



Growing Together Through COVID-19



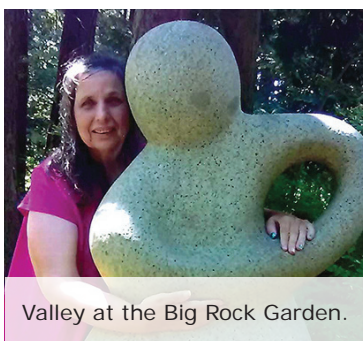
Dan enjoying being outside and the sun.

This past year has been a challenging time filled with new obstacles that have come with many blessings in disguise and new opportunities for us to learn from. Cascade Connections staff have been continuing to take serious precautions in order to protect our clients and themselves while providing services. At the same time, our staff have also adjusted to working remotely and adapted new projects for all of our departments to take on while business restrictions were in place.

Despite the psychological and emotional impact COVID-19 has had, Cascade Connections has not missed a beat, and staff members and clients were able to find ways to have fun through new hobbies and activities.



Haley smiling with her new cutting boards.



Valley at the Big Rock Garden.



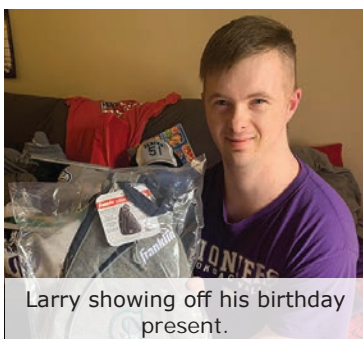
Heather and Hannah during the spirit week.



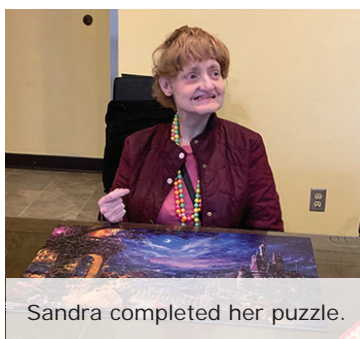
Peggy and Amanda making sugar cookies.



Debra working on her puzzle.



Larry showing off his birthday present.



Sandra completed her puzzle.



Teri participating in a scavenger hunt.

Thank You to Our Donors

Donations From Businesses:

AmazonSmile, Eaglemill Farms, Facebook, Harbor Lands Co, Kroger, RPM Services, Salesforce, Saturna Capital

Donations From Foundations and Churches:

Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Christ the King Community Church, First Christian Reformed Church, First Reformed Church, Hope In Christ Church, Lynden Lions Club, Nooksack Valley American Reformed Church, Nooksack Valley Reformed Church, Third Christian Reformed Church

Memorial Donation in Honor of Lucas Marjon:

Louis Marjon

Memorial Donation in Honor of Daryl Kooy:

Alvin & Donna Bajema, Irene Beld, Betty Kaemingk, Henrietta Kok, Blaine & Ardelle Kooy, Don & Bernice Kooy, Grace Mulder, Bernice Vanderpol, Sherwin & Carolyn Vanmersbergen

Special thanks to the dozens of other individuals who donated since October 2020.

Cascade Connections Supported Living Update

By Nikki Harangozo (Kilmer)

– Cascade Connections Supported Living Area Manager



Nikki Harangozo (Kilmer)
Area Manager (Float)

On behalf of Cascade Connections Supported Living, I am excited to share some structural changes we have made in this new year.

Prior to March 2019, Cascade Connections operated two separate

Supported Living programs; Cascade Supported Living Lynden and Supported Living Bellingham.

After much consideration, we merged those two separate programs together to create Cascade Connections Supported Living or CCSL for short. In doing that, we restructured many of our internal processes. Our hope and goal in doing this was to ensure the highest quality of care for those we support in our program while providing the best possible structure for our employees. Our top priorities when making changes is our clients, employees, and making sure whatever we change is in their best interests.

Overall, we have been very pleased with the results of merging and restructuring. When we initially merged, we identified and created teams by location. We promoted a manager to oversee a specific team and had all of the teams under one director. It had become clear that if we wanted to continue providing quality care and expand our services, we would need more management for teams than one director can provide. After many planning sessions, we decided that in lieu of having one director over all of CCSL that we would also create an Area Manager position for each area. CCSL will still be one program; however, it is now managed by three Area Managers. Each Area Manager oversees 2-3 sites. Each site has a Site Manager overseeing the staff, client concerns, and day to day operations.

Another significant position change we are making is to dissolve the Direct Support Advocate position and have two separate positions instead; Assistant Site Manager

and Direct Support Lead. The paperwork and caseload for 3-4 clients will be managed by the Assistant Site Manager while the rest of the on-site duties will be delegated to the Direct Support Lead who will be working closely with the Assistant Site Manager. Over the years, the paperwork requirements have increased and the states expectations are now far exceeding what the Direct Support Advocate position was originally designed for. We found that as client plans have become more complex, it took a great deal of training and experience to manage everything. We felt that it would be better to simplify the Direct Support Advocate position to two separate positions.

We are excited to see how these changes help us ensure quality care and the high standard for services that Cascade Connections is known for.



Jake Huyette
Area Manager (Bellingham)

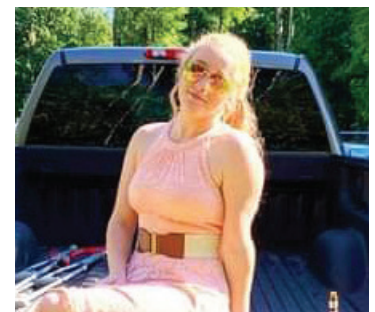
It has been an honor and joy to serve as the CCSL Program Director for the last two years. I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to work with so many wonderful staff, clients and their families.

While I will miss this role in

certain ways, I am excited to see Jake Huyette (Bellingham Area Manager), Danielle Di Tommaso (West Lynden Area Manager), and Rita Boeckholt (East Lynden Area Manager) take on these new roles. We are confident that these three will exceed our expectations.



Danielle Di Tommaso
Area Manager (West Lynden)



Rita Boeckholt
Area Manager (East Lynden)

Thank you in advance for your patience during this process. We anticipate bumps along the way, and we are eager for the opportunity to learn from them.

Progress in Ending Subminimum Wage



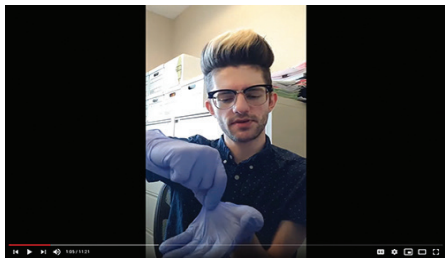
The 2021 Washington State legislative session is being held virtually from January through April this year. Cascade Connections' Vocational Services client, Elvira, and staff, Aaron Dickson, recently met with our six local legislators as part of the Community Employment Alliance's "Employment for All Advocacy Day" event. We are excited to report that one of our priority bills is making great progress. Senate Bill 5284 would eliminate the subminimum wage for individuals with disabilities by 2023. If this bill passes, it would mean that all individuals with disabilities in Washington State would be paid minimum wage or higher for their labor. On February 18th, the Washington State Senate passed this bill 42-7, sending it to the House of Representatives. We are close to making subminimum wage a thing of the past!

Contact Your Legislators

You can make a difference by contacting your legislators to pass Senate Bill 5284. To find contact information for your representatives, you can visit <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>

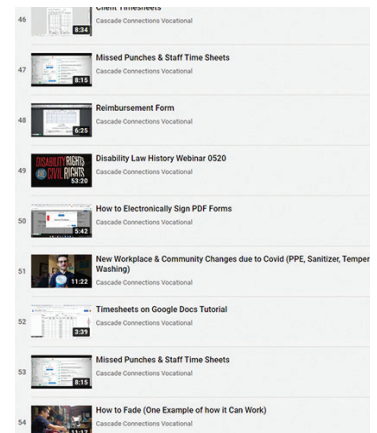
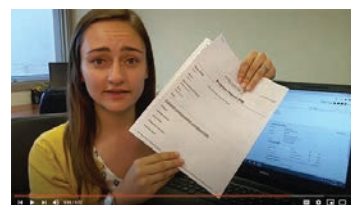
Vocational Services' New YouTube Channel

When the state's stay-at-home order came down in March 2020, Cascade Connections' Vocational Services



had to quickly adapt to continue its work primarily in a virtual world. Staff took the opportunity to develop a Cascade Vocational YouTube

channel, containing nearly 100 training videos as of February 2021. The channel began with videos about COVID-19 safety such as proper handwashing and mask wearing while expanding to include a wider range of topics. Some video playlists include videos to help new staff get orientated to the basics such as our database, email service, and logging requirements. While other video playlists contain more in-depth training such as a team training held over Zoom to learn and role-play skills for developing jobs for our job-seekers. From all of this, the Cascade Connections Vocational Services now regularly utilizes these videos with new as well as seasoned staff



members. While this last year has been difficult for us all, this great new tool is a silver lining that will be of good use for years to come!



E-Newsletter Subscription

You can now get this newsletter in your email!

To sign up, go to:

www.cascadeconnections.org/newsletters

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)

Winter/Spring 2021 Newsletter

Cascade Connections

PO Box 3174
Ferndale, WA 98248
360-714-9355
cascadeconnections.org

Board of Directors

Joe Tejeda, *President*
Becky Kirkland, *Vice President*
Michael Adams, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Suzanne Hansen, *Vicar*
Mark Hildebrand
Larry Stegink

We Are Hiring!

View the current openings here:
csscc.sentrchr.com

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic

In February and March 2021, Cascade Connections' clients and staff had the opportunity to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. This marks an extraordinary and exciting time for many as we turn a page closer to the end of this pandemic. We are so grateful for all of the doctors and scientists that have made this day a reality. Their courage and dedication to the well-being of the community has been a shining example for Cascade Connections to follow as we continue to safely provide our clients with care during these challenging times.

