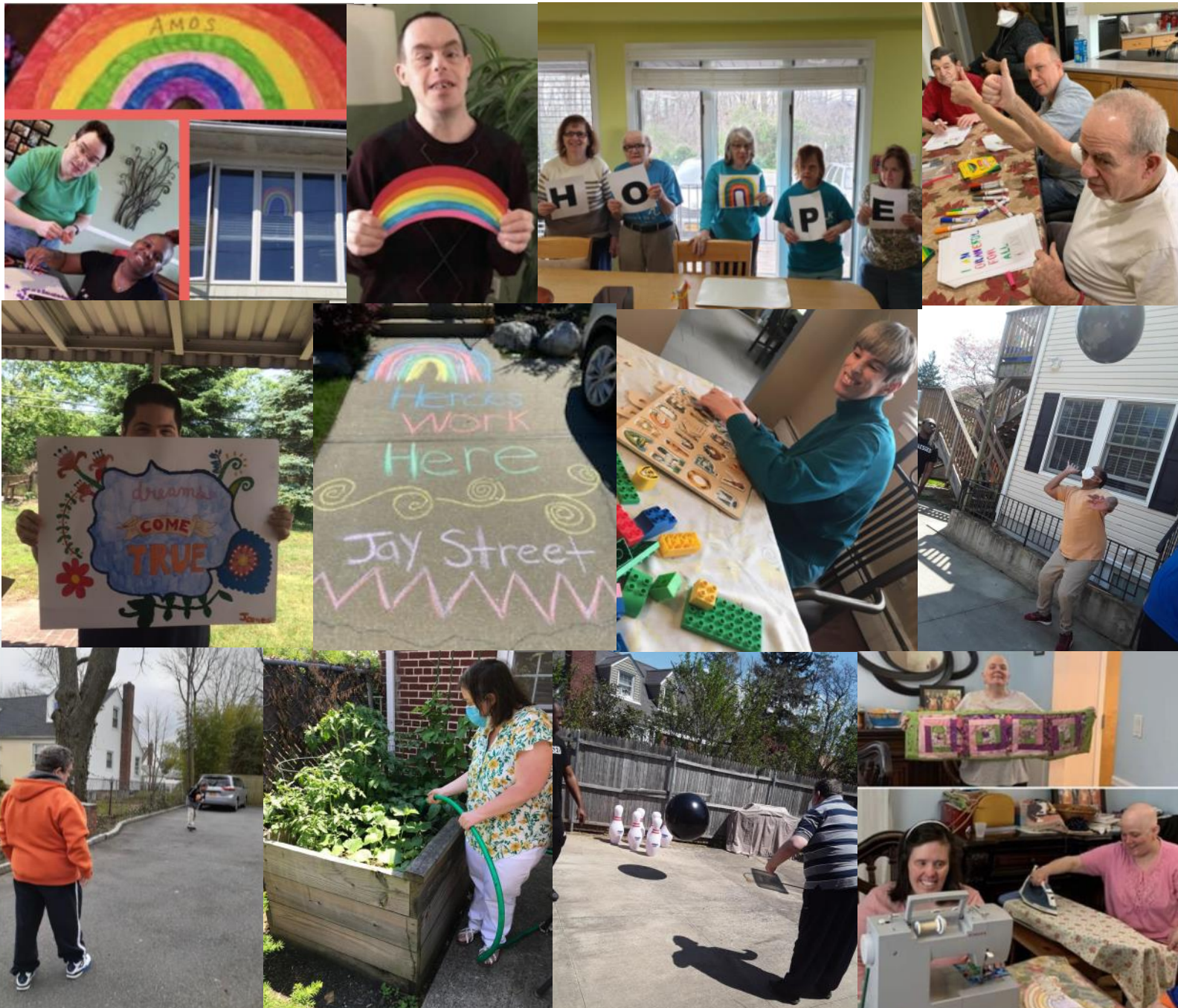


## “Stay at Home” Did not Stop Us!

### Our New Normal

It took a few weeks to adjust to the “New Normal” of the 2020 pandemic. No doubt we have been touched by loss and grief. The definition of “hero” took on a new meaning. We hope that this newsletter reaches you at a time of new beginnings and we can all look upon spring and the start of summer with the eyes of those that fought as one - staff, families, and people supported all coming together to make it work, to some way rise above everything. We salute our DSPs, nurses and all essential staff that braved the very heart of this virus. Our hats are off to all of you. Through it all, the spirit of who we are never faltered.



*Our New Normal.*



# MISSION STATEMENT

## Mission Statement and Management Plan

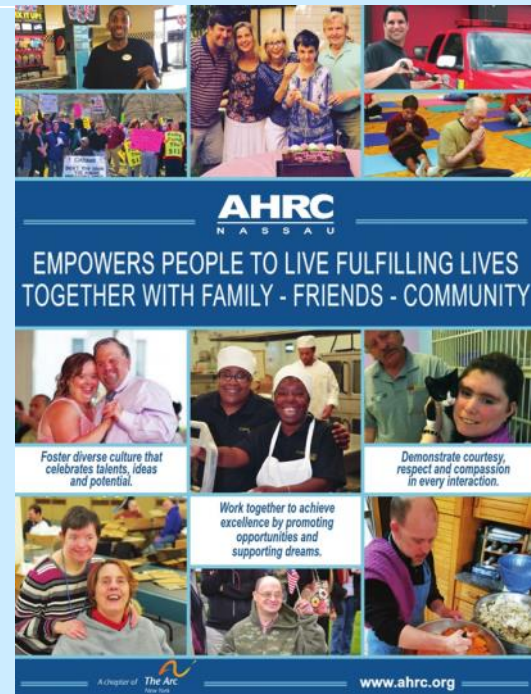
The annual review of the Mission Statement and Management Plan will begin in September 2020 by AHRC Nassau Councils. This is completed each year as part of our COMPASS commitment and execution of the COMPASS Management Plan.

After the Councils' review, the COMPASS Committee will review the mission statement and COMPASS management plan followed by AHRC Board of Directors' review.

If you have suggestions for changes to the mission statement or management plan, please contact Colleen Tapia at 516 293-2016 extension 5492 or at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org). Everyone's input is valuable and welcome.

### 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.*



## Staying Home—Staying Busy! By Sue Limiti

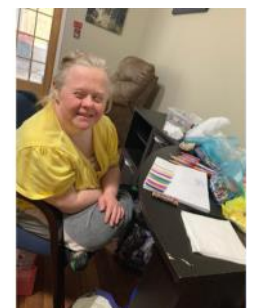
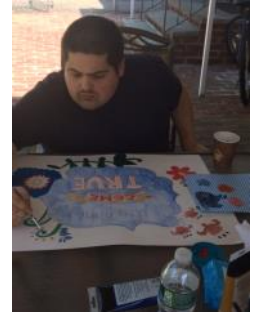


The activities specialists have been busy making activity packets and distributing supplies to the AHRC residences. The activity packets are being made up weekly and consist of mazes, word searches, baking ideas, and craft projects. They are based on a weekly theme such as Memorial Day, Safari, and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Enough packets are distributed to the residences so everyone can enjoy doing them. We are currently up to week 14!



Thanks to the help of the hub sites, we were able to gather ceramic pieces and paint to disperse to the houses. Pictures were taken of the people we support sitting in their back yards and creating works of art. Puzzles were distributed to some of the residences and it was amazing to see how quickly they were able to complete a 500 piece puzzle. Games such as Connect Four, Family Feud, and Dominoes were also distributed and are being enjoyed by many. An Amazon order was made and we were able to fill requests for supplies such as adult coloring books, sun catchers, colored pencils, canvases, poster board, etc. Many of the people in the residences utilized the supplies to make thank you signs for all the DSPs that have been there for them. They proudly displayed them in their front windows for all to see.

We are currently working on placing another Amazon order to continue to support the needs and wants of our talented people.





# MISSION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN ACTION

## Community Connections We Are In This Together

Greeting baskets were shared with nonprofit neighbors! Made with love and care by AHRC residences, these baskets were sent as a friendly hello to Town of Babylon Animal Shelter, Our Lady Of Consolation Nursing and Rehabilitative Care Center, Sunrise of Plainview, Atria Plainview and Christian Fellowship House.



From senior centers to local animal shelters, community organizations received a neighborly hello from AHRC residents! Baskets were sent with heartfelt notes and objects from AHRC houses in Oceanside, Sea Cliff, Baldwin, Jay St., Bethpage, Old Country Rd, Marietta Dr., Livingston St and Warren Place.

Organized by Community Relations Liaison Lynne Brewer, the baskets successfully put a smile on the faces of team members at Emerge Nursing and Rehabilitation at Glen Cove, Glengriff Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center, Amber Court of Westbury, North Shore Animal League America, and Town of Oyster Bay Animal Shelter. Treats were also shared with the dogs at the local shelters. #helloneighbor #nonprofitstrong #strongertogether #longislandstrong #newyorkstrong

Nonprofit neighbors continue to receive warm hellos from AHRC residents with bright greeting baskets. Organized by Community Relations Liaison Lynne Brewer, the baskets were made with love and include heartfelt notes and tasty treats that successfully put smiles on the faces of team members at the Massapequa Center Rehabilitation & Nursing, Belair Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Bethpage Pharmacy, New York Bully Crew, Nassau University Medical Hospital, and Dominican Village.





# VALIDATION VISIT

## Validation Visit 2020

As with all things COVID, the annual COMPASS recertification/validation visit, scheduled for the week of May 18, 2020 was unfortunately postponed. We miss the opportunity to reconnect with OPWDD and share our progress, unique endeavors and obtain feedback.

A validation visit is not planned for 2020. A virtual validation visit has been proposed by DQI for 2021. This would include virtual interviews and involvement in activities.

We look forward to when we all can be together—virtually!



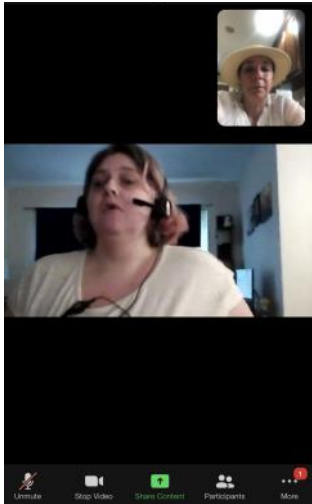
## Talents and New Talents

The quarantine did not stop Coleen Mackin from showcasing her talent and months of voice training. She beautifully and proudly shared her rendition of “This is Me” to an audience of many during a local talent show over Zoom. Many people showed off the old and new talents such as knitting and painting. Many new talents have emerged during these times and Coleen is in the process of planning and developing a talent night for AHRC Nassau in collaboration with Day Hab. All talent is welcome!

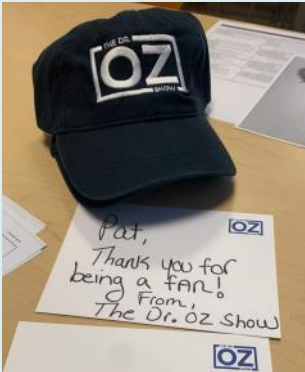
## AHRC Nassau Virtual Talent Show

*Coming Soon!*

*All Talent is Welcome!*



## Dr. Oz By Kate Zimmerman



Jennifer Cipriano is a lifelong family friend who I recently found out is the Senior Editorial Director for The Dr. Oz Show.

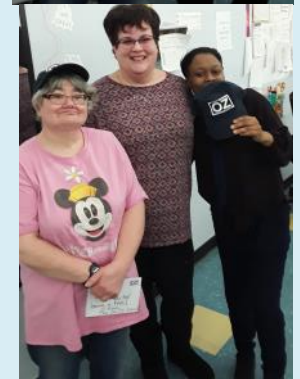
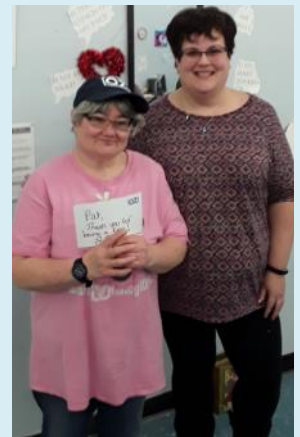
Knowing that Pat Kelly, a volunteer in Freeport PWW, is a huge Dr. Oz fan, I reached out to Jennifer to see if we could do something for Pat. Jennifer said she would reach out to the PR team to see what they could pull together for Pat.

The following day, I received a package containing 2 Dr. Oz Show hats and a note to Pat thanking her for being a fan from the entire Dr. Oz

Team! While talking with Nastasia Gettys, the Assistant Manager in Pat's hubsite, I learned that she has a heartfelt connection to The Dr. Oz Show, having spent numerous afternoons watching it with her grandmother. Having shared a similar bond with my grandmother with Jeopardy, I decided to give the second hat to Nastasia.

This morning I gave the thank you note and hats to Pat and Nastasia. Both ladies were surprised, excited and grateful for their gifts. Pat is writing a thank you note to send to Dr. Oz and his team. I told her I'd make sure it made it to him.

I've attached the photos from this morning, as well as a photo of the hat and card sent from Dr. Oz.





# PERSONAL MISSIONS—Pot of Gold Contest



Bayville IRA



The Pines IRA



The Pines



Woodmere IRA



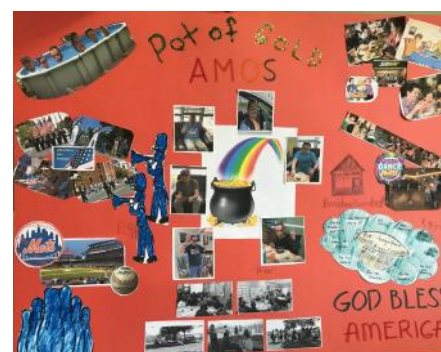
Lee St. IRA



Jefferson Apts.



Francis Ave. IRA



Amos Ave. IRA

What does your Pot of Gold look like at the end of the rainbow? We are all waiting for a better tomorrow with our family, friends and community. Some of the homes made posters to share and let us know what that means to them. See the inspirational submissions above. The overwhelming theme of most posters was family and friends. That is what most people were missing most and looking forward to. Happily in July, visits with family and friends resumed. Please see photos below of some of the joyous reunions!





## 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. The change to virtual meetings was a new endeavor for AHRC Nassau and many Board members. From all accounts, the virtual meetings have been a huge success and provided a seamless means to coordinate and maintain agency operations. A weekly Board of Directors COVID-19 update meeting has also been held to share information and coordinate efforts. The weekly meetings have been invaluable in uniting and coordinating efforts. It has been a busy, challenging time. Up next, is the annual Council presentation to the Board of Directors in the fall. This will be done virtually.

## Today Show - Hope You Tuned In!

AHRC Board Member Harriet Traversa and the Traversa family shared with Craig Melvin on the Today Show on June 17, 2020 their family's experience with disability, the impact of COVID-19 and their hopes for the future.

NBC's Today Show spent time with families of The Arc Westchester and AHRC Nassau to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their lives. Anchor Craig Melvin also sat down with a chapter leader to discuss the challenges providers face and why people with disabilities, their families, and the direct support workforce need to be included in recovery plans.

If you missed the Traversa Family on the Today Show, check out the full segment on AHRC Nassau Facebook page to see Sal and Harriet share their experiences.

Thank you to Craig Melvin and the Today Show for connecting with us on the unique challenges of disability during COVID-19 and the loving devotion of families.



When Sal Traversa and his mom, Harriet, were featured on the Today Show, his housemates, Tracy and Trevor, were home cheering him on!

Shown here is an inspiring picture of Tracy and Trevor, watching the show and giving a big thumbs up!

Way to go Sal and family! Thank you for advocating on behalf of everyone.

## Board of Directors Physical Plant Inspections

At the present time, inspections are suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The annual Physical Plant Inspections (PPI) meeting was held on March 11, 2020. At this time, the policy and procedure were reviewed, sites assigned and any questions or concerns addressed. The physical plant inspection process remains an integral component of our success as a COMPASS agency.

40 physical plant inspections were completed from January to March 2020. (when inspections were suspended) A total number of 32 new work orders were generated. There were 6 hazardous citations. There were 4 physical plant deficiencies that remained open after 60 days.

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.

## SIBLING GROUP



In response to the pandemic, the Sibling Group began holding virtual meetings in March. The meetings have been held approximately every two weeks over the past months. They have been an invaluable way to come together, share information and support siblings. At the first meeting, during the height of the pandemic, the group discussed ways to support staff and their siblings. This resulted in siblings wanting to give back, say thanks, and ease the daily strain at their siblings' homes. Many siblings had meals delivered (some every day!), sent thank you cards and treats.

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.



### 2020 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us for virtual meetings!

Contact [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org)

- Sibling Group Virtual Meetings at 5:00pm. Contact Colleen Tapia at [Ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:Ctapia@ahrc.org) for details on how to connect.
- December 3, 2020 – Sibling Holiday, 6:00-8:00pm Brookville. Please bring your brother or sister. On hold.

Thank you for making meals happen!

Your gifts and notes of thanks mean so much to staff and is feeding the body and the soul. Siblings and now families have been doing this on an individual basis and it expanded across all of our homes. Sending a meal has made it possible for staff working and people we support to enjoy unexpected acts of kindness and support. Chris O'Connor, Pam Boyle and others have attended the Sibling meeting to keep all informed and offer their support and leadership.

## Café 230—Making Meals Happen!

Handmade with love, delicious meals have been served up by AHRC Nassau's amazing Café 230 team throughout this challenging time. The catering service continues to fill orders for AHRC houses, who place requests. Café 230 responds by providing delicious meals for all and offering dedicated staff an opportunity to step out of the kitchen and spend more time connecting with the people we support.



Many siblings took advantage of the delicious meals made by Café 230 and had them delivered to their siblings' home. This is a wonderful and enjoyable support for all. We all appreciate you, Percival and Maureen!





# AHRC Nassau - Councils

## Executive Council Met Monthly (except summer break and November)

Executive Council 6 month review

### March-June

- We rebranded our Council. The new name we voted on is The Power Voice.
- The Executive Council has been meeting via Zoom since March with Pam Boyle giving inspirational encouragement during these hard times.
- Michelle Rudoff and Sue Gill have been presenting the "I am the Expert" initiative for the Camp Connection program. Sue has held a few meetings to discuss plans for the "I Am the Expert" initiative.
- Michelle has been working on a rights PowerPoint. Michelle has been doing the monthly rights training at the Zoom Council meetings.
- Michelle, Steven and Jessica, with the help of Coleen Tapia, are working on getting a summer reading group up and running via Zoom.
- Jessica and Michelle are almost finished doing and ready to sign their supportive decision making agreement. Michelle's agreement that was for March 25th was postponed and is in the works to do it virtually.
- Coleen Mackin and Jessica are working on a voting webinar.
- Steven and Michelle's safe driving campaign on March 18th was cancelled due to the coronavirus.
- Stanford Perry dropped by one of our May Zoom Council meetings to talk about what is going on in the agency and the Council's plan to reopen.



### December

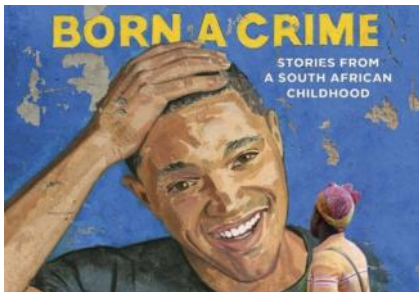
- On December 14th, Coleen Mackin and Michelle Rudoff did a rights training as part of the University of Personal Growth.

### February

- Michelle and Coleen hosted a bake sale to raise money for those in Puerto Rico

### January

- Chris O'Connor and Shaun Weather came to the council in January to speak to the Council about staffing issues and concerns

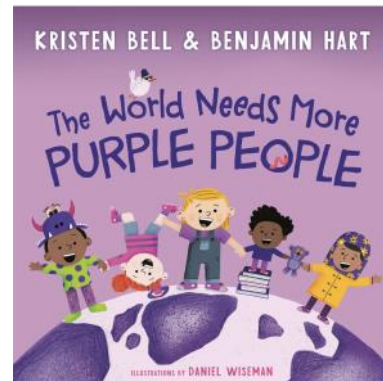


## Advocates Host Summer Virtual Reading Group Focus on racial justice.

By Steven Barsh

A Wednesday lunch and learn summer virtual reading group began on July 1, 2020 at 12:00 noon. The focus of our readings was on topics related to racial equality and justice. The

group read, "The World Needs More Purple People" and is presently reading, "Born A Crime." We are learning about apartheid and Africa. It is very interesting to learn about the different tribes. Some people in the group have staff that are from Africa and will join us at a future session.



## Can They Do That? Monthly Rights Seminar

"Can They Do That?", is a monthly series about self advocates' rights with Hezzy Smith and is a project sponsored by Harvard Law School project on disability. This includes a series of videos which feature Chester Finn, a self-advocate from SANYS. In the first series, Chester recalls his experiences, growing up in Jim Crow Alabama before leaving home for New York. Self-advocacy is about making your voice heard. All over the world people have joined the self-advocacy movement to demand their human rights. This is a rich movement, which advocates, staff and administrators at AHRC Nassau strongly support. Many years ago, AHRC Nassau partnered with SANYS due to the strength in which self-advocates are supported to speak out for themselves and others. We have hosted endless events, educational series and presentations to help spread this movement. Today AHRC Nassau advocates sit on the SANYS board and have aspirations that reach beyond that.





## Spread the Word: Inclusion

We worked on Spread the Word to End the R Word in 2009 with an audacious belief, a plain observation, an urgent goal, and an ambitious plan. We did it!

Welcome to the next stage of [Spread the Word](#). Your dedication and vision brought us this far. Your leadership and action will bring us to our ultimate goal: **inclusion for all**.

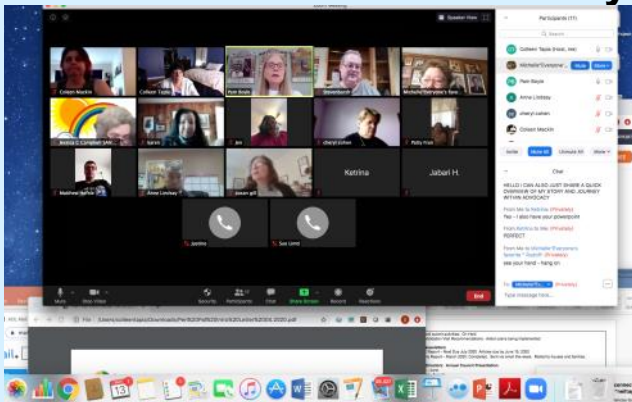
Each Council "Spread the Word" in different ways during the month of March. While progress has been made over the past ten years, perceptions about people with disabilities continue to occur, specifically over social media.

Perhaps people can take a moment to help educate others when they see postings to social media that are hurtful and to do so with kindness and compassion.

***Spread Love!***



## Our Daily Inspiration - Pam Boyle!



Council Members have greatly enjoyed, appreciated, and benefited from Pam Boyle's "daily inspiration" at the weekly Council meetings.

From Pam, we all learned about resilience, having a plan B (which is not our normal Plan A but can be a joyous and wonderful thing!), and that we all have some days when we are strong and on top of things... and some days when we're low. Emotions going up and down during a pandemic is normal and to be expected. We also learned to breathe in a square, to celebrate the new joys in our lives and to try to connect to 5 people a day and try 5 new things a day.

So as Pam would say, we may not have everything we want... but we are very fortunate and do have everything we need. Life is good! Try it as a mantra!

Thank you Pam for making us laugh each week, for sharing yourself and helping us to see the best in this new normal.

You inspire us!

## Start the Wave By Leigh Fanuzzi

In these uncertain times, we discussed at the Council meeting how lonely it can get since we can't do the activities that we are used to doing. People said they feel lonely many times since they can't see their friends and family as usual.

We know we aren't the only people who feel this way so we came up with an idea. It is called "Start with a Wave." Since we can't really smile at people any longer with our masks, just give people a little wave when you see them. This could be a neighbor, the mailman, delivery person, anyone we might come in contact with. We all like to be noticed and this is a way to do it. We discussed who we would like to do this with, and how we can get the word out to their friends, family, etc.

We discussed emailing, or doing zoom meetings with the people we know and suggesting to do this. Making a poster would also be a good idea and could be posted on AHRC Facebook page, or on their own.

So, are you with us? Just start with a wave!



## Staying Connected to SANYS



We are all facing huge uncertainty during the coronavirus pandemic; this uncertainty makes staying actively connected to our roles in society ever more important. Two advocates from AHRC Nassau serve as SANYS Nassau and Suffolk County representatives which means connecting statewide with advocates from many different places and on different platforms. The technology of connecting statewide virtually was welcomed. Unfortunately the hard but inevitable decision was made to cancel the local and statewide self-advocacy conference. However, that did not stop these great advocates. Plans are underway for a virtual conference with mini seminars. SANYS also gives us another voice in Albany and OPWDD. We have been able to have advocates' voices heard on a regular basis and issues within AHRC Nassau Councils have been shared at the state level. It has been very important now more than ever to speak up and speak up strongly for those that do not use technology to connect for whatever the reason. It has been very important to be a part of SANYS now more than ever.

*Stay tuned for information on the SANYS Virtual Conference!*

## Zoom Groups Adding Supports and Fun!

**By Michelle Gladstone, M.A., MS. Ed., L.M.H.C./Coordinator of Psychology Services for Day Programs**

Since 3/23/20, we have been faced with the unprecedented challenge of providing services virtually to people supported. The psychology department jumped to the challenge and took the initiative to set up some helpful and fun groups!

The day program behavior intervention specialists have been running zoom groups with their hub sites and the people supported there on a regular basis. It is a great opportunity to stay connected and to chat with the gang! It brings a lot of smiles to everyone!

A special shout out to Soosan Happel BIS, Levittown Hub Site and Justin A., who attends the site! Their creativity and hard work have helped Justin start his own zoom group, "Dance Party with Justin A". Justin is quite the D.J! He brings his own music and vibe to Thursday mornings to get everyone up and dancing. Join the gang every Thursday at 11 a.m. and don't forget your "boogie shoes"!

Some of the groups focus on supporting staff and people supported during these challenging times with topics such as COVID support and bereavement groups, where people can discuss any challenges and feelings they may be having during this time, and how we as a group can support, develop coping strategies, and encourage self-care during these times.

The behavior intervention specialists also facilitate a bereavement group for people supported, as they have suffered profound losses during this time. These groups have been well received, and the people that have been attending have been a great support to each other, sharing their stories and how they are coping day to day. Extra thank you to our behavior intervention specialists, Blair Flynn, L.M.H.C, Maria Pelosi, L.M.H.C, and Soosan Happel, L.M.H.C, for facilitating these groups for our staff and people supported.

Finally, we have recently started a support group for family members, facilitated by yours truly. We are hoping parents, siblings and other family members will join our group to share feelings, ideas, ways to cope, and self-care ideas, which is so very important! The group is held every Wednesday at 2:00 p.m. Please join us!

Please continue to check the zoom activity and group schedules daily for dates and times, zoom ID's and passwords. Please feel free to join in any time! Be well and stay safe!

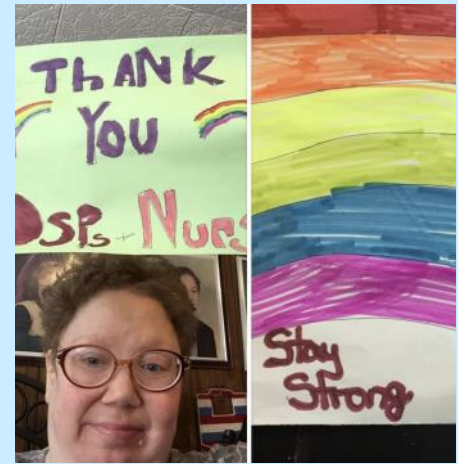


## Site Zoom Gathering By Michelle Rudoff

The Oceanside Rd hub site isn't just a hub site but we are a family from individuals to staff. So one day Lizzy (that's me!) suggested to Chaunikah to put together a Zoom meeting so we can all see each other.

Site manager Chaunikah and Behaviorist Blair arranged this gathering for Wednesday May 13th. The Oceanside Rd hub site had a get together at 12:30 on Zoom where we got a chance to see each other after not seeing each other for the past couple of months. Everyone really enjoyed seeing each other. We had a pretty good turn out which was nice to see everyone and hopefully we can have another Zoom meeting with each other.

Thank you Chanukah and Blair for putting together this Zoom gathering for everyone.



## More Zoom

During these hard times staff and individuals from AHRC and Citizens are staying connected with each other through an app called Zoom. Zoom is an app that is just like Skype or Facetime where you can virtually see people. It is definitely great during these hard times because Zoom is a great way for families to stay connected with loved ones in our residential program.

Here are some of the things AHRC and Citizens have been doing through Zoom these past couple of weeks. We have been hosting Council meetings each Wednesday. Jerri Walker has been putting together different activities like music, art, and culture and different evening activities like Jeopardy, learning sign language, and a nice dance with the counselors from camp. She is calling "Camp Connections". Heidi has put together some fitness activities like yoga and Zumba and a nice dance. I would like to thank Colleen, Heidi and Jerri for putting together stuff through Zoom so we all can stay connected with each other and brighten up our days through these hard times.



## ZOOM Groups By Liza Geonie

During these unprecedented times, we have had to work on creative ways to connect with the people we support and provide opportunities to be engaged in stimulating conversations and meaningful interactions with each other. Pam Boyle, Liza Geonie, and Lauren Jaquay worked together to create a full week of these experiences to provide some much needed respite from the stressful changes happening in all of our lives.

Some of the groups that have been developed through Zoom involve checking in and talking to each other about the concerns surrounding Covid-19 and other news events, and ways to handle stress and build coping strategies. Two evening men's groups and one daytime women's group is in place for support and connection. However, Pam, Liza, and Lauren realized that what the participants of these groups really needed was positivity, laughter, and a break from what was happening with the pandemic. As a result, groups were developed to provide opportunities to learn, discuss, and find some joy together.

Monday groups revolve around learning new things – "How It's Made" on Mondays at 11 is based on the television series, *How It's Made*. Pam, Liza, and Lauren show segments from this series with follow up trivia, fun facts, and discussion. "Mystery Monday" group at 3 focuses on topics that the participants have expressed interest in learning more about, and takes a deeper dive into favorite topics of interest such as unique animals and creative cake designs. Tuesday's 1:00 music group explores all the ways music influences our emotions and helps us cope during difficult times. The participants view videos of all different genres of music from around the world and engage in conversation about lyrics to songs. Wednesday group at 6:00 is devoted to games such as "Name that Tune", walks down memory lane to visit favorite shows and commercials from the past, and Jeopardy games. A favorite for everyone is "Good News Friday" at 10:00, where the rule is "only good news" to be shared. Participants discuss something positive they experienced that week and everyone celebrates what is shared together. Participants then view and discuss recent good news events that have occurred during the pandemic – such as people making special masks available for those in need, celebrating first responders and medical staff, and ways people have kept connected throughout the pandemic through car parades and social distancing parties.









## Don't Give Up

By Susan Gill Orange/POM interviewer and trainer

Michelle Rudoff knows the meaning of tenacity. Faced with opposition from all sides, Michelle fought an uphill battle in her journey to live independently with a family member. She never gave up on herself. With the support of some key people who encouraged her to remain steadfast, Michelle was able to move into an apartment and now enjoys three years of independent living!

It is this attitude of perseverance that defines Michelle not only as a self-advocate but as a human being. Michelle attends the Oceanside Road hubsite and is a staff person for self-advocacy in the QA department. By utilizing these venues, she is able to reach out to many people who need support to take that step forward in advocacy. At Oceanside Road, Michelle has been able to reach out to her friend, Allison. Allison is a sweet, quiet girl who needs assistance in order to communicate.

Michelle has provided that help to the one she calls her "little sister" and the result of this careful encouragement and compassionate prodding, is that Allison has shown more self-confidence along with a pronounced willingness to assert herself at work. This is so vital to the growth of self-advocacy amongst people who need support.

But it is not just Allison that Michelle has inspired. She is a cheerleader for so many programs that focus on people's dreams and visions for life. Lately she has been a tireless voice for promoting online Zoom meetings for camp and for Council meetings. Michelle realizes that isolation and confusion often accompany this quarantine and for many the lack of contact with their friends and their routine living has become difficult to handle. Michelle's promotion of the sources available to make connections once again has been invaluable.

Michelle Rudoff is a woman who wears many hats in her life. But the one that seems to fit her very well is that of friend, advocate and supporter of other people's dreams. When I asked her what advice she would give to those who are still struggling with fears, she told me "Don't give up! There will always be someone along the way who will understand."



## Rights Shout Out!

Our annual Rights Rally will take place this fall on September 23, 2020. People will share what rights are important to them and Rights Ambassadors will be honored. We will also take this opportunity to announce the Advocate of the Year for 2020!



## RIGHTS SHOUT OUT!

**Topic: Rights Shout Out!**  
**Time: September 23, 2020**  
**11:00 AM**

**Join Zoom Meeting**  
**Meeting ID: 862 4784 2805**  
**Passcode: 597698**

**Create a Poster**  
**and join us at the**  
**Rights Shout Out**  
**September 23, 2020**  
**at 11:00 am.**



## Coming Together Has Never Been More Important!

Coming together has never been more important! Tina Rodriguez, Site Manager at AHRC's Bethpage Hubsite, shares how a special Zoom session brought everyone together.

Soosan Happel, one of the day habilitation behaviorists, reached out to see if we would like to get everyone from the Bethpage Hubsite together via Zoom. I thought this could be a great way for everyone to connect and loved the idea.



I called over to every parent and staff member giving them the information about our upcoming Zoom meeting. Also, Soosan called over to the group homes. Our hubsite has always had such a great team from the people we support to the hardworking staff to the supporting parents to the group homes. We figured why not. Let's give it a try!

Well, success is an understatement!!! We had over twenty-five people participate and although at times it was hard for everyone to communicate, it didn't matter because we all got to hear and see one another. That seemed to be just enough. We had smiles, laughs and even some tears but in the end we all had each other. It brought joy to everyone to know we are all in this together.

We decided to give it another try next week and going forward until we are back at the hubsite. I received so many calls, texts and emails from the parents stating how much it meant to have everyone connect:

"I think she and all enjoyed seeing each other. GREAT idea!!!"  
"It was really so nice, the girls were so happy to see everyone."  
"It made his day; he smiled and talked about how he just got off the computer with his friends."  
"I was so happy to see my friends and staff; I can't wait until next week."  
"You had to see the smile she had on her face and it was the highlight of her day."



## Sewing Masks and More...!

The ladies and team at AHRC's Livingston House learned to sew. With their new skills, 30 face masks were made for and picked up by Nassau County EMS workers.

AHRC Livingston looks forward to continuing to do their part to help the community.



## Reopening! Plans Underway! Chris Williams

Attached are pictures of our Levittown day site. As we prepare to reopen for people that have been living with their families since stay at home orders were issued. Si'Chole Jackson (Program Coordinator) worked with Stacy Keena (Site Manager) to envision the site with people keeping social distancing measures intact.

Transparency plans are underway for people and their families, so they can see what the site will look like when we reopen and hopefully ease any concerns they may have.

Here's to a happy, safe and healthy return to being together.

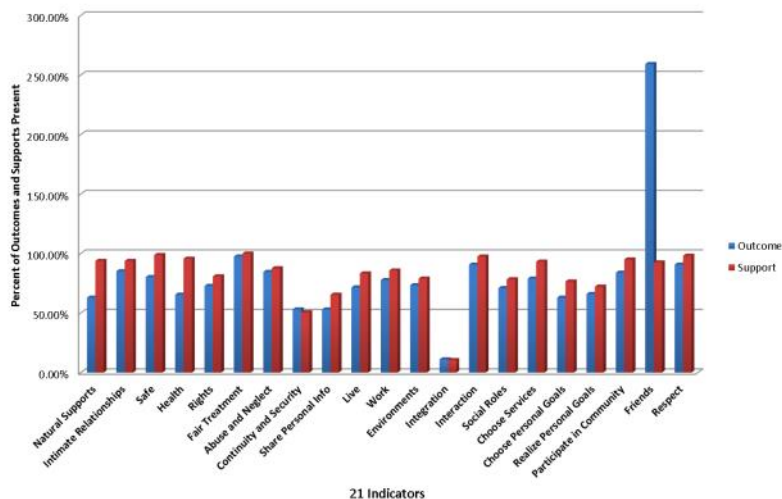




# VALUED OUTCOMES

## Personal Outcome Measures Update By Colleen Tapia

POM Interview Data:  
Total Percent of Outcomes and Supports Across Agency (2020)



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.

The Personal Outcome Trainers/Interviewers continue to track all data for the individual's outcomes and the agencies' supports in order to implement improvement initiatives. During this time of pause due to COVID-19, interviews have been completed remotely. In order to assist people to understand CQL and Personal Outcomes, POM trainers/interviewers attend residential/house, day program and family meetings.

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.

Advocates are members of the Board of Directors, COMPASS, Human Rights, Incident Review and Guardianship Committees. People supported attend Human Rights Committee meetings as they wish, with support staff, as needed, to discuss the current rights restriction in their plans and/or medications. They are involved in the discussion about the need for continued or discontinued use of it and the process of fading it out of their lives in a safe and healthy way if indicated. POM interviews continue to be conducted prior to referral for a psychiatric evaluation.

Empowerment training is offered to people receiving supports on various topics: voting, mask wearing, how to make a complaint, what happens if you get sick and social distancing. Training on POMs continues to be provided at New Hire Orientation. Staff also sign an attestation to indicate their commitment in facilitating that people supported work on and attain their outcomes. POM training is offered through the year to existing staff. Each year the POM department interviews a different set of people supported by both AHRC Nassau through various services (Residential, Day Program, Supported Employment, Community Habilitation, Self-Directed Services). Thus far in 2020, 162 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.

## Staying Safe ... Wearing a Mask!

**Wearing a Mask**

THE RIGHT WAY TO WEAR A SURGICAL MASK  
CORRECT: MASK MUST COVER NOSE, MOUTH AND CHIN

THE WRONG WAY TO WEAR A SURGICAL MASK  
INCORRECT: MASK ONLY COVER MOUTH

Wearing a face mask will help prevent the spread of infection (germs) and prevent contracting any airborne infectious germs. When someone coughs, talks, sneezes the germs into the air that may infect others nearby. Face masks are part of an infection the spread of illness.

All Staff Must wear masks.

The use of face masks continues to be discussed in training and Council meetings on a regular basis. It is understood that wearing a mask is difficult and challenging for many people.

The hot summer months remind us all that those people are not alone. Yes, it can be uncomfortable, we know that. Masks can come in many different forms. Paper, cotton, nylon etc. Bandanas can be used and tied behind the neck or head. Masks can be made of mostly anything and offer a barrier against the spread of infections.

If you need help wearing a mask or need help choosing one that works for you, do not be afraid to ask someone to assist you.

**Please join Coleen Mackin this September as she hosts a mask making seminar on September 9, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. Come join Coleen and make a seasonal mask that you can use throughout the fall. You will be surprised how easy it is!**

## Art at Evers Street

By Helene Ramer

Everyone is going through a difficult time adapting, and coping to the new normal since the coronavirus changed all of our lives in the spring of 2020. Everything is different. Day hubs are closed and visits home to families were not possible for months. We at AHRC Nassau are very fortunate to have outstanding, dedicated staff, who can adjust to new policies, and encourage us to still be happy, healthy, and enjoying ourselves.

I had the pleasure to interview the ladies who live at Evers Street for their Personal Outcome Measures (POM) interviews. All five of the ladies were enthusiastic about their days working with Day Hab staff, Jaqueline Rolle from Oceanside hub site, and Rosanna Vaia from East Meadow Art hub site. They have been coming to Evers St daily and making wonderful art projects.

The art supplies come from East Meadow Art. The ladies start working on their projects at 9:00 a.m. They break for lunch, and finish by 3 in the afternoon. The house is so nicely decorated with all of their fine art work. They are busy making rainbows with leprechauns and a pot of gold, butterflies and flowers on the windows, and decorated picture frames with their pictures in it. They have also made a Tree of Hope with leaves, branches, birds, nests with eggs, and frogs sitting on mushrooms. For Memorial Day, they made an American Flag Banner to hang outside. They have decorated baseball hats, and even made a rock garden. The rocks are painted, and have sea shells and buildings made out of milk cartons.

They also have a cooking class one time a week, and have made a recipe book with all of their favorite foods. They make corn bread casserole, grilled vegetables over pasta, and tuna salad with red peppers and peas.

The house manager, Georgette Gentles- Lambert, is very proud of the beautiful work the ladies have done, and how festive the house looks. Great job everyone!



## A World of Thanks!

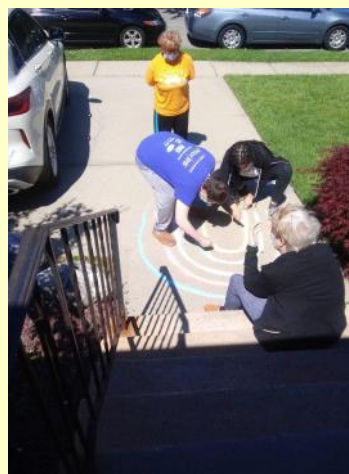
The residents of AHRC's Jay Street House sent a bright message of thanks to their direct support team!

Direct Support Professionals make so much possible for people with developmental disabilities, from essential supports to civil rights.

The chalk art done at Jay Street house says it all—

**"Heroes Work Here"!**

It was a wonderful way to share their appreciation for their DSPs' creativity, bravery and hard work.





# VALUED OUTCOMES

## DSPs and Nurses are Recognized



Despite being quarantined, everyone was able to recognize our nurses and support staff in unique ways. We could not show our appreciation in person so we had to get creative, take pictures and share!

## Faith and Hope Grows Here

"Faith and Hope Grows Here." We always knew that about AHRC's Cedar Street House, but now it's highlighted in a bright and cheery window painting by local artist, Mike Pagano. Pagano has been sharing his talent across Long Island during this time of COVID-19. For his generous spirit, time and beautiful art, Cedar Street's residents and staff wanted to say a warm thank you! #art #strongertogether #newyorkstrong #longisland Pagano Concepts



## Here to Help - Delivering Meals and Supplies By Peter Yagaloff

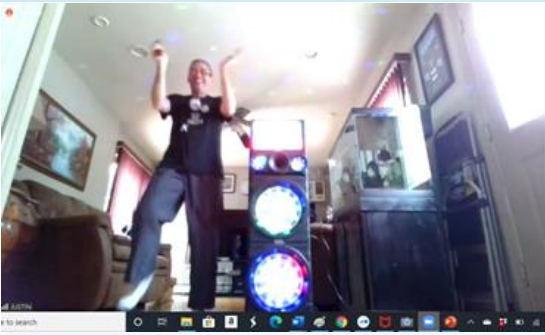
During the pandemic, Barry and Justin identified the opportunity to divert Freeport staff to support the residences, as the houses have largely been quarantined and/or isolated from their communities. By allocating some Freeport resources, to assist the residences with fulfilling their essential needs, such as grocery shopping, it has freed the house staff up to fulfill their primary responsibilities of caring for and protecting the individuals living in our homes. Freeport staff has also partnered with Diane De Santis' purchasing team, and have been able to secure large quantities of cleaning and paper products, which have been in high demand and in short supply, since the onset of the COVID 19 crisis. Staff warehouses these supplies in Freeport, assembles orders (prioritizing homes with active COVID cases), and makes regular deliveries of them to the houses who have acute need for them.

Further, Percival Aquino and our Café 230 culinary staff, as well as Rita Cruz and the commercial cleaners from Total Facilities Management, have continued to ensure that prepared hot meals and emergency disinfecting cleaning services are regularly being provided to the residential staff, to ensure that their needs are all met and that they feel safe, living and working at their respective homes. Recently, Rita and Todd Borom were able to purchase specialized electrostatic cleaning equipment for COVID disinfecting, which will continue to be used in agency homes, offices, and schools, to ensure that we are all living and working in sterile environments.

It is our pleasure to continue to support our residential heroes, who have sacrificed so much in their efforts to preserve the safety and well-being of the people we support. Shown are a few pictures of Rachael David and Fiona Wilson, members of the Freeport Vocational team. They are out at the supermarket, grocery shopping and making deliveries to some of our AHRC residences, during the crisis.



# Getting the Party Started



DJ Justin Abramowitz has been bringing people to the "virtual" dance floor during Zoom sessions for the Levittown day program and people across the agency.

Live from his music room with speakers, a microphone, disco ball and a life-size cut-out of himself, Justin has been leading 30 minutes of music and dancing, while behaviorist Soosan Happel facilitates the meeting and his mom lends a helping hand as his behind-the-scenes assistant.

Way to go DJ Justin! [#wegotthebeat](#) [#letsdance](#)

## AHRC Diversity Committee, “AS WE STAND TOGETHER, WE GROW TOGETHER”. *By Bridget Cariello*

“As an act of solidarity, the AHRC Nassau, Citizens and BCCS diversity committees ask you to honor two core beliefs of our agencies – diversity and inclusion – as we acknowledge the senseless death of George Floyd and other victims of racially- motivated attacks and injustice”.

Earlier this year, I ran into Senior Director Shaun Weathers while I was writing on the Kinara display in the lobby of the AHRC building in Plainview (The Kinara are the candles associated with Kwanza). While, I am not African American, I strongly identify with the seven principles associated with the holiday: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), NIA (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith). I was in the process of adding some of my thoughts to a Kwanza poster put out during the holidays in the lobby of our building. Shaun and I struck up a dialogue; this is how I learned of the AHRC-Citizen's Diversity Committee and its important work. When asked to join, I responded that I had chaired a similar committee in a previous role that I had. It was a natural partnership and this is how my knowledge of our internal committee began. The committee itself is part of several other committees and the All Agency Committee chaired by Stanford Perry. The AHRC-Citizen's committee had been hosting several wonderful events annually to bring people together (Friendsgiving, Ice Cream Social and many other events).

Our committee (Shaun Weathers, Dalton George, Astrido St. Surin, Samantha Torres, Craig Wolfson, Heidi Klewicki, Linda Rosen, Michelle Dressler and I) had the opportunity to meet several times prior to the spread of the Pandemic. The committee is comprised of staff from varied levels of the agency, we are a culturally, ethnically diverse group of people. Together we discussed hosting our first collaborative event for the year, 2020.- a “Lunch and Learn Series,” that would focus on Cultural Diversity and Belonging. As a committee our excitement grew, as our event began to come to life in the planning.

A few weeks later we were quarantined. During this time period our committee continued to meet and discuss not only Diversity but our own well-being and that of our families. Together we tackled topics of great importance like being isolated, not being able to resume our training in a face to face forum and moving ahead with this important work. We regularly started our meetings with “one word check ins,” and incorporated active listening and open dialogue into our regular agenda. We openly shared our experiences surrounding our own sense of belonging and exclusion.

As our work together progressed, our country moved into a period of civil unrest, that led up to the death of George Floyd. While our committee was not prepared for this turn of events, we had grown together in openness, respect and combined talent. The AHRC-Citizen's committee was prepared to talk to one another, to hear and feel the sharpness of the world's most recent events, together.

As shared by Committee Member Michelle Dressler, “Being part of the Diversity Sub-committee is eye-opening experience. We are a diverse but cohesive group. Everyone has their own viewpoint which makes for interesting and informative conversations. We've had several Zoom s and I can't say why but I feel being apart has made us closer.” Another member Craig Wolfson shared, “During these unprecedented times, the Diversity and Inclusion Committees have been a source of inspiration and courage. While we are not physically together in the same room, we are still working together to share our mission throughout our agency. We are planning several events and activities, adapting to the ever-changing landscape, and the team has truly grown closer despite all of our additional demands due to the pandemic.”

In response to these events and the great need for understanding in our world we have worked to develop our first launch and learn on Cultural Diversity and Belonging. In the weeks ahead we will be hosting a nine-minute vigil to acknowledge and honor the tragic death of George Floyd. Together we hope to expand and develop a discussion series that addresses important topics that impact our community, and provide meaningful ways for **all people** to stand together.

As said by Diversity Committee Member Heidi Klewicki, “I am infinitely grateful for the diverse workforce found at our agency; and excited each day to create a work place where people feel they belong. This committee helps bring each of our unique experiences of life to light through a quarterly newsletter, team building events and most recently a virtual workshop on the topic of culture. I'm proud to work for an agency that is committed to creating a culture of inclusion”.

**Perhaps as said best in the statement made by Stanford Perry in response to the death of George Floyd: It is simply not enough to try to imagine what others are going through. We must have the respect and resolve to do something about it: we must sign petitions, contact elected representatives, support organizations that fight for peace, justice and equality. Though the challenges before us are at times tremendous and overwhelming, we must choose — through our words, thoughts and deeds — to emerge as a stronger and more just community. We do so together.**

I am grateful to have had this unique opportunity to grow and learn alongside my colleagues in a very meaningful opportunity to create greater change. I found it fitting that my introduction to the agency Diversity Committee was over the Kinara, one fine day in Plainview. The bonding and shared experience of working on issues that are important to all of us during such challenging times has strengthened us as a unit. We have grown together, and together we stand. As we continue to “STAND TOGETHER,” we invite you to stand with us, at the AHRC-Citizen's Diversity Committee where ALL are always welcome.



## Individual Questionnaire Results 2019

AHRC Nassau provided people who receive services and supports with a questionnaire to obtain their individual feedback regarding each program. An agency wide trend is noted if more than ten percent of those surveyed identified a concern to a particular question. Advocates assisted people who requested or required help completing the questionnaire.

The following programs completed individual questionnaires:

- Community Living Services
- Community Hub Site Program (includes Freeport Seniors and Freeport Day Hab)
- Freeport Supported Employment (On and Off Site)
- Freeport Pre-vocational

### Development and Design:

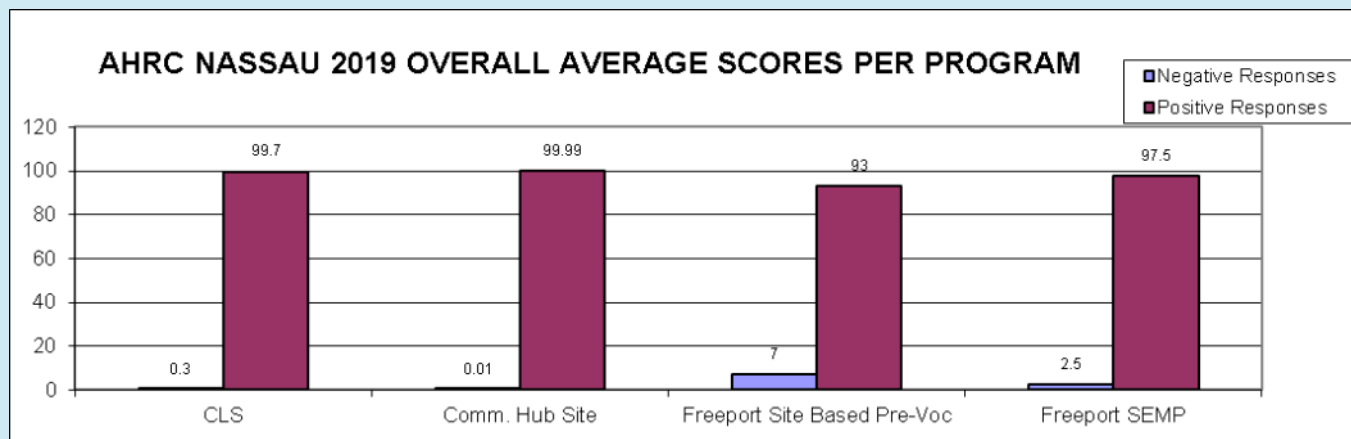
An agency wide template was created by the COMPASS Committee to obtain feedback regarding satisfaction with services offered via the National Core Indicators of Home/Work: Environment, Relationships, Health and Productivity in addition to key issues related to CQL's Basic Assurances. Additionally, feedback on the agency's Guiding Principles was solicited. This template was provided for each program's customization of questions per category. All questionnaires are designed in a "yes, no" answer format with space provided for additional comments. New this year was an open ended question, *"Please tell us what new or additional services you would like to receive?"*

### Agency Guiding Principles:

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

### Agency Wide Results:

No agency wide trends were identified. The results across programs were excellent. Program responses were assessed and individual program reports were generated and are attached. The individual programs made personal contact for comments that re-



## House and Family Meetings

### *Visits -The Long Wait is Over!*

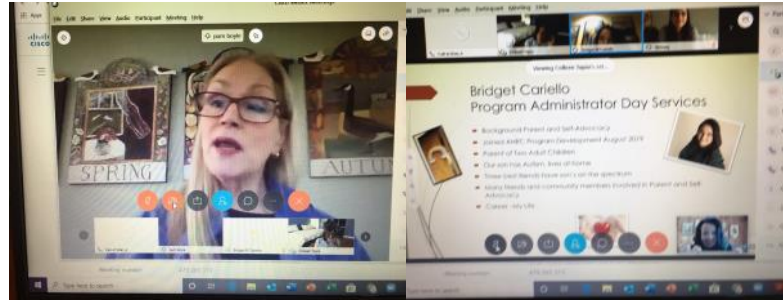
*While you can't see all their smiles,  
you can feel their joy to be together again.*



# VALUED OUTCOMES

## Family Seminars Go Virtual!

During these challenging times, AHRC Nassau was pleased to offer families a **virtual opportunity** to participate in a seminar specifically geared towards wellness, gratitude and mindfulness to uplift spirits as we all “shelter in place.” “The Gratitude and Mindfulness Seminars” was a two part series held on May 7, 2020 and May 21, 2020. Presentations were provided by Pam Boyle and Bridget Cariello.



“Understanding Dementia: What Every Caregiver Should Know” was presented by: Julie Cannet, MA, BCBA, Assistant Director for Psychology Services & Erin Marciante, MS, Sr Behavioral Intervention Specialist on June 22, 2020. This valuable seminar about dementia and how it affects people with disabilities offered the opportunity to learn practical tips to care for your loved one's daily needs along with approaches for common challenges caregivers face. Also discussed was how Covid-19 has affected life for people living with dementia and the newly expanded role of caregivers during this time.



A daytime and evening seminar was then held on June 24, 2020 and June 25, 2020 to review the protocol for visits at AHRC Nassau residences. This was presented by Karen Tanzillo/Senior, Director of Citizens, Nicole Ferrar/Senior Director of Health Services and Shaun Weathers/Senior Director of AHRC Nassau Residential and Day Services. Everyone was thrilled to be able to once again spend time together in person!

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

## University of Personal Growth by Helene Ramer

We are very proud of the success of the University of Personal Growth classes, that have been held once a month since April 2019 until March 2020. Classes were held in Plainview on the second Tuesday of the month from 11a.m.-12 p.m.. The program has been so well received that as of January 2020, we moved to a larger conference room to be able to accommodate more people. Our first class for the new year was yoga and meditation, taught by Nicki Katz.



Every month the topic is different. Subjects range from health and nutrition to money management, relationships, safety, and personal and emotional health. Flyers are sent out by email to the hub sites and group homes monthly. Signing up is easy; just a quick email to Helene at [hramer@ahrc.com](mailto:hramer@ahrc.com). Participants do not have to attend all classes. They can choose the ones that interest them. For the remainder of 2020, we are planning to host classes virtually. Stay tuned for more information!

## Delivering Meals and Supplies By Cesar Fuentes



Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the AHRC/Nassau Pre Vocational program has endured similar hardships as other programs within the agency. While the Freeport hub facility has remained closed and the majority of staff have been furloughed or reassigned, a skeleton crew of dedicated staff have maintained ongoing supports and assistance to individuals enrolled. Since the onset of the pandemic, weekly calls have been consistently made to all participants to check in on their well-being and offer additional supports and supplies. For those in urgent need of food and PPE supplies, staff are working in collaboration with the Long Island Council of Churches to provide food supplies, and furnishing PPE equipment as needed and delivered as a door to door service. In addition, weekly Zoom sessions provide a social outlet for participants to connect with each other, as well as provide them with up to date information related to the pandemic, public service announcements, and status of the Pre Vocational program in relation to its eventual opening.





## VALUED OUTCOMES

## 2020 EMPOWERMENT & FAMILY SEMINARS

## Empowerment Series

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

**2020**  
**Empowerment Technologies**  
11:00 a.m.  
September 16, 2020 via Zoom

**2020**  
**Engaging and Retaining your Talents**  
11:00 a.m.  
October 7, 2020 via Zoom

**2020**  
**Internet Safety**  
11:00 a.m.  
October 28, 2020 via Zoom

**2020**  
**Professional Behavior in the Workforce**  
11:00 a.m.  
Date TBD

## 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**

**Day Hab Reopening**  
**August 6, 2020 at 11:00 am**  
**August 13, 2020 at 6:30 pm**

**October 7, 2020**  
**The Importance of Community Involvement and Engagement**  
Wheatley Farms  
2:00 pm

TBA  
Wills and Trusts

**For information or registration,  
please visit our website at [AHRC.org](http://AHRC.org)  
or email [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org) or  
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5492**

**We are excited to announce that the Empowerment Series trainings and many activities have gone virtual!**

For many people, getting connected with friends and doing activities “together” is now possible through TVs, tablets and phones. Classes such as music and movement, Yoga and fitness are now offered through Zoom. Please visit [AHRC.org](https://www.AHRC.org) for more details on how to join these fun and exciting activities.

## Empowerment Series

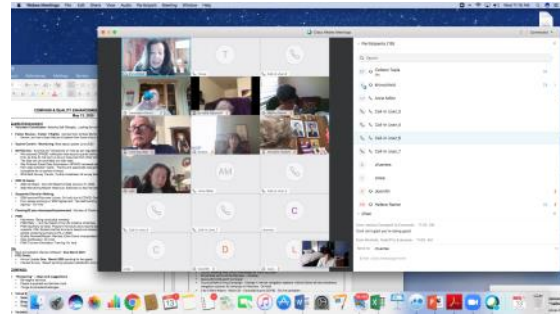
A virtual empowerment training was held on May 14, 2020 ON COVID-19 and covered the changes we all now face, what to expect if someone gets sick as well as rights if hospitalized. This was followed by a training on Virtual Meeting Etiquette on May 20, 2020, the Complaint Process on July 15, 2020 and a Voting Seminar on July 29, 2020.



# VALUED OUTCOMES

## The COMPASS Committee & The Quality Improvement Process

It's not business as usual! The COMPASS Committee along with the rest of the country has been busy reinventing itself due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This involved a change to virtual activities for meetings and quality improvement initiatives. And we are happy to report that remote meetings, trainings, questionnaires and events have worked and been successful. There are no doubt challenges and a sense of isolation from not being with others but we have found ways (Zoom!) to engage with colleagues, people supported and families.



The message is clear. The future is up to us to shape it and reap the benefits of this new experience. Lets make sure that includes being more empathetic, more compassionate, more understanding and a better nation.

## Regulatory Affairs By Eric Rosen

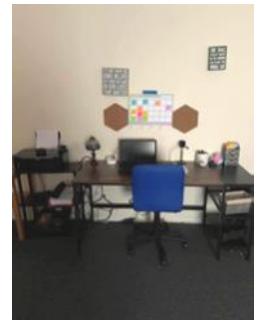
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of site-based surveys, the Regulatory Affairs Department completed twenty seven (27) surveys during the first half of the calendar year of 2020. These surveys include small IRAs, large IRAs and Day Habilitation sites. The OPWDD Site-Based Protocol was utilized during all surveys.

Positive findings noted during these surveys include overall satisfaction with supports and services, the promotion of independence and respectful/supportive interactions.

## Advocates Virtual Connections By Coleen Mackin New Times, New Skills.... Keeping up with the Times

**Coleen wasted no time adjusting to the self-quarantine order in March. She quickly and effectively set up her "home office" so she could continue her strong advocacy for SANYS and AHRC Nassau.**

**Way to go Coleen!**



## Employee COVID Survey

This year a COVID-19 survey was completed to assess how employees were meeting work and home demands during times of uncertainty and upheaval. 455 responses were received which represents 13.4% of employees from all companies who shared their candid feedback to help us understand how they are managing during this time.

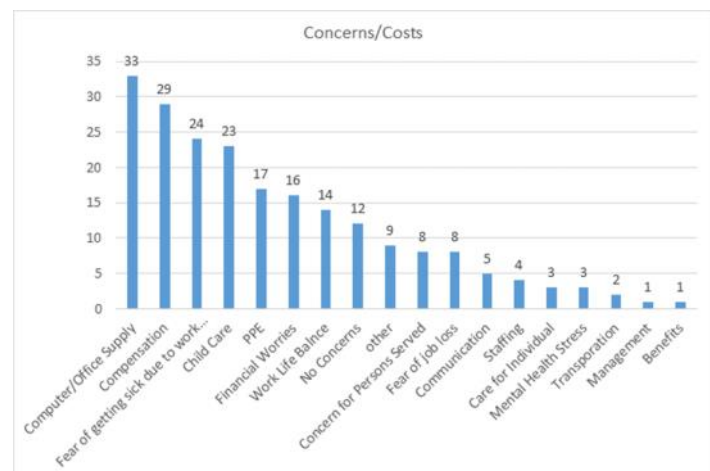
The feedback collected is being used to help provide insight into what resources AHRC Nassau and our family of companies can provide to support and to help plan for managing future crisis situations. The goal is to be sure everyone has the tools and help to balance work and home demands.

"I trust that our company will use this survey as an opportunity to help our employees meet their needs"

We received a score of 3.2 on a scale of 1-4

Responses for the question "Please tell us about any other work-related concerns/costs you may need help with, due to the current crisis, and any suggestions for how we might help." are shown at right.

Plans continue to be enhanced to assist all employees during these challenging times. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey and stay safe!





## Connecting with the People We Support at Wheatley Farm and Arts

By, Bridget Cariello

During the fall of 2019, Wheatley Farm and Arts programming was well under way. With development of the property at 211 in the works, Site Manager Isabella Riggi managed teams of staff alongside the people we support to embrace equine-assisted learning at HorseAbility. The individuals attending program learned grooming, feeding and stall maintenance in order to care for the many horses at the facility. Staff became well versed in prompting and supporting attendees to fulfill their daily tasks on the farm. Learning this type of care will be important as we plan for one full size and mini horse to join us when programming moves to the property at 211 Wheatley Road.

Over the past several months, Day Services met to work on expanding program development. Directly after the new year Wheatley Farms added in yoga, art and a photography club to their regular schedule. Through a partnership developed with Maryhaven, Day Services, we worked to develop curriculum to aid program attendees in learning more about growing produce through the use of hydroponics. The people supported at AHRC Nassau had the opportunity to take several weeks of classes at the Long Island Welcome Center. Classes consisted of the basic understanding of hydroponics, the towers, and how to grow produce successfully. This learning opportunity was face to face with a hands on component. While classes had been discontinued due to the shelter in place orders, development continues. Day Services teams are working to recreate the hydroponics classes in a virtual setting to continue the experience for the people we support. Since our organization supported the development of the materials, we will have developed a full curriculum for use at Wheatley Farms when the site opens.

Continuing our connections during this challenging time has been of great importance to the people we support and their families. Recently, I had the opportunity to catch up, and check in with Isabella and hear more on how she has stayed connected and continues to support program participants during this challenging time.

### ***Here is a summary of what she has shared:***

"During the time away from Wheatley Farms PWW, the volunteers and staff have continued zoom calls from home once a week. This is going very well. We meet and we talk about the pandemic and how we are coping with what is going on in the world. We have had the attendance of about 11 or 12 people total each zoom call. We do dance exercises on YouTube to get us moving. After a few weeks of doing one day a week, we decided to move to two days a week zoom calls. We now meet on Wednesday and Fridays. More people have been able to attend both zoom calls. In the past few weeks the volunteers have been eager to know when program was opening back up and when they can attend again. They can't wait to see the horses and their friends again soon."

***\*\*We look forward to sharing more on program development and will continue plans for reopening subject to OPWDD guidance.***

## Clothing Donations By Lynn Brewer

It all began way before the pandemic started. I was seeking a way to raise funds for programs and parties for the individuals we serve. I began to google and "FunDrive" caught my eye - collect clothes and get paid by the pound at Savers. The donations came in slowly but then when I was seeing what was donated, another idea popped in to my head. Many of the clothes were new with tags or gently worn. I began to go through every bag and offer these clothes to the individuals we serve. It was a win, win and I still had clothes to bring to Savers, usually over two thousand pounds.

Then the pandemic hit, people were home cleaning out their houses and all the clothing bins were closed and no organization was picking up donations. I decided to jump on this opportunity using my favorite tool Facebook. I put my flyer up but posted all donations would have to be dropped at my home. The inquiries began and the bags started to come. Then I had the unfortunate incident of my patio table breaking and had to purchase a new one. Again an idea came - make this a clothing drop box. I covered it with garbage bags to protect donations from the rain. From there every day I emptied the bin, putting it in my car and bringing to Plainview to be sorted. Some days, especially Mondays, I had to make several trips. Weekend donations were large ones!

One day I was talking with Chris Williams and he asked what I was up to, I told him about the donations pouring in and the condition of the clothes. He stated "Wouldn't it be great if we could offer free clothing to DSPs via a mobile boutique?" We both giggled. Next thing I knew it was happening. With the help of day program staff, we are delivering clothes to every AHRC group home DSPs. Every week we sort through the bags, fold and organize; we have two vans going out twice a week. The majority of the group homes are grateful and taking what they need for themselves and family members. We have an abundance of clothes because of the ongoing donations.

AHRC Nassau  
189 Wheatley Road  
Brookville (Glen Head)  
New York, 11545



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Organization  
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TO:

*Empowers people to live fulfilling lives. Together with friends-family-community*

