

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Elizabeth Martin

Back in 1926, historian Carter G. Woodson, Ph. D. had a visionary idea. He wanted to ensure that the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans would be remembered, studied, and valued. His idea took root and grew into Black History Month, which schools, businesses, and individuals across our country honor every February.

I am thrilled that here at Living Resources many staff members took part in this celebration of culture, using it as an opportunity to amplify voices, past and present, that might otherwise go unheard. One of the driving forces behind this celebration was our recently-formed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

The committee held trivia contests that included prizes of gift cards to local Black-owned businesses and tickets to The String Queens and Tina Turner: The Musical. They also did a beautiful job decorating our Albany office. There were posters, banners, hand-outs, and books on display that were chock full of education and anecdotes stretching from days past when Harriet Tubman courageously led slaves to freedom to the modern era when we have Black leaders in Washington D.C., like Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson.



The primary goal of our DEI efforts is to ensure that everyone – regardless of who they are – knows that they are valued and belong here at Living Resources.

We are committed to carrying the lessons of Black History Month with us, long after February ends.



Save the Date
Sunday, August 18, 2024

3rd Annual
A Tribute to Transforming Lives

Presented by



A Day at the 1863 Club
Saratoga Race Course

Benefiting





URGING LAWMAKERS TO “SHARE THE LOVE” THIS BUDGET SEASON



Groups from the Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP) and the College Experience Program were on a mission when they arrived at the State Capitol in Albany on February 7. They had gift bags full of sweet Valentine’s Day candy and a message to send to New York’s Senators and Assemblymembers.



The message was simple: Make meaningful investments in the programs that support individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD). Along with the candy, groups had cards, decorated in artwork by individuals supported by other Living Resources programs. The cards read: “Share the Love with the I/DD Community this Valentine’s Day” along with bullets and hashtags, listing top priorities for the final version of the Fiscal Year 2025 state budget.



Chief among those priorities are a 3.2% Cost-of-Living-Adjustment (COLA) and a Direct Support Wage Enhancement. This added funding would help Living Resources and organizations like it keep up with

inflation, keep programs operating at their most effective level, and pay Direct Support Professionals better wages.

Groups methodically made their way, door-by-door, through the Legislative Office Building. If a lawmaker or one of their staffers was available, individuals would hand-deliver the cards and candy, taking time to personally advocate for why they feel added funding is so critical. They were met with smiles, handshakes, and many assurances that their voices were being heard.



At the end of the effort, groups were feeling tired from all of the walking and talking, but happy that they could experience the excitement of government in action and meet some of the legislators who shape the financial future of our state and our programs!



To read about how DCOP, our Arts Program, and Brain Injury Program came together on preparations for this trip to the Capitol, click here: <https://www.livingresources.org/coming-together-to-prepare-a-vital-valentines-day-message/>





THE FIGHT FOR FUNDING IS NOT OVER



On Monday, February 12, 2024, many members of the Living Resources family joined their voices with hundreds of others at the New York State Capitol, who love, care for, or are members of I/DD community in advocating for funding that fits the life-changing and life-enhancing work being done day-in and day-out in every corner of the Empire State.

Rousing chants of “Invest in Who? Invest in Me!” and “What do we want? Three-Point-Two. When do we want it? NOW!” could be heard echoing down the Million Dollar Staircase to the offices where lawmakers were at work.

The political rally, which was organized by New York Disability Advocates (NYDA), sought to persuade New York State Senators and Assemblymembers to take action in their one-house budget bills and prioritize the I/DD community and then advocate for their additions to be included in the final version of the Fiscal Year 2025 State Budget. Living Resources depends on funding from New York State to operate our programs and life-enhancing supportive services.



One-by-one, lawmakers who are committed to this cause took the microphone at the rally, sharing that this failure to increase funding is neither a republican or democratic issue, but a bi-partisan one that must be addressed from both sides. Each thanked direct support professionals (DSPs) for all that they do to support the I/DD community and pledged that they will carry our banner into their budget talks. While wages for direct support staff at nonprofit providers stagnated, the state provided significant increases for staff doing the same work at state-operated providers. Our DSPs deserve pay equity. We depend on state funding to pay our DSPs and provide the future raises that our DSPs are so deserving of. A 3.2% COLA and a DSWE will help us keep up with inflation and combat what has become a statewide staffing crisis being faced by so many organizations like ours.



We need your help to make our voices heard! Please reach out to your state representatives to let them know that you stand with us. By adding your voice to ours, we are more likely to be heard before it is too late and the budget is final on April 1. [Our friends at The Arc New York have created an easy-to-use online tool that you can use to send a customizable email. You can access it by clicking here.](#) We deeply appreciate everyone who takes the time to join our advocacy efforts!



FRIENDS REUNITE



Walter and Dwayne have a friendship that has withstood the tests of time and distance!

Over the years, Walter and Dwayne formed a close personal bond when they lived in the same Living Resources residence in Westchester County, however, last December, each moved to a different residence within our organization, to address their personal needs.

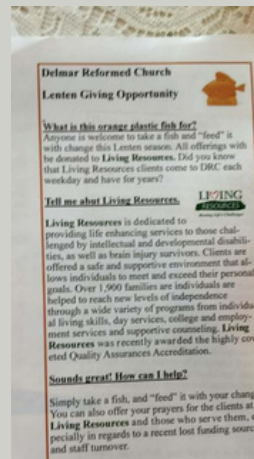
While they no longer are able to see each other on a daily basis, they continue to keep in touch through daily phone conversations. While talking on the phone is great, they decided they needed to get together and have some fun.

A special thank you to the staff at each of the residences, including Debra Reese, Tammy Bell, and Paul Truax who worked together to help make this hang-out happen at the end of January. Walter and Dwayne enjoyed some food and fun at East Greenbush Bowl. It is wonderful when old friends reunite!

FEEDING THE FISH

The Lenten season of prayer, fasting, and charity is upon Christians and the Delmar Reformed Church community has chosen to honor this holy time of year by “feeding the fish” and supporting Living Resources.

Each year, the church chooses a local non-profit organization as the beneficiary of its Lenten Fish Bank Fundraiser. Orange banks, shaped like fish, are offered to members of their congregation. Those interested in donating or collecting contributions take a bank at the beginning of Lent and return it shortly after Easter, with change, cash, or checks inside.



For years now, individuals supported through our Albany County-based Day Community Opportunities Program have been welcomed into the Delmar Reformed Church during the week. The church has served as a reliable location where they can take part in activities and other programming.

Pastor Jake Chipka shares, “This wonderful relationship is one of the reasons why the church community felt that Living Resources would be the perfect fit for our almsgiving season.” We are honored to be a part of this wonderful tradition and sincerely grateful for the continued partnership and support!



NAIL ART(S AND CRAFTS)

Creativity was “on hand” at our Site-Based Day Habilitation Program in East Greenbush!

Nicole and Micayla wanted to test out their skills as nail artists, so they traced their hands on cardboard, cut out what they had traced, and had artificial nails hot-glued on.

Now that their five-fingered canvases were all set, they got to work painting and designing, with no fear of their nail design creations breaking off or being ruined by everyday wear.

You can see the concentration on their faces as they worked with their polish brushes!



♥ Thank you ♥
for Sharing
The Love

*We appreciate the donors who
contributed to our
Valentine’s Day fundraising
campaign*

- Allison Batty
- Body Forward Clothing, LLC
- Vladia Boniewski and Daniel Vallely
- Catherine and Peter Butryn
- John and Carla Capek
- Chemung Canal Trust Company
- Mary Chen and Yong Li
- Kathleen Conboy Schreck
- Phyllis Cooney
- Jean Corlew
- Loretta and Michael Darcy



- Kathleen DelSignore
- Bill and Darienne Dickson
- Michael and Norine Durkin
- Roland Eberhard
- Robert and Joanne Fitzgerald
- Dr. Philip Fusco
- Bill and Torie Gable
- Megan Haessig
- Jim Hurley
- Debra Johnson
- William and Beth King
- Maggie Kirwin
- Julie Lombardo and Eric Mason
- Marc Lustick
- Christopher Lyons
- Christopher and Carleen Madden
- Eileen Martel
- Douglas and Donald Martin
- Peter and Patricia Ann Menditto
- Richard and Mary Nandkissore
- Shirley A. Netoskie



- John F. Nitsky
- Thomas O. Pandick
- Carol Piotrowski
- Alice B. Poole
- Lisa and John Razanousky
- Gayla Riccardi
- Thomas and Susan Rogan
- Patricia and Robert Roslund
- Lewis and Janis Saperstein
- Kathe Sheehan
- Peter Slattery
- Russ Traunstein
- Cliff and Charlynn Tryon
- James Tynan
- Kevin A. Walsh
- Cathryne Welch



*Click or scan here
to make a
contribution!*



VALENTINE'S DAY FUN



When you're part of an agency that has a heart in its logo, it's only fitting that you go all-out for the day celebrating love!

Many Living Resources groups and programs planned parties to celebrate Valentine's Day, including those in the Brain Injury Program. They planned a bake sale, with prices ranging from 25 cents to a dollar for chocolate-covered strawberries, cupcakes, brownies, candy, and other sweet, homemade treats. These desserts were devoured on Valentine's Day and they served as an appetizer-of-sorts for what was to come.

Following the holiday, the main Living Resources office building on Washington Avenue Extension welcomed staff members, supported individuals, and others connected to the organization for a festive open house event.



It included snacks, games, and a photo station where visitors enjoyed posing with all sorts of fun and goofy props.

A scavenger hunt activity encouraged visitors to venture through the office's hallways to find hidden gems and pick up prizes along the way.





VALENTINE'S DAY FUN

Throughout all of our Valentine's Day celebrations, the focus remained on spreading love and care. We hope that spirit of friendship and camaraderie will continue for everyone long after February ends!





THANK YOU, TINA MARIE'S DANCE ACADEMY!



On Sunday, January 14, 2024, the talented dancers of Tina Marie's Dance Academy in Guilderland took the stage at the UAlbany Performing Arts Center with two goals in mind: put on a wonderful performance and raise money for a local charity. In both respects, they triumphed!

The academy puts on a benefit show every year and donates all proceeds to a Capital Region-based non-profit organization. This year, we were honored to be selected as the beneficiary and were deeply touched to receive a \$5,700 donation as a result of the show. That funding will make a huge impact as we promote dignity, independence, and happiness through our programs and support services.



"I was moved to hear about Living Resources' mission," says Tina Clancy, owner of Tina Marie's Dance Academy, "We like to ensure that the funds raised through this annual benefit show stay in our community and are proud to support the work being done at Living Resources and other local non-profits."

We appreciate the artistry, dedication, and generosity that went into the preparation for and performance of this benefit show. Thank you to the dancers, teachers, and everyone else involved in making the show a smashing success. Bravo!



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