



# THE INFORMER

*Helping older adults and adults living with disabilities discover resources to plan, prepare for, and support living independently for as long as possible.*

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**Check out our website for more resources and information!**

[www.altcew.org](http://www.altcew.org)

## A MESSAGE FROM ALTCEW

Welcome to the winter 2024 issue of **The Informer**.

During the winter season, it's easy to get wrapped up in the holiday hype. But don't forget to check in on your loved ones! If something doesn't seem quite right, or you're worried about someone's wellbeing, call our helpline at **(509) 960-7281**.

## EXCITING NEW CHAPTER FOR ALTCEW

Our agency is excited to announce that we have relocated to a new office space! Beginning November of 2024, correspondence and in-person operations started taking place at 1313 N Atlantic St, STE 3000, Spokane, WA 99201. Our business hours remain 8:30 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday. **(Cont. on pg. 2)**



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1/1: Holiday—office closed
- 1/20: Holiday—office closed
- 1/23: Spokane Homeless Connect
- 2/19: Holiday—office closed

Full Calendar of Events: [altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar](http://altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar)

***(A New Chapter, Cont. from pg. 1)***

Our phone numbers, email addresses, and fax numbers are also unchanged.

Our agency has resided in the previous office space since 1998. This move marks a significant milestone for us as we continue to expand our services and enhance our ability to support the aging population. This new facility—just a couple of blocks away from our previous location— offers greater space and improved accessibility, which will benefit our staff and clients.

“We are thrilled about this move and the opportunities it brings to enhance our services,” said **Lynn Kimball, Executive Director**. “Our new location will provide a more welcoming and efficient environment for our clients and staff, supporting our mission to improve the quality of life for older adults and adults living with disabilities in our community.”

There is no change to phone, online, or in-home services. For any programs that had adjustments, clients were notified. For more information about our services or the move:

- **Visit:** [www.altcew.org](http://www.altcew.org)
- **Visit:** [www.facebook.com/AgingLTC](https://www.facebook.com/AgingLTC)
- **Email:** [action@altcew.org](mailto:action@altcew.org)
- **Call:** Aging & Long Term Care Programs & Services at (509) 458-2509 (OR)  
Community Living Connections Helpline at (509) 960-7281



*(Images: ALTCEW's new front desk and view from the office space.)*



## **Renew Spokane's Better Living Center is offering FREE Dental Clinics each Tuesday!**



If you are uninsured or on Medicaid, and living in Spokane or the surrounding communities, schedule an appointment for an upcoming clinic. You can receive fillings, simple extractions, limited evaluations, and toothache treatment.

- **To schedule an appointment, call:** (509) 992-1976 a
- **Learn more:** <https://www.renewspokane.org/dental-clinic>



# Home for the Holidays

*By: Savannah Reams-Taylor,  
Marketing & Outreach Coordinator*

Aging & Long Term Care of EW has joined the national campaign "[Home for the Holidays](#)" led by USAging and the Eldercare Locator to protect older adults from financial scams! The holiday season is a time for joy and connection, but it's also a time when scammers ramp up their efforts.

As you gather with loved ones this year, take a moment to discuss how to avoid common financial scams.

## Stay Scam-Savvy

Fraudsters often prey on emotions, using tactics like fake charity appeals, holiday deal scams, or urgent phone calls claiming unpaid bills.

To protect yourself:

- Verify before you give. Research charities or organizations before donating.
- Be cautious with deals. Offers that seem too good to be true often are.
- Avoid pressure tactics. Scammers often create urgency to make you act quickly.
- Guard your information. Never share personal or financial details over the phone or email unless you initiated the contact.

## Keep Loved Ones in the Loop

If you're unsure about a request or offer, talk to a trusted family member or friend before acting. Scammers thrive on isolation—staying connected can be your best defense.

For more tips and tools to protect yourself this holiday season:

- Check out the Eldercare Locator's guide: [Protect Your Wallet: A Guide to Avoiding Financial Scams](#)
- Call our Community Living Connections helpline at (509) 960-7281 if wanting to speak to an individual.

**Let's make the holidays safer for everyone!**



## *ALTCEW wants to send a huge, celebratory THANK YOU to our Volunteers!*

As we reflect on the year, one thing stands out: the dedication, compassion, and tireless efforts of our volunteers. At our Area Agency on Aging, we are fortunate to have a remarkable group of individuals who give their time, energy, and expertise to serve older adults, adults living with disabilities, and their caregivers in our community. Today, we want to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you.

- ⇒ To our **Planning & Management Council**, thank you for your invaluable guidance and leadership.
- ⇒ To the **Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA)**, your assistance in helping seniors navigate the complexities of Medicare and other insurance options is nothing short of lifesaving.
- ⇒ Our **A Matter of Balance** volunteers, your commitment to falls prevention is a vital part of keeping our seniors safe and independent.
- ⇒ To the caring volunteers of **Check and Connect**, your regular check-ins provide so much more than a phone call—you offer companionship, safety, and a reminder that our seniors are never alone.
- ⇒ And to the **Spokane Regional Dementia Friendly Community** volunteers and **Dementia Friends Champions**, we deeply appreciate your work with individuals and families facing the challenges of memory loss.

Whether you're offering a listening ear, lending your expertise, or creating meaningful connections, your contributions are vital to our mission. You help us build a stronger, more compassionate community for aging adults. From all of us at the agency, thank you for everything you do!

Enjoy the photo below of volunteers enjoying our open house in our new building. Coordinators provided a tour of our new space and enjoyed visiting with them.





# Care Transitions: Supporting Recovery at Home

*By: Laura Dalich, CT Coordinator & Savannah Reams—Taylor, Marketing Outreach Coordinator*

Navigating the shift from hospital care to home can be challenging. Care Transitions, an evidence-based program offered by our agency, ensures you don't have to face this journey alone. By addressing gaps in care and providing personalized support, the program reduces hospital readmissions and improves quality of life for those recovering at home.

## What Is the Care Transitions Program?

Care Transitions provides a seamless continuum of care during recovery from hospitalization. Transitions between healthcare settings can be risky, but this free program is designed to support you through your discharge process and beyond. A dedicated Care Coordinator works with you to navigate complex medical and social systems, identify needed supports, and advocate for your care. Participants must be 18 years or older, were recently hospitalized, and are managing a serious chronic health condition.

For more information on this program, call the Community Living Connections helpline at 509-960-7281 or visit our [Care Transitions webpage](#).

## Making a Difference in Recovery

The Care Transitions program is more than a service—it's a lifeline for those adjusting to life after hospitalization. Consider one client's story: This client was refusing in-home care of any kind. Although it was referred by her doctor, the client didn't want people inside her house messing with her stuff. With a little motivational interviewing and strength-based approaches we were able to help her see she had the power to get out of her house and move independently with the aid of a ramp. With the help of Tailored Supports for Older Adults and phone calls to various equipment builders, she soon had a ramp installed. This simple adjustment transformed her quality of life, enabling her to move freely and accomplish more than she thought possible.

## Bridging Gaps and Building Confidence

The program's 30-day involvement can have a lasting impact. By connecting clients with resources like Meals on Wheels, in-home caregiver applications, and yard work assistance, Care Coordinators help remove obstacles to recovery. Transportation is often a challenge, but securing reliable options can empower clients to take control of their next steps. Whether connecting clients with supportive housing, utility assistance through Spokane Neighborhood Action Partners (SNAP), or other essential services, we ensure no need goes unmet.

**Laura Dalich** shared, "At a time of crisis, Care Transitions is there at a moment's notice to bridge the gap of uncertainty and help the patient successfully manage their health needs. When things are out of my hands, I make sure I quickly pass their name along to the right resources. Every client I have worked with presents differently but I can say with much confidence they have all benefitted from my interactions with them. Even the small things, I have seen, can have a cascading effect on a person's outlook on life."

## Your Recovery Partner

Every Care Transitions client is unique, but the program's consistent focus on encouragement and support helps all participants achieve better outcomes. From addressing immediate needs to laying the groundwork for long-term independence, Care Transitions makes a difference where it matters most—at home.

**For Spokane County residents seeking support after hospitalization**, contact the Community Living Connections Helpline at 509-960-7281. Your recovery is our priority, and we're here to help every step of the way.

## Memory Garden Project Underway

*By: Tara Hill-Matthews, Dementia Resource Catalyst*

**Bob Scarfo**, a landscape architect and **Debby Dodds**, a gerontologist, have been working on creating a public memory garden in Spokane since well before I met them almost two years ago. This is now becoming a reality with a major update: a reallocation of \$60,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act to the project!

The Spokane City Council made this decision on October 21<sup>st</sup> after hearing Bob and Debby's plan for the garden. They have been laying the groundwork for this decision by going to Spokane Park Board meetings, neighborhood meetings, and writing a beautiful narrative so others can see their vision.

A memory garden is designed to provide pleasure and interest for people living with dementia, as well as relaxation for their care partners. It is a place where people living with dementia can use their senses and enjoy nature.

Bob is a passionate advocate for designing built spaces for people living with dementia and disabilities. About Bob's work, Debby said: "His heartfelt dedication to this project and his deep network of resources were key to our success, and we couldn't have reached this milestone without his leadership and guidance."

Debby became a gerontologist because of her experience caring for her mother. She says one thing often that guides my work. "People with dementia often lose the ability to sooth themselves, but they can still be soothed." She reminds us to have a strengths-based approach as well as create moments of joy and soothing, and we value her expertise.

The next steps in completing the garden are to continue to raise funds to both build the park and maintain it in the future and to finish a detailed design. An article by Debby Dodds and Bob Scarfo about this effort will be included in the next issue of the [Spokane Regional Dementia Friendly Community Newsletter](#). Read the January 2025 issue for more information.



### Adopt a Neighbor

Let's build stronger neighborhoods together! "Adopt A Neighbor" is a community effort through ALTCEW that's looking for caring groups such as clubs, organizations, businesses, churches, community centers, and schools to support older adults and those with disabilities during leafy and snowy days. Your kindness can make a world of difference.

**Learn how you can get involved:**

[Adopt a Neighbor Press Release](#)

**Need assistance with leaf raking or snow plowing?**

- Contact our helpline at (509) 960-7281

## THIS WINTER ADOPT A NEIGHBOR

Be a Snow Angel. Help your neighbors in need with snow removal this snowy season.

Interested in helping? Contact:

- ❄️ Community Living Connections
- ❄️ (509) 960 - 7281
- ❄️ [action@altcew.org](mailto:action@altcew.org)

# Supportive Housing: Transforming Lives with Stability and Care

*By: Jeannie Robinson, SH Coordinator & Savannah Reams-Taylor, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator*

Finding and maintaining stable housing can be a significant challenge, especially for individuals facing medical issues or other barriers. Aging & Long Term Care's Supportive Housing program is here to help, offering guidance and critical resources to those in need.

## How We Help

Our housing support services include the **Foundational Community Supports (FCS) Supportive Housing Program**, a Medicaid-funded initiative aimed at providing safe, stable housing for those at risk of homelessness. Through personalized support, we help clients navigate housing systems, secure permanent housing, and develop skills for independent living.

If you or a loved one needs help finding housing, call **509-960-7281** or visit our [Housing Support webpage](#) to learn more or check eligibility.

## A Story of Resilience

A client's story exemplifies the life-changing impact of supportive housing. As an amputee living with cancer and COPD, their journey to stable housing was filled with obstacles. Over eight years, they had challenges finding suitable homes.

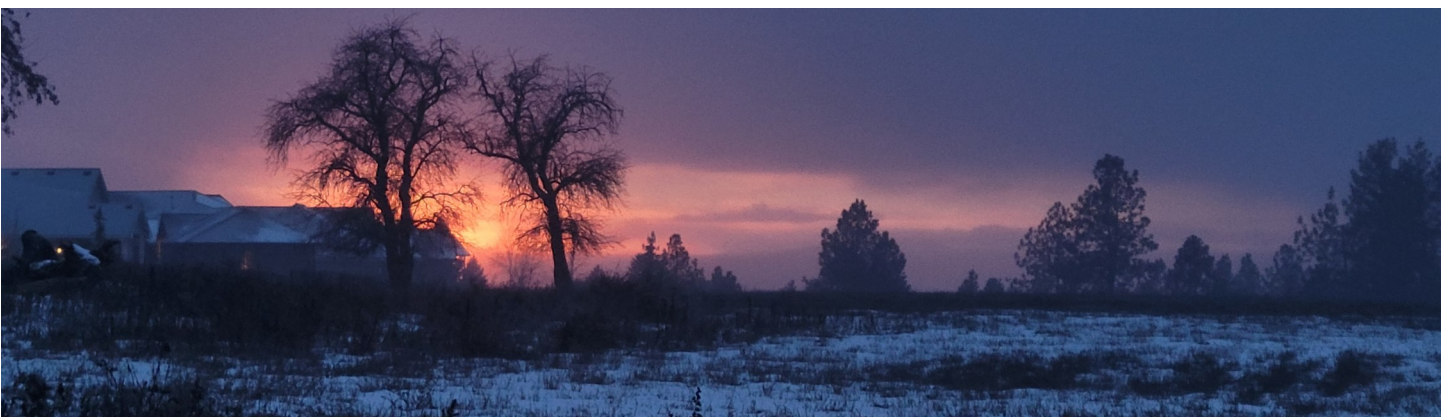
Initially, they lived in a basement apartment, accessible only by stairs—a significant challenge for someone using a wheelchair. Through collaboration with the apartment manager, he was eventually moved to an upper-floor unit with an elevator. However, winter conditions on the steep hill outside made life difficult, prompting a search for a better option.

They later moved to an ADA-accessible ground-floor apartment, but financial and social challenges arose, forcing them to leave. For a time, he lived in his car, which was eventually impounded, leaving him with nothing. Despite these setbacks, their resilience and the efforts of housing staff kept the search alive.

## A New Chapter

With the support of a Chas social worker and Elder Services Care Manager, they were finally placed in an assisted living facility that met his needs. Reflecting on this successful transition, **Jeannie Robinson** shared, "I talked to them yesterday. He was sitting in his bed watching TV with snacks. He said the staff was friendly and taking care of his medical needs. He's happy there... There were a couple of times during all his moving, that I thought I would lose him. He's a fighter."

If you or someone you know is struggling to find safe housing, our Supportive Housing program is here to help. Together, we can make a difference. Call **509-960-7281** to learn more.



## Aging with HIV/AIDS

By the end of this decade, an estimated 70% of people living with HIV/AIDS will be over the age of 50. This demographic shift brings unique challenges and opportunities for professionals in aging services. To highlight the impact of HIV/AIDS on older adults and improve care for this growing population, **Gilead Sciences** and the **American Society on Aging (ASA)** have partnered on a year-long initiative to foster awareness and provide actionable resources.

At the heart of this initiative is a podcast series that explores key issues surrounding HIV and aging. These conversations delve into how healthcare providers, social workers, and other professionals can better support individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Topics include educating care teams, addressing stigma, and amplifying the voices of overlooked HIV-positive communities.

### Why It Matters

Older adults living with HIV often face dual stigma: aging and living with a long-term diagnosis.

This can lead to barriers in accessing care, managing comorbidities, and maintaining a high quality of life. By equipping aging professionals with the right tools and understanding, this initiative aims to bridge gaps in care and ensure all older adults receive the support they deserve.

Let's continue working toward a future where aging with HIV/AIDS means thriving, not just surviving.

### Additional Resources

- Listen to the podcast: [Living & Aging with HIV](#)
- Learn more about [Aging with HIV | HIV.gov](#)
- Discover [HIV & Aging Resources](#) with SAGE

**For more insights, tune in to the podcast and join the conversation.**

## VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to provide the best home and community based services to support healthy living and aging in place.

- \* We Listen... to our community to understand individual needs.
- \* We Adapt... to our changing world.
- \* We Provide Solutions... using innovative services to improve quality of life.

## Volunteer

### *Consider volunteering with Aging & Long Term Care!*

Our agency is regularly looking for volunteers for a variety of programs! At Aging & Long Term Care, we work together to promote well-being, independence, dignity, and choice for all older adults and individuals needing long-term care. **To learn more about opportunities, visit our volunteer page ([altcew.org](http://altcew.org)).**

## Stay Active and Engaged

Interested in staying active and engaged as you age?

### Check out these resources:

- ⇒ [Create Arts](#): A Community Center in Newport for the Arts. Classes, activities, and group meet ups are all available. This location is wheelchair accessible.
- ⇒ [Spokane Parks & Recreation](#): Explore the natural beauty of our region and join one of the Parks & Rec's activities.
- ⇒ [Check and Connect](#): Receive weekly phone calls from volunteers to connect with an individual and learn about local resources.



## What is the Latest with WA Cares?

*By: Loegan Sargent, WA Cares Specialist*

The WA Cares Fund is a groundbreaking long-term care program created to ensure financial security for Washington State residents as they age. This state-mandated insurance program is designed to help workers in Washington cover the high costs associated with long-term care, such as assistance with daily living activities, caregiving services, and facility care. While the program has generated both support and criticism, it represents a significant step toward addressing a pressing issue: how to make long-term care more accessible and affordable.

### What Is the WA Cares Fund:

The WA Cares Fund was signed into law in 2019 and aims to provide a sustainable solution for long-term care costs. To learn more about WA Cares, visit our [Summer 2024 issue of the Informer](#).

### The Defeat of Initiative 2124:

Despite its ambitious goals, the WA Cares Fund has faced criticism and resistance from some quarters. Many opponents of the program sought to overturn it through Initiative 2124, which would have eliminated the mandatory payroll tax. However, the initiative failed to gather enough signatures to make it onto the ballot for a public vote. This means the WA Cares Fund will proceed as planned, continuing to collect contributions and provide long-term care benefits to eligible workers.

While some view the program as a critical safety net, others remain concerned about its structure, especially regarding those who move out of Washington and lose access to the benefits they've paid into.

### A Key Update: Portability of Benefits Across States

To address concerns about portability, Governor Jay Inslee signed **HB 2467**, an important amendment to the WA Cares Fund. Previously, workers who contributed to the program but later moved out of Washington would lose access to their benefits. With HB 2467 in place, benefits are now portable across states. This change ensures that workers who leave Washington can still access the care they've paid for, making the program more equitable and responsive to the realities of a mobile workforce.

### What This Means for Washington Residents:

For those living in Washington, the WA Cares Fund represents both an opportunity and a challenge. It's an opportunity to prepare for future care needs while sharing the financial responsibility across a broad base of workers. However, the program's mandatory nature and potential limitations have sparked ongoing debate.

The defeat of Initiative 2124 and the passage of HB 2467 signal that the WA Cares Fund is here to stay—at least for now. Residents should take the time to understand how the program works, assess its implications for their financial planning, and determine how it fits into their overall approach to long-term care.

The WA Cares Fund is a bold step toward tackling a critical issue, balancing innovation with the complexities of implementation. As it evolves, Washingtonians should stay informed and engaged with how this program impacts their lives and their futures.

### Additional Resources









- More information can be found at: <https://wacaresfund.wa.gov>
- If you have further questions or to request a WA Cares presentation, email: [wa-cares@altcew.org](mailto:wa-cares@altcew.org)

# Staying Healthy Through Resilience





*By: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator*

During the winter, feelings of isolation, boredom, and lack of sunlight can contribute to seasonal affective disorder (SAD). However, the cozy atmosphere can also offer a chance for introspection and growth. This winter and as we come into the new year, consider building resilience through strategies developed by **Dr. Judith Moskowitz**, a psychologist at Northwestern University. She's been researching how to help people cope with stressful experiences, such as caring for a spouse with dementia or living with cancer. Through tough situations, noticing bright spots in our days can help us cope better.

Her research-based methods, proven to boost well-being, offer simple ways to reduce stress daily:

-  **Positive events:** Notice when positive things happen in your life
-  **Savoring:** Relish the positive things in your life
-  **Gratitude:** Appreciate what brings you happiness
-  **Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment without judgment
-  **Positive reappraisal:** Find the silver lining
-  **Self-compassion:** Be kind to yourself
-  **Personal strengths:** Recognize your unique abilities
-  **Attainable goals:** Make plans that set you up for success

Repeated use of these skills has been shown to build emotional resilience. We even have the power to rewire our brains. In addition to these strategies, consider winter activities that offer physical and mental health benefits, or offer a sense of community and purpose.

-  **Spending time outdoors:** Sit in the park, go snowshoeing, hiking, and enjoy the landscape while getting some fresh air. To deepen your practice, try an “awe walk” in nature—notice small wonders around you, and leave your phone behind
-  **Creative Pursuits:** Pick up a new art project, read, journal, play or listen to music
-  **Cooking and Nutrition:** Learn a new recipe and spend time focusing on balanced and healthy eating to help maintain your energy and mood
-  **Social Activities:** Attend local events, virtual meetings, or even consider volunteering to connect with others

These small actions can make a big difference in easing stress. To learn more about ways to build resilience or discover connection opportunities:

- **Sign up for NPR's Stress Less Series:** [Stress Less Series: NPR](#)
- **Read more of Allison Aubrey's** [reporting on stress & resilience](#)
- **Attend virtual classes with GetSetUp:** [Washington State Aging Network · GetSetUp](#)
- **Join a virtual community with Well Connected:** [Well Connected - Front Porch](#)
- **Speak with Check and Connect:** [Check and Connect - Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington](#)
- **Learn about local volunteer opportunities:** [Volunteer - Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington](#)





# BRAIN HEALTH CORNER

## Traveling with Someone Living with Dementia

*By: Tara Hill-Matthews, Dementia Resource Catalyst*

Traveling is stressful for many people because of long lines, draining travel schedules and a lack of flexibility in plans. For someone living with dementia, additional stressors may include loud noises and bright lights, disruption in routine and being in crowds. Here are some tips for traveling with someone living with dementia.



### Flying

**TSA Assistance:** The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) offers a Passenger Support Specialist who can help navigate the TSA checkpoint and even move you to the front of the TSA line. To use this program request assistance using the TSA Cares Assistance Form online at [www.tsa.gov/contact-center/form/cares](http://www.tsa.gov/contact-center/form/cares) OR Call TSA Cares at (855) 767-2227.

**Hidden Disabilities Program:** Many airports, like the Seattle, Portland and Missoula Airports, use the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program. This shows airport employees that the person living with dementia may need extra time or assistance. To use this, go to a kiosk in the airport to get a lanyard for the person living with dementia. If traveling to an airport that doesn't have this program, you can carry a card yourself (see below).

**Airlines:** Specific airlines may offer assistance getting from security to the plane. Depending on the airline, they may also offer assistance from the car to the airport. Call the airline ahead of time or include accommodation requests when purchasing the ticket.

### Driving

**Stops:** Plan several places that you can stop along the way like rest areas, gas stations, restaurants, etc. Apps like Flush or websites like [refugerestrooms.org](http://refugerestrooms.org) can also help you search for public restrooms.

**Border crossing:** Provide reassurance. It can be helpful to say things like, "You're safe" or "We're ok; I'm here with you". Place your passports/IDs in a safe place before you cross. Let the border agent know right away that the person you're traveling with has dementia. If this could escalate the person with dementia, carry a card explaining this so you don't need to acknowledge it verbally (see below).

### General

- Buy a card from [Hidden Disabilities](#) or get a similar one from ALTCEW by calling (509) 777-1629 or emailing [dementia@altcew.org](mailto:dementia@altcew.org) to indicate that the person has dementia and may need more time or help
- If possible, keep medications and other important assistive or medical devices in one bag that's easily accessible and with the care partner
- Clearly label all bags with name, phone number and address
- Carry the phone numbers of your pharmacy and doctor(s)
- Pack reassuring objects, like a comforting blanket or a photograph
- Consider having the person living with dementia carry an identity bracelet, a card that has your phone number and address you'll be staying, or putting a background with important numbers on their phone
- Consider buying travel insurance or a flexible plan ticket since travel plans may need to be adjusted
- Know how to handle a crisis. Take a class or read an [article on dealing with dementia behaviors](#)

## ALTCEW PHOTO DUMP

Over the past several months, our staff have participated in a wide variety of events, activities, and volunteer opportunities. These are a fun way for staff to socialize with each other, contribute to the community, and get out of the office. Enjoy photos below from a few of these recent activities!

### August 2024, Second Harvest Volunteers



### October 2024, Walk to End Alzheimer's



### November 2024, Staff New Office Welcome Party

