



Independent Living Panel Speakers

Cottonwood Community Alternatives, Inc

Cindy Opheim, Chief Executive Officer of Cottonwood Community Alternatives, Inc, has been working with children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1987. Cindy is an advocate for empowering individuals with choice, independence, and quality of life, and has served on many county, state, and legislative workgroups.

Cottonwood was established in 1991 as a private, non-profit agency with a mission to provide a variety of community-based supports and services to individuals, empowering them to live as independently and productively as possible, and encouraging participation of family and friends to maintain regular involvement in individuals' lives.

Visit www.cottonwoodcommunityalternatives.org. Contact Cindy at 303-761-6487 or copheim@cottonwoodca.org.

Housing Options

Amanda (Mandy) Garman has been the Housing Administrator at DDRC for the last 2 ½ years supporting people living with a disability, including individuals with IDD and their families experiencing homelessness, and others facing barriers to affordable housing. The department offers housing subsidies for renters and homeowners, voucher referrals for families experiencing homelessness and other housing resources. She is currently Chair of the Aging Well Housing Workgroup, and a member of the Heading Home Supportive Housing committee and the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative. Before working at DDRC, she worked at the Denver Rescue Mission and Family Promise of Greater Denver assisting people transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing. Mandy is passionate about collaborating with community partners.

Contact Mandy at 303.462.6530 or amanda.garman@ddrcco.com.

Open Up

Kayla VandenBosch is the co-founder and Program Director of Open Up and has been making matches for affordable housing since 2017. Kayla earned her BA in International Community Development and Spanish with a concentration in Urban Studies from Calvin College, graduated from the CrossPurpose Center for Urban Leadership in Denver, and has completed a Master's Certificate in Urban Ministry Leadership through North Park University.

Visit letsopenup.org. Contact Kayla at kayla@letsopenup.org.

MORE

Stonebridge Independent Living Project / DDRC

Bob Adams has worked with DDRC for 34 years and is a Program Manager with DDRC's A Better Choice division which provides various services and supports. Over the last three years Bob has also worked on DDRC's Stonebridge Project, a site attached to one of DDRC's residential settings. Stonebridge is designed as a short-term training option with the goal that individuals will develop the skills and confidence to move on to another more independent living site. Stonebridge is unique in that individuals can use HCBS and SLS funding.

Contact Bob at Bob.adams@ddrcco.com.

See also: <https://ddrcco.com> and click on "Services"

Emily Waldo is a graduate of the Stonebridge Project and one of the first participants. She now lives independently in an apartment setting. Emily also has a job working with The Arc. Among her many interests are riding her bike, animals, participating in Special Olympics, making and selling things, getting her hair and nails done - and having fun!

VIA Mobility Services

Michelle Barringer, Lead Travel Instructor, has been with Via for six years. In addition to providing comprehensive one-on-one travel instruction to older adults and individuals with disabilities, she trains new travel instructors. Each year, she is the "contact liaison" with Project Search at the Anschutz Medical Campus. Via Mobility Services, a private non-profit organization, has been providing a variety of transportation services since 1979. The travel training program was established in 2003 and is available throughout the entire RTD service area.

Visit viacolorado.org. Contact Susan Unger, Travel Training Coordinator for Via at 303-447-2848 ext. 1048.