

# AUGUST 2023

- ORGANIZATION NEWSLETTER -

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## Student Spotlight

- JOHNNIE KITCHIN -

**Johnnie is a newbie at PawsAbilities.** One of the first things you will notice about Johnnie is his sense of style. We love his fedora, but his cool socks really make his brand. Johnnie is mastering bakery skills and has been rocking the sniff mats! He is a meticulous cleaner and since his arrival, the Learning Center is dust free and buffed to a shiny perfection.

*Favorite Food: Cheeseburger*

*Favorite Movie: Indiana Jones*

*Favorite Artist: Ed Sheeran*

*Favorite Activities: Swimming and video games*

*Fun Fact: Has a new dog named Coco*



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# FashionAbility *Gala*

**February 17, 2024 for the 10th year of Fun, Fashion and Fundraising!** A Kansas City premier event, FashionAbility celebrates our students and mission with on-stage entertainment and celebrities including Rex Hudler, Joel Goldberg, and Jennifer Bertrand. Our FashionAbility Committee has been hard at work collecting live and silent auction items, recruiting TOP MODELS, and cultivating ideas - this is the "Don't Miss" event of the year! Secure your table today or reach out to us if you would like to strut the runway in the TOP MODEL competition.

**Ticket & Sponsorship Info!**



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# Exciting News!

We are excited to announce that Inclusion Connections has been selected as a United Way Impact 100 Community Partner for 2023-24. **If you or your organization makes an annual pledge to United Way, you can now choose Inclusion Connections to designate the funds directly to us!**



Did you know that all the young adults we serve want to live more independently? That's where BelongKC independent living initiative comes in, creating a place where individuals with developmental disabilities can live, be supported, and THRIVE! **We are so excited to be closing on our land at 11501 S. Ridgeview Road in Olathe in mid-October - HURRAY!** This is the first step in making BelongKC a reality!

**We are super excited to announce that Rex and Jennifer Hudler are our Honorary Chairs for the Steering Committee!** We've engaged the well-regarded fundraising consultant firm, Byrne Pelofsky to raise the necessary funding for the project, and are negotiating with some amazing potential collaborators as well. If you'd like to join our fundraising committee, please sign up at <https://www.belongkc.org/contact-us>.

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*YOU can make the difference!*

PawsAbilities skills training program puts our students on the pathway to community-based employment by teaching skills that translate to real world jobs. Students handcraft dog treats, bandanas and other beautiful products, with sales helping sustain the program. **One of the best ways you can help support our PawsAbilities program by volunteering**, whether it's with a group or individually. It's a lot of fun interacting with our students, helping with treats and other product production.

Recently, Country Club Bank brought a slew of folks to volunteer at PawsAbilities - what a great time everyone had! These visits also impact our retail store sales as who can resist purchasing a treat for their pup! We'd also like to thank Country Club Bank for the lovely donation check they sent after volunteering. We can't do this without help from our community - thank you!!

**I want to volunteer!**



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## Hire a PawsAbilities Student!

**Expand Your Workplace DEI Strategy!** The heart of Inclusion Connections is PawsAbilities, our employment training center. We focus on career preparation and job placement by matching student's interests and strengths with local employers' needs. We provide support, job coaching, transportation and strategies for long-term success. PawsAbilities' students possess translatable job skills and are career ready!

Ryan and Skyla have both started their new positions at Chicken N Pickle! They're both doing awesome! We're so proud of them. THANK YOU to Chicken N Pickle for providing them with this opportunity!



If you are interested in learning more about how you can make your workplace more inclusive by hiring a Paws student, please email [info@ickc.org](mailto:info@ickc.org).

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# Transition Academy

In order to prepare our adults to live more independently at BelongKC, this year we have implemented a new Transition Academy. This addition to our curriculum focuses on preparing each student with skills and knowledge that will help make their move a success. Topics covered include cooking, safety procedures, time concepts, laundry, household repairs, self-advocacy, and the like. Our space expansion allowed for additional classroom space as well as a full kitchen set up for hands-on learning. Our students LOVE learning new things, especially those which point them towards greater independence!

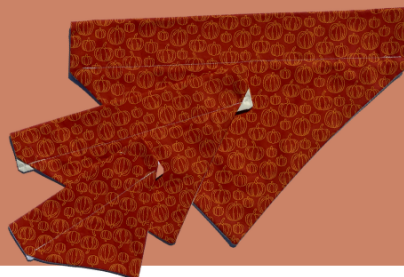


*"I like the amazing teacher that is in there and I am looking forward to learning how to do laundry." -Katie P*

# Shop Paws!

It's time to stock up of your favorite all-natural dog treats and cookies! Earlier this month, we released our Fall Bandana collection so you can gear your pup up in stylish fall patterns. Click below to shop and remember **FREE shipping on all orders over \$20!**

PEANUT BUTTER  
DOG TREATS



ORANGE PUMPKIN  
BANDANA

SHOP PAWSABILITIES NOW →

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