

# Sharing the Journey



January 2022

LIVING  
RESOURCES

## A Message from the Chief Executive Officer

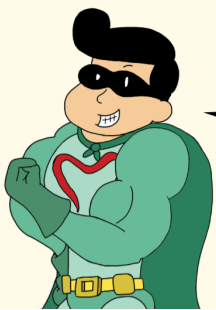


Elizabeth Martin

A new year is upon us and with that new year comes new aspirations. While the past couple of years have tossed us many strikes and curve balls, my hope for 2022 is that we continue to hit the balls and round the bases. At Living Resources, we are excited to showcase our first homerun of the season with the expansion of our CareerNext college program with a new collaborative partner, Hudson Valley Community College. Our students were seeking new educational opportunities and this expansion allows them a greater variety of career paths to choose from, while also aligning with our strategic goal of strengthening and growing our programs.

A special thank you to each of our collaborative partners. Our partnerships provide the opportunity for each student to fulfill their educational goals whether that is through our College Experience Program at the College of Saint Rose, or through CareerNext at Hudson Valley Community College, SUNY Cobleskill, and SUNY Schenectady.

By supporting each other, we all rise!



## The Capital Region Blood Battle is here!

Get Pumped!

February 4 is **LIVING RESOURCES** Sponsor Day!

You can donate any of the drive dates, just be sure to state that you are donating for LIVING RESOURCES when you arrive.

Blood donation remains essential to ensuring the health of those in our community. Living Resources has joined local businesses throughout the Capital Region in a friendly competition to help save lives this winter!

What: Donate Blood

Where: American Red Cross of ENY 33 Everett Road, Albany, Training Room A & B

When: 8am to 6 pm Jan 21, Feb 4, Feb 18, March 4, and March 18

You can donate any of the drive dates, just be sure to state that you are donating for **LIVING RESOURCES**!



Have a Heart  
Do your Part!

1. Go to <https://www.redcrossblood.org/>
2. At the top right corner of the page, where it says "Find a Blood Drive" type the word BLOODBATTLE (not case sensitive)
3. The above dates will populate on the left of your screen. Choose a date and select "See Times"
4. Choose your time and type of donation

Blood

Power Red

(Power Red is similar to a whole blood donation, except a special machine is used to allow you to safely donate two units of red blood cells during one donation while returning your plasma and platelets to you.)

5. Confirm Appointment

Confirm Appointment

SEE TIMES

Find a Blood Drive

BLOODBATTLE



Upon arrival for your appointment, register at the desk. You will be asked which organization you are representing.

Tell them **LIVING RESOURCES** !





## CareerNext Expands Its Reach



Living Resources' CareerNext program is expanding its services to a third college campus! Set to begin at Hudson Valley Community College in the of Fall 2022, CareerNext provides support to students with autism and learning differences, helping them to succeed in college, earn an accredited degree, and live independently. It began in 2019 at SUNY Schenectady and extended to SUNY Cobleskill soon after. This year, the program expects up to 40 new incoming students to Hudson Valley Community College.

"For decades, Hudson Valley's faculty and staff have supported thousands of students with disabilities and helped them to advance and fulfill their personal, college and career goals. Now, our new partnership with Living Resources continues that proud tradition and promises to enhance the level of support and resources that dozens of new students will receive," said Roger Ramsammy, President of Hudson Valley Community College. Judy DiLorenzo, VP for Academic Affairs, HVCC agreed saying, "We are looking forward to this partnership. It is about time. Hudson Valley takes pride in its culturally diverse and inclusive campus."

Living Resources' CEO, Elizabeth Martin said, "We are going to be working closely with Hudson Valley Community College to support these students, providing assistance so that they can really succeed in their coursework." Kevin Tully, Board President of Living Resources said, "Obtaining a college degree isn't easy, especially for non-traditional learners... We are sincerely grateful to President Ramsammy and his dedicated team, for working with us to provide our students a life filled with education, opportunities, dignity, happiness, and independence."



Pictured left to right; Jennifer Richard, Associate Executive Director for Programs, Living Resources, Kristin McNerney, Senior Admissions Coordinator, Living Resources, Colleen Dergosits, Director of College Programs, Living Resources, Elizabeth Martin, CEO, Living Resources, Roger Ramsammy, President of Hudson Valley Community College, Ronalyn Wilson, Assistant VP for Academic Affairs, HVCC, Judith DiLorenzo, VP for Academic Affairs, HVCC, Kevin Tully, Living Resources Corporation Board President, Louis Coplin, II, VP for Student Affairs, HVCC, J. Carlos "Shawn" Viana, Living Resources Foundation Board President.





## Road to Independence: Bumpy but worth it

*A bend in the road isn't the end of the road ... unless you fail to make the turn.*

– Helen Keller

The road to independence is sometimes bumpy, but traveling it is always worth it—just ask College Experience graduate Danielle Passariello. After many years of bumps, bends, and yield signs in the road of life, she has achieved a milestone in her quest for independence—she earned her driver's license.

Learning to drive has been one of a variety of goals Danielle was determined to achieve. Along the way, she attended and graduated from Living Resources' College Experience program (CEP), which took much of her focus for two years. As a part of the CEP curriculum, she learned to navigate the CDTA bus system, allowing her to explore the region independently. The goal was paused since, as she said, "I really didn't need a license."



Since her graduation, Danielle's journey towards independence has been supported by Living Resources' Transitions and Employment Services programs. With their support, she maintains an apartment and holds down a job at Burlington Coat Factory where she works four days a week. With all this going on, you might think that Danielle would not have time to learn to drive, but she was determined.



In 2021, Danielle's permit expired, which galvanized her resolve. She said that re-taking her permit test was actually a positive thing since it reminded her of the many rules of the road. She began taking lessons from a local driving school and in September she was ready to take her test. She easily scheduled and took her 5-hour course, but her road test was a different story. The Department of Motor Vehicles was backed up and the first available test wasn't until December. Frustratingly, she had to wait.

When Danielle's testing day arrived, she was understandingly nervous. Her stress only increased when she didn't get her result immediately after the test, but was told she would have to go online with a code to learn her fate. At long last, she found out that she passed. She recalls, "I was shocked. I passed my road test on the first try! I was jumping in the air! Most people get their license at 17, but I am proud of getting it at 23."

Danielle hasn't driven completely on her own yet, but when she does, she says she will start with short trips first. Just the knowledge that she has a license makes her feel more independent, more adult. She knows she has plenty of other transportation options such as bus, STAR, and Uber. She will use each method strategically, because, as her CEP instructor Dom taught her, "You don't have to drive the car everywhere. It can be a waste of money to park places."

Having an apartment, job, and now a driver's license, Danielle knows she has crossed a bridge into independence and that slow and steady always wins the race.



## My Job Coach is a Rock Star!

Joshua Miller has nothing but praise for his job coach, Brian, who has been Joshua's job coach, ally, facilitator, and friend for the past six and a half years. Brian's knowledge, experience, and compassionate commitment to assisting Josh has been especially evident since the beginning of the COVID pandemic.



Josh has worked at the same elementary school in Albany for almost 15 years. He began as a Lunchroom Attendant and his responsibilities grew to training new hires, helping operate the school store, and giving out prizes to students who have excelled academically. The kids at the school quickly grew to love Josh and he became like a part of their family.

Things changed in early 2020 when COVID struck. Virtual instruction replaced in-class learning and Josh was furloughed for the remainder of the school year, leaving him lonely. When Josh returned to his beloved school in the fall, his role had been significantly altered. Lunch no longer took place in Josh's cafeteria domain, instead, the teachers brought the food to their classrooms on carts. Josh wanted to be useful to the school and interact with the kids, so he came up with the idea that he could deliver the meals to the classrooms for the teachers. He voiced this idea to Brian but didn't feel it was his place to offer this suggestion to the principal. Josh recalls, "Brian helped me talk to my principal. He helped put my ideas and emotions into words. He's really good at knowing how I feel." The principal was very receptive to the idea and Josh's plan was gratefully implemented.

Over his past 15 years of working a school calendar, Josh has had the challenge of earning an income during the 11 weeks of summer vacation. This perennial search for a summer job ended in success this past year when Brian helped Josh secure a position with the Parks Department. Josh worked at a local park for 20 hours a week checking kids in to the pool area and ensuring the safety of all. This position was a perfect fit for all involved. Josh earned an income while remaining connected with the neighborhood kids, most of whom he already knew from his school position.

Through the rollercoaster of events, changes, and resulting stress these past many months, Brian has been there for Josh, right by his side. Josh's biggest wish through it all is for Brian to be recognized for being the rock star job coach that he is. Brian is humbled that Josh expressed his appreciation to Living Resources' Director of Employment Services, Ian Mott. He said, "I'm happy to be able to make a positive difference in people's lives and do some good in this world."



Josh pictured pre- pandemic





## Popping By for ABI



Living Resources' Acquired Brain Injury Program made sure that our main office celebrated National Popcorn Day in style by holding their first Popcorn and Hotdog sale of the year. Participants ran the various stations, offering a lunch package of two hot dogs served on warm buns, a bag of freshly popped popcorn, and a can of soda, all for \$5.

All proceeds benefited the ABI/TBI Program for activities such as their Winter Ball. See the related story below.

The popcorn popper and hot dog cooker were purchased with a grant that we received from SEFCU over three years ago and we are happy that they are so regularly called into service. It's a win for all involved!

## Dancing the Night Away

Our Acquired Brain Injury Program put on their dancing shoes and boogied the night away at their Winter Ball on Friday night. Held at the Schenectady VFW, they danced, ate, and enjoyed each other's company to the fullest.

Some of the women in the group are wheelchair riders and wanted to get up to dance. Alan Demers delighted in being their dance partner, supporting their weight so they could sway to the music.

Alan said, "For me it was trying something new. I don't usually go dancing or anything so it was nice just to be socializing in the regular world having a good time. Being the 'token man' was a nice touch. It was a blast!" He admitted to feeling a little nervous getting ready for the night because he didn't know what to expect, but he left his inhibitions at the door.



They all look forward to another opportunity to party in the near future!



## With Gratitude to our Matching Gift Donors

John & Mary Ann Allen  
George Amedore  
Amedore Homes Inc.  
Pamela Archie  
Rachelle & Phil Aron  
William Artini  
Louis & Judy Buhrmaster  
Catherine & Peter Butryn  
John & Mary Lynn Cimon  
Paul & Phyllis Cooney  
Domenick & Katie DeSantis  
David Durand & Lorelei Bohle  
Paul & Lisbeth Ehrlich  
Robert & Joanne Fitzgerald  
Brea Garahan  
Marjorie Geiger  
Virginia Giguere  
Christopher Greagan &  
Shirley Greagan, Esq.  
Victoria Harkins  
E. Stewart & Kimberly Sanger Jones  
Kathleen Kinstel  
Michael Kuhland  
Aaron Lieberman  
Dan Liebert & Anne Kuppinger  
Susan Lum Creitz & Toby Slyman  
Elizabeth Martin  
Bernard & Susan McGarry

Sharon McLelland  
Brendan Mooney  
Paul Murray  
Stephen & Jane Orr  
Deneen Palmateer  
Robert Panico  
Carol Piotrowski  
Alice Poole  
Frances Rasmussen  
Lisa & John Razanousky  
Thomas Regan  
Kenneth & Susan Ritzenberg  
Aaron Ritzenberg  
Kimberly & Robert Rogers  
Ronald & Marianne Romano  
Joanne Russell  
Patricia Ruth  
Sheila Y. Samms  
Frederick & Sylvia Sievers  
Tom & Johanna Stebbins  
Kimberly Strauchon Verner  
KathyThiel & Eric King  
James Tynan  
Anne Valliere  
Rosemary Vara  
Colleen & Dean Whalen  
Susan Williams



### Special Thank you to our Matching Gift Sponsor,

*Neil Golub and the Neil Jane William Estelle Golub Family  
Foundation, Inc. for issuing this giving challenge and matching  
all donation responses, up to \$2,500.*

***Together, let's continue to positively impact lives!***

[www.LivingResources.org](http://www.LivingResources.org)



Click [HERE](#) to read November/ December's Newsletter



Click here to Unsubscribe