

FALL 2024

CONTACT

In touch with all things Cottonwood.



We help individuals with disabilities shape their own future.

A Message from Our CEO



As the crisp fall air settles in, it is a perfect time to reflect on the past months and look forward to the opportunities that await us.

Over the past six months, our team has continuously demonstrated remarkable resilience, creativity, and innovation. We have completed a full year of our newest activity-based, community-focused day program, CORE. Cottonwood consumers have been experiencing all that the Douglas County community has to offer while helping to make our community richer and more diverse at the same time. Cottonwood Industries continues to refine processes, bring in new types of contracts and teach a variety of skills to consumers who in turn are earning higher wages with these increased skills. We

welcomed our retirees to the new Retirement Enrichment Center and are completing a refresh of our Life Enrichment area. We celebrated the 25th year of our signature fundraiser, Salute! and it was the most successful fundraiser in Cottonwood history! All of these accomplishments are a testament to your dedication and hard work.

Looking forward, our focus remains on continued organizational development and continuing to strengthen our foundation and grow ever upward. I am confident that with our commitment and passion, we will not only meet these goals but exceed them.

Each day, I am grateful for the wonderful Cottonwood family, our tremendous boards, our community partners, our fabulous donors...and the list just keeps growing. Thank you all for helping us be Cottonwood Strong!

Colleen Himmelberg

Boards of Trustees



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CONTACT is published for the friends and supporters of Cottonwood, Inc. by the Community Relations and Development Department: Ettie Brightwell and Kari Bentzinger.

Cottonwood Incorporated is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization that serves children and adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Cottonwood provides an array of employment options, onsite and in other parts of the community, day activity programs as well as residential, and case management services. Cottonwood is a member of Interhab, the Resource Network for Kansans with Disabilities.

Cottonwood is partially funded on a contractual basis with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services. Cottonwood receives some funding from Douglas and Jefferson Counties. Cottonwood is an affirmative action equal opportunity employer. We do business in accordance with the Federal Fair Housing Law. (The Fair Housing Amendment Act of 1998)

Labeling and mailing services for this newsletter have been provided by men and women of Cottonwood.

An adapted version of this publication and other materials are available by calling 785.842.0550 or by visiting us on the web at www.cwood.org.



EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



May - Michael

I have worked at KU Kansas Memorial for 7 years. I work in the dish room and help with food prep. I like putting away the clean dishes because I can connect with all my co-workers that work in the other areas. I like working there because it's in the heart of the campus and there is always something going on. My advice is to stay on task and show up every day and be dependable.

June - Louise

I have worked at Clinton Parkway Nursery for over 1 year. I put money in the cash register, take out trash, move empty plant trays and water plants. I like making money. Being a good worker makes me happy!



*I like making money.
Being a good worker
makes me happy!*

-Louise, June Employee of the Month

July - Cameron

I have worked at Tractor Supply since 2018. I help customers, cashier, stock shelves and do load outs. I like helping customers find the stuff they are looking for. I like my co-workers. My advice is to just do what you are asked to do. Be there every day.



August - Peggy

I have worked at Au Marché for almost 3 years! I make boxes and stamp bags. My job is relaxing. It feels like arts and crafts that I like to do. My advice is to stay focused. That's what I think a good employee would be.



September - Lynette

I am a housekeeper at Presbyterian Manor. I have been there almost 1 year. I love to vacuum! I like my job because it gives me freedom to clean however I choose. I also have an awesome supervisor!



October - Joey

I am a dishwasher at KU South Common Dining. I like working fast when I do the dishes and I like my paycheck! My advice is to show up on time and be ready to work.

Congratulations!

EMPLOYERS OF THE MONTH

May - Perkins

June - Presbyterian Manor

July - On the Rocks

August - Elevate

September - KU Residential Custodial

October - Wagmore Canine Enrichment

We appreciate your partnership!



Supported employment is very important because it provides purpose for many people. Hiring individuals with disabilities is a great way to grow your business and support your community.

-Ethan Bentzinger, Elevate

JobLink provides consultation and resources that help meet the workforce needs of more than 200 employers. Unique among employment agencies in the Lawrence, Kansas area, we analyze job requirements and customize a job match with qualified and reliable workers.

We are the only locally based, licensed, accredited, and certified disability-related employment service.

Contact JobLink today for qualified candidates. JobLink candidates have a variety of skills and abilities with an array of educational levels and work experience.

- Reduced hiring costs
- Customized service
- Hiring flexibility
- Payroll savings
- On-site training
- Community partnerships
- All about teamwork

VOTED #1  **Staffing Agency**
3 years in a row!

COTTONWOOD Industries



There always seems to be a flurry of activity at Cottonwood Industries (CSI). For over 130 months (that's over 10 years!) in a row, there has been over 100% work availability. CWI has developed new ways to utilize automation and improve processes to bring even more work product through the production line, thus helping to further increase wages for person-supported.

The contracts procured by Cottonwood Industries provide the people we serve many varied opportunities to learn, maintain, and hone valuable skills while earning money and completing meaningful work for a variety of local and regional businesses.

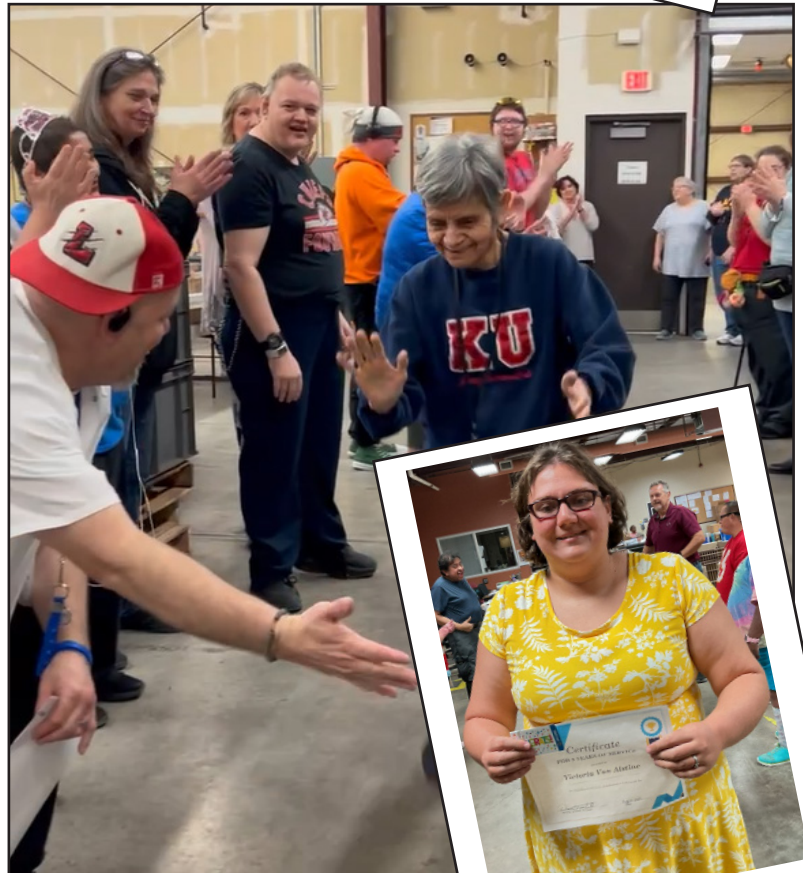
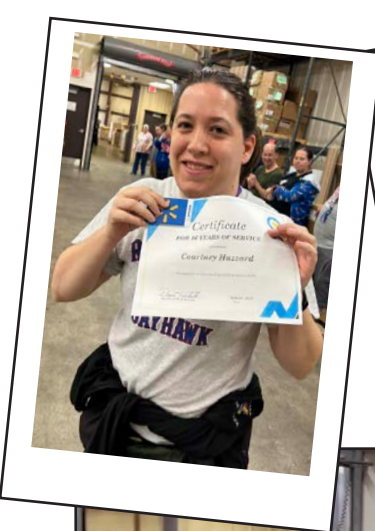


For more information on partnering with Cottonwood Industries, contact Robert Bieberle, Business Development Manager
rbieberle@cwood.org or 785-842-0550

Celebrate



Each month, we celebrate milestones for persons-supported working in Cottonwood Industries. It is such fun to see the excitement, joy and pride on everyone's faces as they are recognized for their outstanding work achievement!



Shaping Futures





I went on my first Lawrence Parks & Rec trip to Colorado Springs. I had a great time! I saw the mountains, went to the Garden of Gods and saw a ghost town museum. I went to the Flying W Ranch and had a chuck wagon dinner. It was fun hanging out with all my friends at the Flying W Ranch listening to a country band. It was really fun taking the cog railway up to Pikes Peak. The mountains were so beautiful. I would like to go back to Colorado Springs!

-Jordan



On September 25, 2024, The Douglas County League of Women Voters held an on-site, community-wide voter registration station at Cottonwood, hosted by Cottonwood's Community, Outreach, Recreation and Enrichment department. Thank you to all who participated and for helping us to help others to shape their own futures and the futures of our communities.



Shaping Futures

Celebrate



Yet again, the Cottonwood MiniMasters did not disappoint upon its return to the Cottonwood property on Thursday, September 26, 2024!! It was an absolutely beautiful evening in Lawrence. There was delicious pizza donated by Toppers Pizza and an icy sweet treat from the Kona Ice Truck for all participants. Thanks once again to Travis Walsh and Lawrence Mini Golf for the amazing miniature golf set up. The Clubs were hot as Cottonwood consumers, staff and family members played their way through the course, but the hottest clubs of all belonged to Perry and Ellen for their sizzling 1st & 2nd place finishes. There were some serious dance moves displayed in the ever-popular street dance while other folks displayed expert fishing skills by hooking prizes at the fishpond. Participants flocked to a very talented airbrush tattoo artist and a new balloon twisting artist to get wonderful souvenirs of the evening, and we even had goats! What a fun night with all of our friends. The only downer is that we have to wait until next year for MiniMasters 2026!



Caring & Commitment Award
Sharon Vokins



Caring & Commitment Award
Jeff Whittier



Shining Star Award
Susan Boose



Shining Star Award
John Denney



Distinguished Service Award
Allison Vance Moore



JobLink Employer of the Year
Culver's



Cottonwood Industries Business Partner of the Year
Mosaic Diagnostics

The 23rd annual Cottonwood Classics will be held on Monday, November 4, 2024 at Southwest Middle School. This event is truly a celebration of all that is Cottonwood and what makes Cottonwood such a uniquely wonderful place. The Classics is Cottonwood's way of honoring those who excel in their lives and jobs, making a difference in the lives of the people we serve and in the communities in which we live. Congratulations to all of our award winners!

Take A Tour



LMH Health Partnership



McCaw & Associates



Mark & Jen Gonzales & Ryan Kruse



Gene Dorsey



Bert Nash, MHC & O'Connell Youth



Adam Turk



Gavin Kreidler, Brooklyn Moseley & Suzanne Wikle



US Bank Private Wealth Management



Pam McDermott, Rich Lorenzo, & Brad Chun

We are very proud of the work that is done at Cottonwood to support people with disabilities. Come see for yourself how amazing Cottonwood is! If you are interested in finding out more about Cottonwood and/or touring our facility, please contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations/Development at ebrightwell@cwood.org or (785) 842-0550.



Source America



CBIZ



Uplift Coffee



Lawrence Chamber



2024 marked the 25th anniversary of Salute! A Festival of Wine and Food. The Mass St. Mosey kicked off the festival on a moderately warm (for July, anyway!) Thursday evening, July 11th. It was a great time to reconnect with friends and make new friends over a taste of wine and delicious bite of food at 13 Mosey stops.



Salute Festival of Wine & Food



This year's Winemaker Dinner was hosted by The Oread Hotel on Friday, July 12th and featured wines from J. Lohr Vineyards. The 5-course meal was fantastic and attendees enjoyed the guided tour through the wine and food pairings led by Trevor Garcia of J. Lohr Winery.

We're thrilled to share we've been chosen for J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines '50 Years, States & Ways of Giving' campaign, receiving \$5,000 to support our mission! Cheers to J.Lohr 50 years!



Thank You!

As a culmination to the Wine Festival, over 400 people gathered on Saturday, July 13th at the Oread Hotel for the Grand Tasting. Participants enjoyed up to 200 wines, beers or spirits and had food tastings from ten local restaurants. The bidding was spirited throughout the live auction led by our friends, Brian Hanni and the Nigro Brothers Auctioneers! Salute continues to be Cottonwood's largest fundraising event and this year was no exception with \$200,000 raised for Cottonwood.



A special thank you to all of our sponsors, participants, donors and volunteers for their strong and unwavering support. Proceeds from Salute enable us to drive our mission of helping people with disabilities shape their own future and lead their best lives.



Presented by:



Celebrate



What a great place
to work
with a great mission!

Thank You Lawrence!

We appreciate our
community's support!



Hurrah for Cottonwood! Named Best of Lawrence 2024 in the following categories:

-  **1st Place - Best Nonprofit (Adult/Senior Services)**
- 1st Place - Best Place to Work (Large, 100+ employees)**
- 1st Place - Best Staffing Agency (JobLink)**
-  **2nd Place - Social Media (Org. or Nonprofit)**



Why I Give...

Giving to a high performing, well managed, soundly governed, fiscally stable, values-based non-profit with a track record of over 50 years of service to the community is simply a no-brainer. Cottonwood is all the above and more. The dedication of the staff at every level of the organization is evidenced in countless ways. The encouraging word, the teaching, the team approach, the smiles that are shared, the fun that is had, the medical, behavioral, residential, employment, retirement, financial, and case management support that is provided 365 days a year is no easy task to pull off. Cottonwood helps people with intellectual and developmental disabilities every day, all day in multiple settings throughout the Lawrence community. As a donor, as a volunteer board member, as an attendee at the various fun events that are held throughout the year, I know that my gift of time or money will be added to this awesome mix of beautiful souls, delightful personalities, and expert caregivers, to be something greater than the sum of its parts. Please consider supporting these amazing people with a donation and ask for a tour so you can feel the love for yourself!



Shaping Futures

LEGACY GIFTS

Your legacy gift to Cottonwood will leave a lasting imprint on the people we support and will ensure that our work continues well into the future. A legacy gift, such as a bequest in your will or a designation in your retirement plan, is a powerful way to continue supporting our mission for years to come.




By including Cottonwood in your estate plans, you will join a group of dedicated individuals who are committed to making sure our programs, services, and initiatives are sustained for generations. This type of gift can reflect your values, make a lasting impact, and allow you to leave a legacy that aligns with your life's passions.

A legacy gift can also provide you with potential tax benefits while making a significant difference in the lives of those we serve. Our team is available to discuss different ways to structure your gift in a manner that honors your personal, family, and financial goals.


STOCK GIFTS

With the recent market conditions, now may be an ideal time to make a gift that not only supports Cottonwood, but also provides you with potential tax benefits. Contact us for more information on this type of transaction.

 **QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DEDUCTIONS**
Individuals who've attained age 70 1/2 may make QCDs.

 **ONE-TIME GIFT** Your gift always makes a big difference!

 **MEMORIAL & HONORARIUM**
Honor your loved one with a gift today.

 **MONTHLY GIVING**
Help shape the future of the people we support year-round with a monthly automatic gift.

 **COMPANY MATCH**
Increase the impact of your gift by utilizing your company's matching gift program



We would be honored to speak with you in more detail about the various opportunities to make a lasting contribution. If you have already included Cottonwood in your estate plans, we would love the opportunity to thank and honor you into our Legacy Circle.

The Cottonwood Foundation is a separate but affiliated 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization established to facilitate the contribution of funds for the benefit of Cottonwood, Inc. The Foundation's purpose is to promote and further the advancement of services at Cottonwood. With increased competition for limited philanthropic funds, gifts have become even more critical to help ensure a long, healthy future for Cottonwood, Inc. Contributions to the Cottonwood Foundation can be made in a number of ways, including cash, securities, real estate and personal property, life insurance, retirement plans, in-kind gifts, and planned gifts through a will or trust. Each contribution makes a difference and helps ensure the future of Cottonwood. The Cottonwood Foundation is a charitable organization, and gifts are tax deductible. Contact Ettie Brightwell, Director of Community Relations and Development, at (785) 842-0550

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Do you know someone who is looking for a job that is truly rewarding and interesting?

Cottonwood will give you a welcoming work experience that broadens your understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of our fellow community members, sharpens your problem solving strategies, hones your organizational skills, provides numerous teamwork and collaboration opportunities- the list is long. Cottonwood employment also ties in directly with many fields of study: social work, speech/language pathology, healthcare, etc.

Cottonwood benefits available:

- Medical, dental and vision
- KPERS Retirement
- Paid sick and vacation



Scan to see
available
positions

Contact Matthew Moore, Human Resources Coordinator, mmoore@cwood.org

