

LIFEDesigns Letter

Fall 2014

Crawford Apartments Receives Lt. Governor Award

On October 1st, Crawford Apartments was awarded the Lt. Governor's Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing and Urban Community Development. The award is highly distinguished, and LIFEDesigns was truly honored to accept this award with partner Shalom Community Center in recognition of their joint effort in Crawford Apartments.

The award recognizes organizations that have made an exceptional contribution to community development and affordable housing in Indiana. The awards spotlights developments that best provide affordable options in rental units for those Hoosiers who are traditionally under-served. Winning entries demonstrate a commitment to affordable housing as well as innovation and a spirit of cooperation.



Crawford Apartments are permanent affordable housing units for our most vulnerable community members—people experiencing chronic homelessness and have a disability. Crawford has maintained an 87% retention rate since opening its doors in September 2013, which is extremely rare for this type of housing. Crawford supports its occupants by providing employment counseling, training and placement, continuing education, counseling, case management, addiction counseling and support, and nutrition and wellness education.

LIFEDesigns Halloween Masquerade Party



Come one, come all to LIFEDesigns annual Halloween Masquerade Party. The party will be held this year at the Moose Lodge. Come on out for a spooky night filled with delicious treats and fun activities. As usual, part of the fun will be watching three lucky winners get a pie in the face! LIFEDesigns office staff is currently holding a penny pitch to decide exactly who those winners will be. If there is someone you would love to see get pie-ed, bring your pennies to LIFEDesigns office on Winslow to "vote" for the winners. The Penny War continues through October 24 5:00 pm and funds donated benefit United Way Agencies, including LIFEDesigns.

Don't be afraid to come dressed in your spookiest costume, it's all part of the fun! Contact Stephanie Shelton sshelton@lifedesignsinc.org or (812) 332-9615 if you would like to volunteer or donate to support this fun activity for all LIFEDesigns customers, staff, donors, and supporters.

DSP Appreciation Week Celebrations

LIFEDesigns celebrated National DSP Appreciation Week during the month of September. Some of the exciting activities that LIFEDesigns staff planned for our amazing DSPs were holding a car wash in several different locations, delivering tasty treats to individual settings, a raffle with cash prizes, and generally thanking them for all the work that they do. Take a moment to read a few thoughts from our Direct Support Professionals and learn what makes them so great.

My Favorite Customer

My favorite customer can be a handful. The day he arrived at the office without taking his meds can only be described as an unmitigated disaster. He is usually difficult, but my favorite customer makes me laugh. He is a grade-A comedian with a mischievous smile and a knowing glint in his eyes. He's funnier than Jerry Seinfeld and he laughs harder than Santa Claus. But most of all, my favorite customer is a good person. Beneath his sly exterior lies a sincere young man with worries and dreams and a desire to live life to the fullest. Occasionally he and I break through that facetious wall and I get a glimpse into the kind, wonderful man I know he will eventually become. As his DSP, I do what I do for the chance to help him get there.

“Not Cut Out for It”

When I took a job at LIFEDesigns, I had no idea what I was getting myself in to. I had heard stories about behavioral issues and how much work it would be. I was told that I didn't have the patience for this job, and I wasn't cut out for it. After a year and a half as a LIFEDesigns DSP, I would like to say that I am good at my job. I wake up on days I work and I am

glad to see my customers and go with them into the community and participate in fun activities. I am happy to cook dinner with them. I love my job! I enjoy waking up on Saturdays and spending my weekend with the guys. Being a part of their lives has impacted mine in many ways. I feel more responsible, accountable, and like I am finally working a job where it matters if I don't show up. I am affecting more lives than just mine, and it is important to me that I feel like doing my job makes a difference. I have found fulfillment in this job, and I hope to have many more years here.

We're all the Same

Being a DSP has been humbling, uplifting and sobering. I have witnessed a customer start talking about his feelings for the first time, and another almost get arrested. I have been with my customers in line at the Community Kitchen and

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, and volunteered together for both places as well. I have shared the joy with a customer who started at Ivy Tech and I have witnessed the anxiety of full born obsessive activity. Sometimes I feel like I understand nothing and don't know what to do, and at other times I seem to say and do exactly the right thing. I wonder which dreams will be reached and which will be forgotten. I ponder the diversity of skills and challenges we all have and am humbly grateful for my lot in life. Why, oh why was my sister born with Downs? Only God knows. I am full of gratitude to LIFEDesigns for giving me the opportunity to learn more about myself and others.



Thank You!

LIFEDesigns Board

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Welcome New Board Members

LIFEDesigns welcomes five new board members this fall. Joining our amazing team of Board Members are Sarah Burgess, Adria Nassim, Christina Richardson, Amanda Roach, and Kelly Walsh. Each of them brings a unique set of skills and experiences to LIFEDesigns.

Sarah Burgess

Sarah is an expert in the accounting and financial field. She has previously volunteered at the Asian Children's Mission, and Smithville Christian Church Outreach Ministry. Sarah is committed to helping LIFEDesigns grow their ability to support the needs of people of all abilities in our communities. Sarah is a Senior Associate II with BKD, LLP.

Adria Nassim

Adria is an expert in the disability field, focusing in Autism and Learning Disabilities. She brings experience in Public Relations, Public Speaking, Marketing, Advocacy, Community Development, and Customer Service with her. Adria is committed to LIFEDesigns mission and has been an advocate and a guest lecture at Indiana University. Adria is an Alumni Student Ambassador, Marketing/PR with the College Internship Program.

Christina Richardson

Christina is an expert in the accounting and financial field. She has volunteered as a 4-H leader in the past, and comes to LIFEDesigns with a passion to increase our ability to support our customers towards independence. Christina is a Senior Associate, CPA - Tax with BKD, LLP.

Amanda Roach

Amanda is an expert in the Public Relations and Marketing Field. She is committed to LIFEDesigns mission and brings a great deal of experience in marketing, events, fundraising, and advertising with her. Amanda is Marketing/PR Manager at IU Health Bloomington Hospital.

Kelly Walsh

Kelly is an expert in the disability field. He brings knowledge and expertise in Human Resources, Fundraising, Advocacy, Conflict Resolution, team building, and customer service. Kelly has over 30 years of experience working with individuals with disabilities. Kelly is an Educator in the Richland Bean Blossom School Corporation.

October Awareness Month

Did you have any idea there were so many things to be aware of in one month? Most of us are familiar with October as being Breast Cancer Awareness month, because of all the pink. October is also the month that the National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) brings awareness to the cause by celebrating the *abilities* of people who have down syndrome and sharing stories about themselves.

LIFEDesigns is recognizing Down Syndrome Awareness month by participating in the Buddy Walks in Columbus and Monroe County. Show your support by taking the time to understand and hear the stories from self advocates. Learn more at ndss.org.

People with disabilities have the highest rate of unemployment across the nation. They are often overlooked or perhaps don't have access to the same "job hunting" tools that other people do. LIFEDesigns offers a supported employment program which provides support throughout the job search process.

During the month of October, LIFEDesigns is holding Mock Interview Day on October 30 to give our customers a chance to put their skills into practice. LIFEDesigns also participates in Disability Mentoring Day, a national program. If you would like to learn more or recommend a business partner, contact Brandi Hamilton (812) 332-9615 x227 or bhamilton@lifedesignsinc.org.

October Awarenesses

Down Syndrome
National Dyslexia
National Disability Employment
Spina Bifida
National Domestic Violence
National Book
National Work and Family
National Breast Cancer
National Cyber Security
American Archives
Italian History (NYC)
Black History (UK)
Filipino American History
LGBT History
National Bullying Prevention
Polish American Heritage
Pregnancy/Infant Loss
Pastors Appreciation
Brachial Plexus Injury
Dwarfism

LIFEDesigns mission is to partner with people of all ages and abilities to lead meaningful and active lives.

*Help us fulfill our mission by contributing in the ways that you can contribute. **Donate. Advocate. Volunteer.***

Contact Us (800) 875-9615

Main Office (812) 332-9615

200 E Winslow Rd
Bloomington, IN 47401

Columbus Office (812) 314-2233

1531 13th St Suite 2530
Columbus, IN 47201

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