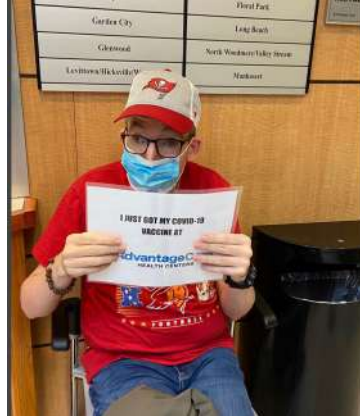


Celebrating the Vaccine

Beginning the first week of January 2021, members of AHRC Nassau began to receive the vaccine at Advantage Care Health Centers in Brookville, as part of the Phase 1 roll out for vaccination. Weeks leading up to this moment were spent educating people on the vaccines available, CDC emergency approval, and informed consent. In anticipation of this day, advocates were urged to discuss receiving (or not) the vaccine with people that support them to make decisions and their health care providers. Pictured are people celebrating getting the vaccine and doing their part to spread the word.



MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement and Management Plan Annual Review

The AHRC Nassau Councils' annual review of the Mission Statement and Management Plan began in September 2020. After the Councils' review, the COMPASSS Committee completed its review followed by AHRC Board of Directors in January. Below are the results.

Mission Statement Review:

Councils Review: Feedback on AHRC Nassau Mission Statement was provided. The Councils are not recommending any changes but request that the pictures used in the poster be updated.

COMPASS Committee Review: The committee was in agreement; no changes were recommended.

Management Plan Summary of Changes

Criterion #1 - Board and Management Commitment:

1. Add: Periodic Strategic Planning

Criterion #2 - Mission Statement and Commitment to the ISE:
No recommended changes.

Criterion #3 – Empowerment:

1. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Each of AHRC's residential and day programs have a Council which all people supported are eligible to participate on including virtual options for people to attend.
2. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Each AHRC residence has house and family meetings, which all people are eligible to participate in. Virtual options are made available for people to attend.
3. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): AHRC will further empower families, people supported and members of the community by offering periodic educational seminar(s). Based on its mission, AHRC will offer education to family members, advocates and community members which will enable them to assist in further empowering all and enhancing community engagement. Virtual options are made available for people to attend.
4. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Sibling group meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to provide education and support for siblings. A virtual option is made available for people to attend, if unable to be physically present. A holiday party and annual BBQ are also held.
5. Add: Virtual Capability: Each house will be equipped with the technology that enables each person, as desired, to connect to virtual activities including council meetings. Efforts to assist those that live in a family home that wish to connect virtually, will be initiated upon request.

Criterion #5 – Self-Survey:

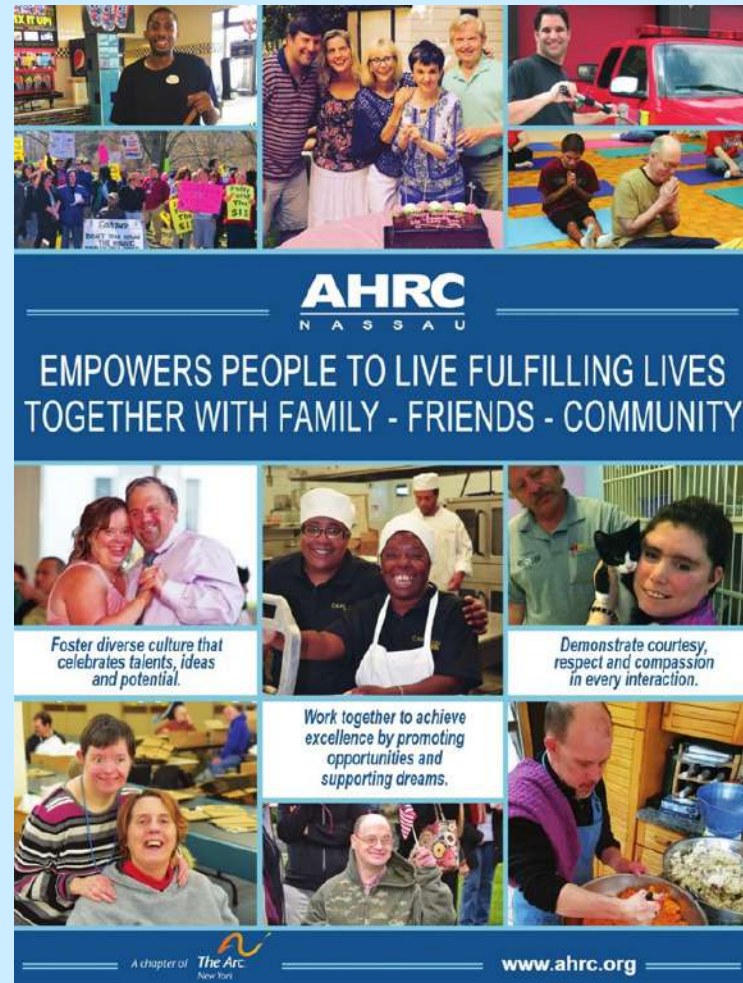
1. Add: Self-survey data provided to OPWDD as required.

Criterion #6 – Valued Outcomes:

No recommended changes

Criterion #7 – Quality Improvement

No recommended changes



Guiding Principles

- *Work together to achieve excellence by promoting opportunities and supporting dreams.*
- *Demonstrate courtesy, respect and compassion in every interaction.*
- *Foster a unified culture that celebrates diverse talents, ideas and potential.*

Basketball Makes Life Better!

By Helene Ramer

This week I had the pleasure of doing Personal Outcome Measures (POM) interviews with the men at the Saint Andrew's house. This included doing follow-up interviews with their manager, David Horton.

I was so impressed with David. Not only did he know the men intimately, and was able to share a lot of information, but his compassion and enthusiasm really came through. He is all about the men at the house and advocating to make their lives better.

One gentleman is an avid basketball player who missed participating with his team this year due to the pandemic. So, David bought a basketball hoop for the whole house to enjoy!

David was so open to suggestions about supporting all to have more independence and to grow. This year has clearly been a challenging year for everyone. David has used his wonderful personality, his relationships and humor to make everyone feel as comfortable as possible. I wanted to share my terrific experience working with David.



Unexpected Recognition – !!

On July 31, 2020, Jennifer Bull, one of the day program staff, took Sharon Licence from Floral Ave. to lunch for her birthday (74). They went to Friendly's in Syosset. While there, Jennifer assisted Sharon with her choices and reviewing the menu. During this exchange Jennifer was caring and patient with Sharon by using this opportunity as a teachable moment.

What Jennifer did not realize was that a family was eating and heard her interaction with Sharon. Jennifer then assisted Sharon to the bathroom and when they returned the waiter came to the table with some amazing news. He told both Sharon and Jennifer that the family at the other table was so inspired by the both of them they paid for both of their meals.

This acknowledgment from a perfect stranger just makes everything we do so worth it. Please share this! Our staff do this every day and don't necessarily get that type of acknowledgment. It feels good - **real good!**



Sadly, Sharon passed away early in 2021. It is heartwarming to know that she lived a life of dignity and respect and was surrounded by staff that reinforced that every day!

Christine Basile House Manager
Tracy Ricketts Asst. Manager

Validation Visit 2020

We are happy to report that the COMPASS recertification validation visit is scheduled for the week of May 17, 2021. An on-site visit is planned, if possible. A hybrid review (part virtual; part in person) will be completed if COVID warrants limited contact. This would include virtual interviews and involvement in activities.

We missed the opportunity in 2020 to reconnect with OPWDD, collaborate and share our progress and endeavors. It will be wonderful to once again share and obtain feedback from OPWDD.

We look forward to being together again — in person and/or virtually!

Coleen Mackin, A Strong Voice in New York State

On February 11, 2021, New York State held a virtual rally attended by 500 people to thank our local lawmakers for their support of people with disabilities and call on everyone to advocate for a New York State budget that keeps services and supports intact and thriving. Coleen Mackin is the Nassau County representative for SANYS and works for AHRC Nassau as an advocate. Coleen was speaker at the February 11 rally and this is what she shared with fellow New Yorkers,

"My name is Coleen Mackin . I am the past President of the Board of Directors of the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State. I receive services from ACLD and Self-Direction. I am employed by AHRC Nassau.

Many people with I/DD, such as myself, rely on the critical services from non-profit providers to assist and support me/us, in our everyday lives. For over ten years, New York State has not put enough money into this system, and we need this state to finally protect our programs. The pandemic cannot be used as an excuse to cut our vital services.

For years now, we haven't had enough DSPs because they are not paid enough. We also want staff that are professional and person centered. We need to take care of this problem with DSP wages so we can start to build something better.

We need more opportunities to live in the community for people with different disabilities. We need to be part of our community and be more involved. For that to happen, we need our services to grow, not be cut.

The truth is that these cuts are bad for us. Please ask New York State to do the right thing. I am Coleen Mackin and thank you for taking the time to listen to me."



99 Years Young

Edythe "Edie" Rosner of the AHRC Bellmore Road House celebrated her 99th birthday this weekend! Together with her direct support team, Edie planned a festive party. That's the power of direct care — supporting meaningful moments in a person's life. [#Happy Birthday](#)



PERSONAL MISSION

Four Years of Self-Direction By Michelle Rudoff

This December 29th I will be living a self-directed life for 4 years now and am loving it. I have been able to do more stuff than I did when I lived in the group home like doing more than one night of bowling and also saving up for my own birthday parties and my own room at the conference in Albany. I also have been keeping up with my doctor appointments and making my own ride arrangements for those appointments. I want to thank everyone who supported me in my goal of living a self-directed life. I also want to thank my parents for giving me independent skills to help me live on my own.



Joe Mandella Recognized With NYSID Award

Joe Mandella loves his job. One of 51 nominees for the NYSID 2020 William B. Joslin Outstanding Performance Award, Joe currently works as a commercial cleaner for AHRC Nassau in Freeport and through AHRC's NYSID contracts at the Department of Labor in Hicksville.

"Being nominated for this award makes me feel special and very happy that my supervisors know I am doing my best," said Joe.

Always early and rarely taking time off, Joe has worked with AHRC for the past 24 years. "When the going gets tough, Joe gets going" is how AHRC's team leader, Jose Portillo describes Joe's work. As soon as Joe finishes his work, he is ready to support his co-workers.

During this difficult and unprecedented time of COVID-19, Joe has overcome many challenges. The most significant being his inability to visit his wife in a nursing home. This was part of Joe's daily routine and he desperately missed it. Talking on the phone was just not the same. But as with most challenges,

Joe's determination won out. As soon as he realized that she had a window in her room and they could see and talk to each other with the window slightly cracked, Joe was back to visiting his wife daily.

When Joe finally returned to work, he found more changes to his daily routine. Wearing a mask was an adjustment but this was a challenge Joe overcame. He understood now more than ever he was making a difference with his work.

"I like my job because I feel I am helping to keep people safe by doing a good job cleaning," shared Joe. The end of the rainbow? We are all waiting for a better tomorrow with our family, friends.



Alex Got A Pet!

By Kate Zimmerman, POM Department

While I sat with Alex Gould to do his virtual POM interview in September, my cat decided to join in and walk between me and the computer making sure to stop and sniff the camera along the way. Alex was entertained by her antics and began asking me all about her. Alex shared that he loves all kinds of animals, but especially ones that can be kept as pets. We talked for quite a bit of time about all of the pets we've each had over the years and what animals are our favorites. I asked Alex if he had any pets at home and he said no, but he would like to have a pet fish someday. When I followed up with Samantha Rodonis, his program Site Manager at Freeport, she shared that Alex had mentioned that he wanted a fish and had already purchased a small tank for the hub site. They were working on planning a trip to the pet store as soon as they had the money so that Alex could pick out the fish. While they waited, staff worked with Alex to learn all the responsibilities of caring for a pet fish. Alex learned how to set up the tank and how many fish could fit in a tank that size. He learned about ways to keep the tank clean and the steps he needs to take when the water needs to be changed. Then the day came and Alex went to the store and picked out 3 goldfish he named Cleo, Goldie, and Chad. Since then, staff has supported Alex as he learns to care for the three fish, remembering to feed them appropriate amounts and helping him remember the steps he needs to take to keep them safe and when he needs to put them in another container so that he can properly clean their tank. Keep up the great work Alex and Hub Site 6!

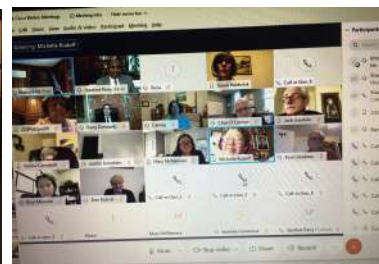


Annual Board COMPASS Council Presentation

AHRC Nassau's Board of Directors has continued to meet virtually over the past few months due to COVID-19. On September 21, 2020 Michelle Rudoff a member of the Residential Council and a member of the Executive Council, joined the meeting virtually to share the Councils' accomplishments with AHRC Nassau's Board of Directors. The accomplishments were highlighted in a video which showed pictures of advocates carrying out these accomplishments.

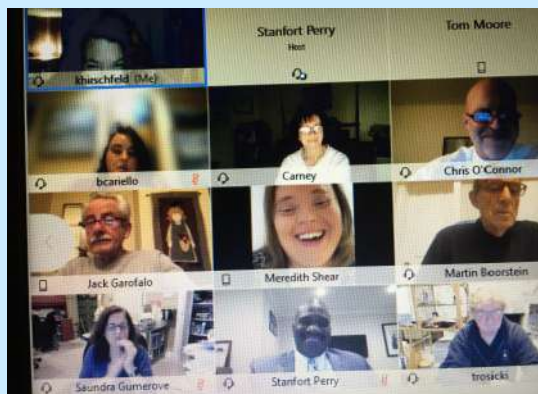


The annual presentation being virtual this year was different but great. Seeing all the events from 2019 reminded us of all the times we have not been able to be together this year but also how strong the Councils and the Board's connection remains. The annual presentation continues to provide a vital link between the Board of Directors and the Councils, enabling the Board of Directors to learn of the Councils' endeavors and share in their goals. Thank you Michelle!



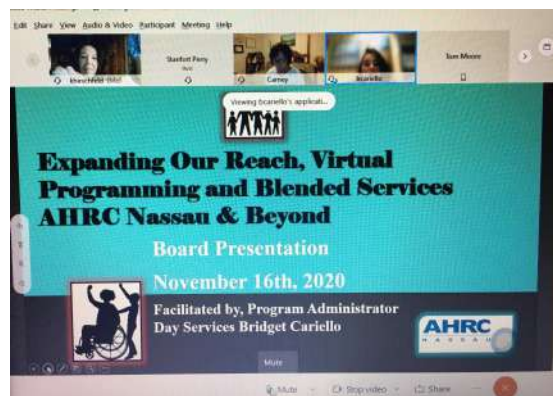
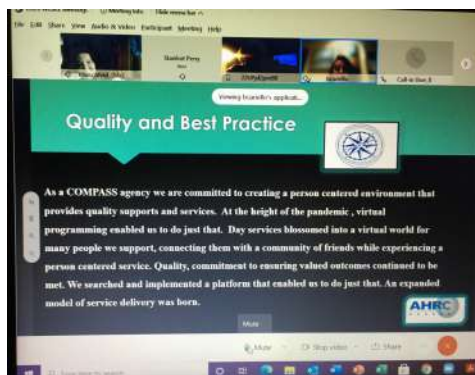
Installation of Officers

Advocate Meredith Shear was honored to be asked to install the Board of Directors Officers at the Board meeting on November 16, 2020. Great job Meredith!



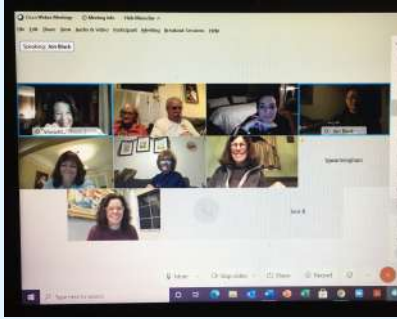
Annual Board of Directors COMPASS Training

The Annual COMPASS Board training was given on November 16, 2020 by Bridget Cariello, Program Administrator - Day Services, who discussed Virtual Service Opportunities and Technology. Thank you to Bridget, for her thoughtful and informative presentation. It included information on new opportunities for remote learning. We look forward to the Spring when Wheatley Farms will come alive and be bountiful. It is hope, a strong commitment for continuous growth, and adaption as a COMPASS agency that has made us strong through the adversity of this past year.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SIBLING GROUP



In response to the pandemic, the Sibling Group has continued to meet virtually since March. The meetings have been held approximately monthly over the past months. They have been an invaluable way to come together, share information and support siblings. The group has discussed a wide range of topics from the challenge of holiday plans to the devastating impact of budget cuts. The group has advocated to support services for their siblings and the organization. Stanford Perry, Executive Director, and Chris O'Connor, Associate Executive Director, have attended the sibling meeting to keep all informed and offer their support and leadership.

Paul Giordano, AHRC Board President and founder of the group, encouraged all in attendance to remain involved. As parents age, the role and responsibilities of siblings-supporting-siblings usually increases and they become one of the strongest natural supports for their brother or sister. Siblings also provide long lasting, positive and loving relationships. AHRC Nassau strongly encourages this natural support and enjoys working with so many engaged siblings. Thank you for joining with us as we get through this – together.

2021 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us for virtual meetings!

Contact ctapia@ahrc.org

- Sibling Group Virtual Meetings at 5:00pm. Contact Colleen Tapia at ctapia@ahrc.org for details on how to connect.



Executive Director Shares His Vaccination Experience

This week, Daphne and I received our first dose of the Moderna vaccine. I was thrilled to take this vaccine because it provides me with the chance to keep myself and others safe from contracting Covid-19. As we all know, our community has seen the devastating consequences of this virus. Many of the people we support, staff, family and friends have been affected in a variety of different ways.

I am thankful that the medical community has developed this vaccine to help us all return to normal, once enough people have been vaccinated. I understand that there is some hesitancy among some of our staff, due to the history of harmful and deadly medical experimentation,

especially among African Americans. The pandemic won't end when a vaccine is approved, but when everyone is vaccinated. The people who need protection from the coronavirus the most will continue to be at risk unless they believe the vaccine is both effective and safe. If we do not establish trust in a vaccine, the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to disproportionately impact people of color and reinforce the systemic racism that has long produced health inequity in our nation.

If you are concerned about taking the vaccine, speak to your personal physician, join one of the many virtual forums that are being planned with our medical staff and leadership, and talk to informed people that you know and trust. Many of the people we support, our staff leadership and DSPs have already taken the vaccine and are doing well. We have received no reports of harmful or negative side effects and these people are on the way to better preventive health. Won't you join them, by taking the vaccine as soon as you can make an appointment?

As you know, providers of services to people with developmental disabilities and the people we support are in Phase 1A of eligibility to receive this vaccine. Please take advantage of this excellent opportunity to be at the front of the line and do yourself and those who rely on you a favor. Get vaccinated.

Board of Directors Physical Plant Inspections

Board of Directors physical plant inspections remain suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We look forward to a time when the inspections can resume.

Thank you to Sue Dowling who coordinates this process.

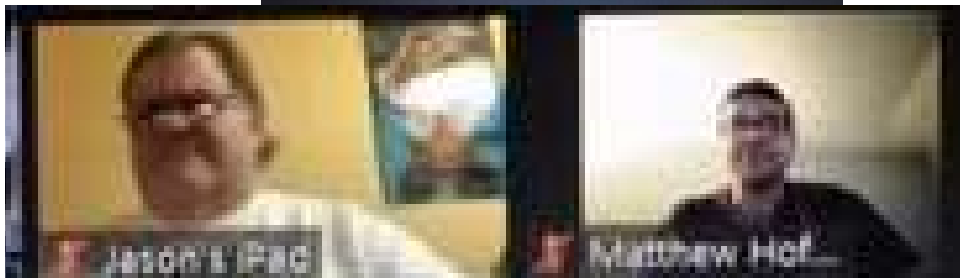
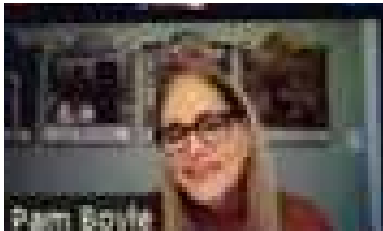
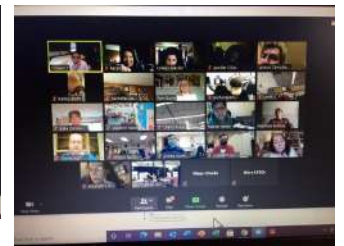
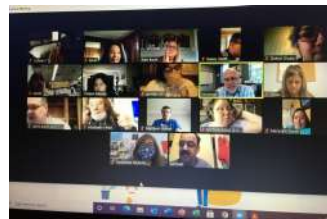
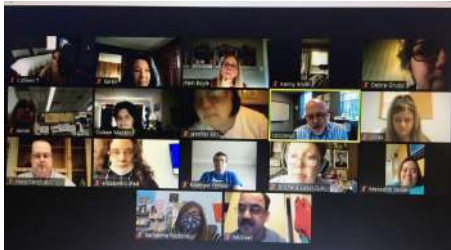


Members of the Board of Directors along with management staff during the annual physical plant inspection meeting.

AHRC Nassau - Councils

Executive Council Met Monthly (Except Summer Break and November)

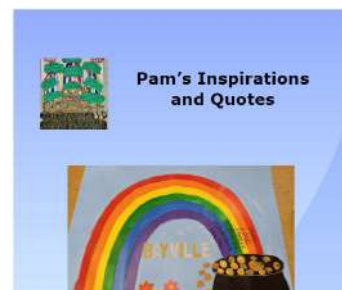
- The Executive Council continued to meet weekly during the pandemic.
- Pam Boyle provided weekly inspiration and support during this uncertain time.
- Stanford Perry, Executive Director, Chris O'Connor, Associate Executive Director and Shaun Weathers, Senior Director, attended Council meetings over the past six months to facilitate direct connection to agency leadership, and discuss changes to services, visitation policies, day hab re-opening, etc.
- Weekly updates were provided by the POM Interviewers on POM initiatives/celebrations.
- A voting seminar was held in August 2020.
- Virtual Voter Registration/Mail in Ballot Assistance meeting held in September.
- The Rights Rally was held on September 23, 2020 with over 75 advocates and staff in attendance.
- Rights training continued monthly.
- Members of the Executive Council attended the Long Island Zoom Rally to Save our Services.
- Members of the Executive Council attended the SANYS Statewide conference in December.
- SANYS NYS Board members Coleen Mackin (Nassau Rep) and Matthew Hofele (Suffolk Rep) will continue as Board Member for 2021 due to the pandemic as elections will not be held for 2021.
- Ongoing COVID-19 information, including vaccination, safety etc. was provided to all advocates.



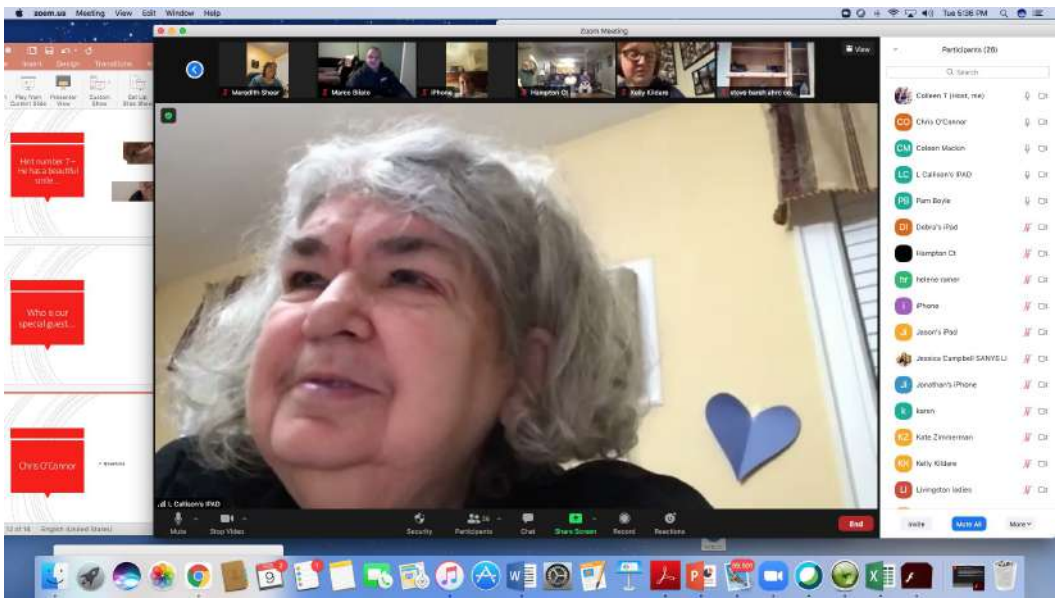
COMING SOON...THE COUNCILS'

CREATION...PAM'S

INSPIRATIONS AND QUOTES



Executive Council Hosts an Evening Meeting



made visible”

On February 9, 2021, the Executive Council hosted a evening meeting to connect with residential advocates. The special and surprise guest for the evening was Associate Executive Director, Chris O’Connor. Advocates were unaware that Chris was joining and were provided hints as to who this surprise guest was. Council members learned that Chris’ favorite meal was Thanksgiving dinner and one of his favorite activities pre-pandemic was frequenting estate sales. Council members also had the opportunity to discuss with Chris the current state of the agency, response to COVID-19 and vaccinations. Pam Boyle was also present and gave some food for thought to all in attendance, “Kindness is love



More on Vaccinations

We are so proud of our staff that have taken the next step to protect themselves and the people they support!



What a Woman Vice President Means to Me

By Michelle Rudoff

The right to vote is my favorite right out of all of the rights to have because women didn't always have the right to vote and didn't gain that right until August 26th 1920 so on Saturday, November 7th, Kamala Harris was elected as the 78th and first woman Vice President. She is also the first African American and international woman vice president. It is a really historic time for not only Americans but women in general in the 100 years since women first had the right to vote because it shows young girls that if you work hard you can make any dream that you have come true. Having a woman vice president means to me that after a 100 years of having the right to vote women's voices are being heard in America and it paves the way for even more great things to come for women. Like one day the first ever Woman President.

Advocacy and Councils

SANYS VIRTUAL STATEWIDE CONFERENCE-Advocacy Never Stops!

On December 2nd and December 3rd 2020, approximately 1,000 people signed into the NYS SANYS conference which was held virtually this year. The theme, Advocacy Never Stops, certainly was a definitive statement for this conference. It was amazing. Judith Heumann was the keynote speaker. Forty-three years ago, Judith led the 504 Sit-in, a 28-day-long protest with over 100 activists with varying disabilities at a federal building in San Francisco. The group was demanding passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a precursor to the ADA. The protest worked! Advocates from all over the state learned about this revolutionary movement in disability history and joined Judith in a Q&A. Many other sessions were held including a presentation by OPWDD's Commissioner Theodore Kastner. Panelists during the breakout sessions also included our very own Jessica Campbell and Coleen Mackin. Everyone enjoyed watching "Crip Camp," which showed the origin of the advocacy movement. "Crip Camp" is an American documentary about a summer camp, Camp Jened. The campers from Camp Jened turned themselves into the activists that joined Judith in the 28-day protest noted above. The camp laid the foundation for advocacy for many of these people.



AHRC's Brightest Stars!

People supported by AHRC's Residential and Day Services took center stage in a virtual talent show, AHRC's Got Talent! The talent show was held on Friday, October 23, at 11 a.m. It was a fun morning of music, singing, dancing and more!



COVID Vaccine—Learning and Advocating People and Staff in Houses Are Included in First Phase of COVID-19 Vaccine

There has been a lot to learn about the COVID vaccine.

A message from The Arc New York: We Did It!!! Residents and Staff of OPWDD Homes to be included in Phase 1A of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan. Thank you for your continued willingness and desire to advocate for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. After months of letters, hearings, public testimony, meetings and calls, we have achieved our goal of vaccine prioritization for people with I/DD living in residential settings, as well as frontline staff! Although this is a significant victory, we cannot forget the challenges ahead. As we approach the introduction of the NYS budget, our number one issue will be to maintain and strengthen funding for I/DD supports and services. It will require all of us to engage our elected representatives more than ever.

Board Member Tom Moore Installs Rights Ambassadors



The pandemic did not stop the recognition of Rights Ambassadors. Board Member Tom Moore, from Florida, named and installed the Agency Rights Ambassadors for 2020.



Congratulations to those people who continued to proudly and responsibly exercise their rights in a responsible manner. Congratulations to Camille Rossetti, John Buley-Neumar, Beverly Savini, Elise Olsen, Maribel Encarnacion, Meredith Shear, Kevin Resvlovic, Jennifer Alford, Aubrey Glover, Patty Fran and John Martino.



Staying Connected—Technology Committee

Weekly staff and bi-weekly advocate technology training was initiated in January 2021 to enhance knowledge and promote proficiency in virtual platforms. During these virtual technical trainings, advocates are introduced to platforms such as Microsoft teams, Zoom and WebEx. Training on virtual etiquette (manners) has also been provided.

In 2021, the Personal Outcome Measures Department Announces Relaunch By Bridget Cariello

During the pandemic, many teams have had to learn new strategies in working together to maintain the “connective-ness,” that so many of us seek. Over the past few months, the POM Department has made a concerted effort in creating that synergy through a series of training initiatives (leadership development, departmental culture and CQL philosophy) and the use of new technology to conduct their interviews (Microsoft Teams). The team had coined these efforts as a “departmental relaunch.”

In late October, Administrator of Day Services Bridget Cariello expanded her responsibilities by assuming direct supervision of the department. In the New Year, the POM Department will be hosting a series of information sessions to reintroduce CQL philosophy and concepts interdepartmentally. These sessions will include expanded resources and information on the 21 personal outcome measures, the new department logo as well as several initiatives that are being expanded in 2021 (Choices, I Am the Expert, and expanded University of Personal Growth sessions).

As stated by Stanford Perry, “The work of the Personal Outcome Measures (POM) Department is significant, as our person-centered services model is based on identifying the preferences of the people we support to ensure that they achieve successful outcomes. In a POM interview, 21 indicators are used to understand the presence, importance and achievement of outcomes, involving choice, health, safety, social capital, relationships, rights, goals, dreams, employment and so much more. POM interviews are critical in developing an individualized plan to be based on what a person wants for their lives and at an aggregate level, influence strategic planning within our organization. We are extremely proud of the work done by this department in helping individuals, families and AHRC Nassau to achieve an effective data set for valid and reliable measurement of individual quality of life.”

The POM Department took some time to share thoughts on the department, new initiatives and strategies used to develop better outcomes:

Certified trainer-interviewer Susan Gill-Orange shares her thoughts: “The ‘I am The Expert,’ initiative came to me after reading an article on the CQL website. It seems there was a young man who at some point got tired of people making life choices for him, and felt he knew more about what his own life was about than anyone else. It seemed so simple, yet the sense of independence and decision making has eluded people with disabilities for decades. I thought who better than the person to decide who the expert is when it comes to one's own life and desires. The idea grew into an art project whereby people designed posters depicting the things that matter most to them in their lives and best describe what they believe they are ‘expert’ in.”

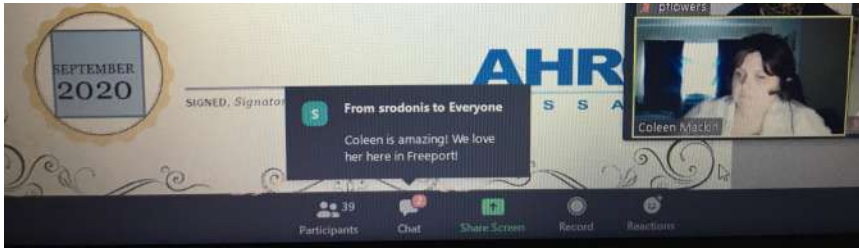
Interviewer Kathryn Zimmerman is currently working with her colleagues on creating “Choices,” a presentation that will encourage the people we support to use their voice and speak up at life planning meetings. Kate says, “I believe that coming to the POM department from day program gives me a unique perspective, when it comes to helping direct support staff to implement what we learn during a POM interview. Coming from day program has also provided me with the ability to adapt the conversation to meet the needs of the individual I am interviewing relatively seamlessly. It also gives me the opportunity to connect with new staff, who like myself prior to coming to the department, may need more information about what POM are and why they are important. Over the years, I have learned so much from the people we support, being a POM interviewer affords me the opportunity to get to know them, their dreams, and help them get the supports they need to learn the skills to get where they want to go.”

Certified interviewer Helene Ramer has worked diligently to share strategies on how to expand staff's ability to cultivate the desired outcomes of the people we support. Helene shared, “When I complete a POMs interview, I work to brainstorm with the person we support and their staff to come up with new ideas to expand each person's personal experience. I had recently interviewed a lady that loves George Clooney, and watches every movie and TV show that he is in. During the interview, I had suggested that she write a letter to George's Public Relation's Department. It was agreed that the person supported would need staff support to write the letter, but she could dictate all she had wanted to say and sign her name. In this way, she is working towards her own hobbies, dream and plans that are important to her!” Most recently, Helene has also joined the agency's virtual programming calendar by expanding the University of Personal Growth's calendar to offer weekly sessions on independent living skills, and choice based programming opportunities.”

Cariello states: “It is the department's goal to generate exciting new ideas and aid our staff in continuing to provide the people we support with meaningful opportunities to live their own best lives, the way they choose to. Together, we are looking forward to further empowering the people we support to connect more deeply with their own personal wants and needs by exploring the keys to a full life.”

“What is the key to a full life? A full life means that you are able to explore your dreams involving family, friends, community, work and more. The key to a full life is that you are empowered to achieve your own goals.” (www.cql.org)

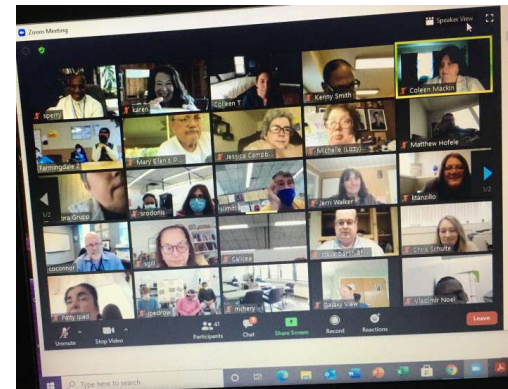
Outstanding Achievement Award - Goes to Coleen Mackin!



The definition of achievement is accomplishing something by superior ability, special effort and great courage. This year, we recognize Coleen Mackin for the outstanding achievement she has displayed over the many years of advocating for herself and others. Coleen came to us from North Carolina after losing both her parents. She moved to Long Island and unfortunately found herself living in a homeless shelter where she quickly found AHRC Nassau. Coleen has called this her home for many years. Here, she made her way as an advocate. She quickly became a member of the Residential, Freeport and Executive councils. She broadened her wings and became a member of SANYS and soon headed out on her own through self-direction. Coleen learned anew the meaning of the word courage, understanding that it sometimes means stepping back, evaluating your life and making changes so you can once again move forward.

Coleen is the Long Island Nassau County Representative for SANYS and has also been President of the Statewide SANYS Board. Coleen is employed as an advocate for AHRC Nassau and works as a switchboard operator at AHRC's offices in Freeport.

During the pandemic, Coleen quickly adjusted to remote responsibilities, remaining highly active in the advocacy movement. She spread the message to "stay home, be safe"; "wash your hands"; and "social distance." She remains highly involved in NY state advocacy and has sat on many committees dedicated to ensuring the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their staff. Coleen remains a strong role model for others and has never given up. She has shown courage despite adversity, strong advocacy and always brings forth her best effort. This year we recognize Coleen for her outstanding achievement and present her with this award. Congratulations Coleen!



Residential Advocate of the Year Award: Edward Richardson

This year's Self-Advocate of the Year for Residential is Edward Richardson. Ed has been a member of AHRC for many years. He is a rights ambassador and is well versed in his rights and the rights of others. He is president of the Community Hub Site Council South and consistently attends the Executive Council. He has participated in all the rights rallies and is currently involved in supported decision making.

Ed has attended the SANYS conference in Albany on numerous occasions and has attended all of the SANYS conferences in Melville, Long Island. He attends the SANYS regional meetings in Plainview and is an active participant.

Ed accesses his community by using Able-Ride and is a member of the Woodmere Library. He has been an advocate for pay increases for direct care staff by attending rallies both in Albany and Manhattan. He has called local legislators to ask them to have more money put in the budget to support pay increases for DSPs.

Ed is employed as a receptionist for the Freeport location. This comes after many years of Ed advocating for himself and letting everyone know that he wanted to work. He never gave up and finally his persistence paid off.

Ed was an example to others during the pandemic. He actively participated in virtual Council meetings and advocated for group homes to be re-opened and family visits to resume.

Ed is an excellent example of what an advocate should be and is well deserving of the title 2020 Advocate of the Year.

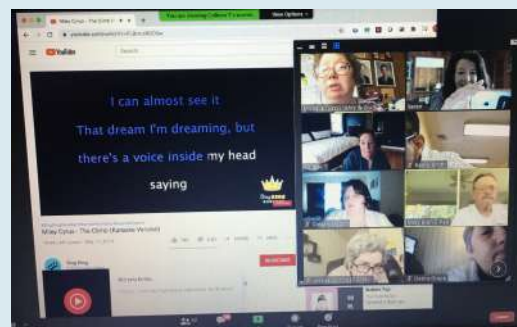


2020 Rights Rally Goes Virtual!

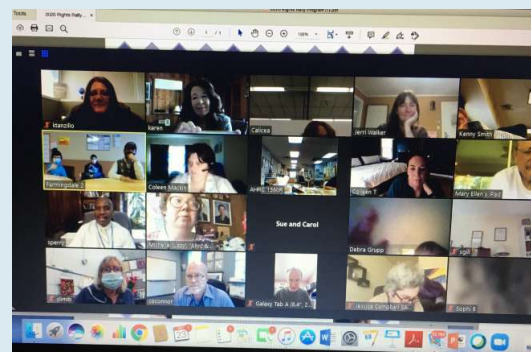


Welcome to this year's Rights Rally. Although we never imagined we would ever be celebrating rights in this manner, it is amazing how many people have joined us today virtually on September 23, 2020

This year we dedicated our Rights Rally to those we lost in 2020. We also dedicated this year's Rights Rally to the amazing Direct Support Staff who give new meaning to the word Hero. As an agency, they are our greatest asset.



Advocacy did not stop during the pandemic, nor did people's rights and most importantly, responsibility. We called our lawmakers, wrote letters and e-mails and made sure people with disabilities continued to have a voice in Albany. People went many weeks without seeing our families or visiting places in our community. Programs were physically closed. People understood their responsibility to limit the spread of the virus so they did their part. New platforms in which to advocate were learned – we moved forward together. Discrimination took on an intense role during the pandemic and standing behind and supported those who are discriminated against is supporting human rights.



It was great to be together to celebrate rights, honor new Rights Ambassadors and to announce the Advocate of the Year for 2020!

Day Council Self Advocate of the Year - Patty Fran!

This year's Self-Advocate of the Year for the Day Council is Patty Fran. Patty is a member of the Massapequa, Clocks Blvd. Hubsite. Patty has held Board positions on the Day Council and regularly attends the Executive Council. Patty is well respected by others within each council and always politely and effectively shares her concerns as well as solutions to issues facing people with developmental and other disabilities. Thank you and congratulations Patty!



Vote! By Michelle Rudoff

Yesterday I went to vote at Monica Village. There was no lines when I went to the polls. I walked up to the poll worker and gave my name and got my ballot and sat down at the table and colored in the circles of the people that I wanted to vote for. After I colored in the circles I put the ballot into the machine and casted my vote and got my sticker. I felt proud that I casted my vote and made my voice heard.



Record Number of People Turnout to Vote!!

The polls in New York were open until 9 p.m., early voting and mail in ballots were all the rage giving everyone lots of options on how and when to vote! Along with their fellow New Yorkers, Reggie, Jody and Mary Jo from AHRC Nassau made sure their votes would count! Debra (shown below) chose to mail in her vote. We hope you voted and showed your support for the candidates you believe in. Together, we can build an inclusive and inspiring future. **Your vote counts!**



AHRC Day Hab Council Update

- The CHS Council resumed meeting in October.
- A virtual talent show was held where people had the opportunity to display their singing, dancing, and drawing talents.
- Down Syndrome Awareness Month was celebrated in October. Hub sites colored socks in different colors and patterns to help draw awareness. They were put on display in Plainview and Freeport.
- Breast Cancer Awareness Month was acknowledged by people wearing pink on Fridays throughout the month. I fight for _____ signs were made to show why people were fighting against breast cancer.
- The AHRC walk-a-thon was held virtually and program participants submitted pictures and videos of themselves being active.
- The right to vote was discussed and people were encouraged to vote. Absentee voting was explained as was early voting.
- Letters of thanks were written to the veterans and they were dropped off at the VA Hospital.
- People participated in the Thankful Day project by writing down what they are thankful for.
- A food drive was held before Thanksgiving and the donations were given to a local food pantry.
- November was Diabetes Awareness month and a discussion was held where the signs and symptoms of diabetes was explained. Additionally, information was shared on how to help people prevent themselves from developing diabetes.
- Council members participated in a Save Our Services Rally that was held virtually. Program participants decorated their vans and residences with signs that asked that services not be cut for people with disabilities.
- Law Enforcement Appreciation Day was celebrated in January by people making baskets of treats and delivering them to local police departments.
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day was celebrated by people sharing what their dreams were for humanity.
- Inauguration Day was celebrated by people putting into words what they would do if they were president.
- In January, former board member Martha Carney spoke to the council about the responsibilities of a board member. She explained that the board members not only advocate for the people supported but also for the staff that work with them.

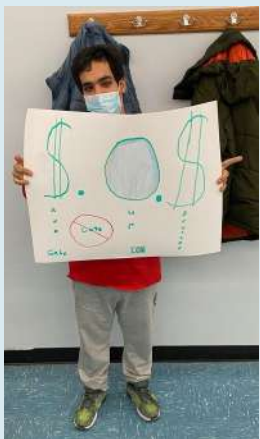
Rally to Save Services

More than 1,000 people participated in a virtual, statewide rally on December 9, 2020 asking New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to reconsider budget cuts for services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The rally included elected officials, and many speakers including dozens of self-advocates, families and providers. Many felt the situation in New York State is reaching a breaking point.

OPWDD faces nearly half a billion dollars in funding cuts and other withholdings amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to the statewide coalition, New York Disability Advocates. Several rally speakers also said the cuts are just the latest offense following a decade of chronic underfunding.

OPWDD was impacted by an across-the-board 20% withholding in state reimbursements enacted earlier in the pandemic because of federal cuts, but the office also faces a proposed 5% budget cut for 2022. An additional \$238 million in annualized cuts to residential rates went into effect on October 1 and is expected to result in the loss of 1,200 beds in group homes and other residential facilities, according to a recent survey conducted by New York Disability Advocates.



Artists Inspire Us!

We're pleased to share with you "A Day in the Park" by Richard Infante of the East Meadow Art Gallery. This painting took first place in AHRC's first online art competition and was entered in the Arc New York's statewide art competition in Albany.

The painting was inspired by Richard's fond memory of a school playground he enjoyed as a child. Richard sketched the playground from memory, gathered his paint colors and supplies, and painted the canvas completely independently.

Thank you to everyone who participated in AHRC's competition. Together, we decided which painting by AHRC artists would represent the agency at The Arc New York's statewide competition.

While only one can be sent to the competition, all artists were recognized for their art with a certificate and recognition on social media. Be sure to go to AHRC's website to see the outstanding artwork. It's amazing!



VALUED OUTCOMES

Direct Support Professional Recognition Week

The week of September 13, 2020 was Direct Support Professional (DSP) Recognition Week. To recognize the extraordinary service of these frontline workers, we shared testimonials, stories and updates. Here is a message of thanks from the AHRC East Meadow Art Gallery Hub Site Management Team: Lisa Moosmueller, Leotha "Leo" Montano and Margaret Dunor-Collins.

We could never express how proud we are to manage the DSP team at the East Meadow Art Gallery. The past few months have shown us what these ladies are made of. The courage, the compassion, and the concern that they showed for the people we support during this COVID crisis has been so inspiring. At the beginning of the crisis, these ladies worked to make care packages for everyone living at home and in the IRAs and put smiles on their faces delivering the items while showing them that we were still there. These same ladies were called to work in the IRAs and ICFs cooking food, preparing meds, helping out with the day-to-day operations of the homes, and sometimes bouncing from place to place. We know they were scared, yet they showed up.



Every day, they worked hard and they didn't let fear get in the way of finding a way to bring some joy to their workplaces. They brought art and activities to the houses and helped the people supported to continue their day hab goals. Every picture you see of the guys/gals smiling is because one of my DSPs brought art, exercise, learning and fun to their homes.

We received so many wonderful phone calls from residential managers complimenting my staff and the way that they engaged the people in their house to do fun things. We want to recognize them for their outstanding bravery and work ethic. We want to tell them that they make a difference every day that they come to work and that we are so proud and honored to have them as coworkers and friends.



STAFF APPRECIATION DRIVE THRU



Staff Appreciation Day Drive-thru Event October 15, 2020

This year's event was held in a new socially distanced format with a drive-thru, that brought the smiles and cheers our hardworking team deserves!



hundreds of cars tuned into our very own radio station and took part in 10 pit-stops that delivered activities, gifts, words of thanks, and even do-it-yourself pizza. Rounding out the offerings, staff members had their windows washed squeaky clean sending staff on their way knowing that we have a bright future in working together. It was a wonderful day.

Once under the arch,



VALUED OUTCOMES

DSPs Are Recognized



It was a wonderful week of recognizing the important work of the DSP team. Here, the service of the direct care teams at AHRC's Martin Place House, Park Crescent House and Birchwood Park Crescent House were celebrated. For DSP Week, Café 230 prepared meals for approximately 30 AHRC houses and staff from supported employment and the business lines also assisted with delivery. Day program administration staff Brooke Gillman, Bridget Burlak and Patrick Sherrard prepared gift baskets to give to day sites and DSP staff for DSP Week 2020. It was a pleasure to recognize our amazing DSPs! Thank you for all you do—every day!



Personal Outcome Measures Update

The Quality Improvement Department developed a policy and procedure to utilize Personal Outcome Measures (POM) to develop meaningful, person centered valued outcomes in order to help people improve their quality of life. When feasible, POM interviews are to be completed 1–2 months prior to a person's Life Plan meeting and if possible, every two years.

In 2020, **260** interviews were conducted. POMs are typically conducted every two years or as requested, with the exception that people with formal Rights Restrictions are interviewed annually. It is noteworthy to mention that the POMS Department continued to interview the people we support virtually even during the Covid-19 pandemic via phone or virtual interview. During this time of pause due to COVID-19, interviews have continued to be completed remotely in order to assist people to understand CQL and Personal Outcomes. POM trainers/interviewers attend residential/house, day program and family meetings.

In 2020, the POMS data indicated a strong increase in rights (+21%) and choosing services (+39%).

Even during 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic brought significant challenges, our agency teams worked diligently to create weekly activity packets, delivered activity boxes and binders, and ultimately created new and varied activities by way of virtual and blended face-to-face services. Virtual content includes: "A Day Around the World," a "How It's Made Series," self-advocacy meetings, yoga, music and movement, Spanish classes, ASL classes, SANYS rights trainings, integrated social opportunity with Prep Academy, "Zen Tangle Meditative Artwork," "Bollywood Dance Spectacular," personal health/Covid safety, technology training classes ("How to Zoom, Teams, and Web-ex") gardening, book club, virtual art shows, talent shows, and holiday contests.

The POMS department expanded the University of Personal Growth Series to provide weekly classes on health and safety, money management, choice, artistic expression and other virtual opportunities to support personal growth and independence for the people we support.

The POM staff continues to participate in Council meetings and COMPASS meetings. Personal Outcome trainers/interviewers provide supports to people at their Life Planning meetings as requested. They also provide support to staff members at reviews. The COMPASS initiative set forth for staff in both the day and residential settings continues to offer monthly training to people supported on specific individual rights. And they have provided meaningful opportunities to experience self-development and explore the 21 Personal Outcomes Measures by encouraging the people we support to participate in the "I Am the Expert" initiative and a POMS department logo contest. These opportunities aid the people we support in expanding their artistic expressions of their own personal goals, plans and dreams for their lives.

VALUED OUTCOMES

University of Personal Growth by Helene Ramer

I am happy to announce that University of Personal Growth is so successful that we have changed our monthly virtual meetings to weekly as of January 2021. The class is still on Tuesday, but the time is a little earlier at 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Every week is a different topic. We started off the new year with WORDS OF WISDOM from the very inspirational Pam Boyle. We have had Personal Health, Money Management, Hope Fitness, Art with ALEX, Fire Safety, yoga and Meditation. The Music Academy and the Caffeine Academy have also volunteered their services and will be providing games like Name that Tune.

At the end of March we will have a professional DJ spinning tunes for a dance party. Cooking demonstration, self advocacy, nutrition classes, games and gardening will also be on the agenda. Please join us every Tuesday to learn something new, socialize with friends, and have a good time. Classes are open to all day hab, residences and people at home. I welcome any suggestions of classes that are of interest to you. Thank you for participating!!!



Home for the Holidays



Every year, AHRC Residential Services hosts a black tie, gala event for Thanksgiving dinner at the Crest Hollow Country Club. Unfortunately due to COVID this year, we were unable to do so.

Knowing the joy and excitement this occasion brings, the management team at the AHRC Elizabeth Street House went above and beyond to recreate the experience. Elegant attire and settings awaited everyone as they sat down to dine.



What a beautiful way to celebrate this year!



Wow! So many people showed up to shop at AHRC's FREE Flea Market! It was a fun, outdoor activity on a warm, sunny day. There was clothes in all sizes - shirts, pants, hoodies, jackets, coats and more all in new or like new condition! The best part was-- everything was absolutely free! Many thanks to Lynn Brewer for arranging this event!



Where: 115 E Bethpage Rd., Plainview, NY

When: Saturday, Nov. 7

Time: 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.
(Until everything is gone!)

PLEASE NOTE
You must wear a mask and gloves to shop.

Bring bags to shop for yourself, residents or family.

The flea market is first come, first served.

When you arrive, pull around building to back left hand corner - you'll see it!



Family Questionnaire Results 2020

The family questionnaire is a vital component of AHRC Nassau's COMPASS Management Plan. The questionnaire is sent to all families to obtain their feedback, assess level of satisfaction and improve services. The response rate for this year is 30.9% compared with 22.7% in 2019. The 2020 agency-wide results are attached for review. New this year were questions directly related to the agency's response to COVID-19. **The overwhelming response from families was extremely positive and a testament to the exceptional services provided by our Leadership, Nurses, Managers and Direct Support Staff.**

There are no agency-wide trends. There is one program trend at the Freeport Vocational program related to our Guiding Principles, "Work together to achieve excellence by promoting opportunities and supporting dreams." (13%) A trend is defined as a score of 89% or lower. There was one program trend identified at Freeport Vocational for which a quality improvement plans is under development. No other trends are noted throughout AHRC Nassau. These are outstanding results which reflect the excellent services AHRC Nassau provides.

Each program will also address any family questions, concerns or requests shared on individual "comment sheets" provided with the questionnaires. Follow-up action taken is documented on corrective action tracking sheets. Corrective action forms will be maintained by each site with a copy forwarded to the COMPASS Department.

As per the COMPASS Management Plan, these results are provided for Board of Directors review and Agency planning purposes.

Number of Trends 2013-2020

| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|----------|------|
| Residential | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Day Habilitation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Freeport Vocational | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | *1 (n/a) | 1 |
| Freeport SEMP | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Habilitation | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| AGENCY WIDE TRENDS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Trends | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |



House and Family Meetings

Home for the Holidays!

While you can't see everyone's smiles, you can see the holiday joy!



"Home for the Holidays" took on a new meaning this past year—while most remained home, we do not think that is what this saying originally intended. Thus people living in group homes and those living with family members did not have the traditional "going home" or visits from friends and relatives. However, new celebrations took place and new traditions were born! Each home celebrated in its own special way and enjoyed meals, gifts and the gift of each other.

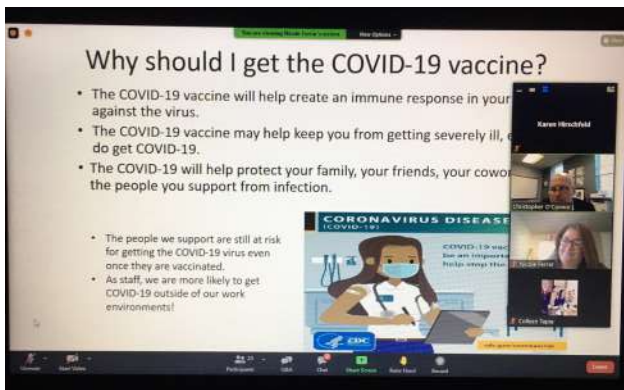
Family Seminars 2020 Series

A Family Seminar on the Wheatley Farms & Arts Center was held on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. It was a wonderful opportunity to share updates on our construction and anticipated Brookville location opening as well as discuss our guiding principles including our commitment to social capital; and plan the farms hydroponics, grow to give initiatives and so much more!



**For More Information on
Family Seminars,
Visit AHRC.org**

***Hope You Join Us
at a Seminar Soon!***



Next was a Family Seminar on COVID-19 Vaccine and COVID-related information on February 8, 2021 presented by Nicole Ferrar, RN, Senior Director, Medical Services and Chris O'Connor, RN, MBA, Associate Executive Director.

New Family Seminar Series - Monthly Discussion Group: Supporting Our Families in Time of Need by Bridget Cariello



This fall at AHRC Nassau, Day Services worked to develop a specially designed series for the family members of the people we support who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare. The seminar series launched on November 5th in cooperation with Partners Health Plan. This series was developed so that our families may learn more about virtual programming, accessing activities, 24/7 nursing triage and telehealth.

This family series includes the start-up of a brand new monthly discussion group that will take place virtually on the first Thursday of every month and is hosted by the Program Administrator - Day Services at AHRC Nassau. As parents of adult children receiving services, we have found that there is nothing more empowering than families getting together with one another to share resources, provide support and simply connect. The series includes monthly discussion of featured supports and services, the opportunity to connect with other families and legislative, agency and family updates.

*This series is open to families of people receiving services who are eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. By winter of 2021, we hope to further expand this group broadly to include the families of people we serve who are receiving other services and supports as well.

Our Family Seminar Series - monthly discussion group is on the second Thursday of each month from 3:30 PM-5:30 PM. Together, we will:

- **Take a Deep Dive Into Services and Supports**
- **Engage in New Discussion Topics Monthly: Jan. 14th, Feb. 11th, March 11th, April 8th, May 13th**
- **Explore Legislative Advocacy-Policy on Supports and Services in 2020-2021**
- **Create Family-to-Family Connections, Open Sharing, Resources**

2021 Meeting Dates:

Jan. 14th "Medicaid-Medicare, Systemic Advocacy"

Feb. 11th "Informed Choice: Self-Directed Services and Supported Decision Making"

March 11th *April 8th *May 13th -Topics Coming Soon

For Information, Contact: Bridget Cariello, Program Administrator Day Services at 516.293.1111, Ext. 5232, or bcariello@ahrc.org

VALUED OUTCOMES

2020 EMPOWERMENT & FAMILY SEMINARS

Empowerment Series

For information or registration:
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5362

Topics for 2021

- **Tech Training (Bi-monthly on Thursdays)**
Please contact Colleen Tapia or Bridget Cariello for additional information
Ctapia@ahrc.org
bcariello@ahrc.org
- **Online Etiquette**
Date TBD
- **Residential Options**
Date TBA

Integrated Seminar Series

Join us for future webinars via WebEx right from your own home!

Open to members of the community, family members and advocates

TBA
Wills and Trusts

For information or registration,
please visit our website at AHRC.org
or email ctapia@ahrc.org or
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5492

Fun, Interactive Virtual Tech Training Classes

Facilitated By Colleen Tapia & Bridget Cariello

Join us weekly to practice/discuss Zoom, Web-Ex and Microsoft Teams, Host Meetings, Share Documents, Engage with YouTube Video Content, Archive and Access Archived Materials, Enjoy Guest Speakers, Ask Questions—Share Information.

- Sessions for people at home, in day sites, or in residences will be held each Thursday January 21st-April 1st from 10:30 AM-11:30 AM.
- Staff Tech Training- January 21-April 1 from 12:30 PM-1:30 PM

No RSVP Needed! Trainings open for all to attend as needed or based on your availability. Classes and materials will be archived or made available whenever possible! For more information on how to join or help to access tech contact Help-Desk, or email bcariello@ahrc.org. Also see weekly Microsoft Teams calendar invites sent to outlook for Day and CLS AD's.

Regulatory Affairs By Eric Rosen

Throughout calendar year 2020, the Regulatory Affairs Department completed fifty-four (54) site based surveys. Site-based surveys were not completed for all of the Agency's sites/programs during this calendar year; due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of site-based surveys during two timeframes (to parallel DQI's suspension of routine surveys). Those surveys completed included surveys of small IRAs, large IRAs and day habilitation programs. Upon resumption of routine surveys; those sites not reviewed in 2020 will be prioritized for survey.

During surveys completed; exceptional practices noted included the promotion/ encouragement of independence, satisfaction with services/supports; choice being offered and positive/respectful interactions. Sites decorated to the individual's likes /preferences was also noted during multiple surveys.

The COMPASS Committee & The Quality Improvement Process

AHRC Nassau and Citizens: 2020 QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS

In 2020, there were 14 quality improvement goals as well as enhancements, with 36% of the goals/objectives met.

Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a limited ability to fully implement all Quality Enhancement goals in 2020 (state closures, surveys/visits suspended to limit the spread of the virus, etc.). Thus data was not available for majority of the year for all goals and results were not able to be determined.

However, quality enhancement was different this year. It was a year with challenges and heartache but also collaboration, progress and innovation. 2020 taught us all to try new things, to embrace technology and to evolve. There is no doubt, that with dedication and energy we will continue to innovate and improve, to meet whatever the new normal will be.

In 2020 virtual learning, meetings, and services became a new part of our lives. 2021, may be the year that shows us what is here to stay.

All FACTORS

- Communication was enhanced across all people and domains to unite, education, support and enrich coordination (i.e. executive director ongoing emails to all stakeholders, etc.).
- Policy and procedures were developed in virtually every area to promote each person's health and safety as well as to ensure compliance with regulatory and fiscal/billing changes due to the pandemic. This was preemptive (visitation to residences, reopening day habs, etc.) and as warranted.
- There was a reallocation of resources across all domains to address essential pandemic items (PPE source –purchase, distribution, etc.).
- There was an extensive shift to virtual services and environments (i.e. staff, board and council meetings, COVID questionnaires etc.) which helped emphasize priorities (people supported, families, and staff) and served to bring us together and provide focus and entering during a time of extreme change in needs, priorities and resources.
- MIS creation of platforms to support virtual activities and remote work (LogMeIn, WebEx, etc.).
- Day Habilitation staff and services was very successfully shifted to people's homes (IRAs). In addition, creative and fun weekly activity packets were prepared and delivered to people's and family homes (i.e. rainbow initiative, arts/crafts, masks made, gift baskets created and donated for local essential workers, etc.).
- Remote work initiated and implemented to ensure uninterrupted and continuous daily operations.
- A virtual camp connection was formed for people to enjoy alternate camp activities (camp fire, songs, arts/crafts, etc.) during the summer months.
- Agency commemorative events were refashioned and hosted virtually (Rose Ball etc.).

RIGHTS

- There was an increase in people exercising their due process rights via education and guardianship/rep payee action plans. As a result, people feeling supported to exercise their rights was increased by 5% in 2020.
- Advocacy never stopped during the pandemic (i.e. letter writing campaigns, SANYS engagements, advocates participation on statewide reimaging day services committee, family and advocate TV and print interviews, etc.).
- Everyone rallied to advocate for the right to visit with family and friends.
- Many people enjoyed a more relaxed pace remaining at home when the pandemic shut down occurred. Sleeping in, not driving to day activities, etc. also brought some rest and relaxation along with home activities.
- Council meetings were held virtually weekly.
- A COVID questionnaire was distributed to obtain input from people and provide individualized supports.

DIGNITY & RESPECT

- AHRC hosted a virtual rights rally.
- There was an increase in people feeling respected by 5% in 2020 by providing only necessary supports and supervision. Thus supports and services continue to enhance dignity and respect.
- Virtual Family Seminar were offered on various topics.

NATURAL SUPPORTS

- People's satisfaction with natural supports remained very high and in the 90th percentile based on the 2019 individual and family satisfaction questionnaire results. All scores for satisfaction levels remained in the 90th percentile.
- Unfortunately everyone's interactions with family and friends has changed and become more limited due to COVID-19. In addition, the agency is required to follow guidelines issued by OPWDD which restrict visits, day activities, and other in-person activities based on the positivity rate of the virus. This separation has been understandably challenging for people. Creative ways to alleviate these stressors have been initiated including virtual visits so that people have time, to come together through FaceTime, Zoom, as well as via telephone calls and letters. Although we know it is not same as time together, the hope is to support relationships until we are all able to resume more typical activities and spend time together.
- AHRC began hosting virtual Sibling Group meetings during the pandemic to promote connections and provide support as well as information.

FREEDOM FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION

- In 2020, the goal to reduce the number of substantiated allegations of neglect by 5% was met by AHRC.
- BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH
- Systems were implemented to promote the best possible health for people during the pandemic with a daily heightened focus on each person's medical safety (PPE, monitoring of pulse ox, etc.).
- A crisis response nursing team was created to enhance people's health and safety as well as to provide education and support in COVID-positive homes.
- The use of tele-med increased to promote the best possible health and limit the potential exposure to COVID.

VALUED OUTCOMES

Quality Enhancements continued from prior page

SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- Physical plant modifications were made to promote health and safety including the upgrade of HVAC systems to MERV 13 as recommended by CDC, creation of more single bedrooms, sanitation/fogging spray, social distancing/spacing reconfigurations and the use of plexi glass, etc.
- An Assistant Director was hired this year, to provide increased oversight of the day-to-day operations of facilities maintenance. This has allowed for increased focus on the maintenance team's attention to preventative maintenance and providing prompt responses to needed repairs.

POSITIVE SERVICES & SUPPORTS

- New virtual activities and support groups were created and offered to assist people in remaining engaged and healthy.
- The goal to reduce the number of Behavior Support Plans that include 1 of 5 target behaviors (yelling, cursing, crying, threats, teasing) by 5% in 2020 was met with an 15% overall reduction noted. This far exceeded the original 2020 goal of a 5% reduction! As this goal was initiated in 2019 and spanned a two year period, the total percent reduction from the start of the goal resulted in a 32% reduction in the number of BSP's containing one or more of the five presenting behaviors.

CONTINUITY AND SECURITY

- The goal to increase satisfaction in people choosing personal goals by 5% in 2020 was not met as outcome data remained the same which given the pandemic is a stable result.
- During 2020, with the pandemic's significant challenges, our teams worked diligently to create weekly activity packets, delivered activity boxes and binders and ultimately created programming related activities by way virtual and blended face to face services. Virtual content includes: a day around the world, a "how it's made series," self-advocacy meetings, yoga, music and movement, book club and virtual art shows, talent shows and contests.
- In 2019, a cross program interest survey was utilized to capture people's interests, desires, and talents regarding how they wish to spend their time and direct their services throughout the day. In 2020, we have continued these efforts and captured data to create programming that is aligned with the interest of the people we support. Some of the most popular categorical activities requested were more opportunities for dining-cooking, travel, shopping and recreation specific to community related classes. As our teams continue to analyze the data, we will work to develop the top 25 categories requested by the people we support first, and connect people with activities of their choosing.
- In 2020, Citizens opened a new residence located in Greenlawn. Three people from the 904 Melville Estates ICF transferred to Greenlawn, along with three people from the State's priority list. Development plans continue for five homes in 2021.

STAFF RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- The 2020 QI goal to increase new hires by 10% was unfortunately not met this year but a desirable 5% increase in new hires was achieved for AHRC.
- The agency held a drive-through Employee Appreciation Day on October 15, 2020 with over 500 employees in attendance.
- A virtual Direct Support Professional of the Year Luncheon was held in 2020.
- A COVID questionnaire was sent to all employees to assess and address employee concerns.
- Enhanced communication was also established to stay in regular contact with employees during the pandemic (i.e. using Constant Contact software). In addition, a COVID hotline was created to support and guide employees and management of what to do in the event that they become ill.
- The agency has also secured and continues to distribute PPE to employees who need it for their job. Additionally, the agency formulated a return to the workplace committee who worked to get office locations assembled to be safe for employees to return to the workplace in our Brookville, Freeport and Plainview locations.
- During the pandemic, the agency, through MIS services, quickly offered effective ways for employees to remain engaged with colleagues and people supported through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams, WebEx and other necessary technology to keep us operating.
- To address childcare needs for our employees during the pandemic, the HR Division continues to research and communicate resources to employees such as OCFS and EAP. We also partnered with the Nassau and Suffolk County Childcare Councils to provide webinars on the services they provide along with access to available subsidies.
- To address Health/ Mental Health/ Wellness concerns, the agency continues to promote resources through our Behavioral Supports Team, promoting our EAP, and through our medical provider CIGNA (& OMADA).
- Implementation of a new robust learning management system, Relias, was completed in June 2020.
- Partnership with SUNY Stony Brook to offer Masters' Level Programs – For 2020 17 Admitted in HR Management Track and 19 for the Liberal Studies Track. The cohorts began in March of 2020 and began their fourth semester on 1/4/2021.
- NADSP Frontline Supervisor Curriculum has been purchased and a train the trainer session has been completed. We will be working with each of the programs to develop a protocol for implementation.
- Enhancement of the agency-wide wellness program, Project You. Program utilization continues to increase each year. Total participation year to date (12/31/20) is 1,510 employees up from 1,289 employees last year.
- Total Rewards statements were issued to all full time employees in 2019 and will resume again in 2021.

PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES

The goal to increase satisfaction in people choosing services by 5% in 2020 was met based on Personal Outcome Measures interviews (62% in 2019 and 75% in 2020)

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