From the Executive Director’s Desk  by Nancy Pope

As spring approaches, I have reflected on the difficult season we have gone through with the Corona virus. I am thankful to our staff that worked diligently during this past year. We have used safety precautions to keep both our employees and our consumers safe. Because of that we have continued to provide all of our services that keep people living independently in their homes.

Besides providing all of our regular services, we have several programs that we are currently working on. We have set a date for the Back-to-School Fair for low-income students from Jefferson County. The Fair will be July 29th at the Jefferson College fieldhouse. Every child who attends the Fair will receive a free backpack, school supplies, and a new pair of shoes. All students must be pre-registered to attend, and DRA is now taking registrations for this event. Normally we have a trivia night to raise the $20,000 it takes to host this Fair. Due to COVID, we have cancelled our Trivia Night, but we will host the School Super Hero contest again this year. For $25, you can also Sponsor a Backpack of supplies for a child who will attend the Fair. Please read more about this on Page 3 and learn how you can take part.

We are also preparing for our Summer Youth Program. It may seem early, but Vocational Rehabilitation wants us to have our flyers ready and to start registration now. This is a four-week program that prepares youth to transition into employment and adulthood. Please read more about this on Page 3.

DRA is excited to have been selected to be a part of the Missouri Assistive Technology’s Robotic Pet Project. This is a study to see how robotic pets may help an individual that is living alone and isolated. Read more inside about this project and how you can be a part of it.

We will be starting on our fourth house build as soon as the ground dries a bit and the weather cooperates. We are excited to sell another affordable/accessible house to a well-deserving family.

We have over 20 programs, and we are here to serve you. If there is something we can help you with, please contact us at 636-931-7696 or visit our new website at www.DRA4help.org.

Our mission is personal empowerment for individuals with disabilities, seniors, and those in need.
Senior Apartment Wait List has Room

DRA is accepting names for the disabled wait list for our 2-bedroom senior apartment units. The apartment wait list is for Water Crest (Arnold), Richardson Ridge (Arnold) and Bluff View (Festus). To be eligible you must be age 55 or older, have a good credit history, and have good previous rent/mortgage history. The combined household income cannot exceed the income restrictions for your family’s size at move in (limit of 4 per household).

The program requires that the apartments be leased to “Qualified Households” at 60% Median Income per family. For example, a single person must make at least $13,000 per year but must not exceed $34,860 in annual income. These amounts adjust with the size of the household.

The DRA wait list for Bluff View and Richardson Ridge is lengthy at this time, but the list for Water Color in Arnold is much shorter.

If you are interested in being added to this wait list, please call Nancy at 636-931-7696 Ext. 113.

DRA Consumer Highlight: Zachary Moulder

Zachary Moulder loves cars and working outdoors. Pain in his back and legs related to accidents as a child and again as an adult make it difficult for him to do these and other basic tasks. Still, he is determined to learn new skills he CAN do, like trading stock.

DRA provided the medical equipment he needed after his last surgery. His girlfriend Tara is also his CDS attendant.

Zachary shares his love for Disney movies and car shows with his kids Anna and Xavier. His dream car would be a ’67 Camaro SS or a ’67 Mustang GTS.

DRA Staff Highlight: Kiley Rigdon

Kiley Rigdon has served as DRA’s Consumer Directed Service (CDS) Specialist since November of 2019. Her job duties include helping people learn about CDS for in-home personal attendant care. It is rewarding for her to walk people through the qualification process. The best part of her job is knowing that she is really helping people.

In her spare time, she makes custom cups as her hobby. She also enjoys walking her dogs and spending time with her husband Chris and her two sons, Brett and Garrett.
DRA is Looking for Robotic Pet Owners

DRA is partnering with Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) to provide Robotic Pets to older adults and individuals with disabilities. These animals have soft fur that feels real and sensors that respond to motion, touch, and sound, allowing them to interact with their owner.

Participants in this pilot program will “foster” a robotic pet (puppy or cat) for five weeks. At the end of the five weeks, they can “adopt” their pet - at no cost!

If you want to adopt a robotic pet, you will complete an “Adoptee Agreement.” You will be part of a study to explore the benefits of companion pet adoption on mood and experiences. Each participant will fill out a pre- and post- adoption questionnaire. For five weeks, you will care for your pet. You will also chat with a “Checkinarian” weekly about your experiences with your pet.

If you would like to adopt a robotic pet, call DRA today and ask for Penny at Ext. 129.

FREE For Students: Summer Youth Program

DRA is offering fun, interactive programs this summer for students ages 14-21. Come build self-confidence and prepare for your future!

**Wednesdays and Thursdays From June 30 –July 22, 2021**

**Missouri Driver’s Permit Prep**
from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
Prepare to take the Missouri Driver’s Permit test.

**Skills to Pay the Bills**
from 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Learn daily living and employment skills.

Classes will be held at DRA offices at 130 Brandon Wallace Way, in Festus, MO.

Sign up today before classes fill up! Call Nancy at 636-931-7696.

2021 Back-to-School Fair and School Superhero Contest

DRA co-sponsors an annual Back-to-School Fair for low-income students from all over Jefferson County. This year the Fair will be on July 29. We need volunteers to help set up and run the Fair.

This year we will NOT be hosting our Annual Trivia Night fundraiser due to COVID. Instead, you can “Sponsor A Backpack.” For $25, you can provide a backpack, school supplies and a pair of shoes to a student who will attend the Fair.

You can also help nominate the 2021 School Superhero. Until March 26, nominate a person from your school district who is a Superhero. Then vote for the winner! Any teacher, administrator or staff who works at a Jefferson County School district is eligible. The winner will receive $250 themselves and $500 for their school.

To give, to nominate, to vote, and to volunteer, go to our website at www.DRA4help.org.
Thank You to our Generous 2020 Holiday Food Basket Donors!

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Festus-Crystal City Rotary Club
Hillsboro Lions Club
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Sincere Thank You to our Generous 2020 End-of-the-Year Donors!

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