Anixtercenter
DISABILITY SERVICES

September2026

Disability Services: 2nd Annual Picnic

On Friday, September 25th our Disability Services Team held their 2nd Annual Picnic and BBQ at Warren Park on Chicago's north side. All of our participants from our residential and day programs attended this wonderful event. We were even fortunate enough to have some Anixter board members stop by for the event. The day may have had cloudy skies, but staff and participants did not let that get in the way of having a good time as the temperature was mild and comfortable. Staff took to the grills and cooked up a feast including chicken, hamburgers, lamb sausage, and chicken sausage. Classic side dishes of macaroni salad, potato salad, and coleslaw completed the meal. Everyone ate to their heats content, while visiting among friends and listening to lively music. Judging by the smiles on people's faces the event was a tremendous success. Participants and staff are already talking about the plans for next year!









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Disability Services: 2nd Annual Picnic (Continued from Page 1)













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Disability Services: Celebrating DSP Week



The Disability Services Team went all out during the week of September 14th - 18th as they celebrated DSP Week. Our Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are the heart of our mission to provide the very best service and support to our participants in both our residential and day program settings. Every day they show up with smiles on their faces, joy in their hearts, and kindness and compassion a plenty as they help support and guide our participants throughout the day.



We appreciate our DSPs always, but it never hurts to show people how much you really care. During the week-long celebration we held a "Spirit Week" with theme days. There was Throwback Day where staff dressed from their favorite decade; PJ Day where staff wore their comfiest pajamas; Sport Day where favorite team jerseys were worn; Wacky Tacky Day where staff wore wild patterns and colors; Twin Day where staff dressed like a favorite coworker. In addition to "Spirit Week" all DSPs were treated to breakfast on Monday and lunch each day for the rest of the week. Just our way of saying "Thank You".





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Literacy Tutor Spotlight:
Amy Block - Connecting Literacy to Real Life



Anixter Adult Literacy is proud to spotlight literacy tutor, Amy Block. Amy is a dedicated tutor who began volunteering with our adult literacy program in May 2026. Amy was introduced to Anixter Adult Literacy through her friend, Suzanne Kaplan, a volunteer cooking teacher at the Choice Day Program. With a bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master of Social Work (MSW) in Clinical Social Work from Smith College School for Social Work, Amy currently works as a group practice therapist with Psychotherapy Associates of Chicago. She brings her professional experience, compassion, creativity, and genuine interest in people to her weekly tutoring sessions!

Since May, Amy has been meeting weekly with learner, Emily Garcia, a member of Anixter's Mental "Hub". Emily is conquering neurological and cerebral challenges. Together, they work on language arts, mathematics, geography, reading, writing, and practical money skills. What makes their sessions especially meaningful is Amy's ability to connect academic skills to Emily's everyday life. Emily enjoys lessons that have a "real-world" connection, so Amy often creates hands-on activities that allow Emily to practice skills she can use outside the classroom.

One of their favorite activities involves restaurant menus and money skills. Amy brings in menus from local restaurants, and Emily practices reading the menu and identifying meals she might enjoy. Emily then "orders" her meal while Amy creates a practice "guest check" with the selected items and prices. Using play money, they work together to calculate the bill and settle the check. What might look like a simple restaurant activity becomes an opportunity to practice reading, decision-making, addition, subtraction, recognizing prices, and handling money—all skills Emily can use in her daily life!

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Literacy Tutor Spotlight: Amy Block - Connecting Literacy to Real Life
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Amy and Emily's literacy lessons also extend beyond traditional reading and writing. Recently, they read a book about a young girl whose parents immigrated to New York City from China. The story opened the door to conversations about immigration, assimilation, family, and what it can feel like to be different. Amy and Emily used a world map in the tutor classroom to visualize the enormous distance the young girl's family traveled when moving to the United States. Through the story, Emily practiced reading comprehension while also exploring geography and connecting the book's themes to the wider world!

Thanks to Amy, real-life experiences frequently become learning opportunities for Emily. After Emily recently went to a movie with friends, Amy created a lesson around the experience. Before the movie, they practiced estimating the cost of a movie ticket and concession-stand items using play money and examples of foods Emily typically orders. Afterward, Emily's homework was to write or discuss a report about the movie, including its theme and what she liked and did not like. This activity transformed an enjoyable outing into an opportunity to practice writing, comprehension, opinion-sharing, money skills, and critical thinking!

Beyond the lessons themselves, Amy and Emily have developed a strong and trusting relationship! In a wonderful coincidence, they even share the same birthday! They are planning to celebrate together during one of their tutoring sessions near their birthdays. Amy and Emily's connection reflects what makes adult literacy tutoring so special: learning is not simply about completing worksheets or mastering individual skills. It's also about building relationships, discovering interests, encouraging independence, and creating a safe environment where learners feel comfortable growing! That's why Amy's tutoring journey with Emily demonstrates the power of purposeful, practical, and relationship-centered literacy instruction! We look forward to celebrating the continued growth and accomplishments of both Amy and Emily!