

Innisfree

VILLAGE VOICE
WINTER 2022

Ellie at
Innisfree
in 2021

Ellie has been an Innisfree coworker since 1992. She lives in Meadow House.

A Learning Experience

by Eleanor Gronemeyer

I'd like to start at the very beginning: how my parents met. It was kind of funny. My maternal grandfather was a scout professional who met my dad who was also a scout professional. And there's something even funnier. My grandfather suggested my mom meet my dad, and she wasn't interested! Isn't that funny? And he turned out to be my dad.

As things moved along, my parents learned that I would be arriving. They knew before I was born that I would have a

disability. This was in the days before genetic testing. I was born two weeks late.

When I was in my early twenties, I was diagnosed with a mental illness, and my family moved to Florida. Within the same six-month period, my maternal grandfather was diagnosed with cancer. My grandmother did not tell me that my grandfather had cancer, and this was difficult for me to accept when I later discovered that he was terminally ill. But I now understand



Ellie aged 26

that she was only trying to protect me.

In 1992, I moved to Innisfree. Living at Innisfree has been a growing experience. When I came, I was accustomed to always doing things my way. One of the areas in which I have improved at Innisfree is in sharing better. Another thing that I have learned at



Ellie and her brother John enjoy
a trip to Sugar Hollow.

Innisfree is increased self-confidence – and also how to deal with cold weather again. I had lived in Florida for 10 years before coming to Innisfree; and, the year that I arrived, there was the “snowstorm of the century.” (There even was snow in Tallahassee, Florida, that year.)

Something that I have particularly enjoyed about living at Innisfree is participating in activities that my parents would not have done with me, such as going on a Thanksgiving hike one year.

Valentine's Dance Party

There's always plenty of love to go around at Innisfree's Valentine's Day Party!



A peek-a-boo valentine, featuring Max!

New Volunteer Spotlights

One challenge of the pandemic that had a particularly significant impact on Innisfree was the international travel ban. Throughout our history, our model has relied on volunteers from all over the world, and during the time the ban was in place, international volunteers were unable to obtain the visas that would usually allow them to come to Innisfree, meaning only a few with dual citizenship or other special situations were



Semih (from Turkey), Keke (from Lesotho), Valentin (from Germany), and Sebastian (from Switzerland) enjoy a day off together.

able to arrive. We are elated to have welcomed six new volunteers

(four international) since the beginning of 2022 and are looking forward to more arrivals in the coming months! Not only does a diverse group of volunteers add to the richness of community life for our coworkers, but the bonds between volunteers often lead to lifelong friendships.



Keke and the bakery crew get creative in their pretzel designs.

Keke

Hometown: Mohale's Hoek, Lesotho

Hobbies/interests: Traveling, Gardening, Playing tennis, Hiking, Dancing, Shopping, Baking

Innisfree House: Sunflower

Favorite thing about Innisfree so far: Being surrounded by people of different backgrounds. I have become more understanding, open minded and appreciative. Laughing, talking and dancing bring / give me peace of mind, so being at Innisfree, I feel at home, there are lots of happy faces, laughter and dancers of course. So, as a farmer girl from Lesotho, I am happy to be here because I will be able to work with the soil and get my hands dirty.



Keke in her field of corn at home in Lesotho

Mark has been an Innisfree coworker since 2005. He lives in Laurel House and is proud to hold the title Master Jokester.



Jokes with the "Master Jokester"

by Mark

What did one eye say to the other eye?

Between the two of us, something smells.

What is the army's favorite month?

March!

Why did the astronaut find skeleton bones on the moon?

The cow did not make it.



Denise and Max weigh and fill reused jars with chocolate covered pretzels, a well-loved Pasture Fence staple!

Denise

Hometown: Waynesboro, VA

Hobbies/interests: Singing, reading, writing, swimming, exploring new places, and attempting to learn languages

Innisfree House: Meadow

Favorite thing about Innisfree so far: Living in a beautiful place with great-tasting well water and a house with a wood stove (the only working one at Innisfree, I'm told)



Denise in her Dickens Caroler costume



"Springtime" by Crosby



Crosby has been a day coworker at Innisfree since 2016. He lives with his family in Earlysville.

Marny has been an Innisfree coworker since 1976. She lives in Oxford House in Charlottesville.



Haikus by Marnina

Innisfree

Innisfree is nice
I like it better than school
It is beautiful

Birthdays

March is birthday month
Three Oxford birthdays in March
My birthday is first

Spring

It is getting warm
Spring is better than winter
The flowers come up

David has been an Innisfree coworker since 2021. He lives in Halcyon House.



"Japanese Flower Pattern" by David



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Be Mine



Emma shows off her avant-garde valentine design!



Wendy looks lovely in a hand-crocheted necklace from volunteer Olivia.



Maggie shows off her moves dancing to "The Jackson Five."

Brooke dressed and accessorized for the occasion, including her lovely pink mask.



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