

# Messenger

Spring 2018



*Spirited People Leading Spirited Lives*  
..... *Celebrating Independence* .....



## LETTER FROM

# Cindy Clark, President & CEO

## OUR MISSION

**‘Compelled by faith in Jesus Christ, we enrich the lives of individuals of all beliefs, with cognitive or developmental disabilities, by fostering independence, inclusion and self-advocacy.’**

Dear Friends,

As Emmaus continues our expansion into the community, we also continue to experience a significant staffing crisis. Much like our competitors and other service industries, we struggle to recruit, train and retain high quality staff. Did you know that each year the staff at Emmaus provides **more than 1,000,000 hours** of service for our clients?

Did you also know that over the past 5 years more than **100 new clients have chosen Emmaus** as their service provider? Annually we hire and train more than 300 direct support professionals (DSPs) to help provide those crucial services. While the need for our services remains critical, the rates our clients receive to help pay for their care remains relatively flat – in fact, over the past 8 years we’ve only netted a 3% rate increase, certainly not enough to keep pace with wage increases in similar industries.

In response to this crisis, the Board of Directors, in conjunction with our executive team, have crafted a **bold plan of action** to address our critical staffing needs. With an initial investment of more than \$2MM, this two-phase approach includes an immediate salary increase for our frontline staff, primarily by increasing the DSP starting salary from \$10.50/hour to \$12/hour, AND will offer additional career growth opportunities for current staff. This plan will help fill the more than 150 open positions and provide immediate relief for our current client services staff.

But we need your help now, more than ever before. To stem this staffing crisis, and continue our nearly 125-year-old mission, our Board of Directors made this significant investment in our staff by drawing on agency reserves. Your support – through both financial gifts and advocacy work – will help to ensure our vital ministry continues.

To the many volunteers and staff who continue to serve clients at Emmaus, thank you for standing beside us as we work to provide critical services to more than 300 adults with developmental disabilities. While much has changed at Emmaus, much more has remained the same, primarily our unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality care and services. Thank you for your continued support of our mission and ministry. Sincerely,

Cindy Clark  
President & CEO

P.S. April is National Volunteer Month and if you’re interested in volunteering, consider this – the simple act of visiting with an Emmaus client, or taking them on an outing in the community may seem like a small thing, but is quite powerful because that act of caring brings them immeasurable comfort, joy and encouragement.

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# FAMILY



*“Anna is one in a million and her attention to detail sets her apart from others. I don’t know many that would be able to coordinate such great care for our daughter.”*

## ANNA’S HUGE HEART

Anna is always thinking about what new goals her clients may want to set for themselves. Then Anna develops a plan for them to be successful independently. She loves her clients and will do whatever she can to keep them involved in their community.

As a Home Manager at Emmaus, Anna encounters many unique situations. One dates back to a few years ago when she was introduced to a client, who uses a tracheotomy tube. Trachs require a meticulous schedule for changing, tubing and machine maintenance.

When asked by family members about what experience she had with trachs, she very openly stated **“None, but I can learn!”** Through initiative, Anna’s worked with nurses and other Emmaus team members to ensure the training is done correctly and makes sure everyone continues to rotate

through a schedule to retain their competencies.

***Since 2015, there has not been ONE trach infection.***

Aside from providing exceptional care, Anna regularly coordinates trips and parties for the ladies on her own time. She even attends vacations with the ladies and their families. Recently, she coordinated a hot air balloon ride for the mother of a client who doesn’t have any family in the area. Anna found out that her client’s mother had never been in one and had the desire to do so, so she just made it happen.

What sets Anna apart from others is her HUGE heart. She puts the needs of others before her own and follows through in a timely manner. She always makes sure that the girls at the house are involved in community activities so they keep

in touch with friends. Anna even serves as a volunteer so her ladies can be more involved in the Washington community. By giving back, everyone feels important.



Anna works every week and will come to a shift at the drop of a hat. Anytime, day or night. Managing a home also means she is ready to answer the phone when any of the ladies just want to talk. For Anna, Emmaus is not just a job. Her relationships with the ladies, their families and her team creates one BIG family. ■



DO YOU HAVE A HEART AS HUGE AS ANNA’S? CONSIDER MAKING A DIFFERENCE BY APPLYING AT [EMMAUSHOMES.ORG/CAREERS](http://EMMAUSHOMES.ORG/CAREERS).

# FEATURE

## EMMAUS & ..... BEYOND



While still in high school, Ben's family began planning for his future. Because of their son's fearless, independent spirit and love for the outdoors, they were searching for an agency that emphasized the importance and value of an individual's quality of life.

In 2015, Ben's parents were contacted about an opening within Emmaus. Just a few months later, Ben moved into an individualized supported living arrangement near St. Louis.

Ben wanted nothing more than to experience the freedom that comes from living independently and at his own pace. It didn't take him long to ask, "Why can't I go anywhere?"

He didn't mean why can't staff take him places, he meant why couldn't he, as an individual, just get up and go when and where he wanted to. After bringing this up with his staff members, he began

the conversation with his parents that he'd like the opportunity to do things alone, without anyone accompanying him.

All hands were on deck, working hard on granting Ben this basic right. The team assessed safety procedures, stranger awareness, geographic directions and more. Ben had to demonstrate his personal safety while staff participated in and observed his walks in the community.

During the course of 10 months, Ben was able to display his independence and the team agreed upon a number of hours in the community without staff oversight. After multiple meetings, countless contributors and pushing paperwork, a plan was prepared.

***At last, Ben's fondest memory unfolded. He was finally able to go out for the first time completely by himself!*** He recalls walking straight to McDonald's, where he had worked since he was 20 years

old, and where he met his current girlfriend.

Everyone waited patiently by their phones, waiting for a call for assistance to come. But it never did. That is until 30 minutes had passed, as he was required to check in every 30 minutes to let his Direct Support Professionals know his whereabouts. Eventually this rule became more relaxed, the time between check-ins grew longer and longer, and today Ben is not required to call unless he feels it's necessary.

Ben goes on adventures almost every day. He loves being active and is always on the move. He limits himself to only 1 hour of sitting per day. The longest he has ever been completely unsupervised lasted 7 hours, and included walking 15 miles. He has also spent 4 hours biking around town. His impressive memory lets him remember where restaurants, parks and other places are located

while in the car, and then he can route himself back to them by foot or bike. If he gets caught in an unfamiliar location, he just opens his GPS through his phone or smartwatch to get back on track.

While on walks, he collects rocks and minerals. He pays attention to the ground to look for fossils and unopened geodes. He considers himself a collector and will always stop to pick up a lucky penny since he also collects misprinted coins. A few lucky pennies have turned out to be worth upwards of \$22!

One of Ben's favorite items to stop and pick up are seeds. Before being served by Emmaus, Ben volunteered his time at Monsanto by assisting with lawn services and indoor plant care. He learned a lot about plants and what it takes to grow and bulb different trees and flowers. He'll take the seeds home, water them until they grow, and then give them away in pots as gifts to family and friends. Currently Ben's working on a Japanese Persimmon Tree that he found a pod of seeds for and may take seven years to bear fruit. He's interested in horticulture and signing up for college courses this fall.

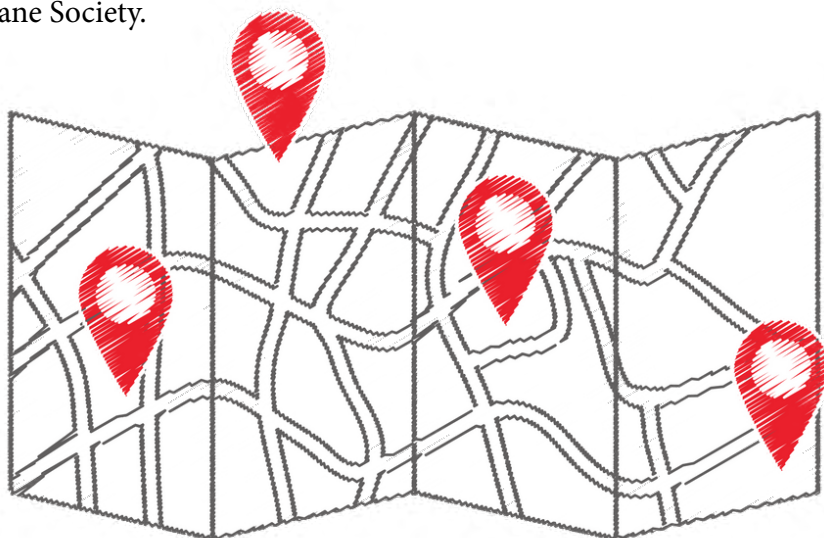
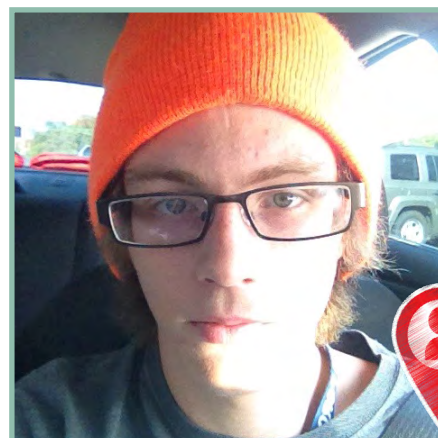
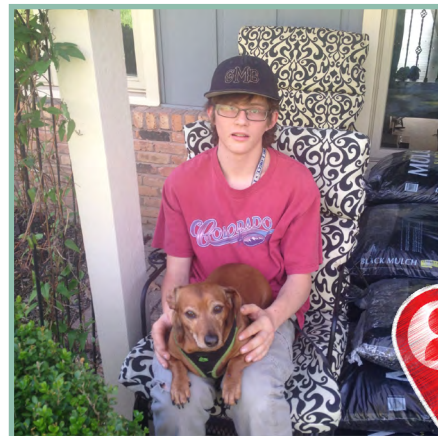
Another small accomplishment is that Ben is now looking to volunteer and put his experiences and hobbies into practice. He's interested in bringing food and cooking at a homeless shelter, or walking dogs on his day off with the Humane Society.

His next step is acquiring a driver's license. He has already taken some initiative by obtaining his driver's permit and scoring an 86 on the written test.

When asked what a license would mean, Ben responded, "Freedom. I could go anywhere. The Zoo, Science Center, and I could even take my girlfriend." His brother has even let him drive in his truck. At first, things didn't go so well, and it's not something he gets to practice often, but Ben loves problem solving. "Now I focus while on my bike. I look at the signs, stoplights and roads. I focus on the cars in front of me and take myself to different spots." Since then, he's driven twice and is even more motivated to get professional lessons.

Since living in his own home, Ben knows he's living a more independent life. He's having more fun and living a less sedentary life. There is so much to experience, and he's always looking to try new things. Today, Ben considers himself 80% free. He focused on the baby steps to get where he is now, but still has big plans for the future. One thing on his list includes overcoming his fear of heights, by literally taking a jump of faith and skydiving! With the loving support of his parents and in-home staff, Ben is able to independently take his life journey to wherever he wishes. We can't wait to see where it takes him next! ■

## THE ADVENTURES OF BEN



# GETTING INVOLVED



## PAVING THE WAY

For the majority of people, getting the mail is exciting. Children often love rushing out to meet the mail truck and delivering the news to their parents. Shoppers enjoy finding little packages tucked away in their mailboxes. But what if something as easy as checking the mail, wasn't so easy?

For Matthew, receiving his mail isn't as simple as walking out to the mailbox and pulling out what's inside. Matthew is visually impaired and cannot safely walk from his front door to the street without the assistance of a Direct Support Professional.

A few groups saw it was time to take action and an accessible walkway and handrail were installed beside the driveway so that Matthew can now walk outside to check his mail without assistance. No one should be denied the ability to go do something they love.

Thanks to a donation by Home Depot,

project preparation with MasterCard volunteers and Salem United Church of Christ Mission Campers from Huntingburg, Indiana, **Matthew has met one of his goals to become more independent!**

Over the course of 74 hours, 15 volunteers from 3 different organizations came together to complete this special project.

Home Depot generously donated \$500 to begin work on the home modification which included supplies and machines. The facilities team at Emmaus jumped in and began coordinating the project.

As soon as the materials were purchased, a volunteer group from Indiana-based Salem UCC Mission Camp spent an entire day beginning preparation of the pathway. They dug up all the dirt along side the driveway and started organizing bricks, rope and wooden posts to be laid out.

Finally, a corporate group from MasterCard helped pave the bricks, roped-off the walkway and even clean up. With their finishing touches, the project was completed.

*"Matthew would like to get his mail independently, and I think that's really neat. We've been working on different projects, but this one is a more personal one, just for one certain person. I think that's important. We're all together here working for him."* said Becky, Salem UCC Mission Camper.

Everyone has talents, ambitions, and goals. It's when we work as a team that real positive change begins to develop. Emmaus is filled with people who contribute to our mission in many ways.

Matthew had asked to get the mail every day and now, thanks to so many, he's able to do this on his own. ■



## GIVE STL DAY

Give STL Day (May 2<sup>nd</sup>) and its 24-hour day of online giving will shine the spotlight on our region's vast assortment of nonprofits, their missions, and the extraordinary ways they make St. Louis special.

Emmaus will be participating in Give STL Day for the 4th year in a row and hopes to continue paving the way for independence through accessibility.

All donations received on May 2<sup>nd</sup> will benefit home modifications. Funding will assist with projects that include wheelchair ramps,

accessible countertops, framed doorways, or other universal design items.

Emmaus recognizes that small changes can reap great rewards to give people independence and self-reliance.

**Will you rally around Matthew and others like him on Give STL Day (May 2<sup>nd</sup>) by making a donation to Emmaus so that we can keep choice and independence at the center of our clients' lives?**

**GO TO GIVESTLDAY**

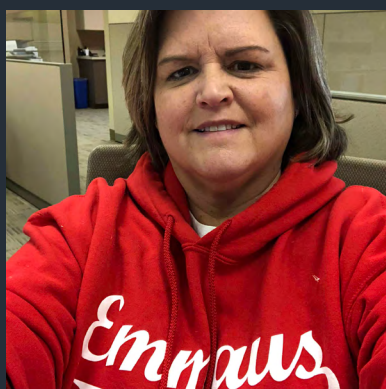


“And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God’s diverse gifts.”

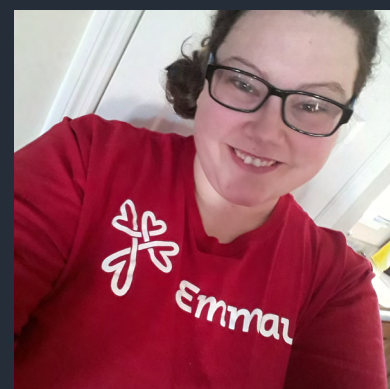
~1 Peter 4:10

Ways to Give: Text “Emmaus” to 91999, Donate Online at [www.emmaushomes.org/Donate](http://www.emmaushomes.org/Donate), or by Cash/Check Payable to Emmaus Homes

While celebrating our 125th anniversary we'd like to highlight everyone who continues to help make Emmaus who we are.



As part of our Emmaus Family, join us by taking pride in saying “I Am Emmaus”



Each month we'll be gathering and posting spotlights of our community on social media.



# SAVE THE DATES!



## Give STL Day May 2<sup>nd</sup>

Follow Us on Facebook & Twitter  
*Help Emmaus connect with the generous people of St. Louis  
for a 24-hour marathon of online giving that allows us to  
continue to serve the community we love.*



## Night at the Ballpark June 25<sup>th</sup>

River City Rascals

*A night of Baseball and family fun with Emmaus!  
A portion of ticket sales are donated to Emmaus.  
Team members and clients attend free.*



## Duckfest October 6<sup>th</sup>

Lakeside 370 Park

*A day dedicated to celebrating all things outdoor.  
Live music, contests, great food and plenty of drinks.*

# Like What You Read?

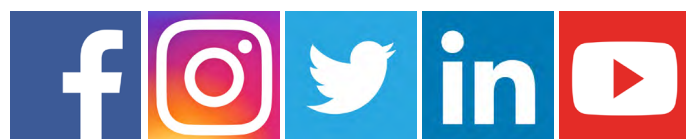
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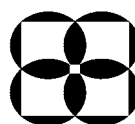


## Emmaus

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