

SPRING 2024

CONTACT

In touch with all things Cottonwood.



COTTONWOOD
INCORPORATED

We help individuals with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



Spring is in the air— temperatures are warming, the grass is greening, flowers are blooming, and Cottonwood continues to blossom as well. As I embark on my third year here, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for each and every one of you. Our journey together has been nothing short of remarkable, and I am continually inspired by the dedication and passion of our Cottonwood family.

In the face of challenges, we have not only persevered but thrived, demonstrating resilience and adaptability that truly sets us apart. Our collective commitment to excellence and innovation continues to drive our success and position us for a strong and exciting future. I am incredibly optimistic about the opportunities that lie before us. Together, we will continue to exceed expectations as we deliver on our mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future.

We are so lucky to have such outstanding board members who so willingly give of their time and talents in the support of Cottonwood. The expertise, energy and commitment that each member brings to Cottonwood is truly amazing. Please enjoy this edition of the Contact newsletter and see how we continue to be COTTONWOOD STRONG!!!

Colleen Himmelberg

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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, day activity programs as well as 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.



Advocacy Day



On March 14, 2024, 30 members of the Cottonwood family traveled to Topeka to participate in Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Our own Cottonwood participants joined over 700 fellow Kansans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the Capitol rotunda to make their voices heard by the Legislature—and they were definitely heard!! Thank you to all who participated!





JobLink
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EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



November - Reggie

I have worked at Jungle House for almost 1 year. I make and mix tropical and cactus soil. I help deliver plants, take out compost and trash. I like my job because I can work at my own pace. I also unbox new plants. My advice would be make sure all tasks are completed.



December - Shirley

I have worked at KU Dining for 18 years! I fold boxes for Pizza Hut & get ice for Starbucks. I clean restrooms and take care of trash. My job keeps my spirits up and I like the people around me. I am really proud that I have had this job for so long.



January - Carolyn

I have worked at Genesis for 2 years and The Oread for 1 year. At Genesis I play with the kids, I do dishes, pick up toys and vacuum. At The Oread I roll and polish silverware and glasses. My advice is go with the flow and do everything.

February - Billy

I have worked at KU Ekdahl Dining for 2 years. I am a dishwasher. I like my job because it pays well and I have a consistent schedule. My grandpa used to be a supervisor at KU Union. I know he would be proud of me.



March - Tate

I have worked at the KU The Market for 2 1/2 years. I wipe down tables, chairs and stock products. I greet the students coming in to eat. I like everything about my job! I love my boss, Katie and all the people I work with. My advice is do a great job and be positive. Make customers feel welcome and let them know you are happy they are there.



April - Deb

I have worked at Pizza Hut since May 2021 and Glory Days since May 2023.

I fold boxes. I can fold 300-400 boxes in 2 hours. My advice is get along with people, show up and work hard and fast.

Congratulations!

We appreciate your partnership!

EMPLOYERS OF THE MONTH

November - Transdev

December - Clinton Parkway Animal Hospital

January - McDonald's

February - American Dining Creations

March - Tractor Supply

April - Eileen's Cookies

April - Eileen's Cookies

Why wouldn't you work with JobLink? They help provide great employees with amazing support, you get to be an important part of someone's life journey and inclusion matters.



JobLink provides consultation and resources that help meet the workforce needs of more than 200 employers. Unique among employment agencies in the Lawrence, Kansas area, we analyze job requirements and customize a job match with qualified and reliable workers.

We are the only locally based, licensed, accredited, and certified disability related employment service.

Businesses can benefit from a partnership with JobLink. Here's why:

- Reduced hiring costs
- On-Site training
- Customized service
- Community partnerships
- Hiring flexibility
- All about teamwork
- Payroll savings

Contact JobLink today for qualified candidates. JobLink candidates have a variety of skills and abilities with an array of educational levels and work experience.



 **JobLink**
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COTTONWOOD Industries



Reprinted from the Rehrig Pacific Newsletter, 3/24/24

Community Engagement: Rehrig Pacific and Cottonwood Industries - Cheryl Moore

As part of our cultural improvement efforts, the De Soto team set out to find new ways to engage and give back to our community. Thanks to our research, we connected with Cottonwood Inc. in Lawrence, KS. Cottonwood, Inc. is a 501 (c)3 not-for-profit established in 1972 to provide services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Cottonwood contracts for light industrial services such as product assembly, packaging, & industrial sewing. The Cottonwood team is now preparing roll-out cart lid pins with RFID tags to support De Soto operations. We were invited to their facility to describe our culture, dive into the purpose for the task, and experience the Cottonwood facility and team. In short, we were blown away by the capabilities of the location and enthusiasm of the workers and staff. They customized workstations for the individual performing the work, based on their capabilities and preferences, all feeding into a central conveyor to bulk pack the lid pins. There are no less than three quality inspections built into the process. The work group was excited to share that they nearly reached their goal of processing 10,000 pins in a single day! During the tour, we recognized that Cottonwood is capable of short run quick turnaround programs with high quality and complexity at a fixed piece price, while providing their 140+ employees enrichment through paid employment, social exposure, and community involvement. We are excited to partner with Cottonwood on future projects, and host Rehrig Pacific plant tours with their employees and staff.

The work group was excited to share that **they nearly reached their goal of processing 10,000 pins in a single day!**





Cottonwood Industries is buzzing these days! With work on approximately 20 different contracts, persons-supported have the opportunity to earn a paycheck while completing meaningful work and learning new skills. For the second year in a row, we were able to work on the very exciting job of packaging Super Bowl cups! Go Chiefs!



A SUPER SUPER BOWL CUP

We received these Super Bowl cups the morning after the championship games and got to work. In five days, we stickered, repackaged, and sent out over 145,000 cups.



For more information on partnering with Cottonwood Industries, contact Robert Bieberle, Business Development Manager, at rbieberle@cwood.org



CORE (Community, Outreach, Recreation, Enrichment) is Cottonwood's dynamic and exciting day activity program which offers person-driven experiences focused on community access and opportunities. Participants and staff work together to develop the activities and opportunities they want to experience. Individuals also pick the level of participation in this program—full to part time.



Shaping Futures



Congratulations Lisa!

Lisa began exploring terminating her guardianship when her mom died over a year ago. Several conversations were held with her dad and siblings, with gradually increasing support for the idea. Lisa hired an attorney last Fall to begin the process. Finally, on March 19, 2024, the guardianship order pertaining to Lisa was terminated. From the moment Judge McCabria declared it so, Lisa was granted full rights and decision making on her own behalf!

Way to shape your own future!



Congratulations Andrew & Trent!

Recently, two of our four-plex units became available. Andrew & Trent worked with their teams to make the transition from many years in Cottonwood group homes to life in a bachelor pad! What a wonderful transition for both Andrew & Trent!

Way to shape your own future!





THANK YOU

Dillons
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Shaping Futures



ECLIPSE

Take A Tour



John Mugler



Lawrence Douglas County Public Health Department



Chloe Martens, The Oread



Jeannene Loewenstein, Wagmore Canine Enrichment



Leadership Lawrence



Amanda Reeder, The Oread

We love having visitors at Cottonwood! Tours are the best way to experience what an amazing place Cottonwood is! If you are interested in learning more about Cottonwood, please contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations & Development at ebrightwell@cwood.org or (785) 842-0550.



Express Pros



City Lifestyle Magazine



Lawrence Schools Foundation



Jean Milstead

SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars—Salute! 2024 is coming July 11, 12, and 13th! Salute! is our largest fundraiser of the year with proceeds from the events benefiting the people we support at Cottonwood. 2024 is quite a milestone for Salute!, marking the 25th year for this fabulous event! Tickets go on sale June 3. They are limited, so get in early to get yours! Enjoy the events and help us drive our mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future at the same time.



Mass St.Mosey
Thursday, July 11th

Winemaker Dinner
Friday, July 12th



Grand Tasting/Auctions
Saturday, July 13th



Scan here to learn more

Presented by:



Annual Fund Drive

2023



For almost 30 years, Cottonwood has provided a unique service for our older adults—The Cottonwood Retirement Center. Services at the Retirement Center are offered to persons-supported who have achieved their work goals and want new, relaxed, person-centered learning and leisure opportunities. Participants have access to art, music, recreational, wellness and social connection within the entire Lawrence community. As our lease was expiring at our current Retirement Center location, we found it necessary to find a new home for this very popular service. Such a relocation inevitably brought additional expenses as we adapted our new space for the needs of the persons-served here. Thanks to the generosity of our Cottonwood donors, we were able to meet our goal and provide a wonderful new space for our folks in Retirement Enrichment Services. Retirement Rocks!! Thank You All!!

Thank You!

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Ahlen
Dr. & Mrs. David Ambler
Mr. & Mrs. Darron Ammann
Ms. Mary Elizabeth Atwood
Mr. & Mrs. Dustin Baker
Ms. Jill Baker
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Ms. Cindy Williams
Ms. Katie Winter
Ms. Samantha Wo
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Wood
Ms. Michelle Young
Ms. Diane Zinn

Celebrate

Congratulations to these 2023 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
- Self Determination and Personal Growth
- Teamwork
- Community Partners
- Courtesy and Respect
- Support



1st Quarter
Linda Brandenburger
JobLink (Retired)



2nd Quarter
Jeanene Lathrom
Finance



3rd Quarter
Pam Richards
Cottonwood Industries



4th Quarter
Jane Bowers
JobLink

Why I Give...

Cottonwood has been a part of my life since 2008. I consider myself one lucky, thankful lady who has had the opportunity to be a part of Cottonwood's Mission statement, "We help people with disabilities shape their own future."

Recently, I discovered a 1959 KC Star newspaper article with a photo of my mom and me going door to door for the United Way. I was 2 ½ years old. I was taught from a very early age to help those in need and thank my mom for demonstrating what is important and thereby enriching my life which in turn enriches others.

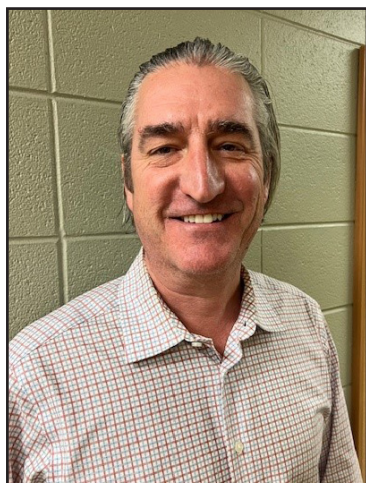
Helping the consumers long term at Cottonwood is my passion. Seeing their smiling faces, being with board members for events with consumers and knowing we have provided a more meaningful life for each consumer is the most satisfying feeling possible.

Even though I do not live in Lawrence anymore, my commitment toward Cottonwood is as strong as ever. Cottonwood is a great organization that cares deeply for each consumer. Watching the staff care and dedicate their lives to others is humbling. I believe we should all do our best to enrich the lives of others. Cottonwood has certainly provided this enrichment for persons-served! Both the Inc. board and the Foundation board members are very fortunate to be affiliated with Cottonwood. Please come visit Cottonwood today to learn how you can become involved!



-Nancy Longhurst, Cottonwood Foundation Board of Trustees

Shaping Futures



Welcome! New Cottonwood, Inc. Board Member

Adam Courtney has been with the KU Innovation Park for 10 years and was named the CEO in March, 2024. Adam and his wife, Melisa and their 3 children have been residents of the Lawrence community for 10 years. He enjoys golf, KU sports (of course!) and travel.

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



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



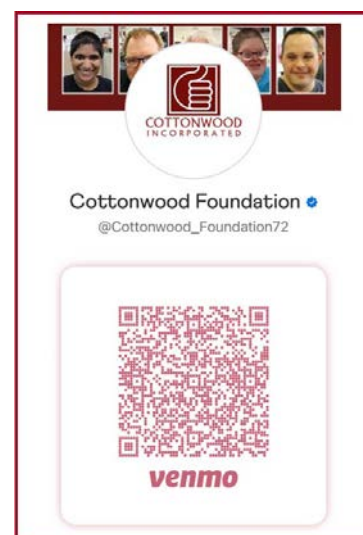
QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DEDUCTIONS
Individuals who've attained age 70 1/2 may make QCDs.



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.



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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 available:

- Medical, dental and vision
- KPERS Retirement
- Paid sick and vacation

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



Scan to see
available positions