

Enriching the lives of adults living with developmental disabilities through the love and wholeness of Jesus!

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Assisting adults with disabilities to find new abilities in the context of Christian Family.

## SHALOM NEWSLETTER

Did you know the SHALOM Newsletter is available digitally? If you would prefer to receive a digital copy please contact our Community Liaison, Sheila, at [sheilawithshalom@gmail.com](mailto:sheilawithshalom@gmail.com).

**SHALOM!** is published to keep our support base informed of blessings and opportunities for ministry. To add or remove your name from the mailing list, please write SHALOM, P.O. Box 265, Kalamazoo, MI 49004, or call 269-382-3840 or e-mail at [shalomkazoo@aol.com](mailto:shalomkazoo@aol.com).



SHALOM depends on the financial gifts of individuals, churches and civic organizations. We are a non-profit, 501c3, faith-based public charity. Please consider using the QR CODE or the enclosed Gift Planning card to partner with SHALOM!

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The SHALOM Network includes adult foster care homes, supported living and homes, other adults with disabilities and our many partners in ministry of the same heart and purpose.

Self Help Alternative Living  
Opportunities of Michigan, Inc.  
PO Box 265  
Kalamazoo, MI 49004  
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The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (It's about Jesus!)



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# SHALOM Christmas!



December 2023  
volume 32 issue 3

## SHALOM YEAR-END REPORT

There may be no better word to describe SHALOM 2023 than **growth**. Growth is part of the legacy of SHALOM, starting small with Glen and Sara Collison's desire to share the love of Jesus by providing a loving family home for adults living with disabilities. *We have seen God multiply that desire a hundredfold and continue to do so in 2023.*

We now serve 40 Participants per day at the **SHALOM Woolery**, with approximately 30 volunteers serving weekly, alongside 11 coaches. The **SHALOM Farm** continues to thrive with BIG plans coming in the next couple of years.

**SHALOM Coffee Connection** opened in March on Fridays and Saturdays. Five part-time coaches are on rotation to work alongside one volunteer and one or two Participants per shift. Seventeen Participants have been trained to serve as baristas! SHALOM Coffee was a dream come true for SHALOM resident Karen and her care provider Julie Stevens. SHALOM's newly licensed kitchen at the Shepherd's Barn empowers them and volunteer Sandy Hart to bake cookies together for the coffee shop weekly.

The **Connection Depot Thrift Store** continues to exceed all expectations with growth year after year under the leadership of the Lohmans and many dedicated volunteers!

Multiple **Service Teams** assisted SHALOM in a variety of projects including major updates and landscaping to our Groveland home, painting at Polk St., increasing pasture fencing, and wood splitting for spring sap boiling.

**Friday Night Fun Nights** were initiated to provide SHALOM caregivers three hours of respite twice per month. The **Meal Blessings Team** and the **Worship Transportation Team**, respectively, operated for the full year providing meals to SHALOM homes *four times per month*, and driving Participants to SHALOM Worship monthly.

**SHALOM Worship** celebrated 10 years! The River Church faithfully provided pizza and worshiped Jesus with

SHALOM all throughout 2023! In the past 12 months, we added much needed staff hours with Barb Patterson as **Administrative Assistant/HR** and Sheila Brown as our **Community Liaison** to support our growing community needs.

Each of the above SHALOM ministry areas requires *major support and interest* from volunteers. **The people of SHALOM thank you from the bottom of our hearts!** SHALOM continues to operate debt free thanks to so many wonderful partners who have shared not only financially but with their "lives as well" (2 Thessalonians 2:8). May God continue to grow us in the image of Jesus in 2024!

God designed us for community. At SHALOM, we work and grow TOGETHER, doing so *on mission*, called to serve and share the love of Jesus with others.

## Community Partnership

We are grateful for many opportunities to live into the mission God has called us to. One of our community partners is the Young Adult Program (YAP) from Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA).

Every Wednesday a group of teachers and students comes to SHALOM to learn and serve alongside SHALOM Participants, coaches, and volunteers. They learn skills on the SHALOM Farm and Woolery. Plus, there is an opportunity for YAP students and SHALOM Participants to work alongside each other, learning and growing together.

Jenna, who leads the YAP program, wrote a letter of thanks to SHALOM recently for the experience YAP students have had while attending on Wednesdays.

Dear SHALOM,  
The partnership between KRESA's Young Adult Program (YAP) and SHALOM has grown and been a defining part of YAP

students' learning experience. Over the past ten years, we have seen students gain critical employment, job task skills, and social skills while becoming more well-rounded young adults.

Words cannot express the impact that SHALOM staff, residents, Participants, and volunteers have had on our students. YAP students have gained skills in gardening, farming, and art/crafting activities while being mentored by SHALOM Participants. The peer modeling our students have received from SHALOM has been invaluable in building connections and friendships that will continue into their lives post-YAP.

For our students at YAP who need a safe space to explore and learn community and employment skills, the opportunity to join and participate in the activities at SHALOM has been life changing. This opportunity has allowed them to get out of the classroom, be part of something bigger, and access their community in ways they have not been able to before creating a community that is truly inclusive. The compassion, empathy, and understanding SHALOM has shown YAP students is genuinely moving.

We thank SHALOM for everything you have provided for our students to help them to become successful young adults and look forward to continuing this partnership into the future.  
Thank you, The Staff and Students of YAP



## VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: SHARING IS...KAREN

Have you heard the motto “*sharing is caring?*” It is a popular Biblical theme and trademarked by The Salvation Army. Here at SHALOM, we are fortunate to have our volunteer Karen Monitz who puts “*sharing is caring*” into action twice a week at the SHALOM Woolery and Farm.

The Lord planted a seed in Karen's heart for SHALOM when her son, Michael, saw our alpacas. She immediately had a desire to work on the farm as a volunteer and tucked that away in her prayer life. Two years later she was invited to the SHALOM Woolery Spring Bazaar. Karen paid a visit, was introduced to Lon and given a tour. Karen recalls, “I was so impressed with the Christian mission, and the warm welcome I received from Woolery Participants, that I knew I was meant to be here.”

Karen developed a place in her heart for people living with disabilities at a young age.

She recalls, “I had a best friend in 2nd grade who was deaf. She was such an artist. I feel gifted with the ability to develop rapport with those with special God-given gifts. This is how I see SHALOM Participants.”

Karen attended WMU with a double major in Speech Pathology/Audiology and Elementary Education while also working at Croyden Avenue School. After graduation, she worked at the Kalamazoo Psychiatric Hospital before transitioning to MDHHS (Michigan Department of Health & Human Services) where she worked for more than 30 years, prior to retirement.

Karen has full-time expertise since her son, who is now 29, was born with a disability. She reveals, “The patience and empathy practiced at SHALOM comes in handy at home as well.”

SHALOM is not the only place Karen shares her time. She has also helped with the SPCA Annual Dog Walk, at Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center, and ironically

as a Salvation Army Bell Ringer. “*Sharing is Caring*” for Karen!

Our alpacas caught Karen's eye too. She says, “I love this farm and everything and everyone on it!” She helps our farm team on Tuesdays by collecting the eggs and watering the ducks and chickens. On Thursdays, she enjoys skirting or assisting anyone with Woolery projects.

Why does Karen love to volunteer at SHALOM? She feels, “We all are working toward the same goal as children of God. Everyone is caring and nonjudgmental. I've always loved feeling appreciated and needed, and until I started at SHALOM I didn't realize how much I



needed the SHALOM family myself. It is such a loving, caring environment, where we are all learning patience, understanding and compassion. You also learn a lot about yourself. Spending the day with some of my favorite people feeds my soul!”

We appreciate that Karen also attends our worship nights, monthly dinners, bonfires, and cheers on her SHALOM friends at the bowling alley.

Thank you, Karen, and all SHALOM volunteers for caring enough to share your time and talents with us!



## FARM DAYS UPDATE

The theme of SHALOM Farm Days 2023 was *Sharing God's Goodness*. God has abundantly blessed us, and we had the opportunity to share God's abundance with others!

At Farm Days 2023 we were witnesses to the abundant favor of God. We enjoyed two days of wonderfully warm weather. We welcomed over 1,100 guests in two days, exceeding 2022 by over 200 people. Our staff and volunteers went above and beyond in planning, prepara-

tion, and service. Eighty-three volunteers served 250 hours! The most important statistic? **Thirty-two SHALOM Participants served 100 hours!**

Our community partners blessed us beyond measure. Special thank you to: *Gull Road Meijer, Parchment Hardings, Gull Meadow Farms, Russell Farm, Sportel Greenhouses, Kurt and Jennifer Schmitt, John Thorn, the Green Valley Boys, Jim Hoyt and the Pickers, and Ahhsome Party Rentals.*

## Meet the People of SHALOM

SHALOM is blessed to serve many residents and Participants. We currently have 35 people who reside in homes in the SHALOM Network and 55 active Participants that attend the SHALOM Woolery every week.

Tim has lived in a SHALOM Network home for 13 years and has also attended the SHALOM Woolery for several years. Tim serves at the Connection Depot Thrift store and plans to train at SHALOM Coffee Connection soon! Tim loves anything Star Wars and is a coffee connoisseur.

Tim shared that he loves working with the animals, going out to eat with friends, going on trips, and spending time at the thrift store and coffee shop. Tim also enjoys serving our community during SHALOM Farm Days.

Although he misses some of his family in Oregon, he enjoys being with his friends and living in community. Tim also shared that he is trying to follow in Jesus' steps and feels he is growing in his independence. He loves learning about the Bible and enjoys historical devotions.

Tim has the gift of encouragement, a bright smile, and a positive attitude. He is always willing to help and has a wonderful sense of humor. He loves being around people he can talk to and being accepted for who he is. We are thankful for the kindness and love Tim shows to those around him!



**The mission of SHALOM is to enrich the lives of adults living with disabilities through the love and wholeness of Jesus.** Farm Days is one way we accomplish this mission, working together as a team to include residents, Participants, volunteers, and staff to share the love of Jesus with others.

We thank and praise our great King Jesus for sharing with us so we can share his love and goodness with others!



## GIFT REMEMBRANCES August 5—November 30, 2023

**Honor of Aktion Club**  
Arthur Roberts & Betty Lujan-Roberts

**Memory of Nathan Baylor Jr.**  
Paul & Marlene (Vlietstra) Bosker

**Honor of Paul & Kelley Blacken**  
David & Paula Nieboer

**Honor of Tim Bond**  
Debbie Frye

**Memory of Delores M. Bosker**  
Paul Bosker & Craig Bosker

**Memory of Glen & Sara Collison**  
James & Marilyn Sadler  
Robert & Julie Stevens

**Memory of Ida Mae DeNooyer**  
Matthew DeNooyer

**Memory of Jack & Pearl Doorn**  
Linda Hinds

**Memory of Trina Rae Droste**  
George & Gladys Manley

**Memory of Sara (Goldstein) Collison, RN**  
Jacqueline Wylie

**Honor of their six Grandchildren**  
Peter & Marilyn Cake

**Honor of LeAnn & Wayne Hayward**  
Jerry & Pat Pinkster

**Honor of Keith & Andie Lohman**  
Cindy Forshee

**Memory of Sue McNally**  
Benjamin & Lynette Demink

**Memory of Sandra Lou Modderman**  
Paul Bosker & Marlene Vlietstra (Bosker)

**Memory of Pat Nicholson**  
Linda Hinds

**Memory of Marjorie Pinkster**  
Jerry & Pat Pinkster

**Memory of Matthew Ross**  
Patrick & Cathy Ober  
Clarence & Sally Collison

**Honor of Fred Spitters**  
David & Paula Nieboer

**Honor of Julie Stevens**  
Robert Stevens  
Teresa Bright

**Memory of Brad Stonerock**  
David & Paula Nieboer

**Memory of April (Nieboer) VanderSlik**  
David & Paula Nieboer

**Memory of Jerry Tacoma**  
Sherrill Busboom

Timothy & Joyce Carpenter  
Fred Deyoung

Lawrence & Jeanine Helmer  
Steve & Nanette Kokmeyer

Philip & Marcia Mejeur  
Sally Miner

Norman Noviskey  
Duane Bogard & Garilyn Sportel-Bogard

Allen & Sharon Tans

**Memory of Pete Veldt**  
Donald & Genevieve Veldt

**Memory of Bernice West**  
Bob & Michelle Baird

**Honor of Greg Westra**  
Jerry & Pat Pinkster

**Memory of John Westra**  
Jerry & Pat Pinkster

**Memory of Mrs. Youngblood**  
Bob & Michelle Baird

**THANK YOU FOR THESE GIFTS OF LOVE GIVEN ON BEHALF OF THESE VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE!**

## NEW SHALOM CAREGIVER

Caregiving could be the hardest, and potentially most *rewarding* job at SHALOM. Mo Couzens is our newest caregiver. Though she is a veteran volunteer, and cool coach at the SHALOM Coffee Connection and Woolery, she became the charismatic caregiver for the residents at SHALOM Hope Grove in October of this year.

Mo describes her favorite part of the new role as “*relationshiping*” with residents. She loves the family style environment, sitting down for a family meal

while discussing life, learning new skills, and growing together.

She was *surprised* by the openness of residents to receive her as a caregiver, and has loved to hear residents say, “sounds good!” when provided options for daily living.

Years ago, Mo began to see God leading her towards this new calling. She got a job driving bus for people living with disabilities, and before long Mo developed a special relationship with a current SHALOM Participant. That relationship led to volunteering on SHALOM's 2021 Shipshewana trip and the rest, as they say, is history.

Mo has a huge heart that is on full display in all areas of service at SHALOM. We are so thankful that God has led her here for such a time as this!

