

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Issue 1

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WARM WELCOMES, ANNIVERSARIES, 5TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Pictured: Misericordia residents, staff, and families participating at several events in January: New Year's Eve Pajama Party, Brooklyn Britches & the Whispers concert, Movements at Moore, Outreach Circus.

WHAT'S IN THE MIX FOR YOUR 2026?

"I am grateful for good health, video games, and good Chinese food."

- Arrington K (CDS)

"Buying my First Home, getting my driver's license, buying a car, and taking more family trips."

- Taina J (McAuley)

"Taking care of myself as well as I take care of our residents."

- Conrad L (Rosemary Park)

"A few things I'm looking forward to this year are diving into some of my hobbies like singing, dancing, and traveling! I'd like to find a choir to join, an aerial class to sign up for, and take Latin dance lessons with my partner. I also want to travel out of the country and start a food garden. (:"

- Lauren O (CILA)

"2025 was an exceptionally challenging year for me personally and professionally. In 2026, I'm looking forward to more yoga, grounding activities, and fun times with friends. I'm hoping to move to a new apartment with a better commute, build up my savings, and crossing off more bucket list items in Chicago (like: go dancing!)."

- May A (DT Graceful Living)

[Click here](#) to submit your own and let us know what's in store for you this year!

MESSAGE FROM THE HEART

Misericordia strives to be a welcoming, all-inclusive community. We want our staff and residents to always feel welcome and safe on Misericordia property

Please [click here](#) to read an important message concerning Misericordia's Immigration Protection for residents and staff living and working within our organization and community.



COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

MISERICORDIA CELEBRATES MLK DAY



Pictured: Misericordia residents participating in arts and crafts at DT dedicated to MLK day.

ALL THINGS EDUCATIONAL: MOVEMENT AT MOORE



Pictured: Misericordia residents participating in Movement Program on 1/14.

PERFORMING ARTS 2026



Pictured: Misericordia residents at the first auditions for the 2026 Performing Arts season. "[It] was a beautifully organized chaotic event! We were excited to see so many of our returning friends and a LOT of new talent! Looks like it's going to be a wonderful year of entertainment!" - **Jacob G (Recreation)**

UPCOMING EVENTS



- **SIERRA WHITE SINGS BROADWAY**
 - *Featuring Michael McBride*



- **VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY**
 - *Fashion Show Runway Walk!*
 - *Meet & Greet Tracy Drost (Mrs. Illinois 2025)*
 - *Dance Party!*



- **GOLDEN STREET REGGAE BAND**

Check Campus Connections Weekly Updates and Mis Biz for ongoing resident and staff events happening throughout the month, and visit the [Misericordia Facebook](#) page for recaps.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



HIGHLIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

HELP SHAPE OUR MISERICORDIA CULTURE



Pictured: Untitled (Dance) © Keith Haring 1987

As the Cultural Ambassadors (CA) team prepares for another year of fun, meaningful initiatives around appreciation, recognition, and Misericordia's Community of Believers values, we are looking to expand our membership to more interested staff, with applications opening now.

Find out more about us below.

Who We Are

- Committed employees across different work areas and departments
- Ambassadors of Misericordia's mission and values
- A liaison and resource between leadership and staff

Purpose

To foster a culture of connection and community through fun, creative, and supportive workplace initiatives.

What We've Done

The Cultural Ambassadors have contributed to enhancing existing initiatives and creating new ones since 2025. Examples include Monthly Department Appreciation Lunches, Staff 1st, 2nd, & 5th Milestone Anniversaries, Annual Holiday Celebration, Resident Appreciation Day in McGee Park, and much more!

To learn more: [Click here](#).

To apply: [Click here](#). Your area supervisor's endorsement is required.

OUTWARD INCLUSION

ARBINGER INSTITUTE

In an effort to continue upholding our value of inclusion, Misericordia is pleased to offer a professional development opportunity that centers on self-reflection and belonging. Created by the Arbing Institute, Outward Inclusion will be a quarterly, half-day seminar geared toward "safe, honest, reflective, and productive conversation."

Additional information will be included in a later Campus Connections, so please be on the lookout and sign up to attend!

COMMIT TO YOUR OWN LEARNING AND GROWTH

JOIN US AT A PHI BOOSTER THIS WINTER

We've all been to webinars and trainings that perhaps have not been that helpful to our day to day tasks. In our PHI Boosters, we strive to make the trainings relevant and pertinent to the work of leaders like you at Misericordia. Give yourself 90 minutes this season to invest in your learning and growth.

To learn more, [click here](#) for details and talk to your area's supervisor about joining.

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

COPING WITH SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

As we enter the thick of winter, we may notice some changes in ourselves and the people around us. During these darker seasons, the brain increases the production of a chemical called melatonin. Melatonin lets our body know when to sleep and is triggered by darkness. Therefore, in the winter and fall, experiencing low energy is more common. We may also notice a decrease in mood because of the lack of sunlight. The sun triggers the production of serotonin, which is a chemical the brain produces to feel happy. During this time of year, when there is less sunlight, our brains will increase feelings of fatigue and decrease overall mood. These feelings are normal, but for some people, this could develop into Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also known as Seasonal Depression.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a form of depression onset from various seasons. Some signs of SAD are a persistent feeling of hopelessness, a decrease in mood, oversleeping, overeating, social withdrawal, low energy, mood swings, and suicidal ideation.

Often, people with intellectual disabilities are overlooked for depression because they may not have the communication skills or self-awareness to share their symptoms. As Misericordia staff, we may observe changes in residents' behaviors and can advocate by sharing these insights so residents can get the support they need.

If you observe a resident presenting the symptoms of SAD that are listed above, please reach out to Misericordia's Coordinator for Counseling Services, Sarah Peters (sarahpe@misericordia.com). If you have any concerns about yourself or a loved one experiencing SAD, then reach out to Michelle Odisho (modisho@misericordia.com) to learn more about the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Furthermore, if a resident ever makes a statement of self-harm or suicidal ideation, please report to your supervisor immediately.

What can we do for ourselves and for residents to prevent and cope with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)?

- Move the body: engage in some sort of weekly physical activity
- Light exposure: either by going outside during the day or using a lightbox
- Social engagement: connecting with loved ones and spending time with friends
- Eating vitamin-rich foods: specifically B-12, Omega-3, and Vitamin D. Please consult with our campus dietitians before changing a resident's diet.
- Engaging in meaningful activities: hobbies, journaling, art, etc.

Try out some of these tips for yourself and the residents! Remember that SAD symptoms will lessen as the seasons change, so these feelings will pass! Stay tuned for more ways to support the mental health of our residents and staff in the monthly editions of Campus Connections.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

We understand that life can be challenging, and sometimes we all need a little extra support. If you feel that you need to speak to someone, you can use our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential services to help navigate personal and professional stressors or challenges.

For employees enrolled in the medical plan offered by Misericordia

Health Advocate ([Click here](#) Health Advocate Flyer):

Phone: 1-866.799.2728

Email: answers@HealthAdvocate.com

Web: HealthAdvocate.com/members

Employees who are not registered:

registration code: SMJSELW

For employees not enrolled in medical benefits through Misericordia

Employee Resource Systems or ERS doing business as AllOneHealth ([Click here](#) Core Service Flyer):

Phone: 1-800-292-2780

Web: ers-eap.com

Code: misericord

If you have any questions, please email HRBenefits@misericordia.com.

BREAK THE ICE WITH THESE CONVERSATION STARTERS WITH CO-WORKERS



Courtesy of TeamBuilding.com



Do you know how to speak more than one language?



Who is someone in your community that makes a difference?



What movie defined your generation?



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

LOCAL BUSINESSES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

FORTY ACRES FRESH MARKET

5713 W. Chicago Ave. Chicago, IL 60651
[details here](#)

THE SOUTHERN CHICAGO

2000 S Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60616
[details here](#)

HONEY & HUE BOOKSTORE

1804 W. 103rd St. Chicago, IL 6064
[details here](#)

BLACK HISTORY CONCERT SERIES: VOICES OF AŞE

50 E. Ida B. Wells Dr. Chicago, IL 60605
[details here](#)

TWEEN CRAFT NIGHT: COWRIE SHELL JEWELRY

9525 S. Halsted St. Chicago IL 60628
[details here](#)

WOODSON COMMUNITY HERITAGE QUILT PROJECT

9525 S. Halsted St. Chicago IL 60628
[details here](#)

BHM ENVIRONMENTAL WALK

3 Stover Rd. Barrington, IL 60010
[details here](#)

Send us a tip! If you have recommendations for any local minority and women-owned businesses that Misericordia should know about it, [click here](#) and tell us about their goods and services. We may highlight your suggestion in future issues of Campus Connections!

HONORING DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

"The quality, not the longevity, of one's life is what is important."
Martin Luther King Jr.



Pictured: A timeline of MLK's history of activism. [Click here](#) to enlarge.

In recognition of one of America's greatest civil rights leaders, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Campus Connections and Misericordia's Diversity and Inclusion team have arranged a list of webpages to explore below. To find the full resource guide, [click here](#). In the meantime, see the excerpt below.

Notable and Surprising Facts About His Legacy

Courtesy of History.com, Mental Floss, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Smithsonian, PBS, Ben and Jerry's, and NPR.

- King's birth name was Michael, not Martin.
- His holiday is celebrated every third Monday in January.
- When actress Julia Roberts was born, MLK and his wife paid for her [parents' hospital bill](#).
- He was a Trekkie who watched Star Trek regularly with his wife and kids.
- George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Cesar Chavez are the only other Americans to have had their birthdays observed as a national holiday.
- He was an avid pool player, known to shoot with the pool cue behind his back. He used billiards to connect with people, especially those who were marginalized.
- He started the [Poor People's Campaign](#), "to unite the poor of every race."
- He earned a C in Public Speaking.
- He has won a Grammy for [Best Spoken Word Recording](#).
- His holiday is celebrated every third Monday in January.
- He lived in Chicago for six months, helping to launch the [Chicago Freedom Movement](#).
- Stevie Wonder's "[Happy Birthday](#)" was recorded for the campaign to make MLK's birthday a national holiday.



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME NEW RESIDENT



Carly

Residence: Village

- loves Halloween
- Also loves music and cats!



Dave

Residence: CILA

- big White Sox fan
- has a dog named Charlie Brown

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Aslam, Shehzad (Village); **Bardalez, Ryan Anfernee** (CILA); **Burton, Shakyra** (Rosemary Park); **Clark, Sharon** (Rosemary Park); **Diego, Melony** (Rosemary Park); **Eagletail, Laniya** (Marian Center); **Erickson, Elizabeth** (CILA); **Guyton, Yvonne** (McAuley); **Johnson, Natasha** (Marian Center); **Madagwa, Dominique** (Mercy Glen); **Miranda, Gabino** (Rosemary Park); **Moore, Hannah** (Rosemary Connelly); **Nance, Krystle** (McAuley); **Nsinga, Alice** (Quinlan); **Peterson, Sydney** (Quinlan); **Robles, Samuel** (Marian Center); **Smith, ShunIQUE** (Marian Center); **Sukasi, Vineela** (Marian Center); **Taylor, Kellie** (Rosemary Park); **Vaughns, Kaja** (CILA); **Clark, Latrinda** (McAuley); **Moreland, Naomi Xiao** (Nursing Services); **Janich, Kris** (Nursing Services); **Ramos, Maria** (Laundry)

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 36** Constance Allen
35 Stephanie Husbands, Ron Masterson
34 Diane Almer
29 Sonia Delgadillo
28 Katie Campbell, Harold Johnson, Ken Rebholz
27 Jose Molinaro
26 Fr. Jack Clair, Mary Gunn
25 Santana Barr, Belinda Melvin
24 Dena Thompson
22 Angelica Green
20 Bernadeta Bajgrowicz, Anna Bogdanski, Carlette Corriah-Wynter, Karla Echavarría
16 Victoria Young
14 Nishar Cheeks, Mayda Castillo
13 Jamal Leki-Albano
12 Paul Peterson
11 Elia Lehman
10 Schalom Akakpo, Alicia Patterson, Elizabet Vargas
9 Thomas Oster
8 Angela Spaulding, Rosario Vera, Annette Farmer, Chareatta Milan-Herring, Marion Nevils-McDaniels, Jennifer Plata, Biljana Djukic, Abigail Deyro
7 Lukas Willis
6 Derricka Gayles, Taquita Knight, Colin Hegg, Jessica Marquez
5 Ashlie Hawkins, Marcela Rymus, Tonia Sonie, Arturo Magpayo
4 Tanesha Baldarez, Dženana Sivac, Nadine Uwase
3 Jeremy Osinga, Tracy Suzuki, Kwabena Asare, Shanell Johnson, Raquel Mayfield, Madelyne Trejo, Lawrence Newson, Tashauna Austin, Conrad Lee, Perla Martinez, Goreth Nibarore
2 Kevin Knoll, Finn Corwin, Marlon Marin Diaz, Lisette Moreno, Jenna Pearson, Valerie Brown, Itzel Garduno, Mahirseh Kadjika, Ninive Newman, Mikhaela Padilla, LaMonica Pierce, George Stamos, Latisha Turner, Malachy Rahlfs, Melissa Ramirez, Nicholas Giokaris, Carmelita Cole, Norkita Givens, Kamden Payne
1 Alely Aparicio Martinez, Jessica Cuevas, Robert Rahlfs, Barbara Tah, Timothy Young, Romel Allen, Grazyna Antas, Alyssa Baptist, Pegaud Beaucejour, Kristy Butler, Zakia Edwards, Mari Granville, Nieemah Hill, Rickita Hill, Diamoni Lewis, Jaelin Macedo Vergara, Semiah McGill, Mariah Monroe, Eric Nixon, Theresah Osei, Oluwole Owoyemi, Ramon Padilla, Xiomara Rueda-Marshall, Brittany Seaton, Gloria Stokes, Rose Uwamahoro, Pearlene Williams, Brian Boyle, Kimberly Cook, Mildred Garcia

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS (CONT'D)

STAFF 5TH YEAR ANNIVERSARIES

This January, we are holding a special celebration event for all staff who reached five years of service in 2025.

Check out some special messages from Leadership:

"Your dedication to person-centered care does not go unnoticed. Because of you, our residents feel supported, safe, and seen as individuals. Thank you for your years of service and the impact you make every day."

- Meghan G (RMC/McGowan)

"Congratulations to each of you on reaching over five years of service. You were hired during a particularly challenging time, and your commitment, perseverance, and dedication have been instrumental in rebuilding and strengthening the Misericordia community. Thank you for your continued contributions"

- Tina S (Programs)

"5 years! You should all be proud of yourselves! Thanks for helping us care for the incredible people who call Mis home. We are happy to have you on this journey with us. Hope to see you when you're celebrating 10 years at Mis!"

- Valerie F (Marian Center)

"Five years is a major milestone and the commitment and passion that all of you have brought to your role at Misericordia is invaluable. Thank you for making wonderful moments happen each and every day. You share your talents, skills, strengths and abilities with each other and with our residents. YOU.....contribute to a life worth living for every resident who calls Misericordia home and for that we are thankful. Congratulations on 5 years!!!"

- Sharon K (HR/Staff Development)

Check out some of the early memories our celebrants have had when they first started out at Misericordia:

"The first time that I received a nickname from one of the residents."

- Jacob K (Village)

"When I started at Misericordia as a DSP, I quickly realized that the work was about people, not tasks. Being with residents every day taught me patience, empathy, and how much the smallest actions could affect someone's comfort and dignity. That experience stayed with me and became the foundation for how I show up in every role since, always leading with care and respect."

- Bilel D (IT)

"The first time that a resident I was working with picked me instead of his regular staff to help him with his iPad! He will usually pass me even if I offer to help and go ask a staff who he was familiar with. That made me wonder if I was ever gonna be able to help him because he wouldn't let me help with other things he wanted help with, like ADLs. But that day gave me a lot of confidence that I was going to be ok, and I was able to form a great relationship with that individual later on."

- Bellone N (Behavior)

"Looking back, my favorite memory remains my first impression of Misericordia. The campus energy, smiling faces, helping hands, and an instant sense of shared purpose. Also, there is a sweet, funny memory from a resident when she told me to "Reeelaax" that I still go back to :)"

- Andrea C (Quinlan)

"Smiling at myself that I would not last for more than 6 months here because it was my first time away from the hotel industry."

- Veronica A (Food Service)

Stay tuned for weekly Campus Connections updates sent via email. If you have any questions or feedback for us, send your messages [here](#)! Be sure to include your name, work area, and an email we can use to contact you!

Remember to use caution when opening and responding to emails. Every day, more than 3 billion phishing emails are sent out worldwide. These emails are tactics used by scammers to trick you into giving up sensitive information. [Click here](#) to find eight tips on how to avoid email phishing scams.

