



Advisory Newsletter

December 2023

Welcome to the December edition of the Thomas Allen Advisory Newsletter! In previous years, Thomas Allen hosted an “Advisory Council,” as an opportunity for families and guardians of persons served in licensed programs to gather for updates, share feedback, and connect with one another. The Advisory Newsletter is intended as a semi-annual communication for our Home and Community-Based Services.

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Agency Updates

Reflecting on the past year, there are so many successes to celebrate.

DSP Week

In September, we celebrated our amazing Direct Support Professionals for DSP Recognition Week. At Thomas Allen, we have some of the most competent, compassionate, and hardworking DSPs in the State. Every day, our DSPs help people live independently, work in the community, connect with friends and family, and spend their days meaningfully in ways that are important to them. We are so grateful for everything they

Adopt-a-Family

Thomas Allen is pleased to participate in our annual Adopt-a-Family holiday tradition. We hope to make a positive difference in the lives of those who may be facing challenges this season. Two families were chosen to participate from individuals we currently serve. Employees are provided the opportunity to donate gifts or monetary items based on a wish-list from each family chosen, and Thomas Allen matches donations, up to \$5,000. We hope this will provide the families with a little extra support this holiday season!

Leadership

Recently, Thomas Allen expanded the Senior Leadership team to include the Senior Director of Operations. This position was greatly needed to provide additional structure and supervision to the Human Resources, Administrative Support, Maintenance and Training teams. These teams support our employees by making sure reports are sent to support teams, the homes have supplies needed, the homes are kept in good condition and the staff are provided training to best meet the needs of those supported.

Thomas Allen is pleased to announce this position has been filled by a current employee, Emily Jaworski! Emily joined Thomas Allen in August 2014 as a Contracted Case Manager. Since then, she has held several progressive roles including License Supervision Program Director before being promoted to Senior Director of Operations. Emily has an MSW from St. Catherine University and is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker.

COVID

Our COVID restrictions largely match with what the general community is doing, but we still have safety protocols in place. Staff are not required to use a mask in the home unless they are providing personal cares, there is a suspected COVID case, or there is an outbreak.

Visitors are welcome, but we do ask that they notify the home before visiting, self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to visiting, and communicate with the Program Manager or Director of any new symptoms within 5 days of visiting.

Residential Openings and Staffing

This has been a time of transition, and there has been movement within the homes. Thomas Allen currently has open beds available at the following homes:

Southview, South St. Paul – 1 opening for male only

Burnhaven, Burnsville – 1 opening for female only

Skyline, Burnsville – 1 opening

Swift Lane, Shakopee – 1 opening for female only

Third Ave, Shakopee – 1 opening for female only

If you wish to look at opportunities for family members or acquaintances, please contact housing.referrals@thomasalleninc.com, or the Program Director you currently work with.

Staffing at the homes continues to be difficult for the Home and Community-Based Services at Thomas Allen. While the professional divisions have seen an increase in recruitment, many of the direct care positions are still difficult to fill.

In the News

The Minnesota Legislature has passed several requirements for employers that will benefit workers, including state-wide benefits of Earned Sick and Safe Time beginning January 2024 and Minnesota Paid Family and Medical Leave, starting January 2026. Please note that these are currently unfunded initiatives for Minnesota Home and Community Based Services Providers. While we are pleased to pass along these benefits to our diligent and passionate employees, we would appreciate any assistance advocates may provide to let your representatives know of the burdens faced by providers to deliver these benefits without adjustments to the service framework and rates.

Minnesota has fully implemented Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) for Personal care assistance, Individualized Home Support with and without training, In-Home and Crisis Respite, Home Health Aides and certain services delivered in a person's own home. Community Residential Services are exempt from this requirement, but this is still required for our Community Living Services Division.

In the News Continued...

Thomas Allen uses the State of Minnesota system from HHAeXchange at the start and end of every visit to verify services were delivered.

DHS has implemented EVV as a soft launch where claims will not be denied or reversed. This allows providers the opportunity to train and onboard caregivers, and provide time for individuals receiving services and their team members to learn the systems.

Employee Spotlight



July Employee of the Month: Abayomi “Abay” Akinrodoye

Abay has been an exceptional employee for the last 5 years. He started at Deerview. After about 6 months, Abay moved to Applevue as a Program Counselor. His manager took quick note of his hard work, and he was quickly promoted to Primary Program Counselor, and then Assistant Program Manager. Abay is always eager to learn, friendly, and truly wants the best for the people we serve. He is always ready and willing to help out whenever and wherever he is needed! We appreciate his dedication to Applevue.



August Rookie of the Month: Marilyn Walker

Marilyn joined Community Living Services team in September of 2022 as a case aid. She immediately took on difficult projects relating to changes in documentation. Her paperwork is always well written, timely, and professional. She never complains about the volume of work, and always takes time out of her day to make her coworkers feel special. Marilyn is essential in helping the division run smoothly!



September Employee of the Month: Kristin “Krissy” Bellino

Krissy has been committed to Thomas Allen since 2008. During that time, she has dedicated her career to advocating for the individuals living at Oak Hills. Krissy goes above and beyond coordinating their complex services, providing quality care, and works closely with support teams to better the individual's quality of life. In challenging situations, Krissy jumps right in to problem solve, intervene and always in the best interest of the people we serve. Krissy is a dedicated, caring manager and support to the entire team at Oak Hills. Thank you Krissy!



Employee Spotlight Continued...



August Rookie of the Month: Kadiatu Konneh

Kadiatu came to Cedar Crest in the middle of many changes. She was immediately ready to jump in. She has decades of experience in various care settings. Her experience shows, yet she is still eager to learn. She is constantly willing to pick up extra shifts and expresses pride in the work we do. Since she joined the Cedar Crest team, we have seen more resident interaction, better communication throughout the home, and her positive support techniques have created a calm environment. We are truly grateful for Kadiatu and her contributions to Cedar Crest!



November Rookie of the Month: Marilyn Campiz

Marilyn joined the Cedar Crest team in May and instantly jumped right in. With her experience in human services, as well as in the US Navy, Marilyn blew us away from the start. Marilyn has taught staff simple sign language and redirection techniques to help better communicate with individuals served. She has coordinated many outings and everyone has been having a great time. As program manager, Marilyn pours her heart into the team and the people living at Cedar Crest. It's an honor to work with her!

Congratulations

Policy Updates

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) have the initiative to restructure and update the division policy book to match with the current structure, regulations, and procedures. Upon request, you can obtain copies of the policies from the Division Program Manager or Program Director.

The following policies have been updated since the last communication.

Policy Updates Continued...

Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information	Individual's Privacy Rights
Authorizations	Right to Agree or Object
Uses and Disclosures Required by Law	Accounting for Disclosures
Business Associate	Safeguards to Protect the Privacy of Protected Health Information
Notification in Case of Breach	Employee Training on Privacy Practices, Policies and Procedures
Access to Protected Health Information of Individuals Served	Assessing and Reporting Maltreatment of Minors
Sanction for Violating Privacy Policies and Procedures	Financial Policies: 245D General Financial Provisions, Service Recipient Financial Accounts and Property, Financial Prohibitions, Financial and Property Safekeeping, Financial Assistance Services
Incident Response Reporting	Timecards
Rules for Staff Conduct	Alcohol and Drug policy
Meals and Rest Breaks	Safe Transportation
Overtime Pay	COVID
Conflict of Interest	
Corner Place Program Abuse Prevention Plan	Swift Lane Program Abuse Prevention Plan
14 th Ave Program Abuse Prevention Plan	Southview Program Abuse Prevention Plan
Birch Lake Program Abuse Prevention Plan	Westwood Program Abuse Prevention Plan
Emerson Program Abuse Prevention Plan	Midland Program Abuse Prevention Plan



Our Mission

Thomas Allen is committed to working together to provide meaningful quality life experiences to all people.

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