SHARED VOICES NEWSLETTER

Issue 5 | Q1 2026



"Every Voice Belongs"

RECENT EVENTS

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

PEER SPOTLIGHT

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

RECENT EVENTS

This quarter, Shared Voices brought members together through events celebrating community, inclusion, and diversity.

Members from CBDS, Day Habilitation, and Specialized gathered at the auditorium at Northern Essex Community College for a viewing of The Peanut Butter Falcon. The event gave members an opportunity to connect with people from different programs and enjoy time outside their usual routines. The movie's themes of friendship, independence, inclusion, and following your goals made it a great choice for Shared Voices.

We also celebrated Latin America with different foods and activities, giving members opportunities to explore and appreciate different cultures. In addition, members from Project Search worked on a lesson detailing what diversity is and what it means to them in their own words

Shared Voices would like to thank everyone who participated and helped make these events meaningful and enjoyable. We look forward to continuing to provide opportunities for members across Opportunity Works to come together, connect, and have fun.



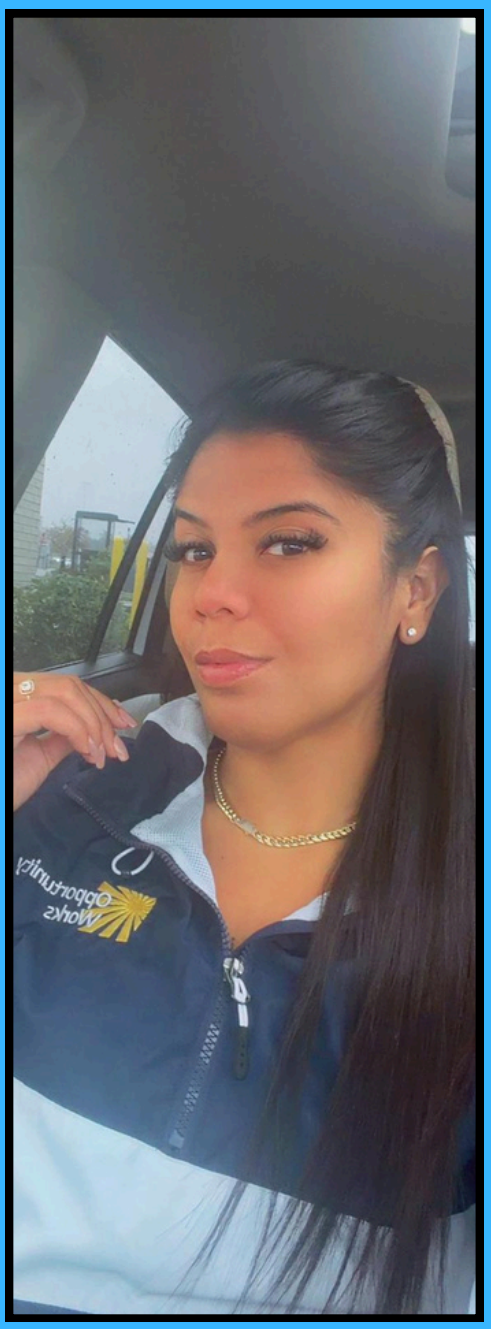
JOHN SIDHLY PROJECT SEARCH



Staff Spotlight

PAOLA TIRADO

SPECIALIZED DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL



Paola exemplifies the qualities of Shared Voices through her repeated efforts to find new ways to engage her individuals. She adapts depending on the situation and takes the time to assess what would work best for each person, taking into account their interests, behavioral profile, and individual needs.

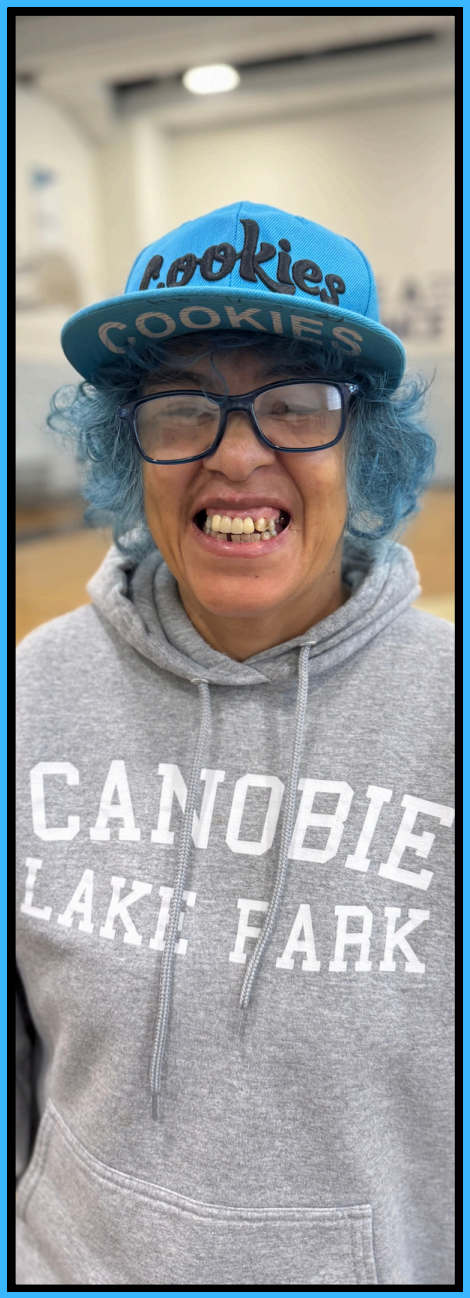
Rather than approaching every person the same way, Paola makes an effort to understand what will help each individual be successful and engaged throughout their day. Her ability to adapt and connect with the people she supports allows her to build quality bonds with her individuals and makes her an effective and dependable staff within her department.

Paola enjoys working at Opportunity Works because she finds meaning in supporting individuals and helping them feel comfortable and valued. She especially enjoys creating welcoming spaces for holidays and special occasions, and appreciates the teamwork and positive relationships she shares with her coworkers.

Peer Spotlight

SAO BRANDT

SPECIALIZED



Sao Brandt encompasses many of the qualities and values that Shared Voices represents. She consistently brings a positive attitude to every environment and makes a genuine effort to connect with those around her. Sao is always willing to participate, try new things, and remain involved, even when she may not initially feel confident in her abilities. Her willingness to step outside of her comfort zone and continue trying demonstrates her positive outlook and desire to grow.

Sao enjoys coming to Opportunity Works because it gives her the opportunity to spend time with her friends and staff, participate in activities, and continue to learn and grow. The relationships she has developed and the experiences she has at the program are an important part of what makes Opportunity Works meaningful to her. Most importantly, Sao feels that coming to Opportunity Works allows her to have fun and enjoy her time with the people around her.

Staff Spotlight

ERIKA LARA

CBDS
DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL



Erika is an extremely kind and caring person who showcases many of the qualities of Shared Voices. She is extremely active within her department and is always willing to lend a hand when needed. She has built strong connections with both her coworkers and the individuals she supports and brings a positive attitude to the department each day.

She puts a lot of effort into keeping her individuals engaged and involved throughout the day. She encourages them to participate in different activities, try new things, and make the most of the opportunities available to them. The care she puts into her work and the connections she has made with those around her make Erika a great person to recognize through Shared Voices.

Erika enjoys working at Opportunity Works because she gets to help the individuals she supports feel valued, accepted, and included in their community. She finds joy in helping them build skills, gain confidence, and work toward greater independence. Celebrating their progress and sharing meaningful moments are aspects that make her work especially rewarding.

Upcoming Holidays

October 2026

- October 12, Monday

1. Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples' Day: U.S. Federal Holiday

- October 20, Tuesday

2. Dussehra (Vijayadashami): Hindu celebration of the triumph of good over evil.

- October 31, Saturday

3. Halloween / Samhain: Halloween is a widely celebrated secular holiday with historical connections to Samhain, a Gaelic festival traditionally marking the beginning of winter.

November 2026

- November 1, Sunday

1. All Saints' Day: Christian day of remembrance honoring saints.

- November 1–2, Sunday–Monday

2. Día de los Muertos: Mexican celebration honoring deceased loved ones.

- November 8, Sunday

3. Diwali (Deepavali): Hindu, Sikh, and Jain festival of lights.

- November 11, Wednesday

4. Veterans Day: U.S. Federal Holiday

- November 24, Tuesday

5. Guru Nanak Gurpurab: Sikh celebration commemorating the birth of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru.

- November 26, Thursday

6. Thanksgiving Day: U.S. Federal Holiday

December 2026

- December 4–12, Friday–Saturday

1. Hanukkah: Jewish eight-day Festival of Lights.

- December 21, Monday

2. Winter Solstice (Yule / Dongzhi): Observances marking the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year.

- December 25, Friday

3. Christmas Day: Christian Holiday and U.S. Federal Holiday

- December 26–January 1, Saturday–Friday

4. Kwanzaa: African American and Pan-African celebration of family, community, and culture.







