



# D.I.Y. Newsletter

( DO IT YOURSELF )

W I N T E R I S S U E • 2 0 2 4



Providing essential supports to people with intellectual disabilities and autism, building a community where everyone participates and belongs.

## Winter at CCS

*Welcome to 2024! We hope you're finding warm and fun ways to enjoy the winter season. In this edition of the DIY newsletter meet CCS Board member Sarah Debouter, see what Jordan has been up to, and take a trip to Japan with Randy. New additions to the DIY are always welcome. If you'd like to submit an article, send an email to [jcampbell@ccs-vt.org](mailto:jcampbell@ccs-vt.org).*

*Sincerely,  
Julie Campbell, Editor*



### **Randy's Trip to Japan by Jess and Kristi**

Randy was asked by a friend to travel to Japan to help build two wooden boats. He left on November 1st for five weeks. The first town where he stayed was called Oda in

central Japan and the temperature was in the 80's. He arrived at the second town

Takashima by train and the weather there was much colder. He worked on a 32 foot Taraibune boat for a touring company located near Lake Biwa. Randy also helped build an 18 foot wooden pond boat which fisherman will use to fish for carp. The fishermen use a long pole to steer the boat and have a bucket handy to store the fresh fish. This boat will be placed in a nearby museum when its no longer in use. The boats are made of cypress and red cedar both of which are native to Japan.



There are many customs in Japan. When you visit someone you always bring gifts. Some popular gifts are sake (wine) and beautifully wrapped and decorated cookies. Everyone grows their own rice. In each house water is fed into a square concrete area where they keep live fish (carp). There are canals on the sides of the roads which are used for irrigation for the rice fields. The carp swim in the canals and help to keep them clean.

Randy enjoyed his trip and liked meeting others in the same trade. He met a 93 year old saw sharpener. He asked if Randy wanted to try his saw. He told Randy, "Slow down, you're going too fast. Lower your arm". They visited for four hours. He also met a lady who wrote a children's book about making boats. She gave Randy a signed copy. Randy would like to return to Japan some day and build more boats.



## Champlain Voices Update by Emily A and the Champlain Voices



Happy Winter Everyone! Champlain Voices held their annual elections on Monday December 18<sup>th</sup>. It was a dramatic event due to the natural suspense that all elections provide, the music played by outgoing Secretary Thomas, and because it was filmed by the videographers of our upcoming “What is Champlain Voices?” video.

Unlike the previous year, new people were elected to all the officer roles. Paul is now President, a role he played in 2018. Thomas is now, for the first time, Vice President. Hasan returns to the role of Secretary, a role that propelled him into his life as a professional advocate and Whitley is Treasurer for the first time.

This shift in roles provides the advocates with opportunities to develop new leadership and other specialized skills. For instance, since the election, President Paul has thoroughly stepped into his new role and is ready to guide Champlain Voices through its upcoming projects with thoughtful leadership. Vice-President Thomas has been meeting weekly with Secretary Hasan to support him in learning how to send a weekly email with our upcoming agenda, previous meeting notes, and a zoom link for our hybrid meeting. Whitley will head to Green Mountain Credit Union to formalize her relationship there as a ‘signer’ on our account.



### Jordan’s Volunteer Work by Melissa & Jordan Photo by Melissa

**How do you like working at the Essex Free Library?** I like working with the puzzles and cleaning them.

**What are your hours and job duties?** I volunteer on Wednesday's from 9:15 am -10:15 am. I file picture books, disinfect toy puzzles and clean off the colored chairs.

**What’s the name of your favorite book?** I don’t really have a favorite book. I prefer chapter books about dogs or really any book about dogs.

**Who are the staff that work there?** Noreen and Emily, the librarians.

**How does your work impact the community?** Cleaning the toy puzzles is helping the little kids so they have clean toys to play with.

### Staff Anniversaries & Milestones

The following staff celebrated years of service this winter. **Thank you** for your dedication.

- 1 Year: Lena, Letitia and Shelley
- 2 Years: Shiel and Charles
- 4 Years: Laurie and Wendy
- 6 Years: Morgan
- 7 Years: Fin and Roxy
- 8 Years: Marcia
- 17 Years: Mike !!



### Shared Living Providers:

- 1-5 yrs.: Sandra Baker, Linda Belval, Jorge Gonzales, Hilery Kenyon, Celine Kouadio, Joan Ladouceur, Shawnae Langlois, Liz Leggett, Max Mirabile, Ginger Santor, Rita Rai Sinchuari, Carol Tessier, Noelle Thabault, Colby Trudell, & Carolina Warren
- 6-10 yrs.: Julie Elkins, Kristen Elwood, Nicole Giard- Jeter, Kayla Kizziah, Joy & Joshua Redington, Debra St. Armour, & Paulette Thibault
- 11-15 yrs.: Pam Cook, Eve Duff, Claudette Kosa, Anna Mudgett & Randy Sightler
- 16-21 yrs. Kevin O’Brien



### **An Interview with Board Member Sarah Debouter - by Julie**

#### **Why did you want to be a member of the CCS Board of Directors?**

I've always been interested in being involved in the big picture of what goes on in our world. Joining a board of directors has always been something I wanted to do but not just any board of directors. I wanted to be part of an organization that I really care about. The first organization I thought of was CCS because it had a huge impact on my life.

I'm excited to be part of an organization that was transformative for me at a time when I was growing as a leader and young professional. I was so fortunate to have mentors like Ron Turner and Michelle Paya. I transitioned from a place of work that wasn't a good fit and my confidence was low. Michelle and Ron embraced me, laughed with me and became my colleagues and friends. CCS gave me a sense of community and I loved helping individuals I'd grown to care so much about. It was a great experience.

#### **What is your experience with nonprofits?**

I've worked for nonprofits since I graduated from college. I've worked with homeless veterans, for Easter-seals, for CCS and Norwich University where I got my graduate degree. Now I work for MENTOR Vermont and I also teach leadership classes to adult learners at Norwich University.

#### **What is your definition of success?**

To me success is more a feeling inside that you believe in what you're doing, and you feel content with your contributions, your place in life and your ability to help others. It's about feeling grounded, centered, and happy. I feel successful when young people that I've worked with tell me the programs I've helped to create have positively impacted their lives. At the CCS holiday party one of the individuals I used to support told me they had just celebrated 8 years at a job I helped them to secure.

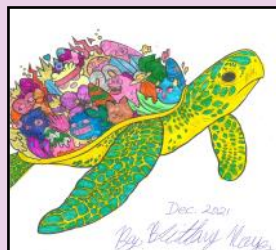
#### **What do you like to do in your free time?**

I have a lot of fun with hobbies and consider myself a serial hobbyist. The primary things I make time to do are run a book club in town every month, do community theatre and enjoy partner dancing. I also play the ukulele and I'm a published poet. I enjoy knitting and painting. I had an Etsy shop for a while that was designed to sell literature inspired crafts. I sold knitted hats, mittens, bookmarks, and I created stitch markers that looked like little books.

### *DIY Art Gallery*



**Fire by April**



**Sea Turtle by Brittany**



**Frosty by Scott**



Champlain Community Services Inc.

512 Troy Avenue  
Colchester, VT 05446

## **Our Mission & Vision:**

Champlain Community Services provides essential supports to people with intellectual disabilities and autism, building a community where everyone participates and belongs.

Since 1967 CCS has been serving our community, and offers coordinated one-to-one supported employment, home & shared living, school-to-career transition, and community supports.



Visit us on the web!  
[ccs-vt.org](http://ccs-vt.org)

## **CCS Closures and Events**



### **CCS will be closed on:**

March 1st — All Staff Inservice Day (closed for services)

April 25th— Annual Lunch, Elley Long, Colchester  
Noon to 1:30 pm

---

**Subscribe to our D.I.Y. Newsletter!**  
Submit your stories, photos, ideas to:  
[jcampbell@ccs-vt.org](mailto:jcampbell@ccs-vt.org)

**DIY c/o Champlain Community Services**  
512 Troy Avenue  
Colchester, VT 05446  
Phone: 802-655-0511