that is done at Cottonwood to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Come see for yourself how amazing 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.



Goeser State Farm



Truity



Catholic Charities



Peggy Wallert
& Sue Carpenter



Hunter Consulting Services



Evergy

Thank You

Super Service Saturday The KU Center for Community Outreach

Super Service Saturday is an annual one-day volunteering event hosted by the KU Center for Community Outreach (CCO), an organization that functions to promote volunteerism and advocacy in Douglas County! Super Service Saturday is the CCO's largest fall event that works to engage students with service early in the year. Thank you for coming to Cottonwood!



Happy Retirement!

Mike Taylor, Data Assurance Coordinator, is retiring after 33 years. We wish you the best! Happy Retirement!





Shaping Futures



Why I Give...

I have always believed that giving of our time, talent and treasure are some of the easiest and most satisfying choices a person can make. Time, talent, money and involving others are essential elements to feeling part of a community. Throughout my life, being part of something greater than myself has always been what I sought to fulfill my life. From cleaning the church for Sunday services, to chairing a board of an organization, it has all given me great satisfaction, knowing that my time and energy is working toward a greater good. Plus, being involved has acquainted me with many great people I would not have met otherwise. While I may not always have had a lot to give financially, I knew that every dollar made a difference for others—no matter how large or small. Working also allows me to continue to volunteer time, energy, and money, and that has turned out to be another great reason why I work! I urge you to reach out and get involved. Learn about the needs of the community and stay connected to others. Be sure to take the opportunity to get to know Cottonwood, as it is a most wonderful organization, and truly reflective of the love people can have for each other. Come tour soon!

-Shirley Martin-Smith



Opportunities to shape the future, you can make a lasting difference!



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.



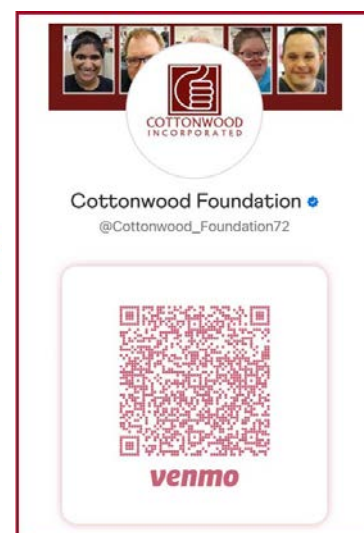
PLANNED & ESTATE GIFTS

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



Company Match

Many companies offer a company donation match.



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. 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

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



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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



Scan to see
available positions