One of the things that I value is transparency, and it is in the interest of transparency that I share with you a significant challenge we are facing.

Like other businesses in NYS, we are faced with a severe workforce shortage. I guess there is some solace in knowing that we are not alone, however, that solace is fleeting. Unlike many private sector employers who are raising wages in hopes of attracting staff members, we not able to compete with this by just doing the same. As a non-profit that receives a majority of its funding from State Medicaid to provide mandated supports and services, we do not have profits to draw from and we have little to no control over our "prices". Therefore, we can’t easily raise wages because NYS will not increase our funding just to cover the added costs of increasing staff wages. Even a very small hourly wage increase for our direct support professionals can increase costs by over a million dollars per year.

So we continue to search for innovative and creative ways to increase our hiring pool and retain our superhero staff. We are piloting several incentives including weekend differential pay and are looking at several more, but it is not easy, nor is it inexpensive. If you know of someone that has a caring personality and wants to make a difference every day, we have a job for them! Please encourage them to apply.

Elizabeth Martin

A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

The Art of Independence

Please join us for our annual Art of Independence

on July 20, 2021, 5:30 - 8:00 pm

as we enjoy a Picnic at the Pruyn House

The Art of Independence showcases our artists and their personal journey to be working artists. This event will be filled with artist demonstrations, elbow rubbing, fist bumps, and a fabulous, fun picnic experience. Casual Attire is recommended.

With your support, we hope to make this year’s Art of Independence the best one yet!

Join our Honorary Committee!

http://weblink.donorperfect.com/AOI_Honorary_Committee
Carey’s Adventures at Camp Jened

At his Living Resources residence in Schenectady where he has lived for 25 years, Carey Walker proudly modeled a bracelet he made by threading small plastic beads on nylon string. It was a work of art, featuring the entire alphabet. Carey, who was born in Jamaica, enjoys being in the great outdoors, going out for burgers and ice cream, and listening to music, particularly the reggae sound of Bob Marley.

Of all his hobbies, he says that creating bracelets is his favorite. He has been making them since he was seven years old, has perfected his craft for well over 50 years and naturally has become quite good. “You go in and out … in and out,” he explained. It is one of the many activities he enjoyed when he attended Camp Jened as a teenager.

Camp Jened was a summer camp for people with a range of disabilities in the Catskill Mountains during the 1960s and 1970s. It is the setting of the movie, “Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution,” which is currently airing on Netflix. The documentary showcases a group of teens with disabilities who met at a summer camp and built a movement advocating for greater equality. The movie won numerous awards including the 2020 Sundance Film Festival’s Audience Award and the Independent Spirit Awards for Best Documentary Feature. It was nominated for a 2021 Oscar for Best Documentary Feature.

Carey recently shared some personal highlights of his four-week long adventure at Camp Jened. He said he rode a bus with other campers to get upstate from New York City. During that time, he explored art activities, played basketball, and went swimming. He remembered enjoying delicious food such as; French toast, pancakes, eggs, hot dogs, and hamburgers. In the evenings, they roasted marshmallows over a fire and sang folk songs like “Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water.” He even had a girlfriend named Maria. “She was really cute,” he reminisced.

While at Camp Jened, Carey washed cars for the counselors - for a small fee. He smiled proudly when sharing, “I had a box that said ‘The car wash is 25 cents.’” Like any good businessman, Carey wanted to do a really good job and get the cars extra clean. Jim LeBrecht, fellow Camp Jened alumni and director of the movie “Crip Camp,” recalls Carey’s car washing enterprises in a Facebook thread. “I remember that he offered to wash the counselors’ cars. And he did. With soap and bleach, destroying the paint on them all.” The Camp Jened page responded by saying, “Carey Walker--at least his heart was in the right place!”

When asked if he would go back to Camp Jened, Carey said “Nah, I’m too old now.” But if he could go back in time, he would absolutely do it over again. He said, “It was good.”
Meet the College Experience Class of 2021!

On Saturday, May 8, The College Experience had the opportunity to celebrate both our 2020 and 2021 graduates at The College of Saint Rose commencement ceremony at the Times Union Center. The College Experience is a two-year certificate program for individuals with developmental disabilities. Graduation was a much anticipated event for all involved, particularly our Class of 2020. There was no formal graduation last year due to COVID restrictions, so, they had to wait a whole extra year to walk across the stage in their full cap and gown attire.

Our families praised their grads and the College Experience Program. A small sampling of their comments are below:

“We are so proud of all your accomplishments! It was a tough year in many ways, but also a great year.”
“We are so proud of the man you are becoming. You have made all of us a better person.”
“We’re so proud of all you have accomplished while at Saint Rose. You continue to face every challenge and new experience with courage and kindness.”
“We are so PROUD of you! You’ve worked very hard to get to where you are today, graduating from college and growing up to be a young intelligent man.”
“Congratulations on your graduation from CEP! We know you’ll continue to learn and grow in this new, exciting chapter of your life!”

Ra’Kwon Brady  Dora Butner  Dylan Calderon  Maxim Holznueter  Michael Mortenson

Pablo Nieves  Ryan Peterson  Ty Sheldon  Daniel Walsh  Sean Ward
Our Saratoga County Day Community Opportunities Program participants started the warm weather season in style. Assistant manager, Kristina Shafer planned a fun activity at Lake George.

One activity everyone enjoyed was defying the laws of acoustics at the “Mystery Spot.” For those not yet initiated, if you stand in this exact spot facing the lake and speak, you'll hear your own voice echo back to you like it is from another dimension. The catch is that only you can hear it, and only if you stand in the exactly right spot.

Our participants found this fascinating. They tried it out by shouting things like "hello" and "echo" and were thrilled to experience the mystery.
Programs with a Purpose, Lives Reimagined

We are proud to showcase the many programs of Living Resources!

**After School Program**
Helping children and adolescents develop social and recreational skills. Children and teens in the ASP enjoy a variety of activities, and look forward to the opportunity to socialize with their peers after their school day. Parents of kids in the ASP enjoy the peace of mind that comes from knowing that when they are unable to be present, a dedicated staff of skilled adults is ensuring the safety of their loved one.

**Arts Program**
Offering individuals with disabilities the opportunity to take fine-arts classes in a variety of mediums with high-quality materials taught by professional instructors in a studio setting.

**Brain Injury Services**
Designed to give individuals the means to regain control of their lives after brain injury through therapy, life-skills training, peer support groups, and other specialized services.

**Clinical Services**
Providing agency-wide support by licensed mental health professionals for the behavioral health needs of the individuals we serve. Our clinical team is renowned for their expertise in autism spectrum disorders. Services include psychological assessments, behavioral treatment plans, individual counseling sessions and group therapy.

**College Experience Program/ CareerNext**
The College Experience is an innovative, two-year certificate program operated in conjunction with The College of Saint Rose in Albany, New York. Offering young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities the opportunity to gain academic, social and independent living skills in a collegiate residential setting. CareerNext at SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Schenectady offers personalized academic and residential support for students with Autism and learning differences. It is focused on helping students who need guidance successfully complete an accredited Bachelor’s Degree, Associate’s Degree or Career Certificate.

**Community Habilitation**
Providing assistance to individuals of all ages living in the community, either in their own homes or in the home of family members. Staff assist individuals to achieve goals for independence, integration and socialization.
Programs with a Purpose (Continued)

**Day Services**
Delivering weekday programs for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in community-based and site-based settings. We focus on skill building in independence, community inclusion, social integration, individuality, and productivity. Participants engage in volunteer opportunities, prevocational and recreational activities, as well as educational enrichment.

**Deaf Services**
Professional American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services at medical appointments, performances, or any environment where communication between Deaf, hearing-impaired and hearing clients is required.

**Employment Services**
Providing career development to individuals with disabilities and assisting them in finding and maintaining jobs based on their interests and skill sets. We help individuals achieve independence by ensuring individualized supports are provided on the job site.

**Impact All**
Impact ALL helps human service professionals, social workers and mental health counselors maintain their professional standing and explore new opportunities through interactive courses conducted by professionals with hands-on experience serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Residential Program**
Supporting individuals living in a variety of settings. Staff support varies from 24/7 to as few as two hours a week based on an individual’s needs and abilities. Our residential sites offer a home environment, while also providing group learning experiences and development of skills in daily living.
In 2014, Living Resources opened New York State’s first Smart House for people with disabilities. This barrier-free, technologically-integrated home maximizes independence for individuals with multiple impairments.