

Serving adults



Imagine having a mood disorder stemming from a developmental disability that made it difficult to interact with people. One moment you felt fine, and the next moment you were deeply upset but you didn't know why or how to overcome it. It got you into trouble and over the years it made you withdraw from people and eventually it made you withdraw from everything...

Meet Neal Polacek.

Three years ago he didn't want to do anything. He didn't want to work and he just didn't get involved. But today he loves snowboarding, skiing, basketball, and he is volunteering at the CCI greenhouse. Tim Butler, one of his support staff, attributes this change to Neal's job at Dairy Queen: "This is an example of how important a job can be".

When Tim first met Neal 3 years ago, Neal wasn't enthusiastic about anything but now he is a dedicated worker; people at DQ depend on Neal to not only clean but to make all of the waffles for the day. Before Dairy Queen, Neal bounced checks and had no savings. Nowadays Neal pays all his bills and even has a credit card! With his savings and a little help from CCI, Neal bought new glasses. Neal said he chose those particular glasses because "they looked good and he could get a clip-on for sunglasses".

Because of Neal's hard work, and the support of CCI staff like Tim who helped Neal get a job and acquire the tools he needed to manage his moods, Neal has overcome challenges that used to stand in his way.

Adult Program

- promoting independence for over 119 adults ages 18-77
- bought a wheelchair accessible van and house for our clients

housing solutions One of the most difficult aspects of Community Connection's adult program is finding housing in Southwest Colorado. Housing is very expensive but we have seen the negative outcomes of "group homes". So CCI always tries to offer the most independent and nurturing living situation possible for each of the 119 adults in our program. Depending on the adult, CCI may provide in-home "supported living services" that help with meals for instance, a suitable house and live-in staff for two - three clients, or adult foster care with comprehensive 24-hour services in a host home. We will continue to look for land or housing donations, grants, and host home providers because we have seen adults really blossom in the right home.

health An important part of CCI's mission is to help clients lead healthy lives. To do this, the Health Services Department administers nursing services to approximately 60 adults in our Comprehensive Services Program. These services include: assessments, education, monitoring, and coordination of primary care services with specialty medical services. We are proud to report that this past year client nursing care plans have contributed to the stabilization of blood sugars for our diabetic clients, necessary weight loss for several clients, and an overall reduction of required medications to minimum dosages. For next year, we hope to finish our transition to electronic medical records, find more efficient ways to deliver medications, and help clients become even more medically independent.

employment CCI works with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to find the best job placements for each of our eligible clients. We currently have 22 clients working in Durango and 13 working in Cortez in businesses such as Hallmark, Starbucks, and the Adobe Vet Clinic. We are in the process of finding jobs for at least 12 more clients in the near future.

community integration One of CCI's top priorities is to increase community integration for each of our clients. We currently have 45 clients enrolled in our Cortez and Durango day programs that include continuing education classes, art classes, volunteering at the Manna Soup Kitchen, Meals on Wheels, Adopt a County Road, Senior Center, and the Cultural Center to name a few. We also partner with Fort Lewis College's Psychology and Sociology departments, and their Environmental Center is getting our greenhouse up and growing for our clients so they can embark on new hobbies, and eventually careers, in growing greens and flowers for our local businesses in the years to come.

Photos:
Neal Polacek and Tim Sapa.
Zane Hatfield.
Coppinger family.

Serving children

Early Intervention Programs



- serving 60 infants and toddlers
- 2 outstanding programs

Community Connections coordinates two Early Intervention programs: San Juan Kids (serving La Plata, Archuleta and San Juan counties) and Southwest Kids (serving Montezuma and Dolores counties). Our services include free developmental screening and evaluation for children under three, plus physical, occupational, speech, and social/emotional therapies based on the child's eligibility, needs, and family priorities.

Each family is assigned a service coordinator to help them plan for the family's needs and access a variety of community resources and activities that will enhance the young child's development. This year, we provided services to approximately 60 infants and toddlers (1.9% of the population) with significant developmental delays and/or diagnosed conditions associated with delays.

CCI's Early Intervention programs are monitored by the Division of Developmental Disabilities and have to adhere to specific state indicators to be accountable for program efficacy. This year we are proud to announce that we were among the few programs in the state to meet all of the indicators!

Family Support Program



- assisting over 76 families
- raised over \$4,000 in grants & fundraisers

The Family Support Services Program (FSSP) works with each family who has a member with a developmental disability to develop a plan that meets the needs of the entire family as they relate to the disability. Families use the program to help with things like travel for medical purposes, medical bills not covered by insurance, developmental materials, home modifications, alternative therapies, vitamins, supplements, recreation, social activities, and respite.

It has been documented that parents who get respite experience less burn-out and are happier in their roles as caregivers. Therefore, one of the most essential services supported by the FSSP is the Tambo Respite Program. FSSP offers activities such as "Parent's Night Out" which allows parents to meet and network with each other. Often these are held in conjunction with Tambo so that childcare is taken care of.

State funding is used to meet many of the needs identified by families, but is often not enough. Therefore, additional funding is secured through fundraising and grants to help fill the gaps left by insufficient state funding.

Our son Zane was diagnosed with Trisomy 18 (also known as Edwards Syndrome) five days after his birth. At that time, we were told to prepare for his death. The only one who offered us hope was Zane's occupational therapist who told us that many times children with his condition live much longer than reported; we should provide him with early intervention as soon as possible. Now 14 months old, Zane has defied the statistics associated with his condition.

After conducting an online search of early intervention programs in the area, I contacted Rachel Cameron at San Juan Kids. She coordinated an evaluation that included physical and speech therapists.

In addition to the therapies offered through early intervention, we feel supported by people like Rachel and Pat Smith (FSSP Coordinator) who do not treat Zane's condition, but see him as an individual who has some additional needs. We feel grateful for the services, the connections, and the relationships that result from being a part of San Juan Kids and Community Connections.

Susan and Kirk Coppinger are loving parents who would do anything to give their children a happy life. Olivia is the twin to Emily who is unable to walk or talk and requires 24 hour care. Their brother Michael has Duchene's Muscular Dystrophy and his condition will deteriorate to the point where he will have to rely on a wheelchair for mobility.

They have accessed the Family Support Services Program to help overcome the challenges they face of providing a happy life for their family.

"We would not be able to afford a family pass without help from the Family Support Program." The Recreation Center family pass serves many purposes - swimming is both therapeutic and enjoyable to the children, the family can recreate together, there is a social opportunity for Emily, and Susan can work out to reduce some of her stress.