The month of February and Living Resources go hand in hand, or in our case, **heart in heart**. At Living Resources, we always celebrate the individuals we care for and the staff that support them because they are the heart of the agency.

As we move through the month of love, our staff members are sharing their love by getting vaccinated to ensure the health of those around them. Currently nearly 300 of our eligible staff members have begun their vaccination series and with each vaccination, our heart swells. If you are eligible, please do your part and get vaccinated.

Be the reason someone smiles today, cheers!

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Help us plant our garden of hope!

At Living Resources, the **heart** is part of our logo because individuals with developmental disabilities and brain injuries are the **heart** of our mission!

This population is all too forgotten when it comes to funding and resources. With state budget cuts looming, we are reaching out to YOU, our Living Resources family, and asking you to **join us by investing in services and programs that support more than 1,900 individuals each year so they can live safely and independently.**

As a token of our appreciation, you will receive your own “Forget Me Not” seeds to plant in your personal garden of HOPE.
Showing the Love

Love is not what you say, it’s what you do. Our Super Heroes show their love by getting vaccinated!

Sam Thalluri, Asst. Director Of Information Technologies

“I got my shot because I am a first responder. If you care about your loved ones, you should get your shot.”

Sharon Kendzierski, Computer Support Specialist

“I don’t want to get sick and I don’t want others to get sick. I got vaccinated because I care.”

John Newkirk, Asst. Director Facilities Management

“I got vaccinated to ensure the health and safety of my family, friends, and the people I serve.”

Nora Walsh, Art Program

“I got my shot because I want to do my part to get my participants back into doing what they love to do!”

Bryce Zielinski, Administrative Assistant

“I got vaccinated to protect myself, my friends and family. I want to do my part to move past this pandemic.”

Dave Putman, Director of Facility Management

“I got vaccinated because I have a personal responsibility to protect my family and my friends.”

Heather Blakeman, Corlaer

“I got my shot for the safety of the residents. I don’t want to see COVID keep going, and I want to do my part.”

Roxanne Delfavero, ABI Art Program:

“I got my shot because I want to help my participants come back to program and be hands on in the creation of art again!”

David Noonan, Coordinator of Incident Management

“I got my vaccination because I feel it is important to help my family and community.”
John Schwartz: Music Man

When John Schwartz was born, there were serious concerns. He had a combination of Cerebral Palsy and hydrocephalus. Shortly after birth he experienced a brain hemorrhage and required a shunt to be installed in the left side of his brain. The medical professionals expressed doubts that John would ever talk or walk.

That was almost 35 years ago, and he has shattered every expectation. He lives a full life with his parents, Mary and Chuck, participating in many programs, including Living Resources’ Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP). One thing is for sure, music is his passion.

When he was six years old, John started taking piano lessons from Linda Fisher, the pianist at his church. He studied with her for many years, learning to play one-handed as the CP makes it difficult for him to use his right hand. John also sings, plays harmonica, guitar, djembe, and cajon making him a veritable one-man-band.

John has participated in the DCOP Chorus as their piano accompanist since the group was formed seven years ago. Prior to the pandemic, the group met weekly to rehearse music. They performed twice a year at the agency wide Day Program Award Ceremonies and sang Christmas Carols at the Living Resources holiday open houses. Although they haven’t met in person this past year due to the pandemic, he still interacts with his DCOP friends via Zoom on Tuesdays and Fridays.

John has become a master of other communication platforms as well. This past summer, he gave live musical concerts in his front yard for his neighbors and his Facebook Live fans. Each week he created set lists including songs by artists such as The Beatles, The Beach Boys, Billy Joel, Elton John, Michael Jackson, Jimmy Buffet and modern artists such as Justin Timberlake. John said, “I loved that, ‘cause I knew that there were people watching and they knew the songs I had prepared.”

One of his most frequently requested song is Billy Joel’s Piano Man, on which he sings and plays the harmonica while accompanying himself on the piano. This piece is very special to him since he met Billy Joel through the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

John knows about giving back to his community. Prior to the pandemic, he played at a several Open Mic Night venues in the region as well as at nursing homes and a summer camp. At the later, he frequently brought a bag filled with percussion instruments so everyone could make music with him. Since all that is on hold, he currently does online music therapy with “Music Speaks” in Troy, connecting with the next generation through the universal language of music. He says that it is “very meaningful to me to play for different folks.”

Kate Bugbee, his DCOP manager said, “John is truly talented and phenomenal musician. He has shared a lot of inspiration and shows enthusiasm when he plays music with his peers.” His father added, “John is a remarkably courageous and talented young man.” The lesson John wants to share with the world is not to let others define your life.

As John frequently tells others, “You can do anything you want!”
In a time where learning takes place virtually, making academics even more difficult for students with disabilities, our CareerNext program has been helping students succeed. Our CareerNext at SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Schenectady County Community College offers academic support for students with autism and learning differences. We help those students who need guidance to successfully complete an accredited Bachelor’s Degree, Associate’s Degree or Career Certificate.

We are proud to spotlight CareerNext SUNY Schenectady student Megan, who is set to graduate in May 2021. She has been accepted as a transfer student to Cazenovia College where she will be receiving a scholarship. Megan will be attending their Teacher Education program, having benefited from SUNY Schenectady and Cazenovia’s articulation partnership.

Freshmen student Tessa has much to be proud of as well. She was a recipient of the President’s Award having received all A’s in four courses. Special Congratulations our many students who achieved President’s list at SUNY Schenectady: Dylan, Hayden, James, and Victoria. Congratulations to Zach who made the Dean’s list at SUNY Schenectady. Congratulations to Isabelle who made the Dean’s Honorable Mention list at SUNY Cobleskill.

Happy Valentine's Day from #LivingResources! Dogtor Benjamin has a special skill to give hugs when asked. He has missed all his friends at Living Resources during the pandemic and can't wait to give everyone hugs!

See Stephanie and Dogtor Ben in action: https://youtu.be/jKMMesOYyyI
COLORS Donation

Living Resources’ College Experience Program made a donation of clothes, bedding and household items recently to the Colors Foundation in Wappingers Falls, NY. They, in turn, quickly donated the items to the Hudson River Housing, Inc. where they were distributed to individuals who are supported by that agency.

Delsie Howey, member of the Colors Foundation’s Board of Directors said “Those at the Hudson River Housing, Inc. were so excited and happy to receive the donations. It was like Christmas, Hanukkah, and birthday gifts for them! They were super happy and that’s the best reward anyone can receive when planting a smile on someone’s face who is in need.”

Thanks to all involved in getting the goods where they could do the best GOOD!

Photographed with the donation are Delsie Howey, her daughter, Skye; and her parents Luz and Pete Morales.

Have a Heart, Do Your Part, and Get Your Shot!

Our individuals who live at The Intrada in Saratoga had the opportunity to get their COVID-19 shot this month. Manager Lindsey Ryan shared that the group was, “all very excited- a bit nervous, but overall excited to get the vaccine because they knew that it was going to keep them safe.” All of the individuals said it didn’t hurt at all, and it felt just like getting the flu shot. People’s arms were a little sore the next day, but they were grateful that they were *finally* able to get vaccinated!

Toby Slyman said “I got my shot so I don’t get sick. It’ll make me feel better. I think that it’s important to get it to keep myself and my loved ones safe. Tina Harding agreed, adding, “hopefully things go back to normal soon.” Katie Kelly concurred, sharing, “I work at Market 32 and I want to stay safe!”
WARNING- SCAM ALERT! There are many scams surfacing about the COVID Shot. You DO NOT need to pay to get a shot. You CANNOT pay to get an early shot. NEVER give out your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number or other personal information to unknown sources.