



# THE LEAF



## MONTHLY EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



## EVC THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON

We recently came together for Emory Valley Center’s Thanksgiving Luncheon, and it was truly a meaningful and memorable occasion. This special event provided an opportunity to pause, reflect, and celebrate the strong sense of community that defines Emory Valley Center. From our dedicated staff to the individuals we support, the luncheon served as a heartfelt reminder of the importance of connection, gratitude, and shared experiences.

The luncheon was filled with warm conversations, genuine laughter, and an abundance of delicious food. It was uplifting to see everyone gathered together, enjoying one another’s company and taking time to recognize the commitment and compassion that contribute to our supportive and inclusive environment.

Events like the Thanksgiving Luncheon underscore the value of coming together as a community to express appreciation and strengthen relationships. We are grateful for everyone who participated and helped make the day a success, and we look forward to continuing to create meaningful opportunities that foster unity, recognition, and a spirit of thankfulness throughout the year.

Our Early Intervention team recently came together for a festive Angel Tree wrapping party, creating a meaningful moment of connection and generosity during the holiday season. Team members worked together to wrap gifts and prepare surprises that will help brighten the holidays for children and families in our community.

This special gathering reflected the heart of our Early Intervention program—compassion, collaboration, and a commitment to supporting families both in and beyond our daily work. We are grateful to our dedicated staff for embracing the spirit of giving and making a positive impact this season.



Emory Valley Center recently had the opportunity to attend the TASH Conference in Denver, Colorado. Scott Britton, an EVC MAPs participant, and Dianna Wooldridge, Independence and Innovation Specialist, were selected to present on how the MAPs program has supported Scott in achieving a new level of independence over the past several years.

We are incredibly proud of their hard work and the meaningful impact they are making. The conference provided a valuable opportunity for learning, connection, and collaboration—along with a little time to enjoy the experience together. To learn more about this trip, please [click here](#).

Dear Team,

As we come to the close of 2025, I am filled with deep gratitude and pride for all that we have accomplished together at Emory Valley Center. This past year has been a powerful reflection of what can happen when dedicated staff, committed community partners, and the incredible individuals we support come together with a shared purpose. Your passion, creativity, and perseverance have made 2025 a year defined by growth, innovation, and meaningful impact.



Throughout the year, we expanded programs, strengthened pathways to independence, and created new opportunities for learning, connection, and inclusion. We witnessed individuals reach personal milestones, build confidence, and take meaningful steps toward greater independence. These moments—big and small—are at the heart of our mission and remind us every day why the work we do matters so deeply.

Our success this year would not have been possible without the unwavering commitment of our staff, whose compassion and dedication go above and beyond, and our community partners and supporters, whose generosity and collaboration help turn vision into reality. Together, we continue to create a supportive and inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

As we look ahead to 2026, I am filled with excitement and optimism for what's to come. With new goals on the horizon and opportunities for continued growth, we remain committed to innovation, empowerment, and excellence in everything we do. With our incredible team and strong community by our side, I am confident that the year ahead will bring even greater impact and possibility.

Thank you for being part of the Emory Valley Center journey. Your dedication, support, and belief in our mission make all the difference. I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the year ahead.

With gratitude,  
Jennifer Enderson  
President, Emory Valley Center

## STAFF TENURE

- Theresa Fletcher – 1 year
- Linda Mozingo- 1 year
- Julio Rosas- 1 year
- Ana Solis- 1 year
- Angela Wilson- 1 year
- Robin Cannon- 2 years
- Timothy Porter- 2 years
- Aubrey Ridenour- 2 years
- Donna Campbell- 3 years
- Hope Holt- 3 years
- Clayton Rouse- 3 years
- Rachel Stovall- 3 years
- Amanda Tackett- 4 years
- Dustan Kelley- 6 years
- Emily Jones- 9 years
- Karen Olson- 9 years
- Sally Brown- 10 years
- Travis Bartlett- 11 years
- Kristen Otto- 11 years
- Sandra Shanklin- 13 years
- Jennifer Enderson- 21 years



### Language Access Plan

*Added technology for interpreting services*

### Children Services Abuse Reporting

*Added unpaid admin leave if the target. May use PTO and will be paid if it comes back as unsubstantiated.*

**FOR MORE INFO PLEASE CONTACT  
KRISTEN.OTTO@EVCMAIL.ORG**



# ADVOCACY CORNER

NOVEMBER 2025

Community is at the heart of human experience. For people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), a supportive and inclusive community is not only essential for well-being—it is transformative. When people with IDD are embraced as valued members, everyone benefits.

## Belonging and Empowerment

People with IDD often face barriers to social participation, whether through physical inaccessibility, lack of understanding, or social stigma. Inclusive communities break down these barriers, promoting a sense of belonging and self-worth. When individuals feel seen and heard, they are empowered to contribute their talents, passions, and perspectives.

## The Strength of Diversity

True community thrives on diversity. Welcoming people of all backgrounds, abilities, and experiences leads to more creative, compassionate, and resilient groups. Diversity challenges assumptions, sparks new ideas, and encourages growth for everyone involved. When people with IDD are included, communities learn to value differences and adapt to meet a wider range of needs—skills that strengthen the social fabric as a whole.

## Mutual Benefits

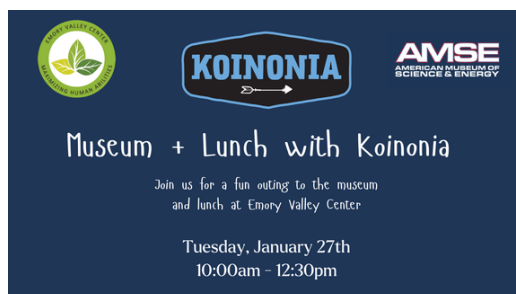
Inclusion is not just beneficial for people with IDD—it enriches everyone. Friendships, teamwork, and shared experiences across diverse groups build understanding and break down stereotypes. Diversity is not only our strength; it is the foundation of true community.

## A Call to Action

Each of us has a role to play in fostering inclusion. This starts with open-mindedness, empathy, and a commitment to making spaces accessible to all. Whether through volunteering, advocacy, or simply extending a welcoming hand, each action helps build a stronger, more vibrant community.

Mel Stanley  
Advocacy Specialist

## UPCOMING: OAK RIDGE WE ADAPT EVENTS



**KOINONIA** AMSE  
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF SCIENCE & ENERGY

Museum + Lunch with Koinonia

Join us for a fun outing to the museum and lunch at Emory Valley Center

Tuesday, January 27th  
10:00am - 12:30pm



**KOINONIA**

Brunch of Fun

Join us for brunch and a game day at Emory Valley Center

Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>  
10:00am - 12:00pm

Emory Valley Center  
723 Emory Valley Rd

## RESOURCES

- Useful Links:
  - <https://supporteddecisionmaking.org/> (Supported Decision Making)
  - <https://supportforfamilies.org/supported-decision-making-an-overview/> (Supported Decision Making)
  - <https://www.olmsteadrights.org/> (Rights)
  - <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/guardianship-less-restrictive-options> (Alternatives to Conservatorship)
  - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1178968536636589> (Facebook Group Family Connections)

## Promotions

Orian Miller- Independent  
& Innovation Specialist

Sheri McMahan- HR  
Recruiter

Braylea Wright- Home  
Manager

Andria Cassell- Residential  
Manager

Mikaela Prichard- Home  
Manager



## Staffing Updates

New Hires

DSP- 8

HM- 2

Total Current Staff:

351



# HUMAN RESOURCES



## Take Advantage of Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

At Emory Valley Center, we care about the well-being of every team member—not just at work, but in life. That’s why we offer the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a free and confidential resource available to all employees and their families.

The EAP is designed to provide support when you need it most. Whether you’re navigating personal challenges, seeking counseling, managing stress, or looking for tools to improve work-life balance, help is just a phone call or click away. The program also offers resources for financial planning, legal advice, family support, and more.

You don’t have to face life’s challenges alone—the EAP is here for you, anytime.

📞 Call 800-272-7255

🌐 Visit [www.guidanceresources.com](http://www.guidanceresources.com)

🔑 Use WEB ID: SymetraGR

Take advantage of this benefit and remember—you are never alone in finding the support you need.

## SERGEANT CADE BROWN VISITS PSR



Our Men’s PSR group recently had the pleasure of spending time with Sergeant Cade Brown from the Oliver Springs Police Department, and it was a truly meaningful experience for everyone involved. The visit gave participants the opportunity to engage in open conversation, ask questions, and learn more about community safety and the important role law enforcement plays in our community.

Sergeant Brown’s friendly and approachable presence helped create a relaxed environment where participants felt comfortable chatting, sharing stories, and building connections. Opportunities like this support social engagement, strengthen community relationships, and help foster mutual understanding and respect.

We are grateful to Sergeant Cade Brown for taking the time out of his day to visit with our Men’s PSR group and make such a positive impact. We appreciate his dedication to our community and his willingness to engage with and support the individuals we serve.

# EVC HAPPENINGS

## PSR Getting Crafty



Our PSR group recently enjoyed a hands-on woodworking class, and it was a wonderful experience filled with creativity, learning, and teamwork. Participants had the opportunity to explore new skills—from sanding and assembling to adding personal touches to their finished pieces—while enjoying a fun and engaging activity together.

A heartfelt thank you to our amazing community partners who made this opportunity possible:

- Grow Oak Ridge for helping bring this experience to life
- John Polly for generously sharing his time, patience, and woodworking expertise
- Appalachian Arts Craft Center in Clinton for their continued support and partnership

We are incredibly grateful for community partners who help create meaningful, skill-building experiences that empower and inspire the people we support.

## The Heart of Early Intervention: An Amazing Team



At Emory Valley Center, our Early Intervention team is incredibly grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside so many wonderful families, and we never take a single moment for granted. Each day, our dedicated staff brings compassion, creativity, and heart to their work as they support little ones in learning, growing, and reaching their fullest potential.

From celebrating small milestones to cheering on big breakthroughs, our team is there every step of the way—offering encouragement, joy, and reassurance to both children and their families. We are truly honored to be part of each child's journey, sharing laughter, building confidence, and ensuring families feel supported and empowered throughout the process.

Here's to our amazing Early Intervention team and the incredible families we serve. Your trust, partnership, and inspiration make this work so meaningful, and we are grateful for you every day. To check out the video [click here!](#)

# GET INVOLVED

ARE YOU INTERESTED JOINING A COMMITTEE?



## AGENCY QUALITY TEAM

**Chair:** Kristen Otto, Vice President of Professional Services

**Focus:** Driving continuous improvement and service excellence

**Meets:** 4th Tuesday of every month at 1:30 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room

## DATA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Kristen Otto, Vice President of Professional Services

**Focus:** Ensuring data integrity and smart data use across the agency

**Meets:** Every 3rd month on a Tuesday – virtual only

## EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

**Co-Chair:** Aaron Price, Vice President of Community Engagement, Casey Chumley HR

**Focus:** Boosting morale, culture, and workplace satisfaction

**Meets:** 3rd Wednesday of each month at 12:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room - lunch provided

## HIRING COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Kim Jeffers-Whitaker, Vice President of Human Resources

**Focus:** Supporting high-quality, inclusive recruitment

**Meets:** Every Tuesday at 9:00 AM in the Multi-Purpose Room (Hybrid option available)

**Note:** Currently open to Home Managers only

## EVENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Interim Chair:** Elizabeth Hawkins, Accreditation Specialist

**Focus:** Review of agency investigations and actions to move forward

**Meets:** 2nd Monday of each month at 10:00 AM in the Training Room

## IT COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Joe Reed, IT Specialist

**Focus:** Enhancing our technology systems and digital tools

**Meets:** 3rd Wednesday of every month at 1:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room

## SAFETY COMMITTEE

**Co-Chair:** Kevin Hicks, Executive Facilities Director and Kim Jeffers-Whitaker- VP of Human Resources

**Focus:** Promoting a safe, healthy, and compliant work environment

**Meets:** 3rd Thursday of every month at 2:00 PM in the Multi-Purpose Room



You're invited to the  
Emory Valley Center

# Holiday SOCIAL



Friday, December 19th  
2pm-4pm

Gym at the Caldwell Thompson Building.

Come join us for some festive fun including

🏆 -Ugly Sweater Contest

-Door Prizes 🎁

🎮 -Games

-Refreshments 🌟

🎵 -Music

-Santa 🎅





## Second Harvest Food Bank



Emory Valley Center is glad to share that Second Harvest food is available for both the people we support and our employees. When food is ready to pick up, a message will be sent through PHS email to let everyone know. If you would like to receive food, please go to the PSR area. Staff will help you sign in and answer a few required questions for Second Harvest. After that, you may choose the food items that are best for you and your family.

This program helps make sure everyone has access to healthy food, and we are grateful to be able to offer it. If there is a food item you are hoping to get, you may contact Crystal Hicks to see if it can be requested during the next order.



### MEET WITH YOUR RETIREMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Schedule a complimentary in-person Account Review today!  
Appointments will be held on the last Wednesday of every month  
at the Emory Valley Center Office location in Room 112!

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	8:00 am	8:30 am	9:00 am
					1	2	9:30 am	10:00 am	10:30 am
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11:00 am	11:30 am	12:00 pm
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12:30 pm	2:30 pm	3:00 pm
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	3:30 pm	4:00 pm	4:30 pm
24	25	26	27	28	29	30			



#### You can discuss questions such as:

- How do I enroll in my account?
- How much should I save for retirement?
- Are pre-tax or Roth contributions best?
- How can I maximize Social Security?

#### Instructions:

1. Scan QR Code
2. Select "Private Appointment" (25 mins)
3. Schedule Time

Planning for retirement is one of the most important steps you can take toward securing your financial future. To support you in making informed decisions, we have partnered with The Trust Company to offer in-person appointments where you can:

- Review your retirement plan and investment options
- Make or update your benefit elections
- Ask questions about your current savings strategy
- Receive guidance on long-term financial planning

Having a retirement plan in place is essential—it not only helps ensure financial stability in the future but also provides peace of mind today. Whether you are just starting to save, actively investing, or looking ahead to retirement, these appointments are a valuable opportunity to get personalized advice.

Appointments are available the last Wednesday of the Month . Please use the QR code on the attachment to reserve your time slot.