



A Message From Our Executive Director

JENNIFER CONRAD

So much has happened since our last Magnolia Matters newsletter! We have held several fund raising events, started two new programs, brought in new leadership staff, and have begun planning for our November Moonlight Gala.

In March, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Ye Olde College Inn hosted its second annual give-back event with an evening of food, friendship, and fundraising. Magnolia had its first team of charity runners in the Crescent City Classic. On April 13th, twenty runners raised \$17,442 helping to ensure that our residents live their best lives. Then on May 7th, Magnolia was one of over 1000 nonprofits participating in GiveNOLA Day. Our families and friends rallied once again to raise over \$44,000. These funds helped pay for vehicle updates to our fleet. And – SAVE THE DATE for Magnolia's annual Moonlight Gala on Friday, November 1st. With a Fiesta theme, we are excited to celebrate with Latin food, music, and décor. We know you will not want to miss all the fun at Magnolia Moonlight Fiesta this year!

We are proud to share the successful launch of our **Employment for All** partnership with Ochsner Health System. This intense internship program with several rotations, allows individuals to experience a variety of work environments to help them decide the best type of work for a permanent, competitive position. Four of our residents are nearing completion of their second

rotation. Thanks to the Louisiana Legislature, we have secured our second year of funding for this project. Magnolia now offers group therapy sessions for our residents, thanks to a generous grant from Hancock Whitney Bank. These groups focus on relationship building and how to be a good friend and housemate. Many of our residents look forward to these weekly guided sessions showing a definite improvement in the quality of their relationships.

In May, we welcomed two new members of our leadership team – Ngina Benoit, as one of our Client Care Managers, and Liz Yager, as Development Director.

Every day, I look forward to engaging with our family of residents. I am proud of our dedicated employees from direct support professionals to the administrative staff, who go above and beyond to provide support and care with commitment and compassion.

Wishing you all a cool summer. We would love to see you! If you find yourself in the neighborhood, please feel free to stop by and see our residents in action. You know you will get lots of smiles! Just give us a call.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Conrad

We're Hiring

As a part of the Magnolia Team, your efforts make a difference in the lives of our clients.

We are looking for Direct Support Professionals (DSP) and Case Managers.

MORE INFORMATION & APPLY
www.mcs-nola.org/careers

Magnolia Welcomes New Employees From January 2024

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (DSP)

*Working directly with our residents
ensuring their needs are met while helping
them learn how to be more independent*

Javona Benjamin
Brian Broussard
Glenn Daniels
Trisheka Faison
Jasmine Holder
Jasmine Jackson
Jennifer Jackson
Shawn Murakami
Jovan Sam
Clarisse Zitem

TULANE STUDENT INTERN

*Social Work graduate student gaining
direct experience*

Monica Ruiz

SITE MANAGER

*Gate keeper to Magnolia campus fielding
calls of need*

Juan Turner

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE (LPN)

*Ensuring the physical well-being
of our residents*

Debbie Dwyer

CASE MANAGER

*Resident advocate coordinating client care
and individual needs*

Marissa Ford

CLIENT CARE MANAGER

*Oversees comprehensive care of
Magnolia's residents*

Ngina Benoit

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

*Builds awareness, capacity and resources
for Magnolia services*

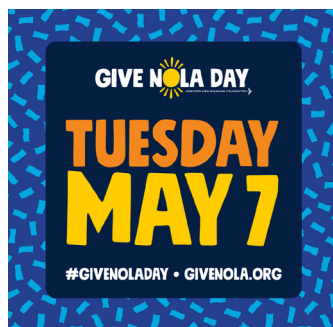
Liz Yager

Magnolia in the Community

CRESCENT CITY CLASSIC IS US!

This past April, Magnolia formed a running team and ran the 10K route to raise funds! With twenty runners, we are proud to share that we raised **\$17,442**. Each runner created their own campaign page and reached out to their friends and colleagues to help them attain their funding goal. A heart felt thank you to our runners and all the donors. We are grateful to Maggie Spell who spearheaded Magnolia's involvement. Team Magnolia plans to hit the streets again April 19, 2025.

We encourage you to join us to run or walk the race in support of Magnolia. Please contact Liz 504-731-1308 or lizy@mcs-nola.org to sign up!



GIVENOLA DAY

New Orleans' community online day of giving was Tuesday, May 7th. Magnolia is grateful for the generosity of the **140 donors who collectively raised \$44,481**. With over 1000 participating nonprofits, we are proud to share that Magnolia placed 23rd in funds raised. Thank you to all that helped spread the word and donated.



6TH ANNUAL GROWING MAGNOLIAS

The 6th Annual Growing Magnolias Bowling event was on Sunday, May 19th at Colonial Lanes. An abundance of items were raffled as winning tickets were drawn throughout the event resulting in over \$11,000 in funds raised. Many of our clients enjoyed bowling and socializing. Our Executive Director, Jennifer Conrad, and Development Director, Liz Yager, were honored to pick the grand prizes. Thank you to Colonial Lanes' Growing Magnolias founders, Steve and Melanie Perez for acquiring all raffle items and planning the event at the alley. We are grateful.



Mark Your Calendars

MAGNOLIA MOONLIGHT FIESTA

Friday, November 1, 2024 | 7:00pm – 10:00pm

Magnolia River Road Campus | Whitehall Grounds
100 Central Avenue, Jefferson, LA

Celebrating Latino culture, the evening will feature live music by Julio & Cesar, dancing, savory hors d'oeuvres with Hispanic inspired dishes, libations and a wide array of unique and coveted auction items.

Our largest annual fundraiser directly benefits Magnolia clients and services. YOUR support will enable us to continue to lead the way and reach our ambitious goal.

PURCHASE SPONSORSHIPS OR TICKETS:
mcs-nola.org/magnoliagala



MORE INFORMATION:

Liz Yager: 504-731-1308 or lizy@mcs-nola.org





100 CENTRAL AVENUE
JEFFERSON, LA. 70121



GIVE TODAY

MCS-NOLA.ORG/SUPPORT

LIZY@MCS-NOLA.ORG

504.731.1308

FOLLOW US: @MCS_NOLA



Profiles of Magnolia

RACQUEL CASTANEDA

*Client Care Manager,
Magnolia Employee since 2018*

“Growing up with a younger brother with Downs Syndrome greatly influenced my life,” proudly notes Racquel. With parents who did not speak English, Racquel, from the age of 5, became her brother’s advocate, forging a lifelong passion for taking care of people. After doing advocacy work post college, Racquel found her calling at Magnolia where she worked directly with clients as a case manager. ***“I enjoyed meaningful time with my clients and felt like I was making a difference”***, notes Racquel. After 4 years, she was promoted to Residential Program Manager planning group home life alongside the client support staff. Then in early 2024, Racquel became Client Care Manager, a leadership management position she shares with Ngina Benoit.

As one of the Client Care Managers, Racquel oversees a portion of the staffing and amenities of the 21 group homes, ensuring that clients receive the staff attention, programming and care they need. She schedules recreational activities including art, cooking, fitness/wellness, and gardening and community outings including bowling, movies, library visits, shopping at the mall and walking in the park. In addition, under Racquel’s purview, is the recruitment and coordination of client and community volunteers.

Racquel is proud to see clients discover purpose and gain confidence through learning skills, securing jobs and volunteering in the community. She recalls Amanda who lost her volunteer job at East Jefferson General Hospital after COVID. The job loss was a great setback for Amanda. Once the community started opening, Racquel and the Magnolia team provided personal attention and individual preparation to rebuild her confidence allowing Amanda to ultimately secure a job in the hospital cafeteria. Racquel notes, ***“Seeing Amanda’s pride and sense of accomplishment along with helping all my clients live their best lives is what truly gives me purpose at Magnolia.”***

