

# CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

## EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Issue 12

Vol 4

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#### *A Holiday Message from Fr. Jack*

Dear Staff:

At all times, but especially during this time of year, I have so much gratitude to each and every one of you for your dedication and commitment to our residents. Our residents receive so many gifts, but the excellent care you provide on a daily basis is at the top of that gift list, and we are forever grateful for our amazing staff here at Misericordia.

This has been a busy year, and we end the year knowing that 2025 will be even busier when we welcome families to Rosemary Park starting in February/March. We will also be opening several more CILA homes in the early part of the year, which will bring our CILA count to 20 homes. And finally, we look forward to opening the Gildo Mazzolin Recreational Center sometime in mid-2025, which will be a great addition for recreational purposes. These are exciting projects, but there are exciting happenings that occur every day here at Misericordia because of all of you in our residential homes, programs, and everywhere on campus and in the CILA homes.

Our holiday events are wrapping up, and we are grateful to the thousands of people who have visited Misericordia in November/December, and the hundreds of volunteers who have assisted with these events. Our micro-businesses have also been busy, and we are so grateful to the Bakery team for keeping up with the orders. I am delighted to share that next week we will welcome Stephen Achilles to the team to oversee our micro-businesses (Bakery operations, Café, Greenhouse Inn Restaurant, etc.). Please give Stephen a warm welcome as well as a warm welcome to all of the new staff who have recently arrived (and those who will soon come) to make a difference along with you here at Misericordia. We need to work together as a team and it starts with a warm welcoming environment for all.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the staff celebrations tomorrow and encourage everyone to attend. Many thanks as always to our Kitchen staff as they will make sure that it is a delicious meal. And many thanks to the Misericordia Family Association for their contributions to help with a portion of the Christmas/Holiday appreciation gift. The monetary gift is based on status (FT/PT/Relief) and is provided to all employees who started before 12/1/2024. Any staff who have started on or after 12/1/2024 will receive a Misericordia gift item to show our appreciation for joining our team. If you look at your ADP Portal on Friday, 12/20/2024 you will see your monetary amount. Also, please note that we covered your portion of the FICA taxes (7.65%) that you would have owed on the gift. In the future, bonuses will be provided to staff net of FICA taxes (or the bonus amount less FICA taxes).

In addition to the appreciation bonus, I am delighted to share that everyone will receive a \$0.75 an hour increase starting with the pay period that begins on 12/22/2024. This is the ninth increase within the last five years. We hope you know that we are doing all we can to recognize your significant contributions and how much we appreciate all of you.

Thank you again so very much. Happy Holidays and Merry Christmas to you and yours. I look forward to the exciting challenges of the New Year because we have the most caring and devoted staff in all of you. Much health and happiness for all in 2025 and know that you are in my prayers. Please keep our residents and the entire Misericordia community in yours.



Sincerely,  
Fr. Jack Clair



Tell us what's in store for your 2025! [Click here](#) to share your goals for the new year with us, and we can share them in Campus Connections. If you met your resolutions and accomplished any goals in 2024, feel free to share those as well!



## FAREWELL MARY PAT



**Pictured above:** Misericordia's Executive Vice President, Mary Pat O'Brien. Here is a fun fact about her: she has traveled to 27 countries!

Mary Pat retires this month after 46 years of service at Misericordia. The entire community wishes her all the best and will remain grateful for her impact and dedication to our mission.

When Mary Pat started as a Social Service Coordinator at Misericordia South in 1977, she says, "It was all about getting to know the kids," whom she has seen grow into adult residents. Gradually, she took on other leadership roles, from supervisor to Social Service Director to Administration. Mary Pat was responsible for the Village homes in terms of working with the team regarding the design and ensuring we were meeting the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) regulations. She was also responsible for ensuring the homes were licensed by IDPH. The fact that we were on a campus was problematic and so Sister Rosemary stepped in and invited about 30 state legislators to our campus and they could not believe the state was having an issue with the campus. Within the next week, the governor approved the licensure of these homes. That was a challenging time but in the end we had nine beautiful homes and at that time served 8 residents in each home. Mary Pat continued to be involved with the design, regulation compliance and licensure of all the homes on campus. She fondly recalls the special connections among the staff and residents as a testament to our loving, dedicated, growing community.

Fast forward decades later, as Misericordia's Executive Vice President, Mary Pat says, "I don't even know how I got here." She has seen her work evolve, from managing enrichment programs to residential services that have expanded year by year. She also advocated for and saw the implementation of additional on-site services, such as the dental clinic. Misericordia sees this achievement as one of the most beneficial legacies she will be leaving with us. As she sets off into retirement, Mary Pat reflects on an important career note for everyone: "You get so much more than you give!"

Misericordia would like to thank Mary Pat for her enormous impact on the organization throughout her 46 years of service! Our community would not be what it is today without her.

### **GROWTH & OPPORTUNITIES RECAP**

This year, we'd like to highlight all staff from across the organization who have taken the initiative to invest in their professional growth, as well as grabbed the opportunity to grow their careers at Misericordia. Congratulations to all of you, and we hope you will keep this momentum going to 2025!

[\*\*2024 Fit for Success Graduates\\*\*\*](#)

[\*\*2024 Staff Promotions\\*\*\*](#)

*\*This material was shared by HR and Staff Development*





# SNAPSHOTS OF 2024

**Black History Month Dance Party**  
Extra thanks to Developmental Training (DT) for organizing an afternoon filled with music, dance, and celebration!



## 2024 ART WALK



## 2024 Special Olympic Games

(Pictured right) The 2024 Art Walk was a culmination of a community coming together in the best possible way. The art pieces represent residents from all across campus and many different departments. This art walk highlights the talents and creativity of our residents and staff.

(Pictured left) Many Misericordia residents take part in Special Olympic events throughout the year, competing locally, regionally, and nationally. We send a special thanks to the staff and volunteers who support the residents on their travels to events!



## Food Trucks on Campus Highlights:



Participating Food Trucks this year included: Soul & Smoke, Cheese's, Hearts & Flour Bakery, and Chicago Lunchbox. Food trucks are funded entirely by Misericordia and coordinated by our Family Association and Diversity & Inclusion Team as a way to show our gratitude and express our continued appreciation for the work that everyone does to help us stay Misericordia Strong. Additionally, we aim to select food trucks that serve specialized cuisine from different cultural origins that reflect our community at large. If you have a suggestion for a minority-owned food truck or food service provider that you would like to visit our campus, please [click here](#) to leave a suggestion!

## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

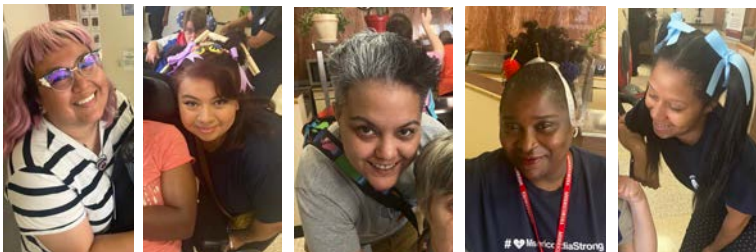




# SNAPSHOTS OF 2024

## SPIRIT DAYS AT MISERICORDIA

Themes included: "Twin Day", "Mismatch Day",  
"Favorite Sports Team", "Crazy Sock Day", "Crazy Hair Day"



## STAFF MILESTONE CELEBRATIONS

### 10-Year Anniversary:



### 5-Year Anniversary:



## Communities Coming Together



## CAMPUS CONNECTIONS





# 2024 ANNUAL SERVICE AWARD WINNERS

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## **Alecia Y**

*Alecia has been coined as the "Mother of Peterman." She is described as patient and caring. Her care and compassion not only encompass the residents but extends to her co-workers, as well. She takes initiative when it's short-staffed and not only new staff with each resident but also helps support floaters by welcoming them and making sure it's a smooth experience. She helps co-workers gain confidence. She takes their responsibilities seriously, always follows through when asked to do something, connects with peers, and take on special projects. She always makes sure the residents of their house, look good, are happy and thrive. Congratulations, Alecia, for receiving the 2024 Service Award!*

## **Andreea C**

*Andreea supports the residents without hesitation and shows compassion. Taking on many roles, she supports her team and every way she can. She consistently does 1:1 check-ins and is invested in the growth of her staff. Organizing social events to build teamwork and going above and beyond by preparing treats for staff, she is admired by her peers and other staff for her exceptional leadership skills, dedication to team development, ability to motivate and inspire others, and fostering a positive work environment. With all that's on her plate, Andreea still manages to implement creative and fun activities for all to enjoy. Congratulations, Andreea, for receiving the 2024 Service Award!*



## **Danijela V**

*Daniela displays moments of compassion every day in the way she approaches every aspect of her work. She consistently and thoughtfully focuses on all of her responsibilities and is constantly attending to all our residents' needs. She never misses an opportunity to communicate effectively with her team, even when it's outside of her duties. She goes above and beyond and always puts the residents first, all while providing a comfortable and supportive experience for everyone around her. She demonstrates having high standards for the work she does and this gives her team confidence whenever they work with her. She is a "teacher" and shows a perfect example of dedication. Her occasional baked goods are a welcomed bonus, as well. Congratulations, Danijela, for receiving the 2024 Service Award!*

## **Olivia N**

*Olivia is described as a strong communicator who advocates for what is best for our residents. She demonstrates compassion and care for all the residents she works with. When a group of residents does not have what they need, she takes it upon herself to make it happen. She is a solid team member who helps anyone in need. She addresses each resident with care and dignity and sees them for their talents and abilities. She is welcoming and inviting to all that they meet. She shares her creativity and talents so generously. She truly embodies the mission of Misericordia. Congratulations, Olivia, for receiving the 2024 Service Award!*



## **Richard S**

*Richard is described as an incredible leader, who manages with calm and care. While the holiday season can be an exceptionally busy time for the bakery, he ensures that the volunteers and seasonal employees he works with feel knowledgeable and have what they need to get the job done. Richard lays out their vision each shift, so goals are met and time flies by. Whether supplies are low or things are out of order, he approaches every obstacle with a positive attitude. To quote someone who nominated them: "I have never felt stressed when they lead our shift. Days with them are organized and inspiring." Congratulations, Richard, for receiving the 2024 Service Award!*



# IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

## CO-WORKING FAMILY MEMBERS AT MISERICORDIA



**Pictured left:** Sisters Ciara M (Marian Center) and Alyssa M (Shannon Apartments) decorating the Jean Marie Ryan Center for the Disney-themed celebration at Mis. The sisters were featured in Campus Connections' series of co-working family members at Misericordia. To read about them and other co-working families, [click here!](#)

## WORKING STUDENTS AT MISERICORDIA

**Pictured right:** Yao A (Village) started at Misericordia as an international student and is now completing his internship for a Master's degree in Clinical Mental Health and Counseling (Psychology). He was one of the working students Campus Connections featured in special September spotlight. [Click here](#) to read about him and other working students who talked to us!



## STAFF PERSONAL COLLECTIONS



**Pictured left:** Art instructor Melissa B's personal collection of vintage Apple computers and software. She told Campus Connections, "I attended an annual convention in 2010 and started my collection." To read about how her collection evolved, [click here](#). You will also find various kinds of personal collections from art to instruments shared to us by staff.

## TRACKING A YEAR OF HARVESTING



This year, Greco Gardens tracked their harvests using a new tally spreadsheet, documenting their successes, challenges, and the impact of their work. From Greco hydroponic towers to the orchard and Amina Grace Gardens in the Village, they produced an impressive variety of crops that were shared with residents, various departments, Care for Real, and Hearts & Flour Bakery. [Click here](#) to read their tally!

## FIND IT ON YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK



### STAFF APPRECIATION 2024

[Click here](#) video dedicated to all the staff in every department, put together by Misericordia residents, Campus Connections, and the Misericordia Family Association.



### MOVIES THAT MEAN SOMETHING TO YOU

[Click here](#) to find a list of movie trailers staff submitted in our call for submissions about movies that mean something to them.



### 10+ YEAR STAFF ANNIVERSARY QUIZ

[Click here](#) for a video in which we asked our longtime staff how much they know about Misericordia!



### SONGS OF THE SUMMER

[Click here](#) for a playlist of summer songs submitted by staff. Want to know what the most popular submission was? [Summertime](#), by DJ Jazzy Jeff & the Fresh Prince and Jazzy



### HOLIDAY PLAYLIST AND SLIDESHOW

[Click here](#) for a list of Holiday songs staff submitted to Campus Connections. These songs were included on the playlist for our annual staff holiday meal. If you weren't able to attend, you're invited to [click here](#) to view the slideshow.



**WANT TO SEE MORE PICTURES, STORIES, AND HIGHLIGHTS?** [Click here](#) to find them on our Facebook page.