

Earth Day 2022: April 22nd

Earth Day had been observed in the U. S. each year on the 22nd of April since 1970 and has been celebrated internationally since 1990. The day is set aside for people to show support for environmental initiatives and learn about ways to protect the planet from “dangers” like pollution and deforestation.



Many communities hold Earth Day events like trash pick-ups, tree and garden planting and recycling drives. You can help protect the planet not only on Earth Day, but every day! Small changes can have a big impact overall. Below are a few ideas from www.EarthDay.org:

- Switch to energy-efficient lightbulbs. If every household in the U.S. replaced just 1 incandescent lightbulb with an energy-saving bulb, the nation would save about \$600 million in energy costs annually
- Fix leaky faucets...a leak of just 1 drip per second wastes 269 gallons of water per month
- Use earth-friendly cleaning products and recyclable water bottles, drinking straws and coffee cups
- In the market for a new car? Consider electric and hybrid models
- Plant a garden. You don't need an acre or even a yard! Container gardening is fun and can grow a wide variety of fruits and vegetables
- Teach children the importance of recycling and practicing energy- and resource-saving habits like turning off lights when not needed and using less paper

First Impressions of the First 90 Days

**FIRST
IMPRESSIONS!**

Time really does go by quickly when you are busy! I began in my role as Key's President on January 10th of this year and can't believe that three months have already gone by. Over the course of these months, I have had the great pleasure of visiting offices and programs, speaking with staff and Management Team members,

and learning more about the variety of services the Agency provides. I would like to share with you a few things that stand out from those conversations and observations:

- Key's staff is incredibly hardworking and committed to providing the highest quality services to the children, youth and families they serve. The work you do requires that you be compassionate, alert, creative, patient, empathetic, and determined on a daily basis; yet you return to work each day committed to finding ways to connect with even the most challenging of clients. It is clear from my conversations with staff across the Agency that you care deeply about the kids and families with whom you work and doing the best possible job you can.

- Key excels at meeting and beating difficulties. With a large number of long-term staff on the Management Team, I've been able to learn about Key's history, how the Agency has evolved over the years, and challenges it has faced along the way. Like other providers, Key is affected by economic downturns, staffing crises, inadequate funding levels, political climate, etc. What stands out to me, though, is the exceptional way in which the Agency has risen to and overcome each challenge placed in its path. Out-of-the-box thinking and willingness to put in the hard work are two of Key's greatest strengths.
- People (including me) are excited about what the future holds. Implementation of the Risking Connection® framework has provided different approaches to working with "our" kids. Changes in service models will provide us with opportunities to serve different client populations. Adapting to evolving "best practices" in our field will further our knowledge and understanding of the vital services we provide.

I can't thank you enough for making me feel welcome and sharing your thoughts and ideas with me. I am so impressed by the work that you do, and, more importantly, by YOU. You really are our "key" to success!

I am committed to doing all I can so that you can continue doing what you do!

Tammy Mello, President & CEO



Springfield Admin Team is Over the Moon for Maroon!

Submitted by **Marigza Rodriguez**, Senior Administrative Supervisor/HR Rep, Western Region



This is our powerful Administrative Office Team in the Western Region. We work well together, we get the job done, and we have fun doing it! And we all wear matching clothes on Fridays (Friday, April 8th happened to be "maroon day")!! I could not ask for a better office team. Thank you for all you do!!

From left to right: Computer, Data & Billing Specialist **Tri Pham**, Senior Administrative Supervisor/HR Rep **Karen Waterman**, Administrative Assistant **Heather Dulude**, Senior Administrative Supervisor/HR Rep **Marigza Rodriguez** and Administrative Assistant **Rebecca Lauzier**

People choose to work for Key for a variety of reasons – challenging and rewarding work with kids and families, opportunities for professional development, educational and other benefits, practical job experience, and many others. Having great coworkers and working as a team is another important reason, which is clearly the case in Key's Springfield Regional Office!

Arbor Day

Arbor Day is celebrated in the U.S. on the last Friday of April. For 2022, the observance is on April 29th. On this day, people are encouraged to plant a tree or donate to an organization committed to protecting trees and forest land (such as the Arbor Day Foundation at www.arborday.org or the National Forest Service at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/donations/plant-a-tree>).



R.A.V.E. Award (Recognizing a Valued Employee)

Submitted by: **Meghan Bailey**, *Regional Director*, Northeast Region



The Northeast Region is very pleased to R.A.V.E. *Overnight Awake Shiftworker* **Kelsey Marison!!!** Kelsey began working for Key in the New Directions residence in June 2021. She is a remarkably reliable and supportive teammate. Kelsey often rearranges her schedule to cover open shifts and, over the last few weekends, graciously offered to stay late after her shift ended while coverage could be found for a teammate who called out due to not feeling well.

Kelsey, a huge thank you for staying late and helping whenever and wherever needed. When we were in a jam, you once again came to the rescue! We are incredibly grateful to have you as a teammate!

We are so thankful for all you do! 😊

April Fun Facts

- The first battle of the Revolutionary War, in Lexington and Concord, MA, began on April 19, 1775
- April is a great month to view meteor showers. One is the Lyrids meteor shower which appears from April 16-26 each year. Another known as the Eta Aquariids meteor shower can be seen beginning on April 21st.
- After a 1,500-year break, the 1st Olympics of the modern era was held in Athens, Greece on April 6, 1896
- The diamond is April's birthstone, representing innocence
- The month of April hosts several important religious observances that include:
 - *Ramadan (4/2-5/2) – the holy month of fasting, introspection and prayer celebrated by people of the Muslim faith
 - *Vaisakhi (4/14) – a Hindu observance that celebrates the Solar New Year and spring harvest
 - *Passover (4/15-4/23) – a week-long commemoration of the freeing of the Israeli slaves celebrated by people of the Jewish faith
 - *Easter (4/17) – a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ



ARTIC On-Line Survey is Coming!

Submitted by: **Kara Ludy-Speight**, *Quality Manager*, Framingham Main Office

Key has committed to the implementation of a trauma-informed care treatment framework in all program models. Many of you have already completed basic training in this framework called Risking Connection®,

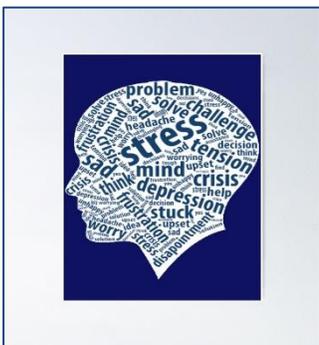


heard staff and clinicians talking about trauma-informed care for our clients, and have worked hard to build RICH (Respect, Information Sharing, Connection and Hope) relationships with our clients. In order to help Key better understand how this implementation is progressing, we will be asking all staff to participate in an on-line survey. The ARTIC (Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care) survey will be distributed twice per year in May and November via email from the Trauma Stress Institute. The first distribution of the on-line survey will be May 18-25th! This survey is strictly voluntary, but we hope you will all participate. Your input is essential so that we can best train staff in the framework and deliver the best

services to our clients and families. **ALL** answers are **CONFIDENTIAL**! Be on the look-out for future emails and notifications about specific incentives being offered.

April is Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month has been observed each April since 1992, but this year it seems even more important to bring attention to this subject with all of us experiencing “pandemic fatigue,” financial worries due to rising inflation and gas prices, the crisis in Ukraine, and personal stressors (such as family or medical difficulties).



What causes stress varies from person to person – as does each person’s response to feelings of stress and anxiety. Extreme or long-term stress can affect your mental and physical health, so it is important to learn ways to reduce stress, respond to it in healthy and productive ways and ask for help when you need it. Some tips:

- Take care of yourself! Eat a well-balanced diet, exercise, and get enough sleep
- Develop a vision for healthy living and personal growth and create a plan to move yourself towards those goals
- Share how you are feeling with a family member, friend, or other trusted adult

Some amount of stress is unavoidable and most of us have found ways to manage day-to-day stressors. However, if stress/anxiety is interfering with your daily life (interrupted sleep/insomnia; overwhelming feelings of sadness or hopelessness; interfering with your ability to concentrate, work or enjoy activities; irrational fears, headaches or other physical ailments, etc.), **PLEASE ASK FOR HELP!**

As caretakers, much of our efforts and energy are focused on the youth, children and families with whom we work – but taking care of yourself is equally (if not even more) important. Consider speaking with a therapist who can help you learn strategies to better manage your stress and anxiety. Don’t know where to start? Your doctor’s office should be able to provide a listing of area practitioners. Staff enrolled in Key’s group health plan can contact BBA at 877-707-2583 and ask for a directory of area therapists. You can even search for therapists by zip code online at

www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists. Take good care of yourself!



Give Yourself a Boost!



Key has offered a one-time incentive payment of \$125 for staff who are or become vaccinated against COVID-19 since January 2021. To be eligible, staff must have received the 1-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine or both initial doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines.

In response to the availability of COVID-19 boosters and updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), we are pleased to announce an **additional \$125 incentive** payment for staff who receive the booster dose! That's right! If you've been "boosted," you are eligible for incentive payments totaling \$250! Employees who have already received a \$125 incentive for the initial vaccine series are eligible for an additional \$125 incentive if they've since received the booster.



To receive your incentive payment, email a confidential copy of your vaccination record to vax@key.org.

Don't Be Shy, Cash in On Your Friends!



Do you know someone who'd be great working with "our" kids and families? Encourage them to apply to Key! If a person you refer is hired and completes his/her/their 90-day new hire orientation period, YOU will receive up to **\$1,000** (\$1,000 if your referral is a full-time employee and amount is prorated for part-time referrals).

To be eligible, the applicant must also indicate that they were referred by you on the employment application at the start of the selection process.

April is Financial Literacy Month

When we talk about "wellness," we most often think about taking care of our physical and mental health needs. But wellness includes other areas such as social, intellectual, spiritual, environmental and financial wellness.

During our working years, we are striving to achieve the goal of financial wellness, but it is important that we start by being financially literate to understand personal finance topics such as budgets, debt, saving, investing, credit, and taxes so that we can make educated decisions about our finances. Want to learn more? Consider working with a certified financial planner (CFP) or taking a "personal finance" class through a local high school extension or community college program. Reputable on-line sites include: <https://www.mymoney.gov/>, <https://finance.yahoo.com/>, <https://www.thepennyhoarder.com/>, <https://www.khanacademy.org/economics-finance-domain/core-finance> and <https://money.cnn.com/pf/money-essentials/>. Many banks also have financial tools available on their sites.



April Recipe Selection

Warmer weather (finally!) will soon have us looking for ways to cool off – and ice cream is definitely one of the tastiest! Below is an amazingly easy (just 4 ingredients!) recipe for homemade **vanilla ice cream**, thanks to www.tasteofhome.com.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups half and half
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 tsps. Vanilla extract

Instructions:

1. Put glass or metal pan in freezer to “pre-chill”
2. Combine all ingredients in large bowl and stir to completely dissolve sugar
3. Pour into chilled pan, cover, and place in freezer
4. Stir well every 30 minutes for 3 hours to keep aerated and creamy
5. Serve with your favorite toppings and enjoy!



Welcome to New Staff Members Hired in March!



- Berkshire Region: **Jordan Jones, Nicholas Leveque and Harrison Sloan**
Central Region: **Starsha Atkins, Jessica Gordon, Danielle Michalak, Erin O’Leary and Kyle Strait**
Southeast Region: **Trenton Cameron, Brandon Keane and Keyonna Prudent**
Western Region: **Perry Belcher, Greta Kurtz, Tarah Newell, Audelis Olivieri, Melissa Reynolds, Whytne Stover and Cassidy Whitten**

And a very warm “Welcome Back” to:

Southeast Region: **Daniel Reed**

We are so happy to see you!





Congratulations to Employees Promoted in March!

Central Region: **Jazmin Dupuis**, Assistant Program Supervisor

Tax Filing Deadline is Monday, April 18th!

The last day to file your 2021 income tax returns is **Monday, April 18th** (Tuesday, **April 19th** for *Massachusetts residents only* due to the state Patriot's Day Holiday).

Tax documents (Forms W-2 and 1095-C) can be accessed through the ADP Workforce Now portal under "Myself," "Pay," then "Pay & Tax Statements." Links to the forms are at the bottom left of the page.



Massachusetts residents who are enrolled in Key's group health insurance plan should also have received a "1099-HC" from Blue Benefit Administrators (BBA). If you did not receive or have misplaced the form, call BBA directly at 877-707-2583 to request a copy.

Please note that Key does NOT have access to any of these forms and cannot obtain copies for you!

Wait! Isn't the federal tax filing deadline usually April 15th? Yes, it is! This year however, Friday, April 15th is a holiday in the District of Columbia, so the date has been extended to Monday the 18th.

