Quarterly Newsletter

Calvin Calton, RSS Executive Director

Winter, 2024

While I am not a fan of change, it seems that right now RSS is rolling out so many changes it is hard to keep up. Our day program has officially moved up to the Heights, the thrift store is able to expand to the basement. We will also be creating a workspace there for clients to use for projects, and our training space for Mandt and CPR classes is now available.

We have also decided to go with Homebase as our way to move towards electronic time keeping. Inexpensive tablets will be installed in the homes for the staff to use to clock in, and this will save office staff from having to manually add up hours for employees and prevent errors. Homebase will give the office the means to see who is working where in real time, and to better manage overtime and the allocation of employee work hours. It is expandable, so eventually we can have an easy way for staff to access our policies, the employee handbook, check PTO, and other online information.

RSS is also taking a serious look at how we operate the business. Leanne and I are assessing current office workflow to make sure we level out the workload, get rid of redundant or unnecessary tasks, and have backup people trained in all facets of the operation of the company. It’s exciting to be reorganizing this way, but it will be a long process.

Changes like those things listed above are easy for an executive director to put into place. Something much harder to change, but even more critical to an organization’s, or society’s, ultimate success or failure, is a culture. When I take an objective look at the prevailing culture, I wonder what will become of services such as RSS in the future.

We all know attitude is everything. Out there in the ‘real world’, there’s been a fundamental shift in what’s acceptable. This change in norms and values has been brewing for some time, but only since the pandemic has it really come to the forefront. As anyone responsible for supervising people can tell you, instructions from bosses can only go so far to change a culture.

I would think people would want to work in this field. Where else can you go that will pay you to take a person to the rodeo, or ballgame, or out fishing? What sort of employment opportunities could be offered in the manufacturing or the service sector that could compare to the fringe benefits DD services can give an employee?

I am proud to work with our residents, and I am proud to work for RSS. It’s hard for me to have a bad day when I look at the challenges and obstacles my people face, and I see how they take on life with resolve and inspiration. No one asks to be disabled, nor asks to depend on others to have a decent life. Yet our people overcome their difficulties with grace and perseverance. They don’t see themselves as disabled. Just as people.

If any of us live long enough, we will find out what it is like to be disabled. As America has an ever-older population, and more and more of us are going to need skilled care. One cannot help but wonder how those care needs are going to be met in coming decades.

Working with the developmentally disabled is rewarding in so many ways. It’s a fun job, is never the same thing day in and day out, and makes us better human beings. Showing compassion is, or at least should be, a core component of our culture. We should define ourselves according to how we treat the least among us. The day will come when we will be the ones needing assistance. What sort of caregivers will be around when that time comes?

I believe that people are more good, than not. I believe that people want to do the right thing, even when no one is watching. I believe that human nature hasn’t changed, only that the spirit of the times we are living in has changed. And I believe that when we have to, we will reach down inside ourselves and change the complacency that seems so prevalent right now. I hope that happens soon.

Cal Calton

Executive Director, RSS.