

Commemorating the Legacy of Dr. King With a Day of Service

AHRC Nassau community members started the year on a positive note participating in the 40th Annual MLK Commission March and Commemorative Program organized by the City of Glen Cove and Glen Cove City School District. The event also serves as the launch of AHRC's annual inclusive volunteering project successfully securing food donations to support over 60 families for three days.

Honoring the legacy of Dr. King through acts of service, this is the longest-running continuous MLK event of its kind in the nation. AHRC Nassau community members held the banner high and marched beside over a hundred community advocates from the First Baptist Church of Glen Cove to Wunsch Middle School where a program commemorating Dr. King was hosted by Sheryl Goodine, Mistress of Ceremonies.

The program included remarks from City of Glen Cove officials, Mayor Pamela Panzenbeck and Councilwoman Marsha Silverman, as well as citations presented to community leaders, including AHRC Nassau CEO and Planning Commission member Stanford Perry.

From the podium, self-advocate Noah Probert, shared his experience and the need for increased inclusion. "Growing up with a disability, I had to face obstacles related to using a wheelchair. But I refused to let these obstacles define me," said Noah, who finished his speech to a standing ovation. "Together, we can turn Dr. King's dream into a reality and make every day an MLK Day."

The event also marked the start of AHRC Nassau's inclusive volunteer project where agency and community volunteers through the Long Island Volunteer Center, unite to provide food assistance to the Long Island community. 43% of New York families experienced food hardship in 2022. In response, organizers encouraged attendees to bring a non-perishable food item to the event which they donated to Nosh Delivers!, a food pantry in Glen Cove. The volunteer project is made possible through an inclusive volunteering grant by The Arc of the United States and AmeriCorps, the federal agency that leads the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service.

To learn more, volunteer, or donate, please visit ahrc.org/dream.



**Yes chilly, but a great turnout!
We collected enough food to
feed over 60 families for three
days! Thanks to everyone who
supported this inclusive
volunteer event!**

Annual Review of the Mission Statement and Management Plan

Mission Statement:
AHRC Nassau empowers people to live fulfilling lives
Together with
Family - Friends - Community

- *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.*



COMPASS MANAGEMENT PLAN

2023 ANNUAL REVIEW: Summary of Changes

Pilot: Quarterly meetings are held to monitor, review and revise Agency quality improvement goals as needed

MISSION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

Coat Drive to Benefit Neighbors In Need!

The Freeport Workforce Council ran a coat drive to benefit neighbors in need. The coat drive is ongoing and accomplished in partnership with local nonprofit, The Inn.

The Inn tackles hunger, homelessness, and extreme poverty across Long Island. They serve their population by running a soup kitchen, accepting monetary donations and collecting gently used goods.

Council members collected over 40 coats and jackets for children and adults. Their first delivery to The Inn was made at the end of October. Afterwards, they toured the warehouse and saw how their donations would make a positive impact on the community.

Three cheers for the Pre-Vocational Workforce Council, especially officers (pictured from left to right):

Theresa Clarkin – Vice President, Loriann Iozzia – Past President, Robert Callari – Treasurer, Nancy Chisholm – Secretary
Hanna Pollack – Sergeant of Arms, James Sardiello – President



COMMUNITY RECONNECTIONS



Help us congratulate AHRC's One Stop Gift Shop volunteers! This year the One Stop team has been doing their part to give back to organizations in their community.

Recently, they donated \$250 to the Long Island Crisis Center, a nonprofit providing 24/7 confidential and non-judgmental programs and services.

This is the third donation the shop has made so far this year, including their donation to the Hicksville Fire Department for \$50 and The Long Island Coalition Against Bullying for \$250 for a total of \$550.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

For AHRC Nassau, an important call to action is centering the experience of disability within DEI initiatives. Through the leadership of AHRC DEI Officer Sarah Gonzalez Noveiri, Ph.D., the agency will soon broaden the reach of its results-oriented approach.

New York State's Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) awarded AHRC Nassau a five-year grant of \$750,000 to create an accessible "participatory learning process" on DEI. Beginning in 2024, AHRC Nassau will begin recruiting and engaging regional partners to create a Community of Practice (CoP) advisory team. Together, the CoP will develop and connect DEI trainings with New Yorkers with developmental disabilities, their families, direct care providers, and disability agency executives.

"Focusing on lived experiences is the best way to create systems of support that bring people together and inspire action," said Gonzalez Noveiri. "DEI is ultimately about empowerment around how we can move forward together for a more equitable future."

On a Mission - Helping Others



On a Friday, Sal Traversa and friends from AHRC's Pre-Vocational Services headed to Soup To Nuts Soup Kitchen, a food pantry in Freeport's Christ Lutheran Church, to donate \$50 towards the church's community meals program.

This donation was particularly meaningful for Sal, who volunteered at the bake sale where the money was raised. Sal shares that he enjoys completing these tasks and spending time with his friends in Pre-Vocational Services.

"We also do a lot of pop-up sales. I'm getting to be a master salesman. I must be going on great adventures," mused Sal.

On other days Sal and his friends enjoy assisting The Book Fairies, an organization that sources and donates books to

underserved communities. Organizing books and placing them in different categories are a few of Sal's favorite activities.



POMs! James "Jimmy" Miklos and Team Seaford

By Kate Zimmerman and Aracely Baires

James arrived at Seaford day site from Upstate early in 2023. He was quiet, displayed no facial expression, and didn't request help from staff. The team at Seaford sprang into action helping to find ways for James to communicate with everyone. They started playing "Show and Tell", showing him things and asking him questions. James wasn't interested.

That didn't stop the team at Seaford. Through information gathered during his POM interview and brainstorming sessions with the POM team, they soon discovered he loves to be called Jimmy and enjoys daily dancing/walking. At first, he just sat back and watched, but little by little he started joining in while seated in his chair. Then one day he got up and began dancing around with everyone at the site.

Jimmy has very few known words, but with great care and patience, Aracely and the team at Seaford were able to discover his likes. They learned that for lunch, Jimmy loves everything with ketchup. We got him pictures with things we thought could be familiar to him, and we hit the Jackpot! Now Jimmy uses his pictures books when unable to express his feelings or when he is simply tired and looking for an easy way to communicate.

Jimmy has also learned to greet and get to know everyone by name and loves to be seated by the entrance where he can receive everyone with a crisp smile and "Good Morning" "Hi". If Jimmy misses the opportunity to greet you as you enter, he will get up from his table and will make sure your day starts the right way - with a hug, a handshake, or a high-five. Jimmy has come a long way and he's only just begun!



Community Connections

We Care! Thousands Donated to Local Animal Welfare Nonprofit

Since August 2022, AHRC Day Habilitation team members partnered with Tender Loving Cats (TLC), an all-volunteer animal welfare nonprofit (cat rescue) serving Nassau and Suffolk County. So far, people supported have raised close to \$7,500 for the organization, averaging around \$450 a month in donations through bottle recycling. The money collected has been vital in covering medical emergencies, surgeries, and medications and supplies for healing cats.

“About 15 people a day participate in this endeavor. We had a visit with the cats right before the holidays and they enjoyed it so much,” said Susan Limiti, Day Services Activities Coordinator who schedules recycling pickups and drop-offs with day services sites.



Volunteers have pick-ups from three main drop-off sites in West Babylon, Dix Hills and East Islip as well as individual homes and businesses. From there, the volunteers redeem the NYS deposit bottles and cans and submit the funds to TLC. The volunteers enjoy recycling for its multiple benefits. They are reducing the accumulation of waste in the environment, generating funds to support a worthy cause and being active and relied upon in their community.

Marge Goldin, TLC Coordinator, Board Member, and retired social worker Marge, started to partner with AHRC Nassau after discussing the program with AHRC Community Relations Liaison Lynne Brewer.

“The steady income from this partnership helps keep our finances stable. That way we can assist more cats in the community,” shared Marge, also stating that the number of animals they have been able to help since their partnership with AHRC has grown significantly.

Recently the men and women active in this effort, along with supporting staff members, took a tour of the renovated recovery garage where cats are held while recovering from operations. It was here that they could see some of the results of all their hard work.

Wheatley Farms and Arts Center

AHRC’s “Fall for All” was more than just a one-day event. It was an opportunity to welcome the community to enjoy a carefully curated schedule offering a wide range of activities accessible to all. From sensory-friendly spaces to creative mask-making and face painting, every experience was designed to foster inclusivity and ensure that every visitor could participate and enjoy the festivities.

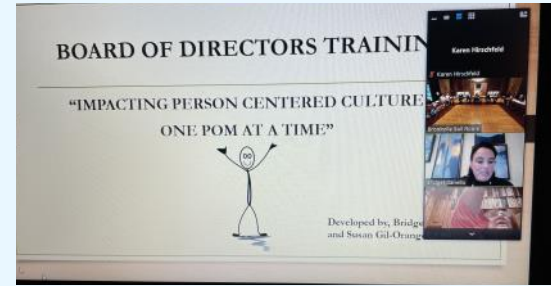
*After two postponements the AHRC Nassau Fall Festival went off without a hitch. Over 100 staff and volunteers were on hand to ensure that hundreds of attendees were able to create lasting memories, especially for the hundreds of young children who attended this event. After a year of planning, we were proud to see the seamless execution of this event. No stone was left unturned to ensure that the campus was meticulously landscaped, food was plentiful and well prepared, the animals were a huge hit and special sensory areas were popular for children. Visitors saw 135 scarecrow entries and engaged in tours of the grounds and the mansion that took place throughout the day. Special thanks to the Fall Festival Steering Committee for a job well done! One of the key features was the re-opening of the WFAC Gift Shop located on the Brookville Campus. Be sure to stop at the Big Tree Greenhouse & Gift Shop to purchase or shop on-line to purchase any of the Wheatley Farms line of items, at www.wheatleyfarmsli.com



Annual Board Compass Training



On October 16, 2023 Annual Compass training for the Board of Director's was provided on "Impacting Person Centered Culture One POM at a Time" by Bridget Cariello, Assistant Director Strategic Project Development, and Susan Gill Orange, CQL Certified Personal Outcome Trainer. Thank you Susan and Bridget for the great information and supporting us all in maintaining and enhancing a person centered culture at AHRC Nassau!



AHRC Nassau Named to Forbes 2023 "America's Best-in-State Employers"

As a CQL with Distinction and Compass agency, AHRC Nassau has been recognized for providing the highest-quality disability supports to Long Islanders with developmental disabilities. Now, AHRC has also been named as one of "America's Best-In-State Employers" by Forbes alongside exceptional employers across New York State.

As the only disability agency featured, AHRC ranks 41st on a list of 88 top New York employers. Of the four Long Island-based organizations featured, AHRC (#41) was recognized beside Northwell Health (#33), Broadridge Financial (#48) and Adelphi University (#67).

The 2023 "Best-in-State Employers" list was independently developed by Forbes and market research firm Statista Inc. from a survey of 70,000 U.S. workers on topics, including working environment, compensation, diversity, and career advancement. The list comprises nearly 1,400 organizations across multiple sectors with over 500 employees.



"This recognition shows that the mission-centered excellence of nonprofits can create workplaces that are both competitive and inclusive," said Stanford J. Perry, CEO, AHRC Nassau. "This is a meaningful outgrowth of the time, commitment and leadership dedicated to creating centers of excellence across our agency. I look forward to continuing to increase recognition of the agency's mission and the important work ahead."

Through its \$134-million annual operating budget, AHRC Nassau provides residential, day habilitation, vocational and supported employment services for people with developmental disabilities with its 2,000-member workforce. On Long Island, disability employers currently contribute approximately \$2 billion in economic impact, according to a 2021 report from the Rockefeller Institute of Government, commissioned by the New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) and the NY Alliance for Inclusion & Innovation.

Recently, AHRC Nassau was also recognized for a second year as a Crain's New York Business "Diversity Champion" finalist (large organization) for their 2023 "Diversity & Inclusion" Awards.

Board of Directors Physical Plant Inspections

The Board of Directors physical plant inspections continued both virtually and in-person this past year.

Some Board Inspectors have assumed in-person inspections if desired if the site was Covid free, while other Board inspectors have continued with virtual inspections. Whether in-person or virtual, the Board Inspections remain an invaluable tool!

This hybrid approach for Board Physical Plant Inspections will continue and will be reviewed at the annual Physical Plant Inspection meeting in March 2024.

Sue Dowling has coordinated this initiative since it started. Thank you Sue for all your professionalism, talent and expertise.



Members of the Board of Directors along with management staff at the 2023 annual physical plant inspections meeting.

SIBLING GROUP

In 2023, the Sibling Group met quarterly and more frequently as needed. In the beginning of 2024, Stanford Perry, Chief Executive Officer of AHRC Nassau, joined to discuss current agency endeavors and hear from the siblings. Please join us in 2024!

2024 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us!

- 3/19/24 – Meeting 6pm-7:30pm – Virtual
- Summer BBQ – In Person – Brookville 6pm-8pm, Date TBD

Sibling Group Meetings are held in-person or virtually at 6:00pm.

Please contact Colleen Tapia at ctapia@ahrc.org for details on how to connect.



AHRC Nassau - Councils

Executive Council Met Monthly (Except Summer Break and November)

June 2023

- We had a bingo fundraiser to help raise money to help send an advocate to the Sanys statewide conference.
- We had Maura Boden come and speak about any upcoming recreation events that she is planning.

July 2023

- Coleen, and Michelle started to plan to have the board of elections come and do a voter machine and registration.

August 2023

- Steven and Michelle hosted the board of elections where people were also to learn how to use the voting machines and register to vote if they wanted too.
- We discussed doing another bingo fundraiser but this time having it in Brookville where we can have more room.
- Lisa Shortell came to our council meeting and explained what she does for the agency and spoke about incident reporting.

September 2023

- Coleen and Michelle helped out at the Emergency preparedness fair for September 11th.
- Michelle Flood came to one of our council meeting and spoke about voting and about things that are going on with Sanys.
- We had Maura Boden come to one of our council meeting to talk about any new recreation that she is doing.
- Kevin Van Nuis brought up having the Executive Council return back to in person or maybe doing it hybrid. But Colleen stated that it is better to do it virtually.
- We reviewed the management plan and mission statement.

October 2023

- About 25 people went to the SANYS state wide conference in Albany.
- We had Jim Stock come to the council to speak about recruitment and staff retention.
- People attended the AHRC WALK where Michelle and Colleen hosted an advocate table at.

November 2023

- We hosted the annual rights rally where Free drum core played and Brian Johnson and Devon Rivera won the advocate of the year.
- Stanford Perry came to our November 29th council meeting.
- People attended the rally on November 15th that was in Albany.

December 2023

- We hosted a new enrollment orientation training where people can learn about different options that they in services.
- We showed the documentary of crip camp.

January 2024

- We started hosting a virtual Advocacy leadership training course where people can attend to learn how to become a better advocate training.
- Colleen hosted a virtual financial decision-making training.
- We reviewed an advocacy booklet that discussed all different kinds of advocacy. We got this booklet from Matt Hofele where he got it from Bridget Cariello
- We had Board President Sandy Gumerove come as our council meeting.
- Michelle helped Michael Costa advocate about the price increase of the soda machines and that nobody was notified.



Financial Decision-Making Training was held on January 30, 2024 for people interested in becoming their own Rep Payee.

Learning to make your own financial decisions is a right which also comes with responsibilities. People interested in having Rep Payee removed, joined this seminar on Supported Financial Decision-Making Training. Topics reviewed and discussed included:

Topics

What is A Rep Payee and why do I have one?

Learning about Benefits

Wants vs Needs

Creating a Budget

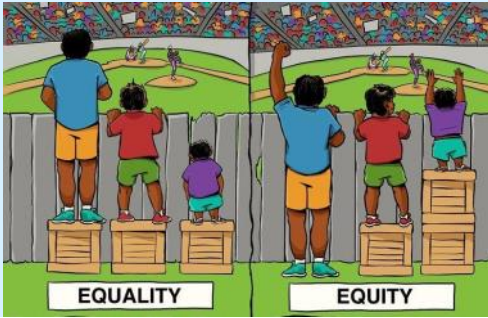
Organizing Financial Paperwork

How to have a Rep Payee Removed and next steps



AHRC Nassau - Councils

ADVOCATES DEI



DEI Advocacy Ambassador's had the privilege of presenting to the Arc of Allegany-Steuben their DEI curriculum and manual which was developed as part of the DDPC grant.

This curriculum is specifically for people with I/DD and was developed to show the many diverse intersections people with I/DD experience. The manual also serves as a guide of what people can do to proactively engage others.

AHRC Residential Council

Please join in congratulating the newly appointed Residential Council Board members announced at the February 2024 council meeting.

The new 2024 Council board members are:
Nijah White **President**
Diane Wright **Vice President (Not pictured)**
Jason McKay **Secretary**
Marion Havens **Treasurer (Not pictured)**

"Thank you" gifts were provided to the outgoing board members and certificates awarded to the new appointees.



Coleen Mackin was nominated to serve as a Regional Representative on the SABE Board of Directors
Congratulations Coleen on being selected to serve on the SABE Board of Directors in 2024 and as a current alternate! This is a great accomplishment, and you have much to be proud of.

Getting out to Vote

Way to Make it Count!

People were all smiles
after casting their
Ballots.



Advocacy and Councils

Freeport Workforce Council



Below is a list of the various activities the Pre-Voc Workforce Council Committee was involved in from July 2023 – December 2023.

- In July, elections were successfully held, and a new group of officers were named.
- In August, members of the WFC group submitted artwork for the SANYS Regional Conference logo contest, for their marketing campaign, event, and materials.
- During the month of October, the WFC held a winter coat drive, collecting donations of women's, men's and children's coats and jackets. The donations were delivered to The Inn, (Interfaith Nutrition Network) in Hempstead, where the council members delivered the coats in November and December. 5 huge garbage bags of coats were collected!
- The WFC conducted a "Just Cookies Café" bake sale in November. They raised \$136.00, which was donated to the Bideawee Animal Shelter in Wantagh. A group had the opportunity to make a trip there to hand deliver the funds to the Marketing Manager.
- WFC group attended Rights Rally at Brookville Mansion in November. Members represented the Rights to Vote table and were able to interact with colleagues from other committees as well as the executive team.
- Monthly meetings were held on the first Wednesday of each month, where assorted Advocacy and Rights issues were discussed.

The Workforce Council winter coat drive! Five huge bags of coats were delivered to The Inn, (Interfaith Nutrition Network) in Hempstead in November and December. *Helping others feels so good!*



AHRC Day Hab Council Update

- In August, council members attended the OPWDD forum virtually where they learned about OPWDD plans for the year.
- Additionally, many people attended the Advantage Care block party, where they were able to enjoy music, games, and food.
- In September, a few of the council members attended the Beautiful Life Project, sponsored by LIU. The football team at the university worked with the people, teaching them skills related to football.
- An emergency preparedness event was held in Brookville. And many people attended. Community partners talked about how people can prepare for emergencies.
- In October, Breast Cancer and Downe Syndrome Awareness month was recognized by people completed the packets that were distributed and displaying them in their hub site.
- A Halloween parade was enjoyed by all as people displayed an assortment of unique costumes and enjoyed listening to spooky music.
- In November, Election Day was discussed, and people were encouraged to vote and register.
- Council members attended the rights rally in Brookville where they enjoyed playing games related to their rights, learned more about the POM Department, and enjoyed an excited performance by a group of drummers.
- Cards of gratitude to veterans, thanking them for their service, were sent to the VA hospital.
- In December, SANYS sponsored a cookie exchange where people had the opportunity to share their favorite cookies with others. It was held in Hauppauge and was well attended.
- Spirit week was celebrated on the week of the 18th. People came to the program wearing different theme related items daily and many pictures were taken.
- In January, campaigning began for new officers for the council. Posters were created and speeches were given. Voting will be in February.
- Council members collected food for the needy to support the fight against hunger. The food went to a local food pantry.
- A contest was held with the theme of what diversity means to them. There were numerous entries, and they were put on display for people to view.
- Council members met with students at Adelphi University to talk about advocacy.



Council members with students at Adelphi University

Residential Council Update

- The Council provided feedback on the Thanksgiving dinner held at Heritage Club in Bethpage which was brought back in fall 2023. The Council shared their likes (photos, one level/floor) and dislikes which included the location, food (small portions, cold, etc.) and tight seating. The council recommended looking into the Marriott for next year.
- Council members attended the SANY'S conference in October and enjoyed the great food, music and doing interviews.
- Concerns regarding Bank changes in procedures and lack of notice about the changes they implemented were discussed and addressed.
- Nominations for new Council board members were held in January and elections were held at the February council meeting with new board members installed.
- The Council addressed a falloff in participation in the fall. As a result, the elections normally held in November were postponed to January. Outreach to the people to encourage participation in the council was also done. The outcome was a success as the Council numbers are back up and we have some very interested parties with some great ideas moving forward. We are excited to see what the council accomplishes this year.

EMPOWERMENT & ADVOCACY!

Rights Rally-Open House 2023

The annual Rights Rally was held on November 2, 2023. Advocate/Michelle Rudoff, was the amazing MC, Stanford Perry, CEO provided welcome comments followed by a fun performance by the FREE Players Drum and Bugle Corp and Coleen Mackin and Kenny Smith: Introduce SANYS Keynote speakers BJ Stasio and Mike Rogers, from SANYS Statewide. ***It was a fabulous celebration of rights!***



AHRC Nassau Self-Advocate of the Year 2023 Congratulations Brian Johnson!

Advocate of the Year Award is given to a person who has shown their commitment to self-advocacy and has effectively influenced services and supports. This means working to create a better life for themselves and/or others. The person shows active involvement in the self-advocacy movement, (actively participates in a self-advocacy group, events and decision-making groups).

This years Self-Advocate of the Year is Brian Johnson. Brian has been a strong self-advocate for many years. He has been apart of AHRC's Day Hab for over 14 years and is currently attending Freeport Seniors 2. Brian has developed relationships with various assembly men and woman. He has Advocated for higher wages for the DSP's and has had many conversations with assemblyman Ed Rea about this topic. Assemblyman Rea has gone to Brian's house on a few occasions to discuss this issue. Brian is the Day Hab council representative for his hub site. He has participated in the rights rally, the SANYS conference in Albany, and the LI SANYS conference in Melville. Congratulations Brian!



SANYS CONFERENCE Unite, Peace and Love!

This year's conference theme, Unite, Peace and Love!, is about the world we wish to see. Our self-advocacy community serves as an example of unity and embodies the values of peace and love. Due to the continued presence of COVID 19 the conference was held on Zoom. This was a free event and a great opportunity to connect with the broader self-advocacy network.

Self-advocates learned and celebrated what each of us has to offer to make the world a better place.

OPWDD Commissioner, Kerri Neifeld held a Commissioner's forum where advocates and attendees were able to ask questions and offer their comments on services and supports.

Coleen Mackin presented on "How to Tell Staff What You Expect and Get Respect" and "A Self-Advocates Guide to DEI" created by AHRC Nassau's DEI council with a grant received by the DDPC, at the SANYS conference.



Advancing Cultural and Linguistic Competence, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



The Arc NY requested a speaker to participate in the webinar series offered by Georgetown University on December 5, 2023. Coleen Mackin was selected to represent people with I/DD and her perspective on the following:

How does historical trauma affect persons who experience IDD, their families, and the communities where they live supported by the organization, agency, chapter, or program?

Coleen shared for how her education was affected by the bullying she experienced due to her disability. Bullying, Coleen shared caused her feelings to be hurt and interfered with her learning. Fast forward many years, Coleen found herself living in a homeless shelter where she also faced discrimination.

It took many years of hard work a determination to live a fulfilling life where Coleen's voice is heard around the state of New York and most recently across the nation through SABE (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered) where she advocates on behalf of others, teaches and protects people's rights. Her poor educational experience, the bullying and homelessness gave her the motivation to turn a bad experience into a brighter future. "No bad days."

Social Media Day

On January 25th, advocates joined across Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, for a Social Media Day of Action dedicated to much-needed investments in New York State's disability services and workforce.

Sharing their stories and creating a more inclusive future for people with I/DD.

[#IDDPriority](#) [#CareCantWait](#) [#StrongerTogether](#) [The Arc New York](#) [New York Disability Advocates](#)

EMPOWERMENT

Valentine's Day is a time to show your love to those you hold dear. This year, people supported by AHRC Nassau Day Services took it one step further by crafting Valentine's Day letters to Governor Kathy Hochul urging her support for a 3.2% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) as well as a Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE) for disability support service providers.

The initiative involved people across nine day services sites in Hicksville and Freeport. People crafting these beautiful and heartfelt letters. Jeanie-Lee Saletto, who has received day services at the Hicksville location for over ten years, was particularly excited to contribute to the project. She loves arts and crafts and took the lead in acquiring the supplies to create the letters, a task that aligns with her job as treasure for her site.



A huge thank you to for the dozens of letters collected and mailed to Governor Hochul as a loving display of activism.

DEI Advocacy Ambassadors Council

The DEI advocacy council now meets monthly and will continue to do so in 2024. If you are interested in becoming a member of this council please contact Coleen Mackin at cmacking@ahrc.org

Financial Decision Making

People making their own Financial Decisions is supported by AHRC Nassau and it is a Basic Assurance goal for Rights. It is an important right to exercise if you choose to. There are many ways to be involved in your finances. A Financial Decision Making training is scheduled for May 7th, from 11:00 am—1:00 pm in the Brookville dining room. We will discuss Rep Payee, review a monthly budget and discuss your personal goals in this area. Please RSVP to ctapia@ahrc.org or call 516-293-1111 ext 5492.



In Five Minutes, you can make a difference!
Visit ahrc.org/advocate and send a one-click email showing your support for the

-3.2% COLA
&
-Direct Support
Wage
Enhancement
in
NY State's
FY 2025 Budget



In January Governor Hochul unveiled the NY State Budget for FY 2025. We appreciate the governor highlighting how people with developmental disabilities are "too often overlooked" and have "suffered from disinvestment and neglect."

However, the proposed 1.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) is insufficient to meet the needs of voluntary service providers after years of underinvestment and ongoing inflation. Also, the independence of DSPs must be bolstered with a Direct Support Wage Enhancement (DSWE).

Please be sure to advocate to increase state funding!

Valued Outcomes

AHRC Artists Exhibit

Throughout October, artists from AHRC's Levittown Hub Site had 48 original, mixed-media pieces on display at the Garden City Library. The exhibit was open to the public during library hours and well attended.

All the pieces were available for sale with proceeds donated to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, The Helen Keller Foundation, and the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, all three notable nonprofit organizations supported by the artists.

One of the largest contributions came from artist Mary Jo Lewerre, a diamond art enthusiast who created the show's statement piece. Her 30' x 13' "Safari Sunset" diamond art creation shows a dynamic line up of animals against a warm orange sunset. "I am excited for many people to view my artwork as I worked very hard on it. I want to show my house-mates my accomplishment, so it can inspire them to do the same. I hope it brings a smile on their faces as it did for me," shared Mary Jo.

The idea for the show came together about a year ago. Direct Support Professional (DSP) Sophia Blackett, was visiting the library with a couple of the people at the hub site and noticed artwork on display. Knowing the passion the people at the AHRC Levittown Hub Site have for art, Sophia asked the library staff if there might be an opportunity to show a few pieces. They welcomed her idea and agreed on an October 2023 showing. This gave the hub site artists plenty of time to brainstorm and generate several works for their show.

The artists spearheaded their creations, with staff lending a helping hand to gather materials and see their vision come to life. Sophia is an artist by trade and was very happy to assist the artists with whatever they needed. The show pieces range in price, size, and material, featuring diamond art, button work, pressed flowers, and resin. Congratulations all on a beautiful and successful exhibit.

Wheatley Farms and Arts has launched a new endeavor—"Horses 101."

During this community class, 12 people supported by AHRC Day Services learned about and cared for the farms' two new resident ponies, Mango and Belle.

The course is an introduction to equine therapy at Wheatley Farms and part of a larger initiative for the Wheatley Farms Program Without Walls (PWW). The intent of these immersive experiences in nature and the arts is to introduce people to lifelong skills that will benefit them in different aspects of their lives.



Sophie Hoffman, who is part of the Wheatley Farms PWW looked forward to time with the horses. Following a class, Sophie shared takeaways, "I learned that we never go behind a horse and we pet them from the side." For Sophie, the opportunity to connect with the ponies was a thrill in and of itself. I like Belle. When she runs and eats the grass, she's so cute," said Sophie.

While the "Horses 101" course is the first of its kind at Wheatley Farms, members gained experience caring for horses during their time at HorseAbility, a center for equine-facilitated programs in Old Westbury. Now they will have the opportunity to engage in a similar way with horses, with the added benefit of being engaged in horticulture—providing a more holistic experience with nature.

Forty people participate in a mix of classes taught by Farm Manager Allison Glass and Assistant Farm Manager Kim Nistal. Together, they have developed lessons, that teaches everything from soils and seeds to the changing seasons and how to spot wildlife. Fun and amazing!

Discovering You Workshops By Susan Gill-Orange



During the months of November through January, the POM department with Susan Orange and Samantha Rodonis, presented the *Discovering You* workshop to students in Brookville along with interested participants who attend the Freeport Day Hab. Held on the Brookville Campus, this weekly series promoted the theme of self-advocacy and its relation to life planning.

This was particularly important not only for young students on the verge of graduating to hear but also for adults who are interested in planning for the future as well. We believe that it is essential for students to do so with a set of tools and resources for a smooth transition. Entry to the real world is challenging for all young people, but especially for those who have a disability. Investigating interests and dreams is the key to any successful Life plan and Freeport Day Hab participant, Michael Costa, created a vision board that highlighted his desire to volunteer for animal shelters. He already had been working on this goal, by spearheading a blanket and towel drive for a local shelter. Michael along with other people from the day habilitation sites were able to mentor the students by setting an example of what it means to be a self – advocate.



Michael Costa shares his vision at Discovering You.

The key to effective support is to be *Educated, Exposed and Experienced*, the CQL Three Es, on the choices that exist and to focus on what matters the most to them for the future. People make choices all the time, every single day. When an organization, like ours, provides Education, Experience and Exposure in relation to personal outcomes and advocacy, that outcome is more likely to be present. It is our mission to meet these objectives to improve the quality of life for the people we support.

The presentation focused on developing self -advocacy skills with the emphasis on person centeredness and future expectations. The presentations provided workable templates where the students could place photographs and pictures of the dreams and desires, they have for their lives. With the assistance of Michelle Flood and Marisol Getchius from SANYS, resources and tools for all attendees were presented for a greater understanding of what it means to advocate for themselves as they navigate through life.

Our vision was to reinforce practical and personal principles in preparation for the next steps after high school and beyond. The *Discovering You* series of workshops will continue to be presented where the theme will continue to be that of developing programs to address specific aspects of the transition to adulthood process.

The POM Department is devoted to supporting people to find their voices and recognize the goals they establish for their lives.



POM Spotlight – Darin Whitehead

By Samantha Rodonis



When I met Darin Whitehead in September 2023 during his POM interview, we spoke about his personal interests and love of gardening. Darin had come to the Freeport Pre-Voc Program the previous year. I spent a lot of time speaking to Darin about his life and his dreams and he lit up when he spoke about his love of gardening and how he dreams of one day being a farmer. He shared about how he would love to grow vegetables and be able to one day sell them. He wanted to be a part of every aspect of gardening from planting the seeds to caring for the land they grew on. While Darin shared his many interests, including a love of art, farming was where he saw his future.

During my follow-up with his support staff, Carol Meyerson, we talked about organizational opportunities for Darin to expand his personal goal of becoming an avid gardener. Carol shared how with additional supports Darin was introduced to this new love of farming. Carol supported Darin to connect with an opportunity to participate in a pilot program where they tended to a community garden at a Synagogue in Wantagh where all of the vegetables grown were donated to local food pantries. The garden, which has previously been a playground, was tended to by Darin and a group of his friends from pre-vocational services as well as members of the congregation of Temple B’Nai Torah in Wantagh. Vegetables such as artichokes, sweet peas, radishes, cucumbers, Swiss chard, lettuce, beets, turnips, onions, garlic, lettuce, and carrots were all grown and donated to charities such as Island Harvest, Bethany House and Community Solidarity.

In speaking with Rona Kauffman, the manager of the community garden, I learned how Darin was able to use his paid supports and community connections to meet his personal goal (personal outcome) of becoming a gardener. She shared how Darin was always open to learn a new task and was always willing to do what was asked of him. Over the course of the season, he learned to identify the different vegetables, weigh and record the harvests as well as keep the area clean and neat by sweeping pathways, mowing and mulching, harvesting produce and preparing garden beds for planting. Darin expanded this opportunity to become a part of the community garden by actively participating in all shift meetings. By using his supports and sharing his personal interests, Darin was able to expand his efforts to a valued social role at the Temple B’Nai Torah community garden. In fact, Rona shared that Darin even took his new gardening and landscaping skills home, asking to mow the lawn for his mother.

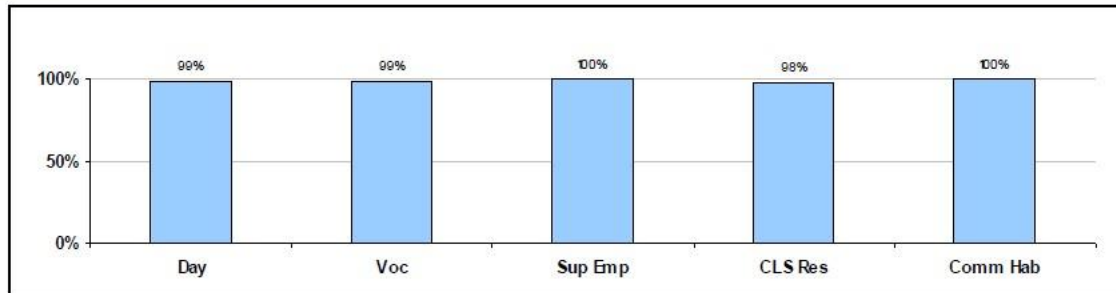
Darin shared that he is looking forward to visiting the garden in the future as well as visiting Wheatley Farms where he can learn more about working on a farm.

VALUED OUTCOMES

Family Questionnaire Results 2023

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 26.9% compared with 23.7% last year. There are no agency wide trends. There is one program trend for Freeport Vocational: Are you satisfied with Care Management? Which 14% of people responded they were not satisfied. No other trends are noted throughout AHRC Nassau. These are outstanding results which reflect the excellent services AHRC Nassau provides. Each program 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. As per the COMPASS Management Plan, these results are provided for Board of Directors review and Agency planning purposes.

Overall Program Average Score



Staff Recruitment and Retention Efforts By Jim Stock

AHRC DSP recruitment and retention remains a priority focus throughout the organization. AHRC currently has 279 open positions, a decreased 14 positions since the last report. The voluntary separations were twenty-four during this period, an increase of one from the previous report. The department continues to advertise the majority of our vacant positions on Indeed.com, which produces robust results and is our number one source for finding viable talents for our open positions. Due to budgetary concerns with advertising, the team is shifting its focus to producing additional social media content, which includes LinkedIn, Facebook, and newsgroups. In addition, the team continues to attend virtual and in-person career and job fairs throughout the Long Island area.

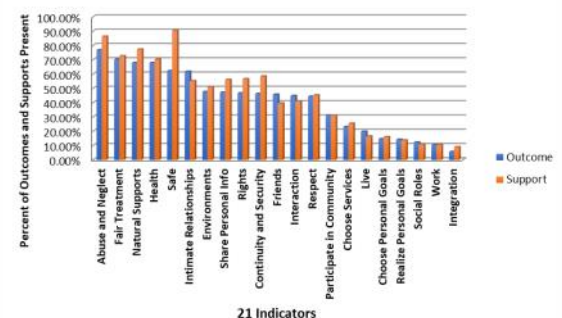
Emotional intelligence workshops for administrative and managerial staff are being conducted to enhance the culture further for all at AHRC. This workshop will cover topics of emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication. Learning and Professional Development, in collaboration with Shaun Weathers and Sally Burgess, is developing a Be Kind Campaign for frontline staff. This fun and engaging endeavor will enhance employees' communication with their peers, including gratitude and kindness in the workplace.

Personal Outcome Measures Update By Bridget Cariello

For 2023, 218 interviews were conducted. POMs are typically conducted every three years or as requested, with the exception that people with formal rights restrictions are interviewed annually. Therefore, while it is useful to compare data for 2022 with 2023 to reflect larger trends within the agency (as well as trends influenced by OPWDD), each year's data represents a different group of people with different wants and needs that can change over time.

In 2023, the POM Department create the "**Discovering You**," series of workshops which focus on the concerns of students transitioning from the high school to the adult world. The Department also hosted their annual **POMs Rally**. Earlier in the year the POM department concentrated its efforts in ensuring that each person understands their right to choose services. A presentation entitled "**A Voice for Choice**" was developed to provide people with information on their day options. In addition, for the first time, the POM Department provided a workshop that incorporated the cultural expectations inherent in our organization along with an explanation of what the personal outcome process for **Camp Loyaltown** personnel. New in 2023 was also the CQL POM interviewer co-certification of a staff member and a person supported. This initiative is designed to enlarge the capabilities of people supported, giving them a more substantive role in the agency structure. **Looking ahead in 2024:** POMS Empowering You Classes, "Show Us Your POMs," Personal Discovery Event to increase people awareness of choice and the personal planning process, Life Model Meeting, and more of "Discovering You." All of these initiatives will take place i to expand everyone's knowledge and exposure to the vital importance of the CQL's 21 Personal Outcome Measures. Together we will continue supporting people to live their own best lives, their own way!

POM Interview Data:
Total Percent of Outcomes and Supports Across
Agency (2023)



VALUED OUTCOMES

House, Family Meetings and Holiday Fun by Deanna Allen

The holiday season is always filled with joy and activities for all. From winter dances, dinners, and gatherings, every member of the AHRC community had several opportunities to enjoy themselves, with family and friends. View more holiday highlights below!



Exceptional Survey Awards Goes To....



**Levittown & Mott Street,
Oceanside
Day Hab hub sites**

Congratulations!!



Regulatory Affairs By Eric Rosen

Throughout calendar year 2023, the Regulatory Affairs Department completed one hundred and forty-eight (148) surveys. Surveys were completed for one hundred percent (100%) of the Agency's sites/programs during this calendar year. Surveys completed included small IRAs, large IRAs, and day habilitation, prevocational, supported employment, respite, and community habilitation programs. A modified version of the OPWDD Site-Based Protocol continued to be used during these surveys.

In addition, Person Centered Reviews were completed for a sample of people receiving services from AHRC Nassau.

Exceptional practices noted during surveys completed throughout the year included nicely decorated homes, bedrooms decorated to each person's likes/preferences, positive/supportive interactions, people being encouraged to participate in the routine of their home, the promotion of independence, and continued overall satisfaction with services.

Congratulations to the Levittown and Mott Street Day Hab sites for achieving the designation of "exceptional survey" in 2023!

Seminars 2024 Series

We want to hear from you. Our Family Seminar Series, now called “Inform Me” is set to launch in April of 2024. What topics are you interested in learning about. Please email Colleen Tapia at ctapia@ahrc.org with any ideas for topics.

NADSP DSP Credentialing



Congratulations to the NADSP/OPWDD E-Badge Academy Members at AHRC Nassau. Your continued professional development through the E-Badge Academy and achievements as DSPs and Frontline Supervisors deserve the utmost recognition.

It was a pleasure for AHRC Nassau to host the Milestones of Excellence Brunch recognizing this exceptional cohort, including Tiajuana Gardener of AHRC Nassau who became the 1,000th DSP to receive certification in NY State.

Joining the celebration was OPWDD Commissioner Kerri Neifeld of OPWDD, NADSP CEO and President Joe MacBeth, OPWDD Deputy Commissioner of Administration Adrienne Mazeau, OPWDD Associate Commissioner of Administration Alison Pingelski, Long Island DDRO Director Michelle Torres, NYS E-Badge Academy Administrator for NADSP Kathy Brown, AHRC Nassau CEO Stanford Perry, AHRC Board President Sandra Gumerove, Citizens Options Unlimited Board President Hallie Klein, BCCS Board President Al Capra, and other industry leaders.



VALUED OUTCOMES

2024 EMPOWERMENT & FAMILY SEMINARS

Empowerment Series

Empowering You airs virtually
at 11:00am every Friday.

A DEI topic is presented on the first
Friday of each month.

**Join for information and ideas
to assist you
to live the life you want!**

January

**What is advocacy and the different
way you can advocate.**

February

Advocacy Groups & Stories

March

**Advocacy Groups & Stories
DEI – The Journey to Kindness.
An Introduction to DEI.**

September

**What is an Elected Official? Who are our
elected Officials?
DEI – Discrimination**

October

**Advocacy and Elections
How to exercise your right to vote.
DEI - Ableism**

November

**Elections!
Voting, Results and What Comes Next
DEI – Gender Bias and Sexism**

December

**Building Relationships with Elected Officials
DEI – Sexual Orientation &
LGBTQIA+ Community**

For information or registration:

**Call Kate Zimmerman at
516-293-2016, ext. 5104**

Integrated Seminar Series

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

**Open to members of the
community, family members
and advocates**

–

**Date TBD 5:00-6:00pm
Guardianship Evolution. Sup-
ported Decision Making, Wills
and Trusts**

Join us to learn about Guardianship,
Wills and Trusts for people with intellec-
tual and developmental disabilities

–

**Date TBD 5:00-6:00pm
Systems Advocacy**

Join us to gain a working knowledge of
systems advocacy.

We'll discuss some of the ways you can
make positive changes in attitudes, poli-
cies, systems and laws that impact peo-
ple with intellectual and developmental
disabilities.

-

**For information or registration,
please visit our website at
AHRC.org
or email Ifanuzzi@ahrc.org or
Call:516-293-2016, ext. 5369**

VALUED OUTCOMES

The COMPASS Committee & The Quality Improvement Process

AHRC Nassau and Citizens: 2023 QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS

In 2023, there were 16 quality improvement goals as well as enhancements, with 12 % of the goals/objectives met. As we enter the New Year, it is wonderful to look back on all the efforts set forth and share some of the successes of 2023. AHRC Nassau and Citizens looks forward to an extraordinary 2024!

Factor One: Rights Promotion and Protection:

- Policy developed and approved for Financial Decision Making. All people are now presumed to have capacity.
- A Human Rights Committee review is now required if a person desires to make financial decisions and their support team is not in agreement.
- Financial Decision-Making Determination of Capacity form developed and in use.
- Money Management Assessment revised to include skills or accommodations which will support the person to not have a Representative Payee, if so desired.
- Informed consent required for financial restrictions, including (if person objects) Representative Payee.
- Rights Rally held 11/2/2023 with a focus on Rights and Responsibilities.

Factor Two: Dignity and Respect:

- A revised policy was drafted this year for Person Centered Planning. Approval to include CQL Personal Outcome Measures and Person-Centered planning within 90 days of enrollment, three times per year for Person Centered Planning experience.
- Person Centered Experience Event was created and will be held twice a year. The initial event was held in May 2023 and was a great success! The next event is scheduled for January 2024.
- Enhanced training on Person-Centered Planning for professional staff is planned for 2024.

Factor 3: Natural Supports

- AHRC Nassau was awarded a grant that subsidized the cost to support a group of self-advocates to go to SANY's conference in Albany this year to build social capital with other self-advocates across the state.
- Everyone was thrilled to be able to return to a large Thanksgiving gala gathering which had not been possible due to Covid. It has always been a great event that people enjoy and a way to reconnect and meet new people.
- People hosted many wonderful events such as milestone birthdays and holidays with friends and families at their homes.
- Expansion continued to be a focus at Wheatley Farms and Arts. Recent developments included the opening of the "Big Tree Gift Shop" at the greenhouse. This presented a new great employment opportunity for many people.
- Citizens Recreation and Respite also added two additional meeting sites in Nassau County where people gather weekly to enjoy community activities with friends.
- Closure of 915 and 919 Rainbow Commons ICF's began in 2023, providing people with choice and opportunity for their new homes.
- 2023 brought engagement of community members at the Shoreham ICF with many new connections and relationships formed. Community connections were made with local schools and businesses, for reciprocal events and exchange, including restaurants, farm stands, music schools and the High School.

Factor 4: Protection from Abuse, Neglect, Mistreat Exploit

- The Quality Assurance Department successfully investigated and managed a total of 520 incidents in 2023.
- The goal to reduce staff conflict resulting in an incident by 5% was not met. However, in response to this trend a special committee was formed to develop and enhance staff training and offer support to staff on avoiding conflicts and maintaining professionalism in the workplace. Examples of incidents involving staff conflict were brought to the committee and training was developed that will be offered both in-person and on Relias. In addition, all incidents involving staff are brought to the attention of HR business partners for additional staff support as needed.
- 2023 incident review committee members include representatives from the Human Resources Department.

Factor 5: Best Possible Health

- A cheat sheet was developed and is in use for staff who float/cover in alternate locations due to the staffing crisis to aid in their quick knowledge of a people's supports/guidelines. We are currently monitoring self-survey data to see if there has been an impact to citations, especially float staff and staff who work in Day Hab with large numbers of people supported.
- Decrease in medication errors- The Nursing staff continue to focus every month on supporting staff to decrease medication errors. A small decrease occurred throughout 2023 which we hope to be able to attribute to filling many vacant nursing positions throughout this year and ending 2023 fully staffed with RNs in both Citizens and AHRC for several months which had not happened in many years.
- Emergency Drills: Each quarter a team of nurses visits the residences and role play emergency scenarios that require the staff to respond. Staff are observed and debriefed on aspects that went well and aspects requiring improvement. This is a best practice that has been recommended by OPWDD's Mortality Review Committee and the Justice Center's Prevention Unit. It prepares staff for actual emergencies they may encounter while working. We are so pleased there were only 2 self-survey citations across all agencies/programs in emergency response which we attribute to this ongoing practice that we will certainly continue into 2024 and ongoing. Self-survey data is used to target areas where emergency preparedness can improve (i.e. responding to falls, choking, etc.)

- Dance Fit back for 2024! We are looking forward to the return of Dance Fit Club to Wheatley Farms in 2024 as it is a wonderful activity focused on helping people move their bodies in a way that is fun, allows for opportunities for socializing with members of the local community and doesn't feel like exercise.

Factor 6: Safe Environments

- The implementation of enhanced training and guidance for the maintenance staff in addressing emergency 'No Heat' and 'No A/C' calls has resulted in a notable decrease in the number of work orders related to these issues. Beyond inspecting the HVAC unit and thermostat, the attending maintenance worker ensures that all windows and doors are securely closed and sealed during their assessment of the residence. Subsequently, they provide instructive insights to the staff regarding how addressing these issues is pivotal in alleviating the primary factors contributing to an uncomfortable interior environment and the potential malfunctions of HVAC units.
- In the year 2023, we implemented a revision to the rotation of our maintenance on-call shift for increased efficiency. Now, a single maintenance worker is assigned on-call duties for the entire week, seamlessly transferring responsibility to the next worker on Monday morning. This streamlined process has significantly contributed to the continuity in addressing on-call after-hours issues.
- This year the Facilities Maintenance team assumed the role of compiling maintenance related documented citations pertaining to all sites. This encompassed the capture of citations and deficiencies identified by OFPC, Quality Assurance, and Board Member inspection reports. The captured information is categorized and analyzed for trends with targeted issues then addressed and tracked.
- The Maintenance Team has initiated the implementation of a procedure to install keyed locks on every bedroom door. The team is proactively obtaining all necessary materials, conducting in-house rekeying of locks, and undertaking the installations.

Factor 7: Staff Resources and Supports

- Utilized applicant tracking system ICMS AI Chatbot feature.
- Over 100 site visits-while engaging people supported and obtaining feedback.
- Implemented a Buddy System during orientation and paired new hires with one another. Forming a partnership and bond for a support system.
- Created a more engaging newsletter with Hyperlinks, a career page, and new hire photos.
- Further enhanced and marketed Tuition reimbursement with a focus on part-time staff working a minimum of 21 hours/week.
- Hyper focus on NADSP Badge academy to market and have DSPs complete three different Badge levels.

Factor 8: Positive Services and Supports

- Efforts continue to ensure the least restrictive interventions are in place: New types of rights restrictions included in Behavior Support Plans (BSPs) in the past year reflect less intrusive alternatives as well as meeting the unique needs of new people supported by AHRC and Citizens.
- A policy on use of Safety Equipment, and a related Safety Equipment Screening Questionnaire, have been developed. Once implemented, it will eliminate Behavior Support Plans for people only in need of safety equipment.
- Enhanced training has been implemented for staff, management, and clinicians working at the Young Adults homes in AHRC.

Factor 9: Continuity and Security

- Collaboration with the Talent Acquisition Team AT team in 2023 has yielded an increase in qualified and dedicated staff to support people daily. Additionally, ongoing advocacy efforts with state legislation have allowed for all staff in both corporations employed with the agency to receive a 4% cost of living increase, further strengthening retention efforts with the existing workforce.
- AHRC Nassau has been able to reopen the Free-standing respite house which provides huge continuity of care for families supported in the community needing respite opportunities for their loved ones.
- 2023 brought focusing on increased community-based activities and assist people in reconnecting with friends, neighbors and local businesses creating a network of natural community-based supports.

Personal Outcome Measures (POM)

- Approximately 150 people attended a presentation entitled "A Voice for Choice" hosted on May 10th, 2023 to better understand their choices regarding day activities. An additional 800 people received training on choosing services through a series of weekly "Voice for Choice" workshops. We look forward to continuing to support people's ever-evolving personal choices!
- Congratulations to Matt Hofele and Leigh Fanuzzi on their certification as CQL Personal Outcome Co-Interviewers. They are the second team in NYS to achieve this unique CQL co-certification!
- In May and December, upcoming high school graduates (from BCCS, Bellmore-Merrick SD, Massapequa HS etc.) participated in a "Discovering You," series of workshops to assist them in identifying their future dreams and goals as well as an action plan. The students really enjoyed creating their Vision boards and are looking forward to acting on their plans!
- Discovering You Community Event Day was held to support students to present their vision for their own life.
- Camp Loyaltown employees enjoyed learning cultural objectives and how to use CQL Personal Outcome Measures as well as discovery tools to gain insight into people's interests and how to support them to be meet their life goals. Based on the great feedback received, this one-day training will also be provided to Wheatley Farms and Arts employees in 2024!
- The annual POM Rally was held in May 2023 to inspire and celebrate people's successes. The rally was a lively and entertaining celebration of personal outcomes and featured keynote speakers from CQL, SANYS and a welcome from AHRC's Executive staff. In addition, a POM's Banner contest was enjoyed by many! It was a fun and creative way to portray aspects of the POM process.
- AHRC and Citizens Board of Directors enjoyed training on *Natural Supports and Social Roles*, and *Impacting Person-Centered Culture, One POM at a time*. Both trainings focused on enhancing our agencies person-centered culture one person at a time!
- The "Empowering You" learning series and **Show Us your POMs** continued in 2023, providing people with education and skills to help them achieve their life goals!

AHRC Nassau
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New York, 11545



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Swan by Tracy Ferris

**Your love is beautiful.
You are my love.
Say a wish.
A wish can come true to my love.
I need you.
Every soul has a love.
Without beauty you are not a “swan”.
Or yet a Queen.
I believe in your beauty.
We are young and beautiful too.
you are true,
you are beauty.
When I look at you,
I see your beauty,
You are a “Swan”.**

