



# Laraway Insider

Volume 2 Issue 1

January 2022

## Special points of interest:

- COVID Updates and Links
- Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle
- Referral Bonuses for Staff Recruitment
- Remembering Dr. King Jr.
- Staff Milestones
- Employees of the Month

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## Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle

Thanks to Father Rick and Tim Swanson's vision and efforts to create a scholarship fund for Laraway students and alumni, we have the annual tradition of the Trailblazer Scholarship Raffle.

We have already awarded one \$500 scholarship in 2021 to a young person who was attending a technical program, post graduation as an adult learner.


In the past, recipients of this scholarship have purchased text books for college courses, attended cosmetology school, welding certifications, and more.

Artist Jake Swanson has generously donated several hand crafted, amazing chainsaw carvings each year as the grand prize for our scholarship raffle.

This year, Jake has created a bobcat, the official mascot of Laraway School. The carving is valued at \$1500. Tickets are \$5 each or 3 for \$10.

Each program director has been provided raffle tickets for employees to purchase or sell. If you need more, contact Dave McAllister.



<b>"TRAILBLAZER" SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE</b>		<b>"TRAILBLAZER" SCHOLARSHIP RAFFLE</b>		NO.  396
DRAWING WILL BE HELD FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18 <sup>TH</sup> , 2022		NAME: _____		
 <p>Help Laraway raise funds to provide scholarships to youth pursuing college or trade school and you could WIN this stunning carving of a BOBCAT</p>	PHONE: _____		1 TICKET FOR \$5.00 OR 3 TICKETS FOR \$10	
	EMAIL: _____			

## 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.

**Testing**—Rhonda sent an email on 1/19/2022 that shared resources for ordering antigen tests and a reimbursement process through CIGNA for individuals purchasing tests.

**Temporary COVID pay**—the agency Management Team elected to provide up to 5-days (40 hours) of pay to employees who are required to quarantine based on a work related

exposure or testing positive for COVID. Rhonda emailed the application and further details regarding the eligibility criteria on 1/26/2022.

**Vaccination**—if you haven't already, please provide Rhonda and Lori your vaccination status information as explained in the email communication on 11/30/2021.

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



## Student Loan Forgiveness Opportunities

The U.S. Government recently expanded student loan forgiveness with the “Limited Public Service Loan Forgiveness Waiver.” This is a temporary expansion for loan forgiveness eligibility and credit for payments and service.

Rhonda recently sent out an email to all Laraway Staff highlighting some of the criteria in this opportunity. If you have further questions refer to that email and/or this link: <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/fact-sheet-public-service-loan-forgiveness-pslf-program-overhaul>.



## Annual Appeal Campaign 2021



Our Annual Appeal Campaign in 2022 is a huge success. We have surpassed \$30,000 in donations, as of the publishing of this newsletter.

The Laraway student/client grant program funds are allocated from our Annual Appeal campaign. We

have already distributed over \$1,200 in requests for kids winter clothing needs from this fund. We provided tuition assistance for a youth at trade school. We have fulfilled requests for winter recreation equipment and other special interests.

Led by our 100% board giving,

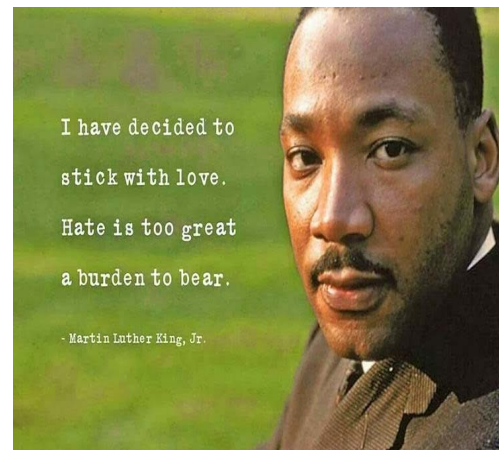
over 65 individuals and businesses have contributed to the campaign this year, including staff through payroll deductions and one-time gifts. Thank you, Donna Ciarcia, James Jackson, Rhonda Stuart, Melissa Fleming, Julia Landry, Bernie Isabelle, April Still, and Dave McAllister.

## Remembering Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dr. King was a transformative leader, advocate, and ambassador for human rights. His legacy remains one of the most inspirational and motivational in American history. As Laraway continues to establish an inclusive and anti-racist culture, curriculum, systems, and practices, we use the wisdom and lessons from Dr. King to light our path forward.

The Office of Civil Rights, within the U.S. Department of the Interior said, “Taking place each year on the third Monday in January, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service (MLK Day) is the only federal holiday that is also designated by Congress as a national day of service—a “day on, not a day off.” Participation in service activities has grown each year as more Americans are encouraged to provide meaningful change in their communities.”

Next year, with the help of Laraway's Equity & Inclusion Committee, we will identify meaningful ways we can all celebrate Dr. King's legacy together, as an agency, learning, growing, giving, and serving. If you are interested in joining the Laraway Equity & Inclusion Committee, contact Dave McAllister.



## 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:**

There were no anniversaries in January for Backpack.

### **Laraway School:**

**David Porter** joined the team at Laraway School two years ago this month. David has infused energy into his classroom and inspired students to engage in learning. David is a friendly and supportive colleague and key contributor to the school community.

## Milestones and Anniversaries in January

**Alice Haskins** has been contributing a positive outlook and cheerful spirit to the school community for a total of three years and we have happy to have her back in her current capacity of Clinical Intern. Alice is helpful, kind, and compassionate toward students and peers.

**Maia Friedman** has been part of team Laraway for the past four years. She began her journey as a Community Support staff, helping the youth in Substitute Care. She transitioned to Laraway School as a BI and has brought a compassionate and empathic approach to the students in her direct care.

**Micah Jankowski**, one of the Behavior Specialist at Laraway School, recently joined the five year club at Laraway, entitling

him to that amazing black sweatshirt. Micah is well regarded by both students and staff for his support and skill. Micah is an advocate and leader in his role.

**Andrew Sinclair** has been contributing to Laraway School for the past 11 years. Andrew is a kind, empathetic, and compassionate soul. He has strong connections with the students and staff built on mutual respect, consistency, and caring.

**Aaron McGee** celebrating 18 years at Laraway School. Aaron has demonstrated over his tenure at Laraway at commitment to enhancing the student learning experience. Aaron has often applied innovative approaches to his instructional approaches to promote the outdoor experience and make learning more interesting for clients.

team.

### **Administration:**

There were no anniversaries in January for Admin.



### **Substitute Care:**

**Melissa Staffeldt** is celebrating her inaugural year at Laraway. Melissa has been a Community Support staff over the past year and brings a positive and professional approach to her work. She communicates well with colleagues and brings creative ideas to help improve client experiences.

**Jim Bocash** has been in the role of Community Support for 13 years. Jim's has an excellent ability to establish positive connections with youth. Youth often appreciate his unconditional support and non-judgmental outlook. Jim is flexible and responds well to needs of students in crisis.





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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 December.



**Ashley Carter, Substitute Care.** Ashley joined our team in 2020 as a case manager. “Ashley is extremely calm, patient, and empathic. She approaches all youth with compassion and positive regard. She works to build a trusting, authentic relationship with clients. Ashley supports her colleagues when they appear to be stressed and need a consult in times of crisis. Ashley embodies the Laraway spirit of believing youth can do well when they are given the opportunity.”

**Alicia Feraldi, Laraway School.** “As the Science Teacher, Alicia provides clear, thoughtful, and engaging academic programming for all developmental levels. Alicia helps other teachers create positive environments and curriculums. Alicia’s ability to connect with students as their teacher and a mental health practitioner is truly amazing. She exemplifies what it means to be a teacher in our school.”



**Tyler Farrington, Backpack.** Tyler was recently promoted to a Tier 2 Case Manager in Backpack. “Tyler is very experienced and professional in what he does. He always goes out of his way to ensure he can help everyone involved. Tyler spent almost two weeks at my school for support with a difficult situation, forever thankful. Tyler is good listener and always there for support.”

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

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

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

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

**Recruitment & Retention Committee Updates:**

Several of your colleagues from each department met in December to review data from various sources about the factors that contribute to retention at Laraway. That group determined the most effective way to continue this work is to form three subcommittees dedicated to exploring those identified factors of influence and develop recommendations for our agency to adopt and implement.

- Compensation (wages, benefits, CTO, retirement, professional development, and career advancement).
- Autonomy (creativity, innovation, empowerment, individuality).
- Community & Culture (Belonging, inclusiveness, wellness, support).