



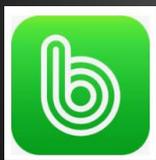
Doing more of what works and less of what doesn't

What are we working on?

Story- Telling! What is the best way to convey the awesome things going on? Through pictures and stories! This newsletter is devoted to telling you about many of the amazing things going on at X-Excel and the people that work here. We didn't want to wait any longer to tell you about them!

BAND APP

The PC at Jackson X-Excel started using an App called BAND. Since the majority of the people at Jackson own a cell phone, this app allows her to post the Monthly X-Excel Calendar, the Meals on Wheels calendar, reminders for the next day, and any other communication directly to them.



Why are we excited about this?

This is a simple, yet effective way to encourage people to be more independent. Rather than relying on parents or staff to tell them what to expect the following day, now calendars are readily available and at their fingertips.



Karlie, Alyssa, and Rachel working during the holiday chocolate rush!

Alaina was all smiles after getting a strike on the Wii bowling!



Carrie and Deana working on counting money



Janet signing up for where she wants to go for the day!



Mike and Corey at the Christmas Party!

Connie is a sanding machine!



New Year's Resolution Tips

- 1 Be realistic. Take small steps toward a larger goal.
- 2 Talk about it. Tell people about your goal so that others can support you.
- 3 Don't beat yourself up! Do the best you can each day, and take one day at a time.
- 4 Break your goal into small sub-goals and celebrate along the way!
- 5 Stick to it. It takes about 21 days for a new activity to become a habit. It won't happen overnight.

"In the New Year, never forget to thank your past years because they enabled you to reach today! Without the stairs of the past, you cannot arrive at the future."

Mehmet Murat Ildan

From the Desk of Tom Rickels

To Bring in the New Year, lets talk a bit about the past.

As you will soon read, X-Excel staff and individuals saw a great degree of kindness and generosity over the holiday season. Why do I want to talk about the past? So, we don't forget how far we have come.

In my first job in this field, I worked at a place called Park West which took in the elderly population from the Orient Developmental Center which was closing. They were moving into "state of the art" ICF-IID facilities that had 5 buildings with 24 people in each building. Each building was separated into 3, 8 bed areas. Many of the people that moved in were institutionalized in the 1910-20's. They had amazing stories. This was in 1983.

In my second job, we were often applying for "conditional use permits," which allowed "group homes" to move into residential areas. When you applied for a conditional use permit, you had to inform

every resident within a mile of the place you wanted to use, so they could come to the zoning hearing, call you bad names, threaten your life, and spit at you.

In my only County Board job, I had the pleasure of allowing the first person that was incontinent to receive day program services in the county. I did not make the staff very happy. I went down twice everyday to lift her to a changing table and tell her how beautiful she was while the staff huffed around. This was around 1993.

I never really thought I was doing anything special, just my job. In general, goodness and kindness will prevail. Standing up for what you believe in can be difficult but very rewarding.

Let's move forward and be stubborn about our goals and flexible about our methods. We still have many miles to go.

Believe in good.

Tom

Christmas at NC1

The Holidays season is always full of surprises. Sometimes we get so overwhelmed with battling the in-laws and the ever-growing shopping list, that we forget the joy this season can bring. Whitney a staff member at NC1, shared a story that truly is inspiring. Her Grandfather, the Pastor of Harvestime Apostolic Temple along with the congregation, offered to purchase gifts for each person who works at the NC1 location.

Whitney was put in charge of purchasing the gifts. With two full carts and only two cashiers working, she was worried that the slow-moving line would make the other customers in line cranky. When the cashier asked what all the purchases were for and Whitney told her about X-Excel, the first person in line asked if she could donate \$20 toward the gifts. The next person in line was equally inspired and volunteer another \$20. This trickled down the line until five customers each donated \$20. Whitney said she truly was moved and in shock. With the contribution, she was able to get 3 to 4 presents for each person at X-Excel. After checking out, the generous people even helped her load up the car full of gifts.

Thank you to Harvestime Temple, to Whitney, and those wonderful people for reminding us that even during these hectic times, generosity and kindness can still be found.

Santa visited Alliance!



Mary, pictured below as Cindy LouWho works at our Alliance location. Her husband Shawn works for Stallion, an oil construction company based in Paris, Ohio. Stallion has been involved in charity events and many fund raisers to support and give back to the local community. Each year around the Holidays, all employees contribute money toward an organization. This year with gift suggestions from Mary, the office staff of Stallion purchased personalized gifts for each person at the Alliance X-Excel.

As an additional surprise, each staff member was given a gift basket.



To everyone's excitement, Santa, Mrs. Claus, and an elf all showed up to pass out the gifts!

Thank you, Stallion!



DSP Spotlight



Jeff J.
NC2

Do you have any pets?

Yes, I have one dog, Dillon. He would want you to spell that correctly.

What's your super-power?

I would say sarcastic humor and the ability to maintain my composure.

What is your favorite thing about being a DSP?

Making "the" or "a" connection. When someone comes up to you later and says "thanks," when it's said unchoreographed and out of the blue, it means the world.

You're happiest when?

I'm making people laugh and smile. I don't mind being the center of jokes. I would say sarcastic humor and the ability to maintain my composure.

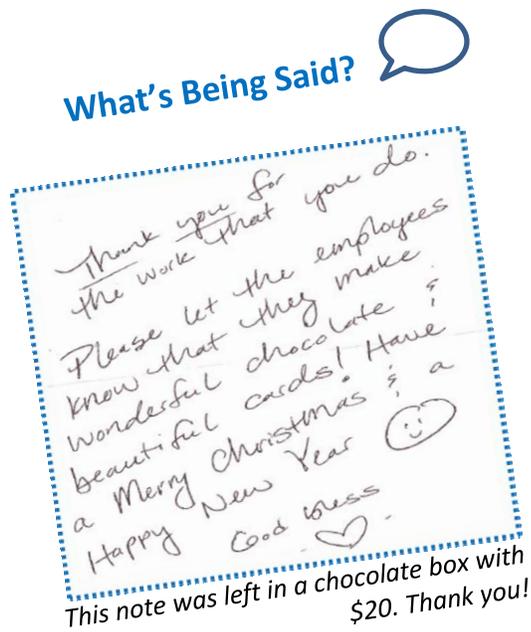
Keith's Story

This past September, Keith a gentleman that we served in North Canton, passed away. Keith's favorite store was the dollar tree because he could buy a handful of pens and glasses for a few bucks. His pure joy was thoroughly loved and appreciated by the staff at the Dollar Tree, specifically by a woman named Karen. As it happens, Karen seemed to work most days Keith came in. She got a kick out of his uninhibited enthusiasm, fully expressing in loud exclamations "look a green one!" After he checked out, she would take the time to remove all stickers and price tags from his glasses so he could wear them back to work.

It had been several months before I saw Karen again. She heard about his passing. When I told her that the centerpieces of Keith's memorial service and reception were pens and glasses he had collected over the years, some of which she no doubt helped him purchase, she was clearly touched.

How do you truly know if you have become a valued part of a community?
You know it, when people are thrilled to see you.
And others witness it, when you are no longer around and are greatly missed.

What's Being Said?



This note was left in a chocolate box with \$20. Thank you!

Happy Anniversary!

<i>Kendra V.</i>	1/3/2013
<i>Charlotte M.</i>	1/5/2015
<i>Wanda S.</i>	1/12/2017
<i>Nancy B.</i>	1/23/2014
<i>Barb Y.</i>	1/24/2011
<i>Kiera S.</i>	1/28/2015

Happy Birthday!

<i>Joseph O.</i>	1/1
<i>Karlie M.</i>	1/2
<i>Lanoarde T.</i>	1/3
<i>Garrett H.</i>	1/4
<i>Stacey H.</i>	1/6
<i>Grace H.</i>	1/8
<i>Mike C.</i>	1/9
<i>Anne D.</i>	1/12
<i>Tom R.</i>	1/15
<i>Jeffry Y.</i>	1/16
<i>Flora G.</i>	1/16
<i>Brendan U.</i>	1/17
<i>Kenniqua G.</i>	1/22
<i>Chase P.</i>	1/22
<i>Rebecca C.</i>	1/26
<i>Bradley P.</i>	1/30
<i>Susan S.</i>	1/30
<i>James S.</i>	1/31