

# GESHER

## *Insider*



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# GESHER *Insider*

Gesher is the Hebrew word for 'bridge' and, every day, our programs and services facilitate a bridge to a better job, improved mental health, greater independence, and more.

## A Note from the *CEO*



I'm writing to you following what was our most successful Trade Secrets event to date in support of our women's workforce programs. It was an inspiring evening and a meaningful reminder of what's possible when a community comes together around opportunity. I am so grateful for our committee, sponsors and the community's support.

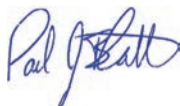
Moments like these reflect something broader happening across Gesher Human Services. We continue to see strong momentum in our work; not by chance, but through the care, dedication, and intention our teams bring every day. That momentum is rooted in the experiences of the people we serve and the partners we stand alongside.

Across our residential services, behavioral health supports, and workforce programs, we hear a consistent message: people feel seen, supported, and less alone as they navigate complex systems. That sense of connection matters. It creates space for hope, and from hope, new opportunities begin to take shape.

In the pages ahead, you'll meet individuals whose stories bring our mission to life. Through their journeys, you'll see how access to the right supports can help people build confidence, strengthen skills, and move forward with purpose.

I am honored to be part of an organization that remains so committed to putting people first and to shaping experiences that truly make a difference. Thank you for being part of this work and for helping us continue to build a future grounded in hope and opportunity.

Sincerely,



Paul Blatt | President & CEO | Gesher Human Services

## At Work. At Home. And in the Community.

### MISSION

Gesher Human Services is a bridge to hope and opportunity for people at work, at home, and in the community. Gesher's workforce development, behavioral health, and inclusion programming serves all Metro Detroiters while meeting the needs of the Jewish community.

### VISION

A world where each person will have the tools to cross life's bridges and realize their potential.

### VALUES

People First  
Integrity  
Kindness  
Forward Thinking



# Expanding Opportunity in Detroit

## How Gesher is Strengthening the City's Workforce

Job seekers coming to our Detroit At Work center located inside the Durfee Innovation Society are in luck: An expanded number of Gesher career coaches are now serving Detroiters searching for employment.



The City of Detroit has increased Gesher's presence because the agency exceeds performance goals and consistently delivers "real workforce results at scale," said Gesher Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Jim Willis.

Individuals come through government funded employment and training programs, and Business Relationship Coordinators (BRC) on site assist both the job seeker and the employer.

Job seekers receive individualized career guidance, transportation and childcare support, and direct connections to employers. At the same time, BRCs work closely with local businesses such as Detroit Medical Center to understand hiring needs and build talent pipelines that align with real opportunities in the Detroit labor market.

### Just ask Brian Davis.

After 11 years in prison, Brian faced the challenges many returning citizens encounter including unstable employment, limited opportunities, and relationships that needed repair. Gesher BRC Stephanie Cranford helped him shift from short-term survival to long-term planning.

"Stephanie had me identify my 1- and 5-year goals and became a life coach and a friend. She even attended my wedding!" Brian said. "I realized that what I really wanted was to own my own business, so I started to offer landscaping services."

Brian's progress reflects the broader impact of Gesher's model.

"When individuals like Brian get back on their feet, the impact goes far beyond one person," Stephanie says. "They can hire others, support their families, and contribute to the economic strength of their communities."

That ripple effect is central to Gesher's approach. With each person who enters the workforce, the organization helps more Detroiters gain and maintain employment, strengthening the city's families, workforce, and communities.



According to a national analysis published by Prison Policy Initiative (2018), nearly all formerly incarcerated Americans want to work, but more than 1 in 4 can't find a job.

To learn more, please visit [detroitatwork.com](http://detroitatwork.com)

# Meet the Team that Keeps the Candy Coming

For Tim, there is no place he'd rather work. Simply put, he says, *"I'm happy!"*

The next time you buy Zolli sugar-free candy (available at Walmart, Kroger, and Amazon), know that Southfield resident Tim Weathers' impact is felt in every tasty bite. Tim serves on a Geshher supported employment team at the Walled Lake-based manufacturer.

Tim came to Geshher to develop his job skills and work readiness. An assessment recommended a little extra support with Tim's communication skills.

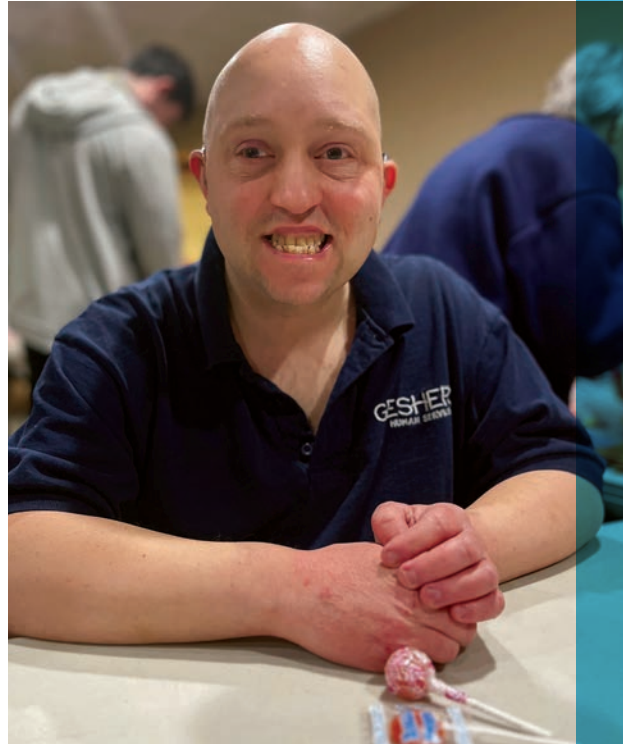
Geshher Direct Support Professional Barbara Doyle, a 27-year veteran of the agency, pulled out a trick from her well-worn playbook. "I gave Tim more responsibilities," she said, and also the coveted front seat in the van that chauffeurs the crew back and forth to their work site.

Today, Tim speaks easily to anyone, including Zolli co-founder Thomas Morse, whose daughter Alina founded the company at age 10. "Geshher sends us a great team; they help us do a number of good things, foremost among them helping others smile," Morse said.

The Geshher group works 4.5 hours a day, five days a week, in an arrangement that provides wages and income while allowing individuals to maintain essential benefits. The hard candy, taffy and lollipops handled by the team make them integral to the supply chain as they hone skills in packaging and inventory management.

Data supports the broader impact of the supported employment model (see Forbes statistic at right). Employees with disabilities contribute to the economy. Having a paycheck affords spending power and autonomy. As Nathan Volz, Geshher's Vice President of Community Inclusion, says, "Getting a phone and going out to dinner bring people great joy."

Tim's experience reflects how supported employment functions in practice. It's a model that benefits both employees and employers.



Companies that employ people with disabilities are 25% more productive and generate up to 1.6 times more revenue and 2.6 times more net income than their peers.

—Forbes, 2025

Ready to diversify your workforce? Please contact [Ted Goewey | tgoewey@geshhermi.org](mailto:tgoewey@geshhermi.org) OR [CuJuan Davis | cdavis@geshhermi.org](mailto:cdavis@geshhermi.org).

# Steven Satterfield's Path to Independence

Steven Satterfield lives with complex medical conditions, including a shunt that regulates spinal fluid and complications from ulcerative colitis. His journey to stable employment began more than a decade ago at Family Dollar, where he stocked shelves. The work, however, wasn't a good fit. "They cut my hours," Steven recalls. "I wasn't making that much anyway, so I decided to take a chance."

That chance led him to Gesher. Through comprehensive vocational assessments, Gesher staff determined Steven was better suited to hands-on work in a structured, supportive environment. He enrolled in a supported employment program designed to match individual strengths with real workplace needs.

"Assessments document technical ability, but they also allow us to observe everyday workplace skills like communication, stamina, focus, and confidence," says Rachel Grinnan, a Career Navigator on Gesher's Vocational Rehabilitation team.



**Research shows that companies leading in disability inclusion reported 28 percent higher revenue and double the net income of their peers.**

— Accenture, 2018

Steven's first placement was as a janitor at Alrig. From there, supported employment navigator Lisa Kraus, who had known Steven since his school days, recognized his potential for greater independence. She helped him secure a position on a custodial crew at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, the only U.S. Army installation in Michigan and a hub for military research.

At the Arsenal, Steven maintains several floors, handling trash removal, light cleaning, and daily upkeep. While he's part of a crew, much of his work is done independently. "They kind of let me do my thing," he says. "You don't have to worry about me."

For Steven's mother, Kelly Satterfield, the support surrounding the job has been just as meaningful as the job itself. "Because the Gesher staff know him so well, they notice when something isn't right," she says. "If Steven doesn't look well, they'll call or text me right away. That partnership has meant everything."

Today, Steven shares an apartment in Ferndale with his wife Jessica, whom he met through Special Olympics and married in 2022. They enjoy going to the gym together and karaoke nights where Steven belts out his favorite Zach Bryan songs.

Stories like Steven's don't often appear in economic reports, yet they reflect the real impact of inclusive employment. When people with disabilities are supported in finding the right work, they gain stability, independence, and fuller participation in their communities.

[Read more about the Detroit Arsenal in our Winter 2025 newsletter at \[geshermi.org/newsletter\]\(https://geshermi.org/newsletter\).](https://geshermi.org/newsletter)

[For more information on supported employment, please contact Lisa Kraus | \[lkraus@geshermi.org\]\(mailto:lkraus@geshermi.org\)](mailto:lkraus@geshermi.org)

# Opening Doors for Families Across Detroit



60 children have been referred to Gesher since January, and many families who have been waiting months or even years for services have expressed relief to discover an established care provider that is local, responsive, and empathetic.

## Gesher Expands Case Management to Children

Gesher supports Detroit area adults with disabilities, and now for the first time, that support is extending to Wayne County children from birth through age 18 who have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The expansion of case management services is funded by Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network (DWIHN). In selecting the agency as its partner, DWIHN cited Gesher's strong track record of 100% compliance with required policies and procedures and a personalized approach to care, driven in part by smaller caseloads.

"Families shouldn't have to navigate complex systems alone," said Vanessa Haviland, Gesher's Vice President of Clinical Services. "Our goal is to be a steady partner from the beginning, helping children and their families access the support they need to grow and thrive."

"It is helpful to come visit the office to get our daughter out of the house," Rachel Galeski said. Rachel's 4-year-old daughter Audrey has autism. The family has turned to Gesher for services including respite and dental care. With help from benefits navigator Marty Sharrard and Gesher's broader team, the family is navigating Social Security disability applications, accessing parent support, and getting connected to essential services like Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

Gesher's case managers help families coordinate therapies, medical care, transportation, and in-home support, while also guiding them through community mental health systems and diagnostic services. Support coordinators are often the first call in a crisis, and a consistent partner throughout a child's development.

"Coordinating care at the early stage allows us to build formative relationships and support families during a child's development," said Laura Hearshen, Director of Supports Coordination. "Long term, we help them emerge into adulthood with supports, skills, and confidence."

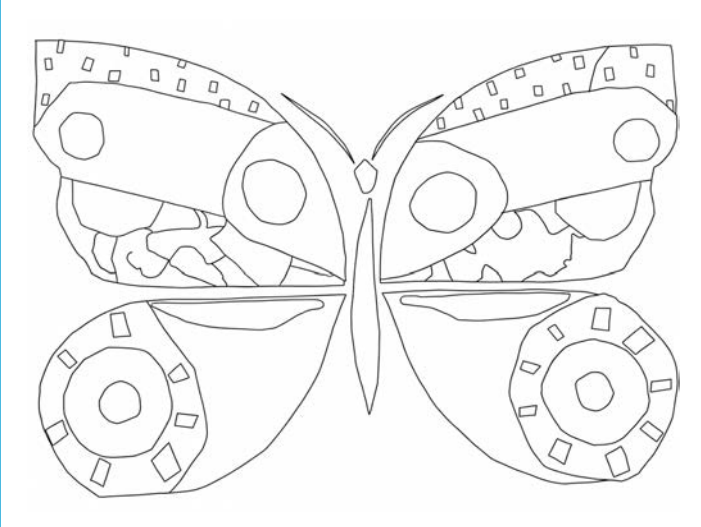
**To inquire about youth case management services, please contact  
Laura Hearshen | (313) 446-8179.**

# CREATIVE *Expressions*

Art helps people explore ideas and connect with others.

Gesher's Creative Expressions program provides opportunities for individuals with mental health challenges and intellectual and developmental disabilities to grow through fine arts education, enrichment, and cultural experiences.

Gesher is proud to partner with working artists, businesses, and organizations, including the DSO, to offer a wide variety of visual and performing arts activities such as photography, sculpture, and poetry, while empowering participants of all skill levels to create, share, and, for some, launch a microenterprise.



*Illustration created by Creative Expressions Program participants.*

Color the picture and let your imagination lead the way!



For more information, please contact the Creative Expressions Program at 947-517-6895.

## Staff Shout Out

Congratulations to Nathan Volz, Vice President of Community Inclusion, on receiving the Vocational Service Award from The Arc of Oakland County.

Nathan's path began in Washington, D.C., after assisting a blind college student named April around the city, an experience he says changed his perspective, realizing "she had been guiding me."

That moment led to more than three decades of service focused on expanding opportunity and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. Reflecting on the recognition, Nathan said simply, "I do what needs to be done."



# An Unforgettable Evening!

17th Annual

# TRADE SECRETS

Over

# 17,000 women

supported in Metro Detroit last year!

Our 17th anniversary Trade Secrets event honoring Kristen Gross was an inspiring and impactful evening, bringing our community together to celebrate both Kristen and the 17,000 women Gesher served over the past year.

With a packed ballroom and more than \$400,000 raised, the night's success was made possible by the generosity of dedicated donors and sponsors who believe deeply in our mission. In her remarks, Kristen shared that while people don't choose their struggles, how they choose to show up, "imperfectly, consistently, and with compassion, matters."

Her words reflect the heart of Gesher's work, as we continue to empower women to transform their lives and build futures filled with purpose, dignity, and opportunity.



## Many Ways to Make an Impact

Thanks to you, our 2025 Annual Campaign was up 16% over the previous year, and our donor retention remains incredibly strong.

That means more people are not only giving, but staying connected to our mission of helping individuals build a better life.

Thank you for being part of this momentum!

**Scan this QR code to  
make your gift today!**

**Or visit**

**[geshermi.org/maynewsletter](https://geshermi.org/maynewsletter)**



## Sunday JUNE 7

## SPRING *Clean Up*

Our first-ever Spring Clean Up is part of the "Good Day" campaign to support individuals with mental health challenges. Volunteers of all ages can help beautify Gesher's Oakland County homes by planting flowers, pulling weeds, and more.

**Teams or individuals can sign up at  
[geshermi.org/spring-clean-up](https://geshermi.org/spring-clean-up)**

**MORE INFO: Mark Osborne  
[mosborne@geshermi.org](mailto:mosborne@geshermi.org)**



**Monday JULY 13**

**The Lois Zussman  
Golf Classic**



**FRANKLIN HILLS COUNTRY CLUB**

A great opportunity to connect, play, and support individuals with mental health challenges, benefiting our Clubhouse for the Common Good.

**Teams or individuals can sign up at [geshermi.org/golfclassic](http://geshermi.org/golfclassic)**

**MORE INFO: Lindsey Fox  
[lfox@geshermi.org](mailto:lfox@geshermi.org)**

**Thursday JULY 23**

**A Special Capstone Event**



A Capstone Event with the DSO at Detroit Country Day, featuring a gallery walk of Creative Expressions participant artwork and an inspiring concert celebrating creativity, community, and the power of the arts.

**MORE INFO: Eric Adelman  
[eadelman@geshermi.org](mailto:eadelman@geshermi.org)  
[geshermi.org/creativeexpressions](http://geshermi.org/creativeexpressions)**

Gesher joins a global network of more than 300 Clubhouses in 30 countries, united by a shared mission: helping people reclaim their lives and thrive as valued members of the community.



## Gesher's Clubhouse Receives Accreditation

In March, Gesher's Clubhouse for the Common Good in Southfield officially received accreditation from Clubhouse International, a major milestone recognizing the quality and impact of our community. This accreditation affirms that our Clubhouse meets the rigorous standards of the evidence-based Clubhouse model, a proven approach that empowers individuals living with mental health challenges through connection, purpose, and opportunity.

Clubhouses are community-based centers where people living with mental health challenges work side by side with staff to build skills, find employment, and develop meaningful relationships.

"Accreditation is more than an achievement, it's a testament to the hard work, dedication, and collaboration of our members, staff, and partners," said Eric Adelman, Gesher's Chief Advancement Officer. "Together, we've built a space where inclusion, recovery, and belonging aren't just ideals—they're everyday realities."

To inquire about Gesher's Clubhouse for the Common Good, please visit [www.ccgmi.org](http://www.ccgmi.org).

# Summer Happenings at Gesher

Our annual summer internship program for high school students with disabilities features two new job sites including Cranbrook Swim Club, where teens will do light landscaping, and the Marvin and Betty Danto Health Care Center in West Bloomfield.

Across Oakland, Wayne, and Macomb counties, 150 students will gain hands-on work experience while learning teamwork, time management, and workplace skills.

Summer job coaches play a key role in guiding and supporting the interns. High school students with disabilities interested in gaining a summer internship can contact their high school transitions counselor or talk to Michigan Rehabilitation Services.

Potential job coaches can visit [geshermi.org/careers](https://geshermi.org/careers) or call Jon VanCamp | 248. 233. 4388 or email [jvancamp@geshermi.org](mailto:jvancamp@geshermi.org).



**JOIN**  
A GESHER INTERNSHIP NETWORK

THE JEANETTE & OSCAR COOK  
JEWISH OCCUPATIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In its 52nd year, the Jeanette and Oscar Cook JOIN Program continues to provide opportunities for Jewish college students to engage in impactful work experiences as they prepare for their careers.

This summer, the program expands its footprint across Metro Detroit, placing 15 interns at Gesher, Adamah, Congregation Shaarey Zedek, Hebrew Free Loan, Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue, The J Detroit, Jewish Family Service, Jewish Federation of Detroit, Jewish Senior Life, Mezuzah, Repair the World, and Yad Ezra. Through these placements, interns experience the power of Jewish communal organizations, contribute meaningfully to their missions, and help shape a vibrant, connected future for Detroit's Jewish community.

# GESHER

## HUMAN SERVICES

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Let's Connect!



## Let us know! Newsletter story ideas or suggestions?

Please contact Gabriella Burman | Director of Marketing & Communications  
248.233.4216 | [gburman@geshermi.org](mailto:gburman@geshermi.org)

## we're hiring.



### Choose a career where you can make a difference every day.

Geshher Human Services is hiring, and we'd love for you to join our team! As a leading nonprofit in the Detroit area, we're passionate about supporting individuals and strengthening our community.

Our workplace culture is rooted in collaboration, respect, and growth, offering employees the chance to thrive both personally and professionally.

Whether you're just starting your career or bringing years of experience, you'll find a warm, welcoming environment where your talents can shine. *Explore our current opportunities and see how you can be a part of our impactful mission!*

[geshermi.org/jobs](https://geshermi.org/jobs) | 248.559.5000

Geshher Human Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping people across metro Detroit lead more stable and fulfilling lives through career development, behavioral health, and residential services that strengthen our community by strengthening the individual.