

March 2024

APA TIMES

Hiking and Sight-seeing



Virgil Wersmann &
Trevor Boyd

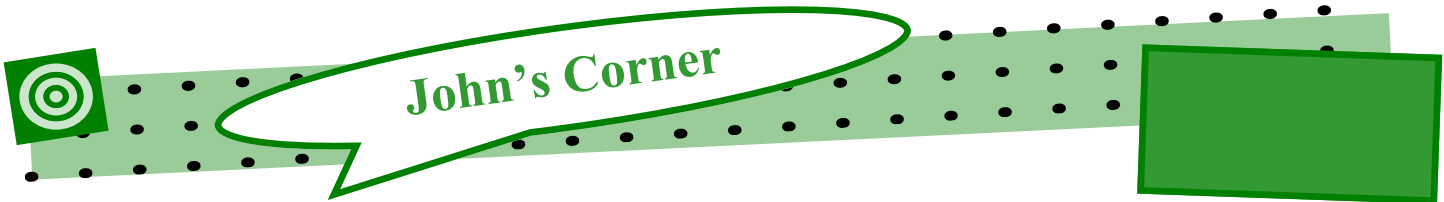
The March employee of the month is Virgil Wersmann. Virgil has went above and beyond by picking up many shifts on the opposite rotation and being a positive influence on our residents. If you happen to see Virgil around campus please congratulate home!

A group of our residents went up to Chamberlain-Oacoma to go on a nature hike and made s'mores. Pictured below is the "Welcome to Oacoma" sign, along with the "Dignity: of Earth & sky." She casts a peaceful gaze across the waters of the Missouri River. During the day, the South Dakota wind brushes the diamonds in her star quilt, causing blue shades to twinkle in the sunlight. At night, she stands illuminated and strong. She is Dignity.



**Dignity: Of Earth
and Sky**





Johnathan Trunkey
Executive Director

“Our primary goal is to assist organizations and programs to implement best practice standards which results in improved service delivery and better outcomes for their clients.” –COA

Counsel On Accreditation

By now you have heard someone mention COA. I thought I would take some time to explain what it is and why it is so important to the work that we do at Aurora Plains Academy. Counsel on Accreditation is one of the many nationally recognized accreditation bodies similar to Joint Commission, and ACA. We choose COA because it most aligns with the work that we do.

What Does COA do and Why is it Important?

In addition to accreditation being required by state and federal law COA provides a framework to manage resources, offer best practices, and strive for continuous improvement. This supports an organization’s sustainability, encourages its growth, and helps it to achieve measurable results.

More About the Accreditation Process

COA views accreditation as a partnership and our approach to accreditation is facilitative and strengths-based. Our primary goal is to assist organizations and programs to implement best practice standards which results in improved service delivery and better outcomes for their clients. This philosophy is demonstrated throughout the accreditation process where the focus is on each organization’s unique mission, resources and culture, as well as the unique needs of the people it serves. Our approach results in a customized process that reflects the capacity of each organization or program and establishes realistic timetables, identifies areas for technical assistance and appropriate staffing of the onsite review team.

In partnership with the human service field, we utilize professional volunteers in each of the most significant activities of the accreditation process. Whether it is serving as a standards review panelist, onsite reviewer or final decision maker, this collaboration ensures that COA accreditation remains relevant and field-driven.

Developmental Disabili-

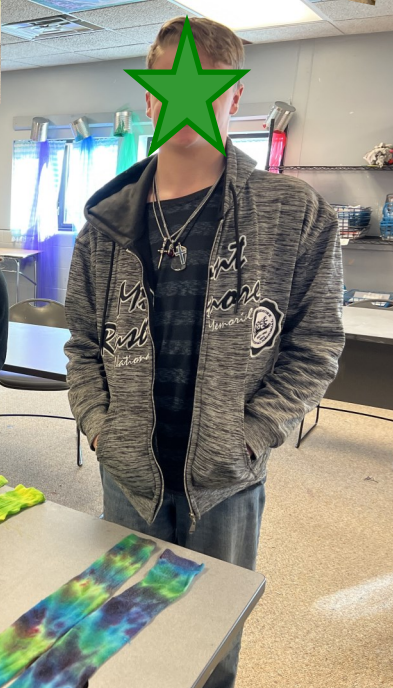
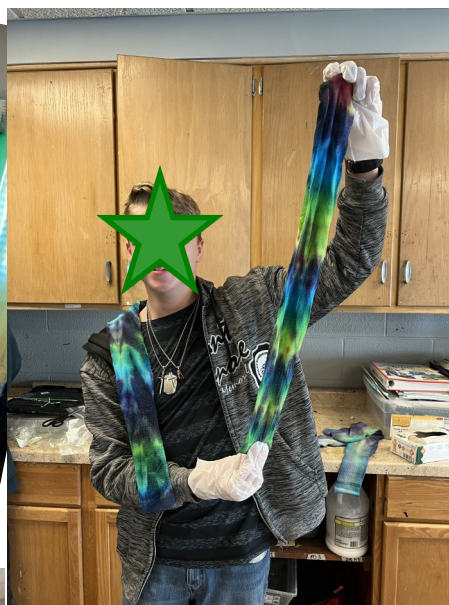
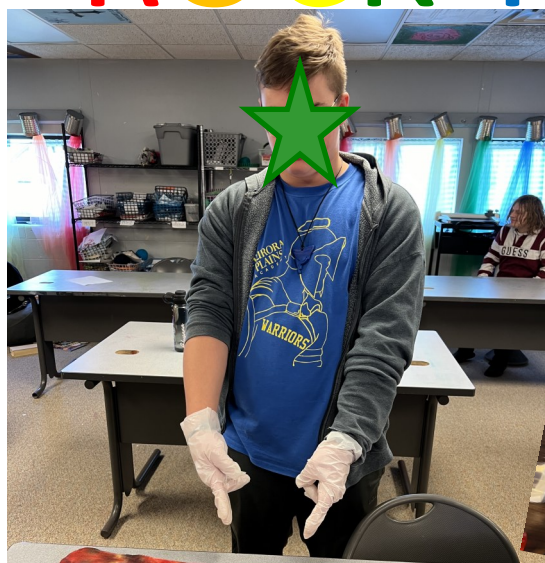
By: Emily Wiekamp

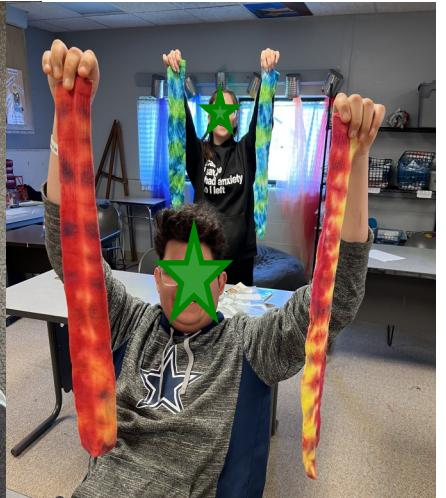
March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. This month is all about celebrating students with Developmental Disabilities and promote our support of all forms of inclusion. On campus you see inclusion in the classrooms, cafeteria, at groups, during recreation, and during campus outings. On March 13th, staff and students wore orange to show their support for the inclusion of all students/people who have developmental disabilities. During Art Class, students were given white socks to tie dye, creating their own, unique wacky socks. On March 21, or 3/21, students and staff were asked to wear their wacky socks. Every year on March 21, people all around the world come together to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day by wearing brightly colored, mismatched socks. March 21 is symbolic because people with Down syndrome have 3 copies of their 21st chromosome. Socks were chosen because the karyotype of Ds chromosomes actually looks like mismatched socks! Don and Alys even wore their craziest socks! Thanks for all who support our kiddos, in each and every way!

21 MARCH



ROCK YOUR SOCKS!

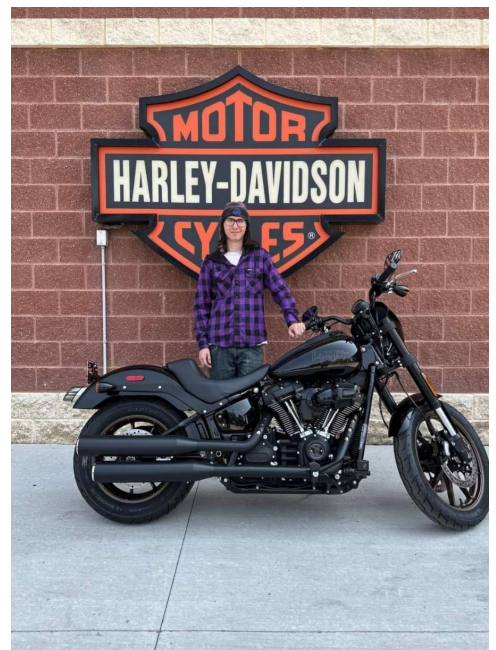




EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

BRENNEN SMITH

1. **How long have you been an employee of APA?** 2 Years
2. **Why did you join APA?** I joined APA because growing up I watched many juveniles fail to get the help needed to do well in life and wanted to be able to provide that help to the younger generations.
3. **What's your favorite part of being an employee of APA?** My favorite part of being an APA employee is being able to form connections with the residents and the staff around me and make a difference in doing so.
4. **What advice would you give to someone who wants to enter [your field]?** If I could give someone entering this field advice it would be to take breaks, when necessary, never be afraid to ask for help, and to look past one bad night and towards the bigger picture.
5. **What's the last book you read or movie you watched?** The last movie I watched was *The Maze Runner: The Death Curse*
6. **What is your favorite hobby?** My favorite hobby is taking my Harley out during my free time.
7. **What's the first concert you ever attended?** The first concert I ever attended was Slipknot and Korn.
8. **What's the next place on your travel bucket list?** My bucket list location is to visit Ireland.
9. **Are you currently binge-watching any shows?** The show I currently am binge-watching is *Hawaii 5-0*.
10. **Do you have pets? If so, what are they and what are their names?** I currently have 2 cats named Dempsey and Hope, along with 3 bearded dragons, Dexter who lives here at APA and Casper and Oliver who are at my home.



ALL-STAFF
APRIL 23RD @ 12:30
GUEST SPEAKER



Julie Eilert
Joel Salmonson
Ireland Clemens
Brennen Smith
Nicole Conrad



Dayne Clark 2 years
Jacob Geppert 11 years
Darcey Hargens 7 years
John Grams 17 years
Misty Vaverka 17 years
Kendra Gusan 2 years
Patricia Bush 17 years