

Volume 7. Issue 2

Adult Learning Systems-U.P., Inc.

IN—S.I.T.E.

In—Staying in Touch w/Everyone



Autumn 2015

It's hard to believe that another fiscal year has come to a close. I would like to send out a sincere THANK YOU to all the employees of Adult Learning Systems-U.P. for going above and beyond to ensure the consumers' care is always a top priority.

ALS-U.P., along with other Michigan Residential Care Providers continues to struggle to recruit and retain qualified Direct Care Workers. This is a crisis facing all Michigan providers. We continue to work with Michigan Assisted Living Association and the Partnership for fair caregiver wages to bring this issue to Michigan's Governor and elected officials; the increase in minimum wage and the Health Care Reform have a direct impact on the budgets of each group home. The lack of adequate Medicaid funding provided for community living supports, personal care and other services effect us as well. Specifically, Direct Service Providers like ALS-U.P. have consistently not received economic increases during the past several years. In fact, we have received substantial funding reductions directly impacting the programs and services provided.

Our company encourages all stakeholders to contact the elected officials and let them know that state policies must change so that employers such as Adult Learning Systems- U.P. can recruit and retain a direct support workforce to provide skilled, caring, and stable support to people living with disabilities, mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

ALS-U.P. will continue to provide quality programming to the people we serve. We look forward to the upcoming year and will work to stabilize the workforce in all programs.

Enjoy the fall and winter seasons. Get out and enjoy all the U.P. has to offer.

Karen LaFave, CEO



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Changes, Changes, Changes!

Maple Home in the Sault has a new Manager at the helm. Bonnie Sanders (pictured to the right) took over the manager position at Maple in April and has already made some positive changes with her organizational abilities and willingness to help wherever she is needed.

Bonnie was a DCW at Woodview Home before applying for and accepting the new role of Home Manager.



There's a new and excited team at the Sault Home! Manager Amanda Schoeppe and Assistant Manager Rachel Tallman became the new management team in May. They bring with them a fresh, positive, can do demeanor that spreads over to the staff and even visitors to the home. The atmosphere at the Sault Home is contagious! While there, you can't help but get caught up in the enthusiasm and excitement.

Congratulations to all the new managers! Keep up the GREAT JOB!

Fall Fest 2015



On Monday, August 25th, Ashley Willig (left), Jake Larson (center), both of Cedar Hills; Laura Kallio (right) of Woodridge; and Karen LaFave (behind the camera), participated in Northern Michigan University's annual Fall Fest which was held on the University Center lawn on the first day of classes.

"Fall Fest is an "opportunity fair" where students come to get information on how they can get involved on campus and in the community" and to "find out more about student organizations, volunteer agencies and local businesses."

Nurses' Corner:

It's that time of year again! I am pleased to announce that we are once again going to offer the influenza vaccination to employees. This offer is extended to you in the hopes that people will take advantage of the opportunity to keep themselves, their families, and our consumers healthy throughout the flu season. I will be announcing flu clinic dates as soon as I receive a fairly accurate count of the number of flu shots needed, as this will cut back on potential waste. I will be sending each manager a sheet for all staff to sign and date checking whether they accept or decline the offer. Once I receive those, I will schedule the clinic days. I will be doing them slightly different this year. I will not require a 20 minute stay after the injection unless someone has had a severe reaction in the past. I will require 5-10 minutes dependent upon whether the person is working or going home afterwards.

An article in the Los Angeles Times explains how important it is to receive the flu shot. It not only protects you from getting a deadly case of the flu, but it also helps to protect you from heart attacks and strokes. They state that there is "a consistent association between influenza vaccination and a lower risk of cardiovascular events."

Now to clear up some common misconceptions:

- People who receive the influenza vaccination do not actually get the flu. They may get a mild form of the illness if their immune system is somewhat compromised, but had they not received the injection (which is a dead virus); they would have had a full blown case of influenza. This virus kills thousands of people yearly!
- Everyone over the age of 6 months should receive the influenza vaccination unless their doctor determines otherwise.
- Another concern people have is that the vaccination has mercury in it which is thought to cause "autism." This has been disproven more than once, but I also want people to know that the injections we provide are single dose injections which do not contain the mercury preservative. That preservative is only in multi-dose vials.
- Another topic I would like to touch on is how the influenza vaccination is made. The CDC takes virus strains from previous years including the most recent, and puts it into a single dose. There is no guarantee that the flu we will see this year is going to be something that the vaccination will protect you against, but what it will do is boost your immune system so you can better fight anything that tries to enter your system. The influenza virus mutates each year into a new strain so we can only try to make assumptions based on past behaviors of the virus. Some protection is better than no protection when it comes to life or death!!

If anyone is unsure whether they should get the vaccine or not, I would be happy to provide them with documentation so that they can make an informed decision. Please feel free to call me and I will do my best to find an answer for your question.

Please consider doing yourself and everyone else a favor by protecting yourself in the upcoming season!

Nurse Sherry

Autumn Activities

This summer, our consumers were active in their communities, joyfully participating in events such as the Independence Day parades, fireworks, blueberry festivals, Special Olympics, county fairs, the UP State Fair, concerts in the park, food festivals, zoos, and even time at the local beaches.

As we begin to head into the fall season (some leaves have already begun to change colors) let us keep in mind a few of the activities that come with it:

- Back to the Future

(Oct 21, Join Marty McFly as he travels into the oh-so realistic future date of October 21st, 2015)

(Escanaba and Quinnesec theatres)

- Hayes Corn Maze

(Sept 19 - Nov 1: Sat 10:30—6:30, Sun 12:30—6:30)

(Groups of 20 or more w/reservations can also go Tue—Fri)

- KI Sawyer Farmer's and Flea Market

(Sat: 11:00—4:00, Aug 1 through end of October)

- Celtic New Year Concert with Four Shillings Short

(Oct 29, 7:00—8:30 pm, Peter White Public Library)

(Free Admission)

- 15th Annual Holiday Art Sale

(Nov 21st, 10:00—4:00 pm)

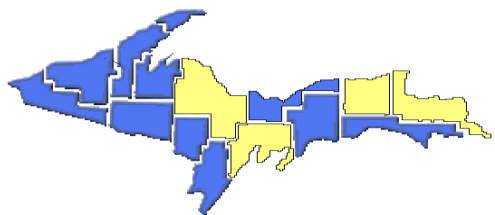
(Marquette Arts and Culture Center)



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We are currently operating in 4 UP Counties.

It is the mission of Adult Learning Systems—UP to promote a positive quality of life while providing a partnership for individuals with disabilities and their communities.