

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

Issue 4

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WHAT'S INSIDE

2

COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

CANDY DAYS 2025, BASKETBALL
TOURNAMENT AT THE GYM, PINK
PARTY AT JMRC, HEART & SOIL
COMPOSTING

3

HIGHLIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

APRIL IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
MONTH, 2025 TFC CONFERENCE,
QUARTERLY PROMOTIONS

4-5

EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

NORMALIZING MISERICORDIA E-MAIL
USAGE, THE FUNDAMENTAL
REFRESH SERIES, ICEBREAKERS,
WELLNESS AND BENEFITS
EDUCATION CORNER

6

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

LOCAL BUESINESSES, AUTISM
ACCEPTANCE MONTH, QUARTERLY D&I
GUIDE

7-8

COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

SPECIAL SERIES

9-10

MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WARM WELCOMES, ANNIVERSARIES,
DEPARTMENT APPRECIATION



Pictured: Congratulations to Misericordia's first and second-year employees. Pictured above are some of them taking pictures at their anniversary celebrations, which was also attended by members of our administration and guardians. We thank these staff members for their commitment and look forward to seeing them grow at Misericordia.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEART



*"My advice is:
You always
have to keep
preserving." —
Temple
Grandin*

Another **State of the State** address for Misericordia staff was held on April 16. This State of the State included organizational updates and a guardian's panel. [Click here to watch a recording of the full address](#), and please be sure to complete the feedback form, which you will find in Campus Connections weekly updates. Those who complete it will have the opportunity to enter a raffle for two tickets to the MFA Benefit on June 26, from 5:30 p.m - 9 p.m. at Soldier Field.

As we work to help further our communication, increase our transparency, and reconnect to our mission and values, our next State of the State will be in October. Look for additional information about it in future Campus Connections.



COMMUNITY SHOWCASE

CANDY DAYS 2025



Pictured: Residents, staff, and community members participating in Candy Days 2025 on April 25th and April 26th.

This year marked the 40th annual Misericordia Candy Days, one of our largest fundraisers. As with previous years, staff and volunteers took to the streets to accept donations. We also raised money through virtual Candy Days. To follow our page and share on social media, [click here!](#) We thank everyone who came out to volunteer or donate.

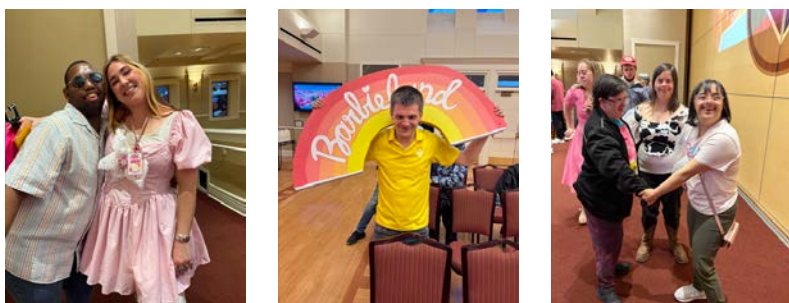
BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

MARCH MADNESS AT CONWAY GYM



Pictured: Residents participating in March Madness held on March 31st.

PINK PARTY AT JMRC



Pictured: Staff and residents at the Pink Party held on April 1st and April 15th.

Visit the [Misericordia Facebook page](#) to find more events that happened through the month.



HEART & SOIL COMPOSTING: JOIN OUR MISSION!

Heart & Soil, operated by Misericordia residents, is now launching our services to the Misericordia community!

Services Start at \$20 a Month for Bi-Weekly Pickups



"Enriching the soil, enriching the soul."



SIGN UP HERE



Heart & Soil, our new composting and employment opportunity program is operated by Misericordia residents alongside their dedicated staff. The composting team has launched their services to the Misericordia community.

Please note, the program is currently operating in a limited radius and participation eligibility is limited by how much ground they can cover per day. People can share their info on the initial sign-up form to help the program determine if they are within our operation radius. They plan to expand that radius as they grow and more sign-ups outside of their current radius will help determine potential expansion.

For more information or questions about composting services please email:

Isanchez@misericordia.com

To sign up: [Heart & Soil sign up](#)

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



HIGHLIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

APRIL IS OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH



Occupational Therapists (OTs) can work in various settings throughout the healthcare field, including schools, hospitals, nursing homes, rehab centers, home health, community settings, and clinics. [They help individuals of all ages with mental, physical, developmental, or emotional disabilities](#) by assisting them to develop, recover, or maintain skills needed for daily living and working.

At Misericordia, our OTs help residents gain independence through activities they want to do, need to do, and are expected to do. They're a small department that make a huge impact on the everyday needs and areas of support.

To learn more about them and the occupational therapy profession, [click here](#).

2025 TOGETHER FOR CHOICE CONFERENCE

HOSTED BY
MISERICORDIA HEART OF MERCY

JUNE 18-20, 2025

The 2025 Together for Choice (TFC) Conference will take place at Misericordia from June 18 to 20. This year's conference will invite speakers and attendees from across the country to share best practices in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Topics will include policy updates, fundraising strategies, workforce recruitment and retention, and the impact of collaboration.

To learn more about TFC, [click here](#), and stay tuned for more details about the conference.

QUARTERLY PROMOTIONS

Ninivet Marin Suarez (from LPN to RN in McAuley Nurses);
Ryan Rio (from DT as a DTI to HR as the Candidate Coordinator Liaison);
Frankie Silva (Certified Lifeguard in Pool/Fitness);
Arslan Malik, Valerie Brown, and Amber Burwell (from DSPs to BSPs in the CILAs);
Judas Benson (from DSP to BSP in the CILAs);
Mia Edwards (from Charge DSP in McGowan to an RN MSN in Nursing Services);
Michael Johnson (from Bakery Packaging Asst./Truck Coordinator in the Bakery to AM Supervisor in Quinlan);
Carlos Cordero Santiago (from DSP to PM Supervisor in Quinlan);
Caitlinn Caddick (from a DSP in Quinlan to a QIDP in Mercy Glen);
Francine Johnson (from a CNA in McAuley to AM Supervisor in Marian Center);
Lupe Rangel (from a DSP in Mercy Glen to a DT Trainer);
Harold Johnson (from a DSP in the Village to a DSP in DT);
Monica Thompson (from Sup/Residential Manager to AM Supervisor in the Village);
Samantha Richter (from a QIDP Rel Sup in Mercy Glen to a Development Associate in Dev. & PR);
Dannielle Geronimo, Liam O'Donnell, and Monica Ryan (Advanced RBT Certified);
Paulie Garrison (RBT Certified);
Valerie Gonder (from a DSP in the CILAs to a Security Guard in Security);
Anacaren Perez (from LJC to PM Sup in the CILAs);
Winnie Akello (from DSP in Shannon Apts to PM Sup in the CILAs);
Ashleah Martin (from a CNA in McAuley to Rec. Leader in McAuley);
Monica Taylor (from a Q in MC to a Funding Coordinator in Social Services);
Babatunde Odeyemi (added Relief Sup to his BSP role in the CILAs);
Paul Peterson (added Relief Sup to his Environmental Coordinator role in the CILAs)

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES

NORMALIZING MISERICORDIA E-MAIL USAGE

To continue improving communication across our workforce, IT will transition staff to using their Misericordia email address for Misericordia functions.

What is my Misericordia/Outlook e-mail?

All staff are given an employee e-mail address upon hire (example@misericordia.com) If you are not sure what your Misericordia e-mail is, please ask your director or supervisor.

Why normalize it? Normalizing the use of e-mail would create an organizational culture that keeps up with the best practices in effective communications of today. This initiative aims to streamline all organization-wide communications through e-mail engagement and strengthen internal communications within each area.

What can I expect? Electronic employee engagement could take some getting used to. Over the next few weeks, you can expect the following:

- **Phase 1:** Everyone should have a Misericordia email. If you don't contact IT.
- **Phase 2:** Everyone should be able to access their email from an iPad or computer.
- **Phase 3:** Everyone should be checking their Misericordia email regularly for the latest Misericordia information.

Again, while adapting to technology can take time, in the long run, you can expect electronic communications through Outlook to be more interactive and help you stay organized and informed.

THE FUNDAMENTALS REFRESH SERIES

Throughout the year, all staff will complete trainings as part of the Fundamentals Refresh Series. These trainings are designed to enhance and strengthen your skills as well as make sure that you are up to date on key topics and changes to help you continue to succeed in your role.

The Fundamentals Refresh Series includes:

- OIG Rule 50 Abuse & Neglect Training (ends March 30)
- **Expo Part 1:** Health & Safety (April 14 - May 18)
- Bystander Training (TBD)
- **Expo Part 2:** Campus Safety (TBD)
- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training (TBD)
- **Expo Part 3:** Staff-Related Policies (TBD)

Completion of this series helps to foster a culture of integrity, support staff's personal and professional growth, and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for all.

These trainings will be offered on Infinitec. If you have any questions, please reach out to training@misericordia.com.

BREAK THE ICE WITH THESE CONVERSATION STARTERS WITH CO-WORKERS



Courtesy of [Teambuilding.com](https://www.teambuilding.com)



What's the most interesting or unexpected thing you've learned recently?



What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?



What's an under-rated skill everyone can benefit from?



EMPLOYEE RESOURCES (CONT'D)

WELLNESS AND BENEFITS EDUCATION CORNER

It's not always possible to escape a stressful situation or avoid a problem, but you can try to reduce the stress you are feeling by using some simple tips.

For the month of April, we would like to share ways to reduce stress. Click the links below to read the following 5-minute stretch activities.



Click each link below to read more:

- [Micro Stretch Break](#)
- [Micro Stretch Self-Care Activities](#)

In addition to these short activities, you may also [click here](#) to access this quick meditation/breathing exercise video from the American Heart Association.

We understand that life can be challenging, and sometimes we all need a little extra support. If you feel that you need to speak to someone, you can use our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential services to help navigate personal and professional stressors or challenges. The support is available whether you are enrolled in a medical insurance plan offered by Misericordia or if you are covered under a different medical plan. Please refer to the contact information below or access the links to the flyers.



For employees enrolled in the medical plan offered by Misericordia

Health Advocate: [Click here](#)

Phone: 1-866.799.2728

Email: answers@HealthAdvocate.com

Web: HealthAdvocate.com/members

Employees who are not registered:
registration code: SMJSELW



For employees not enrolled in medical benefits through Misericordia

Employee Resource Systems or ERS, doing business as **AllOneHealth:** [Click here](#)

Phone: 1- 800-292-2780

Web: ers-eap.com

Code: misericord



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

LOCAL BUSINESSES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

ESSENCE PERFUMES, INC.

5050 S Kedzie Ave, Chicago, IL 60632
[details here](#)

GOLD COAST CAFE

754 N Clark St, Chicago, IL 60654
[details here](#)

WORLD FRESH MARKET

2434 W Devon Ave, Chicago, IL 60659
[details here](#)

OKBRITKNEE PHOTOGRAPHY

Chicago-land Area
[details here](#)

CR CONSTRUCTION

819 Maple Ave, Lisle, IL 60532
[details here](#)

2AXEND

Chicago-land Area
[details here](#)

As we celebrate **National Deaf History Month**, [click here](#) to check out resources about the history of deaf culture and working with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (HoH).

Also, check out [this page](#) from the Smithsonian to read all about Arab American history and culture for **Arab American Heritage Month**.

Send us a tip! If you have recommendations for any local minority and women-owned businesses that Misericordia should know about it, [click here](#) and tell us about their goods and services. We may highlight your suggestion in future issues of Campus Connections!

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH

THE EVOLUTION FROM AUTISM AWARENESS TO AUTISM ACCEPTANCE

Since its inception in 1970, April has been known as Autism Awareness Month, but now the Autism Society of America is changing the title to Autism *Acceptance* Month.

What Do the Autism Colors and Symbols Mean?



The Rainbow Spectrum

Instead of choosing just one color, the range of colors inside the rainbow represents the scope of abilities and diagnoses on the autism spectrum, highlighting the variety of abilities and challenges each faces.



Light It Up Blue

The color blue, associated with calmness and acceptance, is the primary color designated for autism. Its popularity also stemmed from the worldwide Autism Speaks initiative, Light It Up Blue.



The Puzzle Piece

The puzzle piece depicts the mysterious and diverse character of autism. It emphasizes the notion that comprehending autism is a complicated work, quite similar to puzzle-solving.



The Infinity Symbol

The multicolored infinity symbol is one of the more recent icons of autism. The infinite loop of solidus symbolizes unlimited opportunities; this is exactly what people with autism have limitless potential.

Courtesy of Autism Society of America, [click here](#) to learn about how you can raise awareness and help support individuals with autism.

QUARTERLY D&I RESOURCE GUIDE

[Click here](#) to access our quarterly D&I resource guide for January, February, and March. The content includes media recommendations, web articles, activities for residents, and other content around the values of belonging and connection!

The content in the guide was gathered by members of the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Committee and/or submitted by staff. If you would like to contribute, please email campusconnections@misericordia.com.



COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

From Linda B (mother of a Misericordia resident):

As part of the Misericordia community, we know that groups from all over the country look to Misericordia as the model for caring for people with disabilities. In fact, some families have relocated to the Chicago area for the express purpose of having their children reside at Misericordia Home. What makes this place so special?

At its very core, the culture of Misericordia is driven by five specific values, which are exemplified by residents, staff, families, and the organization itself. These values, collectively known as A Community of Believers, make Misericordia the community that it is—a group of individuals connected by common beliefs and values.

This article is the first in a series and covers the concept of our Misericordia Community of Believers with a summary of our core values. Subsequent articles will provide in-depth coverage of each of the core values.

I asked my son Andy, a resident at Shannon Apartments, to help me come up with examples of how we exhibit these values. He provided lots of great ideas and thus deserves part of the credit for this article and those that follow. You'll read more about these examples in the articles that examine each core value.

I consulted the Webster dictionary to break down the meaning of Community of Believers. Webster notes believer as the noun form of the verb to believe.

Webster Includes the following definitions for believe:

1. To have a firm or wholehearted religious conviction or persuasion
2. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something



And Webster includes these definitions for community:

1. A unified body of individuals
2. A group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society

**THIS IS A SPECIAL SERIES
COURTESY OF THE
MISERICORDIA FAMILY
ASSOCIATION (MFA)**

These definitions aptly describe the Misericordia Community of Believers. We are a group of people bound by our faith commitment to provide a worthwhile life for some of God's most vulnerable children. As God's children, we extend our love and care to embrace those who are most in need. We believe in the mission of Misericordia, and further, we believe in those who call Misericordia home. We recognize the strength, goodness, and love that abounds in the residents. We know their disabilities, but we also recognize their abilities, their resilience, their happiness, and we benefit by the joy they bring to us and to those around them.

The original Community of Believers document was drafted in 2010. The term was coined by Sister Rosemary, and the document was based on four core values. Recently, a fifth core value was added—Diversity and Inclusion. That original document began with the following paragraph:

"We are a Community of Believers bound together by our commitment to God, to one another, and our mission. We provide a life, and a life worth living, to God's most vulnerable people. We are a diverse group of residents, families, staff, volunteers, contributors, and friends. Our Community of Believers is a blessing to us all, and we celebrate this life we share. This life is characterized by [five] values."



COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS (CONT'D)

Misericordia is a community that exists within the greater community, embracing the members of the Mis community but reaching out to those in the surrounding area. We invite others into our Mis community, and we participate in activities outside of the campus. As members of the Misericordia community, we share the life-long challenge of caring for individuals with special needs and providing for them the best care possible. For those who suggest that community living is not the right approach, it is the strength of our community that helps and encourages us to reach beyond the borders of the campus.

In a situation that can sometimes feel overwhelming, the core values of Misericordia provide the framework that guides us through the task of nurturing and caring for these most special of God's children. These values provide our residents with a lifestyle that is desired by many but often denied to those with special needs. The core values emphasize our belief that the residents of Misericordia deserve a life that is worth living.

In future articles, we'll cover the ways in which residents, staff, and families exhibit and live by the following five core values:

- **Quality of Life**—one way that Misericordia stands out from similar residences is the quality of its lifestyle for residents and their families. All too often, people with disabilities lead a sheltered, simple life, but the residents at Misericordia live life to the fullest. With each passing year, I receive more and more literature about senior living communities. Each time I read these, I am reminded of Misericordia: a great place to live, a beautiful setting, meals provided, a swimming pool and fitness center, community outings, with transportation provided.
- **Connection**—the Misericordia community connects with each other and with the greater community. Within the campus, activities bring together the residents from many different living areas, each area its own family and part of the greater Misericordia family. Some residents live in community-based housing and return to campus for vocational services, social events, and other activities. Based on their level of independence, residents travel into the community for work, shopping, dining, and entertainment. Families and other community members come into the campus to visit, volunteer, dine at the Greenhouse Inn, and enjoy various activities. Several major fundraisers draw large crowds to the campus, for example, Family Fest and the holiday brunches. And Misericordia families are dedicated to spreading the good news of Misericordia. Our yearly Candy Days collection is another way that people connect to and support Misericordia.
- **Diversity/Inclusion**—our campus and population reflect the diversity of the greater community. Misericordia is a stronger community because of its members who come from a wide variety of diverse backgrounds. Seeing the way that people of all cultures get along within the Misericordia family would be a great lesson to many parts of our world today. We share traditions and customs, and our acceptance of one another makes us a better and stronger community. We embrace those who are more vulnerable, and we recognize their strengths and the positive energy that they bring to all that they do.
- **Responsibility**—Every member of the Misericordia community bears an awesome responsibility to live up to the mission of Misericordia. We each recognize our obligations from a moral and financial standpoint. And at the most basic level, we know that we must do all that we can to maintain this great place, whether that be volunteering, fundraising, or pitching in however we can. Residents are taught to respect and care for their surroundings, and families are asked to ensure that Misericordia will be able to continue its great mission. And from within the organization itself, leadership is constantly making changes to keep up with the latest in caring for our family members.
- **Spirituality**—although under the auspices of the Chicago Archdiocese, Misericordia welcomes and supports members of all faith communities. This core value extends beyond one's religion to include kindness in all that we do and ensuring that all who live and work at Misericordia are treated with dignity and respect. Friends have often commented that everywhere you go on campus, people are so friendly. And what a wonderful gift to our family member to have found a place where they are recognized and acknowledged. People with disabilities so often go unnoticed, but at Misericordia, they are the stars, God's precious gift to all of us. How wonderful it is to travel across campus with your child and hear him or her greeted by name everywhere you stop. God's love truly shines down on this place.

Stay tuned for more detailed information about how residents, staff, families, and the Misericordia organization promote and live by these core values.



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME NEW RESIDENT



Joey

Residence: Village

- loves Legos
- was Dora and Woody for Halloween
- his favorite song is "Life Is A Highway"

DEPARTMENT APPRECIATION

April follows another round of monthly appreciation for the various departments on campus. This month we hosted a special luncheon for the following areas:

- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Kitchen/Food Services
- Bakery
- Misericordia Businesses
- Security
- Social Services

We thank all our celebrating staff for all they do to support our residents and community.

Check out what some of our celebrants had to say about what makes their department special:

- "We're a small, but awesome, diverse department. If were to add of all of our years of dedication to Misericordia together it'd be over 90 years!" - **Johanna G. (Social Service)**
- "Great helper and workers!" - **Carlos S. (Housekeeping)**
- "We are a team!" - **Cathy W. (Food Service)**
- "Small department, big impact!" - **Andrew A. (Culture & Communication)**
- "Everyone works hard because of the residents, their families, and because of Lindsey! She is a great manager, is always fair and works harder than any of us. It's a great department to be a part of!" - **Leslie B. (Social Service)**
- "I love my kitchen co-workers." - **Jose H. (Food Service)**
- "Much like wolves, the social service department likes to travel as a pack, in large groups" - **Robert V. (Social Service)**
- "That it's a great department." - **Manny A. (Food Services)**
- "Everyone is so AMAZING and KIND...and FUNNY. Love y'all :)" - **Kim C. (Social Service)**

APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 36** Mary Anne Fallon
- 32** Leslie Burgard
- 26** Marjorie Neal
- 24** Lela Perez, David Rustile
- 23** Norma Cabunacan, Jenny Leszcynski
- 17** Sharon Neumann
- 16** George Lim, Andrea Newson
- 15** Tamara Beeler, Denise Bradley
- 14** Erica Lopez, Rebecca Muzemil, Chris Siefer
- 12** Amanda Uychocho, Jaxon Lindars
- 11** Nancy Lopez, Wilson Gonzalez
- 10** Lonna Davis
- 9** Yawoavi Akotsu
- 8** Febeia Heard, Jerome Batton, Naja Ross
- 7** Robert Batton
- 6** Kevin Rahlfs, Lena Rutledge
- 5** Scott Thompson, Keziah Paz
- 4** Idris Ali, Gretchen Gantner, Casey Stewart
- 3** Cristina Ayala Rivas, Inez Ayala, Denise Belland, Shaila Gonzalez, Zaria Junius, Jessica Perez, Timothy Strong, Jr., Sharon Sullivan, Kenya Walker, Carmen Gonzalez, Lejla Gutosic, Efrain Villanueva, Paula White
- 2** Mariam Salim, Fleur Martin, Antwon Simpson, Maria Emamo, Alyssa Martinez, Makiya Ousley, Erik Hutton, Vanja St Clair, Avery Kalyn, Jouceline Aquilar-Sanchez, Sean Crawford, Kyle Moore, Ayoola Sobowale
- 1** Martiniece Evans, Jeffrey Floyd, Charniece Haywood, Danielle James, Andrea Jancatova, Christine Jensen, Patrick Kasonga, Alexana Martinez, Shanna Rambus, Joaquin Serna, Chrisand Williams, Jocelyn Cadiente, Londonette Revis, Isabella Flores, Kristin Liebowitz, Derrick Pilcher, James Shaub, Paulie Garrison, Babatunde Odeyemi, Demetrius Williams, Crystal Wilson

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS



MONTHLY RECOGNITIONS

WELCOME NEW STAFF



Anderson, Aliyah (McAuley); **Arellano, Jace** (CILA); **Carrasquillo, Jonathan** (Village); **Cooper, Annette** (Quinlan); **De Col, Fulvio** (CILA); **Dillard, Whisper** (Quinlan); **English, Keyvonna** (Marian Center); **Farah, Dahabo** (McAuley); **Guerra, Kylee** (Rosemary Connelly); **Guzman, Andrew** (McAuley); **Herron, Rickiya** (Quinlan); **Holt, Lailah** (Rosemary Connelly); **Hopper, Andrew** (Mercy Glen); **Jones, Caprishea** (Marian Center); **Looney, Crystal** (Rosemary Connelly); **Luecht, Yasmin** (Nursing Services); **Marecka, Alicia** (Mercy Glen); **Marshall, Jaquara** (McAuley); **Miller, Emily** (Shannon Apartments); **Miron, Mayra** (McAuley); **Navarro, Jennifer** (CILA); **Omogiade, Winifred** (Nursing Services); **Palmiano, Andrew** (CDS); **Park, Hee Jin** (DT); **Patel, Aditi** (McAuley); **Reardon, Madeline** (Quinlan); **Reyes Leyva, Blanca** (CILA); **Roman, Kenia** (McGowan); **Ross, DeAndrea** (Marian Center); **Santiago, Maria** (Village); **Simmons, Jasmine** (Marian Center); **Thiam, Malakhi** (Mercy Glen); **Underwood, Damone (DJ)** (Marian Center); **Velez, Sarah** (Marian Center); **White, Jacqueline (JJ)** (Marian Center); **Yerlitas, Emin** (McAuley); **Washington, Norrice** (McGowan)



Stay tuned for weekly Campus Connections updates sent via email. You can also find previous issues of Campus Connections in ADP and [here](#) on our website. If you have any questions or feedback for us, send your messages [here](#)! Be sure to include your name, work area, and an email we can use to contact you!