

The AC



ACTIVE
CITIZENS

Community

Let's get out and explore!



Alternative Choices



Getting people **out and about** in our Community

we can
help





Now Serving the Greater Battle Creek, Albion, Marshall, Homer, Hillsdale, and Jackson.

Alternative Choices has something for everyone! Our volunteer site is located in Albion at 101 Albion Street. This program works with individuals and local organizations to bridge and strengthen ties throughout the community, to provide assistance to those in need, and to help individuals learn valuable skills.

Our Community Inclusion Program, located at 493 West Michigan Ave. in Battle Creek, provides social skill training and community integration activities for individuals desiring to become more active in the area. The Community Inclusion Program provides opportunities to improve social skills through group outings to local bowling alleys, baseball games, museums, and swimming pools, as well as through holiday parties, dances, boat trips, group cooking, movie days, music therapy, pet therapy, and more!

We also provide essential life-skills like budgeting, money counting, cooking skills for self, nurturing skills, social skills, relationship skills, transportation, and safety, to name a few.

For more details contact us at 269-966-1446



We Strive for Safety and Excellence

In an effort to keep our staff knowledgeable and current with safety techniques, we consistently aim to exceed the standards. The Alternative Choices staff is put through an initial extensive training that goes beyond the requirements of the state and funding source. AC annually updates to ensure information retention and changes in procedures. This is followed by intensive quality assurance assessments, to validate training that meets or exceeds the standards expected.

Training/testing required by AC: due process, cultural diversity, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), person centered planning, corporate compliance, limited English proficiency, cultural competency, HIPAA, confidentiality, blood borne pathogens, infection control, safety, medications, driving safety and road testing, rights training, CPR, First Aid, and Mandt.



Need a Ride? We Provide!

Transportation is included in our services, but you will need to bring your own lunch. Tours of our programs can be scheduled by calling our office.

You can also meet with a company representative to discuss which of our programs is right for you, give us a call to schedule an appointment, 269-966-1446 or 269-339-3840.



Alternative Choices Provides New Services

Covid has affected everyone, it has had no prejudices as to whom it has affected. This caused Alternative Choices to have temporarily close in order to maintain the health and safety of everyone that attended.

Guardians' initial response to the inevitable closure was that they were glad of the decision because they were very concerned about sending their loved ones for fear of becoming ill. As time went by, the guardians began to worry about the well-being of their individuals. They were beginning to see a decline in their loved ones' health and emotional well-being. Many said they noticed signs of depression setting in, not only in the individuals we serve, but the staff was also starting to feel the looming shadow of Covid. The management at AC continued to maintain contact and offer assistance, if only for someone to talk to.

During the closure, two of our outstanding staff continued to serve Meals on Wheel for the routes that Alternative Choices had prior to the pandemic. AC realized that the need to help people was still prevalent, even more so now. Paula Greenway, her husband, and Marsha Lang , continued to deliver meals to those in need, and we want to thank them for stepping up to the plate. Additionally, Marsh Lang , Jennifer Stewart, and Jennifer Doyle took the time to purchase and deliver many holiday cards to the people we serve, so they knew we were thinking of them and anxiously awaiting their return.

While we waited to reopen, Diane Nelson, State Operations Administrator, began to think of ways to still be productive and provide service. Her desire to see this company succeed led us to our first venture, to begin in-home CLS. This entailed some 24 hour sites and specific specialty care needs. Secondly, we started a nursing program in the fall for more medically fragile individuals, or those that needed more intense monitoring for health reasons. The third venture is working with children. We are currently working with special needs and children with Autism. This has been and continues to be a great experience for all. One of the guardians even expressed how pleased he was and grateful for our success with his child after working with several other companies. Finally, we began to support the fiduciary roll for the respite program of one of our funding sources. This has been a new experience for all of us. After smoothing out the edges, things seem to be progressing with lots of potential to grow.



Now we are beginning steps to re-open our day services. The opening phases have been initiated at a 20 percent capacity. We will continue to progress with safety and health in mind. We have had plenty of positive feedback and gratefulness for the extreme measures we have taken to keep the individuals we serve safe.

Alternative Choice will continue to support our community and the people who live in it. We will continue to strive for the betterment of the individuals we serve and hope for a better tomorrow.

Protecting Our Staff and Individuals

We have taken important steps to ensure the safety of the staff and individuals that attend Alternative Choices. While social distancing has been a priority, we have taken extra measures to help stop the spread of Covid-19 and still give the individuals we serve the opportunity to socialize and be active.

We have made several alterations to the program to ensure fluidity and safety. These changes were in the areas that are most frequently occupied by individuals and staff. The three main areas focused on were not limited to but included, screening, transportation, and activities.

Screening is taken for all participants, visitors and staff. This is done with temperature checks before they enter the vehicles. We have assigned, spaced seating to keep distanced. All participants are required to wear masks. A hygiene backpack is supplied for spills, impromptu personal cleanups, and to sanitize between rides. There is also screening stations positioned at the entrances of the facilities.

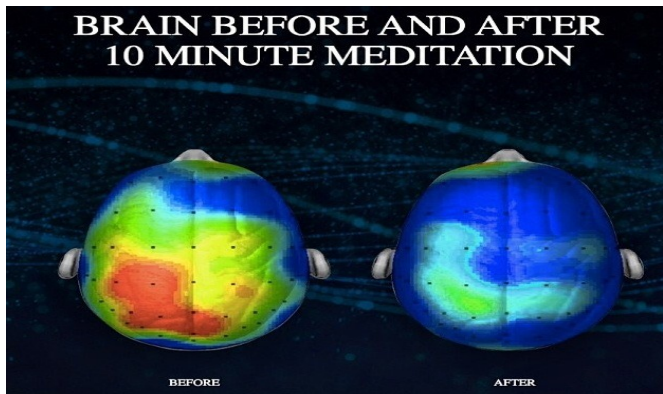


Our facilities are on a cleaning and sanitizing schedule, and on an as-needed basis. Sanitation stations are supplied for each designated area that is used by staff and or individuals. Groups are minimal, with their own space to have activities, do sensory exercises, crafts etc. The areas are also supplied with their own meal area, refrigerator, microwave, bathroom and sink for frequent hand washing. Staff will frequently remind to wash hands and use hand sanitizer.

All activities are done with social distancing in mind. Outdoor activities are encouraged to further promote social distancing, getting fresh air, and exercise. Examples of safe activities include shooting basketballs, outdoor drumming, nature walks and outdoor bowling. This will still give our individuals an opportunity to spend time with their peers.

These individuals are important to us and the measures we have taken have been meticulously thought out. A full plan has been sent to funding sources and guardians. To view the full plan, one can be made available by contacting Alternative Choice, LLC.

7 Ways to Include Meditation in Your Life Without Hassle.



Learning how to attain mindfulness is a benefit of meditation. You are giving yourself a few moments to forget about the past and not worry about tomorrow. Even if it's only a few minutes, at that moment it's about you.

- Listen to music– Find something soothing or instrumental. Listen while sitting quietly, relaxing in a hot bath or just resting. Listen to all the different sounds like nothing matters at that moment but the melody.
- Driving– Turn off the music and take your time. Don't rush. Maybe take a long country ride and take in the beautiful sites to help ease your mind.
- Take a long walk. Stroll slowly while taking deep breaths and exhaling. Maybe a walk at a preserve with all the sounds of nature .
- Find your inner artist– You can get an adult coloring book, or get some paint and a canvas. Even doodling helps to calm you.
- Cook –Find your favorite recipe and make it from scratch, cut your vegetables and grind your own spices.
- Journal– It's a wonderful way to get it all out. You can take the time to be candid to yourself about the way your day has been.
- Remember to Breathe– take the time to stop and just breathe. Take long, slow, deep breaths and exhale in the same fashion. You'd be surprised how even a few minutes can make a difference.



Meditation can help reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and control anxiety.



“Whatever the mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.”

-Napoleon Hill



References:

Bertin (1/5/21), “What is Mindful”, Mindful Healthy Mind Healthy Life, <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/confidence>
 2021, “The Experience of Meditation”, Headspace, <https://www.mindful.org/category/meditation/>

New and Exciting Changes at Alternative Choices

Alternative Choices worked hard to move from Emmett Street to a new home at 493 W. Michigan Ave. in Battle Creek, which was currently housing the Learning Center. This move combined the two programs with hopes of a new and exciting adventure. We want to give a shout out to Cathy Millard (Program Manager) , Linda Langhann (Office Manager), and several others, who have been working very hard to bring creativity and inventiveness to the site. They did an amazing Job! Thank you!!



In an effort to make the change more exciting, we have brought ideas from our sensory rooms and incorporated them into the new site. This will give everyone a chance to experience a day in the woods while in our "Michigan" room. If that's not enough, they can take an adventure in the jungle while exploring the "Tiger" room. Too much action? Then they can have an underwater escapade in our "Under the Sea" room. Lastly they can play, lounge, or read in our "Fairy" room. We are excited and hopeful this new transition will be an amazing experience for everyone.



Alternative Choices Celebrates

Holidays usually bring people together. Who doesn't love to indulge in the festivities and food that surround us these special times of year? Sounds of music, laughter, and smells fill the air and are the foundation of the memories that stay with us for many years. This year we've had to celebrate safely. Halloween gave us a fun start to the re-opening of day services.



Making a Monster House!

We had a fantastic time using our creativity to make monster houses out of graham crackers, frosting, and Halloween candy. I think we had more fun eating our finished project!!!

Who Says There's No Such Thing as Unicorns?

Miracles are happening every day at Alternative Choices when we strive to be our best and encourage the rest!!

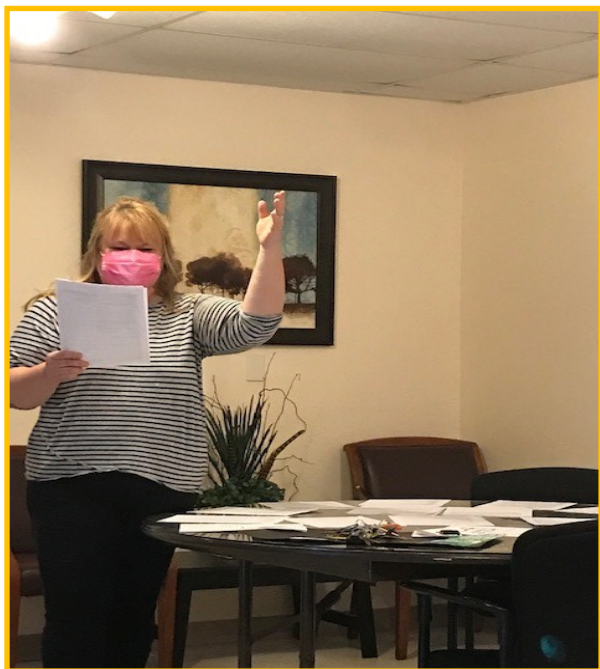


Kathy making her Monster house.

Linda Langhann

Alternative Choices Getting Prepared

With the weather cooling down and hopes to return to activities. Management and staff spent several days learning and preparing for a changing program with new challenges. Everyone welcomed the changes with positivity and creativity while supporting each other during every curve ball.



Cathy Millard preparing Covid training for returning staff.



Taking Advantage of Some Sunshine

AC has a fantastic outdoor activity area that gives great space for outdoor games, several tables for outdoor lunches and some fresh air.



Jennifer, Liz and Cindy doing drumming.

Marsha, Tierra and Jordan getting some exercise.



Fun outdoor bowling game.

The Shining Stars of Alternative Choices



These individuals have shown, without a doubt, that they have what it takes, to bring a smile, help a friend, and make a change. They stand out by helping people when they need it and standing strong when the winds of change are blowing hard. Congratulations to you all!!!



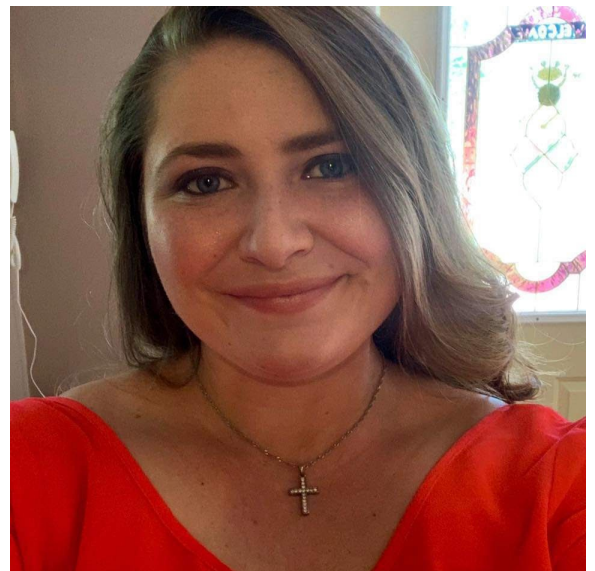
Jessica Sayre – “Shining Star”



Charlie- “Person of the Year”



Cathy Millard—“Manager of the Year”



Jessica Staton—“Employee of the Year”

Alternative Choices
493 W. Michigan Ave.
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www.facebook.com/accommunityinclusion

Visit us at: www.a-choices.com



Mission Statement

We strive to create a society that is more inclusive of individuals with special needs. We seek to build trust, understanding, and acceptance within our local communities through experience, interaction, and active participation.