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**The Sunshine Committee at the Easterseals Academy Tinley Park campus was established to spread appreciation, build team morale, and brighten the days of hardworking staff. Learn about how and why they spread sunshine.**

The Sunshine Committee at the Easterseals Academy Tinley Park campus was established to spread appreciation, build team morale, and brighten the days of hardworking staff. Easterseals Academy is

a non-public, therapeutic day school for students with autism spectrum disorder, emotional disability, developmental delay, or intellectual disability.

"We strive to make sure that our staff feel appreciated and considered. We want them to know that their work truly makes a difference in our students lives, even on the toughest days," says Nicole Moya, paraprofessional and head of the committee.

Research shows that kindness in the workplace has a net positive effect. For example, employees who are respectful and kind to each other have 26% more energy, 36% more satisfaction with their work, and 44% more commitment to their organization.

This year, the Sunshine Committee kicked off the new school year with a moment of appreciation that included keychain rocks with inspiring words like "courage", "blessings," and "kindness." The message was, "You rocked the first week of school," says Moya.

"When we chose to do this appreciation moment, I wanted the staff to pick a rock that spoke to them, to know that they are valued and cared about. If they are ever having a hard day, they can look at their rock and know they aren't alone," Moya explains.



Some of the other things that the committee have planned for the months ahead include handwritten birthday cards signed by the committee and the administrative team, a pumpkin carving contest for team building, a "Thanksgiving Around the World" potluck, and a countdown to winter break in which each day has a theme (like a chocolate bar and a cookie exchange).

These are just a few examples of the myriad events and moments that the Sunshine Committee organizes. See some photos below from past events.

A special thank you to the Admin Team (Kristin H., Jeff, and Kristin C.) as well as the committee members. Carrie, Trisha, Liz, Faith, Lisa, and Deb. G.