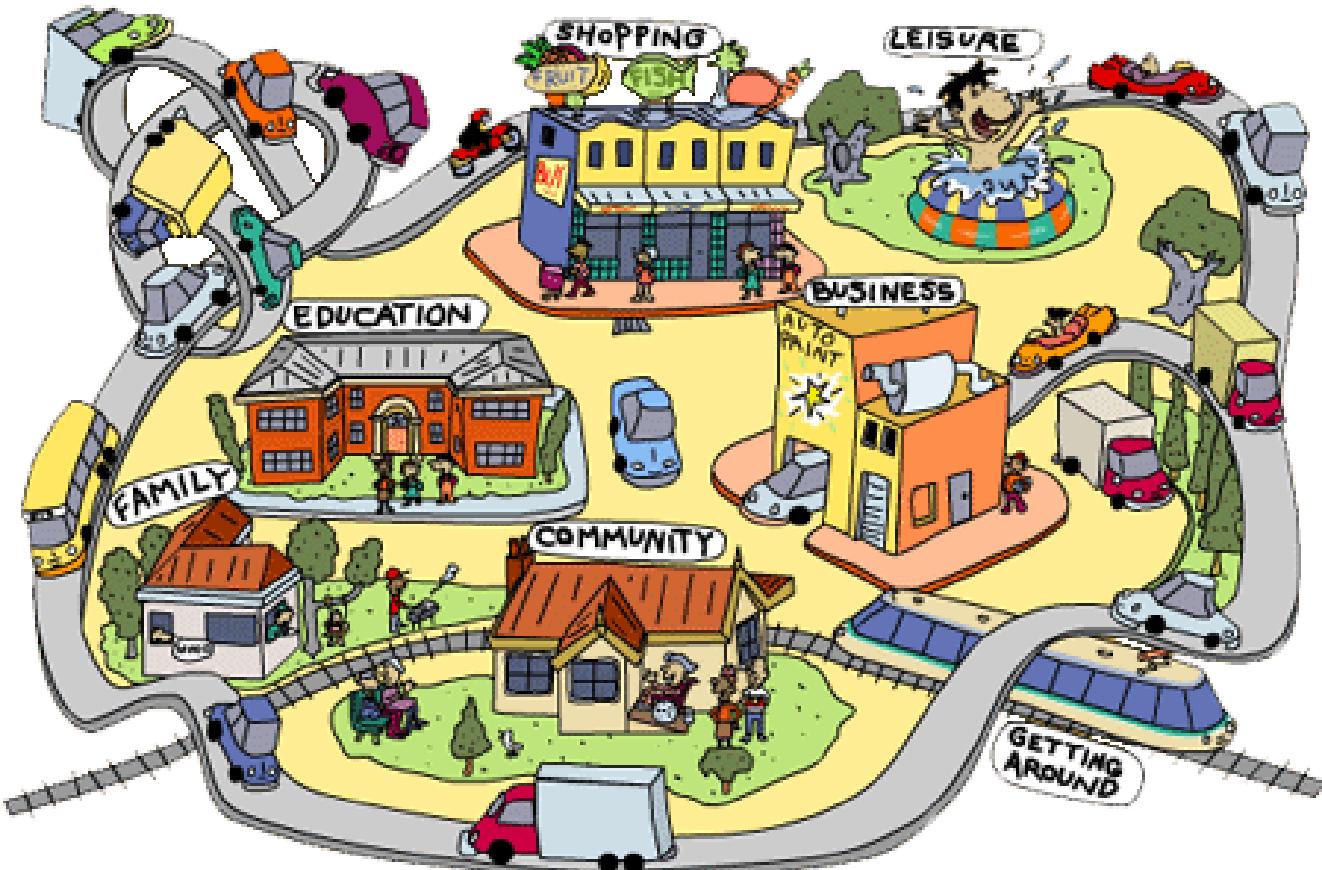


# The AC Community Chronicle

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 and Homer Areas!

Alternative Choices has something for everyone! Our brand new volunteer site is located in Albion at 101 Albion Street, Albion, MI 49224. 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 job-related skills.

Our Community Inclusion Program, located at 555 East Emmett Street in Battle Creek, MI 49017 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!

The Learning Center, located at 493 W. Michigan Avenue in Battle Creek, MI 49037 provides an opportunity for individuals to work in a classroom setting to obtain 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, please contact us at  
269-339-3840.



## Check It Out!

### Driver's Training (test studying only), Art and Gardening have arrived.

Join us to work on gardening skills, how to take the test for a temporary driver's permit, making various art projects such as sensory bottles and so much more. We are offering classes that participants have shown a great interest in and are loving.

*Coming Soon:*

Spanish classes taught using the Rosetta Stone curriculum.

*SE HABLA  
ESPAÑOL*



(Spanish is spoken here.)



## Need a Ride? We Provide!

Transportation is included in our services, the only thing that you need to bring is a lunch. Tours of our programs can be scheduled by calling the office.

If you would like to meet with a company representative to discuss which of our three programs is right for you, just give us call at 269-966-1446 and we'll get you set up with an appointment.





# Effective Tools for Teaching Good Personal Boundaries

## *Help with Personal Boundaries*

Following is a brief guide to help you positively influence the personal boundary needs of your loved one with a developmental disability.

For young adults with developmental disabilities, working towards a more autonomous state of being can be a long and arduous process. One of the first barriers that these individuals face is the development of personal nurturing skills. In this issue, we have included some techniques that can help you in this journey.

### **Highly Effective Tools to Try:**



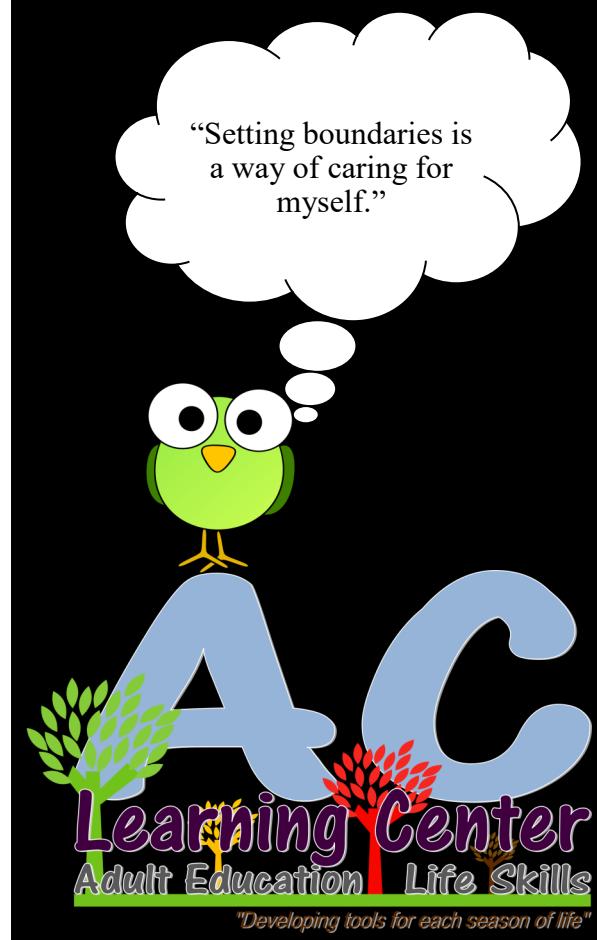
- Set safe and reasonable ways to behave around others** – this helps to understand what is expected and what is inappropriate vs. appropriate in a relationship. Setting personal boundaries are rules or limits that someone sets for themselves. By setting these rules and limits, social outings and situations will become less stressful and easier to manage for the individual.
- Model the rules and limitations that are appropriate** – this helps an individual to understand social norms and expectations such as personal space, loudness, respect for others' property, etc.
- Establish a reward system** – develop a system that encourages and fosters growth for the individual as she/he improves in their quest for autonomy.
- Stay positive** – this is by far the most important tool! Remember, positivity and encouragement can go a long way toward overcoming obstacles and achieving goals.

Beat the heat, stay hydrated, cool off as often as possible and apply sunscreen as needed. Wear hats and sunglasses to protect your face and eyes from the sun.

This was a lesson that all of our participants remembered well and took with them as they went to Leila Arboretum Society in Battle Creek, MI to walk the trails, see the gardens and the greenhouse for an afternoon.



It's important to demonstrate correct and incorrect ways of doing things.





## Let's Get Ready for Summer Festivities

This summer, Alternative Choices has many programs, and other fun events such as: trips to the library to learn about different cultures around the world, trips to MCTI where they will learn about dorm life and what is expected in college. Individuals interested have the opportunity to learn a new language beginning with Spanish. We here at AC Learning Center are also working on things such as GED training and driver's training practice. At AC Learning Center, we have our very own garden in which the students dug up the dirt, got the weeds out, rototilled by hand, fertilized and planted. We are now awaiting our harvest. Everyone is super excited to taste the fruits of their labor.

We have had a lot of fun so far. Spirit week was June 19th - 23rd where we had Monday as *shorts and long socks day*. Tuesday was *crazy hat and sunglasses day*. Wednesday, we cruised through the middle of the week with *wacky tourist day*. Thursday was *Hawaiian shirt/summer clothes day*. Wrapping up the week on Friday we had *wacky beach hair day*. Everyone is having a blast learning new skills, being social, and growing together. We have recently been on excursion in which participants were able to experience the music and culture of Africa. In the bottom right picture our participants were dancing and having a good time.



Crazy hat & sunglasses day



Preparing the soil for the garden



Students learning an African dance



## Program Changes

AC Learning Center students made a trip to Tractor Supply Company to purchase picnic tables for our backyard. We have planted flowers outside in which the students have been responsible for the upkeep and maintenance. We have been working on healthy lifestyles that include hygiene, fitness, personal space, as well as relationships.



The guys picking up picnic tables from Tractor Supply Co.



## Welcoming our New Team Members

We are welcoming some new team members to the mix this summer season. We have first and foremost, our lovely Amanda Olsen who is our new program manager, Corrine Scott who is an instructor, and the all amazing Marcia Lang who is pulling double duty around the center as our driver and teacher's assistant. The students are adapting well to the new hires and are getting along well.



Amanda Olsen



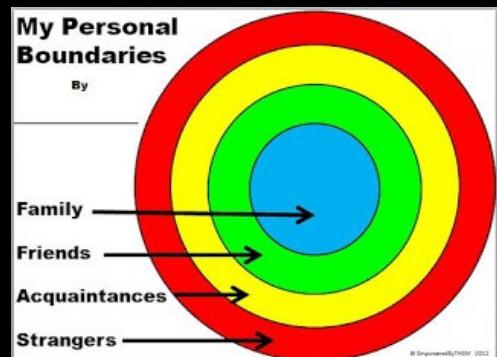
Corrine Scott



Marcia Lang

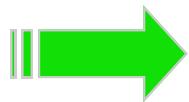


At AC Learning Center, we teach that students can learn from and teach their peers. Captured here is one of our students who voluntarily helped another student with reading. Participants often struggle with reading and writing and peer support can mean a world of difference when it comes to feeling confident in reading and writing. Here, we encourage teamwork and unity.



AC Learning Center is focusing on *personal boundaries* with our physical, emotional, personal belongings, visual space and hearing space.

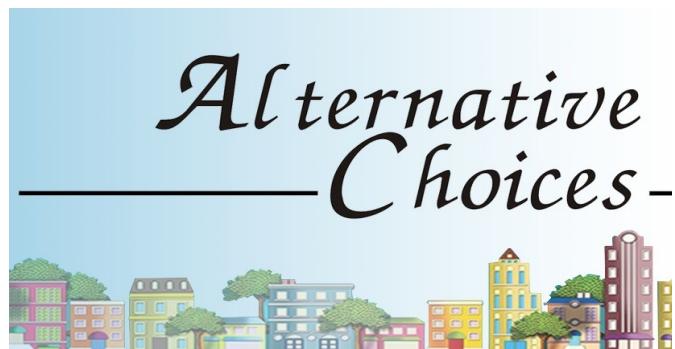
We are setting goals to work toward independence, learning to drive, becoming more social and many other goals that participants set for themselves. Staff are here to assist in setting goals and working with participants in achieving them.



## Community Inclusion

Participants for our Albion location visit University Lanes to get out into the community, get some social time as well as learn a fun new way to get some exercise. Pictured left is Jami and right is Tequida. As you

can see by their smiling faces, we have their approval. Regular community outings are something that we do at our programs to focus on socialization as well as helping participants to feel like they are a part of the community.



## Trying New Things

Blanchford Nature Center brought new animals for participants to experience new things. Often times, new things can create a great sense of anxiety for our participants. Being able to introduce them to new things in the safety of our center helps to ease this anxiety and create an atmosphere of trust and joy for the newly introduced concept. Thanks to organizations like Blanchford Nature Center we are able to work together on creating such experiences.

Pictured right: Amanda petting a bunny from Blanchford Nature Center



## Promoting Healthy Eating

Let's Get Cooking!

At Alternative Choices, the participants helped plant an herb garden to use in their foods for cooking classes. By growing their own herbs, participants are more eager and excited to try new foods and recipes that they can include herbs from their own garden. In the AC programs we like to focus on incorporating everything that we do into building life skills. It gives our students a sense of independence to grow their own herbs and then learn to use them in their cooking.



The World Is Your Playground

## Active Citizens



## For Alternative Choices Art is...

Art is...

- *a major stress reliever.*
- *a source of comfort.*
- *an expression of innermost feelings that sometimes cannot be spoken.*
- *a picture of what the mind sees.*
- *so very important in all of our lives.*
- *a must.*

When our participants create something with their own hands it gives them a sense of pride and independence. We provide an environment that inspires and encourages creativity in our classes.



AC Learning Center  
493 West Michigan Ave.  
Battle Creek, MI 49037  
P: 269-339-3840

AC Community Inclusion  
555 E. Emmett St.  
Battle Creek, MI 49017  
P: 269-966-1446

TEAM  
**AWESOME**

**Follow us:** 

[www.facebook.com/aclearningcenters](http://www.facebook.com/aclearningcenters)  
[www.facebook.com/accommunityinclusion](http://www.facebook.com/accommunityinclusion)

**Visit us at:** [www.a-choices.com](http://www.a-choices.com)



## Mission Statement

Our mission is to empower individuals within our community, providing them with essential life skills that lead to a higher sense of self-worth, new career opportunities, and a better quality of life.



## 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.