

Lifespire NEWSLETTER

Helping Individuals Reach Life's Aspirations

JUNE 2015

A Message from CEO, Mark van Voorst



Dear Staff,

In my last CEO message, I spoke about the financial difficulties that Lifespire, and several other agencies, face in our mission to provide quality programs and services to individuals with developmental difficulties.

Often this means making do with less, trimming expenses where possible, or postponing new programs and services. I mentioned the closing of our Bulova ICF and the relocation of our Manhattan South CSC to a new site on 94th Street—which, I'm happy to report, took place on May 1 as planned.

While I think it's good to face our hardships head-on, I don't want to paint a picture of total gloom and doom, either. As you read this month's newsletter, and look at the smiling faces in the photographs, I want everyone to be encouraged by the many good things that we continue to do for our individuals despite our financial challenges. The holiday celebrations, shows for the parents, and gardening activities are more than just "fun times." They provide opportunities for individuals to learn a new skill, develop social connections, and create memories that last a lifetime. And we will continue to provide these opportunities for as long as we can.

Finally, I want to give a word of thanks to our hardworking and devoted staff, without whom none of our accomplishments would be possible. As I mentioned last month, the delays in funding for well-deserved employee pay raises can certainly be frustrating and financially difficult. Yet every day, our staff are there to support, guide, and encourage our individuals to become contributing members of their communities in the most integrated and independent manner possible.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,

Mark van Voorst



Lifespire Shines at NYSACRA Conference

A group from Lifespire's Residential Services attended the NYSACRA (New York State Association of Community and Residential Agencies) Conference, held April 14-17. The group attended many of the informative workshops presented by agencies from around the state, OPWDD, and vendors. Among the workshops was "One Day at a Time, Strategies for Supervised IRA Daily Billing Documentation," presented by our own Lou Ziegler and Bonnie Zimmermann.

The highlight of the banquet held on Wednesday evening was the presentation of the In Fond Memory Excellence Award to Michael Rappaport. Ann Hardiman, Executive Director of NYSACRA spoke about Michael's efforts as a self-advocate, his service on the Lifespire Board of Directors, and of the groundbreaking work of Michael's parents, Ida and Carl.

Adding to the conference excitement was the awarding of a ribbon and a plaque to individuals Denise Riina, Marisol Concepcion, Andrew Divers and their support staff at Sam Tocker CSC for their fantastic artwork entitled "Bridge to Success." This impressive piece, made of recycled NYC Metro Cards, placed 5th at the annual NYSACRA statewide Art Exhibit and Reception, which showcased the talent and creativity of people supported and serviced by member agencies. Oonagh Christie and other delegates from Lifespire accepted the ribbon and plaque on their behalf. A presentation ceremony will be held at our Central Office in the coming weeks.

The Lifespire group also participated in fun activities. On Thursday morning, the team of Joseph Cunningham, Kenya Gadsden, Abisola Hassan, Bobby Heath, Mike Polin, Teresa Walker, and Lou Ziegler competed in the "Fun Run" fundraiser to benefit Direct Support Professionals around the state. The Lifespire runners took first place as a team and Lou Ziegler took first place for men in his age group.

On Thursday night, individuals and staff from around the state battled for the two first place prizes in the Conference Karaoke Party. Lifespire's Kenya Gadsden sang Gladys Knight's "Midnight Train to Georgia," backed up by her one "Pip" Joseph Cunningham. The pair walked away with one of the first place prizes.

All in all, it was an exciting few days.



Bonnie Zimmermann cutting the cake at her retirement party.

Bonnie Zimmerman Retires

Bonnie Zimmerman, Lifespire's Director of Residential Services, retired on May 1, 2015. Bonnie was the manager of a residence that Lifespire acquired 15 years ago. As time went by, Bonnie advanced to be the Consumer Planning Coordinator and then the Director of Residential Services.

"There was an immediate connection and comradeship with Bonnie," said Aurora

Thomas, Residential Services Program Planning Coordinator. "She is the perfect example of care and dedication to the people we serve. Her knowledge and organizational skills were invaluable and will be sorely missed."

The Residential Department had a retirement party for Bonnie in early May where numerous staff, figuratively and literally, sang her praises. Bonnie moved back to her home state of Wisconsin to spend more time with her children and grandchildren.

Happy Retirement, Bonnie! You will always be in our thoughts!



(Standing left to right:) Dave Henry, Lou Ziegler, Bobby Heath, Mike Polin, Joseph Cunningham, Oonagh Christie. (Seated left to right:) Abisola Hassan, Teresa Walker, Kenya Gadsden, Bonnie Zimmermann, Virginia Gresko.

Save The Date

Thursday, July 23rd, 2015

10:00AM Shotgun Start

Reminder to Self — Take the Day Off!

New Venue!

Harbor Links Golf Course
1 Fairway Drive
Port Washington, NY 11050
Registration starts at 8:00 a.m.
(formal invitation to follow)



Harbor Links

15th ANNUAL
Lifespire Golf Classic

 **Lifespire Foundation**
Helping Individuals Reach Life's Aspirations

Visit us at www.lifespire.org
to learn more about joining us
for this noteworthy event
or contact:
Elia Cintron: 212-741-0100 x4527
ecintron@lifespire.org

Manhattan South CSC Moves

On May 1, the Manhattan South CSC officially moved in to their new facility at 309 East 94th Street in Manhattan's Upper East Side. The area has a variety of eateries to choose from and plenty of nearby area attractions including museums and Central Park.

"We've been exploring the many community inclusion opportunities that the new neighborhood has to offer," said Manhattan South Facility Director Tawana Lee. "I want to personally thank Bonita Hinson, Wendy Schoenfeld, and all the departments and individuals who assisted us in our move. We're still unpacking boxes, but everyone seems to like their new location."

Manhattan South will keep the same telephone and fax numbers. The nearest subway stop is the 96th Street Station on the 6 line. "Manhattan North is on 125th Street, so yes, we're still known as Manhattan South," said Tawana.

Manhattan South CSC
309 East 94th Street
New York, NY 10128
Phone: (212) 645-7000
Fax: (212) 255-6267



(Left to right:) Individuals at the new Manhattan South location: Ackeem Duggan, Gloria Robinson, Pedro Burgos, Derrick Scott, Cherilyn Durham, Jason Delabanque.

CSC Activity Roundup

April and May were busy months for the Lifespire CSCs with the celebration of Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, and the warm spring weather.

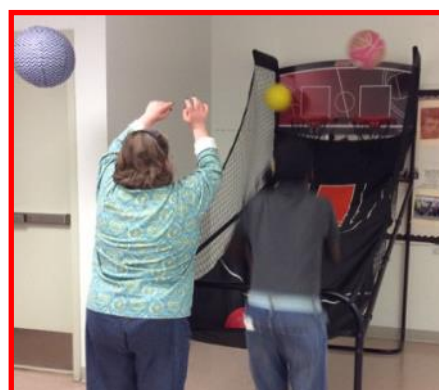
In April, Sam Tocker held an Easter Bake Sale while Queens South held an Easter Party where individuals were encouraged to wear the bright colors of spring. And speaking of colors, Michael Rappaport conducted outdoor visits to Prospect Park, Sunset Park, and Owls Head Park for individuals to view the beautiful sights and sounds of spring.

Sunset Park held a Health Kick Week, while the Bronx held a Random Acts of Kindness Week that included baking treats to deliver to the local police and fire departments. Manhattan North held a Crazy Hat Day, a bowling competition, and an East Wing Meets West Wing Social.

In May, individuals at Staten Island, Michael Rappaport, and John A. Cook created Mother's Day cards for family and friends, and the Bronx held a Mother's Day luncheon. Queens North held a Mother's Day Show, where individuals sang songs from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s, and practiced for weeks to ensure the event was a success. Many parents attended and were thrilled with the show.

Queens North also held a Basketball Tournament where contestants—one female and one male from each activity room—had 60 seconds to make as many baskets as possible. Congratulations to tournament winners Amy Wile and Dominick Nicoletti.

Memorial Day celebrations included BBQs at Sam Tocker and Staten Island, while Michael Rappaport hosted a Memorial Day Parade.



Individuals Amy Wile and Rodriguez "Roddy" Domond shooting hoops at the Queens North Basketball Tournament.



Individual Dominick Nicoletti showing off his dance moves with Day Hab Aide Dawn Cole at the Queens North Mother's Day Show.

A Tree Grows in Staten Island

In observance of Earth Day on April 22, individuals Steven Liberman, Lorraine Tiunis, Cathy Califra, Kevin McBride, and Linda Jones planted a 4 foot Japanese maple tree outside the Staten Island CSC. These individuals, who are also members of the Green House Club, all participated in the digging, planting, watering, and mulching.



Individuals Steve, Lorraine, Cathy, Kevin, and Linda from the Staten Island CSC and the Japanese maple tree they planted in honor of Earth Day.

"Some individuals told me that they enjoy seeing their tree whenever they enter and leave the facility each day," said Steve Green, Staten Island Facility Director. Many staff and visitors commented that, with the proper care and attention, this tree will provide a pleasant and welcoming site and joy for many years to come.

Two Lifespire Individuals Honored at Celebrating Success Event

On April 21, two Lifespire individuals—Daniel Monroe and Janellen Bliss—were honored at the Celebrating Success event held by the Queens Council on Developmental Disabilities (QCDD).

Daniel was nominated by the Queens South CSC, and has received prevocational services from Lifespire since 2006. Daniel performs maintenance duties as part of his prevocational program, and is always punctual, dedicated to his job, and able to complete different maintenance tasks with minimal prompting.

As a result of his excellent performance, the Queens South management team recommended him to a new program called Cleaning with Meaning (CWM) that trains and hires individuals with developmental disabilities to provide a wide range of cleaning services to the public. Daniel was very excited about this opportunity, and was supported and encouraged in his new endeavor by his sister Christie Monroe.

With support from Olive O'Connor—Daniel's Day Hab Counselor and coach at CWM—as well as the staff from CWM, Daniel is successfully completing the training process, which includes both classroom and on-site instruction, and is scheduled to graduate on June 24, 2015.

Janellen was nominated by the Queens North CSC and has lived with Lifespire for 20 years in the Ida Rappaport Residence. She has been part of the Queens North Day Program for the last 16 years. Janellen is a member of the Lifespire Sunday Bowling League and every year helps to raise funds for the program.

This year, Janellen visited businesses in her neighborhood, asking if they would like to donate to the bowling league, and collected \$450. She showed determination, a positive attitude, and the motivation to do her share to ensure that the Sunday bowling league has the funds to continue.

Janelle also volunteered to sell raffle tickets at the first ever Lifespire Bowl-a-Thon that was held at Jib Lanes on March 22. With her positive attitude, and assistance from Queens North Assistant Director Thelma Rochester, Janellen took in over \$1,200 and was very happy to help.

When Queens North Facility Director Hamlet Garcia asked if she would continue talking to local businesses in order to get donations, Janellen responded "Yes, I am ready!"



Individual Daniel Monroe and his Day Hab Coach, Olive O'Connor.



Individual Janellen Bliss and Veronica Hopkinson, Asst. Manager of the Ida Rappaport Residence.

Celebrating Cinco de Mayo

On May 5th, the individuals from Sam Tocker CSC celebrated Cinco de Mayo in a fun and creative way. They sang Mexican American songs, designed shirts symbolic of the Mexican flag, and made sombrero hats using newspaper, paint, aluminum foil, construction paper, and artificial flowers. Completing the festivities were delicious homemade tacos and margaritas made with lemonade and Crystal Lite for color.

Other CSCs also held activities to celebrate Cinco de Mayo including Manhattan North, Queens North, Queens South, and John A. Cook.



Sam Tocker CSC celebrates Cinco De Mayo. Individuals: Peter Graznow, Eric Holmes, Carlos Kemper, Roger Clarke, Rita Salter, Janette Ortiz. Staff: Director Patricia Harkless, Dante Boone. Activities Managers: Charlene and Igenie.



Sam Tocker Individuals Thomas Trink, David Kerr, Jessica Griper, Wayne Scott, David Johnson, and Tyron Boykin celebrate Cinco de Mayo with homemade sombreros and shirts.

Park Slope CSC Plants Community Garden

The Park Slope CSC Community Garden was first planted in 1999, in celebration of Earth Day but also to promote team building among the individuals. This ongoing project is led by Habilitation Practitioner II Gil Hubahib, who loves gardening and has exceptional horticulture skills that he shares with individuals and staff.

Individuals, with support and guidance from the Park Slope staff, perform a wide range of tasks to maintain the garden's upkeep such as removing weeds, planting flowers, watering, raking up dry leaves, and getting supplies from Home Depot. This year, several different types of flowers were planted including roses, lilacs, hydrangeas, sunflowers, tulips, impatiens, and a gorgeous cherry blossom tree. It's sure to be a beautiful and colorful sight when everything is in bloom!



Park Slope individuals Ivette Caban, Joseph Beninati, Simone Brody, Raul Batista, Farry Garrett, Evangeline Grey, Michael Opperisano and Michele Seivwright join staff Nona Ware and Gil Hubahib to help plant their lovely Community Garden.

John Cook Staff's Annual International Food Festival

John A. Cook CSC once again held their after-hours International Food Festival, where staff bring in delicious food from their country of origin. "The event started 16 years ago," says Facility Director Ivor Ramphal. "At the time, we had employees from approximately 25 different countries working here. One former staff member, who was assigned to the kitchen and conducted cooking groups, suggested that we have an International Food Festival to celebrate our diversity of cuisines. And the rest is history."

Most of the food for the Festival is prepared at home. This year's menu included delicacies from India (chicken biryani, roti, samosas, and curried chicken), China (chicken chow mein), Italy (turkey lasagna and baked macaroni), Jamaica (goat curry and Jerk chicken), Philippines (pork adobo and pancit), Puerto Rico (pernil), as well as black rice, stewed chicken, curried fish, shrimp curry, lamb, pepperpot, fried salmon, collard greens, and potato pancakes.

For dessert there was purple cake, chocolate cake, flan, avocado ice cream, corn bread, and pastries, too many to mention. A fun and filling time was had by all.



Staff at the John A. Cook CSC celebrate their International Food Festival.



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