

The Declarations Quarterly

Winter 2024 | Edition 33



2023 Holiday Party

Jennifer Beattie, LSW/Director of CSS Administration

Our first holiday party since 2019 was held on 12/14/2023 at McLoone's in Long Branch. Staff were able to gather together and enjoy time outside of the office, as well as delicious hors d'oeuvres and an excellent spread for dinner.

During the height of COVID, the holiday party was canceled (as well as our Derby fundraiser) to prevent the spread of illness and keep one another safe.

While we have adjusted to the "new normal" post-pandemic, it was easy to forget just how

enjoyable it is to gather together and celebrate all of the hard work we do all year to ensure our consumers can thrive through Community Support Services (CSS) in the least restrictive setting.

Thank you to James Marhold for continuing to host such a beautiful, welcoming, and delicious holiday party for the staff. It was so nice to reconnect after so many changes post-COVID, both in organizational changes and in new staff joining the team.

Photo by picjumbo.com from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/brown-acorn-near-clear-long-stem-wine-glass-225224/>



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Staying Healthy During Cold and Flu Season

Deena Ortiz, RN

Cold and flu season is upon us and, although worrisome, there are ways to prevent ourselves and others we spend time with from becoming ill. The most important way to prevent the spread of germs and illness is to practice frequent and consistent hand washing, which includes both washing our hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If our hands are visibly dirty, it is important to wash our hands with soap and water. While washing our hands, a helpful and fun tip is to sing the happy birthday song twice to ensure we are washing long enough to kill germs!

If we are not feeling well, it is important to stay home from work and away from others to prevent spreading infection.

During this time of the year, it is important that we continue to implement the use of masks to prevent transmission of illnesses such as the common cold, flu, viruses, COVID-19, etc. It is important to be mindful of covering our mouth and noses when coughing or sneezing with the use of a tissue, or coughing into our elbow if necessary instead of onto our hands. We must remember to always wash our hands after blowing our nose, coughing into tissue, eating, preparing food, taking out the garbage, touching an animal, touching a contaminated surface, or using the bathroom.

It is important to keep ourselves healthy, implement self-care, and

schedule routine checkups not only during cold and flu season, but all year round. Receiving our routine vaccinations can help us to remain healthy and prevent illness such as the flu and COVID-19. Other ways to ensure we stay healthy are to nourish our bodies with healthy foods, stay hydrated, implement regular exercise into our routine, get enough rest and sleep, take care of our mental health, and maintain a clean home and work environment.

Let's continue to practice cold and flu prevention techniques and implement standard precautions during cold and flu season to ensure the health of our staff and consumers!

Photo by Polina Tankilevitch from Pexels:
<https://www.pexels.com/photo/person-holding-thermometer-3873188/>

Consumer Spotlight

Susie's Diamond Paintings

Alicia Greaney, Adams Team Leader 1



Diamond paintings are a type of mosaic art that uses tiny resin diamonds and numbered paper to create beautiful and sparkling images. Susie carefully adheres each stud into place until the whole image is formed. Featured are her diamond paintings of Stitch from *Lilo and Stitch*, a beautiful photo of blue butterflies, and a portrait of Jack and Sally from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (one of Susie's favorite movies). Susie has expressed how much she enjoys her doing her diamond paintings and watch the image come to life. Susie also sells some of her diamond paintings in order to make extra cash. The Adams Team would like to thank Susie for allowing us to feature her work in our Consumer Spotlight!



Meet...William Hodgdon!

Bill launched into his position as Clinical Director of Declarations, Inc. in December 2023. He brings 40 years of behavioral health community-based treatment experience to his present position.

In 1979, Bill obtained a Bachelor's degree in psychology from Rutgers College, New Brunswick and then went on to achieve a Master's in Social Work from Adelphi University in 1982. Bill is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and a

member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers. He also has acquired a certificate in clinical supervision for social workers and professional counselors, and his certification as a Social Work Student Intern Field Instructor. Bill has a long history of successfully combining rehabilitative community support services and behavioral treatment in enhancement of recovery of the lives of individuals with serious and persistent mental illness.



Meet...Michael Wilmot!

Michael came to Declarations, Inc. in December of 2023. He serves as the Assistant Director of Clinical Services (AD-CS). He acts as a liaison between the CSS direct care staff and clinical staff, ensuring continuity of service provision across the agency. He brings experience from a variety of mental health settings, including residential, partial hospitalization programs, community case management, and outpatient therapy.

Michael has a Master's of Science in Professional Counseling from Monmouth University and is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the state of NJ. He is passionate about delivering compassionate and evidence-based care to individuals in need. Michael is dedicated to empowering individuals and families in the community.



Meet...Victoria Barkley!

Hello, my name is Vicky. I recently joined Declarations, Inc. in November 2023. I have two master's degrees; one in criminal justice and the other in psychology. Psychology and social work have become my passion over the years, having opportunities to help different clientele in different situations. A majority of my work has been in the group home setting. I worked in a group home for children ages 5-12 who suffered trauma and struggled with placement into resource homes or adoption. Although rather difficult, it was very rewarding to help children process their emotions as well as express themselves in non-

violent manners when they can. It is rewarding when you see them a few years later working their first job or saving for a car knowing the background they came from.

After working with children, I began working in a group home that housed 15 consumers who had severe and persistent mental illness, including individuals with diagnoses such as schizophrenia, bipolar, and borderline personality disorder. In 2018, I became a program coordinator for a transitional home that helped consumers reach their goals of getting their own apartment.

Now working at Declarations, Inc., I get to see a transition from group home and see consumers thrive more in the community and in their own places.

In my down time, I like to read, listen to music, and do anything to relax and take my mind off of work. I like to play video games with my son or go to the park with him, and spend time with family. I am still trying to find that work/life balance; however, working here at Declarations has helped me to find where I can start doing that. The staff here are very friendly, and the compassion and care they have for the consumers is very uplifting and inspiring. I am really glad to be a part of the Declarations team!



Chicken Taco Chili

Shawn Warren, Franklin Life Coach 1

This was a recipe provided to me by my dietitian when I began my weight loss journey. The minimal amount of ingredients combined with the convenience of a Crockpot make this an enjoyable winter meal without overloading on calories.

Ingredients:

- 1-pound turkey or chicken (ground or shredded)
- 1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can corn, drained and rinsed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 packed chili seasoning
- 1 packet taco seasoning

Cooking Instructions

1. Brown 1 pound of ground chicken or turkey (you can use leftover shreds as well).
2. Drain and rinse kidney beans, pinto beans, and corn. Add to Crockpot.
3. Dice onion and green pepper, add to Crockpot.
4. Add chili and taco seasoning.
5. Stir frequently and cook on low for 4 hours.

Enjoy!

Photo by RF_Studio from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/photo-of-person-cutting-bell-peppers-3621212/>

Sudoku

	4		6			8		5
	5		3	4	8	6		1
6								
			5					
				1			5	
	9		7					
4	3		9				1	8
9		6		7			3	
1	7		4	8				9



Photo by Tara Winstead from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-pink-jigsaw-puzzle-piece-with-drawing-of-a-heart-8386175/>

Puzzles for a Cause

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration

The start of a new year is often a time where people look at their belongings and try to reduce, getting rid of things that they no longer want or need.

When decluttering and reducing in your home, consider donating your items to places in need. If items are in new or gently used condition, shelters, churches, pantries, and rescues may welcome donations of goods.

Prefer a hands-on approach? Consider volunteering your time at a location of interest. If you're an animal lover, there are many shelters that often need people to help walk dogs, clean, and organize events.

Prefer one-on-one time with people? Shelters, food pantries, soup kitchens, nursing homes, hospitals, and more could use extra hands to help engage

those who walk through their doors.

On the next page is a crossword with some potential ideas for items you may want to donate in the new year!

And above is a Sudoku, just for fun! :)

Answer key on page 15.

Puzzles for a Cause

Z M E B Y N W Y J J T L Q S V H C F S T Z E J N T O Y X G P
 B C U H H F U Q D A E E Y C C O O K W A R E A T Y C K N G Q
 U S E H P A I S N U Z A O F E I A R Z K H Q S T V E U C B R
 H M N L T M J C B B H S S O C K S Z W D M V V S N S L R J
 B B P T Q E V K J W A H U H Y D U O B M W Z E L Q R T I B L
 G E S I L G R C F Y U E R J O Y W R G A J T N E R D G W Q H
 F Z H P N C Q F U E W S Y M B E G H N I Y R P F Q Q J D W A
 K M X D U V T T Z A B F O B T T S C E A Z D E Y V X L Y X E
 U X M R V O L U N T E E R H F O K D P M X P T P E J L Q A E
 H X Y G M V G U O D P V T O Z Y W U W C S E B V B N L G H N
 T D X H Q F R U P R F I Q E F J V E G I K N E R V H X T G O
 M V B V H K W K V W C M E D B O D L L E S C D Z D D Y L O T
 D S O G Z Q F E P A N T S O O I B A D S N I S I Q K A A O E
 Q C E R E H Q N I Z G J I V O I X X A Q A L Z B I W Z O A B
 Z T A F A C Z T Q T Y X R Y K S O D Z Y T S Q X Q R F P P O
 F N L P F O G M G B Y T B M S H L X Z U O F R P G B S S T O
 K Y R E B A C K P A C K S V J I O F A M Y T I L N K Y L U K
 F K I T E D E L T R X D D E J R K R B M S I O C U A B K H S
 I Z Z B D P O K O W E X A V Z T A Y S L L I R S W S W C J N
 K H V O L V Y Q I V Q N M C E S Z U E R A W S A S O A F A V
 X F M W Z P A T L J P Z B O C G G R E Q L N S J V S N U J J
 R I L L X V U K E F J C G A D L N T Q K Z C K S P Q Z M D W
 T D E S D S V A T P B F H T S W E O R V F Q E K J F J I M
 D L W C Z U L E R H S I W S C K P A K R J X E W T V Q D A H
 X C P H R K K Q I Q Q F A A S J N S N J J X T F K S P I P I
 N K Y C Z S P E E H E G L U G M G R V E J X U R Y T H A E T
 U P U J W P O N S T F H K L R I O U U V R O W F F O F Y R Y
 J Y U S T M F C G I P D B C T M U X I Y Y S U B Z X J R S I
 M Z V M R P B U F P Q H D C W U R J W P V D W E Q J S K P O
 N K N P E B P V H C G G Z D V V Q C S Y S J O O P P Y O O Q

toiletries

volunteer

cookware

pet beds

towels

socks

toys

backpacks

blankets

pet bowls

leashes

shirts

shoes

coats

notebooks

cleaners

diapers

pencils

books

pants



5 Things to Try in 2024

Jennifer Hodge, Sherman Team Leader 2

New Year, New YOU!

While we all wish it could be that easy, we also know that change doesn't happen overnight. While the idea of creating "resolutions" can feel big and overwhelming, the New Year brings about a great opportunity to reflect on the past year and consider any room for growth or self-improvement. Here are some ideas for things to try in 2024:

1. A new hobby: Try your hand at a new hands-on hobby! Origami, diamond painting, and coloring are only a few ideas.

Mental health hack: The calming, repetitive actions involved in crafting have been shown to reduce anxiety while promoting patience and persistence.



2. Get out into nature: Find a way to enjoy nature by walking through a local park or boardwalk, or just by putting your hands in the grass.

Mental health hack: Practice engaging your senses – what does the grass feel like in your hand? Can you smell it? What else can you see/hear around you? Engaging the senses in this way helps us to stay present in the moment.

3. Make something from scratch

Maybe you were a part of the pandemic sourdough craze, maybe not – but put your hands and body in motion and make something delicious for yourself. It could be bread, cookies, or a meal you love! Here is a simple, hand kneaded pasta recipe to try:

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups flour
- 3 eggs
- 1Tbsp olive oil



STEPS:

- 1: Combine ingredients in a bowl until combined.
- 2: Knead by hand for 5-7 minutes, until it is malleable and will “bounce back” when poked.
- 3: Create your pasta shape! Place a small ball of pasta dough on a fork, press with your finger, and roll it off the fork to create your own “gnocchi-like” pasta. OR roll it out into sheets and cut into spaghetti strips.

**Mental health hack: While kneading, imagine the pasta dough holds all of your stresses and concerns from 2023. Push them away from you physically, creating the distance you need to move forward in 2024. Enjoying a yummy bowl of pasta also helps....*

4. Have a solo-karaoke night – or invite some friends!

Search for the “instrumental” or “karaoke” versions of your favorite songs on YouTube. Belt it out like your favorite artist and feel the stress melt away.

Mental health hack: Research has shown that singing effectively reduces cortisol levels (aka stress). Music, in general, has also been shown to be an effective stress-reducer.



5. Be a tourist for a day: Visit somewhere you’ve never been before! Here are some ideas in Monmouth County:
 - a. Monmouth Battlefield State Park – Freehold, NJ
 - b. Allaire State Park / Allaire Village / Pine Creek Railroad – Wall Township, NJ
 - c. Happy Day Farm – Manalapan, NJ
 - d. Monmouth Museum – Lincroft, NJ
 - e. Delicious Orchards – Colts Neck, NJ
 - f. NJ Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial Foundation – Holmdel, NJ

Photo by LA MM from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/red-origami-paper-1582782/>

Photo by Klaus Nielsen from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/faceless-woman-making-pasta-dough-with-flour-and-eggs-in-kitchen-6287568/>

Photo by Damian Scarlassa from Pexels: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/microfono-dinamico-16963920/>

Staff Spotlight On...



Jennifer Hodge Team Leader 2

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: I know I have only been here a short time, but since I started as the Sherman and Franklin Assistant Program Director (APD), I've seen Jenn do so many tasks some at the same time and with great ease. Not only has she been the acting Assistant Program Director and Team Leader 2, but she has also been thorough in helping me train for my role as APD. She continues to still show me things and helps me do things with the same ease as she does everything else. The Sherman staff is lucky to have her here, and the consumers are lucky to have her advocating for them, too!

Submitted by: Vicky Barkley, Assistant Program Director



Staff Spotlight On...



Deena Ortiz Registered Nurse (RN)

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: Deena sets a strong example for us all in consistently delivering a high standard of service to all of our consumers. She is regularly advocating for those with whom we work, and delivering the quality of care they need. Besides her caseload, Deena can't help but always be available and ready to help any of her co-workers. You can go to Deena for anything, and she'll always make time for you. She has on more than one occasion turned down a trip for burritos, choosing instead to invest her time into her work. I don't know what Declarations, Inc. would look like without Deena, but I know it wouldn't be the same.

Additional Comments: Deena's burrito order is chicken, black beans, white rice, pico de gallo, corn, cheese, and sour cream.

Submitted by: Joseph Russoniello, Adams Life Coach 1

Staff Spotlight On...



Allison Turnbach & Jennifer Hodge

Assistant Program Director & Team Leader 2

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: In the near future, my time as acting Clinical Director will be coming to an end. Before I transitioned back into the Director - QA position, I wanted to take a few minutes to highlight and show praise towards Alli and Jenn H. Working alongside both of these staff members has been a great experience. The amount of time, dedication, and support they provided to both the consumers and their staff was truly incredible. Alli and Jenn, thank you for all that you have done and are actively doing to make Declarations, Inc. the best CSS agency around!!

Submitted by: Kellen Polito, Director of Quality Assurance & acting Clinical Director

Staff Spotlight On...



Allison Turnbach

Assistant Program Director

Accomplishment/Reason for Spotlight: Over the past year, I have been able to watch Alli grow in her position as Assistant Program Director from an outside standpoint. While she came to Declarations with prior experience, it has become evident that Alli has begun to flourish and become confident in her own voice and decision-making over the past few months to a year. Alli demonstrates knowledge, insight, and excitement to learn about topics that can aid herself and her staff when she needs to seek out additional resources. She is always willing to ask questions to learn more about her role and how to best serve consumers and staff within the agency. While I may not have opportunities to frequently interact with Alli outside of incident report and utilization review meetings, I can see that there has been a shift. I am excited to see how Alli continues to grow in her role here at Declarations, as well as how the Adams consumers continue to receive the support they need from her and her team.

Submitted by: Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration

Answer Keys

Sudoku

2	4	3	6	9	1	8	7	5
7	5	9	3	4	8	6	2	1
6	1	8	2	5	7	9	4	3
8	6	4	5	3	2	1	9	7
3	2	7	8	1	9	4	5	6
5	9	1	7	6	4	3	8	2
4	3	5	9	2	6	7	1	8
9	8	6	1	7	5	2	3	4
1	7	2	4	8	3	5	6	9

Puzzles for a Cause

Z M E B Y N W Y J J T L Q S V H C F S T Z E J N T O Y X G P
 B C U H H F U Q D A E E Y C C O O K W A R E A T Y C K N G Q
 U S E H P A I S N U Z A O F E I A R Z K H Q S T V E U C B R
 H M N L T M J C B B H S S S O C K S Z W D M V V S N S L R J
 B B P T Q E V K J W A H U H Y D U O B M W Z E L Q R T I B L
 G E S I L G R C F Y U E R J O Y W R G A J T N E R D G W Q H
 F Z H P N C Q F U E W S Y M B E G H N I Y R P F Q Q J D W A
 K M X D U V T T Z A B F O B T T S C E A Z D E Y V X L Y X E
 U X M R V O L U N T F E R H F O K D P M X P T P E J L Q A F
 H X Y G M V G U O D P V T O Z Y W U W C S E B V B N L G H N
 T D X H Q F R U P R F I Q E E J V E G I K N E R V H X T G O
 M V B V H K W K V W C M E D B O D L L E S C D Z D D Y L O T
 D S O G Z Q F E P A N T S O O I B A D S N I S I Q K A A O E
 Q C E R E H Q N I Z G J I V O J X X A Q A L Z B I W Z O A B
 Z T A F A C Z T Q T Y X R Y K S O D Z Y T S Q X Q R F P P O
 F N L P F O G M G B Y T B M S H L X Z U O F R P G B S S T O
 K Y R E B A C K P A C K S V J I O F A M Y T I L N K Y L U K
 F K I T E D E L T R X D D E J R K R B M S I O C U A B K H S
 I Z Z B D P O K O W E X A V Z T A Y S L L I R S W S W C J N
 K H V O L V Y Q I V Q N M C E S Z U E R A W S A S O A F A V
 X F M W Z P A T L J P Z B O C G G R E Q L N S J V S N U J J
 R I L L X V U K E F J C G A D L N T Q K Z C K S P Q Z M D W
 T D E S D S V A T P B F H T S W E O R V F Q K E K J F J I M
 D L W C Z U L E R H S I W S C K P A K R J X E W T V Q D A H
 X C P H R K K Q I Q Q F A A S J N S N J J X T F K S P I P I
 N K Y C Z S P E E H E G L U G M G R V E J X U R Y T H A E T
 U P U J W P O N S T F H K L R I O U U V R O W F F O F Y R Y
 J Y U S T M F C G I P D B C T M U X I Y Y S U B Z X J R S I
 M Z V M R P B U F P Q H D C W U R J W P V D W E Q J S K P O
 N K N P E B P V H C G G Z D V V Q C S Y S J O O P P Y O O Q

Wonderful Winter Celebrations

Jennifer Beattie, Director of CSS Administration



Join us in celebrating the following winter milestones:

January	February	March
None	<p><i>Birthdays</i></p> <p>Daria Sbraccia - 2/1 Alicia Greaney - 2/6 Deena Ortiz - 2/8 Vicky Barkley - 2/26</p>	<p>Alexandra Schueler - 3/6 Kerri Eger - 3/18</p>
<i>Work Anniversaries</i>		
<p>Kerri Eger - 1/12/09 - 15 yrs Alicia Greaney - 1/18/22 - 2 yrs</p>	<p>James Marhold - 2/26/03 - 21 yrs</p>	<p>Jennifer Beattie - 3/26/12 - 12 yrs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Other Updates:</i></p> <p>Shauna Fontenelli returned from maternity leave - welcome back and congratulations, Shauna!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">&</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The agency welcomed the following staff:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Daria Sbraccia, Jefferson Life Coach 1 (October 2023); William Hodgdon, Clinical Director (December 2023); Michael Wilmot, Assistant Director of Clinical Services (December 2023)</p> <p><small>Photo by Susanne Jutzeler, suju-foto from Pexels: https://www.pexels.com/photo/dwarf-gnome-on-snow-3151907/</small></p>		