



# Multicultural Community Services of the Pioneer Valley Inc.



Winter 2024

## Julie Mitchell

We are pleased to welcome Julie Mitchell to our MCS Springfield team. Julie recently retired from her long career as an educator working with children and adults with developmental disabilities. In addition to Julie's many years of professional experience, she is also the mother of two sons, David and Nicholas. Nicholas is 37 years old and has significant special needs. Julie will be doing several things with us: she will be working with some families, particularly those with complicated medical needs; she will develop a group respite program for individuals with complex medical needs; and finally, we will be adding a monthly feature on our website entitled "Ask Julie" where she will present various community resources that may be helpful to you and your family members. Topics will include accessible hiking trails, library programs, sensory friendly restaurants and activities, and more. Keep your eyes open for the first installment!



### PAC

If you are interested in joining the Springfield/ SOS Parent Advisory Council, please email Mary Beattie at

marybeattie@mcsnet.org



### Supplies Available

MCS has free adult disposable briefs available in sizes medium, XL, and XXL.

Please email me if you are interested:

marybeattie@mcsnet.org

## HIGHLIGHT

Seventeen-year-old Kitzia Delvalle Flores has been mastering the art of self-expression through her artwork since she was in kindergarten. She says that painting murals and free-handing relaxes her and is a way of expressing her mood and emotions. While Kitzia creates artwork for "pure fun", she might consider selling her paintings or creating larger murals for others in their homes. Keep us posted Kitzia!!!



## MEET THE TEAM...

I've worked at MCS for the past 12 years as an Adult Family Support Navigator, Service Navigator & Intake Specialist, and Lead Service Navigator. In the past four years, my focus has been Autism without Intellectual Disabilities, where I am now the Program Manager. The best thing about my job that brings a lot of joy to me is that I am able to experience the individuals I serve and overcome preconceived opinions of them. I admire their advocacy for effective services, their perseverance, and most importantly their self-growth and individuality.



I have a Bachelor's degree in Human Services, and a Master's degree in Social Work from Springfield College. I also had the privilege to study abroad in Romania at Babes-Bolai University of Cluj-Napoca. I started my professional journey working with geriatric patients, HIV/Aids patients, substance use patients, the LGBTQ+ community, and most recently working as a Crisis Clinician at an emergency department.

I love nature, traveling, learning about different cultures, and exploring different foods. What brings the most joy to me is family: my 11 year old Siberian Husky, Honey, and most importantly, my son Jadis. I'm a proud mama, as Jadis is a sophomore at college where he studies Health Sciences and is majoring in psychology.

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<https://instagram.com/multiculturalcommunityservices?igshid=18r72kajxju05>



## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

### Family Leadership Series

**Dates:** Saturday, 2/24 virtual, Saturday 3/2 half-day in person

Full day in-person sessions at Hilton Garden Inn, Springfield: March 22-23, April 12-13, and May 3-4, 2024

*Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. Space is limited! Questions can be emailed to [susancrosby@mcsnet.org](mailto:susancrosby@mcsnet.org)*

### Meet the Author

Join us to meet Megan Amrich, the author of the new book Show Up and Bring Coffee: How to Support Your Friends With Disabled Children. Megan's website ([joyfulbraveawesome.com](http://joyfulbraveawesome.com)) encourages deeper conversations about parenting, friendship, disability and inclusion. She does this through a well-caffeinated blend of honesty, humor, and pop culture references.

**Date:** February 28, 2024

**Time:** 10am-12pm

**Location:** MCS SOS, 505 E. Columbus Avenue, Springfield

Virtual Zoom option will also be available: ID#679 6546 068

*Please register by calling Joanne Cruz at 413-200-7501 by 2/21/24*

### Educación Especial: Empoderamiento Legal para Padres de Hijos con Discapacidades

EN ESPANOL Ven y aprenda, en persona o virtual (espacio limitado) sobre las leyes y regulaciones de educación especial, y definiendo efectivamente la calidad de educación para tu hijo con discapacidad.

**Fecha:** 4, 11, 18 & 25 de abril

**Horas:** 9:00am-1:00pm

**Lugar:** MCS, 260 Westfield Road, Holyoke, MA

### Springfield DDS Transition Fair

The annual DDS Transition Fair offers families the chance to speak with providers and DDS staff all in one location.

NOTE: There is a change of venue this year!

**Date:** MCS April 2, 2024

**Time:** 5:30—7:30 p.m.

**Location:** DDS Area Office, One Federal Street, Springfield

### Lunar New Year Celebration

The MCS International Language Project celebrated Lunar New Year with music, friendship, a moving video, and a very impressive spread of Vietnamese foods. This is the group's 10th year of celebrating, and the event has increased from 10 people to over 60 this year.

Thank you to the ILP staff for their dedication and hard work. A very special thank you to Van Nguyen for allowing us to celebrate with her group. We are grateful to have not only Van, but her husband and children as well, working tirelessly to offer this opportunity to the families she supports.

This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of  
*Militza Acevedo and Odil Moulema-Douala*  
We wish peace and comfort to their families and friends.



### Meet the Pets...

Mary (Tate) Paquette is a supervisor for the Children's Program at MCS. She is kept busy at home by Mingo, a 2-year-old tabby cat; Shamrock, an 8 year old cat; and Riley, a 10 year old golden retriever.

The leader of this little pack is Mingo. He has many hobbies including playing in the sink and knocking glassware on the floor. He has also learned to open cabinets, and hides in them until some unsuspecting person reaches in for a dish. After a day of shenanigans, he will cuddle up with Shamrock and Riley for a long winter's nap.

According to Tate...Mingo needs new hobbies, Riley is lovable, and Shamrock is perfect.