Strengthening Communities: A Day of Service

On April 11th, Community Interactions (CI) welcomed a team of 20 volunteers from Enterprise Fleet Management as part of The Enterprise Day of Service volunteer event. As Chris Lynn, CI's Operations Director for Programs and Services said, "The team of volunteers from Enterprise Fleet Management helped to improve several homes, and with a coat of paint, transformed one area of our Pennsylvania Day Program facility into a bright and welcoming space."

The Enterprise team came out to three sites that included two houses and the CI's Day Program facility. Over the course of the day, Enterprise volunteers worked to improve these areas. In fact, at CI's Governor Markham residence, the energetic volunteers stained a deck, painted, and did extensive landscaping and gardening work.

"The garden created at the Cherry Tree residence was the shining star of the day," said Chris, adding, "This was not a day off for the Enterprise team, this was a Day of Service and they were tirelessly dedicated to what they were doing. I don’t think they even took a break. We had great expectations of what was going to be accomplished, but they far exceeded them. They did a wonderful job and we’re so grateful."

CI could not fully live up to its name and mission without the vital service of its outsourced fleet of 80-some vehicles that connect the men and women CI supports with their communities and provide opportunities for social inclusion.

Whether it’s transporting individuals to and from CI’s Day Program, doctor’s appointments, outings, or jobs in the community, CI’s fleet, managed and repaired by Enterprise Fleet Management, ensures that individuals and staff get where they need to go and that operations run smoothly.

For a little more than a year now, CI has been working with Enterprise Fleet Management, a privately-

Our Mission:
Community Interactions, Inc. (CI) provides quality services for people with intellectual, physical and behavioral health challenges to help them create lifestyles consistent with their communities while respecting individual choice, self determination and culture.
PEOPLE

Carrie Carter

Community Interactions’ new Managing Director, Carrie Carter, has only been on the job since April 1st, but already feels like part of the CI family. Carrie, who oversees all of CI’s Residential and Day programs in Pennsylvania and Delaware, as well as clinical nursing and operations, began her career in human services 19 years ago. She joined CI after more than a year with the nonprofit Inperium and their affiliate Supportive Concepts for Families, based in Reading, Pa. Prior to that she spent 17-and-a-half years with the behavioral health provider Project Transition in Bucks County, where she cut her teeth in the human services field and grew with the small company.

“I’m really excited to be here,” said Carrie. “To come from a large organization to a smaller more family-like environment really feels like home. I really have that nostalgic feel here.”

Carrie grew up in Montgomery County and now lives in Quakertown, Bucks County. She holds an associate bachelor’s degree from the Pennsylvania Business Institute, and attended Villanova University where she graduated from the Project Management Program.

Carrie loves to travel, read and spend time with her family, and is devoted to her three goddaughters who live in Phoenix, and her two nieces and nephew.

Norman Nelson

Norman Nelson does not shy away from work. For the past 22 years he’s been coaching football, basketball and track at Springfield High School, and for 20 of those years has also been a DSP with Community Interactions.

The Delaware County native grew up in Morton and now lives in Brookhaven. He attended Springfield High School, where he was asked upon graduation what he wanted to do in the future. His goal then, he said, was to open a community center and help mentor kids. Today he mentors kids through his coaching and through a lot of charity work. He also belongs to a motorcycle club that annually sponsors a Father’s Day outing for children whose fathers are absent from their lives.

“I’m still on the same path of giving back and making a difference,” said Norman, who attended Cheyney University, and whose daughter Tamara, 22, will be graduating from college in December. “I enjoy what I’m doing so it doesn’t feel like work.”

During the school year he works at CI on the weekends and on holidays putting in double shifts assisting CI individuals with daily life skills and everyday living. With his summers off from coaching at Springfield High, Norman switches to full-time at CI’s Day Program.

Norman’s connection to CI came through a friend of his who worked at the nonprofit at the time. He was looking for some extra hours and applied, got the job and has enjoyed it ever since. He said that when he started at CI it felt like a family, but that it changed over the years to more of a business model. He’s happy to see the shift back to the family setting.

FOCUS ON

Scoring Sixers Season Tickets!

When it comes to supporting your local sports team, there’s nothing like the intensity and excitement of attending a home game surrounded by legions of fans all cheering in unison. For the past five years, CI individuals and team members have been enjoying season tickets to the 76ers and getting the chance to show their support and enthusiasm from the stands of the Wells Fargo Center in South Philadelphia.

“A lot of people expressed interest in going to sporting events,” said CI’s Kristy Sheldon, who manages the Sixers season tickets. “It can be very expensive to go to see the Phillies or the Eagles, but

SPOTLIGHT ON

From the Heart

When Vivian Chavis, popularly known as “Miss Viv,” walked through the doors of CI 13 years ago, to apply for a Direct Support Professional position, her initial reaction was one of uncertainty.

“I didn’t know if I could do this or not,” she said. “I left a job at Rohm and Haas’ computer manufacturing company in Delaware to come into this field. But I fit right in, like I had already been here 20 or 30 years.”

Prior to her five years at Rohm and Haas, Miss Viv worked at the now shuttered Medford Meat company for almost two decades. None of her prior work experience prepared her for the new career as a DSP, but she said, she always had it in her to nurture people.

“It’s all in taking care of people and showing your love,” said the mother of two sons, and grandmother of six grandchildren. “If it’s not in your heart you can’t do it.”

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responsible for families, being a support system for the children and taking care of his
Right now he’s a volunteer, but he is considering a career change to a full-time DSP.

residents
George and Miss Viv also supported, sadly passed away in 2015.
Up until five years ago when George suffered a stroke, which impaired his mobility and speech, he and Miss Viv could be seen
everywhere. Today, George uses a wheelchair for the most part, and although they don’t venture out as much as they used to,
they still try to get out and hit a few of George’s favorite spots, like the Olive
Garden or Best Buy, where he heads straight for the DVD section in search of
classic Westerns to add to his large collection.
The two have formed a very strong bond over the years.
“One day he started calling me mom and never stopped,” said Miss Viv, a
New Castle, Delaware resident. “I asked him why he was calling me mom,
and he said, ‘because you take care of me.’”
For her part, Miss Viv feels like George is one of her own - part of her family.
In fact he calls her sons his brothers, and shares in many of the family get-
togethers. George is also very close with his niece and nephew and their
families, who Miss Viv said are very supportive and involved in his life.
“Working with George and with people with disabilities, you have to be
thorough and give a lot of TLC,” said Miss Viv, who is not looking to retire any
time soon. “It’s about George and taking care of his needs, and helping him
live the best life possible.”
Strengthening Communities

held, full-service fleet management business for companies, government agencies and organizations operating medium-sized fleets of 20 or more vehicles. The company is an affiliate of Enterprise Holdings Inc., which has a global fleet of 2 million vehicles – the largest and most diverse privately-owned fleet in the world.

“At Enterprise, we work to strengthen the communities and neighborhoods where our employees live and work,” said Becci Miller, Enterprise Fleet Management Area Sales Manager, who led the team of Enterprise volunteers. “In fact, in Philadelphia, we conduct one fun event and one community volunteer event each quarter. We try to support initiatives that are important to our employees and partners and CI was a perfect match. They were so welcoming.”

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The Enterprise Day of Service volunteer event came about through the initial effort of Anthony Tori Jr., the Enterprise Fleet Management Account Manager assigned to CI. Chris Lynn, who chairs CI’s technology committee for the nonprofit’s strategic plan, was looking at ways to fund one of the committee’s initiatives concerning Smart Home technology. Anthony expressed interest in supporting the CI technology committee with the help of the Enterprise Holdings Foundation and connected Chris with Becci Miller, both a member of the committee and an employee of Enterprise Fleet Management.

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