

# Sharing the Journey



September 2021

LIVING  
RESOURCES

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer



This month, members of our Board of Directors, Living Resources staff, and I participated in a rally to advocate for higher wages for our hardworking Super Hero Direct Support Professionals. We joined our voices with others in West Capitol Park to demand that the state make the needs of those with intellectual/developmental disabilities a priority in state funding.

The rally was held in conjunction with Senator Mannion's Public Hearing on the Impact of the Workforce Crisis on New Yorkers with I/DD. Senator Mannion is the Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Disabilities. Living Resources together with area

providers shared impact stories from our families and staff which the Alliance used as part of their testimony.

Senator Mannion said, "I am calling on New York State to commit \$550 million in the state budget to begin to address the glaring issues in our workforce. This includes funding a living wage, longevity bonuses, tuition credits, and other efforts to recruit and retain workers. All New Yorkers deserve

a quality of life - whether it be through work or care- that reflects their value and dignity."

I agree with Senator Mannion that this workforce shortage must be addressed. Our team was present to advocate for increased wages for our DSPs and to save the needed services for all we support. We will continue as advocates in every way possible until the I/DD population becomes a priority in state funding.



## 12th Annual Golf Tournament

**RESCHEDULED**

**Still time  
to Register!**

**RESCHEDULED to Friday, October 8, 2021**  
Colonie Golf & Country Club • Voorheesville, NY

Title Sponsor:







## The Fruits of his Labor



"Getting dirty is easy – it's cleaning up that's hard." That's how Randy Wander summarized the burden of a gardener, and he should know– he has been gardening most of his life. Randy has been part of the Living Resources family for more than 40 years maintaining his own apartment with the assistance of our Albany Supportive Living Program, then moving to a group residence in 2017 so he could enjoy the slower pace of his retirement years. Since he was a child, Randy loved spending as much time as possible outdoors so his family sent him to a farming camp and he loved it.



Gardening is now in his blood. He says there are many benefits- he gets to be outside, keep healthy, and help other people, proudly stating, "I grow food for everyone that's here." His Living Resources family certainly enjoys the fruits (and veggies) of his labor- eating delicious fresh salads all summer long.

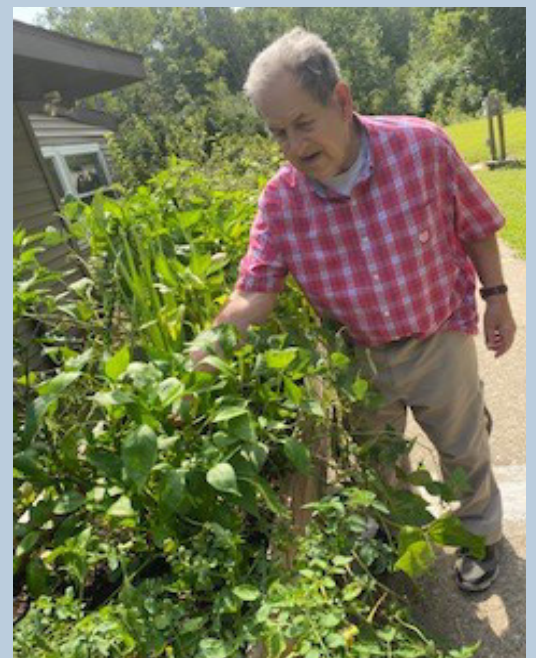
Now in his 70s, kneeling and bending are more difficult for Randy, so early this spring he ordered three elevated garden beds and William Savacool, the husband of Randy's house staff Judi, assembled them. Randy got busy planting strawberries, lettuce, and parsley. His summer crops included zucchini, eggplant, peppers, spring onions, tomatoes, green beans and even a few flowers.

According to all sources, the zucchini was his most successful crop this sea-

son, abundantly spilling over the raised beds onto the grass. He also had a veritable cornucopia of beans, lettuce, and tomatoes.

Gardening is not as easy as it may seem though. He says one key factor to the success of a garden is "knowing what mother nature will do. May was cold. Too cold to put seeds in the ground. My winter squash didn't work out well." Another crop that creates a challenge for him is carrots, explaining, "They look like dandelions and I pull them out because I think they are weeds."

All in all, Randy's raised garden beds are his joy. He would agree with English poet Alfred Austin, who acclaimed "The glory of gardening: hands in the dirt, head in the sun, heart with nature. To nurture a garden is to feed not just the body, but the soul."







## That's Just How We Roll

Wagon rides are not typically wheelchair-friendly. So when staff member Judi Savacool caught wind of a wagon ride equipped with a wheelchair lift she jumped on it—literally and metaphorically. Among the many roles Judi plays in her Living Resources group home, she is the unofficial “travel agent” for those who reside there. In all the researching and arranging of adventures she has done for her residents, she has found that although many venues claim to be “handicapped accessible,” they typically do not have adequate supports for adults with disabilities who are dependent on wheelchairs. Public restrooms pose particular barriers to some members of her group who need adult-sized changing tables.



After a few phone calls to confirm that this would be a good fit for her group, they were off on a road trip to Wagner

Farms in Rome, NY. The two-hour journey was filled with excited anticipation of adventure and enthusiastic singing to music on the radio.

When the group got there, they experienced everything you could wish from a late summer day on the farm; wagon rides, sunflower and corn maze mazes as well as a snack shop and farm stand. There were two wagons that were fully ADA compliant, complete with wheelchair lifts, and the mazes were wide and covered with grass, allowing wheelchair riders and their Super Hero staff to safely and pleasantly explore the grounds. What resulted was a feast for all the senses: they felt the rumble of the wagon beneath them and tractor in front of them, they saw giant sunflowers and took in their fragrant scent, heard the sounds of birds and the laughter of those around them, and enjoyed their meal from the snack shop, which always tastes better in the open air.

All who participated loved the experience from beginning to end and plan to return again.



## KeyBank Making a Difference

KeyBank has been “Making a Difference” since 1990 through their annual day of community service. Employee volunteers demonstrated Key’s purpose to help communities thrive by contributing their time and talents to a variety of non-profit community organizations, including Living Resources. During this year’s **Neighbors**

**Make the Difference Day** on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, their volunteers painted the ramp and porch of one of our residences in Saratoga County.

Thank you, KeyBank for making a difference in the lives of individuals we serve!







## Living Her Dream

"There is a difference between a dream and a goal. A dream is a gift you want to be given. A goal is something you work to achieve."  
~ Brian Knapp, Creative Pursuit

Karen Wright has been on a quest to live independently for many years. Her journey began more than 17 years ago when she joined Living Resources' Albany Supportive Living Program. Within this Supportive Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) she lived in a designated apartment with regular staff support for skills such as apartment maintenance, cooking, cleaning, shopping, money management, and general organization.



There, her staff embraced her desire to live in an apartment of her very own, helping her identify several goals needed to achieve this dream. With hard work and determination on Karen's part, and education, support, and encouragement from her Direct Support Professionals, Karen learned how to make and keep a budget, pay her own bills and manage her own medications. The amount of effort Karen put into this accomplishment is even more apparent when you factor in that she did all of this while working part-time and raising her son, Keyshawn, who is now 22 years old.

With the successful accomplishment of all her goals, Karen's moment arrived. She moved into her own apartment and is now living the independent life she always wanted. This is not to say that she will be completely unsupported. One of our Community Habilitation Instructors will provide assistance needed to help her keep up her skills and ensure she is as successful as possible.

## Keeping the Vibe Alive

Summer is a state of mind. The staff and individuals served by Community Habilitation at our Lionheart Apartments kept the summer vibe alive in their hearts as they celebrated the changing of the calendar and seasons.

Publicized to our participants as a "Post Labor Day Get Together," party-goers relaxed indoors while enjoying music, a meal and each other's company. Lawn games and other outdoor festivities were planned, but as if on cue, the weather had turned dreary and drippy. No matter. There is a saying, "Eternal summer lies in a grateful heart," and our group was just happy to be together.



COVID protocol being a perennial party crasher, a balance was struck between getting some folks together while being as safe as possible. Everyone wore masks and stayed as distanced as possible. Participants were served food, much of which was individually wrapped by our staff wearing masks and gloves.



The event was very well received and the hope is to continue having regular social mixers throughout the fall and winter.



## Our ASP Students Get an A for Apple!



Our **After School Program (ASP)** started this school year off by welcoming excited students back to in-person activities at all six of our program sites!

The Draper ASP site enjoyed their first field trip of the school year by going to Indian Ladder Farms for apple picking. The individuals picked two 1/2 bushels bags of Honeycrisp and Gala apples. Matthew had the best reach for the reddest apples at the top of the trees. On the way back, everyone was talking what they can make with all the apples gathered. Matthew mentioned apple smoothies, while Emma was thinking about homemade apple sauce and pies.

### More about our After School Program



The primary focus of the After School Program is to help children and adolescents develop social and recreational skills. We do this by providing participants with opportunities to participate in a wide variety of activities, such as: field trips, museum & library visits, bowling, arts and crafts, baking and cooking, indoor and outdoor games, and holiday activities.



The After School program provides supervised recreational activities to students at six program sites throughout the Capital/Saratoga Region. Children and teens in 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 ASP enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing that when they are unable to be present, a dedicated staff of skilled adults is ensuring the safety of their loved one.



## Welcoming Autumn



The Living Resources Arts Program welcomed in the first day of autumn with a fabulous Paint-n-Sip Fall activity! Schenectady Art Students Vinique Genre, Tony Larkin, Nadine Nandkissore, and Maddy Hannon created these lovely paintings under the instruction of Rebecca Peters while sipping lemonade!







## Fred's Fountain of Hope

Living Resources is grateful for the legacy of hope left by Fred Erlich, our Founder and CEO for nearly four decades. Fred's hope has always been that those supported by Living Resources are provided unlimited opportunities to live their best life, as independently as possible. **To honor that legacy, we are establishing a Fountain of Hope Fund in his honor.**

The first project for Fred's Fountain of Hope was brought to light by the 2020 COVID pandemic. When public parks were shuttered, we discovered a desperate lack of a safe recreational area for individuals with developmental disabilities. Out of this great loss, an idea was born.

***Fred's Fountain of Hope Greenspace Initiative will provide a safe and supportive sanctuary for all. Located in Schenectady, it will include:***

Meditative Space with fountain to ease stress and anxiety  
Outdoor garden and indoor greenhouse to elevate mood  
Gazebo for shelter from the weather

Picnic tables for community eating which fosters communication and socialization  
Birdfeeders and other tools to learn about the natural world and our environment  
Basketball court and recreational space to support healthy physical activity  
The space will be fenced to ensure the safety of our individuals

The projected cost of this project is \$140,000 and will be completed in four phases.

**Phase 1** involves cleaning out the existing property in preparation for revitalization. This phase is projected to cost \$30,000 and is **now underway thanks to generous donations from CDPHP, The Community Foundation, Barbara Bouchey, Rick and Karen Jones, and Scott Joralemon.**

**We are currently seeking funding to move forward with Phase 2** which involves the removal of pavement, installation of water and electricity to the space for a meditative fountain and other interactive experiences. Installation of security features such as electronic surveillance and fencing for privacy and safety.  
This phase is projected to cost \$50,000.

***Won't you support Fred's Fountain of Hope Greenspace?***

**Greenspace Phase 3 -  
\$30,000**

Adding topsoil, shrubs, trees, and perennials. Adding Handicap accessible paved walkways.

**Greenspace Phase 4 -  
\$30,000**

Adding interactive and experiential features as above.

### **Suggested Levels:**

\$250 Stone Paver  
\$500 Raised Garden Beds  
\$1,000 Garden Bench  
\$1,500 Picnic Table  
\$3,000 Basketball Court  
\$5,000 Greenhouse  
\$10,000 Fountain  
\$20,000 Gazebo



**venmo**

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