



THE LEAF



MONTHLY EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



EVC HOLIDAY SOCIAL

Our Holiday Social was a truly wonderful celebration, filled from start to finish with laughter, music, and plenty of holiday cheer! The afternoon brought everyone together for a joyful time of connection and fun. Guests enjoyed hitting the dance floor, sharing smiles, and soaking in the festive atmosphere that made the event so special.

A very special highlight of the day was the visit from Santa and a few cheerful elves, who spread joy, laughter, and holiday magic to all in attendance.

One of the most anticipated moments of the afternoon was the Ugly Sweater Contest, which did not disappoint! The creativity, humor, and holiday spirit on display brought lots of laughter and friendly competition, making it a crowd favorite and a memorable part of the event.

Overall, it was an afternoon filled with festive spirit, joyful moments, and warm connections with friends and colleagues. Thank you to everyone who joined us, participated, and helped make this Holiday Social such a meaningful and special celebration. We are grateful for the sense of community and joy that made this event truly unforgettable.

Emory Valley Center is incredibly grateful to Barry Stephenson and Materials & Chemistry Laboratory, Inc. for their generous support in funding the recent playground renovation at our Early Learning Center. Their contribution made it possible to create a refreshed outdoor space that is safe, engaging, and welcoming for the children we serve.

Partnerships like this play a vital role in our mission. Thanks to their continued commitment to our community, our children now have an improved environment where they can learn through play, build friendships, and grow with confidence each day. We are truly honored by their generosity and dedication to making a meaningful difference for the children and families of Emory Valley Center.



We are excited to announce that Greg Miller was the winner of our Cash for Christmas Referral Program drawing! This program is our way of saying thank you to those who help spread the word about Emory Valley Center and the meaningful work we do every day.

Greg's referral made a difference, and we are grateful for his support and engagement. Congratulations, Greg, and thank you to everyone who participated in this year's Cash for Christmas referral program. Your support helps strengthen our team and our mission!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

JANUARY 2026

Dear Team,

As we step into a new year, I find myself reflecting with deep gratitude on how 2025 came to a close. The final months of the year were filled with compassion, generosity, and moments of true joy—reminders of what is possible when a community comes together with a shared purpose. Throughout the end of 2025, we were uplifted by the incredible support of our community partners, donors, volunteers, and friends. Your willingness to give your time, resources, and hearts made a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. Because of you, our mission was strengthened, our programs continued to grow, and countless individuals experienced encouragement, opportunity, and belonging. What stood out most was the spirit of compassion that carried us through the season. Whether it was a helping hand, a thoughtful donation, or a simple act of kindness, each contribution played a role in creating joy and hope. These moments remind us why our work matters and why Emory Valley Center continues to be a place where people are valued, supported, and celebrated. As we look forward to the new year, we do so with optimism and excitement. The foundation built through the dedication and partnership we experienced at the end of 2025 positions us well for the opportunities ahead. Together, we will continue to expand our impact, strengthen our community connections, and ensure that every individual we serve has the support they need to thrive. Thank you for being part of our journey. Your compassion and commitment make all the difference, and we are truly grateful as we move forward into this new year—together.



With gratitude,
Jennifer Enderson
President, Emory Valley Center



- GPS Policy: Updated to say we follow DDA guidance
- REM Policy: Updated to add speeding as a Tier 2
- Evacuation Policy: Added that batteries would be changed if required by the specific detector.
Added specific locations for CTB if there is a need to seek shelter.

[FOR MORE INFO PLEASE CONTACT
KRISTEN.OTTO@EVCMAIL.ORG](mailto:KRISTEN.OTTO@EVCMAIL.ORG)

STAFF TENURE

Colleen Goins- 19 years

Amanda Dabney-

16 years

Patricia Nicolai- 9 years

Jessica Clark-4 years

Iolani Livesey-Lum-

3 years

Gina Cale- 3 years

Agnes Horner- 2 years

Daniel Orahood- 2 years

Jen Parent- 2 years

Kayla Weaver- 2 years

Sonya Gross- 2 years

Juanita Brabson- 1 year

Brielle Conover- 1 year

Saria Drake- 1 year

Abigail Grow- 1 year

Bevelene Wallen- 1 year



ADVOCACY CORNER

JANUARY 2026

At Emory Valley Center, advocacy for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) is at the heart of everything we do. This commitment isn't reserved for a select few—it belongs to all of us, from the President to each Direct Support Professional, administrative assistant, and team member throughout our organization.

Every employee's actions, both big and small, contribute to a culture of inclusion and empowerment. Whether you're shaping policies, providing direct care, coordinating programs, or supporting daily operations, your voice and actions matter.

Advocacy can be as simple as listening to the people we support, using inclusive language, or encouraging individuals to express their choices and preferences by exercising self-advocacy.

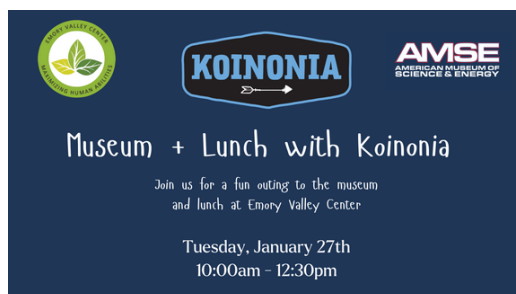
By working together, we break down barriers and ensure that everyone at Emory Valley Center is treated with respect and dignity. Your daily efforts help create an environment where people with IDD can thrive, have their voices heard, and feel truly valued.

Thank you for making advocacy a part of your daily work.

Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive community—one where everyone belongs.

Sincerely,
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 10th
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

Carly Manual :
Teacher ELC to Assistant
Director ELC

Congrats!

Staffing Updates

New Hires

DSP-5

RM-1

Maintenance

Tech -1

Total Current Staff:

351

HIRED

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

🔑 Use WEB ID: SymetraGR

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

THE 2026 SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Emory Valley Center is already buzzing with excitement as we gear up for the 2026 Special Olympics! This inspiring celebration of athleticism, inclusion, and determination is one of the most anticipated events of the year—and for the people we support, it’s about so much more than competition.

The Special Olympics offers a powerful opportunity for individuals to shine, build confidence, strengthen friendships, and proudly showcase their abilities. From training and learning new skills to cheering each other on, every moment is filled with teamwork, encouragement, and joy.

At Emory Valley, we see firsthand just how transformative these experiences can be. Participation empowers the people we support to set meaningful goals, celebrate their achievements, and feel a deep sense of connection to their community. The pride, unity, and sense of belonging created through the Special Olympics extend far beyond the events themselves.

Our athletes, staff, and teams are preparing with enthusiasm and dedication. We look forward to celebrating every milestone and can’t wait to cheer on our incredible participants as they represent Emory Valley with pride.

Special Olympics



Upcoming Events

2026

FEB 4	Bowling <small>Fountain City Lanes - Starts at 4:30PM</small>
FEB 14	Polar Plunge <small>UTK Recsport Outdoor Pool - Time TBD</small>
FEB 21	Regional Basketball <small>Maryville College - Time TBD A & B Team Only/No Skills</small>
MAR 4	Basketball <small>Gibbs Highschool - Starts 9:30AM All teams</small>
MAR 5	Basketball <small>Gibbs Highschool - Starts 9:30AM All teams</small>
APRIL 6	Track & Field <small>Hardin Valley Academy - Starts at 4:30PM</small>
APRIL 8	Track & Field <small>Hardin Valley Academy - MAKE UP DATE**</small>

Samantha Townsend
 Samantha.Townsend@evcmail.org



EMORY VALLEY CENTER
MAXIMIZING HUMAN ABILITIES

EVC HAPPENINGS

Executive team office hours

Executive Team Office Hours

<p>Jennifer Enderson, President January 7th 12-1 PM February 4th 9-10 AM March 6th 11-12 PM April 9th 5-6 PM May 12th 4-5PM June 1st 12-1 PM</p> <p>Crystal Hicks, Sr. VP of Operations January 6th 10:30-11:30 AM February 2nd 7-8 PM March 3rd 10:30-11:30 AM April 6th 7-8 PM May 5th 1-2 PM June 8th 7-8 PM</p> <p>Bryan Taylor, VP of Finance January 12th 4-5 PM February 9th 4-5 PM March 9th 4-5 PM April 13th 4-5 PM May 11th 4-5 PM June 8th 4-5 PM</p> <p>Kim Jeffers-Whitaker, VP of Human Resources January 28th 9-10 AM February 18th 3-4 PM March 17th 7-8 AM April 21st 21-1 PM May 19th 8-9 AM June 23rd 2-3 PM</p>	<p>Aaron Price, VP of Community Engagement January 12th 12-1 PM February 23rd 1-2 PM March 16th 12-1 PM April 6th 1-2 PM June 8th 1-2 PM</p> <p>Kristin Otto, VP of Professional Services January 23rd 1-2 PM February 13th 9:30-10:30 AM March 5th 12-1 PM April 15th 4-5 PM May 27th 8-9 AM June 15th 2-3 PM</p> <p>Anna Moore, VP of Children Services January 7th 10-11 AM February 18th 10-11 AM (Virtual or call only) March 9th 2-3 PM April 8th 1:30-2:30 PM (Virtual or call only) May 6th 4:30-5:30 PM (Virtual or call only) June 29th 12-1 PM</p> <p>Kevin Hicks, Facilities Director January 16th 9:30-10:30 AM February 20th 3-4 PM March 17th 4:15-5:15 PM April 17th 1:30-2:30 PM May 26th 4:15-5:15 PM June 22nd 1-2 PM</p> <p>Joe Reed, IT Specialist January 5th 2-3 PM February 5th 2-3 PM March 5th 2-3 PM April 2nd 2-3 PM May 7th 2-3 PM June 4th 2-3 PM</p>
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EMORY VALLEY CENTER
 MAKING HUMAN ABILITIES

723 Emory Valley Rd,
 Oak Ridge, TN 37830

We're excited to announce new office hours for our Executive Team! These dedicated times are designed to encourage open communication, collaboration, and connection across Emory Valley Center.

During Executive Team Office Hours, employees and individuals served are welcome to stop by, ask questions, share ideas, or discuss concerns in a supportive and welcoming environment. This initiative reflects our commitment to transparency, accessibility, and continuous improvement.

We encourage everyone to take advantage of this opportunity to connect directly with our leadership team and help shape the future of Emory Valley Center.

Employee Spotlight: Jamie Smith

Emory Valley Center would like to recognize Jamie Smith, one of our hardworking and dedicated Case Managers. Jamie is a wonderful advocate who consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the people we support receive the quality care and services they deserve. Her commitment, compassion, and dedication make a meaningful difference every day. Jamie began her journey at EVC five and a half years ago as a Direct Support Professional and later transitioned into the Professional Services Department, where she has proudly served for the past four years. Thank you, Jamie, for your continued dedication, advocacy, and all that you do for Emory Valley Center and the individuals we support!



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

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A

Valentine Day Mixer



**FRIDAY 2/13
12PM-2PM**

**LIGHT
REFRESHMENTS
MUSIC
PHOTO AREA**

723 Emory Valley Road Oak Ridge TN 37830



EMORY VALLEY CENTER
MAXIMIZING HUMAN ABILITIES



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.