




# Gem State News



## Looking Forward to 2015

With the beginning of the new year, Gem State Developmental Center would like to wish you a Happy New Year and thank you for your business in 2014. It has been a pleasure helping children and adults reach their goals. We're grateful for good people like you, who make our work satisfying and enjoyable. We look forward to working with you in 2015 and contributing to your success.

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### GSDC Reorganizes

Effective February 1, 2015, Gem State Developmental Center reorganized its organizational operations for adult developmental disability services. We established a new Clinical Director for Adult Services position, eliminating the existing Clinical Supervisor positions.

The new Clinical Director for Adult Services will oversee all program and personnel operations for both our Meridian and Nampa Adults Centers. In addition, Rosalie Landholm, Senior Developmental Specialist and Co-Owner and Corey Makizuru, Administrator, will continue to jointly share the role of overseeing the day-to-day operations at the Meridian and Nampa Adult Programs. They will be on-site, as well as available via telephone, to address any issues, questions, or decisions that may arise.


Mr. Timothy Schank and Ms. Lori Jo Poole were employed as the company's Clinical Supervisors. After much consideration, Mr. Schank decided not to apply for this new Clinical Director position. We sincerely appreciated his time with us, dedication, and work towards helping us provide extraordinary services to extraordinary people. On the other hand, Ms. Lori Jo Poole applied and interviewed for the position.

Gem State Developmental Center is proud to welcome Lori Jo Poole as our new Clinical Director of Adult Services. We wish her all the best in this new endeavor.

As we work together under such provisions, we're confident that our organizational change will increase consistency, continuity, and quality of services. Thank you.



#### Inside this Issue

- Adults look forward to 2015—Page 2
  - Children's Program 2014 Highlights —Page 3
  - GSDC Employee "Hall of Fame" - Page 5
  - Next Newsletter—GSDC Participant "Hall of Fame"
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#### Upcoming Events:

- Disability Advocacy Day — Feb 12th
- Miss Amazing Pageant— March 27th-28th
- Healthy Nampa—April 18th
- Treasure Valley Community Resource Fair—April 29th

## Adults are ready for the New Year!

May 2015 give you the opportunity to realize your dreams, rediscover your strengths, muster your willpower and rejoice in the simple pleasure that life brings your way!

**"Do not let the future be held hostage by the past."**

### *Ponder the Perspective...*

The disability is not the problem.  
The accessibility is the problem.  
~Mohamed Jemni~

### **ABLE Act helps to close the gap**

The "Achieving a Better Life Experience" or ABLE Act was signed into law by President Obama at the end of 2014. The ABLE act will allow tax-free savings accounts for people who have a documented disability prior to the age of 26 and are currently receiving SSI, SSDI and Medicaid services.

This ABLE savings account will allow people to save up to \$100,000 for qualified living expenses and up to \$14,000 per year in savings or gifts without any penalties to SSI, SSDI or Medicaid benefits. The target date to start an ABLE savings account is by the end of 2015 so each state has time to implement the changes.

The ABLE accounts do not cost money to open and therefore, are more accessible for people to save money and have a safety fund to transition off of services at some point in time and closing the gap that frequently traps people into staying on benefit programs. Other options, such as a "Special Needs Trust" can be very costly with legal expenses and unaffordable for people on a limited income. The ABLE accounts will also allow people to save for necessary and unexpected expenses such as durable medical equipment not covered by Medicaid, hearing aids, etc.

For more information, go to <http://www.ndss.org/Advocacy/Legislative-Agenda/Creating-an-Economic-Future-for-Individuals-with-Down-Syndrome/Achieving-a-Better-of-Life-Experience-ABLE-Act/>



## Children's Program 2014 Highlights

At the end of 2014, the Children's Program was a huge success for both Nampa and Meridian centers. Both kids and staff alike shared many exciting times and lasting memories. The kids learned and grew together as a group in both center and community based activities, where they were able to build upon personal skills and goals. The children grew together and built stronger friendships among each other and in their communities.



As the school year approached in August, the after school program began. The kids transitioned smoothly into their new schedules, both staff and kids fell into the new routine with excitement and ease. Over the last few months, the kids have had holiday vacations in which they were able to participate in several fun community activities and outings. Both centers visited

the Meridian Farmstead Corn maze, where they were able to take a hayride to pick their own pumpkins.

During Thanksgiving break the kids were able to express their thoughtfulness and thanks to their families and friends through several craft and activity projects. The children at the Nampa center were able to make dog treats for a local animal shelter.



Throughout Christmas vacation, the children learned the importance of giving to their communities and their friends and families. The children made Christmas cards, holiday ornaments, gingerbread houses, and participated in a gift exchange with their peers at the center.

As the after school program goes on, the children will continue learning and growing in many "PIECES" of good character. They will learn about several different positive character traits that they may use in their homes, schools, programs, and communities.

Several of the **PIECES** include traits such as:  
Honesty, Respect, Creativity, Patience, and Consideration.

## GSDC Celebrates Employee Longevity

# **GSDC's HALL OF FAME:** **L-O-N-G-E-V-I-T-Y** **among its staff**

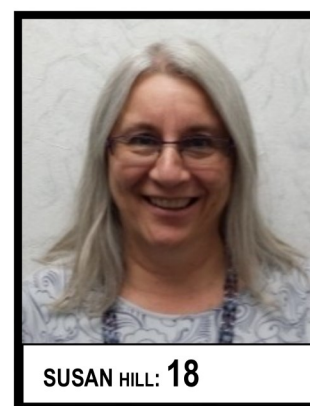


Company longevity is a rarity in today's employment world of high layoffs/turnovers and low retention/loyalty. **DID YOU KNOW?** According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. workers had the average job tenure of 4.6 years in 2012, that's up from 3.7 years in 2002 and 3.5 in 1983.

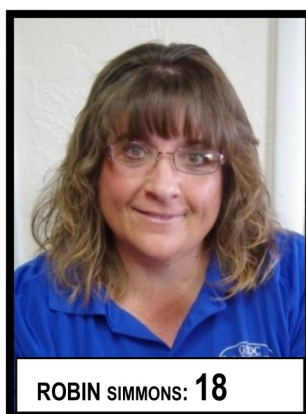
**FYI:** GSDC's average is 7.9 years with several staff with 7+ years of employment who've called GSDC their 2<sup>nd</sup> home. We acknowledge these staff with this amazing employment milestone and take this opportunity to thank them and share personally from them what they love about Gem State Developmental Center!



I enjoy the people/families we help, the work we do, the opportunities to make a difference, & the pursuit to better the lives of people with developmental disabilities. I've appreciated our family-oriented work environment, the privilege to team with compassionate and respected colleagues, experts in the field, and valued our ongoing contributions to the foundation, establishment, and evolution of developmental disability services in the state of Idaho for the betterment of all.



The family-like atmosphere, caring staff, & having the ability to help clients improve their lives for the better have kept me in the safe harbor of GSDC for so long.



I enjoy my job, I enjoy advocating for the wonderful people I work with. They often do not have a voice and need someone to advocate for their needs. I enjoy making sure their voices are heard.



## GSDC Celebrates Employee Longevity

Follow your passion and don't settle. Do what you love!



**LORI JO POOLE: 15**



**LILIBETH DELAPENA: 16**

The clients keep me fulfilled in knowing even the little things they do is both rewarding to them and me.



**EDWARD RUSSELL: 15**

Working with people that have a common vision is a powerful experience. This is an exceptional place to work with extraordinary staff and participants!

I love making a difference in the clients' lives. It's never a dull day at GSDC...each day is very challenging, but also exciting!



**MARIA GUILLEN: 13**

I stayed at GSDC because they treat employees with dignity & respect. I love to work with the children & have fun at it.

I openly admit I continually find fulfillment in my career here at GSDC. Perhaps, because I continue to care so much about the people I have the privilege to work with each & every day. This has clearly contributed greatly to my longevity and joy.



**CHARLOTTE DRINGLE: 9**

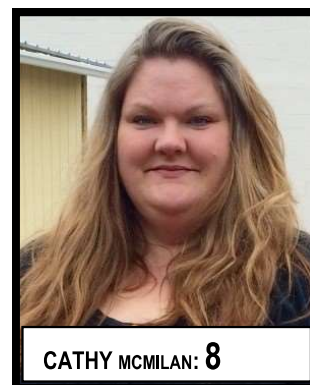


**JESSICA LOWRY: 8**

## GSDC Celebrates Employee Longevity



I love the kids I work with and seeing the progress that they make and opportunities they have to become independent. I also appreciate how supportive administration is of the program.



I'm so blessed & enjoy working for an agency that cares for their participants & employees. I truly enjoy the wonderful people who are always smiling & working together to achieve goals & make a difference in the lives of so many. It's actually the difference they have made in my life that propels me to stay.

The smiles & laughter that I bring to the clients is what makes my job fulfilling!



It is an amazing feeling to see the kids make breakthroughs in their abilities and know that I helped them get there. I love the passion for people with disabilities in the hearts of our administration and how supported I feel as a supervisor to implement things within our programs. It is an amazing company to work for.

By Jessica Lowry

Gem State Developmental Center  
818 NW 15th St.  
Meridian, ID 83642  
(phone) 888-5566 \* (fax) 888-5578  
[www.gsdcdda.com](http://www.gsdcdda.com)

