



A Message from the Chief Executive Officer



As an organization that relies on state funding for a majority of our revenue, we pay strict attention to New York State's Budget negotiations because this funding has a direct impact on the support we provide.

Each year, after the Governor's Executive Draft Budget is released in January, the Senate and the Assembly release their budget and policy priorities in March. Once they publish these priorities, called "One House Budget Bills," the budget negotiation process with the Governor can begin in earnest.

Recently the Senate and Assembly issued their "One House Bills" and they include the following priorities that would have a vital impact on Living Resources and the individuals and families we support. They propose that the Governor:

- Restore the 1% COLA (cost of living adjustment) that OPWDD providers are supposed to receive, which the Governor proposed to defer.
- Restore funding in order to prevent the Governor's proposed 1% across-the-board targeted funding reduction to OPWDD providers.
- Restore funding associated with the Governor's proposed 5% cut to non-Medicaid programs.

The cuts in the Governor's Executive Budget would amount to a significant reduction in funding to Living Resources, which jeopardizes our ability to provide quality supports. It is imperative that these one-house bills be passed.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

[Click here to send a message to your Representatives and urge them to make sure OPWDD funding is restored in the final budget.](#)

Moving Forward One Shot at a Time

We have been working diligently these past few months to provide our Super Hero staff and the individuals they support with as many vaccination opportunities as possible.

We are grateful to each Super Hero who has stepped up. Not only are they keeping themselves healthy, but they are helping to protect their families and those they support.



I'm vaccinated

as soon as we can is our pathway back to hugs, parties, sporting events and all the other wonderful joys of life!

~ Elizabeth Martin, Living Resources CEO



I'm doing this for myself and others. I have hope that in the months to come, the data will show being vaccinated not only protects me but helps prevent me from accidentally giving someone else COVID.

I'm doing this because I've become incredibly impatient. I want this pandemic to end. I'm sick and tired of masks, social distancing and Zoom. And I'm sick and tired of the unbelievable stress this pandemic has had on our staff and the individuals we serve. I want this pandemic over ASAP – and getting vaccinated

Check out the back of this Newsletter for more exciting stories, photos, and video links!



Kudos to Katie Kelly!

Beloved Price Chopper employee celebrates 30 years at Wilton store



Katie Kelly, who receives support from Living Resources, certainly has reason to celebrate. Her success at Price Chopper/ Market 32 over the past 30 years speaks for itself.

As Jacquie Slater of WNYT - TV reported, "In a store with more than 200 employees, Katie Kelly is one of a kind." More of Ms. Slater's story is presented below:

Born with an intellectual disability, her family says Katie has defied the odds since the day she was born. She thrives on her routines. She loves people and helping others. Katie's sister and guardian is Saratoga Springs Mayor Meg Kelly.

When Meg posted a picture marking Katie's big anniversary, the well wishes poured in. "A lot of people know me, but even more people know Katie Kelly from Price Chopper. I put that post up we had over a thousand likes, and we got 250 comments that were just beautiful," Meg said.

A 2018 study by the bureau of labor statistics showed on average a person spends just over four years at a job. Katie proves everyday she's way above average. In fact, she's a superstar with no plans of retiring anytime soon. "I love my coworkers," Katie said. "Because I get along with them really well. I get along with everybody here very well."

Lindsey Ryan, the manager of Katie's residence summed up everyone's feelings regarding Katie's newly found fame by saying, "We're all so excited for her, I actually cried!"



We congratulate Katie on her auspicious anniversary and her well- earned fame!

[Click to HERE to watch the NewsChannel 13 clip](#)

Taking A Break From Winter's Chill



The Alumni Activities Club enjoyed their first trip to the Goldfish Swim School in Colonie for an open swim session. Nick Williams and Megan Matuszek took the opportunity last week to marinate in the 90-degree heated pool water, finding it to be a perfect escape from the frigid winter. They clearly enjoyed themselves and look forward to repeating it in the near future!

Before enjoying the hour-long swimming adventure, they stopped for a bite next door at Professor Java's Coffee Sanctuary.



Mindfulness in March and More!

Jorelle was a professional dancer who specialized in the flair, energy, and muscular strength of African Dance. When she was 29, she was injured in a car accident, resulting in a traumatic brain injury.

Although many things have changed for Jorelle, creative expression still dominates her personality. She delights in the yoga and mindfulness classes she takes through Living Resources' Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injury group.

Mindfulness is the practice of being aware of oneself in the present moment, without judgement. This weekly meeting provides Jorelle with structure that breeds calm, particularly during this time when everything is still so unknown.

Living Resources instructor Kendra Cunningham has integrated her passion for mindfulness and movement in her work with individuals impacted by brain injuries to help build a sense of awareness, acceptance, and increased resilience.

"I love the mindfulness/relaxation class because it allows me to

SLOW down,

breathe,

stretch and move differently than I usually do.

And during the pandemic, it's been really wonderful to

BE A PART OF SOMETHING!

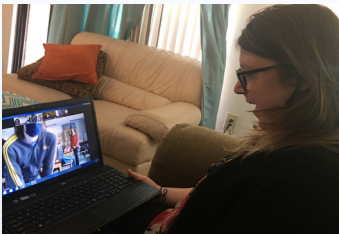
I have somewhere to be, my presence is valued!

There is a whole bunch I do to get ready: close the curtains on the front window, put my mat down, put a sign on the front door that I'll be "unavailable" for the next hour, take off my shoes and socks, and make there's no background noise (radio etc.)

We do "meditation/visualization" and that's pretty wild for me, because I rarely just lie down and do NOTHING. I'm doing something mental, not physical, and I'm a very physical person."

~Jorelle Pome

I Have 22q. Do You?



Deletion 22q, also known as DiGeorge Syndrome and VCFS (Velo Cardio Facial Syndrome) is a topic that Amy Maiorano, a graduate of our College Experience Program, understands on a personal level. Amy describes herself as a typical 27-year-old with a "hidden disability" that makes her unique. Her life's passion is to share about her disability and raise public awareness of Deletion 22q.

Deletion 22q is the second most common chromosomal disorder after Down Syndrome, affecting 1 in every 4,000 live births. This disorder is caused when a small part of chromosome 22 is missing and results in the poor development of several body systems. Amy informs us that 22q can be hiding, creating a variety of underlying medical, psychiatric, and learning problems. This includes heart defects, visual and hearing problems, growth/development, social/emotional problems, and intellectual disabilities. There are over 80 characteristics associated with this syndrome, which makes it difficult to detect without DNA testing.

Amy has been actively educating people about her challenges and successes with Deletion 22q for many years. She was recently the guest speaker for a Zoom conference, has her own blog called **Speaking Amy (click here to view)**, and even made a music video with the cooperation of her family and friends called "22q" which was sung the style of Taylor Swift's "22"





Food for Thought

College Experience graduates Zahin Momen and Sara Lehnert have been enjoying their volunteer shifts at the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York at their new site in Latham, NY.

Due to the pandemic, businesses have closed and many people have lost their source of income, causing them to reach out to food pantries for assistance. Eager to help, Zahin and Sara have been teaming up with the other volunteers to get food to people in need. They sort and repack donations of food and non-food items, preparing them to be loaded onto trucks. Once on the trucks, the packages are headed for food distribution sites throughout the Capital Region.



We are thankful to Volunteer Coordinator Cathryn Jones and the many volunteers who have been showing our alumni the ropes.

Cooking Up Some Fun!



The College Experience students recently had a SWEET time learning about the Culinary Arts. For six Fridays in a row, eleven students participated in a virtual culinary class with Matthew Williams, Executive Chef at the Albany Marriott International.

The hour-long classes covered a lot of ground. Among other topics, students learned about the differences between

commercial and home kitchens, were shown proper sanitation procedures, introduced to The Ten Essential Cooking Methods, and shown how to read recipes, nutrition, and food labels.

During one class, the students watched Chef Matt prepare two breakfast recipes - Oatmeal Bake and Stuffed French Toast. One student, Anna Santiago, was so excited about the Stuffed French Toast recipe, she replicated it on her own, declaring it to be her new favorite food. Anna said, "It has berries and bananas - It was so good! It's not hard to make, just time consuming." But then again, Anna is not new to the culinary arts. She explained, "I have a lot of experience with baking because I already took a BOCES class when I was in high school."

In another session, Chef Matt became a bit of a legend with the group by miraculously making six soups on camera in an hour. They all looked delicious! Anna said, "Chef Matt was very nice and kind. He laughed at some of my jokes!" She chuckled and admitted, "Not everyone understands my sense of humor, so I appreciate that he gets it!"

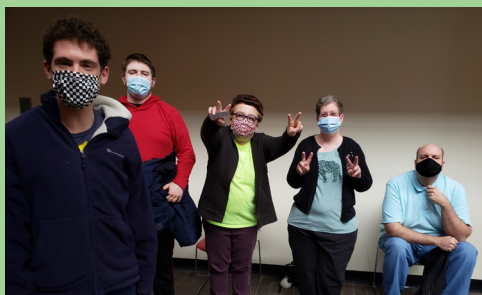
The final class involved visits from two alumni, Kristen Sheridan and Amy Maiorano, and a job coach, Koryn Shear, so students could learn about careers in the culinary field. In the future, we hope to offer this class again, but next time we hope to be able to have it in person so students can help make the food along with Chef Matt.



Doing Their Part in Ulster County

Our Ulster County Day Community Opportunities Program recently had a group vaccination adventure and it went amazingly well! Staff members split their program participants into smaller groups to ensure safety and social distancing during travel to the vaccination site.

To make their experience even more special, after each person who was vaccinated, a bell was rung in celebration. [Click to watch a brief video of the experience.](#)



Program manager Heather Henderson said, "It was pretty emotional just realizing the importance of what we were all doing together." Once everyone was vaccinated, the group went out for a socially distanced lunch. They had not seen each other in person for the better part of a year and the joy on their faces and in their actions was priceless! Everybody did great ordering and remembered to get their receipts. They talked about how much they have missed DCOP and how strongly they look forward to everything opening back up again.

Jesse's Journey toward Jumping for Joy



Jesse Saperstein, a Living Resources employee, autism awareness advocate, and person with Asperger's Syndrome is excited to share his COVID-19 vaccination journey to inspire others to "Have a Heart, Do Your Part and Get Your Shot." Jesse works as a Habilitation Liaison and Creative Writing Instructor and is a member of our training staff. As such, he qualified for an immunization. On a personal level, Jesse decided to get the vaccination to keep his individuals safe, saying, "I work for an agency where it can easily spread due to the group living situation. I don't want to give the virus to someone who may not survive."

Jesse chronicled his vaccination experience to help ease any concerns people may have. He assured, "Getting the vaccine was a very easy experience. I was able to drive myself home immediately afterwards with no troubles. By evening, my arm grew sore and I felt some fatigue. It was nothing to be alarmed about, I knew the vaccine was doing its job."

He asserted, "The biggest side effect was optimism as well as a sense of helping to exterminate this pandemic." He said "After a whole year of quarantining, being away from my family, missing my birthday, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, and everything else, I finally have a vaccine!"

[Click here to watch Jesse jump for joy!](#)





A Pinch for St. Patrick's Day

It wasn't pesky leprechauns pinching our Amazing Super Heroes, but the brave health care personnel armed with COVID 19 vaccinations. Below is a sample of our newly vaccinated #LivingResourcesFamily!



"At first I was concerned to get my shot, but then I did some research. The science says the vaccine is safe. I got it for myself, my family and my grandbaby. I'm glad I did!"

~ **Gloria Bailey,**
HR Generalist



"This 'YOUNG' lady of 94 years is ONE of the reasons I got my vaccination!"

~ **Cynthia Reinhardt,**
Delafield Drive



"I got vaccinated to help get everything back to normal."

~ **Karen McDonald,**
Lionheart



"I got my vaccination to help keep everyone healthy!"

~ **Lisa Razanousky,**
Recruiter



"I got my shot for my health and for the care and safety of people around me."

~ **Jonathan Parsons,**
Community Outreach Specialist



"I got vaccinated so I can travel and see my family again!"

~ **Christian Jones,**
Event Coordinator



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