



# Laraway Insider

Volume 2 Issue 2

February 2022

## Special points of interest:

- COVID Updates
- Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle
- Agency Wide Surveys
- Referral Bonuses for Staff Recruitment
- Agency Wide Training
- Staff Milestones
- Employees of the Month

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## Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle a HUGE Success!

The 2022 Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle was a huge success thanks to many individuals. We want to first thank the artist, Jake Swanson. The amazing craftsmanship of these chainsaw carvings provided over the years are an extraordinary illustration of Jake's talents and skills. We appreciate your generosity to donate your artwork to us for this exceptional cause.

A special thank you to all the staff and board members who purchased tickets, sold tickets, and promoted the raffle. Collectively, we sold over 450 tickets and raised more than \$1500 to add to the scholarship fund.



Father Rick and Tim would be proud to know their vision continues to be supported and serves the purpose of affording Laraway students and alumni opportunities to pursue post-secondary education and training.

Congratulations to Brian and Wanda Audet, the lucky winners of the handcrafted Bobcat sculpture. Wanda and her husband Brian have been long-time supporters of Laraway. They have been foster and adoptive parents for over twenty-years, working with youth. Many of the youth in their home during those times were connected to Laraway's various programs and services.

## Agency Wide Surveys

March is traditionally when we distribute the Agency Wide Survey. Instead of asking employees to complete a comprehensive survey that covered a wide range of topics, we elected to send staff shorter surveys targeting specific feedback on a more regular basis. We hope this will result in higher levels of participation in a timely manner, which will allow us to share the results of surveys in our monthly newsletters and use the data to make informed decisions.

In March we will be requesting input from employees about benefits as we enter plan development and negotiations with Cigna in April. We will also be inquiring about the Level Systems experience and evaluation tools to improve this process. Your input matters, please be sure to complete those surveys.



## COVID Updates

There are many shifts happening with regularity between the VDH, AOE, CDC, etc. Thank you to our COVID Committee, Amber Cheever, Becky Lovell, Heather Mason, and Rhonda Stuart for your diligence and effort to keep us informed and safe with implementation of protocols.

The next major shift will occur on March 14th. As explained in an email from Rhonda on 3/11/22, all Laraway spaces will be mask optional.



It is important as we embark on these new changes, we all have a level of respect and compassion for individuals' personal choices.

If you have additional questions, please communicate with your COVID Coordinator or Rhonda Stuart.

## Agency Wide Training Event

One of the five priority areas identified for 2021-2022 at Laraway was Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion. On Friday, March 18th, we will come together for the first time in two years for our agency wide training event. The theme for the day will be Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The presentations and discussions that day will include topics, ideas, and concepts about: microaggressions and language, defensiveness and protective factors, intent vs. impact, harm reduction vs. politically correct language, transformative justice, bystander training, privilege, brave space, and more.



This day is designed to explore our notions, beliefs, and behaviors. We are committed to ensuring Laraway Youth & Family Services is an equitable and inclusive environment where people feel they belong. This includes our students, clients, families, staff and other stakeholders. The day will be facilitated by two amazing people who have emerged as leaders in this area. These two consultants and trainers will be guiding and informing the internal cultural and systemic review moving forward.

We will be divided in two groups, with staff from each program and department represented at each location. The two sites will be Jenna's House in Johnson, and the Hyde Park VFW. We will provide all materials needed for the day. We will provide a continental breakfast from 8:00-8:45, lunch from 11:30-12:30, snacks, and drinks throughout the day. Please bring a professional and enthusiastic attitude, a learning and growing mindset, and join us on the 18th for a day of education, culture building, and connections.

**Mara Iverson**, is an independent consultant and trainer focusing on allyship, anti-bias, anti-racism education. "I'm an LGBTQ+-identified equity educator and consultant with 10+ years of experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting. I believe in the power of facing our biased systems, ideologies, and personal landscapes as a means to plan and take action toward a more just and equitable world. My speaking style engages, educates, and entertains. I believe that laughter and vulnerability create space for the deep and often challenging personal and systemic exploration required for social change."



Saudia LaMont of Morrisville is an organizer, advocate, facilitator, trainer, and racial equity/transformative justice consultant. Her commitment to networking with community partners, identifying resources, and reinforcing connections to help create a stronger sense of community is demonstrated by her leadership. Saudia has over 10 years of experience in her field. She combines a unique holistic approach with some traditional methods in her implementation and practice of embodiment, reflection, and actuality, leading to understanding. She believes mutual understanding, communal healing, and collective wellness are the foundations for seeing each other's humanity and creating social change.

Saudia is a graduate of Cornell University's—Diversity and Inclusion program, Leadership Lamoille, Bright Leadership Institute, Recovery Coach Academy, and holds a host of other certifications and skills that she incorporates into transformative justice work. A former infant & toddler teacher, founder of the youth program "Developing D.I.I.V.A.S." (Dignity, Integrity, Independence, Virtue, and Self-Esteem), and a trainer of Prevent Child Abuse Vermont's 'Care for Kids, We Care Elementary, Safe-T, and Nurturing Healthy Sexual Development curricula. She has dedicated much of her life's work to researching and supporting youth growth and development. A former visionary director and chair of a local antiracism organization. Saudia currently serves on several boards and committees and is a Democratic candidate in training with Emerge Vermont.

## Enhanced Staff Recruitment Bonus



We are always looking to expand the great team at Laraway by bringing new individuals to our organization.

We know from our past experience, those individuals who share our organization's values and believe in our vision and mission tend to be our most dedicated.

No one lives the vision, mission, and values of Laraway better than our committed staff; because of this, you are some of the best at identifying those individuals who have the right stuff to be successful in this work.

We want to introduce everyone to the Enhanced Employee Referral Bonus program. When you refer someone to Laraway and they are hired on, you receive money. When they have successfully completed the first six months, you get a second installment.

We would like to announce we are increasing that referral bonus to \$250 after 30 days and another \$250 after six months for all new employees starting before June 30th.

In addition, we will be doing drawings for additional cash prizes. At the end of each quar-



ter, any employee who referred someone will be entered into a drawing. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$500.

All employees who referred someone throughout the course of the year will be eligible for an end of the year drawing of one week's pay, up to \$750.

For more information please reach out to Rhonda Stuart.



Our organization is lucky to have these individuals and recognize the combined service and years of expertise.

### **Backpack:**

**Michael Fazzino** is a Behavior Specialist in our Backpack program, assigned to Cambridge Elementary School. Mike is a valued member of the Cambridge Elementary community and puts his talents and skills on display daily supporting our Tier 2 youth with their various needs. Mike, thank you for 6 years of dedicated service to Laraway.

## Milestones and Anniversaries in February

### **Laraway School:**

**Ashley McCauliff** has been teaching English to our students at Laraway School for the past several years. We want to celebrate Ashley's contributions to improving literacy skills these past 9 years.

**Shane Bouthillette** is a Social Studies teacher at Laraway School. Shane uses passion and a variety of interests to engage students in both history and current events. Thank you, Shane for your 8 years of service to our students.

**Ethan Whaley** is one of our experienced and skilled Lead BIs at Laraway School. Ethan brings positive energy and a winning attitude to the students and his colleagues each and every day.

Congratulations on 6 years of service to our youth.

**Gabrielle Tatoyian** is celebrating her first anniversary at Laraway School. Gabby joined our team last year in the role of Behavior Interventionist. Gabby works hard to form positive and healthy connections with the students she supports.

**Dennis Hill** joined the team at Laraway School in 2021 as our new School Director. We want to thank Dennis for his positive energy and leadership this past year in his role. Congratulations Dennis on your one-year anniversary at Laraway.



### **Substitute Care:**

**Brian Tetreault** started at our Westfield Residential Program and transitioned to Foote Brook a few years later. Brian is a strong advocate for independence and life skills training for our youth in residential. Thank you Brian for the past 6 years of dedicated service.

### **Administration:**

There were no anniversaries in February for Admin.





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**Employees of the Month Profiles**

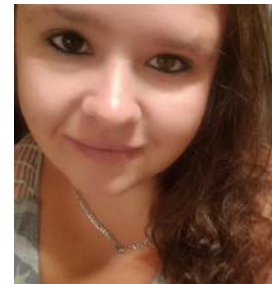
**CONGRATULATIONS** to our three staff this month who were nominated and selected by their peers to be our Employees of the Month in their programs for January.

**Peter Ford**, Substitute Care. Pete has been a consistent and stable force in our Residential Services team since 2013. Pete began his career at Laraway prior to that, as one of our valued Community Support staff. Pete's peers said, "He always has a positive attitude and is willing to go above and beyond the call of duty." His current supervisor said, "When I think of Pete, he's calm and wise, always looking at the positive side of things, supportive and caring, we are lucky to have him as part of our team."



**Elisha Lelong-Douglas**, Laraway School. Lish, as he is often referred to, is one of our two Behavior Specialists in Laraway School. Lish is described as, "There for you! He is professional and approachable. Lish is a great example of the Solid Object, always able to meet kids where they are at. He leads by example and has the students' best interests at heart in all his interactions and interventions."

**Tanika Patnoe**, Backpack. Tanika was recently promoted to the new Lead Behavior Interventionist position within Backpack. Tanika was recognized for her extraordinary dedication as a Behavior Interventionist, supporting elementary age students with intense needs. "Tanika is caring and empathetic to the kids we work with. She is patient and a passionate advocate for our clients. She is a great support during crisis and difficult situations, her work is impeccable."



Please keep those nominations coming. Our March newsletter will recognize three more of your peers you nominated for February.

Backpack: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/N5G38KY>

Laraway School: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F86GNH5>

Substitute Care: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FLPWT5M>