



The Support Report



A COMMUNITY OF KINDNESS POWERED BY YOU

New Program Spotlight: Hobbies and Hangouts

Summer is the season for fun, and this past summer JARC went all in.

A new series of classes called Hobbies and Hangouts, a program of Making Community Connections, enables those served by JARC to learn new skills alongside people in the community. The inaugural, free summer program was a hit with persons served and the community alike, with classes including ceramics, line dancing, tai chi, sand art, jewelry making, and cooking.

Making Community Connections is a long-standing, donor-sponsored program, with the intention of linking people with disabilities and people without, to explore mutual interests and form friendships. This was exactly the outcome of Hobbies and Hangouts.

Community participant Linda Markowitz enjoyed the cooking, ceramics and line dancing classes, and made several new friends through the program.

“There are so many connections. I consider them my friends now, I really do. I enjoy being with all of them,”



Linda Markowitz

Linda said. One aspect of the classes that she enjoyed was the relaxed nature. “We all cracked up because we were having so much fun. There were no pretenses, just do what you feel like doing. It doesn’t matter what you wear, or what you look like – it’s awesome!”

While Linda has been involved with JARC for many years, the series was an introduction to JARC for some participants, like Lexi Smith.

Lexi learned about Hobbies and Hangouts through a Facebook group. She had never heard of JARC and was excited to get involved.

“I took tai chi, cooking, and ceramics. I had a great time!” said Lexi. “I loved the sense of community. Everyone was so kind and wanted to help each other out. I had so much fun interacting with people served by JARC and community members.”

Having enjoyed her experience, Lexi plans to stay involved with JARC and volunteer until next summer, when Hobbies and Hangouts returns.

There were 27 classes in total and planning for next summer’s classes has already begun!



Lexi Smith

If you’re interested in participating in Hobbies and Hangouts in the future, please contact Jessica Tierney at 248.940.2607 or jessicatierney@jarc.org.

Leading by Example

With 21 homes to operate, overseeing daily activity and wellness of persons served is no easy task, and JARC relies on its strong team of home managers to lead the charge.

One of these incredible managers is Stella Swift, who has been with JARC for 10 years and manager of the Meadow Home for two years. With 32 years of experience working in direct care, Stella is very passionate about working with adults with developmental disabilities.

“I love being able to care for persons served,” she said. For Stella, trust is an important part of her work. “Having them trust me makes my job that much more personal and important to me.” Not only is trust vital to her relationship with persons served, but it is also so important in her role as a manager.

“My team knows that I wouldn’t ask them to do anything that I wouldn’t do myself,” Stella said. “I don’t put myself above them. I’m always truthful and I make sure they have all the tools they need to be successful in their jobs.”

Direct care is physically and emotionally demanding work. Stella empathizes with her team and is always available to listen or help connect staff with resources.

“Being supportive of your team is key. I try to be that person you can approach with anything, any issue, either job-related or not. JARC has a good resource program where people can get help and I make sure my team knows that if they’re having a hard time.”

The positive attitudes of staff at the Meadow Home benefits JARC above and beyond the exceptional care of persons served in that home. These staff members are quick to step in when other homes need help filling a shift.

“I really like working for JARC because it’s a small organization and they really take care of persons served. I love that about JARC.” said Stella.



Stella Swift

If you or someone you know is looking for a career like Stella’s, please contact Jennifer at 248.940.2612 or jennifergoldstein@jarc.org.

Ensuring Independence with JARC

JARC is well known for its group homes, but they also provide staffing in more than 20 locations. One of those locations is a condominium, where Cathy has lived as part of the Independent Living Services (ILS) program for the past 11 years.

Prior to being served by JARC, Cathy lived with her parents Jorge and Donna. As Cathy grew into a young woman, her parents wanted to encourage her to be more independent. They went so far as to ensure that they had a floor in their home only for Cathy, which functioned as



Cathy Pacheco

her apartment. She had her own kitchen, living space, and laundry. While that space was great for Cathy and she learned so much and enjoyed it, Jorge and Donna knew it was not a long-term solution. They ultimately decided to provide a condo for Cathy to live, and JARC began to provide services through ILS.

Cathy can live on her own with support from ILS, as needed. Her staff person, Cindy, sees her three times each week and cooks with her, takes her shopping, helps to schedule appointments, and assists with anything else she may need. The two get along well and enjoy each other's company.

"I love Cindy!" Cathy exclaimed. "We help each other when one of us has a bad day."

Cathy is 53 years-old and very social. She enjoys working for Kroger bagging groceries, and her coworkers enjoy having her as part of the team. She also loves to see the friends she has made through being a part of JARC. Cathy and the other individuals who JARC serves appreciate the important opportunity to connect and create friendships within the JARC community, especially all the unique social activities and celebrations she has the option to partake in.

This summer alone, Cathy participated in an interactive drumming event, outdoor story time, concerts, Bingo, and four Hobbies and Hangouts classes: sand art painting, jewelry making, line dancing, and cooking. While she did activities via Zoom throughout the pandemic, she was grateful to enjoy outdoor, in-person activities this summer.

"The story time event was great. Better in person than on Zoom," she said. She also enjoyed an outdoor performance by Raw Silk. "That event was cool. I liked that. He's a great dancer!" Socializing is very important to Cathy, and she enjoys seeing her friends at JARC events.

Donna credits JARC staff with Cathy's independence. Cathy's first JARC staff member was with her for many years and "got her on the right track."

Now, years later, Donna is glad that JARC provides so many evening programs to keep Cathy engaged, and that JARC staff ensures that she gets there and has an enjoyable experience.

To learn more about JARC, visit us at jarc.org.

The year has been packed with activities for persons served. This is due in part to the generosity of matching gift donors, Laura and James Sherman, who established the Ellen Labes Festival Series. The Series kicked off with two private events: a sensory-friendly concert by members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and a separate interactive drumming event. Following those activities, The Shermans created a \$100,000 matching gift so that others who share their passion could double their impact. The total raised for the series was more than \$200,000!

In addition to the new series, JARC hosted numerous other activities this year including concerts, adaptive biking, Bingo, a visit from therapy dogs, storytelling, and so much more. These programs would not have been possible without your generosity. Thank you!



To support JARC programs, please visit jarc.org/give or call us at 248.940.2617.

