

# COMPASS

2024 Fall Edition

Volume 36



Supported Living and Independent Living

# Present Strength

By Sadie Hess, Founder & CEO

We recently embarked on the big question of “what is next”. This year, we revisit our goals and plans for the next 7 years. With such a big question, I needed to get a group of people to talk about our present and the future. We did a great retreat at Carrville. Let me share what I learned.

I was so honored by the group who showed up to this strategic planning session. It was a beautiful thing to see our culture in action, with everyone leaning in to participate, embracing the community, and sharing their ideas. It was wonderful to see our values in action throughout the entire company. Individuals from all our offices joined us—diverse locations and jobs. Everyone showed up fully present, engaged, and trusting in one another.

My takeaway from this retreat is that our present is strong. Because we value excellence, we are always improving, and there are always things to improve. I was so grateful to see how vibrant, cool, and awesome our company already is, as these people represented various aspects of our organization. It was a privilege to see my team, which is diverse, yet shares many common values, beliefs, and passions around serving individuals with disabilities. Everyone who showed up was positive, supportive, and passionate about what we do, about serving our clients and bringing excellence, creativity, and transformation to our industry.

We are focusing on three areas of opportunity in our organization:

## **1. How do we ensure new hires feel connected in the first 90 days and stay with us longer?**

Our solution is the Swim Buddy Program—a team of supportive colleagues ready to jump in and help. This program is designed to provide new hires with guidance, suggestions, and answers to any questions they may have about our work. Starting in our

field can be overwhelming, with so much to learn and each client being unique.

Even if someone has caregiving experience, every situation is different. The Swim Buddy Program ensures that new hires have someone by their side, walking with them through the early days, helping them feel prepared, supported, and connected.

## **2. How do we help our team feel more trained and confident in the field?**

The idea is to bring everyone together for a comprehensive, hands-on, experiential train-the-trainer course. We want to foster a company-wide mentality as professional trainers, dedicated to continuous learning and growth. This course is designed to help us achieve that, ensuring that everyone feels well-prepared and supported in their roles.

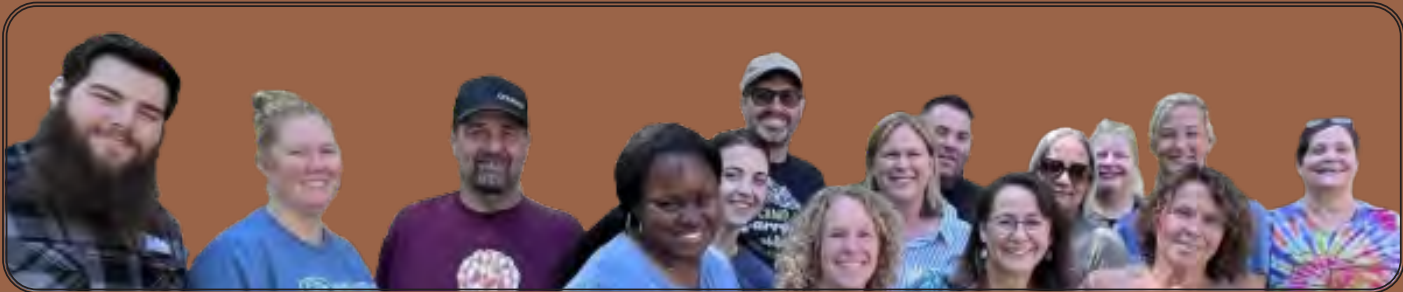


**3. How do we make sure our clients are seen and known in the community?** Our idea is to embrace a Culture of Generosity—and I absolutely love this concept; it is one of my favorites! This is a year-long, agency-wide initiative focused on giving back. It is not just about what we can offer; it is also about what we can receive through stronger community connections. Imagine how much more our community will embrace our clients if we actively give back. Let us show the communities around us how much we care, and in turn, they will care for us. By doing this, our clients will be seen and known because we are sharing our capacity and heart. As Mone beautifully put it, “We need to acclimate the community to our clients, and our clients to the community.” This initiative is all about fostering that culture of generosity.

At this special time, I had the opportunity to be with

staff who have been with Compass for up to 20 years. We shared stories about our clients we have had the honor of working with along the way. We laughed and bonded over memories of the past, and it was an endearing time for me. One staff member, Jeff, showed up with gift bracelets made by a veteran member. Our event began with generosity, which seemed a fitting way for this group. It set the stage for this group to share their generosity of time and heart with Compass.

Listening to stories, talking with staff, laughing, and taking it all in, I felt connected to the past of Compass, to our roots, but even more so to the present and future of Compass. Everyone who showed up was positive, supportive, and their passion for what we do was on display. It gave me a fresh vision of our ultimate purpose and passion: to serve our clients and empower them to be the lead in their lives and dream big dreams.



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# Appreciation has a Language

By Melanie Bazile, Director of Innovation & Expansion

Several years ago, Compass made a commitment to learning about and investing in employee engagement. It seemed that at times there was a concerning gap wherein employees did not consistently feel appreciated, but supervisors thought they were participating in great effort to help employees feel valued and seen. We wanted to learn more about engagement and appreciation, so we invested in consulting and training which led us to The Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace.

## The Book

The book, written by Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Paul White, is based on their previous work on Love Languages. The basic premise is that we each have primary channels through which we experience and feel love and the same concept applies to how we communicate and feel appreciation at work. The five languages of appreciation at work are: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Acts of Service, Tangible Gifts and Physical Touch

## New Employee Training

We offered training on Languages of Appreciation, invested in surveys so people could find out what their primary language of Appreciation is, added the concept to new employee orientation and it has remained a pivotal influence on our organizational culture.

## Acts of Service

This article will highlight Acts of Service as an appreciation language. For some people appreciation is felt more through action than words. Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." Providing services, especially without being asked or expecting something in return, displays respect and helps deepen connections. Your Acts of Service co-workers feel appreciated when they hear "what can I do to help you" and then you follow through based on their response. When you show up to make the load lighter it fills their bucket.





## Ask First

Ask before you help and do so willingly, not begrudgingly. A critical element though is that the help you offer needs to be truly helpful in their perspective. Let's say a coworker with Acts of Service as a primary language of appreciation is visibly overwhelmed and simply has too much on their plate. You know they need to finish a power point for an upcoming Manager Meeting, and you have that skill set so you offer to finish the power point for them. If you make changes that weren't discussed or come back with a list of ways it could be improved or a lot of "what if you added this?", it will likely not be experienced as appreciation since the service is being done your way and not theirs.

**"Don't tell me you care, show me."**

Here are a few ideas and ways to show appreciation to a coworker through Acts of Service:

- Offer specific and concrete task assistance
- Ask how they want something done
- If they are entrenched in a project and decline to delegate, bring them food or coffee to help them get through the project completion
- Offer to help with a specific task they are less confident about (set up the spreadsheet template for them, show up to their presentation and be their tech troubleshooter)
- Say something like, "I want to help... what would feel like support right now?"
- Follow through with your task on a shared project
- Make their request a high priority and get it to them ahead of schedule
- Run an errand for them
- Make a playlist for them to keep them going during a long day
- To celebrate a birthday, success or promotion, make them a custom coupon booklet
- Do not complain about the help you offered or tell a bunch of people you did it
- Offer to do a simpler task so they can focus on something that is high priority



***"To serve  
is beautiful,  
but only  
if it is done  
with joy  
and a whole heart  
and a free mind."  
Pearl Buck, author***

# Meet Darryl

By Robert Guevara, SLS Supervisor

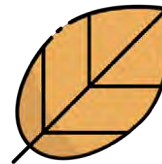
Meet Darryl! He is a friendly, caring, and active individual in RCRC. Darryl has been in Supportive Living Services for many years; however, it wasn't until he found Compass that he truly fell in love with the services being provided. If you are wearing any sort of Compass gear, Darryl will be the first to point it out. He will then point to a piece of Compass gear that he is wearing (he wears something with the Compass logo every single day) and with the biggest smile say "Compass!"

Darryl is very active in the community, going to any social event that is being hosted. Whether it's Sundays in the Park (a local weekly free concert) or seeing him during the day walking in the community, he will always have a smile on his face. If there is a Compass event happening, you will most definitely see him be the first to rush to the dance floor. Darryl's favorite event however is Camp Carrville. Every year Darryl diligently saves his money to attend, he has yet to miss a year since it's inception.

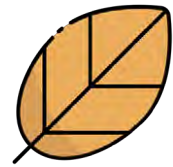
This year, upon hearing news of Compass going to Disney, Darryl was elated! He had not been to Disney since he was a child. Darryl asked if this meant that he wouldn't be able to attend Camp Carrville this year, and that he did not want to even go to Disney if he meant that he would miss out on camp. This led to Darryl setting a goal, he wanted to go to both Disney and Carrville! This set a plan in motion, Darryl would set aside money weekly with the intention of attending both camps. Darryl was very determined to meet this goal, and in only a few short months Darryl was able to save enough money to attend both events.

Darryl's love for all things Compass truly demonstrates the care and passion he has for us, which is reciprocated in kind.

Darryl lives a wonderful fulfilling life, and he will be the first to tell you it is because of Compass he is able to do so. If you ever see Darryl out and about, or at an event, be sure to introduce yourself and show him any Compass swag you have on, it will truly make his day!



# Meet Mariah



By Shannon Laird, ILS Facilitator

I'm thrilled to introduce you to Mariah, a wonderful addition to our Compass community! Her wide-ranging interests and contagious enthusiasm will enrich our community dynamics and bring new perspectives to the table.

Mariah's diverse passions reveal a rich tapestry of interests and talents. Her love for artwork indicates a creative spirit, enjoying both creating and appreciating art. The beach resonates with her appreciation for nature and relaxation, while massages reflect her commitment to self-care and wellness. Her enjoyment of gardening underscores her connection to nature and possibly a desire for hands-on creativity, while her passion for sushi points to a taste for culinary exploration and appreciation of different cuisines. This array of interests showcases Mariah's multifaceted personality and her commitment to a balanced lifestyle that includes creativity, relaxation, self-care, exploration, and culinary delights.

Mariah attended her first Compass event in July and had such a positive experience! Compass events are a fantastic opportunity for networking, learning, and discovering new interests. Mariah's enthusiasm for attending events demonstrates her value for community, learning, and personal growth. Building connections and expanding her network will undoubtedly open up more exciting opportunities for her in the future.

Mariah's dreams of meeting Sophia the AI Robot and learning gourmet cooking reflect a fascinating blend of interests in technology and culinary arts. Meeting Sophia would offer her a glimpse into the future of artificial intelligence and robotics, providing insights into how these technologies can shape our lives. Learning gourmet

cooking would not only satisfy her culinary curiosity but also empower her to create delicious and sophisticated dishes, potentially exploring different cuisines and techniques. Both aspirations highlight Mariah's curiosity, ambition, and desire to explore diverse fields.

Mariah has a routine that is a fantastic way to nurture a positive mindset. Mariah documents weekly in her gratitude app to help her focus on what she values and appreciates in her life, while her daily positivity journal allows her to start each day with an intentional, uplifting thought. This combination supports a consistent practice of mindfulness and optimism, helping to build resilience and a more positive perspective over time. It's great to see her investing in her mental well-being in such thoughtful ways!

Mariah's presence in our community promises to be warmly embraced, and we look forward to all the great contributions she will bring.





## SLS FEATURE

# Meet Francisco

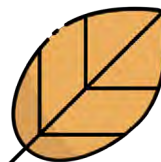
By **Mariza Flores Rodriguez, Case Facilitator**

I would like to introduce you all to Francisco, or as he likes to be called, “Frank”! He’s been a member of our Compass family for about 6 years and enjoys his independence living in his studio apartment. Just in his apartment complex alone, Frank has developed a strong community of friends around him. Frank considers himself lucky because his Compass staff are also his siblings, so he gets to enjoy his family daily. Whether he chooses to be surrounded by family or his local friends, Frank values community and appreciates their involvement in his life.

Although he loves people, Frank prioritizes his alone time. Others might consider him a “homebody”, especially when the weather gets cold! Since the weather has warmed up, Frank has started becoming more active in his community by doing his favorite activity: people-watching. Frank likes to do this at San Jose State University’s campus since it’s close to his apartment complex, but he would rather be people-watching at the mall while enjoying a variety of different foods and shopping along the way!

He has discovered an unexpected perk in this activity: it provides an easy opportunity to make new friends while interacting with strangers. At the end of the day, Frank ensures he stops by his local Starbucks to enjoy a Strawberry Acai Refresher. This time spent with his new friends, or a family member offers a moment to recap and refresh before heading home. Frank appreciates all the little moments in life and the people who surround him in the process!

Frank exemplifies the perfect balance between enjoying life and managing responsibilities. Independently handling his finances, he’s committed to maintaining this autonomy. Frank has struggled at times with debt in the past but



has recently taken a more serious approach to his financial responsibility and makes sure he is timely each month with his payments. His dedication ensures he can still enjoy his cherished Starbucks visits and other important activities. Upholding his monthly payments has been an incredible accomplishment and something that we celebrate here in the South Bay!

Frank takes pride in his progress and values the encouragement from his life guides, which keeps him on track. His debt decreases monthly, reflecting his growing understanding of financial management. As we eagerly anticipate the day Frank fully pays off his credit card debt, our community stands ready to celebrate this milestone together.





# Meet Jesus

By Shannon Laird, ILS Facilitator

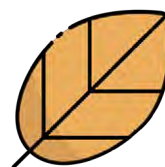
I am excited to introduce Jesus to our Compass community! Jesus has been with Compass since 2020, and this is one amazing fella. Jesus has some special talents and a few of them are cooking and creating YouTube content. Jesus has always wanted to create cooking videos and has found a platform that will reach many people from all over.

Some of Jesus's legendary dishes originated from southern Italy in a town called Naples. One of them is made from thin noodles, savory meats and a rich sauce. It can be made with either marinara or a cream sauce. Jesus prefers making his dish with the Marinara sauce and adding fresh parmesan for exquisite taste. Hopefully one day you will be lucky enough to satisfy your taste buds with Jesus's special recipe.

Another secret I will share with you is Jesus's love for birds, particularly doves. I would say that he is a bird enthusiast, which are also known as birders. Did you know that birds have a special role in the ecosystem and play an important part in environmental balance! Jesus's passion for birds is more than just a hobby. He has multiple cages set up in his home and takes extremely good care of his feathered friends.

But birds are not the only animals that interests Jesus. He can also be called a fish enthusiast! That is right, Jesus has mini aquariums set up in his home. Setting up and maintaining a fish tank involves careful attention to things like water quality, temperature, and the specific needs of different species. For Jesus, this provides a sense of responsibility and patience. Others can appreciate the soothing presence of a well-kept aquarium because it provides a tranquil escape from daily stress and creates a serene environment.

Recently Jesus was able to land a job as a dishwasher at a restaurant. Some people would say that does not sound exciting but working as a dishwasher in a restaurant is a demanding yet essential role that forms the backbone of the kitchen operation. This job involves more than just cleaning dishes; it requires efficiency, attention to detail, and a strong work ethic. dishwashers ensure that all kitchen utensils, plates, glasses, and cookware are thoroughly sanitized and ready for use, maintaining the hygiene standards crucial to food safety. Overall, working as a dishwasher builds a solid foundation in teamwork. Jesus is rocking his position and loving it.





SLS FEATURE

# Meet Jackie

By Brian Linsley, Case Facilitator

I've only known Jackie for a short time, but she's already made such an impact on me. She's full of life and has an incredible zest for living. Despite facing numerous challenges and tough situations, she's always shown resilience. From the brave decision to move away from her family to living in different places until she found a place to call home, Jackie's journey is truly inspiring.

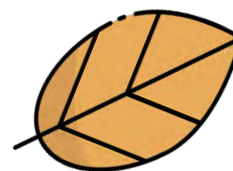
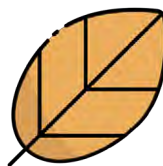
Though she sometimes leans on her support circle to help manage certain aspects of life and feel safe, Jackie is incredibly confident and comfortable being on her own. She shines with independence and has a warm, caring nature that makes it easy to see the good in people. Her sense of humor is infectious, and she has a way of making everyone around her feel at ease. That's why she's so easy to talk to and work with.

Jackie has a soft spot for Disney, especially "Frozen," but she also enjoys movies and shows about vampires. She loves living on her own and decorating her home to reflect her unique personality. Social by nature, she thrives on activities like going to Day Program, attending her church group on Mondays, and participating in Special Olympics events like basketball, bowling and track & field.

Recently, she competed in the Special Olympics Northern California Summer Games at Santa Clara University from June 27th through July 1st. I was so proud to see her compete and earn a medal in her event. One of the highlights of her weekend was meeting former San Francisco 49er and three-time Super Bowl Champion, John Taylor. It was an unforgettable experience for her, one she'll cherish forever.



Working with Jackie has been a privilege. While my job is to make a difference in her life, she's also made a difference in mine through her faith, generosity, and the way she pursues a life of freedom and self-reliance. I hope I can continue to support her on this journey. For Jackie, the love and support of the people in her life are what truly matter—they give her the strength to be herself, create good memories, and always feel safe.



# Meet Aron

By Vanessa Hogan, ILS Supervisor

Peanut butter has jelly and macaroni has cheese, and well Aron? Aron has Jake. When the two joined forces as Life Coach and client, the pair became just as iconic as the food duos. Jake's inspiration and partnership has lit a fire of passion within Aron to go after many of his goals and dreams. Finding the right fit has helped Aron find a new gratitude for life. Aron has decided he doesn't want to walk down the same road he has in the past, and instead is paving a whole new way of what more is possible for his future.

Aron has recently started a health journey and is making positive health choices. While for most of his life he has enjoyed soda and chips, he has since replaced that with healthier choices. But the best part is he isn't buying those healthy options, he instead is cooking them himself! Aron has recently started cooking elaborate and impressive meals for himself. He is learning new skills and gaining confidence in the kitchen. Aron appreciates all the physical changes he is seeing as a result and next up is joining a gym and working out!

In pursuit of becoming the best version of himself, he has also really focused on presenting well. Aron traditionally had long hair and decided recently to cut it all off! With the loss of his locks came a new confidence. Aron isn't just letting life happen anymore, instead Aron is making life happen. Alongside his Life Coach, Jake, he is focusing on his hygiene and ensuring that he is taking care of himself.

Aron 2.0 is just emerging. This new lens on life is only chapter one is the story of his transformation. Helen Kellar said, "Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much." Aron is just beginning his journey into his version of doing so much, not alone, but with partnership from Jake. Don't

be surprised when you hear more stories of Jake and Aron's astonishing partnership for years to come. You might not even recognize him a year from now when even more of his dreams come true.

*Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much.*

-Helen Keller





# Meet Vonda

By Alice Byer, Case Facilitator

For this newsletter focused on appreciation and gratitude, I am excited to spotlight Ms. Vonda, whose genuine expressions of gratitude offer a shining example of how appreciation can positively influence those around us. Vonda is a joyful young woman living in the Bay Area with her brother, Brett, who is also a Compass client.

Her deep and heartfelt gratitude begins with the woman who has served her the most, her mother, Ms. Norma. Vonda's affection for her mother knows no bounds. Whenever Ms. Norma arrives, Vonda eagerly jumps from her seat, wiggles with excitement to show love. Vonda will then unprovokedly exclaims, "Oh, I just love you, Mom!" This heartfelt display of love is a regular occurrence, as Vonda consistently uses nightly phone calls as an opportunity to show her appreciation for Ms. Norma. Vonda is a reminder of the importance of reaching out to those you care about and expressing your love for them.

Vonda's gratitude does not stop with her family; it extends to everyone she interacts with. She consistently demonstrates kindness and respect towards her team members, quickly remembering their names and addressing them with courtesy, such as "Ms. Alice" or "Ms. Sybil." Vonda's joy when she expresses her gratitude is contagious and will instantly bring a smile to anyone's face. This attentiveness shows her appreciation for those around her and her commitment to making them feel valued.

When new visitors come, Vonda's warmth and inclusivity are evident. She often invites them to join her for dinner and expresses genuine excitement about their presence. "Aren't you glad Ms. Jenni is here?" she proclaims before giving a compliment on how nice you look. "I'm so happy Ms. Dina is

here", she continues – reflecting her ability to make everyone feel special and appreciated. Her ceaseless compliments and enthusiastic interactions highlight her understanding of the importance of uplifting those around her.

Vonda's consistent and heartfelt expressions of gratitude highlight the many ways appreciation can be conveyed. Her actions illustrate how regularly recognizing and valuing others can strengthen relationships and make hard days a little easier.





# Meet Carroll

By Shannon Laird, ILS Facilitator

I am so excited to introduce you all to our wonderful client straight out of Fremont, one impressive fella named Carroll. He brings an electrifying energy that leaves an indelible mark. Get ready to be captivated by his story and inspired by his unstoppable spirit. Welcome to the world of Carroll where anything is possible!



Carroll has been with Compass since May of 2020. He has a wonderful life coach by the name of Irene. Some of Carroll's interests include indulging in arts and crafts, where this imagination runs wild, pushing the limits of creativity. Carroll also cherishes time in the kitchen, cooking alongside his mom, where they whip up delicious dishes and create lasting memories. Some of Carroll's favorite foods include orange chicken and papaya salad; you cannot go wrong with that.

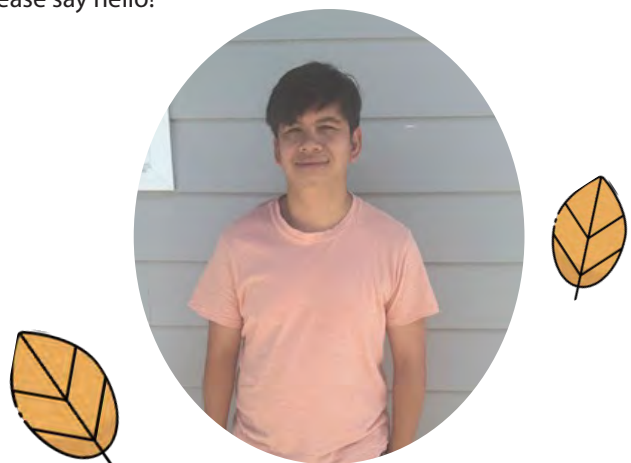
Carroll is currently attending school, but he is also working. He is motivated to make dreams come true! Carroll works at Chilis where he has many different tasks. He at times will

work as a host and arrange a table for the guests and other times, he rolls silverware and prepares the table to have everything you would need when dining. Carroll will do other various jobs that staff at Chilis need support with so you can see he plays an important role in a customer's dining experience.

Carroll has an undeniable passion for music. Some of his favorites include R&B, Hip Hop and Asian music. This passion not only enriches his life but also brings joy to those around him, as he often shares his latest musical discoveries with friends and family.

Carroll's ultimate dream is to become a dance instructor! Becoming a dance instructor is not just about teaching steps and routines; it is about sharing the joy and transformative power of dance. He is committed to this dream and excited about the journey ahead.

Carroll does all of this while staying focused on his studies and attending college. Carroll will be taking college development classes and a math class in the fall. If you happen to run into Carroll at one of our wonderful Compass events, please say hello!



# One Thankful Thought at a Time

By Leslie Henry, Recruitment Team Supervisor

From an early age, we are introduced to the basics of good manners: saying "please" and "thank you," taking turns, and apologizing when needed. These practices, ideally modeled for us by our families and communities, form the foundation of our social interactions. But as we grow, the choice of whether to continue embracing and showing gratitude is ours to make.

What if you weren't taught these early lessons? What if gratitude and appreciation weren't modeled for you, or perhaps your upbringing felt devoid of reasons to be thankful? Is it too late to learn and embrace gratitude?

The answer is a resounding no! It's never too late to start. You can begin your journey of gratitude right now, today. Even if you didn't receive it as a child, you can cultivate it as an adult. Look around you for individuals who exude gratitude. You may find that spending time with them can offer valuable lessons.

Gratitude is palpable. When you interact with people who live with appreciation, their positivity and thankfulness are evident. On the flip side, the absence of gratitude can also be noticeable—complaints, self-doubt, blame, and frustration are telltale signs of a lack of appreciation.

Think about it. Do you find yourself more focused on what's wrong or what's right in your life? Do you expect assistance from others, or do you express thanks when you receive it? Your approach can shape your experiences and relationships profoundly.

Consider your interactions in various settings, including professional environments. You might notice that the spirit of an organization can reflect the gratitude or lack thereof in its culture. In my experience at Compass, I observed that appreciation was a core element. Clients, despite their reluctance at times, felt better knowing that their health was cared for and that they had support.

Gratitude isn't just about grand gestures. It's about recognizing the small, everyday moments—the warm meal, the refreshing drink on a hot day, or the supportive text from a loved one. These instances, when acknowledged with thankfulness, enhance our lives and relationships.

Ultimately, gratitude is a choice. It's about deciding to value and the support you receive, whether it's from people or in a professional capacity. By making this choice, you open yourself up to a more fulfilling and positive experience in your personal and professional life. Are you ready to make that choice today?



# A special Cheers! to our caregivers

At Compass, we believe that caregivers are the heart of our mission. In celebration of Caregiver Appreciation Month, we're raising a special cheer to the incredible individuals who go above and beyond every day.

Your hard work and  
care change lives



You're the heartbeat  
of Compass!



Cheers to you for going  
above and beyond



Big cheers for your  
endless patience,  
love, and support.





# #OURCOMMUNITY



*Compass Vibes*