



Of Special Interest

Due to COVID, MRSI's newsletter stopped for most of the year. Our employees had to focus on keeping themselves and individuals safe. As this pandemic changed and restrictions began being lifted, we felt that our employees had a little bit of time to write an article so we started it back up again. We hope to make this newsletter quarterly again!



A Letter from the CEO

At MRSI sometimes we talk about situations that have occurred over the years. We've dealt with deaths, blizzards, ice storms, tornados, HINI and the staffing crisis to name a few. Many times we find ourselves saying, "You can't make this stuff up" when something does happen. I have to say in all my years at MRSI, this pandemic tops it all. I remember March 18th like it was just yesterday, not 6 months ago, as that is the day we closed both of our ADS programs down. We immediately transitioned our ADS staff into all of our homes so individuals would continue to receive high quality care. We were placed in a position that visitors were restricted as well as all community activities were canceled following Ohio Department of Health orders. We began health screenings each day on all individuals we serve. We also began health screenings on each employee prior to having them work. Agency wide staff were informed vacations were suspended so we could ensure the individuals would receive high quality care. Basically it has been all hands on deck since March.

What I can tell you is MRSI has some amazing staff and volunteers. From Administration, Program Directors, Nurses, Coordinators, to DSPs, everyone is giving their all to keep the individuals we serve safe. MRSI Board of Directors have been supportive of all the measures we have put in place to ensure everyone stays safe.

Contents

Mercer ADS	2	Of all our employees, I want to take a few moments and talk about our DSPs and our Home Coordinators. For a long time, MRSI has said DSPs are the Hero's in this field. I believe they continue to demonstrate this during the pandemic. Our DSPs and Coordinators have adapted well to all the changes our agency put in place. It was not easy for our ADS staff to transition 100% into the homes for three months. Likewise it took our home staff some time to get used to ADS staff being in the homes. Our Coordinators have been working at least 95% of their time providing direct care to the individuals we serve. Yet, these employees have made it work. They are keeping the individuals safe and happy. While some of ODH orders have relaxed and our ADS locations have opened back up this in itself can cause some fear and anxiety as the virus is still here and employees understand how quickly it could enter one of our sites. At the same time employees are finding a way to handle all the changes and still keep people safe.
Van Wert ADS	2	
Gay St.	3	
How to Stay Healthy	3	
Medical Myths	4	
DSP Appreciation Week	4	
Wayne St Group Home	5	
Linden Dr.	6	

The music group, Chumbawamba, released a song in 1997 called Tubthumping. The song starts out, "I get knocked down, but I get up again, you are never gonna keep me down". I think this is very true for MRSI and our staff right now as this virus has knocked us down but we just keep getting up instead of being held down.

-Janelle Wehrman, CEO



Mercer ADS

In June, the ADS was able to reopen to with a smaller group. We started our return slowly, focusing on inside activities. Recently we have started to go on outdoor adventures. The clients are enjoying taking walks up to the lake and downtown Celina. We also have visited several parks

in the area. In August we went to Pla Mor Adventure golf to enjoy a little putt-putt golf and take out lunch from the bowling alley. We also enjoyed a trip to Kendrick Woods where we were able to explore in the woods thanks to the all persons path. After exploring in the

woods, clients enjoyed lunch from Arby's. We look forward to continuing to enjoy the outdoors and nice weather.

- Jennifer Bishop, Mercer ADS Director



Van Wert ADS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Van Wert ADS was closed for three months. ADS staff worked in MRSI homes during the shutdown. In mid-June, we started STEP services in the form of virtual ADS. This is a great and safe opportunity for ADS members to use technology to socialize, work on skills such as budgeting and grocery shopping, learn sign language, go on tours, play games, do activities and crafts, and exercise. Near the end of June, Van Wert ADS was able to start resuming facility-based services. Following state guidance, we have made two ADS pods that we call Blue ADS and Yellow ADS. The pods are made of limited numbers of ADS members and staff to ensure COVID precautions such as social distancing. ADS staff have went above and beyond to keep ADS members safe, including donating individual craft and activity packs for each person, purchasing and creating meaningful lessons and items that will help everyone have some fun, and assuming extra cleaning duties. I am so thankful for our ADS DSPs (Jazzlynn, Shree, Skylar, Lexi, and Carlette) and all they do for the individuals we serve.

Van Wert ADS members have worked on activities to learn about COVID safety, social justice and race, sign language, using coupons for grocery shopping, separating clothes for laundry, kindness and empathy, and cultures from around the world, among many other topics. They have resumed daily exercise classes and work on making healthy choices. We are looking forward to going on outdoor outings as Troop ADS, earning our local hiking and nature badges, and hopefully resuming some safe volunteer projects. State regulations still limit the number of ADS members and staff we can have each day, so we ask for your patience as we are waiting for the state to allow us to open up more fully to all those who would like to attend.



Francie Carmain, VW ADS Director

Gay St.

Both of the ladies living in the Gay St. home had birthdays earlier in the year. One birthday was in February and the other in July! Over the summer, the ladies had a great time sharing their fun and encouraging painted rocks with the Van Wert Community. The ladies also got to get out and enjoy the sunshine and fresh air.



They were able to visit a sunflower field and enjoy some meals and time outdoors.

-Jeneane Garwood,
Home Coordinator



How to Stay Healthy During the Pandemic

1. Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with warm water and soap, especially after touching common shared objects like elevator buttons, doorknobs, telephone handsets, etc. You can use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
2. Try fist bumps instead of handshakes or high fives when appropriate. Use your knuckles for keypads, doorbells, elevator buttons, etc.

3. Cover your cough or sneeze. Use a tissue, your elbow, or inside your shirt. Throw used tissues away immediately and don't forget to wash your hands promptly.

4. Avoid touching your face, eyes, or mouth.

5. Limit contact with those infected with the flu or other illnesses when possible. If you are sick, stay home to rest if they are sick.

6. It may help to sanitize common home or work surfaces with EPA-approved

disinfectants, diluted bleach water, soap. These viruses are fragile in the environment but can survive on certain surfaces for a limited time.

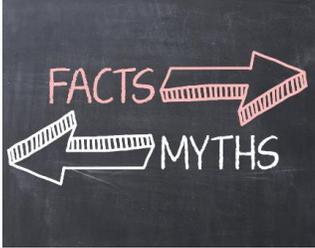
7. Keep your immune system working strong by ensuring proper and adequate sleep, nutrition and exercise.

8. In the case of COVID-19, we also recommend you avoid unnecessary travel and crowds.

Shannon Heindel, RN



Medical Myths



Myth: reading in dim light ruins eyesight.

Fact: dim light makes it harder to focus, causing eye strain and maybe a headache. It will not cause lasting damage.

Myth: Shaving causes hair to grow back faster or coarser.

Fact: Shaved hair does not have the fine taper of unshaved hair, therefore it appears coarser.

Myth: Eating turkey at thanksgiving makes people drowsy.

Fact: While turkey does contain Tryptophan, the chemical that causes sleepiness, it's the combination of foods and the amount that is consumed that is to blame for the Drowsiness.

Myth: Hair and fingernails continue to grow after death.

Fact: Dehydration can make the skin shrink back from the hair and nails, making them look longer.

Myth: Rings are worn on the ring finger because it has a vein that leads to the heart.

Fact: all fingers in the hand have a similar vein structure and none of them lead directly to the heart.

Wanda Fields, RN



DSP Appreciation Week

Every year in September, we take a week to show our appreciation to the DSPs who work hard day in and day out to ensure that the individuals we serve are receiving high quality care and are having a fulfilling life. DSP Appreciation week runs from September 13-19 this year! MRSI appreciates all that our DSPs do. They are the real heroes in this field. Our employees appreciated some

recognition from the Van Wert County Board of DD. The VWCBD gave each Van Wert employee a yard sign thanking the employees for their heart and hard work. MRSI employees Jessica Francis and Jeneane Garwood were lucky enough to win a gift card from the Van Wert County Board. The Mercer County Board of DD celebrated DSPs early and gave all of the Mercer County DSPs fair passes to

attend the Mercer County Fair this year! Governor DeWine also put out a video with some kind words about DSPs all around Ohio. MRSI also wants to extend a thank you and show our appreciation to all of our employees! Our DSPs are truly the heartbeat of this agency. We couldn't do any of this without them!



Wayne St. Group Home

Wayne Street Group Home has gone through many changes with the outbreak of COVID-19. We have not been able to take the residents out for any activities, but we did have a Cinco de Mayo and several birthday parties at the group home. In July we were able to begin outside family visits so that the residents are

able to reconnect with their families. ADS has also restarted in the group home on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays beginning September 15, 2020. This is going to allow the residents an opportunity to work on Life Skills and other activities that they can participate in. We at Wayne Street Group

Home would like to thank all of our DSPs for all of the hard work and dedication they have shown during this difficult time. THANK YOU!!!

-Tacey Blakeley,
Program Director



Staff and Individual Spotlights



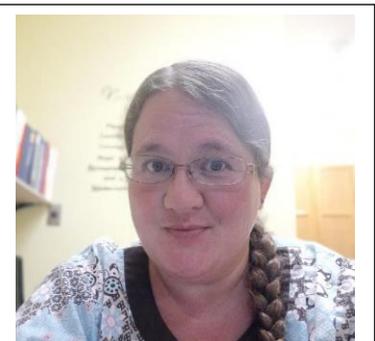
Autumn Armstrong

Autumn started working with MRSI in Sept. 2018. She is an excellent employee who frequently goes above and beyond the call of duty. Autumn has volunteered her time to help with extra ADS outings, such as: the Grand Lake Marathon, the Chili Cook-off and the trip to the Fort Wayne Ballet. She takes the time to have conversations with them. She takes the time to get to know who they are, not just what services they need. Autumn keeps the atmosphere at the ADS fun and light. She brings joy to the clients' day with her craft ideas and sense of humor. Autumn is a wonderful part of the MRSI team!



Katerine S.

MRSI would like to spotlight Katerine. Katerine started attending the ADS in August of 2020. She brings a lot of energy and laughter to the ADS. Katerine enjoys keeping busy during the day. She love to be outside enjoying the sunshine and talking with friends. She is also a very talented artist creating many crafts to decorate the ADS. Katerine is also a champion at tic-tac-toe, frequently starting up games with everyone. We are very grateful to get to spend our days with her.



Jennifer Gilkey

Jennifer is an all-around great person and employee. She is fantastic with all the residents. She has developed positive relationships with them and all her co-workers. Van Wert County is extremely lucky to have her on our team. She helps with anything and everything, whenever she can. She makes sure that the residents all have the care that they need. She also helps with covering shifts on the floor when she can. She takes on a lot and handles it very well. We need more people like her!!!

Linden Dr.

Linden Drive ladies are starting to get out into the community and doing it safely. Staff have been trying to be creative with the outings to ensure we are all staying safe and healthy. Linden has been personal shopping locally. The ladies found a love of visiting the drive in theater to watch some oldies but goodies. Due to many eating establishments being closed for inside dining the ladies have had supper outdoors a few times which they enjoyed. Chris also just celebrated her birthday on September 15th.



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