



NEWSLETTER

Seeking Employment, Equality and Community
for People with Developmental Disabilities

April 2023

From the Desk of Karen Lee, SEEC's CEO

Dear Friends,

Have you seen the recently released 2023 World Down Syndrome Day **video**?

It's called **"Ridiculous excuses not to be Inclusive"** and pokes fun at the barriers erected that prevent full inclusion of people with disabilities. The video highlights the need for everyone to be recognized, valued, and included in society.

The concept of belonging and membership is integral to social justice as well. It is the second guidepost of the Community Life Engagement Framework developed by the University Boston, Institute on Community Inclusion (ICI), titled **"Promote Community Membership"**.

At SEEC, **we believe that one of the fastest ways to achieve a sense of belonging is through work.** When the people we support are employed, they have a clear role in society and a sense of purpose. Volunteering is another way people build new connections.

By volunteering, people can help others and contribute to their communities. **This is critical in building social capital, another important guidepost of the Community Life Engagement Framework.**

Work and **volunteerism** are just some of the ways to **belong**. People we support participate in meetings, clubs, sports, and classes. These activities allow them to meet new people, form connections, and develop relationships.

Families and staff can be crucial in facilitating these connections and supporting people as they build their social capital. **At SEEC, we can also count on volunteers from the community** who dedicate their time and talent to support our mission by joining mock interview sessions, sharing their professional experience, and joining other activities throughout the year.

Let's celebrate and recognize the achievements of the people we support when they belong and build social capital because this is how they can lead fulfilling and meaningful lives!

Cheers,
Karen



Project Search Intern Ryan receiving a certificate of appreciation from Councilman Will Jawando



Eniola entering data at work



Lindsey volunteering at the Arc Thrift Store

If you know people in your network interested in volunteering at SEEC, please reach out to Ethan Litvin at elitvin@seeonline.org. If your workplace is interested in hiring people SEEC supports, contact Pam Toole at ptool@seeonline.org who leads the Employment Outreach Team at SEEC.

Top Things to Know this Month

- SEEC attended and presented at the **Neurodiversity in the Workplace Conference** hosted by the Kennedy Krieger Institute.
- SEEC organized several successful **mock interview sessions** for the people we support in March.
- **Twelve new SEEC DSPs graduated from the DSPII training on March 16th, 2023.**
- SEEC is a **Giant Food Community Bag proceeds recipient** and will receive **\$1 from every \$2.50** reusable Community Bag sold during April 2023 at Giant Food, 1280 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD. Let's shop at this Giant and show some love from the SEEC's community!
- Three articles written by SEEC staff were featured in the **latest issue of Impact, a publication of the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration**. Karen Lee, Donné Allen (SEEC's Director of Projects) and her son, Assante Allen, Hallem Martin (a former Project SEARCH participant), Courtney Murray (employment consultant with SEEC) all contributed to the latest issue of **Impact** with three excellent articles on the topic of diversity and inclusion.
- SEEC will host its **annual Volunteer Appreciation Event at the new SEEC offices on April 18th.**
- SEEC is looking to learn more about families' experience receiving services. **You will receive a survey in mid-May in your email.** We appreciate hearing from our community and value the feedback!
- **SEEC's new office ribbon cutting will happen at 10a on May 9th for anyone who would like to join us.** Contact Katrina Kugel at kkugel@seeonline.org to RSVP.
- SEEC Limitless Gala is just around the corner. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year. Time to **purchase** admission tickets, raffle tickets or sponsor if you haven't done so yet! If you can't join us, **please donate!** <https://onecau.se/seecgala2023>

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