

Lifespire NEWSLETTER

Helping Individuals Reach Life's Aspirations

APR. 2015

A Message from CEO, Mark van Voorst

One of Lifespire's key values is innovation, developing new approaches and new ways of thinking in order to improve the lives of the individuals we serve.



Our March newsletter contains wonderful examples of how Lifespire's staff and volunteers have applied innovation with remarkable results. For example, for the past two years we have partnered with students from Manhattan College on class projects that have improved the productivity and cost-efficiency of our affirmative business operations.

The staff at Sam Tocker CSC were inspired to hold their first Fashion & Hair Expo when they saw how braiding the wig on a mannequin had such a calming effect on one of the individuals at their Day Hab program. The event was a smashing success as several individuals got to "strut their stuff" on the red carpet, with many doing their own make-up and wigs.

It was the innovation of retired board member Larry Hirsch to start the Lifespire Sunday Bowling League. I was happy and proud to share the microphone with him and COO Tom Lydon to promote our first ever Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser on WFAN Sports Radio. Bowling is a sport, after all.

As you read these stories, I'm sure you'll be impressed by the innovative ideas of our Lifespire family. I know that I am.

Sincerely,

Mark van Voorst

P.S. *Speaking of sports fundraisers, this year our annual Lifespire Golf Classic will be held at a new venue, the Harbor Links Golf Course in Port Washington on July 23rd. Be sure to save the date!*

Manhattan College Students CREATE Innovations for Lifespire, Products Plus

For the second consecutive year, senior year students at Manhattan College, under the auspices of the CREATE program of the NYSID, will partner with Lifespire to design and enhance systems that will help improve the productivity and cost-efficiency of our affirmative business operations.

Last year, the students developed a prototype 25-compartment shelving unit, called BrightLife, that uses LED lighting and RFID reader scans to improve the accuracy and workflow of individuals who package and ship clothing items for the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) at Lifespire's Manhattan North facility.

This year's students will investigate possible improvements to the BrightLife prototype, including a more intuitive user interface design, networking multiple units together to handle multiple orders, and a less costly alternative to the RFID reader. Lifespire is thinking of incorporating BrightLife into the future redesign of the Bronx warehouse facility. Here is a link to a video of the project: <http://youtu.be/Og8pV51HUTs>

In addition, a separate group of Manhattan College students are working on a project with our Products Plus business to largely automate the process of diluting concentrated chemical cleaning agents to produce products such as window cleaner, sanitizer, carpet cleaner, and deodorizer that are sold to Lifespire and other nonprofit agencies.

Called the Optimal Chemical Dispenser, this multi-chamber system will allow individuals to select, input, and dispense the appropriate amounts of chemicals, with an external data logger to record dispensary usage. The Optimal Chemical Dispenser will house multiple chemicals, accurately measure and record data, provide additional safety features, and improve the user-friendliness of the current equipment at a fraction of the manufacturer's cost to do so.

"These students are very creative," says Nelson Delorme, who is overseeing the project for Products Plus. "The Optimal Chemical Dispenser should improve the speed, quality, and cost-efficiency of our current chemical dispensing system and increase the number of individuals who can work on the system at one time. In addition, it will save Products Plus about \$30,000-\$40,000 in new equipment costs as the students will design and program the entire system."

The project is slated for completion in May, 2015.

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)

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



15th ANNUAL
Lifespire Golf Classic

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

Sam Tocker CSC Holds First Annual Fashion & Hair Expo

On February 12, the Sam Tocker CSC in Brooklyn held their first annual Fashion & Hair Expo.

The event was inspired by individual Jessica who found that combing and braiding a wig on a mannequin head to have a very calming effect. She enjoyed this activity so much that she began combing the hair of her peers, as well.

Alana Maughn, Day Habilitation Aide III, was so proud of Jessica's progress, as well as the talent of other Day Hab individuals, that she suggested the idea of holding a Fashion & Hair Expo.

The purpose of the event was to allow individuals to express their own identity through fashion, build self-esteem, practice team work, boost their confidence, and live out their dreams of walking the runway.

Individuals picked the fashion style they wished to model, with choices that included casual, dressy, sporty, 60s, 70s, and 80s. The staff prepared dressing rooms where individuals got their hair and make-up done, although several individuals did their own make-up and design. Wigs were styled, accessories were brought in, and the red carpet was laid down.

The Expo was a truly collaborative effort among the staff, the individuals, their parents, and other Lifespire facilities. Each individual received a certificate for participating, and there was a prize raffle for parents who attended the event.

The highlight of the Expo was individual Vanessa Faulk and her mother, who walked the runway together for the dressy category.



(Clockwise from top) Individual Vanessa Faulk and her Mom, stylin' together on the runway; Individual Denise Riina looks great modeling a "dressy" outfit; Jeanette Ortiz and Carlos Kemper looking fashionably cool.



Lifespire Bowl-a-Thon Fundraiser

The first ever Lifespire Bowl-a-Thon, held March 22 at the Jib Lanes in Flushing, was a huge success! We had a higher than expected turnout of 150 bowlers that included many individuals from the Lifespire Sunday Morning Bowling League, as well as parents, friends, and Lifespire staff and executives.

Lifespire vendors "sponsored" 35 bowling lanes at \$1,000 each. Between the vendors' sponsorships and the sale of auction items, an impressive \$53,000 was raised.

The Bowl-a-Thon was a long-held dream of former Lifespire board member Larry Hirsch, who also was one of the founders of the Lifespire Sunday Morning Bowling League. "It's like a dream come true," says Larry. "It looks like a big success. I couldn't have asked for anything better."





In Remembrance

The Lifespire Medicaid Service Coordination (MSC) unit was saddened to learn of the passing of their beloved colleague Belinda Rodriguez, age 59. Belinda, who was taken too soon from this earth, passed away on Friday, November 14, 2014 surrounded by her loved ones.

Belinda came to Lifespire in 2009 from the BOLD program where she had been a dedicated Medicaid Service Coordinator since 1997. She worked in the Bronx MSC unit for many years before transferring to the Brooklyn MSC unit.

“Belinda was a very knowledgeable and hardworking person who took great pride in her work,” says Dr. Jim Normandy, VP of Mental Health and MSC. “She was a strong advocate for her individuals and families, and dedicated her life to helping others.”

“Belinda was a very funny lady who enjoyed making people laugh and could make light of even the worst situations,” says Anna Quinones-Brown, MSC Director. “She brought sunshine to the workplace and will be remembered for her high spirits, overall humor, and her kind friendship.”

Belinda is survived by her five children: Eze, Danny, Elliot, Sybil, and Belinda. Our condolences go to the Rodriguez family. She will be greatly missed by all.

CSC February Activity Roundup

In February, many Lifespire CSCs held special activities to celebrate both Black History Month and Valentine’s Day.

Queens South held a Valentine’s Day Bake Sale the day before their Valentine’s Day celebration, Manhattan North, Michael C. Rappaport and Staten Island held Valentine’s Day Dances, while individuals at Park Slope were treated to Magnificent Rene’s Magic Show and got to crown a King and Queen at their Annual Valentine’s Day Party.

Several CSCs held presentations to honor and learn more about Black History. Staten Island held a Soul Food Fundraiser and discussed the history of notable African American leaders including Booker T. Washington, Jackie Robinson, Frederick Douglass, and Rosa Parks. Individuals at Manhattan North created art commending black leaders, and Park Slope held a tour of the Black History Gallery upstairs in their facilities.

There were other special Day Habilitation activities, too. Bronx conducted a recycling contest, held an Activity Room Bake-Off, and created Spring Baskets to be delivered to local seniors. Queens North held a Sports Day where individuals wore the team jersey or hat of their favorite sports team, and Michael C. Rappaport took individuals to visit the Transit Museum.



Celebrating at the John A. Cook CSC St. Valentine’s Day Party: (Left) William Clements and his grandmother; (right) Nancy Frank Desena and his mother Rose Marie.

Advocacy Day - Lifespire Speaks with Local Legislators on Program Funding Cuts

On Advocacy Day, February 27, Lifespire and several other agencies were given the opportunity to speak with local lawmakers about proposed cuts to government funding for vital programs that help those with developmental disabilities.

Mark Najamy, Assistant Facility Director of Manhattan North CSC, led a group of Lifespire individuals, family members, and professionals to meet with Gabriel Hernandez, the assistant to State Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez, and with Eric Riviera, the assistant to New York State Senator Jose Serrano. The group discussed proposed cuts to funding that would affect Lifespire’s prevocational services, as well as the need for more vocational training programs and other day services for those with developmental disabilities.

“Our team was fantastic,” says Mark. “We had three parents, two self-advocate individuals, and two professionals. Having the parents was extremely helpful as they spoke very passionately on how these programs have made a difference in their children’s lives. They also voiced the concern that their children’s mental stability will worsen if these services are no longer available, and wondered where their children would go for this kind of assistance.”

Individuals Monique Williams and Vance Kershaw, who receive prevocational services, were also part of Lifespire’s Advocacy Day team. “I’m especially proud of Monique and Vance. They spoke from the heart about their own experiences and their fear of what would happen to them if these programs were cut. They really let their voices be heard.”

Mark was impressed by how many different agencies participated in the Advocacy Day event. “There were a lot of professionals and a



(Back row L to R) Gabriel Hernandez of Assemblyman Robert J. Rodriguez’s office, Lifespire Individual Vance Kershaw, Mark Najamy—Assistant Director Manhattan North CSC, Yesenia Estrella—local agency representative. (Front Row L to R) Parent Advocate, Parent Advocate, Lifespire Individual Monique Williams, Parent Advocate.

surprising number of family members, too. In fact, it felt like we were all one big family that day.”

Mark felt that their meetings were productive and that they made their points in a clear and organized way. “Mr. Hernandez and Mr. Rivera were very receptive to our concerns and generously allowed us plenty of time to explain them,” says Mark. “They were both high engaged in the conversation, were attentive to the issues we presented, and assured us that these concerns were going to be passed on to the legislators. I’m glad that Lifespire was able to play a part in the Advocacy Day activities.”

Lifespire on the Radio

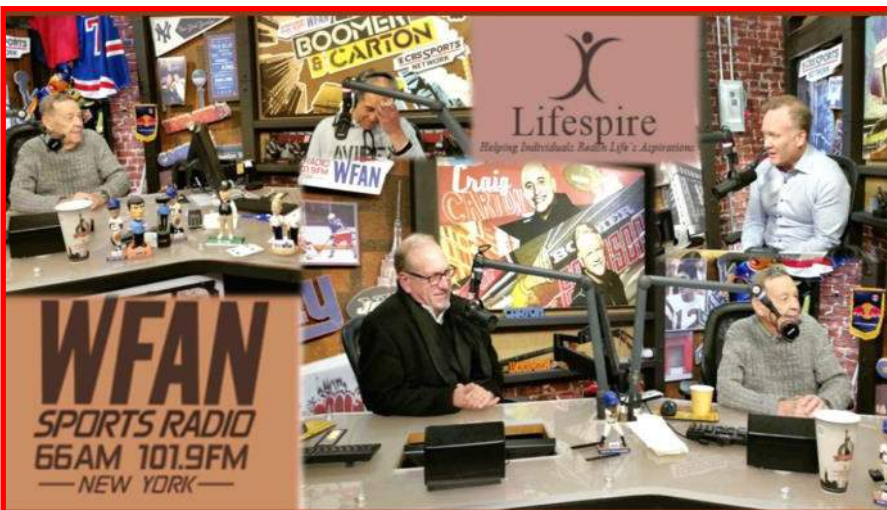
Promoting the Bowl-a-Thon on WFAN

On Sunday, March 15, Larry Hirsch, Mark van Voorst, and Tom Lydon were interviewed by Bob Salter on WFAN Sports Radio. In addition to the Bowl-a-Thon fundraiser, they discussed the start of the Sunday Morning Bowling League, Lifespire's mission, and the services we provide for individuals with developmental disabilities.



While a Bowl-a-Thon may seem a bit of a stretch for a radio sports program, host Bob Salter warmly welcomed the Lifespire team and was happy to have them share their story to his radio audience. Bob has participated in several Radiothon broadcasts and, off the air, is a program manager for a nonprofit radio reading service for the blind and visually impaired in Northern New Jersey. Listen to the interview here:

<http://radio.com/audio/bob-salter/31515-bob-salters-7am-hour/>



From L to R: Larry Hirsch, Bob Salter, Mark van Voorst, and Tom Lydon discuss the Lifespire Bowl-a-Thon and other topics on WFAN Sports Radio.

Lifespire on The Nonprofit Voice

On Valentine's Day, Products Plus, our affirmative business for people with developmental disabilities, and our affiliate ACRMD Enterprises appeared on The Nonprofit Voice 103.9 FM, a Long Island radio station that focuses on issues affecting the special needs and behavioral health communities.



Products Plus and ACRMD told listeners about the products and services they provide (including document storage, secure shredding) to companies on Long Island.



Appearing on the Nonprofit Voice were Jay Kleinman, Augie Delerme, Dr. Jim Normandy, and Nelson Delerme.

Lifespire in the News – Television

NY1 News

NY1 News ran both a featured story on the Lifespire Bowl-a-Thon, and on March 27 honored Larry Hirsch as the NY1 Queens Person of the Week. Link to: <http://www.ny1.com/nyc/queens/week-in-review/2015/03/27/queens-person-of-the-week--lifespire-founding-board-member-enriches-lives-of-those-with-special-needs.html>



Bronx TV Channel 67

Larry Seiler, host of Special People Special Issues interviewed Lifespire CEO Mark van Voorst, COO Tom Lydon, and Director of Education and Training Diana Vega for a show that aired the week of March 30 on BronxNet Channel 67 television. They discussed Lifespire's mission, challenges, and the programs we offer for people with developmental disabilities.



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