



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Elizabeth Martin

April is a wonderful month. The grass is turning green, spring flowers are growing, and we are ushering in some warmer weather that often encourages us to get out and enjoy the sights of spring. For me, it also feels like a time for renewal and hope.

This year, one of my hopes was that the New York State Budget would include an essential 8.5% COLA increase in our Medicaid rates so that we can keep up with the increased operational costs over the past year and invest in our front-line staff.

However, we are now completely through the month of April, and while a budget framework is agreed upon, the details are not yet in place and our call for it to include an 8.5% COLA is in serious jeopardy!

But, we can't and won't give up! Please join us in urging the Governor and Legislature to adequately invest in the I/DD Community. Take a moment now to reach out to the Governor and your state legislators and lend your voice to ours in supporting an 8.5% COLA!

Let's make hope a reality, it's easy, just click here.



Saratoga Trunk LADY'S FINERY presents

A Tribute to Transforming Lives

A Day at the 1863 Club Saratoga Race Course

August 20, 2023

Presenting Sponsor:



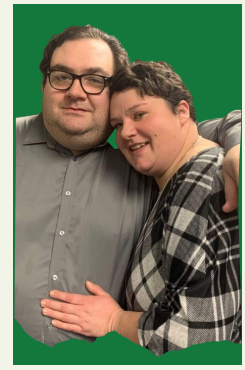
Click to join our Honorary Committee

Celebrate World Autism Month with



Aaron enjoys participating in DCOP where he can enjoy his days with his friends, taking pictures with them to create memories for his scrapbook! His favorite DCOP activity is going to the Llama Farm.

Daniel's favorite DCOP activities are volunteering, cooking, bowling, and of course getting his morning coffee. In the summer Daniel likes activities involving swimming. In his spare time, he likes to play his truck simulator, create art and shop online.



Last and best, Daniel met his girlfriend at Living Resources DCOP and they went to "A Night to Shine," a prom night experience for people with special needs together.



A HOPPING GOOD TIME

The residents in one of our houses in Schenectady County had a hopping good time visiting with a certain springtime rabbit this month. The Easter Bunny spent quality time with each individual, giving everyone a personalized basket of gifts to enjoy, including sensory toys, lotion, nail polish, a watch, and socks.



The bunny didn't hop off after that, though. She stayed with the group for about five hours coloring and decorating Easter eggs and helping with chores. When they needed to do errands in the community, guess who tagged along? Everyone loved the excitement of escorting the Easter Bunny into Wal-Mart and local supermarkets and having children rush towards them shouting, "It's the Easter Bunny!" The excitement still hasn't completely died down – everyone has been talking about it all month.

As one staff member said, "It was adorable and all part of a day's work. Just working with the individuals is a perk in itself, but we get to do fun things like this that you can't do at other jobs. "



In Albany County, two of our residences joined forces for an Easter Extravaganza! They celebrated with music and games while enjoying each other's company. Later, an Easter feast was shared by all.



The house nurse, Rachel Palmer joined in a few rousing rounds of Easter Bingo, and special guests, Dr. and Mrs. Fruiterman popped by to enjoy the festivities while visiting with their son Noah. We are privileged that Dr. Fruiterman lends his knowledge base and leadership to Living Resources as a member of our board.

Living Resources' Day Community Opportunity Programs (DCOP) in Schenectady and Albany counties orchestrated a lively Easter egg hunt which was magnified by the backdrop of a beautiful spring day. Each group had their selected color of eggs to locate and two special golden eggs were hidden to add to the excitement and win extra points. All participants and staff had a great time!

In addition, participants received special baskets created and paid for by the staff and admin team members. The baskets included colored pencils provided by the Art Program, notebooks, healthy snacks, and a variety of fun items such as nail polish, cars, etc.





DANCING WITH DINOSAURS

Members of one of our residences in Glenville took a journey to the center of New York to find themselves in pre-historic times. They traveled to Jurassic Quest at the NYS Fairgrounds in Syracuse where they had an up close and personal experience with realistic life-sized dinosaurs.

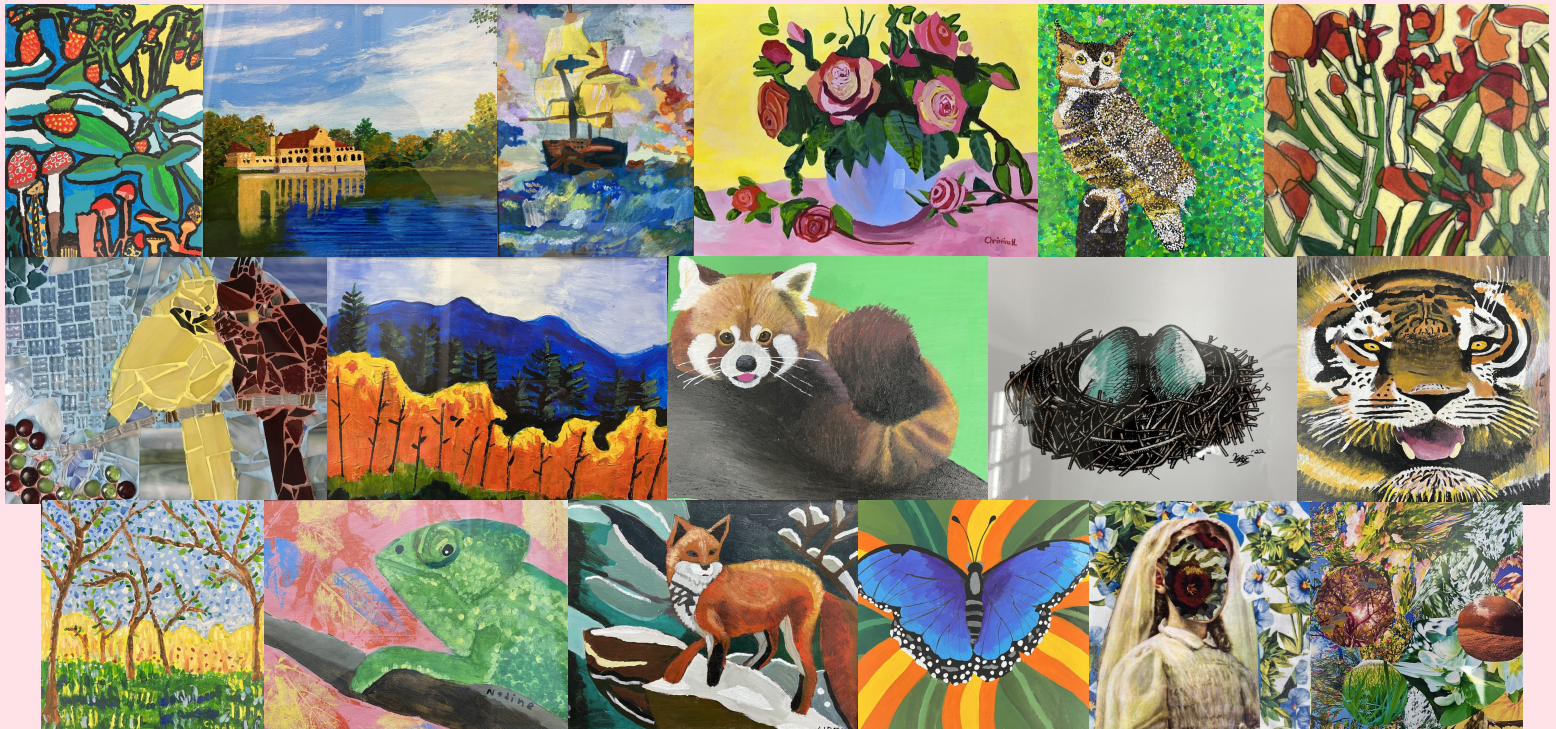


The individuals were thrilled to experience the mammoth animatronic creatures, watching them walk and hearing their fierce roar. They took in a Baby Dino show where they got to dote over three adorable, "just hatched" creatures- Cammie the Camarasaurus, Tyson the T-Rex, and Trixie the Triceratops. Before they voyaged back to Capital Region, they each bought souvenirs at the gift shop and took in a terrific lunch at Tullys Tenders in Oswego.



WORLD ART DAY

Saturday, April 15 was World Art Day! Thanks to Stewart's Shops Holiday Match grant, we were able to purchase a variety of materials for those in our art programs to express themselves. Below are just some of the amazing pieces they created!



Students in Living Resources' Arts Program have a variety of disabilities and each participant receives individualized art instruction/ art therapy from an exceptionally talented staff of highly trained artists.



DCOP ADVENTURES

Participants of our Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP) have been enjoying their community and beyond!

Saratoga County went to the Berkshire Museum where they explored an interactive exhibition showcasing regional innovators and innovations, checked out dioramas of model plants and animals in their native habitats, said hello to Berkshire Museum's resident mummy, Pahat, and visited the many species of fish, insects, reptiles, and amphibians in the aquarium and reptile room. It was so fun, they couldn't leave without purchasing something from the gift shop to remember the excursion!



At St. Edwards in Clifton Park, they put on some fun music and got their blood pumping at their weekly boxing/ kickboxing class, taught by Saratoga County DCOP Manager Kristina Shafer. The classes are great exercise, allowing all who participate to increase their power, fitness, and agility, working on coordination and balance, while toning and strengthening their entire body. Plus, it's a great stress reliever! The class is such a knockout, Kristina even posed for a dramatic photo!



After all that activity, they decided to treat themselves to something sweet at the grand opening of Crumbl Cookie in Latham Farms! They patiently waited in a long line for their turn to purchase some delectable delights.

Fifteen participants and three staff in our Warren County DCOP took the two-hour journey into Massachusetts to visit the Berkshire Museum as well. The county's manager, Hollie Willsey said the trip was well worth it. They spent the full day exploring the museum's many art, science, and history exhibits, eating lunch at Subway, and enjoying dessert at Ben and Jerry's, yum!



Hollie said, "It was a wonderful day! They were all so happy there and on the way home, they asked if they could go back again in June, so we will definitely be doing this event again."



Living Resources' DCOP has created a neuro-inclusive environment for its participants that fosters community, self-sufficiency, and self-advocacy. It is a "without walls" program offered throughout the Capital/Saratoga Region, as far north as Warren County and as far south as Westchester. Offered to adults 18 years and older, individuals in the program participate in a wide variety of activities throughout their communities including cultural and artistic pursuits, volunteer opportunities, recreational activities, and skill-building classes such as art, computer instruction, cooking, money management, reading, and travel training.

We can't wait to see what next month brings for our Day Community Opportunity Programs!



CAPITAL REGIONAL PHARMACY SERVICES' CAREGIVER OF THE YEAR



Congratulations to Lasha Wright, winner of Capital Regional Pharmacy Services' Caregiver of the Year Award! Lasha was one of seven caregivers honored at a recent luncheon that celebrated the hardworking and dedicated Direct Support Professionals and their crucial role in providing care and support to individuals with disabilities. OPWDD Commissioner Kerri Neifeld presented the awards and shared her gratitude to the honorees, making this event even more special.

Lasha has continuously proven to be a strong advocate for individuals with disabilities while putting their needs above all else. For example, an individual Lasha supports had a tradition of independently taking a plane to visit with her family. Unfortunately, due to an increased level of dementia, she was unable to continue this level of independence. Lasha stepped up and volunteered to fly along with this individual, allowing her to visit her family and continue to build those wonderful family memories! We are grateful to Lasha for coming up with a creative solution to this problem and for the many ways she has ensured that her individuals pursue happiness in the manner they determine, and live as independently as possible. Read more about Lasha's journey by going to <https://www.livingresources.org/lasha-wright-caregiver-of-the-year/>



THANKS TO OUR DONORS - APPEAL, JANUARY- APRIL MEMORIAL GIFTS

Annual Appeal

- Barbara Carbo

In Honor Of The Volunteers From Living Resources That Help At the Amen Food Pantry

- Mary Ann Mahoney

In Memory Of Christine Bach Singer

- Rabbi Eleanor Pearlman

In Memory Of Louis J. Bonan

- Vincent Capka and Mary Bonan

In Memory Of Daniel Bouchey and James Riccardi

- Thomas O. Pandick

In Memory Of James Conboy

- Mary Elen Bardwell
- Nancy Carey-Cassidy
- Catherine Cavanaugh
- John Chiaramonte
- Joanne Chmura
- The James Clark family

In Memory Of James Conboy (cont.)

- Virginia Coulon
- Larry and Dottie Dack
- Christopher and Suzanne DeSorbo
- Cynthia and Thomas Drake
- Rosemary Eberlein
- Jack and Lia Friel
- Michael and Kate Hayes
- Christian Hummel
- E. Stewart Jones and Kimberly Sanger Jones Jr., Esq.
- James and Julie Lennon
- Stephen Maloney
- Jane Collins and Kristine McLoughlin
- Lisa and Ed Monti
- Michael and Eileen O'Connor
- James and Nancy O'Connor
- O'Connor, O'Connor, Bresee & First
- Estelle O'Haire
- Patricia Pierce
- J. Michael and Natalie Beth Sanders
- Carol Scully

In Memory Of James Conboy (cont.)

- Jane Wasserbach
- Julie and Bruce Weeden
- Celeste and Tom Wolfe

In Memory Of James Conboy and Jeanne Vaill Conboy

- Donna and Ernest Barvoets

In Memory Of Steve Couse

- Patrick and Barbara Adams

In Memory Of Gary Kent Haber

- Sigmund and Abby Balaban

In Memory of Mary Beth Hanner

- Dennis and Mary Delorenzo

In Memory Of Jeffrey Levine

- Jodi Heinz
- Andy and Felicia Levine

In Memory Of Daniel Signore

- James and Barbara Malerba



CE ALUM HAD A ROLE IN AWARD WINNING SHORT FILM

Nick Williams, a College Experience graduate, and current service recipient of Living Resources had a small role in a movie that won top honors at the NYS Writers Institute’s Albany Film Festival at SUNY Albany on Saturday, April 1. In his big screen debut, Nick, who has cerebral palsy, acted in a family dinner scene filmed in Ballston Spa, NY.

The movie Laurina, which won the Best Dramatic Short and Overall Short Film at the festival, takes place in 1921. It tells the true-to-life story of Tom and Lora Lee Ecobelli’s grandmother who was sexually abused by her stepfather and became pregnant when she was 13 years old. To stop the abuse, Laurina found the resources within herself to take her stepfather to court and ultimately won the case.

Lora Lee said she was delighted to have Nick participate in the film. She and the whole production team wanted to be as inclusive as possible in telling the story, saying, “This is the real world. I wanted to show the way it was.” Lora Lee teaches an acting program at Sage College which is very inclusive, welcoming people of all abilities but she added that “It’s not always that way in the outside world.” She said, “I look out for Nick and try to find opportunities for him in the industry, but I have to be honest, it is still very challenging.”

All involved with the production of Laurina were overwhelmed to win two awards at the Albany Film Festival and emphasized their desire to use this movie as an awareness campaign, partnering with the crime unit and sexual assault center in Albany. Nick attended both the film festival at SUNY Albany and the movie premier at the Madison Theater in Albany, and said the whole weekend of events was “invigorating,” adding, “It was an amazing and eye-opening experience.” He hopes to continue working in the acting industry.

Moving forward to new projects, Lora Lee is looking to increase her dedication to utilizing a diverse cast. She said, “I am dedicated to being even more inclusive with the people we choose to play meaningful roles in the film.” She hopes that any future projects are used as a forum to raise awareness on different serious and important subjects.



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

