

TOGETHER WE  
CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE.

THE BRIDGE TO COMMUNITY

# Connections

2020 ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



## A WARM WELCOME & A HEARTFELT GOODBYE

With sincere gratitude for her leadership and vision, the Board of Southwest Opportunities Center announces the upcoming retirement of its Executive Director, Audrey Gaio-Johnston. Audrey has been with the agency for over 27 years, and her experience and knowledge are invaluable to the organization.

During her time as Executive Director, Audrey expanded the facility with two new additions, developed three new business ventures to enhance community-work experiences for our members, and expanded Supportive Home Care services, and developed new programs including Golden Opportunities and My Community. These programs emphasize on community involvement, building relationships, and career exploration.

Audrey has made exceptional sound decisions to ensure the success of adults with disabilities. Her ability to develop positive relationships with local businesses and community leaders has secured resources needed to further enhance the organization. Audrey's dedication to our agency has and will forever impact the individuals we serve. Thank you, Audrey, for your dedication; we wish you the best in your retirement!

With that said, Southwest Opportunities Center would like to welcome our new Executive Director, Derek Kruempel. Derek brings to our organization a wealth of knowledge, leadership, and management experience. We embrace Derek and know that his education, employment background, and personal experiences will be a tremendous asset to our future.

"I will miss the many relationships I've established and the ability to provide opportunities for individuals to learn and grow."

-Audrey Gaio-Johnston



## THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Due to the pandemic of COVID-19, the agency's Board of Directors decided to suspend various services for the safety and well-being of our community and the vulnerable population we serve. As months pass by, the uncertainty about what lies ahead is heartbreaking. Not only is our agency losing vital time and resources, but the individuals who depended on our services are being greatly affected. Our staff receives daily phone calls from members yearning to get back into their routine. They miss our agency and their co-workers. Their care-providers are also longing for a sense of normalcy, as many are now required to provide 24-7 care.

Despite the challenges and limitations our organization is experiencing, we have found ways to fulfill our mission and maintain social connections with the individuals we serve. Our staff provides members and their care providers with resources and ideas for at-home activities to promote structure and routine. To provide moral support, staff participates in weekly phone conversations, virtual meetings, and training opportunities.

Our agency continues to provide supports through transportation and job coaching for members employed at essential community-based businesses. Our Supportive Home Care Services continues to help individuals maintain independence and reduce their need to go into the community.

With that said, our Board of Directors would like to thank its staff and members of the community for their support and assistance. Because of you, we can continue to achieve our mission during this challenging time. To continue impacting lives, we ask that you consider partnering with our organization. Your contribution will assist in enhancing services and programming for individuals who rely on our agency for adequate support. Donations can be made through the enclosed envelope or on our agency's website [socinc.org](http://socinc.org).

**For questions in regards to your partnership, please contact the agency's Development Coordinator, Tori Leeser, at 608.723.6659.**

## EXPANDING COMMUNITY-INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

With the support of the community and organizations like United Way of Platteville, Southwest Opportunities Center has expanded community-based programming for adults with varying abilities. Career Trek was developed in the spring 2019 to provide individuals with opportunities to explore community-based employment and further improve job-readiness skills. The end-goal of the program is to prepare and empower participants to take the next step of seeking employment in the community. In order to provide participants with a high-impact experience towards achieving their goals, individualized attention is given through small groups of no more than four others.

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Individuals begin their participation in Career Trek by engaging in self-discovery activities that allow them to explore their interests, strengths, dislikes, and areas for growth. Educational experiences provide the participants with a better understanding of workplace expectations and help them hone their skills in areas such as communication, following directions, and problem-solving. Participants practice completing job applications, develop resumes, and learn how to articulate their work experiences through mock interviews.

Lastly, individuals experience a variety of job shadow opportunities and business tours to determine what types of jobs are available and of interest to them. Since May of 2019, eight members have participated in Career Trek, and all of them have expressed that they feel ready to pursue their goal of obtaining a job in the community.



## PREVOCATIONAL SERVICES OPPORTUNITIES TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT

The work and community learning experiences offered through our Prevocational Program are designed to support participants in pursuing their goals. Each member's path to community employment is unique and reflective of their individual interests and objectives. Individuals can choose to develop their skills through different types of paid work at our facility and local businesses, as well as participate in community-based learning programs.

Facility-based work includes a variety of production jobs such as assembling small parts and confidential document shredding to meet the needs of local businesses. These opportunities allow members to gain practical work experience while providing them with foundational skill development in areas such as communication, problem-solving and teamwork.

Individuals interested in janitorial work benefit from training at our facility and acquire significant work experience in the community at businesses and organizations who utilize our cleaning services.

Opportunities to develop skills while working at our agency-owned thrift store, "Your Neighborhood Thrift and Gift," provide relevant experience for members pursuing future employment related to retail or customer service.

Hands-on work at the "SunGarden Greenhouse" allows individuals to experience and consider potential jobs related to food production and packaging. As an agency we continue to seek opportunities for our members to gain meaningful work experiences that support their goals.

**For information, please contact our agency's Prevocational Coordinator/Case Manager Katy Zart-Kurandt at 608.723.6659**



## EXPANDING SERVICES TO YOUTH WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Southwest Opportunities Center recently became registered as a provider under the Children's Long Term Support (CLTS) Waiver Program. The program is structured under Medicaid funding and supports children and youth that have severe developmental, physical, and/or emotional disabilities. Expanding services to youth felt like a natural fit, and the CLTS Waiver Program aligned well with our current programming and mission; to provide opportunities for individuals to grow in everyday life and become an active and engaged member of the community. CLTS Program is a home and community-based service that supports individual choice, enhances relationships, and builds accessible, flexible service systems to help individuals achieve their maximum physical and mental health. Overall, the program promotes presence, participation, optimal social functioning, and inclusion within our community.

Our staff will provide children/youth and their families with support in developing a person-centered plan. The plan is individualized and promotes career planning, provides training in daily living skills, and encourages community inclusion so that each individual reaches their fullest potential. You will find that our organization offers the following services under the CLTS Registry: Day Services, Mentoring, Daily Living Skills Training, Supportive Home Care, Career Development, and Supportive Home Care. To find out more about the Children's Long Term Support program and the eligibility requirements, please visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/clts>.

**We are excited and look forward to the prospects of expanding our services and impacting new lives!**





## MEMBER HIGHLIGHT

### JEROME MONEYPENNY

Jerome Money Penny began his journey with Southwest Opportunities Center in 2012. In his eight years, he has shown tremendous growth and development. Since his involvement in our Prevocational Program, he has achieved many goals and has obtained a well-rounded set of skills necessary for community-integrated employment and independence.

Jerome's journey to employment began on our production floor, where he obtained essential skills through shredding confidential documents, assembling parts for Eagle Window & Door, and preparing baskets for Potosi Brewery. As his skills developed, he transitioned into our Community Prevocational Program, where he became a cleaner for the Grant County Public Defender's Office. Jerome has come a long way since his first community-based work experience. He now cleans over ten local businesses and is very proud of his work. When not cleaning in the community, he is expanding his skills at our agency's retail store, Your Neighborhood Thrift & Gift. This community work experience is ideal for him as his goal is to obtain employment in a retail environment.

In addition to his work experience, Jerome has participated in community learning programs, including Job Club, Career Trek, and My Community. Job Club and Career Trek supported his vocational development through peer-to-peer skills training, resume development, job shadows, and business tours to explore community-based employment. Through My Community, Jerome participated in Laundry 101 to learn and gain hands-on experience in properly washing, drying, and folding clothes. He successfully demonstrated independence in this skill prior to achieving his goal of moving into his own apartment in Platteville.

We are proud of the many goals Jerome has achieved along his path to community employment and independence!

"SOC taught me to work hard, explore different types of jobs, and make new friends."  
-Jerome Money Penny

## STORY OF SUCCESS

### DANIEL "DANNY" HASKAMP

Daniel Haskamp, who you may see at Kwik Trip in Lancaster, WI, is one of our many smiling faces currently working in the community. He has been with Kwik Trip since September of 2017 and works three mornings per week in the kitchen area. Daniel is one of many members that are given this opportunity through the agency's Community Employment Program, which is supported by Wisconsin's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Southwest Opportunities Center is proud of our employer partnerships and would like to express our appreciation to the area businesses for their commitment to inclusion.



"Danny is a joy to have on our team. He comes every day with a smile and ready to go. Danny is extremely good at doing jobs we might forget to do, such as changing furnace filters and checking salt in the water softeners."

-Junior Hill, Kwik Trip Manager (Lancaster, WI)

"My favorite part about working at Kwik Trip is the coworkers and getting to pick on my boss, Junior! Everyone is great here, and I enjoy getting to be working in the community, like everyone else does."

-Daniel Haskamp



## COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT

### TRAINING FOR INDEPENDENCE & INCLUSION

#### Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

Southwest Opportunities Center has been a strong supporter of community-integrated employment for many years. In collaboration with The State of Wisconsin's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), our agency has been able to assist numerous individuals in achieving their employment goals through our agency's Community Employment Program. This program is committed to assisting individuals with a wide range of abilities in obtaining competitive employment that is responsive to their choices, preferences, and goals. The program's objective is to ensure that all individuals acquire the skills to become productive and valuable members of our community.

Our agency works with participants to identify areas of vocational interest and establish an individualized plan to obtain and maintain employment. Support services include customized vocational training, job-search and interviewing skills, soft skills, employment support, and advocacy.

#### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Our agency also works closely with the local school systems to support the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), to provide transition services for youth with disabilities. The services are designed around each person's needs, interests, and goals. Together with the individual, their teachers, and families, we help to guide students through career exploration, job readiness training, and preparation for the job search. After obtaining community employment, our organization supports the individual with job retention to ensure continued, ongoing success. Our Community Employment Coordinator assists students in securing paid internships and work experiences while providing job coaching and on-the-job supports.

To ensure continued success of these programs, our Community Employment Coordinator maintains cohesive support through communication between ourselves, the participant, and the employer on a regular basis. Our Community Employment Program continues to grow as we expand our services and successfully place individuals within the community.

For information, please contact our agency's Community Employment Coordinator, Tammy Clauer, at 608.723.6659

# 2019 COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

## HUMANITARIAN (\$5,000 +)

John Haskins  
The Schneller Family Charitable Fund  
United Way of Platteville  
Wisconsin Council Knights of Columbus

## PATRON (\$2,500 - \$4,999)

Anonymous (1)  
Allegiant Oil, LLC  
Amcor Community Foundation

## BENEFACTOR (\$1,000 - \$2,499)

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Robert & Theresa Stader  
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## SUPPORTER (\$100 - \$249)

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Lancaster Dental Associates  
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Charles & Cathy Cornett  
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Dorothy Alcorn  
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Kathleen Kuenster-Vogt  
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Tom & Shirley Davies  
Tom & Tami Hoffman  
Vernon & Cecilia Deiter  
Virginia Rowe  
Wayne & Helen Raymond  
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William Schilling

## IN KIND DONORS

Allegiant Oil - Tina Hake  
Bills Body Shop - Bill Doan  
Frank & Karen Kilcoyne  
Holiday Gardens  
JAS Candies  
Ma's Bakery  
Morrissey Printing, Inc.  
Potosi Brewery  
Queen B Radio (WGRL)  
Webwise Design & Marketing  
Midwest Builders  
EMC Solutions

*thank you*

Thank you for helping our organization make a difference and provide essential services to adults with disabilities. Our agency is very fortunate to have the generous support of so many individuals and businesses.



## MEMORIAL DONATIONS:

In Memory of Joe McCarthy from A&R Farms LLC, Michael & Amy Enlow, Paul & Laura Hartman, Daniel & Jill Koeller, James & Karin McMahon, Kathy Murdock, and Kathleen Schink  
In Memory of Abby Cullen from Abby's Helpers  
In Memory of Cyril & Florentine Abing from The Abing Children & Peggy Sturmer  
In Memory of Vicki Ardnt from an Anonymous Donor, Cindy & Terry Arndt, Carol & Linda Ihm, and Doug & Carol Needham  
In Memory of Carson Alcorn from Dorothy Alcorn  
In Memory of Tom & Richard Dresen from Jane Bernhardt  
In Memory of Glenda Birkett from Charles Birkett  
In Memory of Albert & Marilyn Breuer from Lester Breuer  
In Memory of Lori Bartling from Louise Brockman  
In Memory of Barbara Ann Spicuzza from Anonymous Donor  
In Memory Brenda Smith from Charles & Cathy Cornett  
In Memory of Robert Craig from Karen Craig  
In Memory of Richard K Goke & Eugene G Digman from Janice Digman  
In Memory of Kenneth & Hazel Morshead by Judy Elskamp  
In Memory of Al Fletcher from Kaye & Robin Gilbertson  
In Memory of Larry Taylor from Gary & Barb Hazen  
In Memory of Ruth Eastlick from Carol Ann Hood and Margaret Jones  
In Memory of Harold Houston from Donna & Tina Houston  
In Memory of Our Son, Ronald Ihm from Leroy & Bernice Ihm  
In Memory of Martha & Jerry Schmidt from Joe & Melanie Reynolds  
In Memory of Harold White from Carolyn Knapp-White  
In Memory of Ora Leighty from Joan Kuehl  
In Memory of Byron Landon from Wilma Landon  
In Memory of Vern Lewison from Sue Lewison  
In Memory of June Curley from Tom & Cindy Martens and an Anonymous Donor  
In Memory of Clarence & Arlyne Nuti from Wayne C Nuti  
In Memory of Clinton Orton from Norma Orton  
In Memory of Sharon Odyne from Barbara Parsons  
In Memory of Bart Rice from Richard & Joanne Rice  
In Memory of Leo Adrian Jr from Joe & Geraldine Schaal  
In Memory of Kaufman & Schauff Families from Morris & Patricia Schauff  
In Memory of Antoinette Nichols from Karen Slaman  
In Memory of Charles Hoffman, Marian Hoffman, & Troy Hoffman from Star Oak Farms  
In Memory of Miles Starrett & Kamala Starrett from Norma Starrett  
In Memory of Ed & Hazel Stauffacher from Bob & Paula Stauffacher  
In Memory of JoAnn Uppena from Curt Uppena  
In Memory of Larry VanNatta from Ron & Diane VanNatta  
In Memory of Kent White from Scott White  
In Memory of Lindsay Wubben from Betty & Dan Wubben  
In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. B. Reding and Mr. & Mrs. Clarence Cadwell from Loren & Mary Cadwell  
In Memory of David W Timmerman from Sharon Harwick-Kieler and Ron & Rosie Timmerman

## HONORARIUM DONATIONS:

In Honor of Corey Adrian from Gene & Phyllis Adrian, Loren & Ellen Adrian, Eric & Janet Schauff, Mike & Darlene Schauff, and Serenity Bluff, LLC.  
In Honor of Ron Blume from Anonymous Donor  
In Honor of Alex Riemenapp & Heidi Loy from Delores Bollant  
In Honor of Kim Cliff from Cheryl Budack, Bernard & Elaine Keller, and Barb Mergen  
In Honor of Mayzie Carns from Anita Carns  
In Honor of Christina Cathman from Tom & Kim Cathman and Doreen & Scott Wood  
In Honor of Craig Orton from Pat & Rita Riley, Marcella Danti and John & Jean Slack  
In Honor of Victoria L Everix from Emil & Pauline Everix  
In Honor of Kelsey Leibfried from Eric & Lisa Gotzinger, Lila Hochhausen, Robert & Catherine Irish, Kevin Leibfried, Potosi's Best Companies, and Chris & Crysti Prange  
In Honor of Randy Jenny, the Best Husband & Father from Dawn Jenny  
In Honor of Annette Schmidt from Joe & Melanie Reynolds  
In Honor of Amy Johll from Robert & Jeanette Johll, Nancy Pearson, Jack & Julie Wiegman, and Nick Wiegman  
In Honor of Amanda Brewer from an Anonymous Donor  
In Honor of Terry Custer from an Anonymous Donor  
In Honor of the Girls from Vondra's Group Home from Pam LaBarge  
In Honor of Craig Loeffelholz from Dan & Cindy Leibfried and LaVern & Ruth Wiederholt  
In Honor of Kathy Curley from Tom & Cindy Martens  
In Honor of Sharon Wells from Tom & Linda Parrish  
In Honor of Robert Richard from Frank & Laura Richard  
In Honor of Ron Kaiser from William Schilling  
In Honor of Linda Lane from an Anonymous Donor  
In Honor of the UMC Cleaning Crew from Serenity Bluff, LLC.  
In Honor of Alaine Sitts from Bea & Alaine Sitts  
In Honor of All the Individuals SOC Cares For from Robert & Teresa Stader  
In Honor of Jeremy Miller from Jennifer Strand  
In Honor of the Staff of SOC from Gary & Pat Swanstrom  
In Honor of Kim Cliff & Chris Cathman from Richard & Sandy Taylor  
In Honor of Chad Schmid from Patti Townsend  
In Honor of Sharon Wells, Paul Graser, & Alex Riemenapp from Dean & Nancy Vogel  
In Honor of Dale Felder from Gerald & Pat Felder

**Remember, you,  
too, can help  
ensure our future!**

Southwest Opportunities Center (SOC) strives to achieve a lasting, positive impact on our members, their families, and care providers. This would not be possible without the continued generosity and partnership from individuals, businesses, and organizations within our community.

With your assistance, we will continue to provide beneficial programs and services to individuals within our community.

- Monetary Donation
- In-Kind Donation
- Memorial or Honorary Gifts
- Planned Giving
- Event Support/Attendance
- Volunteer Opportunities

Please contact our agency's Development Coordinator, Tori Leeser, at 608.723.6659 on ways you can support our organization!







# SOCIAL INCLUSION & COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY

Last summer, a group of five of our agency's members including individuals from our Prevocational Services and Golden Opportunities Programs began their journey as companion volunteers with St. Croix Hospice. The purpose of companion volunteering is to provide support through social connection, activities, or simply listening and being present with hospice patients. In order to become volunteers, members completed applications and participated in nearly six hours of training that provided them with important information to help them be effective and responsible in their new roles. They learned about professional boundaries, stress management, confidentiality, infection control, and more. The St. Croix Hospice Volunteer Coordinator provided these trainings in a classroom-type setting, and the participants loved this learning experience. Once the group completed their trainings, they received certificates of accomplishment to recognize their hard work.

Since November, several participants and a staff member have been going to the Lancaster Health Services nursing home every Tuesday to visit with patients. During the visits, participants have had the opportunity to listen to patients tell their stories and share memories. The individuals have even learned some Lancaster history from the patients they visit. At the end of each visit, they complete clinical notes alongside one of our staff members in order to report their patient interactions to St. Croix Hospice care providers. This volunteer opportunity has provided our members with valuable skill development, and allowed them to build community connections through inter-generational dialogue.

We are very grateful to the St. Croix Hospice Volunteer Services team for partnering with us to make this opportunity possible for our members. This volunteer program is offered through our agency's My Community program which provides a range of community engagement opportunities aimed to increase community involvement and independence among our members.

## AWARDED GRANTS

- Alliant Energy Foundation
- Andersen Community Foundation
- Amcor Community Foundation
- Lancaster Community Fund
- Platteville Community Fund
- United Way of Platteville
- Wisconsin Council Knights of Columbus

## 2019 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

"A MOVEMENT TO FULL INCLUSION"

### \$1,000

- Royal Bank
- Frank & Laura Richard
- Scenic Rivers Energy Cooperative
- Sue Rinehart

### \$500

- Midwest Builders, Inc.
- Peoples State Bank
- Dupaco Community Credit Union
- TRICOR Insurance
- Verlo Mattress (Dubuque)-Rod Leibfried

### \$250

- Clare Bank
- Mike & Brenda Dalecki
- Esterline AVISTA
- Tom & Agnes Hughes
- Harry & Judy Reddy
- Joe & Stephanie Mohlmann
- Mound City Bank
- Southwest Heath Center
- Pink's Automotive Service, Inc. & Goodney's Garage

### \$150

- Community First Bank
- MidwestOne Bank
- Martha's Hot Mustard
- Access Systems formerly Midwest Business Products







# VINES & STEINS

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2020**

Due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, our agency postponed its 17th Annual Vines & Steins Fundraising Event, one of the most significant fundraising events of the year. Though it was a difficult decision, we knew that it was the best decision for the safety of our community.

Our agency has rescheduled the event for Saturday, September 12, 2020. Similar to previous years, Vines & Steins will be hosted at the Holiday Gardens in Potosi, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. The event will include a delicious dinner, wine, beer, and cheese tasting, as well as live and silent auctions, bucket raffles, and grand prize drawings.

A special thank you to Tina Hake of Allegiant Oil, LLC for once again joining the Vines & Steins Event Committee. We appreciate all of your support and know the event wouldn't be the same without your dedication.

## PRESENTING SPONSORS

Allegiant Oil, LLC and TRICOR Insurance

## DIAMOND SPONSORS

Honkamp Krueger & CO, P.C., Holiday Gardens, and Relative Restoration (Rod Pink)

## PLATINUM SPONSORS

Applied Micro Technologies, LV Laboratories, LLC., 1UP USA, and Walnut Hollow

## GOLD SPONSORS

Peoples State Bank, JAS Candies, Community First Bank, Tennyson/Potosi Community Bank, Dupaco Community Credit Union, and State Farm (Jaclyn Bevan Agent-Lancaster)

## SILVER SPONSORS

Lancaster Machine & Tool, and The Hair Shack

# ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2020**

Southwest Opportunities Center held its Annual Golf Tournament at the Lancaster Country Club on Saturday, July 20, 2019. Golfers were able to show their competitive side as they competed in a Best Ball style tournament throughout nine holes of golf. Contests were presented at each hole, and participants had the opportunity to add to their loot of raffle tickets!

Though the state had been experiencing a heat-wave during that time, the tournament turned out incredible and raised just under \$5,000. Everyone walked away with some incredible memories, including being squirted with water guns by two of the agency's members!

Our agency would like to thank all of the event sponsors, donors, volunteers, and golfers for their participation in the event. Please save the date for this year's tournament, Saturday, August 2nd, and we look forward to seeing you on the green!

## PRESENTING SPONSOR

Allegiant Oil

## PLATINUM SPONSORS

Rayovac and Professional Properties, LLC (Jim & Karen Schneller)

## GOLD SPONSORS

Royal Bank, Southwest Health of Platteville, Midwest Builders, and Hughes Dental Clinic

## SILVER SPONSORS

Faherty Inc., Zippy's Brass Rail, JAS Candies, Lancaster Dental, Martha's Hot Mustard, Penny's 1-Hour Photo, WGLR, The Shopping News, Mound City Bank, and Tri-Com US Cellular/Radio Shack



*save the dates*



## Southwest Opportunities Center

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Southwest Opportunities Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) Community Rehabilitation Center. Since 1988 we have been dedicated to providing community and facility based programming for adults with disabilities. Services are offered to individuals who live in Grant County and the surrounding communities of Southwest Wisconsin.

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# Southwest Opportunities Center

