



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

SEEC E-News

April 2022 | Issue Forty-two

What's Up with Services?!

A Monthly Update on Re-envisioning SEEC Services Post Pandemic

By Sherry Beamer, Director of Services



Stories of our neighborhood-based supports are taking shape. Here is one of my favorite stories to give you an idea of how neighborhood walks are opportunities for the people we support and their DSP to find joy around them, while uncovering and affirming their gifts and talents:

Mercedes, Community Engagement Coach, suggested to Graham and Jessica that they could do something for the people they see and interact with the most in their community in Silver Spring. So, Graham and Jessica suggested writing Christmas cards for them. Mercedes asked Graham and Jessica what they liked about the people they see and know; their reply was “they are nice and always smile.” Mercedes helped draft a message they included in the cards: “Thank you for being a friendly smile in our community”.

Jessica and Graham made a list of the people they wanted to give the cards to in their community:

- The Starbucks staff on Ellsworth, including Keith, whom Graham knows from high school,
- Regal Theater ticket taker,
- Silver Spring Library staff,
- MOD Pizza Manager Harry, and
- Angelo, the maintenance man at the apartments next to the library where they wait for the Metro Access van.



The week before Christmas, Graham and Jessica decorated and delivered the cards. Graham and Jessica received joy, hugs and other positive feedback in return for giving the cards.

This story illustrates how neighborhood-based supports at SEEC explore the gifts people offer to their community, and others receive them which creates deep human and social connections. Our next step is to map the information like this for each person so we can discover how to leverage those connections to broaden their circle of people in their lives. For example, Keith from Starbucks is a dynamic, energetic connector who knows just about everyone who walks into the Ellsworth Starbucks, we want to know how to leverage Grahams connection to Keith to broaden Graham's circle. In addition to these mapping exercises, we are re-testing a software application called Miro that allows us to easily build maps for each neighborhood where the people we support live, that includes photos and videos of people met in the neighborhood walk project. We'll continue to bring you these stories as they unfold.

Inside This Issue

- What's Up with Services?
- Charting the LifeCourse Benefits Us All
- Volunteer Corner
- SEEC 2022 Gala Update: "Growing Connections" and Raising Funds!
- Wellness Corner
- April is Financial Literacy Month!
- Employment Outreach Team Update

Charting the LifeCourse Benefits Us All

By [Donné Settles Allen](#), Director of Projects and Charting the LifeCourse Framework Ambassador

Many of us may be familiar with Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) through person-centered planning (PCP) meetings or through completing a one-page profile for yourself or the people we support. Charting the Life Course is a tool to help people with disabilities, their families and those close to them create a vision for the future. CtLC was developed by the University of Missouri Kansas City, and has become a tool for people with disabilities and their families across the country. CtLC's core belief is that "all people have the right to live, love, work, play and pursue their life aspirations". This framework recognizes that both people who provide support and people who require support can all thrive. Within the CtLC are **8 core principles and values** that shape the mindset of the framework. They include the following concepts (linked):



1. [Focusing on All People](#)
2. [Recognizing the Person Within the Context of Their Family](#)
3. [Trajectory of Life Experience Across the Lifespan](#)
4. [Achieving Life Outcomes](#)
5. [Holistic Focus Across Life Domains](#)
6. [Supporting the Three Buckets of Need](#)

7. Integrated Services Supports Across the LifeCourse

8. Transformational Policy and Systems Change

Each principle provides the narrative for having different conversations, encouraging high expectations for the people we support and ourselves and allows the user various opportunities for integrating a variety of support options. CtLC is a complementary learning system that we can use at SEEC for enhancing the ways that we currently provide support. If you have CtLC questions, feel free to reach out to me at dallen@seeonline.org. Stay tuned for more information on this fantastic tool and how SEEC will be using it into the future.

Volunteer Corner

We Love Our Volunteers!



volunteer@seeonline.org

We are celebrating Volunteer Appreciation Month at SEEC by recognizing the 100+ volunteers who have supported our mission in a variety of ways. Volunteers at SEEC participate in mock interviews, facilitate virtual classes, or serve on committees. Our volunteers have been instrumental in the ongoing success of the people we support and our staff. To honor their commitment and dedication, SEEC is inviting all our volunteers on **April 28th** for a ***Volunteer Appreciation Event.***

For more information about the special event and to learn about ways to volunteer at SEEC, please reach out to Ethan Litvin elitvin@seeonline.org.

SEEC 2022 Gala Update: "Growing Connections" and Raising Funds!

Our SEEC Gala 2022 "Growing Connections" was a tremendous success! On Saturday, April 2nd, for the first time since 2019, 200 sponsors and their guests gathered in person. They were joined by more supporters online, including a watch party made up of staff and people we support. We are thrilled to announce that not only did we meet our financial goals, but we exceeded them, breaking all of our past records. We were entertained by SEEC's very own Annabel Hunter, who is an accomplished pianist and James Garcia, a talented singer from our community who virtually serenaded the crowd with "What a Wonderful World". There were few dry eyes in the house as these two artists performed. We also heard three stories of how growing connections helped the people SEEC supports thrive during these challenging times. Don't miss the inspiring videos featuring **Ava, Sam, and Devaughn!** We sincerely appreciate everyone's amazing support and look forward to seeing you next year! Thank you!



Wellness Corner



Easing stress during uncertain times (Full article and additional advice on the Kaiser Permanente Website:

<http://kp.org/stressmanagement>):

Putting others **first** can often mean putting yourself last. But no one can be at their best when their own needs aren't being met. Over time, the stress that comes with taking care of loved ones can take a toll on your mental health. That's why taking time to nurture yourself is so important.

Adopt Daily Small Habits

Daily, small self-care habits like moving our bodies, eating well, and practicing self-compassion and gratitude can help us reset, refresh, and release the feel-good brain chemicals that fight the effects of stress.

Open Your Mind to Meditation

Mediation can help calm your nerves, quiet your thoughts and help you be more mindful in the moment.

Gets Your ZZZZs

Be sure to unplug from screens at least 30 minutes before bedtime and aim for the recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep per night for optimal stress busting.

April is Financial Literacy Month!

It is the perfect time to explore resources to learn more about developing healthy financial habits and achieving your savings goals. As a first step in your journey, you can **visit**:



- The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)'s **financial toolkit**.
- The foundation for financial planning online platform matches pro-bono financial planners with people in need of financial advice and planning. Learn more **here**.

Employment Outreach Team Update

By Pam Toole, Lead Employer Outreach Consultant

The world is opening back up and SEEC's Employer Outreach team (EOT) is poised for opportunities to connect with local employers. The pandemic shifted many to virtual and hybrid work models, and industries have shifted too. In-office administrative support positions are much harder to find today, but even so, unmet business needs in record management, data entry and light administration continue. IT, shipping and health sciences are areas of growth, and restaurants, markets, and custom food businesses are looking to hire urgently as we all go out to dine again. Venues and museums are also gearing up for crowds and events. SEEC's EOT is talking to all of them!



If you know of a business or industry experiencing staffing challenges, please contact

Pam Toole at (ptool@seeonline.org) and we will follow up with your warm lead. More often, businesses are contacting us directly to help them solve their staffing needs, and some have reached us right through our website employer page at www.seeonline.org/employment!! As we all know, the people SEEC supports have a lot to offer businesses of any size and industry!

Retention

Did you know that these are some of our employer outreach talking points?

- Pre-screened Candidates
- Higher Retention Rates
- On-The-Job Support
- Positive Workplace Culture

And now, *Only A Few of The EOT's Recent Highlights:*

- **National Assemblers, Inc. (NAI)** is currently working with us to interview, hire and train people to assemble bikes, grills, and picnic tables for stores like Lowes and Walmart. This is a local pilot program between SEEC and NAI, who hired someone we support in March and is interviewing more candidates this spring. A huge thank you to **Katie Smeltz** of the EOT for developing this niche relationship!
- Through collaboration with a sister agency in Chicago, Jewish Child & Family Services (JCFS), we are now connected to a national restaurant company, **Lettuce Entertain You**, which owns seven restaurants in the DMV. One of those is **Joe's Seafood** on 15th Street, NW where two people SEEC supports were recently hired.
- **The Washingtonian Marriott** recently partnered with us to host a small job fair. The General Manager has experience managing employees with disabilities and very supportive through the interview and job trial process, which resulted in another hire for someone we support.
- Our mentorship pilot with **National Geographic** is now in its second session. Some mentors/mentees continued from the first fall session and some new pairings began in February. An on-site celebration is being planned for June.
- A big shout out to some of our amazing partners who have been providing both internship and employment opportunities – **Dawson's Market (Rockville & Dupont)**, **King Street Oyster Bar (Park Potomac & NoMa)**, **Spirit Club**, **Tony & Joe's**, **The Cambria Rockville & Cambria DC**, **REDI**, and **DQH Consulting!**

301.576.9000 | www.seeonline.org

