

Breaking Ground at Our New Garden Space at Crossroads YMCA

In our last newsletter, we announced our upcoming prevocational training program. This new program, which will be based at Crossroad YMCA's Camp Triangle Hills in Crown Point, will benefit persons with autism and other developmental disabilities who need to develop some general job skills before they can be successfully employed in a community setting.

Those general skills will be taught through a horticulture program. The skills attained through this program will be the important "soft skills" that will make our students valuable employees across Lake County. Punctuality, appropriate job-place behavior and hygiene, respect for one's supervisor and co-workers, teamwork, and other desirable qualities will be reinforced while participating in a horticultural-based setting.

We have learned through our past five years of providing job coaching services that quite often it is not a job-seeker's ability to perform the assigned job tasks, but the

ability to conduct themselves in a work-place appropriate manner that will make or break a successful attempt at employment. Through our horticulture program, we will reinforce desirable work habits so that our students will experience success in their chosen future jobs.

In October, we put our first mark on our new space by defining the area for our new



garden space at the Y camp. In November, Mike McCormick, one of our wonderful volunteers, tilled up the garden plot to start preparing it for the spring planting. Thanks, Mike!

We will start with an approximate 10,000 square foot garden area with raised beds, traditional garden beds, trellis gardening, and examples of gardening for small spaces where our visitors and YMCA camper participants can get ideas about how they might fit garden spaces in their own yards. Watch our progress on our social media pages!

On a personal note, a most sincere thank you to those of you who offered your thoughts, prayers, kind gestures and memorials at Mark's passing. Your kindness is deeply appreciated. May his dedication to our adults with disabilities continue to inspire us as we go forward with our mission.

Mary Anne Neiner

President, Planting Possibilities

Planting Possibilities in the Community

OUR CAMPAGNA GARDEN

We had a relatively small garden this year. But it was the perfect amount of food for the culinary staff at Campagna to create dishes using our produce, such as eggplant parmesan and pasta sauce, and add a little bit of spice to their cooking by including our pepper varieties. We tried a few new things this year at the request of the students. We planted Collard greens, Swiss chard, sweet

potatoes and luffa gourds, along with the usual tomatoes, peppers and sweet corn. Our grape vines are producing purple and green grapes.

Over the winter, we will learn how to transform the inside of the luffa gourds into luffa sponges. We are learning new things every year!



MOWING POSSIBILITIES

Mid-mowing season we introduced our new mowing supervisor, Ernie D'Angelo. Ernie is one of many people who were needed to help fill Mark Neiner's shoes. We are very

happy to have Ernie on our team with our crew of four mowers. This year we mowed 8 residential yards, two commercial properties and the Campagna Academy campus.



2023 GOLF FOR POSSIBILITIES



Once again we were graced with beautiful weather, good company and lots of fun at Scherwood Golf Course in Schererville, Indiana for our annual golf outing.

Thanks to our corporate partner, Griffith Windustrial's Ryan Krejci, we hosted 114

golfers for a round of golf, lunch and some great prizes and auction items. We thank Paul Gergets and his family for dedicating so much time and effort into planning this event, the golf committee, the volunteers who helped that day, and the Scherwood Golf staff. The morning bloody marys were a big hit and will return next year!

We are sincerely grateful to our golfers who spent their day with us, and our sponsors and donors who helped make this event the success that it has become.



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SEPTEMBER MUM SALE

It was a great day for our September 23 mum sale. Not only was the weather great, but we sold out again this year. Every year's favorites are the large multi-colored mums.

We order more every year, but apparently never enough! Watch our social media for next year's spring geranium sale on May 17, 2024.

Thank You to Our Donors

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Merry Christmas from
Harriet Rincon to
Susan Harmening

REMEMBERING MARK A. NEINER



In August we lost our beloved co-founder and Executive Director, Mark Neiner. His energy and dedication shaped our organization. Mark was the heart and soul of our Campagna Academy program, having personally touched the lives of more

than 100 Campagna residents who came through our program. He also helped organize softball, basketball and bowling groups to help create social connections for folks with disabilities. Mark was deeply devoted to the work of improving the lives of adults with disabilities. He will be sorely missed.

Mark would have been very humbled by the outpouring of memorials made in his name.

With his memorial fund we will thoughtfully consider a long-lasting reminder of his spirit at the Campagna Campus where he spent most of his days over the past several years and also at our new horticulture program in Crown Point.

Thank you to those who made donations in his memory.

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* 128 Campagna clients, 25 VR employment services ** 10% switched providers 90% satisfaction from Quality Assurance survey



Planting Possibilities
PO Box 1805
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Visit PlantingPossibilities.org



Learn More About:

- >> Breaking Ground at YMCA Crossroads
- >> Golf Outing Recap
- >> Remembering Mark A. Neiner

Planting Possibilities is a registered 501(c)3 with the mission to provide job-skills training, employment, and volunteer opportunities for adults with autism and other developmental disabilities in Lake County, Indiana.

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