

Gem State News

2021 Summer Edition



Here Comes the Summer of Possibility!

Welcome to another summer. This year, we see a return to familiar routines (pre-Covid pandemic). We are all anxious to get out of the house and explore our city, state, and for some, the country.

We hope that you enjoy yourselves, and take whatever steps you can to be safe. While on your amazing adventures, stop and smell the roses. At Gem State Developmental Center, we will continue to provide a place for you to come and share fun activities with the staff and other participants. Though you may see some new faces around, the high quality of support you've become accustomed to is still as strong as ever.

These next few months will be exciting. So, plant your gardens, finish those projects delayed from last year, and keep your head high. Smile. Always remember - **we aim for the journey, not the destination.**



Gem State is known for staffing a talented and diverse group of individuals. We consider your successes our successes. We would like to take the time to thank the following people for their tireless efforts and congratulate them on their most recent accomplishments. **Go team!**

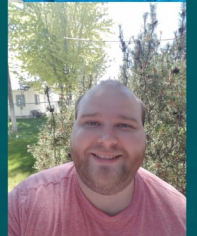
Bachelor of Arts in Social Work:

Hannah Jo Ray
Dallin Cox



Bachelor of Arts in Psychology:

Maicee Conner



Master of Social Work:

Elena Ramirez
Brenda Rangel-Arriaga
Alyssa Shoup



Our Spring Interns:

Jordan Aydelotte
Dallin Cox
Hannah Jo Ray

BSW Field Instructor of the Year:

Lori Jo Poole



Superstar High School Graduate:

Logan S.W. Blythe

Word Search

S M C J N S Z G R I L L S W G V O K
I T C A Y G J S I C V Q P M A Z J P
W L A R N J R P Z H B G L E R C X O
P F G R B N T R A I A R A M W M N O
C I E J S Z O I L R L E S O D E K L
V A C A T I O N Q P M E H R I M S S
H L H N R M B K B T Y N I I V O H I
G D H D I M O L G A S Z N E I R A D
B L O O M C B E X N L E G S N I D E
S W E A T J X R S H L L G C G E E K
J E H I L W A T E R M E L O N S O P
C O C O N U T M V F R U I T I E Z C

balmy
bloom
cannonball
chirp
coconut
diving
fruit
green
grill
memories
picnic
poolside
shade
splashing
sprinkler
stars
sweat
vacation
watermelon



In May, our very own **DJ Casper** was among those who took center stage in The Special Olympics 2021 State Summer Games. Held in Caldwell, Idaho, the games hosted almost 200 athletes, competing in a range of events.

DJ's Accomplishments:

Shotput – 1st Place (Gold medal)!

This gives him the potential to go to Florida for the US World Games in 2022!

20 Yard Dash – 2nd Place (Silver medal)!

50 Yard Dash – 4th Place!

We are very proud of you!



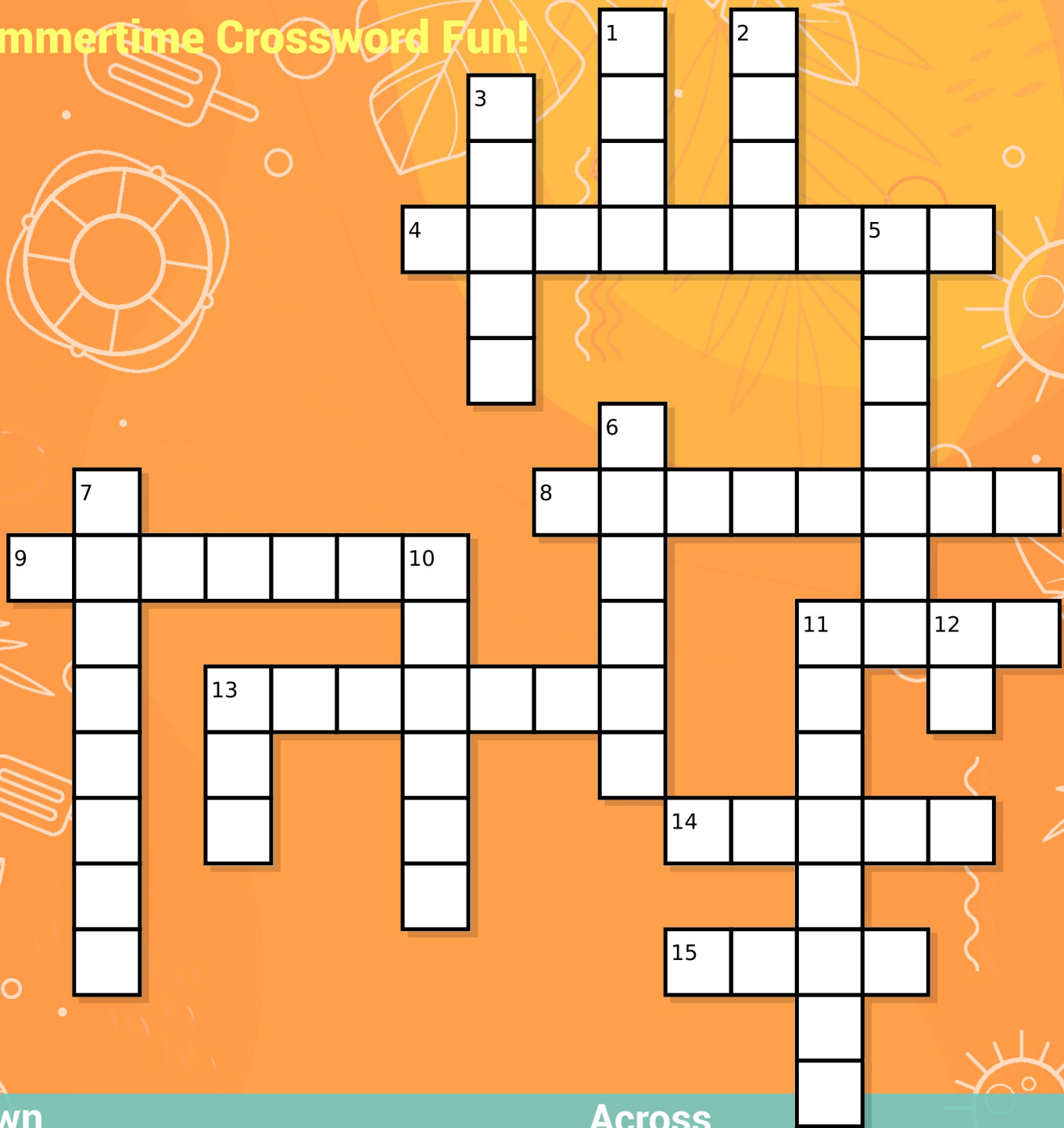
Show off your creative side!

A recent visit to the Angry Easel Paint Center in Meridian provided our participants and staff with some time to showcase their artistic talents. While all of their paintings were delightful, we found their individual take on the original paintings to be uniquely amazing! Here are some highlights from our **participant paint parties** as well as our **staff appreciation nights** at the Angry Easel!

Thank you all for making the world a little bit more colorful!



Summertime Crossword Fun!



Down

1. another word for lawn
2. chlorinated water in a cement hole
3. green stuff that grown on #1
5. place where birds live, cars drive, and baseball is played
6. officially begins June 20
7. outdoor cookout
10. where flowers and vegetables grow
11. concentration of water vapor in the air
12. abbreviation - keeps you cool inside
13. acronym found on sunblock

Across

4. starts yellow, becomes white and fluffy
8. daytime light from above
9. activity done with a tent in the woods
11. thermodynamic energy
13. when a new day starts to awaken
14. white and yellow flower, also a Great Gatsby character
15. verb - what fish do in water

Idaho's COVID-19 Update

2020 had proven to be a challenging year for all of us, but we pushed through. With the arrival of 2021, we see the steady returning to activities for this new year. Always practical, but steadily optimistic, GSDC implemented extra cleaning and sanitizing measures, maintained mandatory social distancing standards and the wearing of face coverings. Our priority from day one of this pandemic has been to ensure that everyone had a safe place to work, learn, and enjoy themselves. **Thank you, staff and participants, for your hard work and patience.**

On May 11, 2021, Governor Brad Little announced that Idaho has moved to Stage Four Healthy Guidelines. With these new measures, we are proceeding cautiously with a routine that enhances the quality of life for our participants, as well as ensuring safety for our staff.

GSDC's COVID-19 Policies

We strongly support and encourage the vaccination of your choice.

Until we reach CDC guidelines for collective immunity within the agency (staff and participants), we will still require masks for all staff. Participants are encouraged to wear them as tolerated.

Our hope is that we will reach this agency percentage as soon as possible, so we can discontinue our agency mask policy.

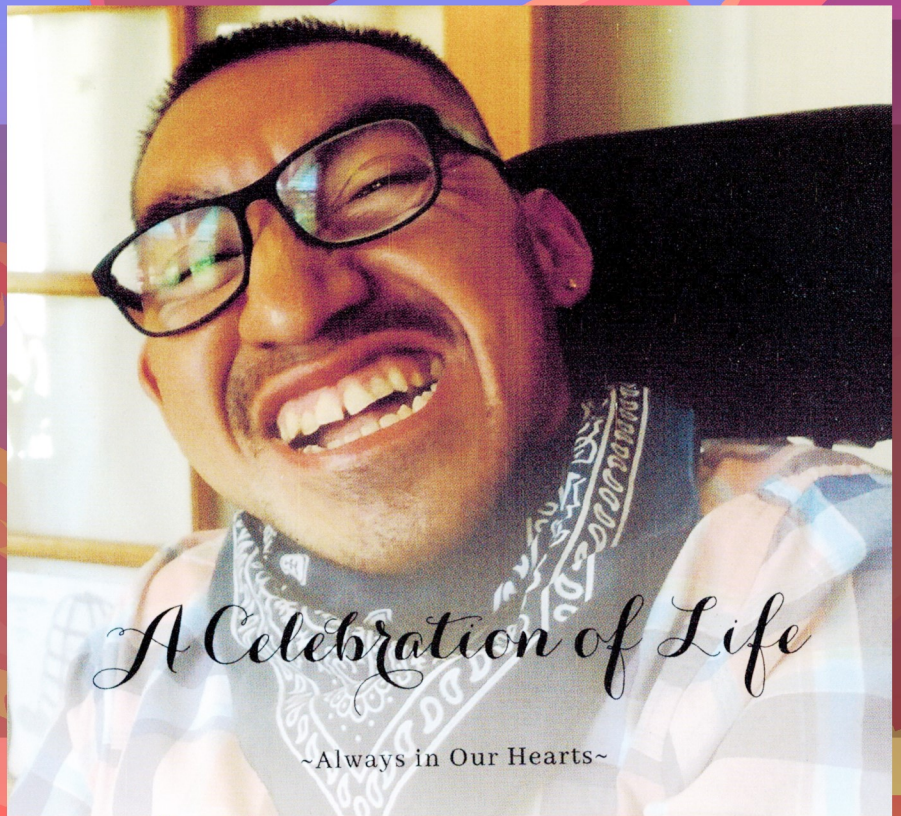
Please update us as you are vaccinated!



We are heartbroken to announce the passing of one of our beloved participants.

Fabian was a valued member of the GSDC community since 2017, and was loved by staff and participants alike.

We have included a number of quotes from our participants and staff members, who will all miss Fabian dearly.



"He would be laughing so hard his face would be red! No matter what life threw in his direction, Fabian was so peaceful and that smile was always there. I miss my friend and the positiveness he had for this thing we call life to share with others... Fly high, my friend, for now you are free." **-RS**

"My friend and part of my work family. Was fun to talk about football with. Go Aggies... oops, I mean Boise State Broncos. I already miss my friend and his laughter." **-NC**

"He was a good friend to me. He talked to me a lot. I am gonna miss him... I still say prayers for him." **-YF**

"Fabian had a way of making a bad day better just by showing up and making everyone laugh... He would wait till no one was looking and then stick his tongue out at me, to which I did it right back, and he would crack up." **-CD**

"Fabian was a really good friend." **-AE**

"Miss his teasing. He used to love to tease. I miss his smile." **-DG**

Growing Together



Let's talk about our wonderful garden! So far, we are off to a great start, with the planting of a variety of good items. We planted tomatoes, watermelon, and jalapenos this year.

Nurture the garden and it will provide you with a great harvest. We can't wait to see our progress.
Great job, team!

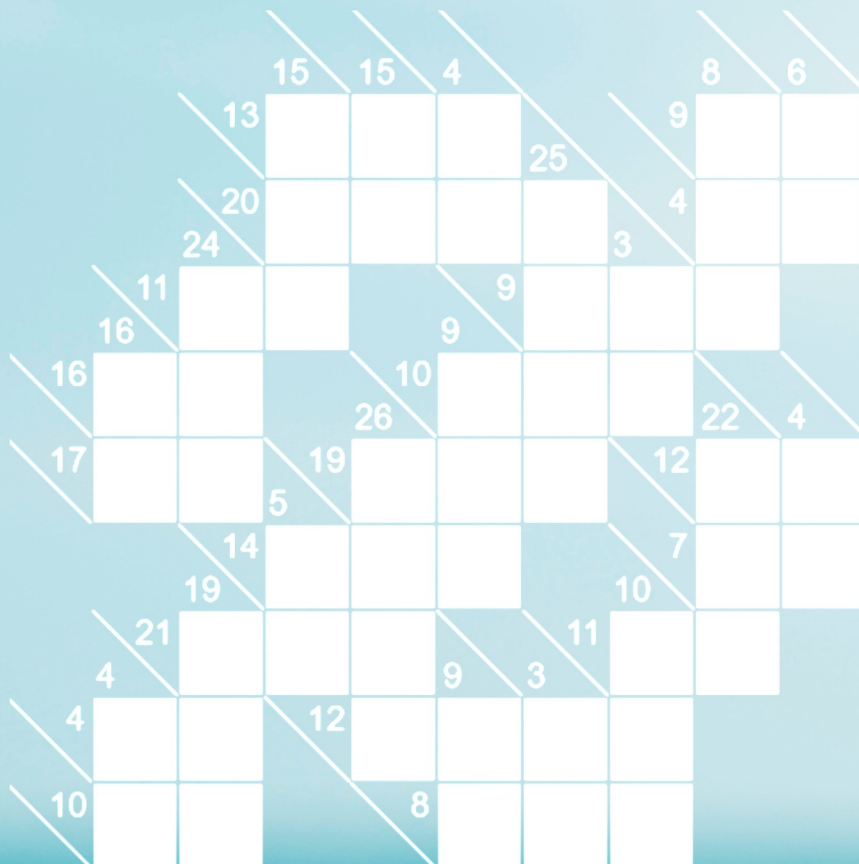


Participant Highlights

Whether visiting the reptile zoo or defying gravity at the trampoline park, our participants have been **living life to the fullest** this summer! Here are just a few highlights of our participants' recent activities.



Kakuro



Kakuro is a mix between Sudoku and crosswords. Each row and column adds up to the number outside of the boxes. You may **only** use 1-9, and each number can only be used **once** per row and per column - no duplicates allowed. Use a pencil. **Good luck!**



GSDC's Pet Corner

by Tony Washington

They are more than just our furry companions; they are also part of the family. To those of us fortunate enough to have them in our lives, they bring us a sense of joy, security, and non-judgmental support. So, it is always a truly terrific day when they come to visit us at our centers.

Animals provide us with therapeutic contact. Outside of pet therapy, which is usually done in a treatment setting, there can also be animal-assisted activities, which don't involve treatment goals, but more of a recreational comfort.

Regular interactions with animals assist in improving motor skills, self-esteem, a reduction in anxiety, the promotion of relaxation, enhanced mood, and a building of empathy. Studies have shown that a natural bonding occurs, whereby those who interact with animals feel less isolated. And let's not forget the main benefit of their presence: **they are a whole bunch of fun!**

Here are a few of our furry partners, with their human companions. If you see them around the center(s), follow these steps:

- a. **Always ask their human for permission first.**
- b. **Keep calm. Don't stare, shout, or loom over them.**
- c. **Allow them to approach you, and relax. They feel what you feel.**



Lori Jo & Gizmo



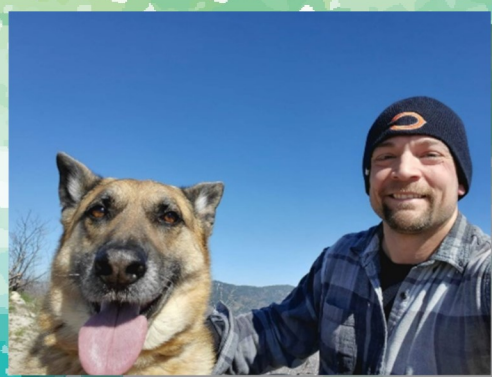
Mandy & Hammer



Olivia & Milo



Jamie & Ruger



Jeremy & Kesha

Special Shout-Outs



In April, we wished Donna Newby a happy Administrative Assistant Day. We are fortunate enough to have Donna as a valuable member of our GSDC team. She is always there to manage the enormous number of daily calls and process other administrative functions. She is critical to keeping everything running smoothly, and we appreciate her for all that she does for us. **Congratulations, Donna!**

Robin has been with GSDC for 25 amazing years. Her contributions are key to our operations at the Nampa Adults center. Always willing to go the extra mile, Robin has assisted in providing a safe and productive environment for all of the Nampa Adults participants. **Congratulations, Robin!**



Corey has been with GSDC for 37 years. His impact on the success of our company is felt throughout the services we provide. We don't know what we would do without his expertise and gentle spirit. **Congratulations, Corey!**

Jamie has been with GSDC for 8 years. She has proven to be quite effective as the Clinical Director of the Meridian Kids Program. She has great compassion for providing services to our participants, and model professional behavior for the staff. **Congratulations, Jamie!**



Lori Jo has just celebrated her 22nd year with GSDC. As both the CEO and Clinical Director of the Adults Program, Lori Jo stewardship has allowed GSDC to remain one of the Treasure Valley's premier agencies for DD services. We are grateful to have you as our navigator. Onward to the future. **Congratulations, Lori Jo!**



Katie has just celebrated her 2nd year with GSDC. Her empathetic nature and steadfast attention to detail has provided us with a model for excellence for all to emulate. When you step into her group room, the smiles on the faces of her participants say it all. **Congratulations, Katie!**

Mike has just celebrated his 4th year with GSDC. His commitment to providing the best care and support to participants is felt throughout the centers. We are grateful for his professionalism and attention to detail. **Congratulations, Mike!**



Donna has just celebrated her 15th year with GSDC. Always with a smile on her face, Donna's empathetic attitude and compassion are valued tremendously. We appreciate her talents and dedication. **Congratulations, Donna!**



Jane has just celebrated her 3rd year with GSDC. She encourages all in her group room to reach for their fullest potential. We recognize her professionalism and light-hearted interactions with participants.

Congratulations, Jane!

Maria has just celebrated her 20th year with GSDC. We hear the stories of how she always manages to keep participants engaged and smiling. She fosters an environment of learning and quality of life promotion. We appreciate all that you do.

Congratulations, Maria!



Charlotte has been with GSDC for 15 years. Her devotion to keeping the participants engaged and fully supported shows. Her energy is always lively and the positivity fills the building. We are thankful for all that you do. **Congratulations, Charlotte!**

Diana has been with GSDC for 10 years. Her time with us has been well received by all who know her and enjoyed her interactions. She delivers on what she says, and we are thankful for her time and energy.

Congratulations, Diana!



Courtney has just celebrated her 2nd year with GSDC. We all know the commitment to excellence she brings to the table. Her compassion to know more, and to do more, is recognized at all levels. We are able to shine because of her professionalism. **Congratulations, Courtney!**



Linda has been with GSDC for 1 year. During this time, we all watched with smiles on our faces as she surpassed our expectations. We believe she is a natural at this job. **Congratulations, Linda!**

Lori Says:

Being able to make even the simplest of choices is empowering and can increase positive behavior. Present our participants with a few options and allow them the opportunity to exercise their independence. This process benefits them in the long-term.

The following tips may help you:

- a. Choose clear and simple language (client centered).
- b. Display options using pictures, words, or objects.
- c. Do not overwhelm them! Excess options create anxiety.
- d. Check in to see where they have additional questions or concerns.

