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## NEWS

### ABRAXAS I, Marienville, PA



It's time for spring sports at Abraxas. Our baseball cooperative with Forest Area Schools allows us to provide up to six clients with the opportunity to participate in this organized team effort. Currently, we have five clients participating from Beaver, Bucks, Delaware, Erie and Delaware Counties.

Track team members have joined with their teammates from our Sheffield High School Cooperative and are beginning conditioning and training. They too are hoping for warmer weather soon. Our portion of the team includes female members from Clarion, Montgomery, Montour, Randolph, WV and Wyoming County while male team members are from Allegheny and Lehigh Counties as well as Washington, DC.

We are very proud of these kids who have chosen to be a part of organized sports as part of the greater community. We wish them an outstanding 2024 Season!



Thanks to the never-ending talent and dedication of the Abraxas I Workforce Development staff and students, the Abraxas I training room has an impressive new look. From the beams on the ceiling to the newly painted walls (to include wooden feature walls and an Abraxas mural) to the freshly cleaned carpets and the resurfaced tables, it looks amazing! We now have a custom-made coffee cart and bookshelves. Thanks to everyone involved in making a brand-new room that is very conducive to learning and training! And although completed by an outside contractor, the Arlene Lissner High School also got a fresh look by having all new flooring installed. The hallways and classrooms look great!



### ABRAXAS ACADEMY, Morgantown, PA



We're excited to announce we have re-started Small Engines, Food Service, Electrical and Framing for students in the Treatment Program!



### ABRAXAS PATH PROGRAM, Reading, PA

Our Berks County PATH Case Manager helped two youth on her caseload get involved in the Olivet Boys & Girls Club RBI Baseball League. They started practice on March 14th. The kids will be traveling to different locations in Pennsylvania to compete. Transportation, uniforms and food are included for the players.



### ABRAXAS LDP, South Mountain, PA (Home to The Specialized Treatment Program & South Mountain Shelter)

At Abraxas LDP, we have found an opportunity to expand our Poultry Club by acquiring a peacock. The students enjoy having him around. They are required to sign a contract holding them accountable for keeping the fowl safe, clean, and happy. Initially, we tried housing the peacock with our chickens, but they bullied him. He was a nervous little bird and paced back and forth, so the students named him Pacey. We feel that having him has been a success and hope to acquire more in the future. Early on, we walked Pacey on a chicken harness, and he did fairly well. But like all things, he quickly outgrew the concept as well as his enclosure. So, several of the students helped to build him a larger home; however, he does have the option to free-range our facility.

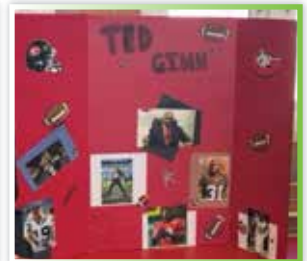
The students love to do yard work and construction projects, which gives them valuable vocational skills they can take out into the real world. They learn how to properly use various lawn and garden tools as well as hand tools to maintain the coop and surrounding areas. Additionally, their responsibilities include daily chores, wing clipping, animal husbandry, and health care. In the past, we have even grown vegetables to feed the birds, so the students get a little gardening experience, too! Pacey and the chickens provide love for the children while they are away from home. It brings out the nurturing side of them and gives them a sense of responsibility. During family visits, they enjoy showing off their pets.

**SPECIAL THANKS** to the following Abraxas Team Members who work with the kids teaching them how to care for our friend Pacey.

- Debra Charney | Special Education Teacher
- Carly Gunnett | Paraprofessional
- Erin Eddy | Vocational Instructor

### ABRAXAS OHIO, Shelby, OH

Abraxas Ohio celebrated Black History Month this year by creating the Gallery of Heroes, a Living Museum. Thirteen students participated in the facility's first ever Living Museum. The activity required the students to identify significant contributions of a famous African American. They chose their person to portray and spent almost four weeks researching the selected individual's background and important life events. The students focused on the person's ability to achieve their goals and dreams, as well as someone who represented themselves as a champion for others. The students created visual displays and costumes that illustrated the life of the person represented in the museum and wrote and presented a 2-3-minute life summary speech to the visitors that walked around and toured the exhibit. The Heroes presented at the museum included Jesse Owens, Martin Luther King Jr., Colin Powell, Muhammad Ali, Kobe Bryant, Ted Ginn, Harriet Tubman, Emmett Till, Lebron James, Jackie Robinson, Patrick Mahomes, and Frederick Douglass.



### WOODRIDGE INTERVENTIONS, Woodridge, IL

Woodridge Naperville Bridge School continues to engage in the CAAEL athletic/activity league for alternative learning programs. Students participating must qualify based upon grades,

attendance and behavior. With participation in flag football, volleyball, bowling, chess, spelling bee, and basketball, this program provides incentives for students to succeed. Weekly attendance, grade, and behavioral checks determine CAAEL eligibility and help to create motivation for success.

Woodridge Naperville Bridge School Senior students are currently engaged in a service project to create a "field of dreams" at the Abraxas Woodridge Interventions with improvements to the facility's softball field. Leveling the field with topsoil, growing new grass, clearing brush, and installing a backstop are part of this service project.



# OUTSTANDING

## ABRAXAS I, Marienville, PA

Mental Health Therapist Rachel Keely received a call from a former client recently. He wanted to relay that he is doing extremely well and wanted to express his gratitude to Abraxas I. He told Rachel, "I hated you and everyone when I was there because I could not see then just how much everyone was helping me". He went on to explain that he often thinks of what he learned when here, "Don't count the days but make the days count!". He has maintained sobriety and has reestablished a good relationship with his parents. He completed Job Corps and will be a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh Main Campus this fall! He will major in education and law enforcement with the dream of giving back to others like himself one day. To quote Rachel, "My heart is smiling".

## ABRAXAS ACADEMY, Morgantown, PA

Mr. James Brunner is celebrating his 10-year anniversary with Abraxas and Mr. Zachery Lewis is celebrating his 8-year anniversary this month. A huge THANK YOU to Ms. Olga Castillo, Senior Recruiter, for all her hard work!



## ABRAXAS YOUTH CENTER, South Mountain, PA

A huge congratulations and thank you to Brian Klink for 25 years of dedicated service to Abraxas! Brian started his career in 1999 as a counselor at the Abraxas Leadership Development Program. Recognizing his work ethic, passion, and commitment to the organization, Brian was quickly promoted to Clinical Supervisor at the Abraxas Youth Center (AYC) in 2000. Since arriving at AYC, Brian has supported the facility in a variety of roles and provided leadership and support to other facilities across the organization as a whole. Currently, Brian spends his days providing guidance and support to our education

department and students as an Education Supervisor. Serving in this role for 13 years, Brian has ensured not only smooth operations of our learning environment, but he has also been integral to the development and sustainability of numerous vocational opportunities and programs. Thank you, Brian, for being an example of commitment and perseverance and for your invaluable contributions to the success of Abraxas.



## SOUTHERN PEAKS, Canon City, CO



Jessica Montoya was recognized at the 2023 Kaleidoscope Conference for Outstanding Service to Facility Schools.

Jessica Montoya has committed 9 years to serving the youth at Southern Peaks. She has worked as a substitute teacher, alternatively certified teacher and case manager for the Day Treatment program for the last several years. She began as a paraprofessional in the day treatment program in 2018. She recently completed her Special Education certification Jessica is a dedicated and creative employee and educator for the youth in the facility. Jessica develops client relations and provides excellent customer service to the parents and stakeholders. Jessica is a unique and irreplaceable asset to the education department at Southern Peaks. Jessica is committed to making sure her Day Treatment Classroom is the best class on campus. She goes above and beyond to help her students be successful in all aspects of life, not just school. She teaches them coping skills and education skills every day. Jessica will help anyone at any time with anything they need. All the school staff look up to Jessica because she is very skilled with everything she does. Without Jessica, Southern Peaks would be lacking because of her vast knowledge and determination for excellence.



OUTSTANDING

## WOODRIDGE INTERVENTIONS, Woodridge, IL

Ginger Allaway was nominated as the 2023 staff member of the year for her outstanding contributions to Woodridge. Congratulations Ginger!



## ABRAXAS LDP, South Mountain, PA



For the past 20 years - the Abraxas Leadership Development Program has held an annual recognition ceremony for staff to highlight the year's accomplishments and thank everyone for their support in helping youth making progress in their lives. LDP recognizes those employees that go above and beyond in their mission to make a difference. Nominated by their peers in the program, awards are presented for staff demonstrating exceptional performance in 4 categories -Leadership, Motivation, Dedication and for those with under 1 year at the program, Outstanding Rookie. We were not able to hold the recognition ceremony for our 2023 outstanding performers until February this year but here they are:

- Nicole Brown | Education Liaison: Leadership Award
- Kathleen Crook | Lead Case Manager: Outstanding Rookie Award
- Isobel Tate | Clinician: Motivational Award
- Todd Chidboy | Youth Development Technician: Dedication Award

Congratulations to all staff who stay committed to helping youth throughout and to those staff nominated and awarded for the 2023 Employee of the Year Awards.



## WHAT'S NEXT

- **ABRAXAS PATH** (Preparation for Adolescent Transition To Home & Partnering with Abraxas in The Community) is expanding to Lycoming County Pennsylvania.
- The **RECRUITING DEPARTMENT** will continue on their Spring College/University Tour visiting campuses throughout Pennsylvania and some in Maryland and West Virginia.
- **SOUTHWOOD INTERVENTIONS** continues to offer 24/7 admissions into their recently opened Stabilization and Transition Unit for adults with a history of substance abuse.
- **WOODRIDGE INTERVENTIONS** Woodridge OP is now offering EMDR trauma therapy.

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**ABRAXAS** | Youth & Family Services

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