

## Update from the Director of RSS

November 01, 2021

Greetings to our social media followers,

One thing I have thought about over the last several months is that I should be updating our followers about things that affect RSS and disability services in Montana. This open letter is my first attempt at providing regular updates, which I hope to send out each month. It's an understatement to say the times we live in provide some topics for conversation about disability services. This first month I will dive right into the biggest challenge we face today, that being Covid.

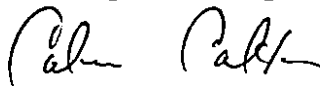
If a fiction writer wrote the story about the last twenty months of our lives, no one would buy the book. It would seem too unbelievable. Yet here we are. We now live in a world where no one looks for work, stores are out of random items, and vaccination status is assumed to indicate political or religious affiliations. With all we're going through, it'd be easy to feel we no longer control our own destiny.

But not at RSS. Our residents are choosing to take back their lives, despite the challenges posed by the new 'normal'. Our Day Program has resumed operation at the facility they formerly occupied as we develop plans for growing into the future. We now support several residents' engagement in meaningful work both within RSS and in jobs in the greater community (Special thanks go out to April, Chris and Bill for this). Every Friday since May 14<sup>th</sup> (with the exception of one) our awesome residents have made and delivered to St. Vincent de Paul 25 sack lunches to help feed Billings' homeless. This comes out to almost 600 meals provided by our people.

We are only just beginning. In the absence of YARC's tradition of holding dances for special holidays, RSS is continuing that activity. We held a company-wide Halloween Dance at Casa Village, which was pulled off with resounding success. This last summer we had not one but two company picnics (Thanks to Jurret and her helpers for this one). While we have to be smart and take reasonable precautions in the new era, we at RSS will continue to choose to live meaningful lives in spite of the challenges.

On a side note, RSS has felt a tremendous sadness in losing many family members, both residents and staff, over the last three years I've been here. As we go into this season of Thanksgiving, I would like to remind our staff and readers that it's okay to grieve our loved ones. They might not be with us physically to see what comes next for RSS, but their spirits live on in each of us touched by their lives. For me, there is no better way to honor those who gave so much to this company than to make it even better for the generations to come.

Have a great Thanksgiving.



Calvin Calton

RSS Executive Director