



# VANDERHEYDEN

Giving new life to youth, adults and families



## NEWSLETTER



Vanderheyden had the honor of celebrating the achievements of our Graduating High School Seniors and our 8th grade students advancing to high school at our 2025 Commencement Ceremony.

Our keynote speaker was Monica Marvin, a former resident and student of Vanderheyden, she was a powerful example of resilience and determination. Currently enrolled in a doctoral program, her inspiring remarks reminded us of the transformative power of support, education, and believing in yourself.



### Pioneer Donates 10K to The Vandy Thrift Shoppe

We are proud to share that Pioneer has awarded \$10,000 to support the Vandy Thrift Shoppe. This generous investment will help provide hands-on job training and career development opportunities for youth and adults in our care.



### Teaming up with Bargain Grocery

Vanderheyden is teaming up with Bargain Grocery in Troy to provide real-world job training for at-risk youth and individuals with developmental disabilities. Since October, participants have gained skills in customer service, stocking, and cashiering—all in a supportive, inclusive setting.



## Student Council School Carnival

Vanderheyden's annual School Carnival was an absolute blast—and the perfect way to beat the heat! Students and team members enjoyed a sunny day filled with snow cones, water slides, and the ever-popular dunk tank featuring some brave team members. A heartfelt thank you to Ms. Stephanie and the Student Council for making this incredible day possible!

## Vanderheyden Prom Great Gatsby

Vanderheyden youth celebrated their 2025 Prom in timeless style with a Great Gatsby theme! The evening captured the spirit of the Roaring Twenties—elegance, joy, and hope for the future.



## The Town Hall - State of the Agency Address

President and CEO Karen M. Carpenter recently hosted the agency's annual Town Hall Meeting, bringing together team members from across the agency. The Town Hall reflects on the accomplishments of the past year, while also sharing exciting updates and goals for the year ahead. All staff members were invited to attend, and those who joined the event left with a small token of appreciation—a gift bag to thank them for their continued dedication and hard work!



## Celebrating Pride Month

Vanderheyden showed up loud and proud at this year's Capital Region Pride Festival in Albany! We had a blast celebrating love, inclusion, and community.

## Juneteenth Celebration

Our Juneteenth celebration featured incredible Black-owned vendors, who shared their artistry, products, and passion with us. We were also honored to welcome Dr. Brenda Robinson as the keynote speaker. Her words inspired reflection, empowerment, and a deeper understanding of why this day is so important. A special thanks for to Vanderheyden's DEI committee for their hard work and dedication to the celebration!



# Staff Spotlight - Devon Jackson

## Graduate of the College of Direct Support

Devon Jackson has been working in Direct Support at Vanderheyden's Independent Residential Alternative (IRA) homes that supports adults with developmental disabilities. Although this is Devon's first role in the human services field, he's no stranger to working with people. His background in retail customer service gave him a strong foundation in communication, empathy, and patience—skills he's found invaluable in his current position, especially working with individuals who may need extra guidance to reach their goals.



Devon's drive to grow in his role led him to pursue professional development through the College of Direct Support, an opportunity he was introduced to by his supervisor, Destiney. The College of Direct Support is a flexible, online program designed for professionals working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He recommends the course to anyone interested in advancing in the field or taking their role to the next level.

When asked to share a meaningful story from his time at Vanderheyden, Devon spoke about Jeremy, a resident who had a personal goal of purchasing an Apple Vision Pro. Recognizing how important this was to Jeremy, Devon worked closely with him over the course of several months—helping him learn to budget, stay motivated, and understand the value of money. Through their combined efforts and Jeremy's determination, he was ultimately able to purchase the device with his own savings. Devon described the experience as one of his proudest moments, knowing he had played a role in empowering Jeremy to achieve his goals.

## We need your support!

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Mail your monetary donation to:  
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10.16.2025

Duo at The Dunes  
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