Quarterly Newsletter - Spring, 2023

Calvin Calton, Executive Director

This morning I saw the light. Not proverbial light akin to gaining some elusive wisdom. No, during my 6:15am commute, the first rays of dawn were building in the eastern sky. A tickle of excitement about an emerging spring started my mind going down another rabbit hole, which happens a lot during my thirty-five-minute drive to work.

From our very beginning, humans have danced to rhythms defined by day and night. Our ebb and flow is intrinsically determined by the measured march of the seasons. We don’t defer naturally to the hands of the clock, nor to the days of the calendar. This artificially punctuated pattern of life is wholly ingrained post-partum, based on what’s advantageous to the masses, not the individual.

So, I asked myself, if I were a recipient of services, why would I want to get up in the morning just because the alarm clock tells me to? I’d already have DD waiver funding to pay for staff to assist me, Social Security for financial needs, and Medicaid for healthcare. I wouldn’t need to work to maintain a roof over my head. No, there are times, like this beautiful pre-spring morning, when you would be hard pressed to convince me to refrain from indulging my own passions for the sake of punching a clock and giving of myself for the betterment of others. And mine is a job that I truly love.

My work ethic doesn’t hold a candle to some of our residents. Take Sawdust, for example. This young man waited for three years on the Voc-Rehab waitlist for an opportunity to get a job, only to be sidelined when Covid came along. He continued to tell anyone who would listen, at every opportunity, how much he wanted to be working. Finally one of my awesome staff (Thanks April!) took him down to McDonald’s where he has worked successfully for going on three years. He also works as a janitor in some of our buildings, he works helping the staff at Options day program doing a whole lot of things, and he continues to tell me I need to hire him as a staff for the Fairpark group home so he can do the dishes for them.

Sawdust’s motivation amazes me. He works, not for the paycheck, nor for accolades from others. He works for the sheer joy of doing something useful and appreciated. He doesn’t go to work for the socialization, although that’s a factor which he enjoys. He works because he has a talent, a gift, as we all do, but he has discovered that our gifts are meant to be shared.

Most of us work to support our personal lives. We work to meet our basic needs, and to pursue our passions and interests. I see an especially beautiful sunrise, and I want to enjoy the peace and serenity that comes with being next to a sparkling stream with a fish on the line. It’s a measure of one’s emotional maturity when they perform labor for the sheer joy of blessing others. I get glimmers of it. It’s a reward all its own when I have an opportunity to make someone’s world a better place through the services I perform. I’m no Sawdust, but maybe one day I will realize, like he does, that it’s in the giving of our special talents to others that we truly enrich ourselves.

Calvin Calton, Director