Reframing Thanksgiving

How will you celebrate Thanksgiving? Sure, the holidays will look different this year but we still can celebrate. We are all aware of the CDC guidelines to keep us safe but what are some creative ways to spend time with loved ones?

- Have a small dinner with only the people who live in your household.
- Prepare and deliver traditional family recipes for family and neighbors.
- Have a virtual dinner and share recipes with friends and family.
- Watch sporting events, parades, and movies from home or better still, the backyard.
- Visit pumpkin patches, orchards, corn mazes using hand sanitizer before touching pumpkins or picking apples. Social distance, wear a mask, and wash your hands.

Are you finding it hard to be thankful? In the midst of a pandemic and surreal election season all we have to do is look around to find things to be thankful for. If you are reading this, you can be thankful for life and employment. You can be thankful for family and friends who are still here. You can be thankful for health. You can be thankful if you and/or family members haven’t had COVID-19 or have had it and survived. When all of this gets to be too much, pause and reflect. Recall the times when it was darkest before dawn. Just as day always breaks, storms always pass. Change your perspective. Focus on what you do have and what you can do. Lend a helping hand to someone in need and check on each other. Plan ahead to make the holidays special and safe. We will get through this together.
Steve Farmer, JHDC Superintendent

Gone too soon hardly grasps our collective DDS sentiment. Remembering a great colleague and friend from the heart and through the eyes of his JHDC family.

Mr. Farmer had the heart of a servant. Anytime he saw me in laundry he would ask if I needed some help. Anytime he saw me out and about on campus he would ask if I needed help. He was the superintendent and thought nothing of offering to help with laundry or pick up trash on the sidewalk. He loved to help others and when you love what you do it shows in the way you work. In everything I ever saw him do in or around this campus he did it with an excellent spirit. - AJH

Allie J Hooks, Rehabilitation Instructor

Mr. Farmer was not only a great supervisor but was also a strong mentor. He was objective and fair. He had expectations of a high quality of care and job performance. I have a unique style of therapy (as do most therapists) and he allowed me to use my particular style of therapy and the individuals benefited. He was not a micromanager but always knew the projects I was working on and was always available. He was also my spiritual mentor. If I had a spiritual question I could not answer, he was happy to help me. He was so wise in that he would answer my question by asking me questions and in the end, he led me to answer my own question. He was such a good, honest, caring, giving and wise man that will be missed by so many. He definitely left his mark on this world. I pray I can make at least half the difference that Mr. Farmer left on this world.

Katrina Weir, Clinical Speech Pathologist/Director of Rehab
As I am still trying to process the loss of my friend, Steve Farmer, I am sad but I also have had some funny conversations with coworkers about his antics that he would do to make us laugh and keep our work environment constantly upbeat. That was his personality. He was always trying to get a laugh from one of us, and then he would laugh at himself after he got us to laugh...which of course would make us laugh harder. I can remember one time (well lots of times, but one in particular comes to mind) when we were in the car driving to Little Rock for a meeting. He began telling me a joke about Jesus walking into a bar and turning the water into wine. I won’t go all the way into it but it was so funny that he ran off the road because he was laughing so hard. We started calling it a Christian joke. But then after that, every time he would come in and start telling me a joke, he’d say “he, he, I have a Christian joke for you” and it became an everyday thing...you had to be there. Steve was my friend, he was my mentor, he was my accomplice in crime, he was so many things to so many people, including our residents. They miss him so much and we do too. Go rest high on that mountain my friend.

Diane Keith, DHS Program Manager

Steve was always wanting to make sure everyone had what they needed. He would always ask if we were ok or if we needed anything. One day he even came by and helped decorate birthday cakes because we had 4 birthday cakes to decorate and were shorthanded. He was very supportive of JHDC staff and would always encourage us to do our best and think of ways to improve the way we care for our residents.

Angela Skinner, Director of Dietary Services/Dietitian
September was celebrated with several monthly activities:

**Julie Wilhelm** (Nurse Manager) and **Tiffin Fitzhugh** (Infection Control Nurse) received the Susan Burton Team Excellence Awards 2020 Innovation 1st & 2nd Quarter Winner PPE Task Force. Programming won the Patriotic quiz for Patriotism. **Linda Scales** (Asst. Superintendent) won the sports quiz for Sports Week. In the training areas, residents learned about the Friends of the Forest in Arkansas and colored pages about the animals.

Submitted by Deb Wilson, Volunteer Program Coordinator
DDS received the First and Second Quarter Susan Burton Team Excellence Awards for Program Improvement for Good Neighbor Project

Being a Good Neighbor: COVID-19 Client Support Command Center: As the pandemic began, people were encouraged to stay home and limit contact with others. Those with compromised immune systems and certain medical conditions were at a higher risk of serious complications, and many were concerned about accessing in-person services or going out in public. Thousands of DHS clients fit in this category, and the Department wanted to make sure they were being taken care of, to make sure they had food and medicine and essential services. More than 200 staff from six DHS divisions and offices worked quickly to stand up a call center to check in on vulnerable clients to ensure their needs were being met, their service providers were showing up, and that they could get connected to resources when needs arose. The command center also included a social media outreach campaign and new client-focused web pages to connect clients to resources during COVID. The command center staff personally made more than 30,000 calls per week, often troubleshooting issues, resolving problems, getting supplies delivered, and creating new connections to resources to help clients. This is an incredible accomplishment and it shows how seriously DHS staff takes their jobs of protecting the vulnerable.
2020 Program Improvement Team

Meet Tammy Rose, DDS Program Administrator

A commitment to a Life of Service~

Tammy has been with DDS 2 years and has 16 years total service with the State of Arkansas. She actively serves the community and was recently elected At Large Director of the North Little Rock Junior League. Congratulations Tammy!

Tammy Rose was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. She graduated high school from J.A. Fair and then went on to pursue a college education from Arkansas State University. While attending Arkansas State, she completed an Associate’s degree in General Studies and earned a Bachelor’s degree in Health Science with a concentration in Health Promotion. After completing her education at Arkansas State, she moved back to Little Rock and enrolled at a satellite location of Webster University. She obtained two Master’s degrees: one in Health Care Administration and the other in Management and Leadership.

Tammy is a mother of three children whom she prides in raising. Germantown High School’s first black history play was written and produced by her oldest son. Her two younger children are both honor students.

Tammy began her work experience at the age of sixteen. In February 2020, she celebrated sixteen years of service with the State of Arkansas. Currently, she is a Program Administrator with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities Services. As a Program Administrator, she oversees the Autism program.

Tammy also has a heart for helping others and loves to serve in the community. She is a member of the Order of Eastern Star, the At-Large Director of The Junior League of North Little Rock, and a member of Chi Eta Omega’s chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her hobbies include traveling, gardening, and meditating. She is also eager to learn new tasks, have opportunities to develop herself, and working with others. She is a member of New Life Church and her favorite scripture is found in Psalms 46:10

“Be still and know that I am God.”
Coming up at DHS

DHS Veterans Day Virtual Event

11/9/2020

Just in time for the holiday season, The Blue Umbrella now offers gift certificates in any amount. A gift certificate makes a great gift for a co-worker or friend and provides another way for customers to support the mission of The Blue Umbrella. Stop by soon!

Submitted by Erin Skrodenis, DDS Blue Umbrella Store Manager

Comments, Suggestions, and Q&A

What would you like to learn more about or see featured? Please send all comments, suggestions, and Q&A to Yvette.swift@dhs.arkansas.gov by the 15th of each month.