



# Spotlight

## This is Our Shot – the COVID-19 Vaccine

OCCK is dedicated to providing a safe and healthy environment for our customers and staff at any time. As a result, throughout 2020 and into 2021, we have been closely monitoring developments related to the COVID-19 outbreak and the potential impact on the OCCK community, and we have helped where we have been able. We want to keep sharing information as we move into the next phase of the pandemic and keep everyone updated with the most current news. The focus now is on the vaccine and getting as many people as possible vaccinated.

Staff in many locations have been getting their first doses, and some will be receiving their second doses shortly. We have been working with

all of the area health departments on vaccine distribution. Many communities have waiting lists for vaccines.

Getting the vaccine is important for keeping our customers and staff safe, but it is also important for other reasons. We can help keep businesses open, keep people working, help people feel safe in their communities, help our economy get back on track and most importantly help end the pandemic.

As important as it is, each person should consult with their primary care provider before receiving the vaccine. This general information is not intended to diagnose any medical condition or to replace your healthcare professional.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently updated their vaccine considerations



**John Velasquez, Paula Downie, Kay Tappendick, Liz McCormick, Jim Hendrix, and Melinda Wolfe received their vaccine!**

for people with disabilities. They have added Down Syndrome to the list of conditions that are at an increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. Conditions are added when there is enough scientific evidence to support putting them on the list. The list is updated when new information becomes available.

We have put together a list of vaccine resources, including tools specifically for people with disabilities, all of which can be found on our website here: <https://occk.com/newsroom/covid-19-at-occk/>



**Juanita Borell, Ronda Frazier, and Stephanie Wedel, InMyHome Staff receive their shot**



## ARE YOU READY FOR THE END OF COVID? THIS IS YOUR SHOT

1

### UNDERSTAND THE VACCINE BENEFITS

You may have many questions about the vaccine. We have organized a list of resources for you.

2

### UNDERSTAND THE VACCINE PROCESS

We will need to move quickly as the vaccines become available. It's also a two dose process spaced 3-4 weeks apart.

3

### GET ON THE LIST

Each county has their own procedure for distributing vaccines. Get with your supervisor ASAP to reserve a shot.

4

### GET THE VACCINE

Building herd immunity through the vaccine, as well as other steps, like masks and social distancing, will all help.

## FOR MORE VACCINE TIPS VISIT

[OCCK.COM/NEWSROOM/COVID-19-AT-OCCK/](https://occk.com/newsroom/covid-19-at-occk/)

## Meet Our Team



Amanda Beam is new to the OCCK team. As the Information and Referral Coordinator, she will help guide people, families and community members to resources to meet their needs across our agency services and beyond. She grew up and lives in north central Kansas, and has experience with rural issues. She has a passion for helping others and has built a career in nursing.

- Started taking classes to become a nurse in January of 2014
- Associates in Nursing and became an RN in May of 2017
- Worked as a floor nurse getting as many diverse experiences as possible including, ER, acute floor, ICU, Charge Nurse at a nursing facility and most recently as the Director of Nursing at a skilled nursing facility

Amanda is a mom of two boys, ages 19 and 15, and also has three spoiled rotten dogs. She spends her free time with family and friends and following her youngest in his wrestling adventures. She looks forward to many years of helping others with this great team at OCCK. If you have questions, please contact Amanda at 785.827.9383 extension 167, or [abeam@occk.com](mailto:abeam@occk.com).

Shelia Nelson-Stout, *President/CEO*  
Michelle Griffin & Jan Pfannenstiel, *Editors*

A community partner  
strengthening the quality of life  
and independence of persons  
with disabilities since 1970.

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# OCCK, Inc.'s More Than You Think Anniversary Scholarship

## Applications Accepted for New Scholarship



OCCK, Inc. celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2020. The More Than You Think Scholarship was established as a part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration as a long term reminder of the good work that past generations have done, and that future generations will do, in working with people with disabilities in north central Kansas. OCCK is committed to working with people with any type of disability and making a difference in rural communities across north central Kansas.

The More Than You Think Scholarship recognizes and honors students in north central Kansas from Saline, Ottawa, Cloud, Republic, Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Ellsworth or Dickinson Counties, who are looking to further their education.

### Eligibility:

- Be a permanent resident or citizen of the United States
- Be a person with a disability, from Saline, Ottawa, Cloud, Republic, Jewell, Mitchell, Lincoln, Ellsworth or Dickinson County, Kansas
  - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.
- Have plans to enroll in some type of post-secondary learning opportunity (college, university, community college, vocational school, cosmetology school, etc.) Any type of credentialed program will be considered.
- OCCK Employees are not eligible for this scholarship.

### Submission:

- The completed Scholarship Application, including signatures
- Two Letters of Reference
- Mail documents in one envelope by May 1st, 2021, to:  
Access Foundation of Kansas  
Scholarship Committee  
Attn: Janae Cramer  
PO Box 1160  
Salina, KS 67402-1160
- **Applications must be POSTMARKED by May 1, 2021.**

### Notes:

- Late applications will be disqualified.
- Awarded applicants will be required to submit a photograph of herself or himself.
- Applications will not be returned.
- Applications can be filled out online or downloaded at: <https://occk.com/scholarships>.

## Are You Interested in Making a Donation to OCCK?

We are currently requesting donations to support our newly established scholarship fund, the More Than You Think Anniversary Scholarship. With your support, we will be able to increase the size and number of scholarships that we are able to award on an annual basis.

There are a few ways you can contribute to this scholarship fund:

- Mail a check donation to us at PO Box 1160, Salina, KS 67402. Please mark in the memo "Scholarship".
- Bring your donation to one of our regional offices: Salina; Abilene; Concordia; Beloit; or Transportation. Again, designate your donation as "Scholarship".

- Participate in Match Madness 2021 on March 25th, through the Greater Salina Community Foundation. Donations received on this day will be matched 50% so more bang for your buck! We can deliver your check for Match Madness just make checks out to GSCF and mail to P.O. Box 1160, Salina, KS 67402.
- Tell all your friends! Help us spread the word to other donors. Share our posts on social media, email or text your friends. Whatever you feel comfortable doing.

We are excited for this opportunity to provide people with financial assistance as they pursue their higher

education goals. If you have any questions, please contact us and we will be happy to help!





# Legislative Watch 2021

## Current Bills In Front of the Kansas Legislature:

Kansas has a few bills in action right now that affect people with disabilities. We've done some research for you so you can reach out to your local legislators to share your stories and insight to help with their advancement through the process.

We also encourage you to watch for community meetings or local gatherings in your communities with your Legislators. These will be held off and on throughout the year. Check with your local Chamber of Commerce for more information. We encourage people with disabilities and their families to participate in these meetings and share stories. It really does help!

House Bill 2122 (HB 2122) – Supported Decision Making – this bill will enact the supported decision-making agreements act to provide a statutory framework for adults that want decision-making assistance.

Read more here: [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021\\_22/measures/hb2122/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021_22/measures/hb2122/)

- Example, a person could have a decision making team of those people closest to them and make those choices for themselves.
- Supported decision making helps people learn about themselves and helps them experience personal growth at a faster pace.

- Supported decision-making is often defined as supports and services that help an adult with a disability make his or her own decisions by relying on trusted friends, family members, professionals, and others - from the American Bar Association.

House Bill 2046 (HB 2046)/Senate Bill 154 – Rate Increase - Increasing reimbursement rates for providers of home and community-based services under the intellectual or developmental disability waiver, making appropriations for such rates and providing for legislative review of the waiting list for such services.

Read more here: [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021\\_22/measures/hb2046/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021_22/measures/hb2046/)

- This bill would help people and Direct Care Services who are important to keep people independent in their communities. This rate increase would help organizations increase staff salaries. Turnover is high across the state for Direct Service Professionals.
- A rate increase would give Providers the opportunity to build enough internal infrastructure to provide specialized supports above basic services.

- It has been a long time since we have had a rate increase.

House Bill 2373 (HB 2373)– Behavioral Health – Requiring the Kansas Department of Aging and Disability Services to establish and implement a mobile crisis services program for individuals with intellectual or development disabilities.

Read more here: [http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021\\_22/measures/hb2373/](http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021_22/measures/hb2373/)

- This bill would provide financial support and a mechanism for people that go into crisis to have supports in their own homes and communities, versus going into a hospital or other setting.
- Experienced qualified crisis teams would provide these services.
- The only hospitals that provide those services in Kansas are Larned and Osawatomie for the most part. Other state hospitals have closed admissions. These hospitals are full and busting at the seams.
- This will also allow for treatment at home after in-patient services are completed.



# How to Communicate with Your Legislator:

Email is a fast, and usually efficient way to contact your legislator. It is particularly important to use a letter writing set of guidelines when writing an email. Legislators get an increasing number of emails and being more formal will help your message get across. Follow these tips:

- The email should be brief. A short, concise email is effective. Close with, "If you need additional information, please let me know."
- If you are writing about a specific bill, include the bill number and a brief statement at the beginning of the email.
- Discuss only one bill in your email. This makes it easier for a legislator or staff member to track. If you want to discuss another bill, send another email.
- Your email should be well written and your tone sincere and polite.
- An introduction of yourself which tells why you are interested in or concerned about the bill.
- A personal anecdote/story about how the bill will affect you, your family, your community, your business, your job, your school, etc.
- Some facts, including supporting information and data to support your position.
- An invitation to contact you to discuss the bill.
- A request for a reply if you need one.
- A statement of appreciation for consideration of your position.
- Your home address and telephone number.

Your email should also include the following:



If you want to find your legislator using your exact address, use the following website:  
<https://openstates.org/>

If you want to learn more tips about Legislative Advocacy and how bills become laws, check out this Advocacy Toolkit found here: <https://kcdinfo.ks.gov/docs/default-source/default-document-library/toolkit.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

The website for the Kansas Legislature can be found here: <http://www.kslegislature.org/li/>

We have all of these resources listed on our OCCK website found here: <https://occk.com/legislative-advocacy/>

## How to Contact Your Kansas Senator:

Your District	Where You Live	Your Senator	Call by Phone	Send them an Email
24	Saline or northern Dickinson Counties	J.R. Claeks	785.296.7670	JRClaeks@senate.ks.gov
35	Ellsworth or southern Dickinson Counties	Rick Wilborn	785.296.7361	Richard.Wilborn@senate.ks.gov
36	Jewell, Republic, Mitchell, Cloud, Lincoln or Ottawa Counties	Elaine Bowers	785.296.7389	Elaine.Bowers@senate.ks.gov

The full Senate District map can be found here:  
<https://www.kansascounties.org/services/legislative/2020-kansas-senate-district-map>

## How to Contact Your Kansas Representative:

Your District	Where You Live	Your Representative	Call by Phone	Send them an Email
69	Northwestern Saline County	Clarke Sanders	785.296.7369	Clarke.sanders@house.ks.gov
70	Dickinson County	John Barker	785.296.7674	John.barker@house.ks.gov
71	Northeastern Saline County	Steven Howe	785.296.7642	Steven.howe@house.ks.gov
106	Republic or eastern Jewell Counties	Lisa Moser	785.296.7637	Lisa.moser@house.ks.gov
107	Mitchell, Cloud, Ottawa or eastern Lincoln Counties	Susan Concannon	785.296.7644	Susan.concannon@house.ks.gov
108	Ellsworth or southern Saline Counties	Steven Johnson	785.296.7696	Steven.johnson@house.ks.gov
109	Western Jewell County	Troy Waymaster	785.296.7672	Troy.waymaster@house.ks.gov

The full House District map can be found here:  
<https://www.kansascounties.org/services/legislative/2020-kansas-house-district-map/view>

# Workforce Corner

## Employee of the Quarter: Joey Watkins



YOU'RE AWESOME!

### WAY TO GO JOEY!

Joey is a customer of Workforce Solutions of OCCK and has obtained employment working at Ray's Apple Market in Beloit. Joey brings many years of experience working in a grocery store setting to his new team. We wish Joey continued success in work and life!

## Success Story: David Chlebowski

David started working with Workforce Solutions in September. He was ready to get back into the workforce. He had previous experience working in restaurants



and was interested in doing that type of work again. David was particular about what hours he wanted to work because a work life balance was very important to him. David enjoys playing bingo and is also an author. Having time to continue doing those activities was crucial to David. The Employment Consultant and David worked together to find a job that he would enjoy that would work around his schedule. We also worked on job readiness skills in order to overcome the current barriers that he was facing. In November, we found that perfect fit! David went to an interview at McDonald's and was hired on the spot! He was ecstatic! David has learned how to run the grill and the fryer. He is open to learning new tasks in this role as well. David has a wonderful manager at McDonald's. She thinks outside the box, has a positive outlook, and is supportive to all of the employees that she manages. This has helped David to shine in this role. She said that she enjoys having David on the team. Congratulations David, we are very proud of you!

## Employers of the Quarter

<b>Saline</b> Salina Regional Health Center Masterpiece Painting and Remodeling Best Western Goodwill Retail McDonald's Stryten Manufacturing	<b>Barton</b> Rosewood Services  <b>Dickinson</b> Russell Stovers Chocolates  <b>Labette</b> Skil Resource Center	<b>Mitchell</b> Casey's General Store  <b>Pawnee</b> Larned State Hospital  <b>Riley</b> Goodwill
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# Thank you!

OCCK would like to thank US Cellular for their generous “at home movie night” donor gifts. The gift included 2 popcorn holders, funny socks, and a free red box movie rental. We had staff, community members, and many blood donations from our local firefighters and EMS.

OCCK would also like to recognize and thank Amy Lange and Theresa Bonebrake from the rotary club for their time volunteering, the Concordia Hospital Auxiliary for their canteen donations, and the Catholic Church for allowing us to hold community drives there.



First time donor, Erin Burchfiel, scheduling her next donation with Kayla Garst and Shaela Chartier

## New Texting Notification System Implemented

OCCK Transportation is starting a new texting notification system to help passengers with closings, delays, and other service notifications.

OCCKTransit Texts sends service notifications from OCCK's general public transportation department via text message to passengers who opt in to the service.

### To subscribe:

Text “start OCCKTransit” to 80123

Passengers will receive a confirmation of their subscription. Notifications are sent from a phone number other than OCCK Transportation. The phone number will most likely not have the area code 785. We recommend passengers add that number to their phone contacts so it is recognized as OCCKTransit Texts.

Notifications include service bulletins such as: weather advisories, delayed service, holiday schedule announcements, reroutes, service changes, public meeting information, policy changes, etc.

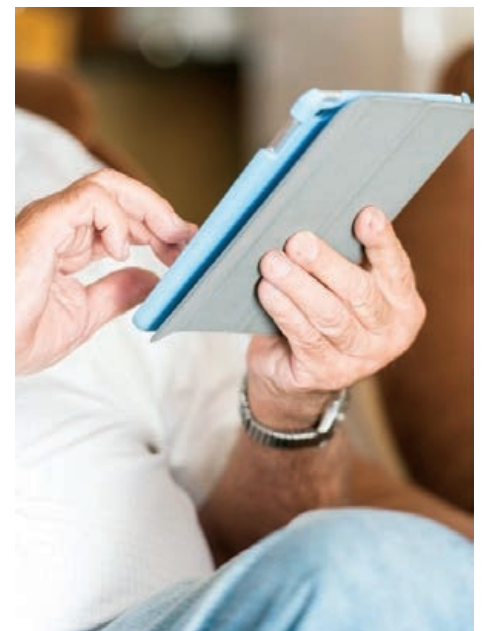
**To unsubscribe at any time:** Text “STOP OCCKTransit” to unsubscribe.

OCCK Transportation will not sell or share contact information. OCCK Transportation offers this service free of charge, but data and text rates may apply.

For more information about OCCK, Inc., visit [www.occk.com](http://www.occk.com). For more information about CityGo and OCCK Transportation, visit [www.salinacitygo.com](http://www.salinacitygo.com). Or, contact the OCCK Transportation Center at 785-826-1583.

## Connecting Rural Kansans With Technology

Governor Laura Kelly approved the distribution of funds recommended by the Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Taskforce to assist local governments with addressing health and economic challenges inflicted by COVID-19. This money was designated to the CARES Act, which then allocated money to the State of Kansas for the purchase of iPads from Verizon with Wi-Fi. Because of that money, InterHab was able to give 40 iPads to OCCK to be distributed to persons with disabilities. OCCK also purchased 20 additional iPads and 20 hotspots with 12 months of service, from Nex-Tech Wireless.



The iPads were distributed to individuals with disabilities in our nine county service area. These devices will help individuals be able to communicate with their medical professionals, family, and others during this pandemic. The devices will also assist individuals with being able to purchase groceries through different programs offered in their communities and download other apps associated to their interests. We are thankful to be able to provide these useable devices through SPARK, CARES Act Funds, InterHab, Verizon and Nex-Tech.



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OCCK continues to receive gifts of service, products, consultations, and funds from individuals, businesses, and groups. We are grateful for your confidence and support.

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Evelyn Phillips, Lindsborg

## Alternate Formats

*Spotlight* and all other printed material produced by OCCK, Inc. are available in large type, electronically, or alternative languages. Please let us know if you'd like to receive this newsletter or any other document in one of these alternate formats. Call us at 785/827-9383 or 1-800-526-9731.

**We're Hiring!**  
**Check out**  
**our website**  
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