

# Sharing the Journey



February 2022

LIVING  
RESOURCES

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer



Elizabeth Martin

Wow, it is hard to believe that we are heading into the third month of the year already! As we look ahead, we are making great progress on the initial steps of our three-year strategic plan to become the premier provider of innovative solutions that promotes equality, equity, and opportunity for all while ensuring the well-being of individuals. Toward this end, we have been taking steps to streamline processes, conducting needs assessments to identify opportunities for new programs, analyzing current programs to find ways to improve them, and identifying workforce development and training needs, all while continuing to provide our quality supportive services. It has been a busy winter here!

Additionally, we are encouraged by Governor Hochul's Executive Budget, which includes a proposal for a 5.4% increase to our reimbursement rates as well as other proposed funding and initiatives that will help us reward and strengthen our DSP workforce. We have been meeting with our State Legislators to encourage their support for including the Governor's proposals in the final NYS Budget. This is the first time that I can remember ever meeting with our legislative representatives and did not need to beg for inclusion or plead to remove proposed cuts in funding.

We are looking forward with continued hope for a brighter 2022!

Saratoga Trunk  
LADY'S FINERY

presents: *World Class Racing, World Class Fashion, World Class Causes*



## *A Tribute to Transforming Lives*

### A Day at the 1863 Club

Benefitting

LIVING  
RESOURCES

and

building  
on love



DAY AT THE TRACK \* FASHION SHOW \* BRUNCHEON

Sunday, August 21, 2022 \* 1863 Club- Saratoga Race Course



## Saving Lives, One Pint At A Time!

Living Resources staff Cathi Butryn was a first time blood donor at our Blood Battle Challenge this month. This is her powerful story:

Ineligible is a humiliating word. It reminds me of looking up at the amusement park sign that says, "You must be at least this tall to ride" and thinking, "All the other kids are big enough and cool enough to participate but I'm left behind."

When I was in elementary school, my father was diagnosed with leukemia, a cancer of the body's blood-forming tissues. We often called on friends and family to participate in blood drives in his honor to compensate for his frequent need for blood transfusions. Being the youngest in the family, I took on the role of cheerleader, giving out stickers and cookies to those who participated, but I wasn't allowed in the "room where it happened." When I was old enough to participate, I had a variety of medical issues which made me ineligible. As time went on, I gave up trying, figuring it was a lost cause. That is until I heard about the Red Cross CEO Blood Battle.



In response to the most severe blood shortage in more than a decade, the American Red Cross of Eastern NY teamed up with CEOs from the Capital Region to "battle" the insufficiency. In this friendly competition, each agency sponsors one specific date by supplying volunteers to help run the drive and trying to encourage the greatest number of overall donors.

When Living Resources announced its participation in the Blood Battle, I decided to battle my own demons. I sat down with my doctor to review my past medical history and present state of health. She determined that I didn't have any barriers to donation, so I immediately registered. As if to test my resolve, the Living Resources sponsor day happened to coincide with a huge snow and ice storm, but after 40 years of waiting, I had made up my mind. Once the weather abated and the plows made the roads passable, I took off for Albany.

The Red Cross employees are a hardy crew. They were ready to assist anyone who braved the storm to share their blood. I found them to be extremely upbeat and encouraging, even more so after they heard it my first time donating. Their masterful balance of joking and attentive care helped put my 50+ year-old nerves at ease. It wasn't until they sat me up and asked me how I felt that a tear escaped and ran down my cheek. I felt overjoyed that I was finally able to donate, sad that I couldn't donate until now, and validated that I am now, finally, a blood donor. Mostly, I felt the presence of my dad who passed away when I was 16. I whispered to his spirit, "This is for you!"

## The Capital Region Blood Battle Continues, but not for long!

A powerful winter storm impacted travel on our February 4 Sponsor Day, and our team is behind.

More importantly, members of our community are in desperate need.

Register for one of the BloodBattle's final dates: March 4 and 18, 2022!

Go to <https://www.redcrossblood.org>

In the top right box **Find a Blood Drive** put bloodbattle (one word) and hit enter.

Choose either Mar 4 or 18 and continue the registration.

The need for blood is at a critical level!  
Please help save a life!



When you arrive and they ask which team you are supporting, tell them LIVING RESOURCES



# Making Progress One Day at a Time

"The road to recovery has not been a straight line. There are a lot of zig zags. But that's life. Eventually you get where you're supposed to be," mused Brain Injury Program Participant Alan Demers.



On his Facebook profile, Alan describes himself as a "disabled, divorced former Master Manufacturing Engineer working hard to discover my new life." He started on a trajectory of engineering, attending Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute where he earned a degree in Mechanical Engineering, and promptly advanced to Rochester Institute of Technology where he earned a Master's degree in Manufacturing Management. In the height of his career, he held positions such as Continuous Improvement Engineer and Manufacturing Engineer, but then his direction abruptly changed. Alan started experiencing

headaches. Then he started losing feeling in his feet "off and on" and found himself tripping as he attempted to walk up stairs. Coworkers noticed and became concerned. They suggested that he see a doctor.

After the dust settled from the battery of tests he underwent, he was diagnosed with a brain tumor called Glioblastoma/ Astrocytoma. He recalls feeling fortunate that he was living in Delaware, close to one of the best neurosurgeons in the country who did the initial surgery. Although his tumor was found to be non- cancerous, he was referred to Boston for additional surgery to remove the tumor and the pressure inside his skull that it caused. There were complications. As Alan joked "I thought, surely they must have taken out the wrong thing."

All his aforementioned zigging and zagging led him to Albany and Living Resources. Through his participation in our Brain Injury Program, he discovered the joy of community. He said, "I never thought I was particularly social before but I realized I really do enjoy talking with people and getting plugged into things." Together with a fellow participant he started a small group which they named, "You Asked for It." In this group, which still takes place today, group members are encouraged to ask questions on a variety of topics. Participants research the questions on a computer and share the answers they find. Alan smiled. "I enjoy being a small group leader. It helps me practice getting my thoughts organized so I can lead people in discussion and keep it going. It has helped with my confidence. It helps me know I can adapt to any situation and handle anything that comes at me."

Although Alan is proud of the progress he has made since his brain injury, he understandably longs for a time when his path will get easier. "You get kind of tired of always adapting to things, you know? I want to stick to something that I can hold onto and call my own. I want to plant my feet on something."

You can be sure that Living Resources' Brain Injury Program Super Heroes will support him on every step of his journey, one day at a time, guiding him through the twists and turns, peaks and valleys.

Living Resources Brain Injury Services offers a comprehensive treatment program for people with traumatic or acquired brain injuries. Individuals living in the community have access to a wide range of service options including care coordination, life skills training, day programs, fine arts instruction, clinical services, and specialized services for veterans with TBI.





## Cookies For a Cause



After a two year hiatus, Living Resources' Day Program is planning their Award Ceremony, which is slated to be held this spring, pending COVID policies.

For those in Living Resources Day Programs, one of the most heartbreaking effects of the COVID shutdown in 2020 was the loss of the Day Program Award Ceremony. Twice a year, we celebrated the many varied achievements of our program participants and recognized staff for their compassionate work. These celebrations were greatly anticipated by all involved as an opportunity to catch up with friends and raucously cheer for all who won an award.

Musical entertainment had always been provided by the Day Community Opportunity Program (DCOP) chorus and the Brain Injury Services rock band, called "Brain Waves." In 2020, large gatherings of people were halted in efforts to abate the spread of the virus and the ceremony was postponed and later cancelled.

Now that there is a glimmer of hope that we will once again be able to gather, the participants desire a triumphant return. Our DCOP staff and participants across all counties we serve were united last week in holding a bake sale. The proceeds will be used towards making the ceremony amazing.

Program participants assisted in the baking of delectable sweet treats and dog biscuits, and even making candles for sale. They stated that they loved being part of the process of creating and selling their wares because it gave them an opportunity to meet people in the community and explain what the Day Community Opportunities program is and the kinds of activities they do.



## Do You Want to See a Castle?

The Alumni Activities Club felt like they were visiting Princess Elsa of Arendelle during their recent visit to the Ice Castles exhibit in Lake George. Frozen fractals abounded in the form of countless icicles, creating a fantastic feast for the eyes. Denise and Jessica chose a day with absolutely perfect conditions for their adventure – the sky was a fierce blue and the temperature remained in the mid-twenties all day long. Although that may seem a bit chilly, warm weather and the melting it would bring is the enemy of this massive ice structure. The cold didn't bother them anyway.



Although there are days when we all want to fast-forward to springtime, our Alumni Activities Club hopes to embrace the beauty of winter as though they are walking through the enchanted wardrobe into snow-bound Narnia.

They are hope to try to seize the remainder of the season by going ice skating and perhaps doing some winter hiking at the Pine Bush Preserve. The options for activities are endless in the northeast. As Princess Anna said, I never knew winter could be so beautiful!"



## Living Resources Celebrates Black History Month

In celebration of Black History Month, Living Resources celebrates the achievements of some black individuals who are pioneers in their fields.

LIVING  
RESOURCES



Maya Angelou was an American poet, memoirist, and civil rights activist. In 1969, Angelou published *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, an autobiography of personal strength amid childhood trauma and racism resonated with readers and was nominated for the National Book Award.

This civil rights icon was no stranger to disability. As a child, Dr. Angelou exhibited selective mutism, an anxiety disorder brought on by physical and psychological trauma, preventing her from speaking for five years. In her later years, she fell ill and depended on a wheelchair for transportation.

We honor her for her achievements in fulfilling her "mission in life (to) not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style."

LIVING  
RESOURCES



Simone Biles is considered one of the most dominant gymnasts of all time. With a total of 32 Olympic and World Championship medals, she is tied as the most decorated gymnast of all time.

At an early age, she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and is a fierce advocate for the community. Ms. Biles said, "Having ADHD, and taking medicine for it is nothing to be ashamed of and nothing that I'm afraid to let people know (about)."

She also became an inspirational advocate for those struggling with mental health after her decision to opt-out of five of six Olympic gymnastics finals in 2021. "I say put mental health first, because if you don't, then you're not going to enjoy your sport and you're not going to succeed as much as you want to."

LIVING  
RESOURCES



Tobi Green-Adenowo is determined not to let her disability run her life. She was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, commonly known as brittle bones, which makes her bones soft and fragile.

By the time she turned 18, she had suffered over 75 fractures throughout her body. Ms. Green-Adenowo primarily gets around through the use of her wheelchair.

Inspired by a visiting legless performer at her school, Tobi began dancing as a way of commandeering her story. She was a contestant on Britain's Got Talent in 2018 and has been described by her university's dance lecturer as a pioneer, "carving a path for those who may follow."

Tobi describes her situation as difficult but inspiring: "Being a black disabled woman who is also plus sized, I've always been treated slightly differently." She said, "If you feel like you don't fit in, just know that there are people like me who you can look at and feel pride."

LIVING  
RESOURCES



Ralph Bunche was a human rights advocate and the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize. As World War II began its decline, Ralph worked alongside First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and United Nations members to draft and implement a document known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

This document defined and defended the necessities and rights of all humans, including the right to life, dignity, an adequate standard of living, and a residence. In addition, the UDHR detailed the responsibilities of humans toward their communities. This document is the most translated text in history with over 530 separate languages represented.

We at Living Resources share in Mr. Bunche's vision by supporting and empowering individuals with disabilities/ life challenging conditions to live with dignity, independence, and happiness.



## College Experience Senior Spotlight

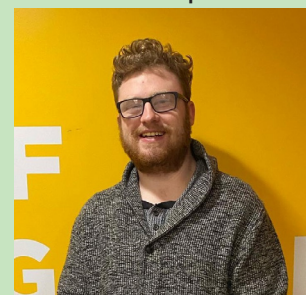
We are excited to highlight some of the graduating seniors of our College Experience Program. Meet Catherine, Anna, Bobby, and Luke!

Catherine says her favorite part of the College Experience has been the Community Involvement class where she hosts and attends events, and gets to socialize with her friends. She is interning at Community Care Physicians where she cleans patients' rooms, gets doctors notes and edits them, faxes and copies, cleans the waiting room, and does whatever else the doctors need help with. Catherine says she always tries to stay on the positive side and likes being independent here. She will be heading to our Transitions program in May.



In addition to her College Experience classes, Anna is auditing a Social Work class at the College of Saint Rose this semester. She is excited to learn more about the field. Her internship is at St. Peter's Mercy Care for Kids Child Care where she helps take care of the children. In her spare time, she enjoys playing basketball with her friends. Next year she plans on attending our Transitions program.

Bobby enjoys the College Experience Community Involvement class, and enjoys being a part of the local Special Olympics softball team. He has been interning at the YMCA After School Program for two semesters where he helps care for the kids and coordinates their daily pickup and drop off routines. Next year Bobby plans on joining the Transitions program and continuing his work with children.



Luke says he's loved all his coursework this year, including LGBTQIA+ Community, Music, Political Advocacy, Mythology, Apartment Life, and his particular passion - US and global history. He recently wrapped up his internship at Grrreendog Daycare and Spa where he did training exercises with the dogs using verbal commands and observing their body language, as well as helping with their grooming. He obviously loved that experience since his new internship also involves pet care. He can now be found interning at Pet Supplies Plus!

After graduation, Luke is looking to get an apartment in the area, and says while it'll be hard to leave CEP, he knows that when one chapter ends another one starts. Here's to amazing new adventures for all our Graduating Seniors!

