



michael dunn
center

Now You Know

the staff newsletter

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edited by
Roger Richmond

FAREWELL

Mike McElhinney

This will be my final newsletter article for "Now You Know", our quarterly employee newsletter, since I will be retiring June 30th. By my count I have written 54 articles in the almost 14 years I have been at Michael Dunn Center.

Fifty four articles sounds like a lot of writing until you stop and think that the newsletter has been published by Roger Richmond for many, many years before I ever started at MDC, and will likely be published for many, many more years after I depart.

It is even less of a feat when you consider that Roger himself has always written an article for every newsletter, and in addition he has had the monumental task of soliciting, editing, laying out and proofreading all of these newsletters.

So my writing a few articles is really just a drop in the bucket when you look at the big picture and all the time, energy and talent Roger has invested in the employee newsletter. So thank you, Roger, for faithfully writing and producing an outstanding employee newsletter of the highest quality every quarter.

And thanks to all of you, my co-workers, for your patience and support of me this past 13-plus years. It has always been a joy to come to work each day at Michael Dunn Center, because I know there are 329 other people joining me in doing this work supporting people, because of our shared belief in the great importance of our mission.

Thanks to all of you, my co-workers, Michael Dunn Center has been the best job I have ever had and the best place I have ever worked. I will miss all of you, and the people we support, very, very much!

Under Michael Butler's leadership the sky is the limit of what can and will happen in the future. God bless all of you!



DID YOU KNOW?

Our best source of applicant referrals has long been our employees.

Michael Dunn Center will pay \$250 to any current employee that refers a person that is hired and completes six months of employment.

An additional \$250 will be paid if that employee completes one year successfully.

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END OF AN ERA, START OF ANOTHER

Roger Richmond

June 30th marks the end of Mike McElhinney's 'tour of duty' at MDC and July 1st begins that of Michael Butler. As has been a theme of this column many times, things change and things stay the same. With every change of leadership, the agency has both progressed and stayed true to the roots upon which it was founded. We've done new and better things and followed new opportunities, all while continuing the same dedication for the people we support as when Michael Dunn Center began, so many years ago.

Mike restructured senior management to streamline leadership and create a level of oversight that hadn't previously existed. During his tenure, we not only participated in Person Centered Organization training, we fully embraced the concept to become the strongly Person Centered agency we are today.

Under his leadership, we provided numerous management training opportunities, using national level facilitators and trainers to conduct a number of multi-part seminars. These were typically presented as one-day-per-month sessions over several months. The seminars addressed topics such as Basic Management, Communication Skills, Time Management, Stress Management, and other essential management-related topics. Each session was attended by 40-50 managers, ranging from house managers to senior management. These programs increased skills and contributed to the success of many employees.

When a church group asked if we had a place they could meet, Mike had the vision to offer them our old 'multipurpose' room at no cost. The room had been a cafeteria during our big School Program days, but the space had been little used for years. Providing funds and labor at no cost to the agency, the church group created the beautiful Community Room that we now benefit from daily. Community and professional groups also use the room routinely.

Mike was diligent in improving and maintaining the overall appearance of our facilities. Parking lots were resurfaced, rooms and hallways were redone (often with volunteer labor), and new spaces were created. He expanded the Engineering Department to provide better facilities maintenance, hired an auto mechanic and repurposed a garage, realizing monetary savings from doing vehicle maintenance and repair in-house.

The MDC Therapy Clinic, which has been developed and expanded over the last several years, not only sees individuals supported by MDC, but people from other agencies and from the community. Clinic space was renovated and equipped with a grant from the Knights of Columbus. The remodeling, decorating, and painting was done by Engineering and Clinic personnel, as well as other MDC staff. A great deal of talent went into that revitalization project and the clinic is functioning well.

At Mike's suggestion, we addressed employee recognition and support in many different ways. We established an Employee Recognition Committee, which created several forms of recognition, including the popular "You Are Treasured" program, in which employees can earn gifts such as the ever-popular MDC hoodie and various \$25 gift cards. We recently established a pay advance program that allows employees to 'borrow' up to \$100 from their up-coming paycheck. The hope was to help our personnel avoid payroll advance loan sharks by giving them a small, interest-free advance on their paycheck for emergencies. We also began providing EAP services for all employees at no charge.

We've come a long way over the years and much has changed, but much has also stayed the same. Our employees still provide the same outstanding care for the people we support that the agency was built upon. Many employees see individuals as friends and family, just as they did in our early days.

Michael Butler was seeing people at MDC in her position as an Independent Support Coordinator prior to working here. We heard the company for whom she was employed was closing and quite literally 'grabbed her up' for a spontaneous interview after one of her support meetings. With no advance preparation for an interview, or even knowledge of our interest, she graciously met with us. She was quickly offered the position as Director of Human Resources and hired in 2006.

Although her husband's employment pulled her away from us a year later and she moved away, when a director position became available, we reached out to her and discovered they were both homesick for Tennessee. We were able to bring her 'home' to MDC as Director of Quality Assurance.

(Continued on page 3)

Ends and Beginnings *(Continued from page 2)*

After seven years as Director of Human Resources and Director of Quality Assurance, Michaelae has been Vice President of Development, also overseeing Work Programs, since 2014. With her efforts, dedication, and enthusiasm, Michaelae has increased the amount of donations we receive and created new levels of interest, awareness, and good will towards Michael Dunn Center from the community.

One thing that has always been very apparent with Michaelae has been her dedication, love, and support for this agency and the people we serve. Her enthusiasm and tenacity is apparent in everything she does. We can look forward to many more years of progress and great services under her leadership.

Michael Dunn Center has a great future, with a great past to build upon! We say "Goodbye, see you around, and best wishes" to Mike. And "Welcome to your new position, Michaelae. We look forward to working with you in your new role." Many more great things are yet to come for Michael Dunn Center and the future of this agency, as always, is exciting.

Each Quarter, one employee is selected from nominations submitted by peers and supervisors to receive our Walk The Talk Award. The award is presented to an employee who "walks the talk" and exemplifies MDC's stated Values (see page 8). The fact that it is always difficult to select only one recipient from many deserving employees is an indicator of the significance of the award and the excellence of our staff. Recipients receive a \$100 gift card, a framed certificate of appreciation, and recognition in the main lobby and in this newsletter.

BEATRIZ MORENO WALKS THE TALK!

Stephanie Clark and Samantha Chapman

Beatriz provides amazing care for everyone in the ICF department. She has never had an issue providing care for any of the people supported. She doesn't mind working with any staff. She is a great advocate for those she supports. Beatriz is often the go-to person for training new staff. She knows people's care plans backwards and forwards. She has no issues with letting others know when there is a problem, especially if it will affect the people supported.

Beatriz has a positive attitude while at work. She does a great job of leaving her personal life at the door. She represents Michael Dunn Center well in the community and she expects high levels of care from herself and from her peers. She will advocate for what is best for those she supports.

Regardless of her personal beliefs and opinions, Beatriz has the ability to interact and work with co-workers from fundamentally different backgrounds. She works overtime when needed to the benefit of the department. She is always flexible when we have call-in's and she rarely calls in, herself. She has picked up staff who don't have transportation and will often fill in at other homes without complaint.

Beatriz has developed a great relationship with the family members of those we support. She is always willing to lend a hand and help with training needs in the homes in which she works. She will also help any of the staff with transfers, household chores, etc. She is an active participant in the Circles of Support. She is often one to add suggestions or comments to improve the daily lives of those who live in ICF homes.

Beatriz is an asset to the ICF department and to Michael Dunn Center.

She is very deserving of the Walk the Talk award and we offer our congratulations.



PARTNERING FOR OPPORTUNITY

Brian Johnson, DSP

DWK Life Sciences, located in the Roane County Industrial Park, has brought together three leading manufacturers of precision glassware, laboratory consumables, and specialty products for life sciences. Premium quality, innovation, and ultimate precision defines their product range.

We are proud to announce that MDC and DWK have partnered for employment opportunities for eight individuals. This partnership began on April 8, when the group had their orientation. Everyone is excited about their new jobs and proud to show off their badges. We have been well received by everyone at DWK, and things couldn't be going any better.

Each day, a crew of four individuals clocks in and out, along with all the other employees. They work from 8:00 am until 4:00 pm. The group brings smiles to the faces of the other workers, and they have made many friends in the short time that we've been there. They are very eager to get to work and they take much pride in their abilities.

I'm sure this is the start of something really special and, hopefully, it will flourish into a great working relationship for years to come.



L-R: Tammy, Phillina, Brian, Tara, Reggie

Brian Johnson, Caring Heart

We congratulate MDC Direct Support Professional Brian Johnson for being selected as a 2019 Alzheimer's Tennessee Caring Heart recipient. From their website, "Alzheimer's Tennessee, celebrates 'unsung' heroes who go above and beyond when caring for individuals and families facing Alzheimer's disease or dementia. We ask facilities and home health agencies across East Tennessee to nominate a staff member who has provided outstanding care to those with cognitive impairment." The organization recognizes deserving individuals with their annual Caring Hearts awards.



Michaele Butler submitted a nomination for Brian, stating that "we believe Brian is the perfect honoree of a Caring Hearts award". According to Mike McElhinney, "Brian is very sensitive to the desires and needs of the people he supports and has an uncanny ability to see and analyze issues and events from their point of view. He is very creative at molding and adapting work, home, and life challenges in such a way so that the people dealing with these challenges can be successful. I have seen him support people that could not stay focused on any task become successful at working, and those with deteriorating skills and abilities still be able to remain on their jobs. Over the years, Brian has turned down opportunities for promotions, which he well deserved, in order to remain a hands-on Direct Support Provider. Providing supports and services is what he loves to do and we are very fortunate he has answered this calling".

Congratulations, Brian, and thank you for all your outstanding work and devotion for people at Michael Dunn Center!

ELVIS IS IN THE BUILDING

Reese Sudduth, House Manager



Shane and "Elvis"

The guys at Simmons Manor, Shane and Henry, recently went to see two-time World Champion Elvis Entertainer, David Lee.

Upon arrival, Shane was very intrigued with the theatrical appearance of the Princess Theatre, in Harriman.

Shortly after Shane and Henry were seated, the show began. Once the show had started, Shane started clapping and smiling from ear to ear! It was such a joy to see the smile on Shane's face. It was a smile

like none of the staff had ever seen on him before! Throughout the performance, Shane kept standing and clapping, saying, "I like him."

When the show was over, Henry and Shane wanted to say hello to the performer. They stood in line, and when it was their turn, Shane grinned and gave "Elvis" a hug. Shane had his picture taken with him and told him "I love you".

"Elvis" told Shane he was so glad he enjoyed the show and couldn't wait to come back. Shane asked him "want to come eat a burger?" The performer told him "maybe next time, but you enjoy your dinner." Shane said "all right", still smiling ear to ear.

Henry then came up and had his picture taken. He told "Elvis" that he enjoyed himself and asked when he was coming back. "Elvis" replied next year and Henry said, "Well, I'll be very glad to hear that and I'll be sure to be back next year".

After leaving the Theatre, staff took Henry and Shane to Shoney's for dinner. Shane then told his waitress, "I seen Elvis" and was just ecstatic, still. Shane and Henry were all smiles the rest of the evening and talked about the show for days after.



Shane and Reese, selfie



Henry and "Elvis"

2019 SMOKY MOUNTAIN GATHERING OF PERSON-CENTERED PRACTICES... THE RAILWAY OF CHANGE

Tiffany Whittenbarger

Michael Dunn Center is continuing its strong focus on being an active Person-Centered Organization. Leta Hall, Tammy Hargis, Mary Bowman, Tiffany Whittenbarger, Tonya Watts, and Andrea Kelsay recently participated in a 2½-day Person-Centered Practices conference, in Gatlinburg. The emphasis of the conference was positive change to help guide thoughts in identifying and developing strategies to address Level 1 and Level 2 changes.

According to Michael Smull, "We need an increase, not in person-centered planning but in person-centered THINKING". This approach allows for change at every level so that more people can have more meaningful ways of living.

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed learning new ideas about being person-centered. The last day of the conference, everyone was able to meet the new Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Commissioner, Brad Turner. He thanked everyone for attending the conference and shared his vision for TN DIDD. The group had a lot of fun and returned even better prepared to focus on and improve upon our already strong person-centered practices.



L-R: Commissioner Turner, Mary Bowman, Tiffany Whittenbarger, Leta Hall, Tammy Hargis

INTERNATIONAL SEATING SYMPOSIUM

Tryphena Stone and Brittany Lawing, PhD

Brittany Lawing is one of Michael Dunn Center's physical therapists. She received her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from East Tennessee State University, in 2013, and her background is in acute care physical therapy with Level 1 trauma hospitals. She has been with MDC for just over a year.

Brittany covers mostly MDC's sister agencies, in Knoxville and Maryville. In March of this year, she took time out of her very busy schedule to go to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to attend the 35th annual International Seating Symposium, representing Michael Dunn Center on not only a national, but also an international level. This year there were over 2,200 attendees, representing 32 different countries from around the world. Brittany went to the symposium to expand her knowledge of the latest research and the newest equipment available to individuals with disabilities.

Brittany was able to attend courses that covered vast subjects such as the "Lifespan Approach for Cerebral Palsy," "Manual Tilt Wheelchairs to Improve Rehabilitation Outcomes," as well as multiple courses on specific strategies for seating and mobility, improved head control and even bed positioning. The keynote speaker for the symposium noted that fall rates and tissue breakdown decline dramatically (90%) when persons supported are provided with properly fitted equipment. She also noted that 1 out of 100 people uses a wheelchair.

Brittany was able to speak directly and network with equipment representatives for many of the companies that our persons supported receive equipment from. She was able to try out some new equipment on the market, as well as learn features of existing equipment that will help assist our persons supported to gain more functional independence and support.

A special piece of information Brittany received, that she felt valuable to not only herself as a therapist but should be appreciated by all, is that "a wheelchair is not just a seat – it is a part of the person's body." This concept impacts the individuals we work with significantly, as the needs to properly support the body need to accommodate their functional needs as well.

Brittany has already been able to apply newly-learned concepts and information gained about specific products to her individuals and has been able to see gains in improved positioning, comfort, engagement and overall functional independence.

All of us in the Therapy Department and at Michael Dunn cannot thank Brittany enough for her dedication to her individuals, and for the time that she took to go and expand her knowledge of how she could better assist all of the persons supported that she works with. Brittany is truly a great asset to Michael Dunn Center and the individuals that she serves.

TIPS FOR REACHING GO365 SILVER STATUS

Ashley Douglas–Shelton

(Note: These tips are for employees that are on our health insurance plan. Plan participants are encouraged to reach Silver Status or better BEFORE AUGUST 1st.)

All of these activities are easy to do and they don't take much time. Most of the activities that are completed on a computer take less than ten minutes per task. You walk around the house and work at taking care of the people we support, why not track your steps and earn points!

I have never paid money to complete any of these activities. Each buck I've earned is a buck earned towards the Go365 Shopping Mall. The Mall has many items you can purchase with the bucks you've earned. You can spend your bucks on various e-gift cards, fitness devices and gear, outdoor and recreational equipment, apparel and accessories, and more. You can even use your bucks to donate to charities!

If you have any questions, I can help you. You will be at Silver status in no time!

- Complete Health Assessment (10 minutes).
- Complete Health Assessment within first 90 day of plan year to receive extra points.
- Having a biometric screening completed will award almost half of the points required to make it to Silver status.
- If results from your biometric screening are in a normal range, you will receive additional points.
- If results are not in a normal range, you will be given recommended activities to help get them in normal range. *Do these!* They often give more points for this than if they were in a normal range.
- Complete the recommended activities. Not everyone has the same recommended activities.
- Make sure your walking apps are connected to Go365 and receive 750 points for your first verified workout of the plan year (1,000 steps).
- For every 1,000 steps you take, you earn a point!
- You will receive 50 extra points every week you walk over 50,000 steps.
- Complete the calculators. These take less than 5 minutes each.
- Complete the conversations that are recommended for you.
- Complete the courses recommended for you to become healthier. These take time to complete but are worth higher points!
- Sign up for a Walking Challenge monthly.
- Connect your My Fitness Pal app to the Go365 app and complete food and weight logs weekly. Make sure you sign up monthly and do the logs, because they are only good for 28 days at a time.
- Sign up for "Start a new fitness habit" once a month and submit photo proof.
- Submit proof of CPR & First Aid certifications.
- Answer the Daily Health Quiz (these points add up!).
- Sign up for the sleep diary.
- Sign up for Mindfulness Breathing and have the correct app connected to Go365.
- Donate blood. You receive a free shirt and food coupons from Medic and earn 50 points in Go365.
- Get your vision checked and have your teeth cleaned twice a year. You receive points for those visits.
- If you get a flu shot, you will earn points as well.
- For ladies, get a pap smear and earn points.
- Participate in an athletic event. The more you walk in the athletic event, the more points you receive!
- Make sure to log onto Go365 at least once a month and you will earn points! Set up a reminder on your phone each month so you won't miss out on points!
- If you win a monthly jackpot drawing, the higher your status, the better prizes you get to choose from.
- You are rewarded extra bucks just for hitting a new status level (Silver, Gold, and Platinum).

Phone Numbers:

Poison Control ... (800) 222-1222

Abuse Investigator (800) 579-0023

MDC Engineering On-Call ... (865) 335-0549

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) ... (866) 219-1232

Michael Dunn Center provides an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for every employee, full time and part time. EAP services are also available for any person living in the employee's household.

EAP provides short term counselling, with up to eight visits per issue per year, to help our employees and members of their households manage everyday needs and life events including:

- Emotional problems
- Stress
- Addiction and recovery
- Relationships and family issues
- Coping with serious illnesses and health concerns
- Sleeping difficulties
- Grief and loss
- Smoking cessation
- Child care and development
- Parenting
- Services and care for parents and elderly adults
- Pet care
- Financial concerns
- Estate planning
- Adoption, pregnancy, and infertility
- Retirement planning
- Consumer education
- Eating disorders and weight control
- Workplace problems and job stress
- Balancing work and personal life
- and more....

With EAP, you also have access to free 30-minute legal or financial consultations on issues such as real estate, retirement planning, divorce and separation, and budgeting and debt reconstruction. Further legal and financial services are discounted at 25%.

More information and useful tools are available on the Lifesynch website. Contact EAP any time, any day, at (866) 219-1232.

Lifesynch.com/eap

Mission

Empowering individuals living with disabilities and challenges to gain independence

Vision

We strive to be a premier agency providing the highest quality of person-centered services with an emphasis on positive communication, while inspiring people to open their minds to acceptance and inclusion.

Values

We value a person-centered culture by promoting:

• High Ethical Standards

Compassion

We value honesty and openness, and treat people with dignity, compassion and mutual respect

Integrity

We have a positive reputation in the community and maintain the highest standards of professional conduct, ethical behavior and personal responsibility

Diversity

We value the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual and respect the diversity of opinions, backgrounds and cultures of others

• High Quality of Services

Professional Commitment

We maintain a disciplined, results-oriented organization reflecting the highest professional standards and ethical behavior

Teamwork

We strive to develop positive working relationships based on trust and respect as we work together to achieve our common goals

Responsiveness

We believe that our future is based on our current actions and decisions. Remaining open to change will define how we manage the challenges that come our way