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MCS FAMILY SUPPORT NEWS

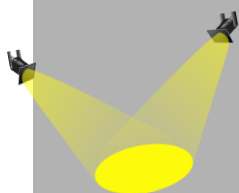


WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER!

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter! The newsletters are designed to share information about programs, trainings, and resources that are available to our MCS families. Feel free to contact your navigator with information and ideas you would like included in future issues. Thank you!

FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER

The Springfield Family Support program is pleased to announce that we will be moving to our new digs this month! We'll be occupying an area on the first floor of our 1000 Wilbraham Road office that is better suited for accessibility and accommodating agency activities for consumers, caregivers and community members. The new space includes a fully functioning kitchen for skills training and food preparation. There's also a large community room for activities, gatherings, conferences and trainings when Covid passes. The center is the result of the unwavering commitment of the MCS management team, our Board of Directors, and Leslie DesRoberts' grant writing efforts. We were delighted to receive grant awards from Chicopee Savings Charitable Foundation, an affiliate of Westfield Bank, The Community Foundation of Western MA, and the Beveridge Family Foundation, Inc. Stay tuned for information about our grand opening celebrations when it's safe to gather again.



HIGHLIGHT:

We want to hear from you! Let us know what you've been up to. Share your stories and accomplishments. Call or email your navigator if you'd like to be featured in an upcoming newsletter.

Meet the Team...

Dana Dansereau

This issue's highlighted staff person is someone who many of you already know... Dana Dansereau. Dana and his wife, Laura, have dedicated their lives to supporting individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. Dana is father to three wonderful adult children, Matthew, Jessica, and Mark. After 31 years with MCS in a variety of jobs including Family Advocate, Uniting Families for Change Coordinator, and case manager, Dana will be retiring from his current position as Group Respite Supervisor in January. The good news is that Dana will remain with MCS in a part-time capacity. The bad news is that means we will continue to be subjected to endless bad puns and dad jokes!



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MCSnet.org

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Meet this issue's pet:

My thought for this feature was to have a light-hearted way to introduce you to our furry family members. Little did I know that people's passion for their pets borders on hysteria! After a heated battle to show



off their adored animals, this issue's guest pet is Riley Paquette. Riley is a 7 year old golden retriever who brings sunshine and joy wherever he

goes. I may be a bit biased since I have had the privilege of being his babysitter since puppyhood whenever his people go away. Riley's mom is Mary Paquette, a Children's Navigator.



EVENTS:

One of the highlights of Family Support services is to provide a variety of fun activities and outings as much as possible. Obviously when Covid hit we had to re-evaluate how we could continue to offer social opportunities to our MCS families in a safe way. We hope to resume our usual array of in-person activities in the near future!



The ***HALLOWEEN GRAB AND GO*** was a huge success, even though the weather wasn't very cooperative. Many families drove through our parking lot and our staff were thrilled to distribute Halloween gift bags filled with all sorts of treats.



Through the generosity and dedication of our Family Support staff and the Autism Social Group, we are pleased to report that we donated over 50 **Thanksgiving baskets** to families in our programs.

ONLINE ACTIVITIES - Our group respite programs has been busy hosting safe activities both online and in person. Dana, Ivonne, Joe, Mina and Tony exhibited their creativity by offering Zoom activities like Bingo, movie nights, Trivia, Chopstick challenge, virtual painting and much more! Kudos to everyone for adapting to activities during the pandemic with grace and good humor.

RESOURCES & COMMUNITY UPDATES

As the pandemic grinds on, more and more families are struggling to put food on the table. Below is information about resources and assistance in your communities.

PROJECT BREAD 1-800-645-8333 projectbread.org

Food Assistance in 180 languages / Hotline Hours Mon-Fri 8 am – 7 pm and Sat 10 am – 2 pm
Counselors assist with finding out if you're eligible for SNAP (financial assistance for groceries) and help you apply, finding free meals for your kids in your community, learning about how to use HIP benefits, and more.

MOBILE FOOD BANK 413-247-9738

Provides fresh vegetables, fruit and other nutritious food **at no cost** to families in the community

Where: 947 Main Street, Springfield (between William Street & Hubbard Street)

When: The second and fourth Mondays of each month

Time: 2:00 pm – 2:45 pm

Please bring a bag or cart to carry your food.

The website **FOODPANTRIES.ORG** is an extremely helpful resource to locate assistance near you. The site breaks down support by town, and provides information on operating hours, necessary documentation, and type of service offered. Please call your Navigator if you need more information or assistance.

