

# Connections

A Newsletter for the Members of Community Care



P.4 Thoughts for National PACE Month: What Did Members and Staff Have to Say?



**PG. 11**  
**Seasonal Treats**

**THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER. IT'S TIME TO START THINKING ABOUT THE TREATS YOU'LL WANT TO MAKE THIS YEAR.**

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# What is PACE?

## *A Closer Look*

The Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) helps individuals, who qualify to live in a nursing home, continue to live independently in the community for as long as possible.

Community Care is the only managed care organization offering PACE in Wisconsin and in 2020 marked 30 years of providing PACE services to residents. Community Care serves more than 500 PACE members.

In August, Community Care started offering PACE services to Kenosha County residents.

In addition to Kenosha County, Community Care offers PACE in Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha counties, and operates two PACE adult day centers in Milwaukee and Waukesha.

An important feature of PACE is the interdisciplinary team that develops care plans and

solves problems for members.

### **The interdisciplinary team includes:**

- Primary Care Physician
- Nurse Practitioner
- Registered Nurse
- Social Worker
- Rehabilitation Therapists
- Recreational Therapist
- Dietician
- Day Center Manager
- Home Care Coordinator
- Transportation Coordinator
- Personal Care Workers

While all PACE participants must qualify for nursing home care to enroll in PACE, only about 7 percent of PACE participants nationally reside in a nursing home. If a PACE member needs nursing home care, the program pays for it and continues to coordinate the member's care.

As an early adopter of the PACE model, Community Care is also one of the founding members of the National PACE Association (NPA), which works to advance the efforts of PACE programs throughout the country.



# September is NATIONAL PACE MONTH

The National PACE Association (NPA) designated September as National PACE Month to raise awareness and celebrate the difference PACE makes in the lives of seniors enrolled in PACE, their

families, and their communities. Community Care is a founding member of NPA.

“The PACE model of care is centered on the belief that it is better for the well-being of seniors with chronic care needs, as well as their families, to be served in the community

whenever possible,” said Kenneth Munson, Community Care’s chief executive officer.

Across the nation, PACE organizations care for 95 percent of enrollees in the community rather than in a nursing home. Approximately 130 organizations operate 264 PACE centers in 31 states. Currently, more than 51,000 individuals are enrolled in the PACE program.



\*PACE participants may be financially responsible for care and services not authorized by the PACE program.

# THOUGHTS FOR NATIONAL PACE MONTH

## *What Did Members and Staff Have to Say?*

In celebration for National PACE Month we asked both PACE members and Community Care staff to share how they felt about the program. Here are their thoughts.



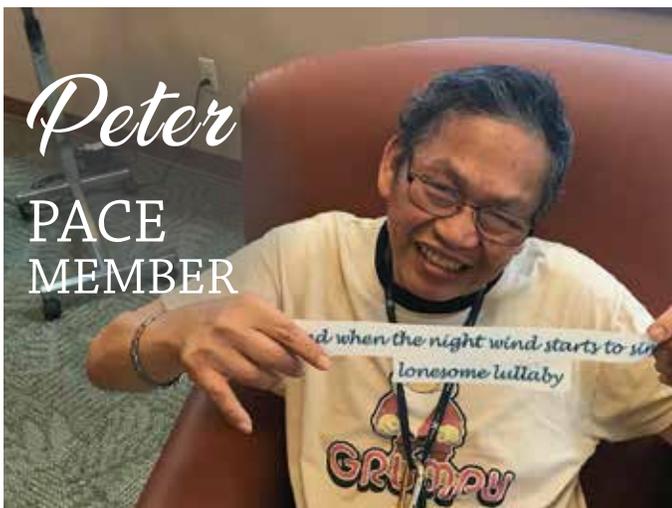
*Connie*  
Program  
Assistant

“I love the organization, for over the 17 years I’ve been here, they really live up to their name, they really do care here.”



*Sandy*  
PACE  
MEMBER

“I think it’s an awesome program! It makes me happy. I have people I can talk to and I made some friends. I would recommend it to anybody.”



*Peter*  
PACE  
MEMBER

“I like it for the activities and games.”



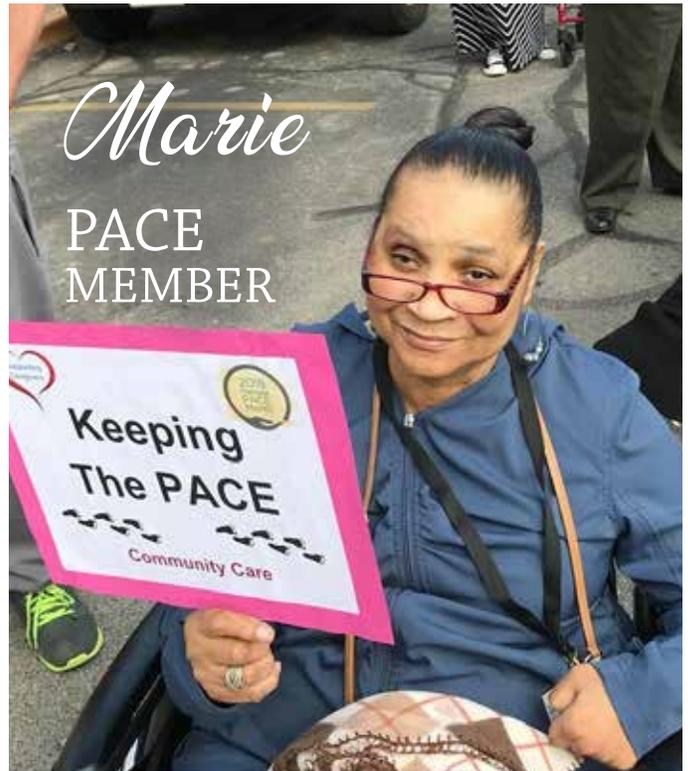
*Thomas*  
PACE  
MEMBER

“I like that it provides a positive social setting, full staff of qualified individuals that really take care of us.”



*Sister Janet*  
PACE  
MEMBER

"I like the convenience. All of my basic needs are taken care of right here. I also like the independence it allows me."



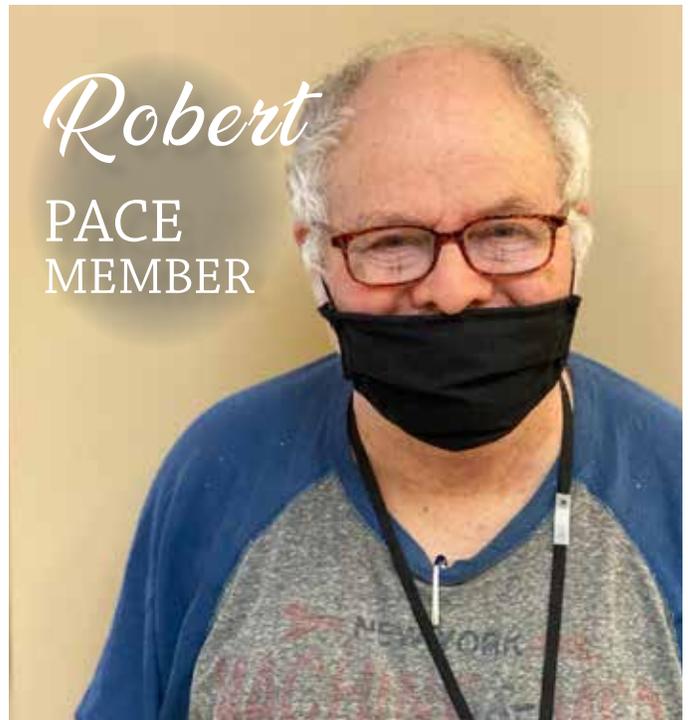
*Marie*  
PACE  
MEMBER

"I love it! It's very convenient and any problem you have they help take care of it. My daughter and I love it!"



*Dr. Nelson*  
PACE  
PHYSICIAN

"PACE is a team. It takes the best that each of us can give and molds it into a plan to provide the best possible care for our patients."



*Robert*  
PACE  
MEMBER

"PACE is great! They help with prescriptions and people, basically helping me through my disability. It's convenient!"

# 5 Questions For...

AMBER GASPER, *Self-Determination Specialist*

## 1 Can you explain what you do and how long you have worked at Community Care?

As Self-Determination Specialist, I provide assistance, consultation, and resources to Care Teams related to Community Integrated Employment (CIE) and Self-Directed Support (SDS) services for the members. I started with Community

Care as a Care Manager for our Sheboygan Office in 2013 and have been in my current role since January of 2021.

## 2 How does the work that you do help our members?

The work I do provides education and resources to Care Teams to increase their ability to have CIE & SDS related conversations with members.

## 3 What is self-determination and why is it important?

Self-Determination, by definition, is “the process by which a person controls their own life.” Member choice in the areas of CIE & SDS is the foundation of what we do as an organization. It is important that our members know that they have a voice.

## 4 How did you get into this line of work?

I initially got into this line of work with a focus on serving those with mental health concerns. After being a Care Manager for 8 years, member choice, advocacy, and CIE became a passion of mine and assisted with the transition to my current role.

## 5 Is there anything you wish people understood better about self-determination? How would you address that?

One area that I wish others better understood is that any individual that wants to work can do so. Far too often, the notion that someone with any type of disability has no chance of being successful working in the community prevents a job from ever being pursued. With education, encouragement, understanding, and the appropriate supports, members can reach their employment-related desires.



# Longtime Board Member *Robert Goldstein* Passes

This past year, Community Care lost an important ally. Robert Goldstein, a long-time supporter, passed away in June. Bob dedicated his life to serving the nonprofit community in the Milwaukee area, including serving for more than 20 years as a member of our board of directors.



Bob joined the board in 1999, serving on several committees, in addition to serving as both Treasurer and Board Chair. He retired from the board in May.

We are extremely grateful for Bob's many contributions through the years to the entire Community Care organization.

You only had to work with Bob to know that he was a man of intelligence, integrity, and kindness. He often brought his sense of humor to his work.

"I was put in position both personally and professionally to be able to maintain and improve the quality of life of some of our most vulnerable citizens," Bob wrote. "For the most part I think I rose to the occasion."

There is no doubt Bob rose to the occasion and we are better off for having experienced his commitment to serving others.

"Bob was chair of the Board when I arrived at Community Care and I was immediately inspired by his knowledge, hard work and dedication to our members," said Kenneth Munson, Community Care's chief executive officer. "He was a warm, joyful person and he will be truly missed."

We are all fortunate for having had the chance to serve with him. Community Care has benefited greatly from his years of service. Thank you, Bob. Rest in peace.

# A DESIRE TO HELP *Those in Need*

Darrin Pribbernow shares his story and experience serving on Community Care's member appeal and grievance committee.

Growing up in smalltown Wisconsin wasn't easy for Darrin Pribbernow. The farming town of New Holstein was a place where folks (particularly kids) were not especially receptive to things or people that are "different;" and Darrin was nothing if not different.

Darrin was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA), a degenerative neuromuscular disorder that causes severe and lifelong mobility limitations.

Darrin has always relied on an electric wheelchair and his mobility is basically limited to a single finger on his left hand. He also uses a ventilator due to a weak respiratory system. In 2013, Darrin enrolled in Community Care's Family Care program when he turned 18.

Growing up with a lot of medical needs, Darrin was fortunate to have a dedicated family around him for support, especially his sister Danielle. Because of the exclusion he experienced throughout middle school and most of high school, Danielle was his only friend.

That changed in 2010 when he met Caitlin, who would quickly become his best friend, his girlfriend, and now his wife. Darrin describes Caitlin as his rock. He said any success he's found or may yet find, does not happen without her.

So far, Darrin's successes have included finishing his criminal justice degree at Lakeland University and completing law school at Marquette University. Darrin is now a practicing attorney and an advocate. The legal profession was a natural fit for someone with a knack for arguing and a strong desire to help those in need.

"Everyone has a right to be heard, especially when it involves their own well-being."

Turns out these same qualities made Darrin a good candidate to serve on Community Care's member appeal and grievance committee.

We asked Darrin about his decision to volunteer.

## **What made you decide to serve on the committee?**

My case manager, Brenda, suggested that I participate in the committee. She felt that my legal education was well-suited to the responsibilities of someone on the committee. I decided to do it

because it seemed like an opportunity to help people and do something good.

## **What has your experience serving on the committee been like?**

Serving on the committee has been rewarding, if not trying. In law school, we are told that most people who seek out legal services do not do so because they want to. Whether it is a criminal trial, a divorce, or a civil suit, the idea is that you—the lawyer—are likely meeting your client at one of the lowest points of their lives. I try to maintain that same mentality in my service on the appeal committee.

When you serve on an appeal hearing, it is important to go into it with the understanding that the appealing member does not want to go through this. Justifying their needs to a committee of five strangers is likely not how the member wants to spend their time. Frustrations and tensions are usually very high. Listening to people voice those frustrations can take a toll, however, nothing worth doing is easy. Everyone has a right to be heard, especially when it involves their own well-being. That is the most rewarding part: knowing that you are the ear that so many people need.



## *Interested? in Serving?*

Community Care is always looking for members, or their guardians, to join the appeal and grievance committee.

This committee hears appeals and grievances filed by Community Care members and a member perspective is important.

New committee members receive training before serving.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Christopher Olson, member rights specialist, at (262) 207-9305 or email at [christopher.olson@communitycareinc.org](mailto:christopher.olson@communitycareinc.org).

### **Is there anything you hope to accomplish while serving on the committee?**

I know firsthand how it feels to be told that you do not need something that you feel you do need. In my experience, the worst part is not necessarily getting what you want, it's the feeling that no one was listening to you. I just want appealing members to feel like the appeal process they went through was a fair one; that they were actually heard.

### **What would you say to a member to encourage them to**

### **volunteer on the committee?**

First, remember that every single Community Care member has a right to appeal decisions. Even if you personally are not appealing a decision, serving on the appeal committee gives you the opportunity to help others exercise that right. You are giving other people a voice. And the committee needs you now more than ever. There are supposed to be two members on every hearing. However, there are not enough volunteer members to meet that goal right now. That is why we need you!



## On the Job *Introducing a new feature!*

At Community Care, we support the concept of competitive, integrated employment (CIE) and are always looking for ways to increase the number of members engaged in CIE.

In addition to providing individuals with disabilities with the opportunity to work, CIE also allows them to live meaningful and inclusive lives in their communities.

Sadly, many people with disabilities remain either unemployed or underemployed despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work.

So, we are excited to introduce a new feature in Connections, starting next year. In our new “On the Job” feature, we will highlight a Community Care

member who is out working in their community. Hopefully, these personal stories will inspire others to seek employment, maybe for the first time, or to look for a job that better meets their needs.

### *The Advantages of Being Employed*

We often think of a job as simply a way to earn an income. However, there are so many other advantages that people can experience when they are gainfully employed. Here are just a few!

#### **Independence:**

Not only are there increased financial benefits, but in general being employed often increases independence at home, in relationships, and in the community.

#### **Inclusion:**

Working often increases one’s support system and reduces social isolation and time alone.

#### **Increased Self-Esteem:**

Working often improves how we view ourselves, so we feel better about ourselves compared to when not working.

#### **Increased Self-Advocacy:**

Working improves our ability to speak up for ourselves, which often leads to increased safety and reduced vulnerability in the community.

#### **Use of Talents:**

Working can tap into those talents you may not otherwise get to use, like being welcoming, problem solving, teamwork, or being focused when needed. What’s your talent?

#### **Increased Stability:**

For all the reasons above, individuals with disabilities who work tend to be more stable, which prevents stress and ultimately prevents crisis situations.

If you are ready to take the next step and experience the advantages of employment, talk to your care team and we’ll help you with the next steps.

# SEASONAL TREATS

The holiday season is right around the corner. It's time to start thinking about the treats you'll want to make this year.

## Thanksgiving Turkey Cookies

Sure, Christmas cookies are traditional. What about whipping up a batch of Thanksgiving cookies? These turkey sugar cookies are fun to bake and decorate. Let someone else worry about the "real" turkey.

### What you need:

- 1 roll (16.5 oz) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
- 1 c. chocolate frosting (from 16 oz container)
- Candy corn
- Orange decorating icing
- Mini M&M chocolate candies
- Black decorating gel

### Directions:

- 1) Bake cookies as directed on roll or package. Cool completely, about 15 minutes.
- 2) Spoon frosting into 1-quart storage bag; seal bag. Cut off tiny corner of bag. On each cookie, pipe frosting on outer edge of half of cookie. Arrange candy corn over frosting for feathers.
- 3) Pipe orange icing onto each cookie to resemble turkey face and feet. Use orange icing to attach baking bits to turkey face for eyes. Pipe black gel on baking bits for centers of eyes.



## Reindeer Cracker Snacks

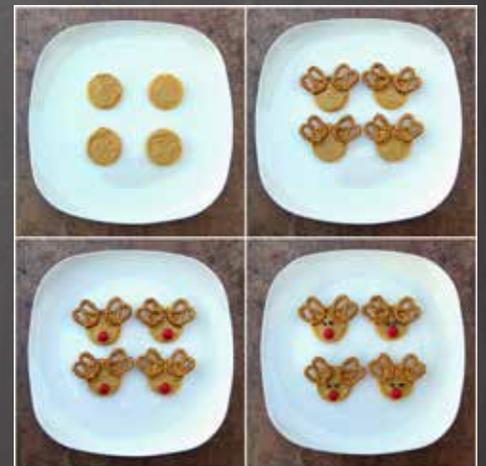
Holiday treats don't have to be complicated. They just have to be fun and tasty. These will fit the bill and maybe you'll go down in history like that famous red nosed reindeer.

### What you need:

- Round crackers of some variety
- Peanut butter
- Red chocolate candies (like M&Ms)
- Mini pretzel twists
- Mini chocolate chips

### Directions:

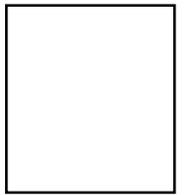
- 1) Spread some peanut butter on each cracker.
- 2) Press two pretzels into the peanut butter to make antlers.
- 3) Add one red candy for the nose and push into place.
- 4) Carefully press in two chocolate chips for the eyes
- 5) Take pictures because they are adorable and serve!



Go ahead and make a batch or two. If you're feeling adventurous and you just happen to have a sleigh cookie cutter, you can really have some festive fun with these.



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