

Key Notes



December 2021

Warm Holiday Wishes and a Fond Farewell

Before the busiest part of the holiday season arrives and we find ourselves preoccupied with shopping for gifts, planning holiday meals and celebrations and enjoying this “most wonderful time of the year,” I wanted to wish each of you very happy holidays and a happy, healthy 2022.



By now, many of you know that I am retiring as Key’s President at the end of this month. Although I am ready to move on to the next chapter of my life and have great confidence in my successor, Tammy Mello, this decision was not an easy one. Key has, without a doubt, the “most wonderful” staff. Your commitment to Key’s clients and families and to Key’s mission are unparalleled. I am constantly amazed and inspired by your work and the positive impact it has on the lives of others.

Over these past 46 years with Key; I have learned a great deal, met incredible people, enjoyed new experiences, shared more than a few good laughs and created happy memories that will always make me smile. Serving Key, serving the human services field, and serving you has truly been the “most wonderful time” of my life.

Be well and happy, stay curious and creative, aim for the stars - and accept my sincere gratitude for the vital care you provide to the children, youth and families who need you.

Warm regards,

Bill Lyttle



Happy Retirement, Bill! We will miss your leadership, experience and perspective – along with your zany sense of humor, “passable” singing voice and genuine care for Key’s clients and staff.

We wish you and your lovely wife Jan much happiness!

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

Submitted by: **Mike Brennan**, *Regional Director*, Central Region

It is my pleasure to formally recognize *Outreach Caseworker* **Jazmin Dupuis**. Jazmin hit the ground running when she was hired in August 2021 and hasn't slowed down since. Though she received support from other regional supervisory and administrative staff, Jazmin showed a great deal of initiative learning the Outreach Caseworker job without a direct supervisor – while also serving as a 1-person Outreach “team.”

Jazmin is extremely friendly and outgoing and has formed positive relationships with clients, families and co-workers. As the most (only!) experienced Outreach Caseworker in the Central Region, she has also been doing a wonderful job training her new teammate who was hired in November.

In addition to the “regular” challenges of starting a new job, Jazmin has faced additional obstacles with enthusiasm, positivity, and a can-do attitude. Thank you for all of your efforts. They certainly have not gone unnoticed and are greatly appreciated.

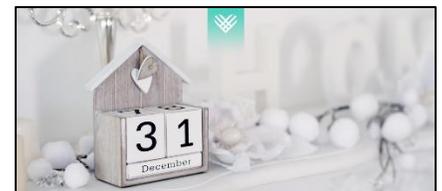


Last Call!

Key's educational reimbursement benefit program limits the amount of reimbursement staff members can receive in a calendar year (January 1 – December 31). If you are taking classes eligible for the benefit and have not yet reached the 2021 calendar year maximum, be sure to submit your reimbursement request, final grades and proof of payment **no later than Monday, December 20, 2021**, for your benefit to be processed in time for the last pay date of the year!

Year-End Reminders

- Make sure your information in ADP is correct to help ensure the documents needed to file your 2021 income taxes are accurate. Log into the ADP Portal at www.workforcenow.adp.com and double-check that your Social Security Number and current mailing address are correct under “Myself,” “My Information,” “Profile.” If you have any dependents covered under Key's medical insurance plan, please check to see that their Social Security Numbers are entered in ADP as well under “Myself,” “Personal Information,” “Dependents & Beneficiaries.”
- Gather up and submit your voucher receipts and mileage logs prior to the end of the year.



Safety Matters!

As we head into another New England winter, please be safe!

Winter Driving Preparedness

- Check your vehicle's engine antifreeze level and add if needed. It's very easy! Just follow the instructions in your owner's manual.
- Check your vehicle's tire pressure and tread depth. The recommended tire pressure can be found in your owner's manual. At a minimum, it is recommended that vehicles be equipped with "all season" tires. To ensure your tires have sufficient tread left, try the "Lincoln test." Insert a penny into the tread with the top of President Lincoln's head pointing inward. If you can see all or most of Lincoln's head, you should consider replacing your tires before winter travel.
- Use "winter grade" windshield fluid that is less likely to freeze upon contact with cold surfaces.
- Put a winter supply box in your vehicle "just in case." Suggested items include road flares, flashlight, extra blanket, first aid kit, extra gloves and socks, bag of kitty litter for traction, ice scraper, cell phone charger and high-energy snacks (like nuts or granola bars).



Holiday Celebration Safety

- Choose toys and gifts that are age appropriate.
- Select toys with ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) approval.
- Consider food allergies when gifting and receiving food items.
- Hang glass, sharp or electrical decorations out of reach of young children.
- Charging electronic devices should be supervised by an adult.
- Be conscious of fire hazards by avoiding open flames and keeping trees and other flammable decorations away from heat sources.
- Remember to also provide safety gear (helmets, goggles, knee pads, etc.) when gifting sports-related items.
- When out celebrating, ALWAYS have a designated, sober driver.

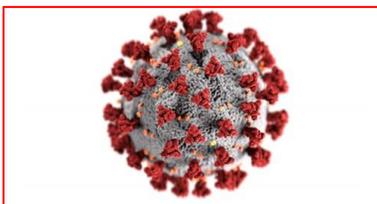
Snow/Ice Removal

Home

- Keep up with snow and ice on sidewalks, steps, driveways, etc. Do 3-5 minutes of warm-up stretching before shoveling to avoid muscle strains. Shovel multiple times during larger storms instead of waiting until the end.
- Homeowners should remove heavy snow from roofs and keep gutters clear of ice and snow.
- Keep a supply of ice melt/sand near exterior doors to combat ice build-up.

Work

- Each location should have a detailed plan (persons responsible, where supplies are located, etc.). Review prior to our first big snow/ice event of the season!



Cold/Flu/COVID

- Keep following the same precautions we have all gotten accustomed to over the past 2 years:
 - wear a face covering
 - wash hands frequently with soap and warm water
 - clean and disinfect surfaces and "high touch" items regularly

-maintain a distance of 6' or more from others and avoid large gatherings
-if you are able, get vaccinated against COVID-19 and seasonal influenza
-if you are not feeling well (coughing, fever, nausea, diarrhea, etc.), do not come to work. Speak with your doctor to determine whether you should be tested for COVID. If you contract COVID, follow established return-to-work guidelines. If negative for COVID, return to work once symptoms have resolved.

Well-Deserved Recognition

Following is the text of an email message sent by Holyoke, MA Department of Children and Families (DCF) Supervisor Angel Emerson to Western Region staff members **Francisco Alvarado** (*Outreach Shift Supervisor*), **Dylan Pacelli** (*Outreach Program Supervisor*), and **Samantha Tenczar** (*Outreach Caseworker*):

Hi team,

I just wanted to reach out and thank you all and the Key trackers for doing such a consistently good job. These are such crazy, tough times but it makes me feel good knowing that when we put Key tracking in, they are solid no matter what! Our families need that, and unfortunately, it's not true for every service agency right now for a variety of reasons. I emailed you three directly because at different times I've been privy to emails between you and my workers, and I'm always impressed and confident in your abilities. I know this can be a thankless job, and I just wanted to thank you.

~Angel Emerson



Great job Western Outreach Team! It is always great to hear that your hard work has been noticed and is appreciated!

Partying With The Patriots!

Submitted by: **Kelly Farrier-Glennon**, *Executive Assistant to the President/HR Administrator*, Main Office

On the evening of December 7, 2021, some of Key's youth had the opportunity to participate in the annual New England Patriots Children's Holiday Party. The evening began with fun games that included word search, trivia, and tic-tac-toe. Joining in the festivities were the New England Patriots Cheerleaders and team mascot Pat Patriot. Although COVID restrictions prevented the players from participating, David Andrews (center, #60) and Lawrence Guy (defensive tackle, #93) joined in the fun through video. David Andrews joined in on singing "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" with the youth. Lawrence Guy played a trivia game and the youth had fun trying to guess the correct answers. The owner of the Patriots, Robert Kraft, also made an appearance. Pizza was enjoyed by all, and cookies and candy were the highlight of the evening. Following the meal, the group participated in wrapping one of the youth as a tree with decorations. Next on the program was Mr. and Mrs. Claus joining the group for a reading of "Twas the Night Before Christmas." The evening rounded out with the youth viewing the stadium from the Clubhouse and receiving a gift. The Salvation Army partners with the New England Patriots for this wonderful event. The youth had an exciting time and thoroughly enjoyed the special evening.



To our Key "family" of staff and supporters, we wish you the very happiest of holidays!



December Recipe Selection

Treat yourself to a relaxing meal for a break from the hustle-and-bustle pace of the holidays with a comforting and nutritious slow-cooker meal!



Vegetarian Chili with Grains and Beans

www.countryliving.com

Ingredients:

- 1 (28-oz.) can fire-roasted crushed tomatoes
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can petite-diced tomatoes
- 1 Tbsp. chili powder
- 2 tsp. cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed

- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 large poblano pepper, seeded and chopped
- ¾ c. wheat berries
- 1 (15.5 oz.) can black beans, rinsed
- 1 (15.5 oz.) can kidney beans, rinsed
- Salt and pepper to taste

Don't forget the toppings!

- Sour cream*
- Grated Cheddar cheese*
- Sliced scallions*
- Fresh cilantro*
- Lime wedges*
- Whatever else you like!*

Instructions:

1. Combine crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, chili powder, cumin, coriander, garlic, onion, carrot, poblano pepper, wheat berries* and ¾ cups water in slow cooker. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Cook, covered, until wheat berries are cooked but still chewy. 7-8 hours on low setting or 5-6 hours on high.
3. Stir in both cans of beans and cook until warmed through, 10-15 minutes.
4. Serve with favorite toppings and enjoy!

**Don't have or can't find wheat berries? Substitute with equal measure of Farro (semi-pearlized wheat) or barley, both of which can be found in most supermarkets.*

Welcome to New Staff Members Hired in November!



- Berkshire Region: **Abdel Aziz Adjao Affissou** and **Taylor Lanahan**
- Central Region: **Kaylee Marshall, Charlaine Ngnepi-Mikeageu** and **Brionne Silcott**
- Children's Charter: **Lucy Lan**
- Northeast Region: **Nicole Ouellette**
- Rhode Island Region: **Tyler Gilbert** and **Kura Lewis**
- Southeast Region: **Cyrena DaSilva** and **Phillip DeCastro**
- Western Region: **Devin Bagshaw, Nathan Colon, Kimberly Fish, Sarah Garcia, Susan Healy, Darla Stabler** and **Victoria Willis**

And a very warm “Welcome Back” to:

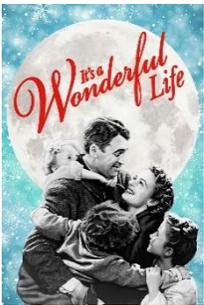
Northeast Region: **Joelly Gomez** *We are so happy to see you!*



Congratulations to Employees Promoted in November!



Berkshire Region: **Jaclyn Reardon**, *Shift Supervisor*
Northeast Region: **Nailah Mays**, *Shift Supervisor*
Rhode Island Region: **Evelyn Payamps**, *Recruiter/Trainer*
Western Region: **Sarah Holt**, *Shift Supervisor*
Samantha James, *Shift Supervisor*
Olivia Meredith, *Shift Supervisor*
Alexandra Otero, *Program Supervisor*



2021 marks the 75th anniversary of the classic movie, “It’s A Wonderful Life.” Although the movie is set around Christmastime, the movie is meant to remind us that we all have lasting impacts on those around us and that our words and actions truly matter.

You never know when a word of encouragement or act of kindness will make a long-lasting and positive difference to someone. Be kind and compassionate always!

Got Kids (and childcare expenses)?

Key offers a tax-advantaged “dependent care assistance program” that may be helpful! The program allows you to contribute to your own dependent care reimbursement account on a pre-tax basis through payroll deduction. You are then reimbursed for childcare expenses from your account tax-free. You may contribute up to \$5,000 per calendar year (January 1 – December 31)...depending on your tax-filing status, this could save you hundreds of dollars per year in taxes!



Qualifying childcare expenses include daycare and preschool costs, before- and after-school programming, and summer camp expenses. Amounts paid for sports, dance, music, etc. lessons or occasional babysitters are **not** included.

If interested in learning more, contact Benefits Supervisor Sue Barry at sbarry@key.org to request additional information.