



Thomas Allen
PERSON CENTERED SERVICES

COMMUNICATION CORNER

Advisory Newsletter

It is our pleasure to introduce the first Thomas Allen Advisory Newsletter! In previous years, Thomas Allen hosted “Advisory Council,” which was an opportunity for families and guardians of persons served in licensed programs to gather to hear updates, share feedback and connect with one another. Moving forward, we intend to send semi-annual communication regarding our Home and Community-Based Services.

Agency Updates

2023 is a pivotal year for Thomas Allen. In December of 2022, our Founders and longtime owners, Dave Peterman and James Perron, officially retired. Jesse Perron remains an owner, and Executive Director, Kari Schuster, came on board as shareholder. As we close out a long chapter filled with innovation, growth and top-notch services, we look forward to a future full of possibilities, fresh ideas and continuing to provide the services you know and trust.

In July of last year, Thomas Allen rolled out a new HR and Payroll system! The new system is designed to increase efficiencies in payroll processing. Although not without its hiccups (as with any system rollout), overall, this has been a success. We are extremely proud of our staff for their flexibility and cooperation in using this new system!

COVID

Company-wide, we have loosened our COVID restrictions to match with what the general community is doing, but we still have many safety protocols in place. Staff are not required to mask in the home unless they are providing personal cares, there is a suspected COVID case, or an outbreak.

Visitors are welcome, but we do ask that they notify the home of the intended visit, self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to visiting, and communicate with the Program Manager or Director of any new symptoms within 5 days of visiting.

Residential Openings and Staffing

The Residential division has openings in our Cedar Crest and Southview divisions, located in Bloomington and South St. Paul. Both homes can support an adult male, who is able to walk with or without assistance from a walker. These homes would not be appropriate for an individual who relies on a wheelchair primarily for mobility.

Please reach out to housing.referrals@thomasalleninc.com if you have an interest in these openings!

Staffing continues to be a troublesome area for Thomas Allen in all divisions, especially Home and Community-Based Services. Leadership is participating in a Dakota County Provider Workforce Shortage focus group. This group contains representatives from providers throughout Dakota County, persons receiving services, family members and guardians of persons served, County employees, the County Commissioner and representatives from the Department of Human Services. They meet monthly to discuss barriers to service provisions and to brainstorm innovative solutions. Currently, the workgroup is asking for input from service recipients and families based on their experiences and how the staffing crisis has personally affected them. If you have suggestions or wish to share how you have been impacted by workforce shortages, please reach out to Kari Schuster at karis@thomasalleninc.com.

We know low wages are a significant contributing factor to our workforce shortages. Thomas Allen has taken the initiative to negotiate with counties for individuals' service agreements that may support a rate that will entice new applicants and retain our current, valued employees. We continue to evaluate wages for new and current employees as much as we are able within our budget.

In the News



Thomas Allen attended Disability Services Day at the Capitol in March! There, employees representing Thomas Allen had the opportunity to meet with legislatures to advocate for Disability Services in Minnesota. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan attended the Rally in the Rotunda, encouraging the crowd to make noise and ask for support until their Senators and Representatives see and hear them as well as commit to support them.

This year, the State of Minnesota has a 17 billion dollar surplus. Rates for Disability Services, which are set by the State legislature, have not been increased since 2017. Now is the time to advocate for service providers to receive rate increases in line with inflation, so they can pay their staff livable wages.

March Employee of the Month, Stacey Jorgenson

Stacey is a Nurse Consultant for Home and Community Based Services. This May, she is celebrating 10 years with Thomas Allen! Stacey is so dedicated to the people we serve. Her excellent communication, attention to detail, and her willingness to jump in at all times sets her apart from her peers. She is a true team player, encouraging colleagues to grow, apply for promotional positions, and shows endless patience when providing training and consultation to our staff. She is reliable, flexible and a wealth of knowledge. We are so lucky to have Stacey on our team!



March Rookie of the Month, Diana Nelson

Diana was hired in March of 2022 as a Program Manager at 14th Avenue. In a short time, Diana has demonstrated exceptional leadership skills, reliability, and sincere devotion to ensuring the people at 14th Avenue receive the best care. She treats everyone with dignity and respect. She is committed to helping the people we serve live their best lives, build on their strengths and talents, and stay connected to their community. Diana's positive attitude has helped her build a strong team at 14th Avenue. Thank you, Diana, for all you do!



Policy Updates

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) have an initiative to restructure and update the division policy book to match with the current structure, regulations and procedures. Upon request, you can obtain copies of the policies from the Division Program Manager or Program Director.

The following policies have been updated since the last communication:

Service Termination: Reasons can include health and safety of staff and supported individuals	Maltreatment: Modifications based on statutory changes, updated purging requirements
Emergency Use of Manual Restraint: Combined, permitted, restricted and prohibited procedures, updated reporting to match regulatory and other incident reporting practices	Rights Review: Outlined staff responsibilities to support service rights, reporting improper rights restrictions, and removed ICF specific language
Assessment and Reporting Maltreatment of Minors: Added and updated definitions of maltreatment, procedure if maltreatment is suspected	Incident Response Reporting: updated reporting procedures, identified and defined trends, patterns and qualified response, updated record keeping procedures
Advisory Council	Program Abuse Prevention Plans
Universal Precautions and Sanitary Practices	Psychotropic Medications and Side Effect Monitoring
Injectable Medications	Medication Assistance
COVID-19	Program Abuse Prevention Plans (All programs)
Emergency Procedures (Highland, Skyline, Emerson & Gardenview)	