



Elizabeth Martin

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As you look at the Living Resources logo, you will see a heart in the center of Living. We often refer to that heart as our front-line DSPs and the individuals they support because they are at the very heart of our mission, supporting and empowering others to live lives filled with dignity, independence, and happiness. However, as with most bodies, the heart needs a good circulatory system and other healthy - but not as well-known organs such as lungs, liver, stomach, and intestines to operate effectively.

At Living Resources, we also need these extra organs to operate successfully. Here they are called Administrative Services, Clinical Services, Communications/Development, Compliance, Finance, HR/Training, IT, Maintenance, Nursing, and Quality Assurance. In this issue of Sharing the Journey, we are highlighting a behind-the-scenes look at the internal workings of Living Resources and how we all work to ensure that our heart is always beating!

## Taking Care of Business



The first person you meet at the Living Resources office is likely a member of our Administrative Team. They greet you with a smile when you enter or cheerily answer your call, directing you to the right person, but reception is only the beginning of what the Administration Team is responsible for. This team is in charge of receiving, reviewing, and distributing the mail each day which also includes our payments, donations, vendor billings, regulatory forms, as well as day-to-day correspondence. They are the front line

communicators with our individuals and families, those newsletters and communications don't label, stuff, and seal themselves!

This team also helps maintain our office files and is responsible for handling the scheduling of meetings and board rooms. They ensure that office supplies are readily available and that we never run out of copy paper, pens, post-its, and our extremely important Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gowns, shields, test kits, and more). Additionally, while many may take the availability of coffee for granted, it wouldn't be there without our Administrative team who keep the café areas stocked with coffee, creamers, sugar, and plastic utensils. No one tends to think of these little things until they aren't there. In essence, this team does what it takes to make sure the office and our programs run smoothly. As the classic song from the 1970s says, they are taking care of business every day, taking care of business every way.



## You've Got A Friend in Me

*“YOU GOT TROUBLES, I’VE GOT ‘EM TOO.  
THERE ISN’T ANYTHING I WOULDN’T DO FOR YOU.  
WE STICK TOGETHER AND SEE IT THROUGH,  
YEAH. YOU’VE GOT A FRIEND IN ME.”*

When asked what the Human Resources Department does, common answers include hiring new employees, doing paperwork, and perhaps “I don’t know. Something with insurance?” Well, it’s all three and so much more. The Human Resources department is a powerhouse dedicated to supporting and collaborating with our staff in order to help solve the problems that arise in everyday life. Let’s break down the areas that our HR department facilitates:

- **Staffing:** Our 11-Member HR Team provides support for our over 800 employees and works diligently to find and hire additional qualified and compassionate staff members for the variety of positions within our agency throughout the 14 Counties we support, all the way from Warren to Westchester Counties. This includes all pre-hiring processes, background checks, and onboarding documentation.
- **Training:** Our six-member Training Team provides each new staff member with their required two weeks of core training to learn the basics of their job, including New Employee Orientation, Residential Management & DSP Training, Recertification Training, SCIIP - R, Basic First Aid and CPR/AED, Defensive Driving, and more. Training doesn't end after orientation at Living Resources.

Our Team also provides ongoing support, training, and development for Direct Support Professionals, as well as manager support in learning the necessary leadership skills to succeed. We also offer life skills training: teaching the essentials needed to support people with disabilities such as nutrition, food preparation, money management, time management, conflict resolution, and teamwork.



- **Benefits:** Our HR team helps staff understand policies, procedures, payroll, and insurance. They also review the variety of career paths available so staff members can achieve their personal and professional goals. Just ask, and an HR generalist will explain our robust tuition reimbursement program!
- **Support:** HR works as supportive partners with our staff, empowering them to weather the storm when life changes come their way. Whether they are expecting a child, lost their daycare, have a new diagnosis of illness, or have other concerns, we can link them with needed resources. To facilitate this, we partner with Employee Resources Network, a team of life coaches who can help staff travel through certain government systems better than we can.
- **Food for the body and soul:** Have you heard of Donut Thursday? We think we made it up, but regardless, you can find a sweet baked treat in Human Resources on most Thursdays.

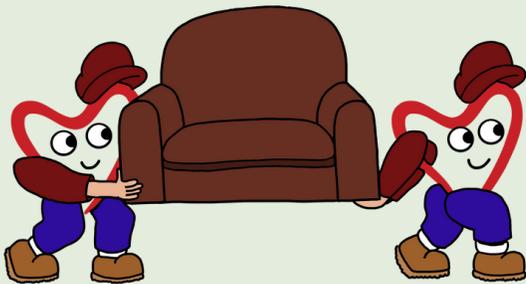


## Who You Gonna Call? Maintenance!

Who You Gonna Call? We know that most people automatically respond Ghostbusters! However, here at Living Resources when water gets backed up, roofs leak, toilets overflow, and your heat goes out, we automatically respond: call Maintenance, the original Living Resources Ghostbusters!

Each of us may manage the day-to-day upkeep and maintenance of our personal homes, however, now change that focus and think about that amount of work and then times it by over 50! Our incredible Maintenance Team is responsible for the upkeep of 49 residences across five counties (homes to over 300 individuals), as well as the maintenance and housekeeping of our main office and our site-based day program. Not only does this team perform inspections and preventative

facility improvements for all the systems in the agency (HVAC, plumbing, electrical, fire egress, general maintenance) they also do all the day-to-day “on-call” tasks that are needed. They help our residents move their belongings from one location to another, patching and painting walls, landscaping, snow removal, and those extremely unsexy household chores like clogged toilets/water leaks/and so much more.



If program participants or staff need a picture hung, blinds replaced, small renovations performed, or any of a variety of tasks, they can be requested through our online work order system. If a task requires more extensive skill, our maintenance staff will contract professional vendors.

The Maintenance Department is also responsible for the upkeep of our fleet of over 200 vehicles used for the transportation of our individuals. Safety is our first priority so we keep our vehicles in top condition through daily and monthly internal inspections as well as dealer-recommended services and DMV inspections.



As many staff members transport individuals to and from programs and throughout the community, our fleet manager also provides Defensive Drivers courses and performs driver assessments as needed to increase the safety of our staff and those they transport.

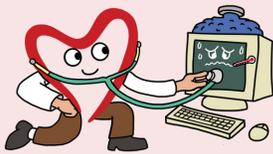
If damage occurs to our vehicles, we contract the repairs factoring in the speed of the repairs as well as the cost. Other costs associated with such large fleet maintenance, include tolls, gas, and car washes.



## Laptops and Tablets and Phones (Oh My!)

The journey of support and empowerment of individuals with disabilities is not driven by a witch's broom or ruby slippers or even by following the established yellow brick road of care. Living Resources has an ongoing commitment to seek out and utilize the latest technologies to drive our mission. The Information Technologies (IT) department is here to support staff throughout each stage of technological modernization. Our IT Team supports the over 800 Living Resources staff members, managing our networks and equipment at each of our offices and program sites through the maintenance of hardware, equipment, servers, network, and cloud servers.

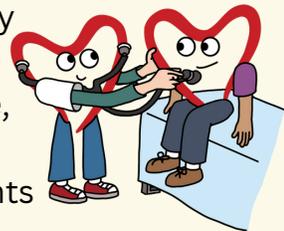
On the road to Emerald City, each of our direct care staff is responsible for the required documentation for everything from billing to the passing of medications. These are all submitted electronically through the agency's desktops, laptops, and tablets. When glitches swoop down on them like a scary wicked witch, they quickly call on our IT department who use their brains, brawn, and nerve to assist.



Together, this five-person team keeps the agency's technology running smoothly. One directs the team and manages the back-end business technologies, one handles day-to-day operations, two manage the front-line handling of support tickets as well as other technology projects, and one builds our computers to business specifications.

## Count on Me Like 1, 2, 3

At Living Resources, nursing is more than case management. We count on our highly trained team of twelve nurses to not only treat medical conditions, illness, and injury but also treat the whole person, providing care with a gentle touch. They can be found sharing their hearts in our homes, supported apartments, College Experience, and day programs, from Saratoga to Westchester county. Our nurses oversee all required medications and medical appointments, communicating these appointments with house staff.



Communication is key to this department. They share their wealth of knowledge with those who are invested in the health of each individual, including; health care providers, treatment team members, clinical consultants, and family members.

This team is not complete without a few additional key players. All Direct Support Professionals are required to complete a one-week medication certification course in order to administer medications. Our nurse educator makes this course informational and fun. We also have medical compliance/health systems specialists who are responsible for the medication inventory for those who reside in our 49 houses. They work closely with the pharmacy to ensure correct medications are ordered and in the homes when needed, factoring in the needs of individuals who go home for a weekend or away on vacation. These nurses provide medical support to many each day. If you think their hands are full, you should see their hearts!



## Rules of the Road



Have you ever played a board game a certain way for years, only to learn that you weren't following the written rules? It happens. We tend to develop our own "house rules" and simply have fun. However, when running an organization that has state and federal oversight, there are few "house rules" that must be followed unconditionally. Everything has to be done by the book, and that is where Corporate Compliance comes in.

Corporate Compliance tackles the challenge of reading, dissecting, and learning all the published regulations and administrative memorandums, working to distill the complexities into information that is as simple and straightforward as possible, and sharing it with the rest of the organization. However, understanding and following the regulations that allow us to provide the highest possible quality of service is not enough, our Corporate Compliance Team also helps to break down and identify what is needed for submitting documentation of the completed supports so we can bill for them.

Keeping track of the ever-changing regulations and making sure that our policies and procedures reflect those changes is no easy feat. Without these behind-the-scenes superheroes, Living Resources could not operate and our individuals would not receive the services that they need. Corporate Compliance is available to anyone with questions or concerns on any topic or issue.

## QA – the Bruno of Living Resources

In the Disney movie Encanto, Bruno was the vilified "black sheep" member of the Madrigal family until it was discovered that his actions were done out of deep-rooted love for his family. Like Bruno, the Quality Assurance Department is often misunderstood and we should really talk about them.

While Corporate Compliance helps us understand the state and federal standards, the Quality Assurance Team works to ensure that this commitment to the highest quality of life for those we support is upheld. When issues/ incidents arise in the day-to-day delivery of service, QA responds by investigating whether something went wrong and if so, determining exactly what went wrong and prescribing the next steps to make it right. They report to OPWDD and the NYS Justice Center, upholding Federal and State Regulations and completing quarterly reports for Mental Hygiene Legal Services. Because of this tough role, these family members are perceived negatively and their communications with our direct support staff may sometimes feel like being sent to the principal's office. In reality, their work is done with great love for this agency and results in improving the lives of those we support. So let's bring the QA Department out from behind the walls and shine some loving light on them and their important work!





# Everybody Loves a Good

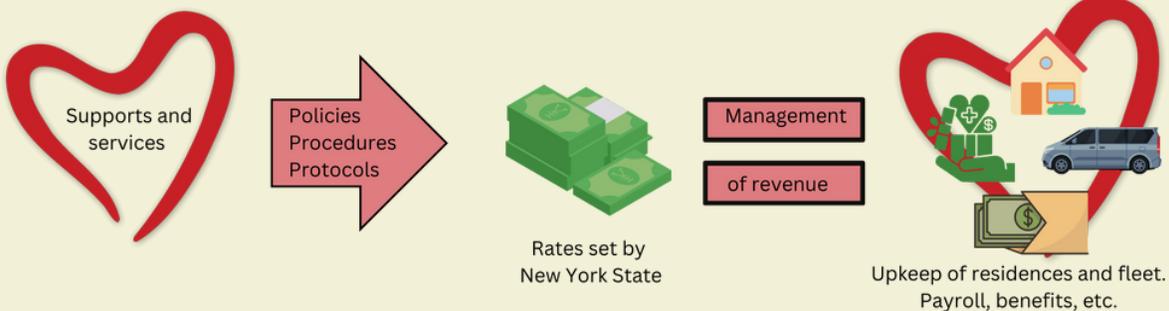


Like the candy, everybody loves a good Payday, but do you know what goes on behind the scenes to make that paycheck a reality? When thinking about an agency dedicated to the support and empowerment of individuals with disabilities, the topic of finance may seem to be an afterthought or a necessary evil, but in reality, money management is vital to keep our agency’s heart pumping and as healthy as possible.

Each day, the Living Resources Finance Team translates the support and services we provide into dollars and cents and then manages those dollars and cents for the best interests of staff, individuals, and the agency.

Not only is this Finance Team focused on the financial needs of the nearly 250 individuals we support at our 40+ residential homes and 13 programs throughout 14 counties, but they also have to consider the day-to-day running of the whole agency, payroll and benefits package for over 800 employees, and any unexpected extra expenditures that arise. For example, during the height of the COVID pandemic, finance figured out how to fund the unanticipated costs of surgical masks and other PPE that were never needed in such a large volume before. In addition, the team works extremely long hours keeping meticulous records and preparing for numerous internal, state, and federal audits, as well as reporting status and updates to the Living Resources Board of Directors.

Working within the confines of a yearly budget, our Finance Team has to make very difficult decisions for the benefit of the agency. Unfortunately, although the necessary costs for items and services have skyrocketed (has anyone bought eggs lately?) our reimbursement rates, set by NYS, have not kept up with this inflationary rise. The difficult decisions made by this Team are only possible because they know that our amazing Living Resources DSPs, program staff, directors, and everyone in between will continue to work hard to support the mission and vision of Living Resources. Because of the wonderful job that they do, the Finance Team can do the behind-the-scenes work of balancing the books and keeping the blood flowing to our heart!





## We Work Hard for the Money

It's not all fun and games in Fund Development! While the Finance department manages the funds we earn by billing for supportive services, that money only goes so far. The mission of the small but mighty Living Resources Communications/Development team is to raise "gap money" to supplement the needs of the agency. They raise donor dollars through communications, grants, and fundraising. It might seem like we just have fun throwing endless parties, but there's more to it than that.



This team is responsible for a wide range of communication activities, including all communications to both internal (staff, individuals, families) and external (community, supporters, donors, media) audiences. They can often be found researching, creating, drafting, and reporting on various activities of interest. Those emails, letters, newsletters, illustrations, graphics, stories, and videos don't create themselves!

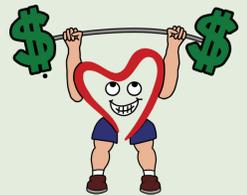
This Team is also responsible for the content development and upkeep of our external website [www.livingresources.org](http://www.livingresources.org) including the information about our Programs, services, events, and featured sections such as *News & Updates*, and *Today at Living Resources*.

Do you follow us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) & [YouTube](#))? If not, you should! This team ensures that new content is delivered daily and it is the fastest way to learn more about our mission and stay in the know about our day-to-day activities.

We appreciate our monthly newsletter subscribers. These newsletters and the stories they contain highlight our favorite moments of each month and are published at the month's end via email and USPS. Would you like to receive our newsletter in your inbox or at home? Share your email and/or street address by emailing [info@livingresources.org](mailto:info@livingresources.org) or calling 518-218-0000 x 5329.

Additionally, the team prepares a monthly staff newsletter called the Mid-Month Minute to keep our over 800 staff members in 14 counties up-to-date with concise and accurate information.

Last but certainly not least, this team plans and executes all of Living Resources' Fundraising events. That's the fun part, right? Well, when was the last time you threw a party? You know there's a lot of work that goes into the big event!



**Last year, this department raised more than \$300,000 in support of our programs and services through the following events:**

- **A Tribute to Transforming Lives**, a Fashion show fundraiser in collaboration with Building on Love
- **Annual Golf Tournament** at the Colonie Golf and Country Club
- **Employee and Donor Appreciation Events**
- **Annual Appeals**, and more

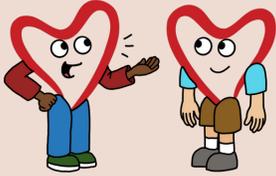
Please support our mission and donate today by going to <http://bit.ly/2noZrWt>

DONATE





# Virtual Reality – It’s not just for gamers!



In addition to providing agency-wide support for the behavioral health needs of Living Resources’ supported individuals, such as psychological assessment and testing, behavioral treatment plans, and individual and group therapy, our Clinical Services Team of five licensed mental health professionals also provide cutting-edge therapies such as Virtual Reality (VR) and Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT).

Our VR platform is used to create an immersive experience of relaxation and mindfulness or for targeting a specific goal. DBT is group therapy where we guide individuals in learning to live in the moment, develop healthy ways to cope with stress, regulate their emotions, and improve their relationships with others. Our unique use of the combination of VR and DBT therapies as an innovative approach to promoting resiliency and skills needed to navigate daily challenges and manage anxiety related to day-to-day stressors empowers the individuals we support to live their best life.

In addition to VR and DBT, the Clinical Services Team also provides group educational sessions/ discussions on sexuality and relationships, emotions management, life skills, parenting classes, and more. The Team also offers clinical training to agency staff members and other licensed professionals, while also providing oversight on agency regulatory committees, including Human Rights, Serious Incident Review, Sex Rights, and Advocacy.

We Are Thankful for our Annual Appeal Donors!

Your Support is the KEY to our Heart!



## The following donors contributed to our Annual Appeal in January of 2023

- |                              |                          |                              |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mary Lynn Bradley            | Lakeside Cider Mill Farm | Mark Rosen                   |
| BRI. LLC                     | Mary Ann Mahoney         | Norman Shenton               |
| Vincent Capka and Mary Bonan | Richard Medved           | Frederick and Sylvia Sievers |
| Kathleen DelSignore          | Catherine Merriman       | Denise Stewart               |
| Richard Fuerst               | William and Betty Nathan | Arthur H. Thorn              |
| Paul Goldman                 | Charles and Donna Paioff | Thomas Tyrrell               |
| Spencer and Stacy Jones      | Rabbi Eleanor Pearlman   | Susan Williams               |
| Michael Kuhland              | Lee and Sharlene Raymond |                              |

[Click HERE to read December's Newsletter](#)