



# STARLIGHT

JANUARY  
2024

## Project LIFE Interns Gain Work and Life Experience

While everyone else in Hancock County was getting ready for the holidays in December, the five interns participating in Project LIFE were focused on a micro-business unit.

Project LIFE is a Blanchard Valley Center program designed to teach individuals with developmental disabilities, ages 18-25, life and living skills.

During the micro-business unit, the interns learned the skills necessary to develop and operate a business. The group brainstormed business names, logos and slogans, landing on Snack Hut as the name of their business. They worked on finding recipes, recording the needed ingredients, shopping for supplies, and following directions to make the treats, which included brownies, cookies and Rice Krispies Treats.

The interns had to price and market the products to Blanchard Valley Center employees. (This was no small

feat, as BVC employees are renown snack connoisseurs.) In addition to the snacks, the interns offered coffee, tea and hot chocolate. When it was suggested that dog treats would make a good product, the interns ran with it. They made and sold more than 600 dog treats.

The experience was enjoyable for the interns, who also learned important life skills. If an intern is interested in entrepreneurship, they have the know-how to get started.

Before working on this unit, the interns completed their first 10-week rotation. Two interns worked at Culvers. One of the interns was offered a job cleaning and delivering food to customers after just four weeks.

Three interns worked at Oler's and had the full restaurant experience. They prepped food, bussed tables, seated customers, delivered chips and salsa, worked on the food line,



and made the guacamole. None of the interns had any work experience prior to starting at Oler's. At the end of the rotation, all three were offered jobs. Oler's wanted to create an

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DATES TO REMEMBER | VISIT [WWW.BLANCHARDVALLEY.ORG](http://WWW.BLANCHARDVALLEY.ORG) FOR MORE DETAILS

January 2 – 6pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Lucas Co.**

January 3 – 1pm  
**Provider Meeting**

January 4 – 6pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Henry Co.**

January 8 – 6pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Defiance Co.**

January 15  
**Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
BVC Closed**

January 18 – 6pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Morrow Co.**

January 22 – 4:30pm  
**Game Night at Stevi B's**

January 22 – 5:30pm  
**Board Meeting**

January 23 – 5:30pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Wyandot Co.**

January 24 – 5:30pm  
**Family Networking Series  
Kickoff**

January 30 – 6pm  
**S.O. Basketball vs. Sandusky Co.**

\*All listed S.O. basketball games take place at BVC gym.

NOTES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

## With 2023 in the Books, I'm Looking Forward to a New Year with the Amazing BVC Staff



It's a new year, and there's a lot to look forward to at Blanchard Valley Center.

Before the holidays began, I made sure my team knew how much I appreciated them and the work they do each and every day to support Hancock Countians with developmental disabilities. The job

they do is not always easy (or fun), but what we do matters.

The dedication we demonstrate to the folks we support will always make a difference. It's easy to forget that our work can sometimes be the most important aspect of someone's life. That work might mean shaping a path to move that person forward, or perhaps just keeping them going for one more day when things are tough.

Even if we are struggling ourselves, we manage to pull together and make it happen for them. Believe me, I see it all the time, and the hard work does not go unnoticed.

The new Family Networking Series is something our stakeholders requested. We listened and are working in partnership with several entities to create the events.

Families can attend these events and gain information first-hand from parents who have been in their shoes. Each session will have a 30-minute parent panel, followed by 30 minutes of networking with professionals and other parents in a casual setting.

Please note these sessions are open to the public and free of charge.

Kelli Grisham, Superintendent



### Sensory Santa at BVC

Board Member Dana Rider, her husband Aaron, and daughters Clara and Frankie enjoy a visit to Sensory Santa at Blanchard Valley Center. More than 150 people attended the Sensory Santa event. Families enjoyed crafts, decorating cookies, and visiting the big guy.

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inclusive experience, allowing its staff to work side-by-side with the interns, coaching them along the way.

"One of the challenges we have for people with developmental disabilities is helping employers understand that these potential hires have skills that extend beyond cleaning positions," said Kelli Grisham, superintendent of Blanchard Valley Center. "Project LIFE helps them to understand that."

The second rotation will include shifts at the Findlay YMCA where interns will assist in a variety of tasks. In the third rotation, which will take place in April-June, the interns will work in a light manufacturing facility. Between this addition and a previous shift at the Findlay-Hancock County Public Library, the interns will have had an array of experiences to put on their resume when they're ready to apply for work.

BVC provides resources and supports that empower people with DD to live lives with meaning and purpose.



**Blanchard Valley Center**

Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities

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**Service & Support  
Emergency Number**  
419-722-9262

