



## SHARING THE JOURNEY



ELIZABETH MARTIN, CEO

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

For me, January is a time to reflect on where we've been and to intentionally plan where we're going. As we look back on the past year, I'm proud of what we accomplished together, and even more inspired by how we did it. Our successes are rooted in our values, brought to life every day by the individuals we support, the staff who walk alongside them, and the community that believes in our mission.

Throughout this newsletter, you'll see those values in action. We're sharing stories that highlight growth, creativity, and independence, including an artist spotlight as we prepare for the official launch of our Artfully Unique Gallery on February 12. This exciting milestone reflects our commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for expression, inclusion, and connection.

You'll also learn about Ajani's journey toward independence, made possible through determination, partnership, and the support of Living Resources. Stories like Ajani's remind us why this work matters and reinforce the impact we can have when we focus on individual strengths and potential.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are building on these successes with purpose and strategy, always guided by our mission and the individuals we support. Thank you for being part of this journey. I'm energized by what lies ahead and grateful for all that we will continue to achieve together.

PLEASE JOIN US AT OUR GALLERY FOR A

# Grand Opening CELEBRATION



4:00 pm  
*February 12, 2026*



2005 WESTERN AVE  
ALBANY, NY 12203





## VALUES IN ACTION: A HEARTWARMING MOMENT AT MCDONALD'S



At Living Resources, we often talk about our core values of Kindness and Inclusivity. We see these values in our programs and our clinical goals—but some of the most powerful displays of our mission happen when no one thinks the world is watching.

Recently, a local mother took to Facebook to share a moment she witnessed at the Union Street McDonald's drive-thru in Schenectady. She was behind one of our Living Resources vans, driven by staff member Roland Evans. The post, which quickly caught the attention of our community, read:

"You, Sir, have restored my faith in humanity today... I witnessed the most heartwarming interaction between you and your client/passenger. You didn't know anyone was watching. You were both smiling, laughing, and full of joy. I didn't hear your conversation, and I didn't need to. I felt your happiness from afar."

For this mother, the moment was deeply personal. As a parent of a daughter with a disability, she recognized the weight of that interaction. She saw more than just a commute; she saw a genuine connection rooted in respect and happiness.

What Roland demonstrated that afternoon is the heartbeat of what we do. Kindness isn't just about being "nice." It's about the emotional energy we bring to our work. Roland wasn't just "transporting a client"; he was sharing a moment of genuine human connection.

True inclusion means ensuring that individuals with I/DD and brain injuries are not just present in the community, but are enjoying it to the fullest. A simple trip to McDonald's becomes a powerful act of inclusion when it is centered on joy and dignity.

The Facebook post concluded with a powerful sentiment: "I have a feeling that you have made your mark on countless lives, the world needs more people like you!" We couldn't agree more. Roland's actions remind us that our "mark" on the world isn't always made through grand gestures. Often, it's made in a drive-thru lane, through a shared laugh and the simple gift of being fully present for another person.

Thank you, Roland, for representing Living Resources so beautifully and for reminding us all that kindness is the most powerful tool we have.

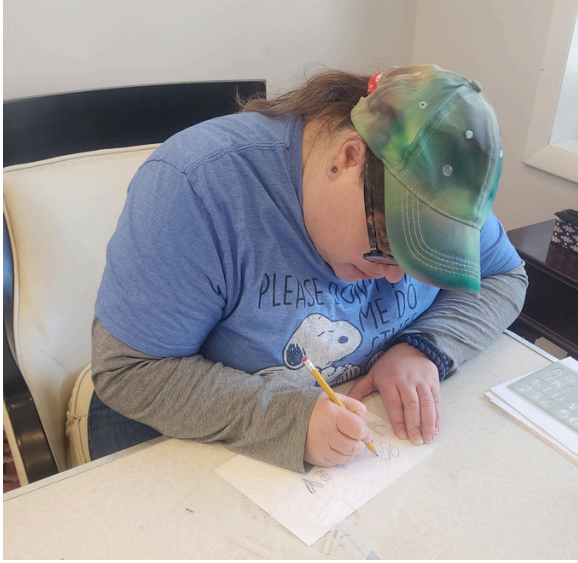
## GET CUSTOM SHIRTS, HATS, BAGS, AND MORE IN THE OFFICIAL LIVING RESOURCES STORE!



SCAN TO SHOP NOW



## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: MEET MELISSA

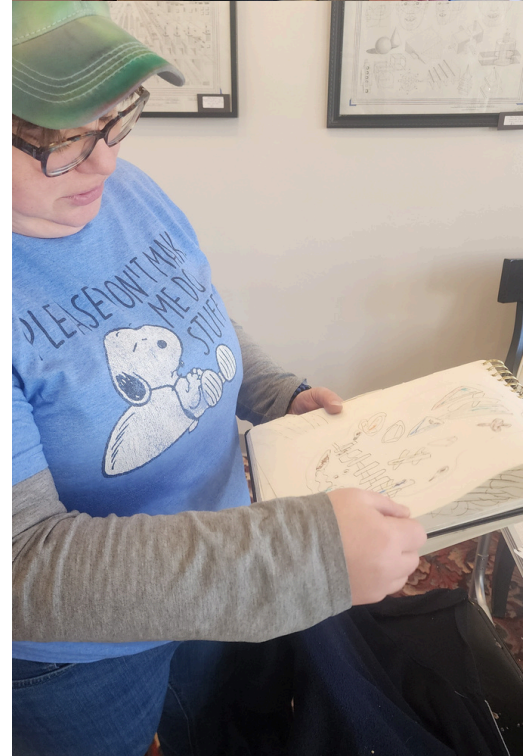


Our new gallery, Artfully Unique recently opened its doors and we'd like to take a minute to introduce you to one of the amazing artists whose work is on display and for sale in the gallery. Melissa is a Saratoga native, and has been attending Living Resources Art Program two days a week for many years. She also attends day program one day a week at Living Resources.

Melissa doesn't have a preferred art medium, preferring to use whatever feels right on that day. Though she doesn't have a preference on materials, her art is very abstract. One of her instructors, Kate, tells us that Melissa is a very fun artist to work with because she's usually just as surprised as everyone else to see what will evolve from her work.

Melissa has been working on her art for many years. Her mother is also passionate about art and passed that on to Melissa when she was just 2 years old. Today, she gets her inspiration by using her tablet and finding subjects online. She loves doing art because it relaxes her and is a way for her to express her emotions and work through complicated feelings that could otherwise be hard to handle.

When you walk in the door at Artfully Unique, you'll see her piece "Untitled" on display for sale. The vibrant colors and abstract nature leave the viewer wondering how it all came together. Melissa says the piece started off as a doodle and took off from there, morphing into a beautiful abstract bird. She says she's happy others get to view her art and listing her art for sale give her a sense of pride in her work. We are so happy to see how Melissa is growing and evolving as an artist, and we can't wait to see what pieces she'll put out next. If you are interested in viewing or purchasing Melissa work, you can visit our Artfully Unique gallery located at 2005 Western Avenue in Albany. For gallery hours, please visit [www.artfullyunique.org](http://www.artfullyunique.org).







## FROM SUPPORT TO SUCCESS: CELEBRATING AJANI'S JOURNEY



At Living Resources, we believe that empowerment is more than just a word; it is the process of providing the tools, trust, and community necessary for individuals to take the lead in their own lives. No one embodies this spirit more than Ajani, whose recent milestones are a powerful testament to what happens when we prioritize inclusivity and person-centered growth.

When Ajani first came to Living Resources, his journey was defined by high-intensity support. Requiring 1:1 supervision to navigate daily life, his path forward was focused on stability. But at the heart of our mission is the belief that every individual deserves a seat at the table and the chance to live as independently as possible.

Through a commitment to inclusivity, our staff worked alongside Ajani to identify his strengths, ensuring he felt seen,

heard, and valued. As he felt more supported by his community, his confidence grew, and his need for constant supervision began to transform into a desire for autonomy.

True empowerment means moving beyond "providing care" to "creating opportunity." For over a year, Ajani has done exactly that. He transitioned from a participant in our programs to a professional colleague, working as a Self-Advocate within our Training Department.

By sharing his lived experience, Ajani ensures that our agency remains inclusive of the voices of those we serve. He isn't just a success story; he is a leader. His work helps train our staff to be more empathetic and effective, proving that inclusivity makes our entire organization stronger.

On December 12, Ajani reached a milestone that marks a new era of his independence. He moved into a new residential home that requires significantly less supervision.

This move is the ultimate expression of empowerment. It represents Ajani's hard-earned ability to direct his own life, manage his own space, and engage with his community on his own terms. By fostering an environment where Ajani felt safe to grow, Living Resources has had the privilege of watching him step into his own power.

Inclusivity means making sure everyone has a voice. Empowerment means making sure that voice is used to shape their own future. Ajani has mastered both. Ajani's story reminds us that when we remove barriers and replace them with opportunities, the potential is limitless. We are incredibly proud of the work Ajani does every day—both for himself and for the peers he advocates for.

Congratulations, Ajani, on your new home and your continued success as a leader at Living Resources!



## KINDNESS IN ACTION: BEST BUDDY BINGO



At Living Resources, our days are filled with purpose, but some moments stand out as a beautiful reminder of why we do what we do. Recently, our Rockland Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP) hosted a "Bingo Madness" afternoon that was about much more than just calling out numbers—it was a celebration of community and the power of peer support. The excitement began long before the first bingo card was marked. Individuals in the program started their morning with a sense of mission, volunteering their time with Meals on Wheels.

After giving back to the community, they headed into a sensory music therapy session, which provided a perfect blend of engagement and relaxation to transition into the afternoon. To cap off a busy day, staff transformed the space into a relaxing, lounge-style environment. The atmosphere was set with refreshing treats and a relaxed vibe.

While the prizes were a hit, the real highlight of the day was witnessing the bond between two individuals, Michael and Sara. Known to everyone as being "thick as thieves," these two best friends showed us exactly what kindness looks like in action.

Because bingo can get fast-paced, Sara sometimes needs a little extra time to find the numbers on her card. Without being asked, Michael stepped in to support his friend. He patiently helped her keep up with the caller, ensuring she didn't miss a single winning square. The result? Thanks to their incredible teamwork, both Michael and Sara took home prizes! But more importantly, they walked away with the joy of succeeding together.

Moments like these are the heartbeat of Living Resources. Seeing Michael offer his patience and encouragement to Sara reminds us that while our staff provides the framework, the genuine friendships formed between the individuals we support are what truly make our program a community.

Kindness isn't just a concept here; it's something we see in the smiles, the shared prizes, and the way we look out for one another every single day.



## LIVING RESOURCES STAFF BLOOD DRIVE



At Living Resources, our mission has always been to support and empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and brain injuries to live their healthiest, most independent lives. On January 20, our staff Wellness Committee took that commitment to health and heart a step further by hosting a Staff Blood Drive.

Coinciding with National Blood Donor Month, the event was a powerful reminder that the desire to help others runs deep in our agency's DNA.

January is often the most difficult month for blood centers due to winter weather and seasonal illnesses. By choosing this month to launch our annual tradition, the Living Resources team stepped up when the community needed it most. The impact of this drive goes beyond just numbers. A single donation can save up to three lives.

The atmosphere in the room on Tuesday was one of shared purpose. From staff members who have been regular donors for decades to first-timers who were a little nervous but brave, the turnout was a testament to the Living Resources spirit.



Tessa L., Incident Management Specialist here at Living Resources had the following to say about the blood drive, "Someday, many of us may face an imminent situation, where a stranger helps without thinking twice. Today, many of us did not think twice!"

"The Red Cross Blood Drive is more than a Wellness initiative; it is a reflection of our core values in action. By advocating for community health, empowering one another to give, and collaborating in an inclusive space, we lead with kindness and integrity while striving for excellence in how we serve others, showing that even small acts can ripple into meaningful change." – Elizabeth B., Wellness Committee Chairperson

We want to extend a massive thank you to everyone who participated, volunteered, or even just spread the word. Whether you were able to donate or simply came by to support a colleague, you contributed to the success of this inaugural event.

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO READ DECEMBER'S NEWSLETTER\*\*](#)