

# MAS MATTERS

A Quarterly Newsletter for Midland Adult Services

It's the most  
Wonderful Time of the Year!





## From the desk of Shawn M. McInerney President/CEO



Dear Midland Community,

### Stay Tuned

As we move into 2026, we have been developing two important planning documents that will guide Midland over the next three years.

The first is Midland's **Strategic Plan**. This cross-cutting roadmap is built around seven core pillars that drive our organization. They are: The Midland School; Residential Services; Employment and Day Habilitation; Human Resources and Leadership Development; Advancement and Community Engagement; Fiscal Strength and Stewardship; and Governance and Board Development. This plan will serve as Midland's lodestar as we move forward—expanding services and, most importantly, supporting individuals and their families.

The second plan, which is nearing completion, is Midland's **Aging Plan**. This plan focuses specifically on Adult Services, including Residential, Employment, and Day Habilitation. Midland supports a growing number of individuals with increasingly complex aging needs, including associated health and mobility challenges that often accompany the aging process. Our goal is to thoughtfully adapt programs to best support individuals, with an overarching commitment to helping each person age with dignity and grace.

Together, these plans reflect Midland's core principles of compassion, dignity, respect, inclusion, and community participation. The plans provide the framework to guide our organization over the next three years. In the near future, you will hear more about both plans.

### Dialed In

As I have written in the past, these are unsettling and unpredictable times for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The need for clear and concise communication, staying informed, engagement, and active advocacy remain of paramount importance. To help you stay informed, the presentation and slide deck on the impacts of HR- 1 have been provided below.

[GSCC-Webinar-December-11-2025-1.pdf](#)

[Protecting Care: What New Jersey Advocates Need to Know About H.R. 1 webinar from December 11, 2025](#)

Warm regards,

Shawn M. McInerney, President & CEO

Midland is committed to meeting these challenges head-on. As a community, we will continue to move forward...together.

### Employment Center Spotlight: Community Partnership Success

We are proud to highlight our continued partnership with ScentBird, a valued community employer, that is making a meaningful impact through inclusive hiring.

ScentBird has welcomed a second team of three Midland participants into their fulfillment center in Somerset as part of Midland's Supported Employment Program.



James



Lindsay



Jill



We are thrilled to congratulate Jill, James, and Lindsay as they begin their new jobs. We wish them the very best of luck and continued success in this exciting next step. We are so proud of all they have accomplished!



# Meet Allison Pacheco Board Certified Behavior Analyst



## **What She Loves About Midland**

Allison's favorite part of her work is connecting with clients. She enjoys supporting individuals with unique interests and abilities and learns from them every day.

## **Career Journey**

Allison's proudest achievement is passing her BCBA exam. She first connected with Midland years ago through volunteering and now supports some of those same students as a BCBA.

## **Growing With the Team**

Allison says Midland's warm, welcoming staff have made her transition as a new BCBA much easier. She values the team's diverse expertise and the way everyone works together to support clients.

## **What Makes Midland Special**

She is inspired by Midland's shared sense of purpose. Staff approach even everyday tasks with care, always promoting clients' dignity and independence.

## **Personal Life**

Outside of work, her greatest joy is marrying her husband, Orlando, whose support helps her be her best self.

## **Who She Is**

Positive, compassionate, and hardworking, Allison strives to create an environment where clients feel supported, loved, and successful.

## **Advice for Future Professionals**

Her advice for anyone considering special education: "Just go for it." While the work can be challenging, she finds it incredibly joyful and rewarding.

## **Outside Interests**

Allison enjoys cosmetology, crafting, and reading. She previously worked as a hairstylist to help pay for school and still loves the craft.

## **A Defining Experience**

Growing up with a brother who has a disability taught Allison to value small wins, build self-advocacy skills, and approach others with empathy—insights she brings to her work every day.

## **Advice for our Individuals**

"If you're struggling, ask for help. No one can do it alone."

## Halloween Fun in Our Adult Programs!

Our adults kicked off the holiday season in style by arriving to program dressed in their favorite Halloween costumes! From creative characters to festive flair, everyone enjoyed showing off their looks and sharing a special Halloween treat with friends and peers. The laughter, smiles, and excitement made for a truly memorable celebration.



*"I just like to smile. Smiling's my favorite."*

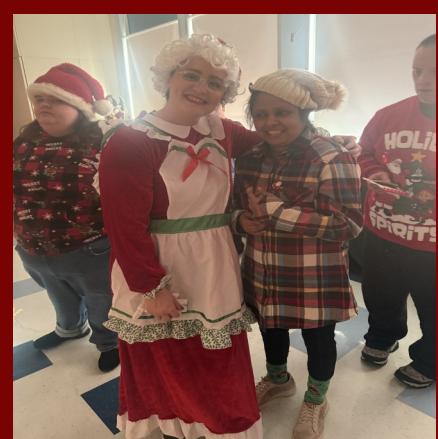


Our residential adults enjoyed a memorable night out seeing **ELF**, celebrating the joy, laughter, and togetherness of the holiday season.



# • Explores Holiday Light Show

During the holidays, the Explores Program *LIT* up the season with their annual Holiday Indoor Light Show! Participants enjoyed visiting a room transformed to celebrate all holidays, featuring a Winter Wonderland, Polar Express, and festive village displays. Handmade ornaments added a personal touch, making it easy for everyone to get into the holiday spirit. ♡♦



## Alumni Event



**Midland's Annual Holiday Party** filled the Somerville Elks with festive cheer on Saturday, 12/14/2025. Families gathered around tables to enjoy a delicious brunch buffet and spend special time together. The celebration peaked when Santa made a joyful appearance, sharing smiles and gifts with our individuals. Laughter, love, and holiday spirit made the day truly magical for all who attended.





# Wellness Corner

## Winter Illness Preparedness

Michele Casey, RN

Staying healthy during the winter months starts with strong daily habits. Be sure to wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water, especially after coughing, sneezing, or being in public spaces. Eating balanced meals, staying active, and getting enough sleep each night helps support your immune system. Don't forget to dress warmly for the weather and stay hydrated, even when it's cold outside. If you start feeling sick, take action early. Stay home to rest and avoid spreading illness to others. Drink plenty of fluids, monitor your symptoms, and contact a healthcare provider if symptoms worsen or don't improve. When in doubt, follow guidance from health professionals and your local health department to help keep yourself and your community safe all season long. The following chart can help you differentiate between some different common winter illnesses.

Please note that allergies tend to cause itchy/watery eyes, itchy nose or throat, sneezing and runny or stuffy nose, without fever, body aches, or gastrointestinal issues. Viral illnesses (cold, flu, COVID-19) are more likely to cause fever, fatigue, muscle aches, and sometimes loss of taste or smell, which allergies almost never trigger. High fevers are typically associated with viral illnesses (102°F+).

Symptom/Feature	Common Cold	Flu	COVID-19	Common Allergies
Fever/chills	Rare or mid	Common; often high	Common (though may vary by variant)	Never/very rare
Cough	Common; often mild	Common; can be more severe	Common; often dry	Sometimes; often from post-nasal drip
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes	Rare; less characteristic	Very common
Runny or stuffy nose/nasal congestion	Common	Sometimes	Common (but not always)	Very common
Itchy, watery, or red eyes; itchy nose or throat	Rare	Rare	Rare/less common	Very common; hallmark of allergy
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Usually/often	Sometimes; less common
Body/muscle aches; joint pain	Rare or mild	Common; often significant	Common	Rare
Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Common	Sometimes; usually very mild
Loss of taste or smell	Rare or none	Sometimes; may occur secondary to nasal congestion	Common	Rare; may occur secondary to nasal congestion
Gastrointestinal issues (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)	Rare	Sometimes; more common in children	Sometimes (especially in some variants)	None/very unlikely
Typical duration and timing	Symptom onset is gradual and lasts approximately 1 week	Rapid onset; often 5-7 days but can be longer	Onset 2-14 days after exposure; duration varies	Can persist as long as allergen exposure continues

Sources: CDC.gov; mayoclinic.org

## Events



**Thank you to our Board of Trustees for your continued generosity and support.**

We are grateful for the time, sponsorships, and commitment you bring to every Midland event—most recently at *Midland Goes to the Movies with PNC*. Your dedication makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the individuals we serve.

Pictured from bottom left to right: Mary Rehus, Sandy LoPiccolo, Frank Settipani, Susan Lodge

Top left to right: Andy Nowack, John Tegeler, John Cunningham, Shawn M. McInerney, Pete Lega

A poster for the "Basket Bash" event. The background features a light blue color with white snowflakes and pine cones. The text "Sunday, February 22, 2026" is at the top. Below it is the title "Basket Bash" in a large, stylized font. Underneath the title, it says "Doors open at 12:00 PM" and "TICKETS tickets are now on sale!". A small note below that says "This event sells out quickly. We hope to see you there!" There are two illustrations of gift baskets with bows at the bottom: one with fruit and one with a bottle and gift boxes.

For more information please contact  
Stacey Carr at [carr@midlandnj.org](mailto:carr@midlandnj.org) or  
(908) 722-8222 Ext. 125

## ALUMNI DANCE SCHEDULE



JANUARY 9TH

Around the World (Heritage Dance) 

FEBRUARY 6TH

Casino Night 

MARCH 13TH

Spring Training (Sports Night) 

APRIL 17TH

Mexican Hat Dance 

MAY 15TH

Semi Formal - "Under the Stars" 

JUNE 5TH

Good Vibrations - Beach Party 