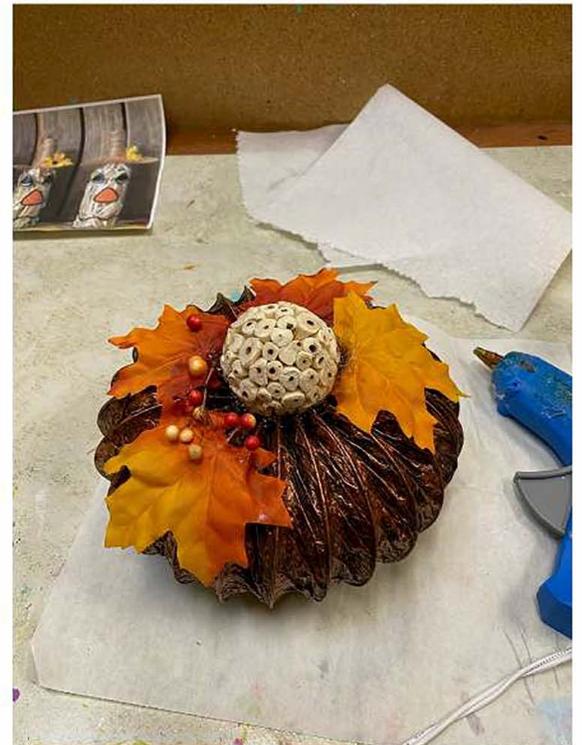




Newsletter Created By:
Elyse Bridgewater

Newsletter Created By Elyse Bridgewater

Elyse has been working with Strive for almost 3 years and continues to achieve her goal of graphic design with their services and support they offer. During the pandemic, Elyse has continued to stay busy by working on projects including this newsletter and different arts and crafts.



STRiVE finds creative ways to serve individuals at home during pandemic crisis

By Sharon Sullivan

STRiVE, a nonprofit that provides community-based services to individuals with disabilities and their families, has taken several steps to ensure that people continue to receive the care and support they need while maintaining safety during the current global pandemic. Community organizations partner with STRiVE to provide fulfilling employment and enrichment opportunities for individuals served by STRiVE. One of the partnerships is with Alida's Fruits, 3402 C ½ Road, where seven disabled individuals help run the Palisade fruit stand. During normal times individuals come to the shop where they wait on customers, count cash and run the register. Those with food-handler's cards help make salsas, jams and chocolate-dipped dried fruits. "Coming to the store is the high point in their lives," supervisor Joseph O'Connor said. "They like it. Work helps with their anxiety." However, employees have been forced to quarantine at home during stay-at-home recommendations intended to combat further spread of the novel coronavirus. STRiVE continues to pay individuals while they are confined to home where they are provided activities to keep occupied. "I call every weekday and ask how they're doing," O'Connor said. Plus, "they can also call us, or text at any time."



Amber Struble, who runs five STRiVE vocational programs, said, "We come up with creative ways to keep people employed at home." Labor Solutions, one of Struble's supportive employment programs, provides jobs for individuals to shred paper for various Grand Valley businesses. STRiVE made it possible for 10 individuals to continue working, by bringing shredders to their homes. Employees get paid by the pound of shredded paper.

Another program Struble oversees is "Sweet Success," where individuals learn kitchen skills and bake cookies that are sold within the STRiVE organization. While observing stay-at-home recommendations, staff helps clients continue to hone their skills by providing links to online tutorials on food and kitchen safety. Individuals also watch cooking videos and work on math worksheets while at home.

Like O'Connor, Struble and her staff interact daily with their clients by making phone calls to see how they're feeling, and reminding them of the importance of taking safety precautions. "We make contact so they'll know we are still here for them; we still care for them and they will have a place to come back to when this is all over," Struble said. Another supervisor, Kelly Lupo, oversees the nonprofit's wellness groups, as well as Strive's "Uniquely Yours" store in downtown Grand Junction. Several individuals work at the shop during normal times. Like other employed individuals who are temporarily quarantining at home, the workers continue to be paid.

STRiVE provides individuals stuck at home packets that contain enriching and informative information and activities, such as virtual museum tours, videos of hot-air balloons taking off over the Sahara Desert, word-find puzzles, beads for jewelry-making, art canvases, and computer paint-by-number projects. Packets are either mailed or dropped off at individuals' homes. Some are customized for an individual's particular interests. Materials are placed in zip-lock bags, which are sanitized and left on clients' doorsteps. Individuals also have the option to come pick up boxes containing craft projects and other activities, which are left outside two STRiVE locations, 1505, and 2850 Chipeta Ave.

One brain-injured individual is a particularly good artist who creates artwork from recycled objects, which are then sold at Uniquely Yours. During the stay-at-home period, STRiVE staff has brought the man objects to repurpose and keep his creativity flowing. "He's an amazing artist," Lupu said. "We went out and picked things he could re-do."

The Western Colorado Botanical Gardens, 641 Struthers Ave., is another wonderful community partnership. Vocational program supervisor Steve Shain runs the program where he and his staff work alongside 14 STRiVE individuals to maintain the gardens and Butterfly greenhouse. Since March, the gardens have been closed to the public, thus, again putting individuals temporarily out-of-work. "We're keeping their positions open until we can open up to the public," Shain says. "We created a way for them to work at home and earn money. We're giving them tasks at home – yard and gardening work, watching YouTube videos on gardening. And, like other programs, individuals receive daily phone calls from staff.

Casey Gordon supervises three different vocational day-rehab programs, one of which offers twice weekly art classes at Western Colorado Center for the Arts – outings that were canceled during home quarantine periods. To make up for the missed art classes, however, The Art Center is continuing once a week classes via Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. When projects require materials not typically found at home, STRiVE purchases and delivers those supplies to people. Individuals, all of whom have Internet access, are provided a link to log in to the class. "They get to do art and see their art teacher," Gordon said. "Our goal is to keep their life as close to normal as possible." Medically fragile individuals meet with staff members virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. "The feedback from individuals and families has all been very positive and thankful," Lupu said. "They're all ready to be back but are making the best of a bad situation. It's really hard for us, too. Part of what is so rewarding is seeing people every day. We're trying to work hard as a group to support everybody," including comforting an individual who is home grieving the death of a loved one. Occasionally, an individual does not comprehend the need for social distancing during this pandemic time. When that happens, staff members go out of their way to relieve anxieties and clear up misunderstandings. For example, an employee at Uniquely Yours was upset because she couldn't come to work; she believed it was because she had done something "wrong." Gordon explained to the woman that she was not at fault, and that there's a sickness going around that requires most people to remain at home. "When this is all lifted you will be back with your friends," Gordon assures her. Also, notecards with the message "We miss you!" signed by all the staff members, are sent to each person in Gordon's programs. "We want them to know, this is a two-way street, and that we miss them as much as they miss coming here," Gordon said.



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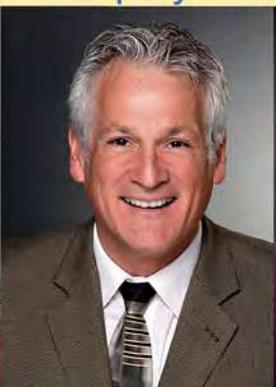
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Strive Events



“STRiVing for Success”

STRiVE was able to host a one and only community outreach event for 2020 on October 14th at Monumental Beer Works. Guests were invited to come and learn about the inspiring work being done at STRiVE. Approximately 30 people attended the event with Mesa County Health guidelines in place. STRiVE is grateful to Monumental Beer Works for donating their venue, staff and wonderful craft beer so that we could host at least one event this year. Cowboy & The Rose Catering sponsored a delicious array of appetizers for guests to enjoy while viewing the presentation. Normally STRiVE hosts an outreach event every quarter but due to the pandemic, have not felt that it has been socially responsible until now. The venue at Monumental Beer Works was perfect with their large outside area. People could easily socially distance while enjoying the beautiful Fall weather. It's just heartwarming to have community partners like these!



“Fall at the Gardens: Harvest Illuminated”

This year was the first year for STRiVE’s “Fall at the Gardens-Harvest Illuminated” and it was a huge success thanks to Willy’s Wild Carvings and our amazing committee! All of the proceeds benefitted our STRiVE’s Children’s Services Program. We were able to host this event safely with the guidelines set forth by Mesa County Health Department. Thank you to all that came out to show support! Next year we look forward to extending our ticket sales so that everyone that wants to attend is able to!

Tulips & Juleps Derby Watch Party

By: Cindy Willms

On Saturday, September 5th STRiVE hosted our 6th annual Tulips & Juleps Derby Watch Party at The Western Colorado Botanical Gardens. Thanks to the guidelines set forth by Mesa County Health Department, we were able to responsibly host approximately 80 guests who sponsored individual tables. Due to the number of sponsorships we received this year and social distancing requirements, we were unable to sell individual tickets to the public like previous years. RoseCap Financial Advisors was once again our Presenting Sponsor, now for the 5th year in a row. We added an additional Title Sponsor this year for a total of three; Timberline Bank, Grand Junction Subaru and Valley Surgical Veins & Aesthetics. Although the weather was warm, guests did not feel the heat thanks to West Star Aviation who provided two large swamp cooling fans. Attendees were able to enjoy the "146th Run for the Roses" in first class style and comfort. If you are a patron of these fine businesses, please don't be afraid to thank them for supporting STRiVE! The event was a huge success raising over \$30,000 which will go to support the inspiring work being done by STRiVE's Children's Services Programs.



Enstrom Candies employs enthusiastic temp workers through the nonprofit Strive

By Sharon Sullivan

On a mid-October day, six disabled men and women are helping Enstrom Candies prepare for the busy holiday season by packing gift baskets and boxes with its world-famous almond toffee, assorted chocolates, and popcorn. Also tucked in the boxes are storyboards that tell the story of the fourth-generation family business.

This year Enstrom is partnering with Strive, a Grand Junction-based nonprofit that serves developmentally and/or physically disabled individuals and their families, to meet its holiday rush.

Jamee Simons, whose grandfather Chet Enstrom founded Enstrom Candies in 1960, owns the business along with her husband Doug, and their two sons, Doug, Jr., and Jim. She became aware of the opportunity to hire Strive individuals, while serving on the nonprofit's Foundation Board.

It's a great opportunity to hire employees for short-term projects, she said. And she's more than pleased with the work ethic of her new, temporary employees.

"They are good, hard workers, and well-supervised (they work alongside two Strive staff members), Simons said. "They're a lot more productive than temp (agency) workers," the company has hired in the past. "They're happy to be working. We can't say enough how great this relationship is."

Each year Enstrom "premixes" 80% of the previous year's holiday sales to get a jump on the season. The four men and two women, along with two Strive direct support professionals, work five days a week, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"They're doing an awesome job; they're just a pleasure to have, we totally love having them here," Enstrom Candies production manager Barb Myers said. "They have fun but they don't stop working."

The temporary workers started October 6 and expect to be finished by the end of October.

"We're ahead of schedule by two or three days," said Trish Russell, Enstrom's ice-cream maker and supervisor of the packing operation.

"They all care; they come to work," Russell said. "They're not preoccupied with their phones. They're meticulous about what they do; they help each other in positive ways. I look forward to coming to work with these guys. They have a positive outlook on life. They're appreciative to be here."

After the gift packs are completed there will be gift baskets to create – a more detailed job that includes adding shredded paper to the baskets, filling them with Enstrom products, and operating a heat gun to shrink-wrap the basket. A decorative bow is tied to the basket.

Working for Enstrom Candies has brought out people's personalities and provided them with opportunities for responsibility, said Merrienne Shaw, who has worked for Strive for 10 years.

"It's been a wonderful, wonderful change for them," from the usual routine, she said.

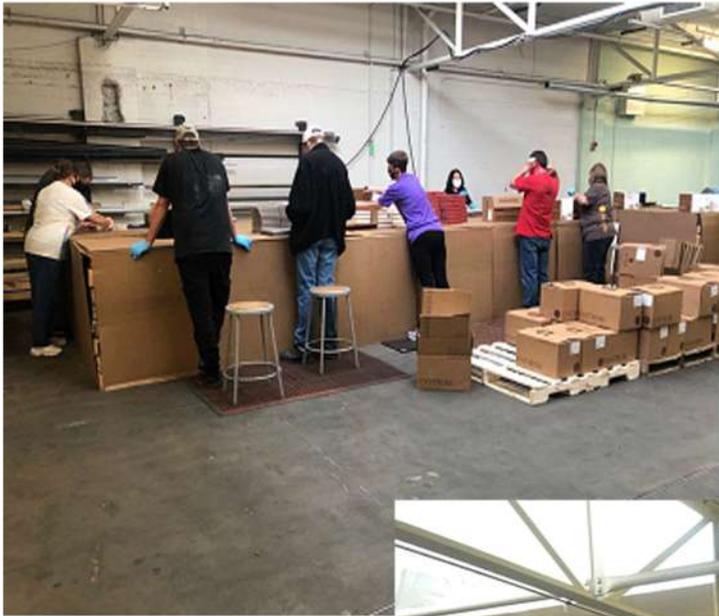
"They go home tired and proud and anxious to come back."

When the gift box packing job is finished, Enstrom might need additional help in the mail room closer to the holiday, Myers said. Enstrom definitely plans to hire Strive individuals again next year, she said.

"If other businesses don't give them a try they're going to miss out on a good opportunity," Myers said.

Simons said finding employees through Strive is "handy" because it can be difficult at times finding needed help for short-term projects.

"I hope we have a long relationship with them," Simons said.



Meanwhile... **AT THE GARDENS**

Fall & Winter Hours
 Wednesday-Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

VISIT OUR BUTTERFLIES!

Bring your family down to the gardens and check out these delicate beauties!

Holidays at the Gardens

Check the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens website:
www.wcbotanic.org for updates on holiday events including a holiday party- with visit from Santa!



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