



Welcome Kendon to Cascade Christian Home!



Cascade Christian Home (CCH) joyfully welcomes new resident Kendon! CCH Program Director Tara Boeckholt reports that the social 22-year-old has had virtually no issues adjusting so far and seems to be enjoying getting to know his new community.

Staff are working on establishing good communication systems with Kendon, who communicates through facial expressions and visual aids. Additional goals for Kendon include going on excursions and forming relationships in the wider community. Meeting this goal will be easier as the weather improves, since Kendon dislikes the cold! Right

now he appears to really enjoy being at home interacting with staff, and his broad, frequent smiles bring a warm, fun energy to Cascade Christian Home community.

Kendon lived with his family in Redmond, Washington, before moving north to Lynden. His family misses him dearly but feels very happy that he gets to have this new experience. Prior to the move, Kendon's father Mark renovated the bathroom that Kendon now uses at CCH. The new walk-in shower makes transitions and bathing easier and safer for Kendon and his supporters.

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Christmas is a favorite time of year at Cascade Connections. We did not hold our usual Christmas party last year due to the pandemic, but our community still found ways to celebrate. Cascade Christian Home residents did some cookie making. Many of those we serve enjoyed visits from a Cascade Connections Santa, who came to their home to deliver treats and gifts purchased from their wish lists!

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Mark and his wife Lisa kindly agreed to help us introduce Kendon to our community by answering the following questions about this new stage in his life.



How did you hear about Cascade Connections?

Mark and Lisa: We had been looking for a supported living home for Kendon through DSHS since June of 2019. Cascade Connections contacted us after receiving Kendon's packet via DSHS in the spring of 2021. We had the opportunity to connect with three other homes over the two-year time period, but we did not feel like they were a good fit for Kendon. When Tara reached out to us about the potential match, we were able to ask lots of questions and, due to the distance, were able to set up a Zoom call to tour the home and meet some of the other caregivers. After years of searching, we felt instantly at ease that we had found the extended family for our son.

Will you share a little bit about Kendon's personality?

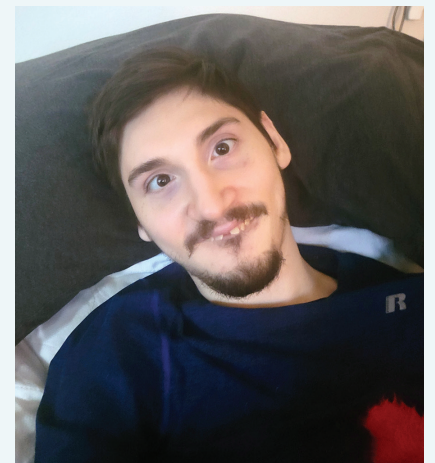
Mark and Lisa: Kendon is a very social and fun-loving guy. He always loved going to school, and he thrives in environments with lots of action. Whether it's watching Spongebob or listening to music, he is always up for fun with his friends. The last two years during the pandemic have been tough for him as we know he missed out on so much social interaction with his peers. But in the end, we truly believe that the wait was worth it and led us to Cascade Connections. We couldn't feel more comfortable with the transition. The wonderful staff and residents make it feel like a big, happy, loving family.

In what ways do you think the new group living environment will be good for Kendon?

Mark and Lisa: Our other two children went off to college to experience life and meet new people. We truly feel that Kendon is getting that opportunity now as well. He lives in a home with his peers, has amazing caregivers, and is making new memories. He is also in a wonderful setting where he can experience so many things that he would not have been able to have at home. As hard as it is to not have him with us every day, we truly believe he is exactly where he needs to be right now.

How have your own lives changed with Kendon's move to Cascade Christian Home?

Mark and Lisa: It was a bittersweet transition for us when Kendon moved to Cascade Christian Home. I think it was a good fit for everyone, but that didn't make it any easier for us as parents. Saying goodbye is hard! But thankfully the staff have been so loving and supportive. We don't have to worry about Kendon's care because we know he is in amazing hands. The smiling photos we get from the staff are priceless and we couldn't be happier with our decision.



Thank you so much, Mark and Lisa! The Cascade Connections community warmly welcomes your family into ours.

Upcoming Stakeholder Meeting - April 28th



As a nonprofit organization focused on community service, we make it a priority to find out what our community wants and needs. We invite you to attend our virtual stakeholder meeting **at 6:30 pm on April 28, 2022.**

Board members, community partners, and any other stakeholders or interested community members.

The meeting will last up to 1.5 hours and will begin with a general introduction and update from Executive Director George Beanblossom and Board President Joe Tejada, followed by brief reports from our Financial Director, Training Program Director, Residential Operations Manager, and Administrator of Vocational Services. The Executive Director will then review the progress we have made on our strategic plan for 2018-2022. He will also discuss findings from our recent community satisfaction survey, explaining how these findings will influence our next strategic plan.

Zoom meeting link:

https://bit.ly/cc_stakeholder_meeting

Everyone is invited, including people we serve and their families, as well as Cascade Connections donors, staff,

Cascade Connections wants to know how we can better serve our community, and we'd love to get your opinion! Non-staff community members who have not yet filled out our **Community Satisfaction Survey** should take a few minutes to do so **by April 15**. Here is the survey link: <https://bit.ly/3NHZ59o>

This brief survey assesses your satisfaction with our staff and the work we're doing. The survey also invites you to share any ideas you have for improving or expanding the services we offer. Your feedback helps to guide Cascade Connections' strategic planning, policies, programming, and service offerings.

We look forward to receiving your survey answers and seeing you at the stakeholder meeting on April 28th!

Board Service Opportunities Are Available!



The Cascade Connections Board of Directors currently seeks new Board members! Our volunteer Board supports and guides our organization and our work in the community. The Board helps to ensure that Cascade Connections delivers results, meets high ethical standards, and appropriately responds to change.

We especially welcome volunteers talented in strategy, forecasting, management, organizational leadership, or advocacy. We also would love to hear from individuals with passion for the disabilities field and community. Disability scholars, advocates, and leaders of partner organizations could be great additions to our Board.

Healthcare professionals, community leaders, fundraisers, and philanthropists make excellent Board members.

Board service commitments include attending a monthly board meeting, serving on a committee, and advocating among peers and the wider community. Our Board members also make a personal, charitable contribution to the best of their ability.

Those interested in being considered for our board should read the Statement of Faith and Board of Directors Requirements (<https://cascadeconnections.org/about-us/board-of-directors-requirements/>) and contact George Beanblossom at **(360) 714-9355 ext. 1107** or gbeanblossom@ccsite.org.

Reflections from Executive Director George Beanblossom



Last year (2021), our agency celebrated providing services for 41 years. Back in 2020, we had hoped to have an open house at Cascade Christian Home celebrating our 40th anniversary, but all our plans changed due to the pandemic. At the beginning of 2021, people were glad 2020 was over. However, 2021 was what I refer to as “the year that wasn’t” because we didn’t get to see a lot of our fellow team members and couldn’t have picnics, a Christmas party, or other in-person social gatherings.

I’ve had some very hard years over the past 41, but 2021 was the hardest yet. Many of us lost friends or family members. Our society faced considerable political division and unrest, including rioting. The Nooksack River flooded and destroyed many local homes. The pandemic continued to ruin many people’s livelihoods.

Amidst all of this adversity, however, some good things did happen. First of all, we survived! The hard times made us stronger, helping us appreciate the good times and focus on what is truly important. All of the uncertainty and turmoil reinforced for me the fact that people, not material possessions, are what really matter. Faith is only as good as the object of that faith. If we trust in possessions, crises such as flooding or pandemics can threaten our faith as well as our possessions.

Life on this planet is short, so we need to live one day at a time because that is all that we have. We really do not control anything – God does. A favorite Bible passage I hold on to during these difficult times comes from James 1:2-4: “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” The joy referenced here is not happiness, but the knowing that all will be well – even when we don’t understand how. “Steadfastness” means being able to stand firm in the face of the many trials that life brings.

Last year we lost many staff, which meant that many of our remaining staff had to work extra shifts to support the people we have the privilege to serve. Cascade Connections staff have stepped up heroically during these trying times, showing patience and fortitude as they support those we serve and keep our organization afloat. I am deeply proud of each member of our staff and want to express my heartfelt appreciation! To honor our hardworking team, Cascade Connections celebrated our first Employee Recognition month in June 2021, and we plan to hold similar festivities this coming summer.



I am extremely saddened that many other agencies have closed due to staffing shortages and that many people who need services lost those supports.

However, I’m grateful that we as an agency have remained steadfast despite not knowing, some days, how we were going to manage. Somehow we did it, one day at a time. People pitched in and made things work. Was it perfect? No! Some things we thought were important got pushed aside to meet others’ needs. However, what most needed doing did get done.

Watching this community rise to the occasion continually inspires me and illuminates the eternal nature and value of all people. Hopefully this next year will be a year of rebuilding and refocusing. One step and one day at a time, we will get through this difficult time together and – God willing – prepare for the next 40 years!



Staffing Shortage Persists

Cascade Connections continues to suffer from a staffing shortage that reflects both nationwide and statewide employment trends. Washington's shortage is about twice as severe as the national caregiver shortage. During fall of 2021, 60% of Washington State's healthcare facilities experienced a caregiver shortage.

Our team has shown up heroically in the face of various pandemic challenges, but need for our services remains higher than we can meet. In 2021, we had to discontinue services for many people we serve due to insufficient staff numbers. Even still, staff and managers are working overtime and getting burnt out. While Cascade Connections has maintained a staff turnover rate below the state average, everyone is feeling the impact.

In an attempt to acquire and retain staff, Cascade Connections has continued its recent trend of raising wages and hiring bonuses. In the last few months alone, wages for many positions have increased by over \$1.00/hour.

This winter, bonuses for new hires doubled from \$500 to \$1,000 for all positions. We also offer \$1,000 referral bonuses to existing staff who connect us with applicants who end up working for us.

Please reach out to us at jobs@ccsite.org if you or anyone you know can join our team! We have multiple full-time and part-time positions with varying hours and shift lengths open at this time. Employees receive competitive pay and benefits packages, paid training, and career advancement opportunities.

Thank you for partnering with us to get the word out there! We appreciate any staff recruitment assistance or prayers you can provide during our time of need.

Learn more about our available positions and access our application portal at:

<https://csscc.sentrchr.com/>

Upcoming Fundraising Campaigns

Panda Express Community Fundraiser



On **Tuesday, April 26th**, you can support Cascade Connections and get a tasty meal as Cascade Connections partners with Panda Express for our second virtual fundraiser together. Online orders may be made from Panda Express locations nationwide, so please take a moment to share this fundraiser with friends and family near and far!

During open hours on April 26th, any Panda Express restaurant will donate 28% of your online food order to Cascade Connections. You just need to **enter VFR906918 into the Fundraiser Code box during online checkout**. This option does not apply to in-store orders, so please place your order online (for pick-up or delivery) at order.pandaexpress.com or via the Panda Express mobile app. See this link for more offer details: <https://bit.ly/3ovGihS>

Haggen "Inspiring Change Together" Fundraising Campaign



Haggen has selected Cascade Connections as a recipient of funds from the upcoming Haggen - Inspiring Change Together 2022 fundraising campaign, which will run from **June 15 through August 9, 2022**.

Put on by the Haggen Foundation, this fundraiser focuses on creating inclusive communities to which all people can belong and contribute. The last Inspiring Change Together fundraiser (in 2021) generated \$6,000 for Cascade Connections! We're so grateful to Haggen for continually supporting people with developmental disabilities. Thank you, Haggen, for being such a generous and reliable community partner! The donations and vocational opportunities you provide make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve, and we're honored to inspire change together with you.

More details about this fundraising campaign will be announced in the next newsletter!

Cascade Connections Selects Elenbaas Country Store as Employer of the Quarter



Cascade Connections' Vocational Services Program has chosen Elenbaas Country Store in Everson as our Employer of the Quarter for Spring 2022! An agricultural cooperative, Elenbaas has provided quality livestock feeds to local farms since 1939.



In October of 2021, the store hired Riley, a helpful, social young man who receives Vocational Services from Cascade Connections. Elenbaas management and staff already knew Riley from his prior work-training experience through Nooksack

Valley High School's Community Transition Services program. Store Manager Leo Cana, who has a family friend with developmental disabilities, says he was eager to employ Riley: "I wanted to give an opportunity to people who need experience. Somebody gave me a chance and now I have sympathy."

Riley is a dependable employee. He enjoys his work and is helpful, easy to be around, and careful to follow directions. Riley's cleaning and maintenance duties include stocking shelves, vacuuming and sweeping floors, keeping the parking lot tidy, and collecting garbage throughout the business. Leo says that Riley's "a good worker, and funny!" and "if he misses a day, staff definitely notice." A staff member added, "I don't need to clean on the days he's here."

With the Everson Elenbaas Country Store's recent expansion, there are now more services and inventory offered and more need for Riley's help. Since being hired, Riley has grown in his duties and enjoys taking on more and more tasks. Riley's incredibly supportive parents help Riley work on relevant skills at home. This support, along with job coaching

from Employment Specialist Drew Jamison, has contributed to Riley's success at Elenbaas. Kim Sexton, Riley's mother and guardian, says that "Drew has done a really good job with Riley. He is a gentle soul, calm and patient with Riley."



Kim also appreciates the supportive work environment at Elenbaas: "Riley gets positive feedback there; the people are friendly... They're really nice and happy he is there." Riley's presence clearly makes a difference at Elenbaas, and Kim reports that having a job means a lot to Riley: "I think he's proud of himself when he gets a paycheck. Riley likes to get a check with his name on it."

Congratulations to Elenbaas Country Store on creating an inclusive work environment, earning Employee of the Quarter, and finding a great employee! Cascade Connections looks forward to continuing to partner with you in creating opportunities for everyone.

Congratulations to Retirees Mark and Larry!



Mark has been a strong member of Cascade Connections Commercial Operations for over 20 years! During his long tenure with us, Mark has served a diverse array of businesses and agencies. Whatcom Transportation Authority, Opportunity Council, Bellingham

Food Bank, and the Department of Homeland Security have all benefitted from Mark's contributions. He has been a great coworker and a dedicated employee with a strong work ethic. Congratulations on your well-deserved retirement, Mark!



Larry also has been with Cascade Connections for over 20 years. He joined the Commercial Operations Department in August of 2010, when he accepted a position on the Border custodial crew that cleans Sumas, Lynden, and Blaine truck crossing stations. Larry quickly

became a staple crew member known for his hard work, quick wit, entertaining personality, and ability to bond with his co-workers. Congratulations, Larry, and best wishes for your retirement. Vocational Services staff and the custodial crew will miss you very much.

End-of-Year Donation Report

Toward the end of 2021, Cascade Connections invited you to donate funds to community members facing difficulties – including displacement from homes devastated by the Nooksack River floods this November. Many of you generously answered our call by donating money and designating it for use wherever it might be most needed.

We want you to know that your donations made a big difference to several people facing housing instability! Some of your contributions purchased a twin bed frame, sheets, and towels for someone we serve who was transitioning to a home after living on the street. Additional funds went to support three staff members whose homes were badly damaged by flooding.

We also want to thank those who donated Christmas gifts to people we serve! Many of you bought gifts from the

Amazon Wish List, which was created and maintained by our community partner Christ the King Church (CTK) Bellingham (<https://www.ctk.church/bellingham/>).



We warmly thank CTK Bellingham and all of our donors for their generosity! Your gifts provided love and support to your neighbors here in Whatcom County. Thank you for helping bring the year 2021 to a close with compassion and gratitude.

Thank You to Our Donors!

Donations From Businesses:

AmazonSmile Foundation, Eagle Mill Farm, Expedia Group, Inc., Facebook, GiveBIG WA, Harbor Lands Co, Network for Good, Western Concrete Pumping, Inc.

Donations From Foundations and Churches:

Bethel Christian Reformed Church, First Christian Reformed Church Lynden, Hope In Christ Church, Nooksack Valley Reformed Church, Third Christian Reformed Church

Memorial Donations in Honor of Ruth Biesheuvell:

Richard Biesheuvell, Jo Ann and Hank Roorda, Joyce Zilstra

Memorial Donations in Honor of Peter Godersky:

Anthony and Janet Ingraffea, Judy Wallace, Larry and Janice Ziels

Donation in Gratitude of Don Bayne:

Phil & Christine Gubbins

Special thanks to the dozens of other individuals and businesses who have donated since November 2021!

Return Service Requested

Please visit us on the web at
cascadeconnections.org
to learn more.



[cascadeconnections](https://www.facebook.com/cascadeconnections) [cascade_connections](https://www.instagram.com/cascade_connections)

Spring 2022 Newsletter

Cascade Connections

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We Are Hiring!

View the current openings here:
csscc.sentrchr.com

Out and About!



Spring has sprung! On a recent trip to a local farm, Hollyann got to experience one of the greatest delights available at this time of year: petting baby goats! She also saw a dog and some chickens before taking a leisurely drive home. As you can see, the farm animals brought a beautiful smile to her face.

Randy and Haley recently took a trip to the Ruckus Room Arcade and Fun Center in downtown Bellingham. Haley tried her hand at skee-ball and hit the jackpot on the Big Bass Wheel! They both won numerous prizes and promised to beat high scores on their next visit.



Correction to Previous Newsletter: The Fall/Winter 2021 Newsletter incorrectly listed a donation from Phil and Christine Gubbins as a "Memorial Donation in Honor of Don Bain." The donation should have been listed as "In Gratitude of Don Bayne" rather than as a memorial donation. We apologize for this error and are glad to report that Don Bayne remains alive and well!



E-Newsletter

You can get this newsletter in your email! To sign up, go to:

cascadeconnections.org/newsletters