

Handi-Crafters Times

SPECIAL ANNUAL REPORT EDITION

ALL THE HANDI-CRAFTERS NEWS THAT FITS

VOLUME I NUMBER 1

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Empowerment and Opportunity

Celebrating a Decade of Record Breaking Support

The 37th Annual Hankin Invitational, held on October 2, 2023, at Whitford Country Club, marked another milestone in the longstanding tradition of supporting Handi-Crafters' mission. Presented by Hankin Group and Bentley Systems, this year's tour-

nament broke records, raising an incredible \$330,000. With 58 teams participating, the sold-out event not only provided a day of exciting golf but also showcased the power of community and corporate partnerships. Participants enjoyed a beautiful day on the course, where pristine greens and perfect weather set the



Sam Sherrill, Michael Hankin, Margie Silverman, Mia McKay

stage for networking, fun, and philanthropy. One of the event's highlights was the highly anticipated helicopter ball drop where 400 golf balls were released from above, adding a thrilling layer to the fundraising efforts. Although no one

claimed the \$1,000 prize, the hovering helicopter brought plenty of excitement.

Additional on-course activities kept the day engaging, including along-drive contest with champion Jeff Crittenden, whose impressive tee shots once again left participants in

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A True Best Friend: Crazy Aaron's, Founder and CEO, Aaron Muderick

Handi-Crafters is thrilled to announce Aaron Muderick, affectionately known as "Crazy Aaron," as the recipient of the 2024 Best Friend Award. Aaron, the creative force behind Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty, has been a steadfast supporter of our mission, embodying dedication, service, and commitment.

Since founding his company, Aaron has employed over 1,000 individuals with special needs in vocational work centers across the region. "We've been lucky to build our business around these amazing individuals," Aaron reflected.

"Their joy and dedication have been the backbone of our

"Aaron is not just a tremendous customer; he's an unwavering advocate for our mission," shared Denny Howell, President of Handi-Crafters. Aaron's support extends beyond business; he is a champion for vocational work centers and supported employment models."

In a spirit of gratitude, Handi-Crafters proudly introduces the Inaugural Community Partner Award, honoring Krapf Coaches for over four decades of dedicated service.

"Though Krapf wrapped up the Rover Community Transportation program at the end of last year, their commitment to our community



Perry Bentley, Aaron Muderick, April Ennis-Pierson

A Night to Remember: Handi-Crafters Spring Event Returns with Unforgettable Celebrations

For years, Handi-Crafters' mission has been celebrated during a magical spring evening where our community of supporters comes together to enjoy a night of pure celebration, and commitment to helping unite for Handi-Crafters impactful mission. Until, 2020 when the pandemic brought profound changes, pausing our in-person fundraising events and reshaping our way of life. And when the pandemic emergency lifted, one question kept surfacing among our dedicated supporters: "Will the Spring Fundraiser Event return?"

At the beginning of 2024, we jumped into action to answer that question. A committee was assembled by Handi-Crafter's Development Director, Dan Koval. "YES! We are

bringing back our spring fundraiser." Not only were we launching the return but we were holding it in a sensible special location. Thus on Thursday, May 2nd, we welcomed our treasured friends back to the very heart of where our impact begins... Handi-Crafters, Spatola Center.

When it comes to our mission, the vocational program is defined as a hub where employment barriers don't exist, where job skills are nurtured, life lessons are learned, friendships are forged, and confidence is built. Hosting the Spring Event in this setting highlighted the true essence of our mission and the unwavering support of our community.

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- Best Friend Award Honorees:**
- 2015 Jennifer and Robert McNeil
 - 2016 Robert Spatola and Family
 - 2017 Bentley Systems
 - 2018 CTDI
 - 2019 Hankin Group
 - 2024 Aaron Muderick, Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty

Honoring Decades of Dedication:
Krapf Coaches and the Community Partner Award

company since 2002." Millions of tins has been instrumental. We are so of Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty, lovingly packaged by Handi-Crafters' clients, have reached stores world wide, spreading joy and showcasing the exceptional capabilities of our workforce.

grateful to Krapfs for the years of getting our great guys to and from their job at Handi-Crafters," said

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Christina's Journey: Living Life to the Fullest

Christina's story at the Adult Daily Living Center (ADLC) at Handi-Crafters is a powerful testament to resilience, determination, and the pursuit of joy. Christina initially joined the ADLC in November 2019, but her participation was short-lived due to the unforeseen challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in June 2023, Christina made a triumphant return to the program on her birthday, symbolizing the start of an inspiring new chapter in her life.



Brooke and Christina

Today, Christina is a vibrant and enthusiastic member of the ADLC community, attending full days every Monday and Thursday. Her success in the program is significantly bolstered by the unwavering support of her one-on-one aide, Brooke. The bond between Christina and Brooke is one of mutual trust and enjoyment, which enhances Christina's overall experience and fosters her active partici-

tion in the program.

Christina's days at the ADLC are filled with a variety of engaging activities designed to keep her both physically active and emotionally fulfilled. She eagerly participates in games, crafts, and musical sessions, with a particular fondness for country and disco music. Among her favorite activities is the "pizza toss," a lively game involving bean bags that not only brings her joy but also helps maintain her physical activity.

Beyond her love for games, Christina takes great pride in contributing to the center's daily operations. *She enjoys assisting the staff by making copies, showcasing her eagerness to be involved and her enthusiasm for helping others.* Christina has also formed a special connection with Linda Zimmerman, the Director of the ADLC, whose leadership and warmth have left a lasting positive impact on Christina's experience at the center.

Outside of her time at the ADLC, Christina finds joy in visiting the beach and pool, where she delights in the calming influence of the ocean. These outings are a source of immense happiness and contribute to her overall sense of well-being.

Christina's journey at Handi-Crafters' ADLC beautifully exemplifies the program's ability to create an environment where individuals can truly flourish. Through meaningful relationships and enriching activities, Christina has found a place where she not only thrives but also experiences the joy and fulfillment that are at the heart of Handi-Crafters' mission.

That First Paycheck Feeling

Getting that first paycheck is a big deal, and at Handi-Crafters, first paychecks are a regular occurrence. They come with big smiles, a sense of achievement, and newfound pride.



Brittany and Staff

Take Brittany, for example. She began her vocational journey at Handi-Crafters in March 2024, eager to transition from high school and pursue her dream of joining the working world.

Brittany excelled from the start,

with her first assignment assembling Verizon routers for CTDI. That Friday, she received her "first-ever" paycheck, accompanied by a proud smile. She was thrilled to see her hard work rewarded.

Over the past few months, Brittany has adapted well to her routine at Handi-Crafters. The joy she finds in earning her own money is evident, and her family shares in her pride. She lights up when talking about her ability to buy things for herself, like her favorite snack gummy worms, which she enjoys at lunch every day. She also purchases fun activities to enjoy outside of work.

Her supervisor Andrew, appreciates her keen attention to detail saying, *"Brittany is a fast, consistent, and reliable worker. Once she is shown how to do a task, she masters it and performs her duties independently."*

As Brittany continues to develop her skills, she's already setting her sights on future employment opportunities.

A Lifetime of Dedication: Steve's 45-Year Journey with Handi-Crafters

1979 was a year of notable milestones. McDonald's launched the Happy Meal, The Muppet Movie delighted audiences, the SONY Walkman revolutionized music on-the-go, and ESPN debuted as the first cable sports channel. Amidst these exciting developments, an 18-year-old named Steve began his lifelong journey with Handi-Crafters.



Steve

From his first day, Steve embodied the values of independence, dedication, hard work, and reliability. Now, 45 years later, Steve stands as the longest-tenured person at Handi-Crafters, a testament to his unwavering commitment and steadfast presence and the most important fact, he simply deeply enjoys his work at Handi-Crafters.

Throughout his four and a half decades with us, Steve has witnessed numerous changes: building renovations, evolving work types, and a rotating cast of colleagues. Despite

these shifts, Steve's consistency has been a cornerstone of our community. His supervisor, Jackie, speaks highly of him: *"Steve is always helpful, a true gentleman, a diligent worker with a pleasant disposition, and a reliable friend. He's the person you can count on to lend a hand or an ear."*

Reflecting on his time at Handi-Crafters, Steve fondly recalls

various roles and projects. He remembers being part of a cleaning crew, assisting at the State Police

Barracks and a local synagogue. More recently, he's become adept at packing router boxes for Verizon and enjoys working with Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty, a shop favorite. Each task, big or small, has been a source of pride and satisfaction for Steve.

As he reminisces, a smile lights up Steve's face, his eyes reflecting gratitude for the opportunities Handi-Crafters has provided. His story is a powerful reminder of the impact of Handi-Crafters mission.

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Celebrating a Decade of Record Breaking Support

awe. Players also had the chance to win a Ford Bronco, generously provided by Brian Hoskins Ford. And, as always pit stops at the club's "halfway house" presented an incredible array of amazing hors oeuvres and finger foods sponsored by the talented Hilton Garden Inn Culinary Team.

As the day came to a close, the sound of bagpipes accompanied the final putts, creating a memorable conclusion to a premier golf event. The evening continued with a dinner, raffle, and tournament awards, accompanied by heartfelt remarks from Hankin Group and Handi-Crafters representatives.

For the past decade, Hankin Group and Bentley Systems have been steadfast supporters of Handi-Crafters, offering critical funding and generous dedication. Since 2014, this phenomenal golf event has raised over \$2.2 million for Handi-Crafters mission and brought with it a network of incredible friends, many of which have returned each year and grown in their dedication to the tournament and in the support of Handi-Crafters. The Hankin Invitational represents far more than financial contributions—it is a true investment in the lives of the individuals served by Handi-Crafters programs.

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A Night to Remember: Handi-Crafters Spring Event Returns with Unforgettable Celebrations

With the empowering theme of Rosie the Riveter and the rallying cry of "With YOUR Help – We Can Do It," we came together and celebrated our mission and the return of the spring fundraiser.

The evening's success was fueled by the generosity of over two dozen sponsors, ensuring that the event surpassed all expectations. We had the honor of presenting Crazy Aaron Thinking Putty Founder and CEO, Aaron Muderick with our Best Friend Award and bestowing the inaugural Community Partner of the Year Award to the dedicated team at Krapf Coaches.

Putting the pandemic in our rear-view, almost two hundred guests gathered to celebrate the triumphant return of our fundraiser, honor impressive awardees, and recognize the achievements of our programs participants. Over \$100,000 was raised to support our program operations.

*This year's event will be held Thursday, May 1st 2025. To join our event committee, please contact Director of Development, **Dan Koval** at **610.384.6990 x205** or **dan.koval@handi-crafters.org***

A Legacy of Compassion: Linda's 40-Year Journey at Handi-Crafters

In 1984, a young woman named Linda Zimmerman was searching for a new direction in life. Like many others, she turned to the local newspaper's Classifieds section, hoping to find a fresh start. What she discovered was not just a job but a lifelong calling that would span four decades and touch countless lives.



Linda Zimmerman

Linda's journey with Handi-Crafters began with a simple want ad, but it quickly evolved into a mission of service and dedication. Starting in the Prevocational Training program, which has since transformed into the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, Linda worked tirelessly with new clients, helping them prepare for the workforce. Her efforts laid the groundwork for what is now a seamless collaboration between Workshop Supervisors and Program Specialists, ensuring every client receives the support they need to succeed.

In the 1990s, Linda transitioned from training and preparation to leading production and work crews, guiding teams of clients as they ventured into the community for various jobs, from lawn care to office cleaning. Her commitment to expanding opportunities for Handi-Crafters' clients was evident as she took on the role of Production Manager, continuing to drive growth and innovation within the organization.

However, it was in the Adult Daily Living Center (ADLC) where Linda truly found her calling. As the Director of the ADLC, Linda has created a warm, nurturing environment where clients come daily for care, companionship, and joy. Whether it's a lively dance party, a peaceful crafting session, or a serene stroll around the campus, Linda ensures each day is filled with activities that bring happiness and fulfillment to those she serves.

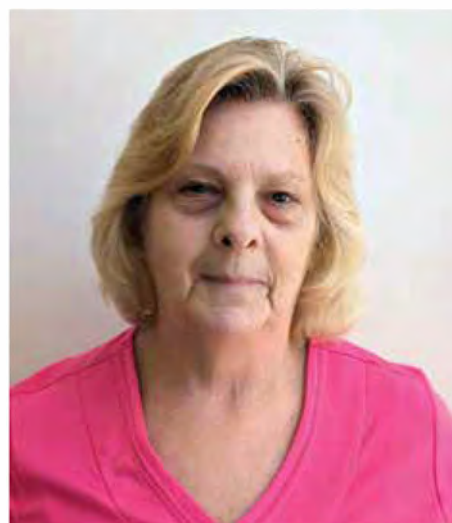
"I will stay as long as I feel needed," Linda says, her eyes misting with emotion as she reflects on her 40 years at Handi-Crafters. Her role is far more than administrative; she is a friend, advocate, and source of unwavering support for the clients who rely on the ADLC. Her influence extends beyond the center's walls, as she plays pivotal roles on the Safety

Committee, Fire Safety team, Incident Management Team, and Human Rights Team. These responsibilities, embraced with love and care, highlight her dedication to the well-being of every person at Handi-Crafters.

Reflecting on Linda's impact, Executive Director April Ennis-Pierson shared, "Linda is an incredibly humble leader. Her knowledge of our agency is an incredible asset. Beyond that, she cares deeply for every single person that attends our program."

Celebrating 25 Years of Dedication: Terri's Journey at Handi-Crafters

For nearly 25 years, Terri Zydinsky has been an integral part of the Handi-Crafters family, bringing her unwavering dedication and expertise as a Workshop Supervisor since 2001. Her tenure with the organization is marked by a deep commitment to the participants she serves, whom she describes as "the most loving and



Terri Zydinsky

caring people in the world." This profound connection to her work is evident in every aspect of her role.

Terri's journey with Handi-Crafters began in 2001, inspired by her sister Kathy, who recognized Terri's unique strengths and suggested she explore a role with the organization. Embracing the opportunity, Terri quickly excelled, taking on responsibilities that included vocational coaching and mentoring. Her exceptional approach to teaching and her dedication to the participants were quickly recognized, leading her to oversee vocational teams beyond the workshop, manage community cleaning crews, and provide crucial support at PennDOT License Centers.

Throughout her career, Terri has demonstrated remarkable adaptability, seamlessly transitioning between roles and consistently pouring her energy into supporting her team. Her flexibility, positive attitude, and genuine care for the participants have made her an indispensable part of Handi-Crafters staff. Terri's ability to build trust and confidence with the participants she mentors is unparalleled; she is deeply invested in their success, tirelessly working to help them achieve their employment goals.

April Ennis-Pierson, Handi-Craft-

ers Executive Director, shared, "Terri just has a wonderful approach with people. The participants she supervises trust her, and she lifts them up to exceed their potential. She knows what they can do before they do."

As Terri reflects on her years at Handi-Crafters, her smile speaks volumes about the joy and fulfillment she finds in her work. We are incredibly grateful to have Terri share her passion and dedication with us every day, helping our clients thrive both in the workplace and within the community.

Karen Cox's Journey: A New and Purpose Filled Chapter

After retiring in 2022 from a 37-year career in manufacturing, Karen Cox anticipated a period of well-earned rest. However, her energetic spirit and compassionate nature soon drove her to seek new opportunities. Through the PA CareerLink Center in Exton, Karen discovered Handi-Crafters—a place where she found renewed purpose and a second calling.

At Handi-Crafters, Karen's lifelong commitment to caregiving took on new meaning. Initially working as a one-on-one support person, she provided compassionate coaching that helped her assigned participant thrive in his daily tasks. It was during this time that Karen realized her passion for vocational rehabilitation, eager to learn everything she could to help others reach their employment goals.

When a Workshop Supervisor position became available, Karen's extensive manufacturing background made her an ideal candidate. Recognizing her potential, Rick Ross, Production Manager, encouraged her to apply. "You would be a



Karen Cox

great fit," he told her. Karen embraced the challenge wholeheartedly.

In her new role, Karen not only quickly adapted but also began teaching and coaching her clients in new skills to enhance their employability. She built strong connections with her team of participants, fostering positive relationships and guiding them toward success. "I wouldn't change what I do for the world," Karen reflects. "I love my work, and although I wish I had started sooner,

I believe this was life's plan for me." Her dedication to her team is unwavering, describing them as "a remarkable group of people who face life on their own terms and succeed."

Reflecting on her journey, Karen shares, "If you ever have the chance to work and give back like I do at Handi-Crafters, seize it. It's one of the most rewarding experiences of my life."

Meet Lindsey Gauger, Director of Rehabilitation

Lindsey came onboard in May 2023. Lindsey brings a universal background of love for the individuals we serve and a diverse professional knowledge. Lindsey came to us from residential program management, with a strong emphasis on regulatory



Lindsey Gauger

compliance and collaboration with the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). She holds a Bachelor's degree in Criminology from Immaculata University but found her true calling in the field of community living, where she quickly developed a passion for supporting individuals with developmental, intellectual disabilities and mental health.

Lindsey's leadership is characterized by her dedication to advocacy, inclusion, and teamwork. Her commitment to creating a supportive environment for both clients and staff is evident in all her efforts. She furthered her expertise by earning a Master of Social Work from Alvernia University in 2022 and becoming a Licensed Social Worker. In addition to her role at Handi-Crafters, she works part-time as a Clinical Therapist, providing care to children and facilitating group therapy sessions.

Lindsey's inclusion in our team reflects our commitment to hiring highly qualified professionals who are passionate about our mission. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her three dogs, traveling, camping, kayaking, and engaging in various hobbies like reading, kickboxing, and family activities.



Join Our Team and Make a Meaningful Impact

Are you passionate about making a difference in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities?

Handi-Crafters is seeking dedicated and compassionate professionals to join our team. We have exciting opportunities available for those who want to support individuals in achieving their employment and personal goals.

As a 1:1 Support Staff member, you will provide personalized, one-on-one assistance to individuals to help individuals develop essential skills that will contribute to their success in our workshop program. This position offers a rewarding opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of others by guiding them on their journey toward greater independence.

Additionally, we have openings in our Adult Daily Living Program for 1:1 Support Staff and an Activities Aide. This important role supports individuals with personal care, such as toileting and feeding, and assisting with their daily activities. These positions require a caring attitude and a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for those you support.

Send inquires to Peggy Eichelberger, Human Resources. Peggy.Eichelberger@handi-crafters.org. Start your journey with Handi-Crafters today and help us continue to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Volunteer SPOTLIGHT: Fred

Fred's journey with Handi-Crafters began unexpectedly while volunteering at a Habitat for Humanity Restore. He noticed a group of dedicated volunteers from Handi-Crafters. Fred started up a conversation with the group and



Volunteer Fred

learned more about Handi-Crafters Mission. Inspired by their commitment and the HCOC story, Fred decided to reach out and get involved.

For over a year and a half, Fred has volunteered every Tuesday, working alongside the same clients he first met at the Restore. Fred says he has a personal connection—having family members with special needs—Fred's work at Handi-Crafters is extra meaningful. He's contributed in various workshops, from packing shoe care kits to sorting Victory beer and working with Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty, a task he finds particularly rewarding.

What keeps Fred coming back is the collective dedication to Handi-Crafters' mission. "Everyone is committed to the mission—kindness, safety, and getting the work done," Fred says. He's inspired by how Handi-Crafters empowers people with disabilities to become productive members of the workforce.

We deeply appreciate Fred's commitment and thank him for being an incredible, dedicated volunteer that we count on.

STRUGGLING WITH STAFFING SHORTAGES?

Handi-Crafters Opportunity Center has the solution.

- 30,000 SF Development Center
- Custom packaging, kitting, co-packing
- 200+ skilled workers
- Capabilities in appliance parts, fasteners, medical components

- 10,000 SF warehouse space
- Advanced inventory software
- Product pickup and delivery
- Quality standards
- Deliver on-time

Partnering with Handi-Crafters empowers individuals with disabilities while enhancing your business operations.



Call Mariana Tarau, Director of Operations at 610.384.6990 x219 or email her at Mariana.Tarau@handi-crafters.org

Community Partnership Opportunity: Empower Individuals to Thrive

Handi-Crafters is seeking community partners to help individuals with disabilities engage more fully in community life. In partnership with Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs, our Community Participation Services Program offers individuals the chance to participate in activities that promote independence, build social connections, and enhance the potential for competitive employment. We're looking for local businesses, organizations, and community spaces to host volunteer opportunities, provide field trips, or offer enriching experiences. Handi-Crafters provides transportation and supervision, with a staff-to-client ratio of 1:3. Examples of activities



include tours of local businesses, public transportation training, library visits, sports, and volunteer work. By joining us, you'll contribute to a more inclusive community and help individuals thrive. Contact Chris Broome, Director of Community and Employment Services. Chris.Broome@handi-crafters.org

Volunteer Opportunities at Handi-Crafters!

Make a difference with Handi-Crafters! Volunteer your time and skills to help transform the lives of our participants. Whether you can spare a few hours or dedicate a whole day, we offer rewarding opportunities for individuals and corporate teams alike. Our volunteers play a crucial role in our programs, assisting with packaging or assembly work, or

supporting our Adult Day Program.

Volunteering with us is both fulfilling and fun. For more information, contact Dan Koval, our Director of Development, at dan.koval@handi-crafters.org or call 610-384-6990 x205. Be a part of something special—volunteer with Handi-Crafters today!

Empower Lives Today! Support Handi-Crafters

For over 60 years, Handi-Crafters has been a beacon of hope, empowering individuals with disabilities through vocational training and meaningful work. Your donation makes this impact possible. Whether through a one-time or recurring donation, planned gifts, or corporate matches, your support changes lives.

Take it a step further—sponsor key events like the Annual Hankin Invitational, our Spring Benefit Event, or our Annual T-Shirt Campaign. Join us in making a difference. Every contribution counts. Empower lives with Handi-Crafters!

All donations are tax-deductible. Contact Dan Koval at dan.koval@handi-crafters.org or 610-384-6990 x205, or visit (<https://hcocenter.org/support>) to learn more.



Community Participation

At Handi-Crafters Opportunity Center, our mission extends beyond the boundaries of our work center program, as we strive to empower individuals to explore new horizons and grow through meaningful community involvement and utilizing our Community Participation Supports (CPS). We understand that giving

dence to build relationships and enjoy a chance to give back and work with others.

Jose, one of our committed volunteers, shares, "I really like helping to sort the food and pack the boxes for others. It feels good to help." His words capture the essence of these experiences, where giving back

community but also gain essential experience that prepares them for future employment.

Meals on Wheels: Delivering Nourishment and Connection

The culmination of our community efforts is exemplified through our partnership with Meals on Wheels. Our clients participate in the entire process, from picking up food prepared by the Food Bank to delivering meals directly to the doors of those in need. This service not only addresses food insecurity but also combats social isolation, providing recipients with much-needed human interaction.

For many of the individuals we serve, these deliveries offer rare moments of connection and conversation. It is a full circle moment to be able to be a part of the community in which we live, work, play, and volunteer in.



Victoria and Joe serving at the Foodbank

back isn't just about service—it's a pathway for our program participants to learn, discover, and immerse themselves in new experiences. By partnering with organizations like The Chester County Food Bank, Habitat for Humanity ReStores, and Meals on Wheels, we provide our clients with unique opportunities to contribute while broadening their understanding of the world around them.

Over the last year, 53% of our program attendees are utilizing CPS during their day.

The Chester County Food Bank: Nourishing Bodies and Spirits

Each week, CPS participants have the opportunity to actively contribute to The Chester County Food Bank by participating in various tasks at the Food Bank's Exton warehouse, kitchen facility, or local farming sites.



Scott and JB at the Foodbank

Whether sorting and packaging food for distribution or learning what makes a nutritious meal, these activities not only support the Food Bank's mission but also empower our participants with valuable skills and confi-

is seamlessly woven with personal development and community support.

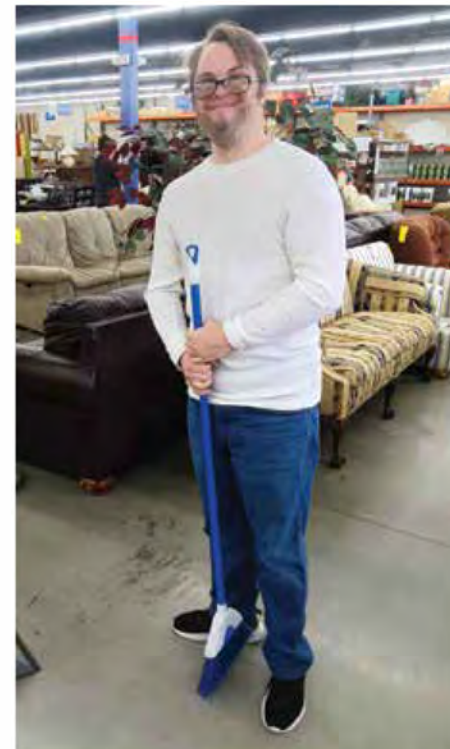
Building Confidence and Skills at Habitat for Humanity ReStores

Our clients flourish in the dynamic environments of Habitat for Humanity ReStores in Phoenixville and Coatesville, where they volunteer twice a week throughout the year. These bustling retail spaces provide a wealth of real-world job experiences, from cleaning and organizing to managing inventory and interacting with a diverse team of coworkers.

Together, we can create a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone has the chance to thrive.

Volunteering at the ReStores allows our clients to build confidence, particularly through customer interactions that let their personalities shine. They take pride in ensuring that items on the sales floor are clean, undamaged, and ready for purchase, which brings a deep sense of accomplishment.

For Nick, a regular volunteer, the experience is both fulfilling and fun. "I like cleaning things, but I also like to see the cool stuff they have to sell," he shares, reflecting on the joy of discovering unique items while honing valuable skills. Through these opportunities, our clients not only contribute to the



Jacob at ReStore

A Call to Action: Expanding Our Community Impact

We are immensely grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside these esteemed community partners. The skills and relationships fostered through these collaborations are invaluable to our clients' growth and empowerment. As we continue to seek new avenues for partnership and service, we invite you to connect with us. If you know of an organization that could benefit from our involvement, please reach out and let us know. Contact - Chris Broome chris.broome@handi-crafters.org

Together, we can create a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone has the chance to thrive. Thank you for your ongoing support and collaboration in making this vision a reality.



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A True Best Friend: Crazy Aaron's, Founder and CEO, Aaron Muderick

April Ennis-Pierson, Handi-Crafters' Executive Director.

The story of Krapf Coaches begins in 1942, when George Krapf, Jr. started a humble school bus company with just two buses. By 1982, Krapf expanded to offer motorcoach



services to local communities, and in 1984, they began a beautiful partnership with Handi-Crafters, transporting clients to and from work. This collaboration blossomed further when Chester County enlisted Krapf to manage its shared ride program.

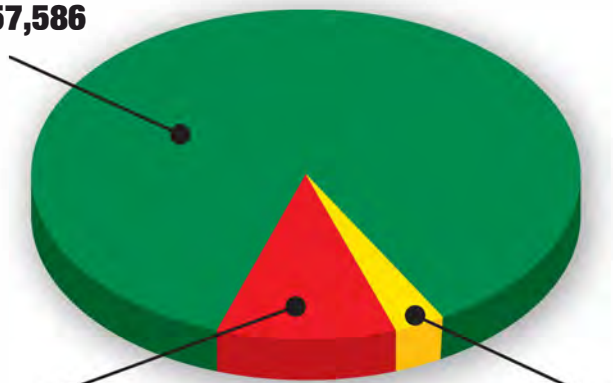


Perry Bentley, Gary Krapf, April Ennis-Pierson

"It was the passion of the people that drove us to be a part of the solution," said Gary Krapf, President of Krapf Transportation. In 2005, the Chester County Paratransit System got a lively makeover, becoming Rover Community Transportation. With a fresh and fun new look, Rover's drivers and monitors brought energy and dedication every single day. "Their can-do spirit and love for the job made all the difference," Gary fondly recalled. Over the years, Rover's cheerful and dedicated team provided hundreds of thousands of rides annually, many of which were for Handi-Crafters, forming immeasurable friendships and bonds along the way.

Expenses

Workshop Rehabilitation
\$7,557,586



General & Administration
\$830,230

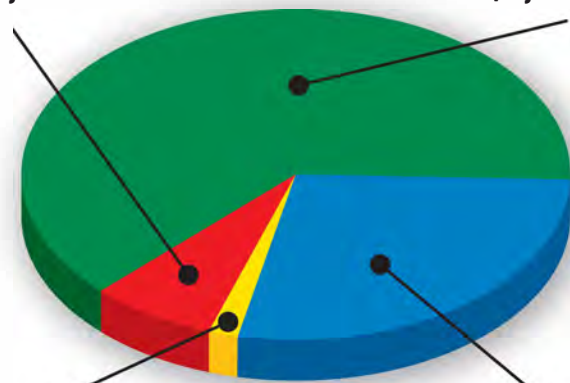
Fundraising
\$118,036

Workshop Rehabilitation	\$7,557,586
General & Administration	\$830,230
Fundraising	\$118,036

Total \$8,505,852

Revenue

Contributions
\$472,130



Workshop Contracts
\$5,060,000

Other \$87,921

Governmental Funding & Grants
\$3,133,947

Workshop Contracts	\$5,060,000
Governmental Funding & Grants ..	\$3,133,947
Contributions.....	\$472,130
Other	\$87,921

Total \$8,753,998

July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

Our Top Business Partners

- Anholt
- Air King
- Crazy Aaron
- Victory
- CTDI
- New Wave
- Herr's
- Neck Sip
- Stichler Candies
- Dumond

The Impact of Losing SCJ as a Customer and the Call for New Partnerships

Last fall, we began discussions with one of our largest customers to develop a transition plan that ultimately marked the conclusion of a 40-year partnership.

Handi-Crafters has long been recognized for its expertise in shoe care kitting, particularly through our work with Kiwi, a brand owned by SC Johnson. At our peak, we assembled over a million shoe care kits annually for this iconic brand, with the demand for these products accounting for 70% of our business. "SC Johnson was a cornerstone customer and a project we honed over the years, achieving exceptional efficiency," said Mariana Tarau, Director of Operations at Handi-Crafters. "Hundreds of our clients gained valuable skills by packaging shoe kits. While much of our business was built around this partnership, it served us very well for decades."

As the partnership came to a close, we recognized the significant challenge ahead. "Our team displayed remarkable determination and resilience," said Tarau. "It also became an opportunity to diversify our assembly work."

reached out to our existing customers, asking them to increase their orders. Their response has been nothing short of extraordinary. This support has been instrumental in filling production gaps and maintaining the steady workflow essential to providing vocational rehabilitation opportunities for our participants.



Kelsy working on SCJ Shoe Kits

Partners such as Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty, CTDI, Herr's, and others answered our call for increased orders, helping to sustain our operations during this transition. As we continue this vital work, we express our deep gratitude to the community for its support. It's important to showcase the exceptional quality of our output, our ability to meet tight deadlines, and our available capacity for production. Equally important, partners who work with us understand they are not just receiving top-quality contract packaging service, but are also helping to empower a workforce that uses these opportunities to achieve their employment goals and foster personal growth.

At our peak, we assembled over a million shoe care kits annually

We proactively sought new business opportunities, leveraging our relationships with local partners, such as the Chester County Economic Development Council, the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry, and local manufacturers. Additionally, we



CTDI and Comcast Visit Handi-Crafters

At Handi-Crafters, our business partnerships are both essential and deeply valued. We are particularly proud of our long-standing collaboration with CTDI, which has extended opportunities for us to work with major companies such as Comcast

to host CTDI on-site for a review of a work contract with Comcast. This important visit not only allowed us to showcase our mission but also provided us with immediate feedback to refine our processes, ensuring we continue to deliver



CTDI and Comcast with Handi-Crafters staff, Miguel, Sebastian, April, Raluca, Miguel, George, Andy, Joe

and Verizon. CTDI continually brings expertise to our program, offering valuable learning and growth opportunities in production.

Earlier this year, we were honored

outstanding results. Both our supervisors and participants appreciated the opportunity to engage with these dedicated business partners.

Empowering Futures: Celebrating Success with the World of Work Program at Handi-Crafters

At Handi-Crafters, we are dedicated to empowering our clients to take confident steps toward their career goals. Aligning with the "Everyday Lives" mission of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP), we emphasize independence, choice, and opportunity for our Clients. Central to this mission is Employment First, a program funded by the Department to ensure our clients achieve competitive integrated employment outcomes. Our World of Work Program is a unique six-week course designed to prepare individuals for the next phase in their professional journeys.

The World of Work Program provides clients with essential skills and knowledge in areas such as:

- **Interview Preparation:** Equipping participants with the necessary skills and confidence for successful interviews.
- **Soft Skills:** Developing essential interpersonal skills, including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.
- **Workplace Etiquette:** Teaching the norms and professional behaviors expected in the workplace.
- **Networking:** Assisting participants in building valuable industry connections.
- **Personal Hygiene and Proper Dress:** Ensuring a professional

appearance through personal grooming and appropriate attire.

- **Job Search Techniques:** Offering effective strategies and tools for job hunting.

- **Appropriate Socialization and Boundaries:** Educating participants on maintaining professional relationships.

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), we hosted a highly successful Career Pathways Presentation. Over a dozen clients and their support teams attended, learning about the OVR process, hearing success stories, and discussing the next steps for training and job mentoring with the Handi-Crafters' Employment Team.

secured new jobs at the Goodwill in Thorndale.

This achievement marks a significant milestone for Dustin, Lisa, and Tiffany, who, with the dedicated guidance of their job coaches, Meg



World of Work Clients

"The World of Work class gives our clients a safe and open practice space to fine tune their interpersonal skills, we are thankful for the clients' participation and our ability to continually offer it."

- *Chris Broome, Director of Employment & Community Services.*

As a precursor to the six-week program, and in partnership with the

From those who attended the presentation, we had the pleasure of working directly with a half dozen participants who completed the full six-week World of Work course. Out of that group, three individuals—Dustin, Lisa, and Tiffany—

and Alyssa, have successfully navigated their path toward competitive integrated employment. Their journey from training to job exploration and then to employment showcases the power of dedication, hard work, and the right support system.

Handi-Crafters also appreciates the great employment partnership with Goodwill. Recently, the Goodwill in Thorndale renovated their store, creating a beautiful new space. For any questions about Employment and Community Services, please contact **Chris Broome** at chris.broome@handi-crafters.org.

Here's to another year of helping our Clients achieve their dreams and build brighter futures!

Christoff's Journey with Handi-Crafters: From Workshop to Community

Christoff exemplifies the vocational growth and support that Handi-Crafters nurtures in all of our clients. He joined us through the School to Work Program in 2015, and many staff recall the day he received his first paycheck. He quickly distinguished himself as a fast learner and an eager participant who looked forward to competitive employment.

Christoff started his day at 6 a.m., welcoming guests as they arrived at the food and coffee stations. He engaged them about their stay and assisted the dining staff with table setup and coffee refills. Christoff became known for his impeccable manners and professional appearance.

After five years in that position, Christoff transitioned to a role as a room attendant at the Desmond Hotel in Malvern. Seeking a job closer to home, Christoff and his family decided in 2022 that a change was needed. He was then hired as a custodian at Goodwill in Thorndale. Meg Wood, Employment Specialist, proudly notes, "Christoff continues to do wonderfully at Goodwill! He does great work and is always happy, helpful, and very kind to everyone."

Despite the challenges he has faced, Christoff remains dedicated to his work and personal growth. Reflecting on his journey, he encourages others, saying, "I think other Handi-Crafters participants should continue to pursue jobs in the community too." His story is a powerful reminder of the impact Handi-Crafters has in guiding clients through every stage of their employment journey.

From Workshop to Workforce: Marissa's Inspiring Journey at Handi-Crafters

Marissa's journey with Handi-Crafters began in 2013, where she quickly discovered a sense of joy and purpose in her work. One of her favorite tasks was working with Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty—meticulously weighing it and applying stickers to the lids of cans. From the start, her attention to detail and dedication made her stand out.

Marissa is described as being "compassionate, caring, sensitive, and having a great sense of humor," recalls Pru Vito, her former supervisor. "She always knew when to add a joke or lend a hand – she really cared about those around her."

By October 2023, Marissa's aspirations grew beyond the workshops. She expressed a desire to find employment within the community, and her potential was clear to everyone who worked with her. Handi-Crafters' team of Employment Specialists eagerly began the search for the perfect job to match her skills and gentle nature.

In May 2024, Marissa's hard work paid off when she landed a role as a Sales Associate at the Dollar General in Parkesburg. Initially responsible for stocking shelves and recovering items, Marissa soon embraced additional duties, including working the register. Though she initially had reservations about handling money, Marissa quickly proved herself more than capable, earning frequent praise

from her store manager, Anthony.

This achievement was especially meaningful given Marissa's initial doubts. She had once believed



Marissa Carr

she couldn't count money accurately, a misconception she had been led to believe by someone else. But with encouragement and a few simple math exercises, Marissa confidently took on the challenge and mastered it with ease. Her quick learning and intelligence impressed everyone around her.

Marissa's transition from a dedicated Handi-Crafters participant to a thriving employee in the community is a testament to her desire to meet her goals. Her story is a shining example for others, demonstrating that with determination and the right support, they too can find success and fulfillment in the workplace.



Lisa, Christoff, Good Dog, Dustin, David

Upon his graduation, he left Handi-Crafters and began working with Employment Specialists to secure a competitive position.

In 2016, Christoff was hired at the Hilton Garden Inn in Exton, one of our community employment partners. As a Breakfast Greeter,

A Letter to our Stakeholders

Dear Treasured Stakeholders,

We are thrilled to present this impact report, highlighting a year filled with remarkable progress and strategic accomplishments that reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the individuals we serve. Throughout the year, our focus has been on delivering exceptional service, nurturing a culture of collaboration, and, above all, prioritizing the goals and needs of our participants.

Over the past year, we've strengthened our partnerships with the State Office of Developmental Programs (ODP) and our County Liaisons. In this report, you'll discover our continued dedication to Community Participation and Competitive Employment. We celebrate the skill-building and achievements of our clients as they strive to reach their employment aspirations. Central to our mission is the expansion of opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities, ensuring they are actively engaged in everyday lives, aligned with their interests, coached for success, and connected meaningfully with the community. Through activities like volunteering, we aim to extend our impact beyond the vocational center, fostering greater community awareness and creating new opportunities.

As we reflect on the close of our fiscal year, we take pride in the milestones we've achieved. We have successfully guided 200 individuals on their journey towards competitive employment, increased community participation enrollment by an impressive 53%, and attained 100% compliance in staff competency training.

Despite the conclusion of one of our largest customer contracts, our

leadership team showcased resilience. We leveraged the support of our existing customers and seized the opportunity to strengthen and expand our business portfolio. Although this posed challenges, we successfully filled the business gap with minimal service interruption.

Our Work Center continues to be one of the largest in the region, with a co-packing enterprise that has served as an effective vocational training hub for people with disabilities for over 60 years. It provides an ideal environment for our program participants to develop their skills and find their path to competitive employment and active community engagement. We are fortunate to have the guidance of a dedicated Board of Directors and talent of caring and passionate staff, many of whom have been part of the Handi-Crafters family for years. Their person-centered approach, compassion, respect, and commitment to excellence truly distinguish them in managing, coaching, and supporting our participants.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support and dedication to our vital mission. Your love for Handi-Crafters makes it possible for us to provide the programs and services that make such a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Denny Howell
President, HCOC Board of Directors

April Ennis-Pierson
Executive Director, HCOC

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to provide individuals with various disabilities vocational job training, community socialization, and the supports they need to achieve their competitive employment goals.

Our agency aligns its goals and services with "Everyday Lives," the mission and vision of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP). Established to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity in their lives.

Demographics

Enrollment and Support

- Skill Development Center: 200+ individual workers
- Community Participation Supports: 111 individuals are enrolled
- Adult Daily Living Center: 40 individuals are enrolled in the program
- Job Coaching and Employment Support: 39 individuals are receiving on-the-job, coaching support.
- Career Pathways launched this year providing a track towards Competitive Integrated Employment

Staff and Volunteers

- Full-Time Staff: 42 members
- Part-Time Staff: 35 members
- Volunteers: 250 volunteers representing companies, families, and individuals giving their time to support the HCOC mission

Contract Packaging and Community Engagement

- Contract Packaging Customers: Over 40 Business Partners engage in contracts that help our workforce develop skills and diversify opportunities
- Community Partners: Over 15 community partners providing enriching experiences helping participants expand their horizons

Development Milestones

- Achieved a record-breaking 10th Annual Hankin Golf Invitational the tournament has raised over \$2.2 million since 2014
- Reinstated the Annual Spring Fundraiser
- Hosted Dine and Donate event at Texas Roadhouse
- Over \$500,000 raised by donors that directly impact the individuals we serve through our programs

Award Recognition:

- Crazy Aaron's Thinking Putty was recognized with the Best Friend Award.
- Krapf Coaches received the Inaugural Community Partner Award

Key Partners

- Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)
- County of Chester Mental Health and IDD
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)



The History of Handi-Crafters

Handi-Crafters was founded in 1961 by a committee of parents who refused to accept that their developmentally disabled children were "un-employable."



Handi-Crafters 1961

They believed having a job with proper supervision and skill training would be the key to advancing quality of life and achieving new levels of independence. The program plan was implemented and drew positive attention and success.

60 years later, what began as a vision by caring parents remains the cornerstone of our mission.

Handi-Crafters runs one of the largest vocational rehabilitation, non-profit Work Centers for individuals with disabilities in Southeast PA. Individuals enrolled in

our program are empowered when they "come to work."

Clients learn and grow their skills through on-the-job training in our production business, receive a paycheck, and work with our trusted team to expand their potential for competitive employment.



venmo

Follow us



We invite you to take a tour anytime.

Contact Dan Koval,
Director of Development,
dan.koval@handi-crafters.org
610.384.6990 x205

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