

JEFF INDUSTRIES, Inc.

A PRIVATE NONPROFIT CORPORATION

LIVE LEARN WORK

Newsletter 4

Fall 2017

Message From

Claudia Roberts, MEd, CPRP

Executive Director

Welcome Fall! It was a busy summer at Jeff Industries as we welcomed new clients and moved many clients into the community workforce.



We survived Hurricane Irma but lost our building awnings which shelter clients, visitors and guests as they enter and exit our buildings. However, our agency was only closed for one day and we didn't lose power! Our new vegetable and herb garden survived the hurricane force winds and rain and it continues to grow beautifully.

We are also most grateful to Extraordinary Charities for they have given us a grant to upgrade our server environment to help us leverage the cloud. The server keeps all of our clients' records, progress reports and important data and financial information.

Sadly, Angelo Squatrito passed away last summer and we dedicate this issue of the Newsletter to him. Angelo was the first Executive Director of Jeff industries and was a visionary for the agency and he is greatly missed. If you wish to make a contribution in Angelo's memory, please use the enclosed envelope.

As we move forward, our "Good Food for Good Mental Health" program continues to have great success. We have noticed that our clients are choosing healthier foods and including more fruits and vegetables into their diets.

Please keep us in mind as you make your plans for the holidays and remember us in your holiday giving. We depend on generous donors like you who allow us to work with those individuals with severe and persistent mental illnesses and to transform them into successful members of society.

With many thanks and have a blessed holiday season to you and yours!

"They have a reason to wake up"



Matt, Jamaiya and Neil (pictured here) are learning wood-working skills and sign installation techniques, like are used to create this sign which was installed for The Pines neighborhood in Wellington, FL. Along with learning these work skills, they also work on appropriate workplace behavior and begin to understand their own personal barriers to employment. They take pride in their achievements and, ultimately, in themselves.

Personal donations and grant monies received from donors like you help Jeff Industries to purchase training materials, pay small, modest wages to our clients who suffer from severe and persistent mental illnesses. Each client is followed by a mental health professional and together they craft a personal development plan with goals and achievements.

Every day, clients have the opportunity to improve their skills and begin to qualify for competitive employment through our agency-owned businesses and community businesses. Clients participate in the development and manufacture of our products and services.

For over 31 years, Jeff Industries continues to help adults and at-risk youth integrate into the community by providing social, leisure, networking, employment and affordable housing so that they can live productive and stable lives.

Meet Some Members of Our Professional Staff



Sylvie Marsh Peterson Part-Time Peer Specialist

Sylvie has been a part-time peer specialist at Jeff industries since 2009.

Sylvie hails from Rockland, Maine and moved to South Florida when she was 18 and attended Palm Beach State College and studied Mental Health Technology where she received an AA degree.

Sylvie worked at Doctors Hospital for 21 years and then transferred to JFK Hospital where she worked for five years. She worked as a tech in “materiels” management department and sterile processing of OR instrumentation. Sylvie found Jeff Industries by way of the NAMI organization and attended a “peer to peer” group where she heard about Jeff industries.

She works in the drop-in center (A.M.I.G.O.S) where she greets new clients and makes them feel welcomed and cared about. Sylvie helps clients with their social services’ needs, filling out forms, computer support, finding appropriate transportation and helps them with their nutritional choices from the onsite food bank. A.M.I.G.O.S. is a friendly, safe place where they are “respected” and feel safe. Sylvie lives by the motto of that “the highest form of wisdom is kindness. A few clients visit without smiling and it warms my heart to see them begin to smile again.”

Sylvie’s someday ambition is to create a safe and secure place for people who are hurting and homeless. She adds “That’s my dream.”

Another Success Story



Josh White moved from Dix Hills, NY to South Florida when he was 19 years old. He is the youngest of three boys and had some issues adjusting to the area. After consulting with a psychiatrist, it was suggested that he look into Jeff Industries. He first started coming to A.M.I.G.O.S. for three days a week. He says “I was just drifting along, not really focusing.” While at A.M.I.G.O.S, he felt a “good vibe” and eventually applied for a training job in the Graphic Design enclave. Previously, Josh was attending Lynn University and was just three classes away from a degree in design and photography. He goes on to say “Jeff has helped me get back on track. They treat you (the workers) very well and with kindness and consideration. Jeff has given me a purpose again and this job helps me to cope with life’s everyday challenges.”

Josh is enjoying life again. He enjoys the beach, fishing, snorkeling and designing his own logos. Josh plans to go back to school to study to become a professional photographer.

Nobody Told Me There’d Be Days Like These

By James Keogh

(Yes, that’s correct-I copped my article title from John Lennon’s lyric.)

It is sometimes shocking how people relate to people with mental illness. It often runs the gamut of patronization and that offered to a leper. Am I right? It’s just plain ignorance.

That’s certainly not the case at Jeff Industries or A.M.I.G.O.S. (Jeff Industries drop-in center). Here you are encouraged to love and have compassion for yourself and are challenged to respect to be tolerant of others regardless of their kinks or foibles. The Golden Rule. You look deeper, it is an education-and it starts from the top of the organization.

I discovered Jeff Industries on my way to the great Mandel Public Library in West Palm Beach. My bus would pull up to the lobby and I’d watch people report for work. I Googled it, made an appointment for an interview and started to drop into A.M.I.G.O.S for several weeks. I was hired for the Design Program and gave it a shot. I did OK but had difficulty with the finer points of the job like threading and cutting vinyl due to medication related hand tremor. I enjoyed the Woodshop on Thursdays. After a few months, I started working the front desk at Jeff. Dana M. (also a client) patiently trained me with much good humor. My hunt and peck typing technique proved invaluable to the tasks ahead.

I am a survivor of the New York mental health system. I spent some years as an outpatient of a state hospital. I wish I had had someone to shake some sense into me to stay away from it. I needed help, I thought they would help me-and they did not. I made a big mistake and frankly, it hurt me. It was a place where the “throw away people” were sent to be warehoused and pacified with drugs. I witnessed a lot of incompetence, neglect and abuse. Thank God, it’s behind me.

One other mistake that I made was being in denial of my bipolar illness. I reasoned if I could function (i.e. be employed, have friendships and a girlfriend) and not need to take medication I was AOK, not “crazy”. Well, obviously that didn’t work very consistently. I would cope with partying which I really enjoyed much, much more than the cotton mouth solution. Ultimately, of course, that had to stop.

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Our Agency in Action



A "Good Food for Good Mental Health" nutrition class



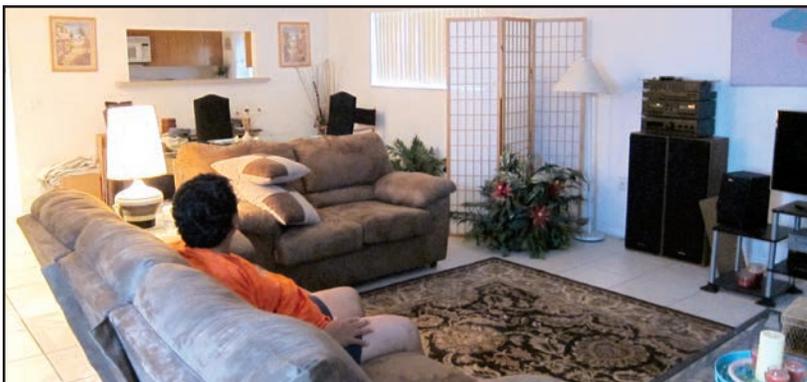
Tropical Sun Signs and Embroidery creation



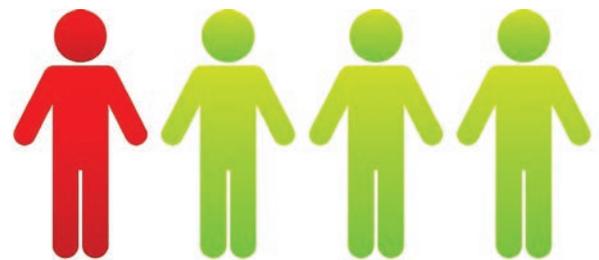
Our growing garden



The sign shop works with raw wood



Interior of a Palm Haven apartment



One in four people has a **mental illness**.
You can be the **one** that helps.

I could tell you war stories that might make you flip your wig. But, I won't. I'm sure you can match or top mine. Let's just say I am a person that was dealt a lousy hand and I'm trying to play the hell out of them.

Hey, what's the deal with the word AWESOME? It seems to be the in-the-know password of South Florida. To my mind, the Grand Canyon is awesome. Moses parting the Red Sea? Definitely awesome. But, a new pair of Bermuda shorts? Sorry, not awesome.

To wrap up this fascinating narrative, I will mention that I like to cook southern Italian food (I learned by watching my mom), I practice yoga (great for an overactive mind) and I write fiction-one day my novel will come along and you'll learn of war stories, true and untrue.

Here's a joke I heard: "Why did the Zen Master keep an empty bottle of milk in his refrigerator? Answer-"He kept it for his students that drank black tea."

Remember, Life is Good!

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