



*Seeking Employment, Equality and Community for
People with Developmental Disabilities*

SEEC E-News

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What's Up with Services?!

A monthly update on re-envisioning SEEC services post pandemic

By Sherry Beamer, Director of Services



Of our four programs, Community Engagement was the one that shifted the most during the pandemic. The people we support and the staff who support them quickly transitioned from spending their days volunteering, working, taking classes, exercising, socializing, etc. to continuing this on computers in creative ways. This experience found us all re-thinking person-centered supports together.

At the end of May, we held a “Visioning Lab” of 15 people supported, families, and a variety of staff to expand the planning of returning to service. This session was facilitated by Donne Allen who is the joint leader with me in this process. We answered questions from our past and present experiences about what supports and doesn’t support the SEEC vision. Key themes that we are focusing on from the Lab are:

- Supports for the person and relationship building not focused on places
- Quality service plans developed for each person based on SEEC values
- Stable, trained, and empowered staff

Now that half the country is vaccinated with more getting vaccinated each day, our communities are starting to re-open. Our Community Engagement pilot to return to in-person support is increasing from 3 people to include another 15 with the lessons we have learned to date. Described below are those key lessons.

Neighborhood Based Schedule of Service

We start in the person’s neighborhood to understand opportunities, connections and transportation to building a service schedule. Sometimes this has included support in the person’s home. Timing is important for this schedule because many open businesses require reservations for timed entry that require pre-planning.

Group Learning

We are rebuilding classes with a trial schedule of four week options on career development and relationships. Because we are needing to relearn what is available in communities and when, this will provide us with some schedule stability and the opportunity to launch skill building practices in neighborhoods after class.

We plan to continue the “Visioning Lab” as an ongoing guidance group to re-envision our services. We are looking for more interested people we support and family members to join us. If you are interested joining the guidance group, contact Donne Allen at dallen@seeonline.org.

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Cathy Dirksen is Retiring!



Thank you to Cathy Dirksen for her 18 plus years with SEEC! Below is her letter to all SEEC staff that was sent at the end of May. Please join us in wishing Cathy all the best as she and Geoff enjoy their golden years together.

Dear SEEC Staff,

I will retire from SEEC effective May 31 after more than 15 years as Director of Communications and Development, and 3 years as a contractor working on grants – a baby step I took before making this life-changing decision.

It is impossible for me to express how impactful my work with all of you has been for me. So many friendships made, and milestones celebrated, - marriages, the birth babies, birthdays, work anniversaries, career advancements, and so much more. Not to mention all the accomplishments of the people we support made possible by YOU!

My time with SEEC represents approximately 20% of my time on the planet. The best years of my professional life. I am grateful for my role in contributing to the growth and innovation of this amazing organization since 2002. But, most of all, I appreciate the joy I have experienced working with you and having a front-row view of the difference you make in other people’s lives.

Love and air hugs to you all!
Cathy Dirksen

A Big Thank You to Compass ProBono

By Steve Blanks, Director of Partnerships

SEEC has had the good fortune to engage with Compass ProBono for a second time these past few months. As you may recall, back in 2019-early 2020, SEEC worked on a

Microproject with a team focused on developing our board. Out of that engaging project, we have launched a focused Governance Committee, who has a new mission to ‘take care’ of the board, the members and the board’s role and purpose.

This committee is headed by our Past President, Seth Kaplan, and meets monthly with the goal to ensure an engaged and sustainable board of directors to lead the agency in the future.



SEEC’s second project with Compass ProBono started during the COVID pandemic back in October 2020. A team of 9 business professionals engaged with the SEEC Executive team and our Board over the course of 8 months to complete a Decision-Making project. The focus of this project was to assist SEEC in the development of easy-to-use, comprehensive tools to help in future decision-making efforts. The focus of the decision areas were Growth and Partnerships, Alternative Fundraising and Real Estate.

The Compass ProBono team worked hand in hand with teams of SEEC Executives and Board members to hone some incredibly detailed tools which will serve the agency in moving forward past the pandemic as we make strategic decisions in these three areas. Specifically, SEEC will be able to make effective decisions more nimbly as it relates to growth opportunities, such as new services areas or geographies, as it relates to expanding the streams of revenues that support programs funds and as it relates to how we use our office facilities in a post-pandemic, more hybrid work environment.

A huge thank you to the Compass ProBono team, led by Lisa Gaffney and Lena Rice, for their hard work and dedication to learning about SEEC, and then devising incredibly useful tools to ensure our continued success in challenging times. Their counsel throughout the past eight months has been invaluable, and we hope to continue to engage with some of the team members in a variety of ways in the foreseeable future.

Mark Your Calendars for FootGolf 2021



We are excited to announce that SEEC’s 4th Annual FootGolf event will take place on Saturday, September 25th from 12-4p at the Sligo Creek Golf Course and will be presented by HUB, the World’s Largest Privately Owned Insurance Broker. We encourage attendees to form their own teams and we will have a play-from-home option again this year.

If you’d like more information on the event or are interested in becoming a sponsor, please contact Katrina at kkugel@seeonline.org.



2:00 P M | June 24 2021 | Via zoom

PROJECT SEARCH

CLASS OF 2021

VIRTUAL GRADUATION



Project | SEARCH®



Please join us as we proudly celebrate the graduation of our

Project SEARCH - Hilton
Capital Area Region
Class of 2021

Friday, June 25, 2021
Begins @ 10:00 am
Graduation Ceremony
Virtual Ceremony to be held on
Microsoft Teams



Public Benefits and Work

By Veronica Lawrence, Public Benefits Coordinator

Public Benefits are not an ambition, but a means for a better future for people with disabilities who want to work and live an independent life. Many Americans with disabilities depend on public assistance for their basic needs, so benefits serve a crucial role in providing the much-needed safety net for millions of people. To qualify for public benefits, one must have a low income. The federal poverty guidelines for a person in the United States is \$1,073 in 2021, which means income below \$1,073 for a month is considered living in poverty.

The great news is that work can be a bridge above poverty. Work not only allows you to earn money, but it is also a great way to connect with people, develop relationships, build confidence, give a sense of purpose, and provide structure and routine. Working allows you to use your talents to contribute to your community, thus enabling a sense of identity and stability.

TYPES OF PUBLIC BENEFITS

Public benefits provide critical support for people with disabilities in two ways. Social insurance programs are health benefits that provide health care coverage, and Social welfare programs are cash benefits to pay for basic needs like food, shelter cost, and utilities. Benefits received from social welfare programs are usually based on low-income means-tested eligibility criteria. These programs include Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Housing Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance (GA), etc.

Benefits received from social welfare programs are generally based on eligibility criteria such as age, employment status, or being a veteran. These social insurance programs are Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Survivors Benefits, Unemployment Insurance Compensation, Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits. Medicaid is also known as Medical Assistance, and Medicare is the most common health care program for people with disabilities.

Although all these cash and health benefits work a little differently, they support work. Therefore, it is essential to learn how these benefits can be used as a bridge to work and achieve a full productive life. Social Security accomplishes this by using a special rule called work incentives. Work incentives help you get benefits while working, keep your benefits longer while working, and help you get back on your benefits quickly even when you reach the break-even point and need to get back on cash benefits.

The Public Benefit Help Desk is here to support you in all you need to know, how to apply and how work affects benefits. Reach out to the Public Benefits Help Desk for more information on work incentives and other benefits needs. Contact Veronica Lawrence at vlawrence@seeonline.org.

Volunteer Spotlight: Patricia Dubroof, Director of Community Relations, Assisting Hands Home Care

“I was drawn to SEEC through the Project Search internship program. It's a win win. I receive the much needed help I require, and I volunteer to help my intern learn and grow. Getting to know the participant, learning about her abilities and strengths and how I can help her navigate the work world is what I have enjoyed the most about volunteering with SEEC. I love working with her coaches as well and learn so much from them! I would say to a prospective volunteer that volunteering



with SEEC is so supportive. They make the expectations transparent and doable. The timing is flexible and works well with my schedule.

Thanks to Assisting Hands work from home status, I was able to connect with a wonderful intern, Katharine who was interested in learning a new skill and supporting my LinkedIn networking on social media. Through an incredibly supportive onboarding experience, her coach Meghan and I created templates and systems to make the work clearly defined and accessible for Katharine, my intern. She is so capable and ready to learn new things. I am so impressed with her results that I am hoping she will want to work with me far into the future. That will not limit me to working with a new participant for other projects, if asked. I also love volunteering with the Hang Out groups and Job Club to talk about being an artist and using art as a healing modality. And of course, I'm always happy to talk with families about our ability to offer respite care to families through Assisting Hands Home Care. My work as an artist and Director of Community Relations offers me the unique possibility of reaching out to our diverse community on many levels. Thank you SEEC for supporting my dual career path."

Interested in learning more about volunteering with SEEC?

Sign up to grab an in person or virtual coffee with Ethan, our new Volunteer Coordinator!

[SIGN UP HERE](#)

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