

In Memoriam Ethel McLuen, Founder 1925-2025

In September of 1976, Lafayette Work Center opened its doors to 16 employees in a rented Valley Park building. They had no customers, no work, and \$10,000 of personal life savings from Board members on the line. What they did have, was an unwavering commitment and dedicated purpose to provide meaningful and sustaining employment to adults with developmental disabilities. 49 years later Lafayette Industries, now comprised of Lafayette Work Center in Manchester, Lafayette Industries North in Berkeley, Lafayette JeffCo in Arnold, and the STEPUP training program in St. Louis and Jefferson County, provides employment and training to 425 people, produces over 11 million packages a year while serving almost 100 customers—and keeps expanding its Mission.

Ethel and Bob McLuen, and dedicated parishioners from St. Mark's Presbyterian led this charge, with their son, Kenny, employee #1. Ethel passed away last week at the age of 99 (Bob passed away in 2021 at the age of 95). Ethel and Bob served on the Board for over 40 years, helping to steer Lafayette through economic uncertainty, preconceived prejudices, and even natural disasters, the flooding of the first workshop.

Ethel and Bob were like salt-n-pepper—inseparable. You always saw them together and repeated their names-- together. I can't even imagine that at the age of 50, they decided to risk their earthly gains, and sacrifice the remainder of their lives to something; a “something” which turned out to be a lifeline for hundreds of individuals and families who otherwise would have had nowhere to turn to.

I was hired to manage Lafayette in January of 2004, and aside from the very first “General Manager”, and another individual who had a stint when my predecessor took a one year sabbatical, Lafayette has been managed by only 2 individuals in its 49-year history. As Executive Director, you are responsible for the day-to-day operations, and report to the Board. In my early days, Board members would drop by every so often to see how the workshop was doing, what new work was coming in, what the waiting list looked like, etc. Ethel would drop in on me every month, saying she was just “checking in”, “to see if everything was all right”. When I started to respond to the state of affairs of the business, she would stop me and say, “No, I want to know how YOU are doing! Are you all right? Do you need anything? Staying healthy? We need you to stay healthy!” I knew she meant physically, mentally, and spiritually. I've never forgotten that. *(Continued on next page)*



Rob Libera
CEO & Executive Director
rlibera@lafayetteindustries.com

Mission: The mission of Lafayette Industries is to provide employment opportunities to persons with developmental disabilities and to persons with other disabilities who are 18 years or older.

Goals: • To provide a meaningful and productive work experience to persons who are disabled • To maintain a safe and pleasant work environment • To teach and to train persons with disabilities to acquire better work habits • To enhance self-worth and dignity through employment • To provide high-quality business service through packaging, light assembly and commercial mailings • To operate the center in a professional, fiscally responsible manner • To provide fair wages and good benefits

In Memoriam – Ethel McLuen, Founder 1925-2025 – Continued:

That meant a lot to me and would always bring calm to a hectic time in those early days. Ethel, the Board member and the person, her “check-in” was on me personally (I had a special, great relationship with Bob as well, but he did ask me about utilities usage and bills....Ethel primary concern was about people. I loved that.

There will be a celebration of life for Ethel at St. Mark’s, 601 Claymont Drive, Ballwin, on Sunday, May18th, at 2:00 pm. Ethel, you have made an everlasting mark on this Earth, and we are deeply grateful and thankful for all that you have done for so many. Thank you for all your prayers, inspiration, and love that you have shown through your 99 years.

And don’t forget to check-in on us, we always need to have an Angel like you in our corner. May eternal rest be granted unto you, and let perpetual light shine on you for eternity. Rest easy Ethel, you’ve done your good deed, now it’s up to us, and we plan to keep Lafayette going.

A LOOK INSIDE LAFAYETTE JEFFCO

Lafayette acquired a new workshop in the Jefferson County area. We are very proud of the workers and Staff that are there and we are always looking for more people to help us. If you know a friend who lives down in that area that might be interested, these would be good pictures to show them. Here it is...Lafayette JeffCo in pictures!!





49th Annual EMPLOYEE CELEBRATION PICNIC

**Saturday May 17
10 am-1pm**

Free for all Lafayette employees and STEPUP participants **and** up to 3 guests each

At Grant's Farm

7385 Grant Rd.
St. Louis, MO 63123



! RSVP is REQUIRED to attend!

! Return below form or register using QR code by May 2, 2025

M Call-a-Ride **does** go to Grant's Farm!
Book with Call-a-Ride by **May 14th**

YES! I am attending the Picnic!



Employee/Participant Name **(required)** _____

Number of Guests **(required)** _____

Name of Guests (optional) _____

Circle One

North

West

JeffCo

STEPUP

Return this form to Becky at West; Sheila or Jerry at North; Christie at JeffCo

Questions? Call Jerry (636) 227-5666 x 2101, Vicky (636) 227-5666 x 1118 or Christie Schillinger (636) 296-6211 x 4



49th Annual EMPLOYEE CELEBRATION FAMILY PICNIC

SPONSOR LEVELS



*Dream Builder (Major) \$1,000

Premium Sign and Newsletter
Recognition

Visionary - \$500

Champion - \$300

Advocate - \$200

Patron - \$100

Friend - \$25

*Sign and Newsletter Recognition

34th Annual CHARITY RAFFLE



\$1,000



\$600

Value

Cardinal's Tickets
Four (4) Box Seats



\$100

Visa Gift Card



Lafayette will celebrate the Annual Employee Family Picnic on May 17, 2024 at Grant's Farm! This new venue offers interaction with Grant's Farm animals, a private designated area for our group, free parking, and a fabulous lunch for all attendees. We are looking forward to new activities and enjoying all Grant's Farm has to offer us.

Please join the **Dream Builders** as a Picnic Sponsor and make an impact for our employees all year long. **Build a dream by choosing to be a Dream Builder, Visionary, Champion, Advocate, Patron or Friend of Lafayette.** These donations will help enhance our picnic activities and make it a memorable event for our employees.

This is a great opportunity to give a Sponsorship as a gift or honorarium to one of our employees or to someone outside of our organization.

Donating is easy! Scan the QR code below, register on our website www.lafayetteindustries.com or mail your check to our Manchester Location. Please contact Vicky James for any questions.

**Winning tickets drawn at the
Picnic on May 17th.
Need not be present to win**

Another way to support our employees and programs is our annual charity raffle. Included are five (5) raffle tickets for purchase at \$5 each. Please return your ticket stubs by mail to the below address or you can purchase tickets online using the QR code below. The winning ticket will be drawn on May 17, 2025

All of us working together can make the 48th Lafayette Employee Family Picnic an incredible day. Your contributions enable Lafayette to continue **Building Dreams and Creating Opportunities** for our employees.

Sincerely,

Vicky James
Chief Advancement Officer
Lafayette Industries

P (636) 227-5666 x 1118
E vjames@lafayetteindustries.com
A 179 Gaywood Drive, Manchester,
MO 63021



WEST - ART CLASS - WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2024 – 3:00-3:45P



Register today for April 9th. You have to register each month for each Art Class!!

Volunteers will give personal instruction for each project. Everyone attending the Art Class will have the chance to participate in each Art Station. **Please turn in your registration to Becky S. by Friday, April 4th.**

Questions: Call or email Vicky James vjames@lafayetteindustries.com 636-227-5666, ext.1118

WEST - ART CLASS – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9TH – 3:00-3:45p

Name of Participant _____

Preferred Phone _____

Preferred Email _____

Contact name/phone number of person picking up art student at 3:45p:



COME JOIN OUR CREATIVE GROUP – SHOW YOUR INNER VAN GOGH!!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR APRILFOLKS!!

NORTH

India	Stewart	5
Vaughon	Caldwell	9
Marquette	Anderson	12
Sean	Watson	12
Mattie	Abercumbia	17
Tamu	Johnson	18
Paul	Spears	18
Demitri	Jamison	21
Pedro	Cruz	25
Sally	Grant	25
Laura	Fortus	29

WEST

Andrew	Martinez	1
Sheri	Cooley	2
Elizabeth	Cendekowitsch	3
DJ	Williams,	3
Justin	Moslander	8
Carli	Binek	10
Teresa	Cline	10
Robyn	Zerillo	10
John	Woerner	11
Pam	Gardner	12
Ryan	Clemente	13
Craig	Marek	14
Jonathan	Walle	15
David	Pfeiffer	16
Mark	Carlson	19
Pamela	Walsh	23
Cynthia	Jacobson	26
Geoffrey	Reusch	28
BJ	Burns	30



JEFFCO

Michael	Foukes	7
Michael	Kelly	14
Jerry	Sampson	29

MISSED MARCH BIRTHDAY

Lafayette would like to wish a happy belated birthday to Jamy-Pietrowski Welch from Lafayette North whose birthday was on the 27th of last month. It did not make last month's newsletter. We apologize for the mistake and hope Jamy enjoyed the day.



THE LAFAYETTE ARCADE: COORDINATION AND MEMORY

By Bill Taylor (Proud Lafayette Staff)

One of the most important parts of gaming is being able to react to what's going on your TV screen or whatever device you might play games on. Gaming is good exercise in keeping your mind sharp too. If you are new to gaming or having trouble with it try doing some exercises to help with finger speed when trying to mash buttons. If you have trouble with seeing certain things, practicing something where you have to observe it and put it back together such as a jigsaw puzzle can help keep your mind sharp. If you still have issues, most modern consoles do have adaptive equipment. Check around. Practicing is the best way to improve. Even the best gamer doesn't get it right the first time. It's ok to learn. Remember folks, it's just a game.

NEWSLETTER REMINDER

If you would like to submit something for the newsletter for next month and going forward please send your article to Bill at frontdesk@lafayetteindustries.com. Becky S. will be retiring in October.

POISON PLANTS



Poison Ivy, Poison Oak and Poison Sumac

To identify, look at their appearance:



Poison ivy has three leaflets on each leaf and grows as a bush or vine.



Poison oak has three leaflets on each leaf, with rounded tips, and grows like a shrub or vine.



Poison sumac leaves have clusters of seven to 13 leaflets arranged in pairs and grows as a tree.





WELCOME AUGUST ALAN

By: JoAnn Bagley (Proud Lafayette Parent)

Ian Bagley became a great uncle last month. Born on 2/11, August Alan weighed in at 8 lbs. and was 21 in. long.

Such a blessing!! Ian looks forward to making many memories with August Alan and his family. His parents' names are Ryan and Isabella.



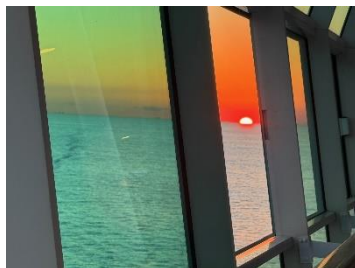
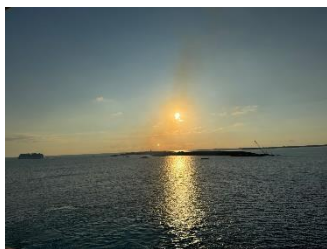
MY TRIP TO THE BAHAMAS

By Bill Taylor (Proud Lafayette Staff)



At the end of February through March 3rd, my mom and I went with a family friend to Coco Cay and Nassau in the Bahamas courtesy of a Royal Caribbean cruise on a ship called "Liberty Of The Seas". We got to stay in a suite stateroom with a balcony. It was way cool. We left out of Fort Lauderdale on Friday and came back on Monday. Along the way we had a bunch of cool events like a concert featuring some of the best bits of the classic film, Saturday Night Fever.

(Editor's note: It was originally going to be a full on musical that they were going to show on the big screen but they ran into technical difficulties, so the live concert was their backup plan.) and a "Finish That Lyric" game show where players had to finish where the music left off. All in all, it was a great, albeit short time.



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The Knights of Columbus Christ Prince of Peace Catholic Church #12986 is one of Lafayette's most consistent donors. They hold a Tootsie Roll Drive every year with the proceeds going to Lafayette. We are incredibly grateful to the Knights of Columbus for their contributions year after year.



Knights of Columbus Council #12986 – Christ Prince of Peace Catholic Church
Tootsie Roll Drive check presentation
Immediate left – left to right: Vicky James (staff), Brian Cahill (Knight), John Diederrich (Knight), Rodney Schnurr (Knight), Travis Nichols (employee), Tom Henning (Knight) and Hazel Owen (employee)

WEST- CAUGHT BEING SAFE AND RESPECTFUL FEBRUARY 2025



CAUGHT BEING SAFE

Immediate Left (from left to right) Stacey Elster (staff), Andrew Zinnuska, Stuart Harlan, Kim Lamb (staff) Rob Libera (staff)



CAUGHT BEING RESPECTFUL

Immediate Left (From left to right): Stacey Elster (staff), Kim Lamb (staff) Justin Moslander, Debbie Draper, Crystal Bail, Rob Libera, (staff)

NORTH CAUGHT BEING SAFE AND RESPECTFUL FEBRUARY 2025

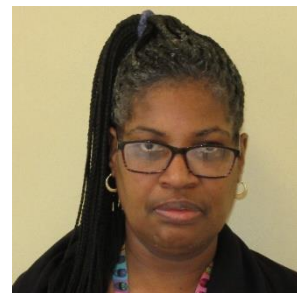


CAUGHT BEING RESPECTFUL

Immediate left: Paul Spears

CAUGHT BEING SAFE

Immediate Right: Veronica Quinn





YOU'RE INVITED: 2025 SPEEDWAY SPECTACULAR

Lafayette Industries is excited to invite you to join our friends at Waigand Wheels for their **2nd Annual Speedway Spectacular**—an evening that brings people together to support a mission we all care about.

 **Saturday, April 26, 2025**

 **6:00 – 10:00 PM (Racing starts at 7:00 PM)**

 **T.A.S.K. – 980 Horan Dr, Fenton, MO 63026**

Expect good food, good company, and some friendly competition as Hot Wheels cars take the track in a derby-style tournament. There will be plenty to enjoy, including:

- Silent and live auctions
- Raffles
- Unlimited snacks and drinks

Waigand Wheels provides hands-on opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities to gain skills and build confidence after high school. Their Wagoneers are involved in real, hands-on work: making deliveries for local businesses, tending community gardens, volunteering at food pantries, and more. The goal is simple—give people a chance to stay connected, learn new skills, and feel proud of what they contribute.

Lafayette Industries is proud to collaborate with Waigand Wheels through shared a mission and workforce partnerships that promote meaningful and productive opportunities for adults with disabilities. The Speedway Spectacular is a great chance to show support for their work—and enjoy a memorable night while doing it.

Tables and sponsorships are available now. Individual tickets open in April, based on availability. Learn more or reserve your spot at www.waigandwheels.com/events, or contact Sam at sam@waigandwheels.com / **314-852-5820**





**Life @ Lafayette Industries
Health and Resource Fair**

Thursday, April 17, 2025

**179 Gaywood, Manchester, Missouri 63021
2pm-4pm**

**Let's Get Together in Person
and
Learn More About
Lafayette's Legacy Program
and
Life Enhancement Programs**

**Visit with our Friends from SSM HealthCare
Network with their Providers
and
All they have to offer!**

**Compass Health Dental Van
Will be on-site for you to tour their mobile dental office and schedule future
appointments.**

**FRIENDS Advocacy
To Provide Information
For DMH Medicaid Waiver Services**

**For More Information Contact
Vicky James
(636) 227-5666 X1118**

April

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 April Fools Day	2	3 North Free Lunch	4 PAY DAY (JeffCo) Deadline for signing up for Art Class.	5
6	7	8	9 West only – 3:00-3:45p – Art Class!	10 PAY DAY (North and West) West Free Lunch	11	12 K of C Dance – St. Clare of Assisi School Cafeteria – 7 – 10p Celebrate the Cardinals with FredBird
13	14	15	16 Board meeting 6:00p at West	17 North Free Lunch	18 Good Friday PAY DAY (JeffCo)	19
20 Easter 	21	22	23	24 West Free Lunch	25 PAY DAY (North and West)	26
27	28	29	30			