

March / April 2022

OPEN CIRCLE OF HOPKINS

# community news



cassia

AN AUGUSTANA/ELIM AFFILIATION

Serving all by following One

## Joy on the Daily!

It's hard to believe it's been four months since I had the great privilege of joining Open Circle as the Center Director. By now I've mastered the names of all the members, but still need reminders for family members.

I remain as excited about the Open Circle Community as I did from day one. Everyday I have the great pleasure of witnessing joy in action. Seeing our members immersed in dynamic programming and interacting with compassionate staff and welcoming peers, reinforces what a special place Open Circle is for our members. Our community of Caregivers/Families can be reassured that your special person has landed in a spot where they are safe, welcomed and can thrive. Please have peace of mind and enjoy the respite time to replenish.

I've learned in my short time here that it can be a little frustrating for Caregivers and Family Members to have their loved one return from their Open Circle day and not be able to recall many details. While you may find solace in their overall happiness with coming to Open Circle, it's understood you'd like to know more. I encourage you to visit our Facebook page, where we include weekly postings highlighting activities and programs. We also email a monthly program calendar and menu (also available in paper in our entry way). In addition, we will feature highlights in this newsletter if you miss our Facebook posts.

I'm also very excited to share news about our mural project. Upon arriving at OC, I recognized an opportunity for us to share what our community is about on our very bare exterior walls. Our interns have helped launch the process with an inside mural project. In the coming months you may be called on to help participate—stay tuned.

If we haven't yet met, whether you are new to Open Circle or have been part of the community for a while, please stop by my office to say hello or for assistance in addressing any questions or concerns you may have.

I am honored to be part of the Open Circle Community and am here to serve your needs.

Terri Joski-Lang, Center Director



**Please visit our Facebook page and like us. You will then be able to see first hand the wonderful programming your loved ones experience on a daily basis.**

<https://www.facebook.com/OpenCircleAdultDayServices>

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## Academic Outreach—Interns

Open Circle Adult Day Services would like to provide you with an overview of our Academic Outreach Program, an important facet of our organization's commitment to providing the highest quality person centered service.

In line with our community minded approach to strengthening our activity program, Open Circle developed the Academic Outreach initiative in 2011; a mutually beneficial partnership developed with several leading colleges and universities. Over the last ten years this initiative has served several hundred students and provided thousands of hours of direct student support and engagement for our membership. Student interns representing a



broad range of academic programs serve to compliment and diversify our activity calendar and enrich our daily programming with their unique backgrounds, skill sets and life experiences. Additionally, each internship experience with Open Circle serves to provide

our future health care and social services professionals with valuable insight so they may become more successful advocates for the older adult population.

Currently Open Circle is actively partnering with several advanced academic programs, including; Adler Art Therapy from Alfred Adler Graduate School, Occupational Therapy from the University of Minnesota and Anoka Technical College, Clinical Social Work from St Thomas University and Human Service's Capstone from North Hennepin Community College.

While it may be hard to say good bye when internships end, we are also very fortunate to have former interns join our staff. They love their experience and our members so much they want to continue on with Open Circle. We benefit immensely by their talents and familiarity with our community. This year we have had Kelsi Johnson, OT student from the U of M and Penni Xiong, Human Services Capstone student from North Hennepin Community College, join us as part-time Program Coordinators. We also have recent interns, Sam Brinkhaus Spolar, U of M OT student and Meredith Cooley, OTA student from Anoka Technical College return as weekly volunteers.

In addition, Baylee Frisch, former Adler intern, recently joined our team as a Lead Program Coordinator.

## Welcome New Team Members

**Baylee Frisch, Lead Program Coordinator**— She is a soon-to-be art therapist and clinical counselor and graduate of Adler Graduate School. She enjoys spending time with family, friends, and dogs. Baylee also loves being outdoors, playing games, and finding ways to be creative. In her spare time she leads several art groups with older adult populations.



**Heather West, Dietary Aide / CAN**—Heather is a returning staff member, having worked with OC previously for a number of years. She is the mother of two young adults who enjoys spending time with them as much as possible. She has been caregiving since she was 16 years old and loves everything about working with seniors and giving back with compassion and respect.



Please join us in welcoming Baylee and Heather to the Open Circle of Hopkins team!

## Community Connections

Open Circle enjoys a proud heritage of service to others. Through the pursuit of community service projects with schools, charities and non-profit groups, we demonstrate an authentic commitment to the health and wellness of the greater community.

This year with your help we assembled care packages and sent letters of support to deployed troops. We recently answered the callout to send notes of appreciation recognizing Allina healthcare workers and all their efforts over this pandemic. Below you will see Members creating thank you cards and writing messages of thanks.





## OC Mural Project

Hats off to our intern, Meredith for launching our inside mural project. Meredith recognized a very void gray wall in our lounge and proposed a wall mural project. It went hand in hand with our bigger vision for an exterior mural wall project coming this summer. Our goal is to express our Open Circle values and what we mean to our community of members, family, staff, volunteers, interns and other community partners.



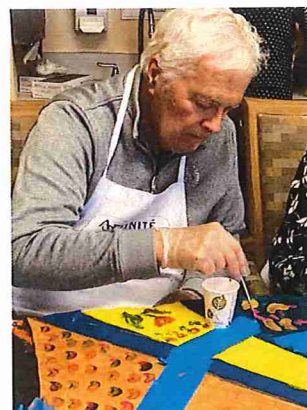
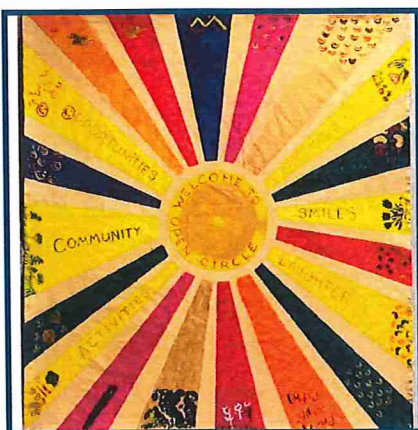
The inside mural started with a small focus group of members discussing what Open Circle meant to each of them. They then brainstormed how to express their words in a simple, doable mural design that would be welcoming and include participation by all interested members. They voted and the sun design was the winner.



The canvas was sketched and the painting began with sun rays, words and detailed designs.



The beautiful mural now welcomes us each day filling our lounge with brightness and joy.



## Hmong Culture with Penni

Penni and OTA intern, Jean, shared the historical background and culture of the Hmong people. Some of the highlights included, the Hmong origins, emigrations, dialects, clothing, lifestyle, and various food intertwined into Hmong culture.



One of the most engaging sections of the program included the lifestyle and clothing items. Members were able to touch the different fabrics while learning about the differentiation of each Hmong group and dialect.



Penni's grandmother's traditional wedding dress will always hold sentimental value because of the amount of time and effort put into it. It was not only hand sewn, but also took nearly one year to complete.

## Volunteer Spotlight Thank you Nancy!

When Nancy Froehlig first came to Open Circle, she came to enroll her husband Bob in our program. Little did we know how important she would be to our program? Immediately she started "helping out." Yes, she already had plenty to do as a full time caregiver, but with Nancy there is always room for another person. She started by seeing to the details of the annual Spaghetti Dinner. How nice to have those authentic checked table clothes and cheese shakers! Where did she find the time to go to every dollar store in a three county radius, so we had enough to cover all the tables.

In 2009 Nancy's life changed profoundly when Bob passed away. Many people find it difficult to walk in the door of Open Circle after such a loss. There was Bob's chair and even a painting of his hand reaching to pet Roxy the therapy dog. She didn't hesitate and in 2009 she became a regular volunteer. In particular, Nancy was a faithful volunteer for our Open Circle Choir and we affectionately called her our "Choir Mom".



Nancy has taken the definition of volunteer to a new level. She moves seamlessly between tasks of the day and the personal connections with our members. She is the quiet calm that can make all the difference in making someone feel safe and loved. She knows the journey of memory loss in a very profound way. This depth of understanding can be felt in her reassuring touch. She has an instinct that draws her to caregivers who need a listening ear.

We are sad to see Nancy retire and ever so grateful for her 13 years of outstanding volunteer service!



The name "Cassia" was inspired by an anointing oil referenced in the Bible that reflects our commitment to healing, wholeness and our desire to help those we serve to live well. According to sources familiar with ancient oils, Cassia is said to symbolize the heart of a servant.

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## Caregiver Consultations

There are many rewarding aspects to caregiving but there are also challenges. Caregivers often need someone to walk with them on their journey who can provide guidance, counsel, and perhaps most importantly, someone to listen. That is where Care Consultation comes in.

Care Consultation is a service that assists caregivers to gain knowledge, skills, and tools that are tailored to their situation. The first session is devoted to identifying caregiver needs and values through a comprehensive, individualized assessment. From that, a caregiver-centered plan is developed. In subsequent sessions, there is collaboration to help caregivers to problem-solve, find resources/additional services, receive targeted education, and to have ongoing coaching/support. Family meetings are also available to assist family members in working together to reach common goals. Through Care Consultation, caregivers increase in their confidence, experience enhanced emotional well-being, and take time and energy to care for themselves.

Care Consultation is available on a fee-for-service basis, based on a sliding scale.

Alternative Care (AC) and Elderly Waiver (EW) are accepted upon authorization by a case manager.

Sessions can be held in-person, virtually via Zoom, or by phone.

**For more information, please contact Carol Ashwood, MSW, LICSW at (952) 697-5370 or email [Carol.Ashwood@cassialife.org](mailto:Carol.Ashwood@cassialife.org)**

## Community Connections cont'd

In an effort to renew our intergenerational outreach, OTA intern, Susanna, has developed a pen pal program. Middle and high school students from WEST Home School Co-op and Open Circle members have begun exchanging correspondence. As COVID recedes, this is just the beginning to more intergenerational experiences.

### Open Circle Staff Contacts

Terri Joski-Lang, Center Manager

Laura Herman, Business Manager

Carol Ashwood, Clinical Social Worker /  
Caregiver Consultant

Mark Rosen, Director of Therapeutic Programs

Matthew Johnson, LPN

Tina Plohocky, CNA / Dietary Aide

Heather West, Dietary Aide / CNA

Baylee Frisch / Lead Program Coordinator

Chris Dyrud, Program Coordinator

Gail Smith, Program Coordinator

Stu Rosen, Program Coordinator

Kelsi Johnson, Program Coordinator

Penni Xiong, Program Coordinator

Karen Carlson, On-Call Program Coordinator