

NIA ASSOCIATION

1st Quarter
Newsletter
March 31, 2011



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A Message from the Chief Executive Officer...

Dear Nia Associates,

We have reached a time in Nia Association's existence that is unprecedented. We have never before had to face the level of change that compares with the situations we have as of today. In our 12 year history, we are being forced to look at some strategies that are quite different from previous years. Each of us has enjoyed the security of an employment safety net when our financial bottom line was in the "black." That's no longer the case; we are now operating with a "red" (negative) monthly bottom line. Although there have been two Department of Finance funding cuts from the State and we lost three Service Recipients last year, we have tried with all our might to prevent the effects from Nia Associates. Before now, you did not know that all executive and management staff salaries were frozen and some benefits were discontinued last year indefinitely. Most of you probably do not know why the 90-day freeze on pay increases was necessitated at the end of last year. Well, it's time that we inform you that the aforementioned changes are merely the beginning of changes to come.

They must be made in order that Nia remains solvent. Therefore, we humbly ask that you commit to keeping this ministry alive by first providing the best care possible for the people you support. Secondly, we ask that you become mindful of waste, fraud and unnecessary expenses. Turn out lights that are not being used. Turn down or turn off the thermostat while it is warmer outside. You probably don't know the exorbitant utility bills are passed on for Nia Association to pay because the Service Recipients don't have the funds.

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Unfortunately, the pay freeze will be extended until further notice. Although we as many other organizations, find ourselves operating in an environment of fiscal and other limitations, we believe in our "Ministry of Supports." As such, we have taken a number of important and necessary steps to constrain and prioritize spending so that we can continue to be an active community employer. We'll continue to work very hard to discover new ways to do as much, if not more, with fewer resources.

On our Services side, we are determined to recognize consistently outstanding performance at the time of evaluations. We will begin to have Quarterly Recognition of the Home of the Quarter completion. Some of your exceptional supports and housekeeping reviews merit recognition. Finally, although we are in the midst of a reorganization effort that's intended to help us better meet today's unprecedented challenges; we earnestly solicit your dedication in helping to keep Nia Association as one of the few exceptional provider agencies in Middle Tennessee. I can assure that each one that sews fertile seeds will reap the favorable harvest from what each has sewn.

Serving According to God's Purpose,

Carol C. Stevens
Chief Executive Officer

A Message from the Executive Director

My role as the Executive Director affords me the opportunity to do some extra special things. I want to share with you several most recent opportunities that surely attest to “who we are and whose we are.” Nia Association most recently committed to assisting two entities here in the Clarksville-Montgomery county area. First, we are partnering with the Clarksville Montgomery County School System, namely Kenwood Middle School, to render support during the TCAP testing April 12 – April 15. Secondly, we will render support to Fort Campbell, KY, in particular EFMP (Exceptional Family Member Program) as they shine the light on Autism.

As an employment network, advocates of change and concerned citizens of Montgomery County, we know that the TCAP criterion reveals valuable information regarding student’s progress. This progress helps to ready our children for the wonderful tomorrows that we wish for them and our community. In partnering with EFMP as it relates to Autism Awareness we are shining a light on a disorder that, from all reports and accounts, are on the rise. It’s not clear whether this is due to better detection and reporting of autism, a real increase in the number of cases, or both.

The commitments do not take from our work....these commitments and others like it...are our work. We believe and stand by the attestation that it takes a village. We know that to truly endorse and support the 100% Graduation rate of CMCSS it means meeting and assisting the children and the schools prior to the High School commitments.

We know that it means pouring into them while they are yet young and aiding in any way that we can to show support and encouragement. We also know that since our mission is to deliver exceptional services to individuals that have intellectual and developmental disabilities...it sometimes means rendering services to those who are not serviced in our residential or personal assistance setting.

As the Executive Director, I want to personally commend the employees of Nia Association for your willingness to step up and assist whenever asked. It says a great deal about “who you are and whose you are” not only as employees but individuals. It also helps to further convey and support the adage that was spoken by Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole some time ago: “**The ultimate expression of generosity is not in giving of what you have, but in giving of who you are.**”

Yours in Leadership,

Cheryl E. Durham
Executive Director



Affordable Housing Opportunities...



**Now Accepting Applications!
1 Vacancy**

1 bedroom, 1 bath communal living \$400. utl. Incl.

An application can be downloaded online at:
<http://www.niaassociation.org/affordableHousing.htm>
For more information about our affordable housing program contact Gwen Stevens at 931-906-3993 or email

gstevens@niaassociation.org



We are a fair housing agency that provides affordable homes for families and individuals.

A Message from the COO

Hello Teammates,

From a business perspective, when one manages time, one tends to segment or divide it. Having said that, I like to gauge time in quarters, you know like four quarters in a football game or four periods in a basketball game etc...the ability to know where you are in the game and how much time is left is very important in the game plan.

I trust you the reader, the team can appreciate my analogy and the parallels to follow given that Nia is nearing the end of the first quarter in this all-important year.

As we end the first quarter, there are some important factors we all must keep in mind; one is practice (training). It is important to the team that we show up for practice (training) as that enables us to continue to hone our skills and can even prevent injuries (worker's comp).

Another factor is communication, we have to know and communicate what we know and do not know effectively; poor communication leads to dropped balls and/or errant passes.

Lastly, knowing your assignment is another factor, as each role (position) is important; we must know, understand, and respect the relationship of parts or positions to each other, and to the whole.

In closing, there are many, many factors; please give thought to the abovementioned factors as well as some of the others you may know of. As the Chief Operations Officer for Nia Association (our team) I ask each of us to continue to give 100% to the game. In my 12 years as a player, I have no doubt we are winners, we've proven that, so let's continue to do what winners do.

Thanks for all of the hard-work and commitment.

Sincerely,

Derrick Stevens
Chief Operations Officer

From the Services Department

We made it through another winter! Thank you to all Program Coordinators for helping getting those that needed a ride to work. Thank you to all the Home Directors, Team Leaders and DSPs that braved the snowy weather and continued to deliver quality services. You all worked together to ensure that our service recipients received the support they deserve. All your efforts were much appreciated.

With the ever changing economy, the Services Department has shown that we can do more with less. We have fewer employees in the Services Department than we did last year and we are still providing great services to our recipients. I know at times it has been hard, but everyone has hung in there and worked as a team. This as well has been much appreciated. Now that we've made it through the cold, we can look forward to warmer days and lots of sunshine. With those wonderful days, I know that everyone will be looking forward to taking time off and vacations.

Please remember that all vacation requests must be submitted in writing at least two weeks ahead of time. These requests are not approved until the Program Coordinator and I have signed off on them. I encourage everyone to enjoy this time of year and make your requests according to the policy.

Two more reminders... with the weather getting nice again, please remember that there is no eating or drinking in the company vehicles. Lastly, company vehicles should be cleaned every two weeks. Money for this can be requested at the office.

Thank you again for your dedication and hard work and remember:

Coming up in the next few months we will be getting prepared for our next QA audit. Please help your Program Coordinator in making sure the house that you work in is always guest ready and ready for inspection at all times. The better prepared we are, the better the audit will go

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit."-Aristotle

Mrs. Jennifer McNeill
Chief Services Officer

From the Medical Department

Spring is finally here! Please be sure to apply sunscreen when recipients are outdoors (for those who have orders); and if a recipient needs an order for it, please contact the medical department. Since the temperature is constantly changing please assist recipients with the appropriate dress. Be mindful of how much time recipients spend in vehicles or with activities. Take frequent breaks. Spring is a great time to be outdoors but also can present some hazards, sunburn, insect bites, allergies, and etc. Continue to report changes to your supervisor as they occur. If someone has an order for PRN allergy medications please ensure medication is current.

Just a reminder: Pharmacy pick up days are Wednesday and Friday unless otherwise notified. Please have all med orders faxed by Tuesday COB and Thursday COB. Please anticipate med pick up days when ordering meds. The 7 day supply rule is a guideline; however, this does not mean a medication cannot be ordered before it is down to a 7 day supply. Medications should not drop down below a 7 day supply.

There has been a sharp increase in the number of medication errors. Please remember that giving medication is a huge responsibility and should never be taken lightly. Our errors could have serious consequences to the recipients. Procedures are put in place to help prevent these errors and should never be put off because they take too much time. For instance, proper shift change, counting medication, checking MAR, seven rights, matching label to MAR, house inspections, and communication, just to name a few. Remember, haste and habit should not replace, caution and care.

Have a great spring!

Deborah Lanier, LPN
Laverne Sweet, RN

Important dates to remember...

Walnut Grove Board Meeting – Saturday, April 9, 2011
Nia Board Meeting - TBD
Special Olympics Spring Games - April 2011
HD/TL Meetings – Monday, April 25th, May 23rd, June 27th
TN Mega Disability Conference – June 2– 3, 2011

For Our Community

Ft. Campbell Walk for Autism will be held on Saturday, April 23, 2011 from 9a-12p at Fryar Stadium Fort Campbell, KY. Bring your friends and family to the walk in support of Autism Awareness Month.

The Kidney Walk will be held on Saturday, April 3 2011 beginning 8a at Austin Peay. For additional information on either of these events, please contact Mrs. Tiffany Edinburg at 931-906-3993 between the hours of 8a-4p Monday through Friday.

Human Resources Department

Nia Association is currently seeking position(s) for **Direct Support Professional and Personal Assistants**

For more information go to our website at www.niaassociation.org or contact our Human Resources Department.



Welcome Our Newest Associates!!!

This quarter we would like to recognize and welcome our newest associates: Felicia Banks, DSP - Alvin Brooks, Team Leader - Desumba Hampton, DSP - Cathy Lozier, Team Leader - Margaret Massey, DSP - Angie McGee, Front Desk Coordinator, Scottkey Miller, DSP - Cynthia Stallworth, Team Leader - Shanna Strickland, DSP - Brandon Trammel, DSP.

Congratulations!

Aleca Miller was promoted to Team Leader

*******Employee Recognition Program/**
Home of the Quarter resumes June 2011*****

Benefits Information:

AFLAC Open Enrollment Dates

April 12, 2011 from 2-4:30pm and
April 21, 2011 from 8-10:30am

Your Human Resource Team

Tiffany Edinburg, Executive Officer
Priscilla Hansen, Human Resource Specialist