

Self-Directed Service News

Consumer-Directed Community Supports (CDCS)

Per feedback from previous CDCS Orientation participants: In 2025, we will continue to hold CDCS Orientations on a **virtual platform (Teams - online)**. There will be sessions offered the second Wednesday of every month, which alternate between morning and evening sessions depending on the month.

CDCS participants are expected to attend only one session within 30 days of starting on or

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Community Services
AA&D Division
14949 62nd Street N.
Stillwater, MN 55082

[Community Services
Disabilities Website](#)

As the days get longer and nature begins to bloom, we're excited to welcome the spring season with open arms. Whether you're planning things to do outside to enjoy the sunshine or finding new ways to engage with your community, we've curated stories and resources to inspire you.

Spring is a time for fresh beginnings, and we hope this newsletter provides you with the tools, inspiration, and support to make the most of the season. Let's grow together!

Submitted by: Rachel Carpenter, Case Management supervisor; Txing Vang, planner; Jonathan Vang, senior social worker; and social workers Whitney Lee and Chor Her.

Community First Services and Supports (CFSS): Expanding Independence and Choice

Washington County is excited to introduce Community First Services and Supports (CFSS), a new program that launched on Oct. 1, 2024, replacing the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) and Consumer Support Grant (CSG) programs. CFSS provides individuals with greater flexibility and enhanced options to maintain independence in their homes and communities.

Key benefits of CFSS include:

- The ability for a spouse or parent of a minor to serve as a support worker
- A budget model option that allows people to directly employ their support staff
- The option to purchase goods and services that aid in independence
- Expanded training opportunities for support workers

As PCA and CSG phase out, current participants will transition to CFSS during their next annual reassessment.

Selecting a Consultation Provider – A Critical Step in CFSS

After your reassessment or intake, it is essential to select a consultation services provider before proceeding with CFSS enrollment. Consultation providers play a vital role in:

- Educating individuals about their CFSS options
- Assisting with the development of the service delivery plan
- Reviewing and submitting the plan for county approval

Before notifying your case manager or Washington County of your chosen provider, confirm that the consultation provider can accept your referral.

Visit the [Department of Human Services' \(DHS\) CFSS consultation services providers web page](#) to access the list of approved CFSS consultation services providers to get started today!

Visit the [DHS CFSS website](#) or contact Washington County at 651-430-6323 or by [emailing the CSAAD-CFSS Program](#) for more information.

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*30 days after starting
on the CDCS program.*

*Please talk with your
case manager about
signing up for CDCS
Orientation.*

You will be sent a
training packet and
emailed a training link.

2025 CDCS Orientation sessions: (Wednesdays)

- **April 9** | 6-8 p.m.
- **May 14** | 9-11 a.m.
- **June 11** | 6-8 p.m.
- **July 9** | 9-11 a.m.
- **Aug. 13** | 6-8 p.m.
- **Sept. 10** | 9-11 a.m.
- **Oct. 8** | 6-8 p.m.
- **Nov. 5** | 9-11 a.m.
- **Dec. 10** | 6-8 p.m.

CDCS Update

Reminder that **CDCS Unbundling** has officially started as of Feb. 1. Per DHS's timeline, most folks will not have to transition to the NEW CDCS Community Support Plan (CSP) for renewal plans until April 1.

In most cases, the assessment date determines which Community Support plan to use (unbundled or pre-unbundling). *Brand new CDCS plans starting Feb. 1 or after will have to use the*

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30th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference

Join Autism Society of Minnesota (AuSM) for the 30th Annual Minnesota Autism Conference. This milestone event offers a wealth of insights and resources on Autism, featuring inspiring keynote speakers and informative breakout sessions for individuals, families, educators, and professionals. Don't miss this opportunity to connect and learn!

April 16-18, 2025

DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis Airport Hotel, Minneapolis

[Visit AuSM's website for more information and to register for the conference.](#)

Adaptive Sports and Summer Camps

As the weather warms up, it's the perfect time to start thinking about all the fun summer activities ahead. Start planning now to ensure you're ready for the best summer yet!

Check out these opportunities:

- [Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute Adaptive Sports and Recreation](#)
- [PACER Center Inclusive Recreation, Adaptive Sports, and Summer Camps](#)

A System of Technology to Achieve Results (STAR)

The Minnesota STAR Program is a federally funded program run by the Department of Health and Human Services. The program aims to help people learn about assistive devices that could benefit their daily living. STAR partners with agencies that offer demonstrations for devices which allows people to compare features and benefits so that they may choose the one the best fits their needs. These partners will also allow people to borrow a device to try it out before buying it. STAR will pay the shipping costs to any Minnesota address at no cost; however, the lender will pay the return shipping. Arrangements can be made for in-person delivery to our office in St. Paul to alleviate shipping costs.

Per the program's commitment to promote the reuse of technology, STAR maintains a listing of online device exchange that allows people to donate, sell, and buy previously owned but still usable technology. The MN.AT4ALL serves as a database of devices available to Minnesota residents for demonstration or loan (short-term or open-ended) with various categories: Computers and related; daily living; environmental adaptations; hearing; learning, cognition, and developmental; mobility, seating, and positioning; recreation, sports, and leisure; speech communication; vehicle modification and transportation; and vision. Create your own account, track your own history of items borrowed, submit requests, and complete our surveys to provide us with your valuable feedback. *Devices can be repaired and refurbished, if necessary, prior to being sold or donated.*

[View Minnesota Department of Administration's STAR website.](#)

[View the MN.AT4ALL website.](#)

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new unbundled CSP.
View the links below
for more information
specifically regarding
unbundling:

- [Aging and Adult Services Division \(AASD\) and Disability Services Division \(DSD\) eList: CDCS unbundling project implementation and policy changes update](#) New service categories, CDCS forms, and timeline.
- [Consumer Directed Community Supports \(CDCS\): Is it right for you?](#) DHS training regarding unbundling.
- [CDCS - Unbundled CDCS service categories](#) Community-Based Services Manual (CBSM) page to new unbundled categories.

April is Autism Acceptance Month

[Learn more on AuSM's Acceptance is a Verb: Take Action... web page.](#)

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Focusing on "Why"

A Renewed Vision Elevates Services at Rise in Oakdale



direct support to participants.

While Rise staff have always had strong relationships with those they support, leadership saw an opportunity to deepen these connections. They initiated conversations with team members, especially direct support professionals, about the "why" behind their work. They explored questions like why they do their jobs, why their roles matter, and how they impact the people at Oakdale.



John Watters, Rise's Washington County program director.

people annually throughout Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Founded in 1971 in Spring Lake Park, Rise also serves people through various programs in Washington County, including locations in Cottage Grove, Forest Lake, and Oakdale.

At Rise in Oakdale, people expect a full range of services. Each week, Rise supports around 70 individuals through various life enrichment activities. These activities include learning new skills, community outings, volunteering, crafts, and clubs. For some, the program is a highlight of their week, while for others, it's a relaxing break from their part-time jobs, offering a chance to socialize in a supportive setting. The program is backed by a dedicated team of over a dozen staff members, nearly ten of whom provide

"Those conversations matter immensely," said Washington County Program Director John Watters. "They provided a way for our team members to talk about their purpose. We learned that even the smallest actions contribute to the experiences of the people we support each day."

This shared vision has done more than just give the Oakdale team a renewed sense of meaning and purpose. It has also clearly defined and strengthened the team's capabilities, which is crucial as they engage with people exploring life enrichment opportunities at Rise.

"These conversations have made Oakdale a better place to work," Watters added. "They have helped us create positive experiences for the people we support, which is why we do the work we do."

About Rise

Rise is a leading provider of community-based career, job exploration, and life enrichment services to more than 2,500



Find Love Safely

Personalized matchmaking services for adults with intellectual disabilities

www.findlovesafely.com 



A SAFER WAY TO DATE

Deeply ingrained in all of us is a desire for connection. But for adults with intellectual disabilities, it can be especially difficult to meet new people, form friendships, and find people to date. And, online dating is not always a safe option for this beautiful community, which is especially vulnerable to online scams.

Find Love Safely was created to help adults with intellectual disabilities meet someone who they can be assured is real and looking for the same kind of relationship they are.

Each Find Love Safely member and their legal guardian meet with Katherine, founder and chief matchmaker, via a Zoom call. This helps ensure members are who they say they are and have their guardian's support throughout the dating process.

GUARDIANS ARE INVOLVED

To be eligible for Find Love Safely matchmaking services, prospective members *must* have a legal guardian as appointed by the court. Each step of the Find Love Safely process is completed with the guardian's permission, participation, and support.

HOW IT WORKS

1. Complete the intake form

Prospective members (with their guardians' support) fill out the [intake form](#). 

2. Schedule a Zoom call

After submitting the intake form, guardians are prompted to sign the services agreement, pay the annual membership fee, and then schedule a Zoom call with Katherine.

3. Receive matches

After the Zoom call, Katherine searches her database for a potential match. Matches are emailed to members' guardians, who are responsible for deciding whether the matches meet, scheduling and coordinating the date, and chaperoning if needed.

AT A GLANCE

- Twin Cities, MN, area residents only
- Court-appointed legal guardian participation required
- Annual membership fee is \$199/year
- Annual membership includes unlimited matches and access to events

SCAN TO
LEARN
MORE



KATHERINE GYOLAI

Founder + Chief Matchmaker

Katherine is a mom and stepmom to 8 adult children, 4 of whom have intellectual disabilities. Inspired to find a better way for her children to find love, friendship, and connection safely, she created Find Love Safely.

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[View AuSM's events calendar](#) to view upcoming events.

[Visit AuSM's Resources web page](#) to view resources, get help navigating systems, and disseminate information to support you on your journey.

**ACCEPTANCE
IS IN ACTION**

Contact Us for Article Submissions:

For questions or to submit articles, contact:

Txing Vang
651-275-8713
[Email Txing](#)

Sign Up for this Newsletter

Sign up to receive this newsletter via email or text using our [Notify Me system web page](#).

If you have a change to your email address, make sure to update the Notify Me system so you continue receiving your newsletters.

Mobile Crisis Van



Washington County is excited to announce our Mobile Social Service Outreach Program!

Program Overview:

- Meet people where they are at.
- Partially routine schedule and partially available for community, cultural, school, and other outreach event opportunities.
- Provide information, referrals, and resources.
- Reduce the stigma of mental health issues.
- Increase access to services.
- Reach underserved populations.

Contact Anne Rooney at 651-275-8692 for more information.

Submitted by: Anne Rooney, Jail Mental Health Outreach supervisor and Kelsey Provo, Crisis Response Unit senior worker.

Valley Friendship Club (VFC) News

Come make new friends at Valley Friendship Club! Having fun making friends is our motto, and we witness this each and every day. Our spring calendar is full of fun and exciting events such as Casino Night, Earth Day at the Farm, Pottery, Line Dancing, Cinco de Mayo parties, Dining Out, and Dollar Bingo. We will celebrate 15 years of VFC in May at our VFC Birthday Bash. Come join us and see what VFC is all about.

Our summer camp registration is now open. We have morning camps for participants with disabilities from 6-12 years old and those 13 and older. Come try your hand at art, music, theater, or cooking. There is something for everyone.

[View VFC's full Events calendar on the Valley Friendship Club website.](#) Kids, teens, and adults are welcome!