

To Makersmiths BoD:

In the past few months, we have been fortunate to have a number of new members join us. Two of those members I interviewed for positions that they stated that they would be interested having within our organization.

Candidate 1: Jen Lupo Reese lives in Purcellville and would like to be appointed newsletter editor. She is also interested in contributing to our social media platforms. After meeting with her and reviewing her bio (see below), I am nominating her for the newsletter editor position that Meaghen Flynn recently vacated.

Jen Reese

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I have built a career that blends communication, web content strategy, disability advocacy, and community leadership. With over 20 years of experience in digital communications, I developed and managed large-scale online content initiatives, most notably during my decade at AARP's national headquarters. There, I expanded state web pages into news and resource hubs, led the transition of 53 field offices to a WordPress platform, and trained more than 75 staff members to create and manage their own content. I managed complex communication projects from start to finish, curated and edited content and ensured messaging aligned with organizational priorities and advocacy goals.

In my personal life, I'm an active user of Facebook and as of Monday 7/6 I have over 33,000 posts and 915 followers. I've also used and posted to Instagram and have a little experience with YouTube but that's more as a visitor.

Alongside my communications background, I have extensive experience supporting individuals with disabilities and their families. As the Northern Virginia Regional Network Coordinator for the Center for Family Involvement at VCU, I provided one-on-one emotional and systems-navigation support, recruited and trained volunteer family navigators, identified service gaps, and built collaborative relationships across diverse communities. I also co-founded the Genetic Navigator Program and contributed regional family perspectives to strengthen culturally responsive services.

I was a contributor for the Blog at VCU. Here are a few of my submissions.

<https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.org/the-frustration-of-getting-idd/>

<https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.org/blog-2/>

<https://centerforfamilyinvolvementblog.org/2021/07/08/n-o-r-m-a-l/>

I graduated from the University of Central Florida in 1996 with a degree in Journalism and a minor in Political Science. Across all roles, I've been committed to empowering families, strengthening community networks and improving access to disability services. I've also remained active as a volunteer advocate, educator, and committee member at local, state, and national levels—continuously working to elevate family voices and advance disability rights.

Candidate 2: Alexandra (Allie) Graves lives in Ashburn and has 3D printing experience (Resin printers) and builds and maintains aquariums. She too has social media experience but also marketing skills. She is interested in filling our open Marketing Director position. Together we reviewed what is on the WIKI pertaining to that position and I shared with her my experiences working marketing events for Makersmiths (i.e. Bluemont Fair, Leesburg Flower and Garden Show and several smaller events the Town of Purcellville sponsors). I read her bio (see below) and based my interview and her bio, I would like to nominate her for the Marketing Director position.

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Bio:

I currently work in business development for Boeing's Experimental Systems Group where I coordinate marketing, external communications, and new business opportunities. Before transitioning to the private sector, I was an intelligence analyst where I supported military information support operations and civil affairs, which included work such as audience analysis and messaging development. I recently earned an M.A. in Conflict Resolution from Georgetown University, where I focused on the psychology of intergroup conflict and earned a certificate in Diplomacy from Georgetown's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

Even though I'm a new member I am already enamored with the wonderfully diverse and supportive community that is Makersmiths. I would love to help with bringing the Makersmiths community even closer together internally, as well as growing that

community both through new membership and strengthening relationships with the local communities that host our spaces.