



ELIZABETH MARTIN, CEO

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

February has brought bitter cold to upstate New York, but across our organization, I have seen something powerful, warm hearts and strong voices in action. One of the new values we launched in 2025 is Advocacy, and this month that value has come to life.

In January, the Governor’s Executive Budget included a 1.7% targeted inflationary increase to support the I/DD community.

While we are grateful to be included, 1.7% does not keep pace with inflation or the rising cost of delivering quality services. We are advocating for a **2.7% Medicaid Targeted Inflationary Increase** and the restoration of funding for the **OPWDD Healthcare Enhancement Program**.

Throughout February, staff, the individuals we support, families, and leadership have all stepped forward to meet with legislators and share what these investments truly mean. Our day and college program participants even delivered Valentine’s cards and treats to legislators, advocacy straight from the heart.

Budget season is a marathon, and we are committed for the long haul. Please join us on **Tuesday, March 10 at 11:30 AM in the War Room of the New York State Capitol in Albany** as we rally in support of the I/DD community and advocate for these critical investments. Advocacy efforts will continue in the weeks ahead, and we hope you will stand with us as we raise our voices together.

Most importantly, legislators need to hear from you. Share your story. Make it personal. When we raise our voices together, we are stronger; and together, we can make a difference! For more information on how to get involved, please visit our website or scan the QR code on this page.

Thank you for living our value of Advocacy every day.

**VISIT OUR ADVOCACY TOOLKIT FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING ADVOCACY EVENTS, BUDGET PRIORITIES, AND WAYS TO GET INVOLVED.**





# ADVOCACY IN ACTION



This month was a powerful one for Living Resources, as individuals from our Day Community Opportunities program and our College Experience program took their voices directly to the New York State Capitol in Albany. It was a day filled with purpose, collaboration, and vital advocacy for the needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Individuals met with members of the NYS legislature, confidently and passionately advocating for critical initiatives that directly impact their lives and the services they receive. Their message was clear and urgent. They called for an increase in the Targeted Inflationary Increase (TII) from 1.7% to 2.7% and the restoration of Care Coordination Organizations as eligible programs under the TII. This crucial adjustment would provide much-needed support to ensure the continued excellence and sustainability of the vital services Living Resources and other agencies provide.

They also advocated for infrastructure and workforce investments, addressing the critical need for affordable housing for direct support professionals. By speaking up for the dedicated professionals who support them every day, individuals demonstrated both integrity and kindness, recognizing that a stable, valued workforce strengthens the entire disability community.

For our College Experience program, this visit was more than advocacy; it was empowerment in action. As part of their navigation class, students independently navigated the public transportation system, riding the bus from campus to the Capitol. This hands-on application of their skills built confidence, reinforced independence, and demonstrated their capability in a real-world setting.

Advocacy at Living Resources is rooted in inclusivity. The voices of those we support were not only present, they were leading the conversation. Alongside them, our leadership team and board members met with legislators to further elevate the issues affecting the disability community and Direct Support Professionals. Ajani Boyd, an individual supported by Living Resources, shared his personal story and spoke candidly about how the proposed budget would impact his life. His voice brought clarity, authenticity, and urgency to the discussion.

At Living Resources, advocacy isn't just a value displayed on our wall, it is something we live and practice each and every day. The voices heard at the Capitol were powered by our core values: collaboration in working side by side, empowerment in self-advocates leading the way, excellence in the services we fight to sustain, inclusivity in whose voices are centered, integrity in speaking honestly about what's needed, and kindness in uplifting the entire community. When our values lead the way, meaningful change follows.

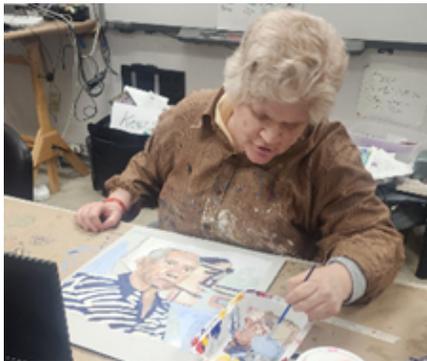


# ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: MEET KATIE

At Living Resources, we believe that art is a universal language, a way to express what words sometimes cannot. Today, we are thrilled to shine our Artist Spotlight on Katie Kelly, a talented creator from Saratoga Springs, New York, who has been a vibrant part of our art program for over 21 years.



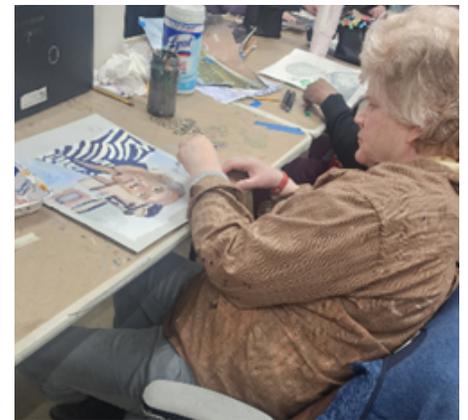
Katie isn't just a hobbyist; she is a dedicated artist with two decades of experience refining her style. When you look at Katie's work, you see a blend of technical skill and pure, imaginative joy. Her favorite mediums include watercolor and acrylic paint, colored pencils, and paper mache.



Where does a prolific artist like Katie find her ideas? She looks to the greats! Katie often draws inspiration from art history books and the famous images she finds within them. She also credits her art teachers for helping her navigate new techniques and encouraging her to push her creative boundaries.

For Katie, art is a sanctuary. In her interview, she shares how her "brain can go off and do art," providing a sense of independence and a mental escape from the stresses of daily life. When she is in the studio, she is focused, free, and completely in her element.

Katie is currently featuring two amazing pieces at our Artfully Unique Gallery. One is inspired by a famous artist that Katie free-handed the entire composition before layering it with paint and colored pencils to create a rich, multi-dimensional effect.



Come see Katie's work in person! Visit us at Artfully Unique Gallery to view Katie's latest masterpiece and support our local artists. The gallery is located at 2005 Western Ave in Albany. For gallery hours, please visit [www.ArtfullyUnique.org](http://www.ArtfullyUnique.org).

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT KATIE





# AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY GALLERY: ARTFULLY UNIQUE GRAND OPENING



At Living Resources, our mission has always been to support individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and Traumatic Brain Injuries in living their most fulfilling lives. Now, we have a vibrant new space to showcase exactly what that looks like. We are thrilled to announce the successful grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony of our new gallery, Artfully Unique!

The energy at our grand opening was nothing short of inspiring. We were honored to welcome members of the Guilderland Chamber of Commerce, as well as local community members and our dedicated staff, all of whom gathered to celebrate the incredible talent within our art programs.



A highlight of the event was a moving speech by Senator Patricia Fahy, Chair of the Senate Disabilities Committee. She shared kind words about our artists' work and reiterated her steadfast commitment to supporting the I/DD community. Our CEO, Elizabeth Martin, also took the stage to share her vision for the gallery's future. For Elizabeth and the rest of the Living Resources team, Artfully Unique isn't just a storefront, it's an inclusive community hub designed for artists of all abilities.

As guests enjoyed light refreshments and wandered through the art, the message was clear. Art is a universal language. Artfully Unique provides the individuals we support with a platform to express themselves, gain recognition, and share their unique perspectives with the world.



Whether you're looking for a one-of-a-kind piece to brighten your home or simply want to support local talent, we invite you to stop by. Artfully Unique is

located at 2005 Western Avenue in Albany. The gallery is open 9AM-7PM Monday-Friday, and 9AM-5PM on Saturdays. For a list of community classes, please visit [www.ArtfullyUnique.org](http://www.ArtfullyUnique.org). Come experience the beauty of inclusion and the power of art. We can't wait to see you there!





# DEVELOPING NEW PERSPECTIVES: A CELEBRATION OF ART AND RESILIENCE

We are thrilled to share the success of our recent Photography Show, a unique exhibition that brought the timeless beauty of film photography to the Miller Sanders Gallery at Living Resources' main office. This special event focused on the intricate world of black and white 35mm photography and the traditional darkroom processes. Funding for the project was received through The Arts Center of the Capital Region Arts Thrive and Grow Grant Program.

The show was the culmination of incredible hard work by individuals in our art program. These talented artists didn't just take pictures. They immersed themselves in the technical artistry of the medium, developing their own black and white photos for display. By engaging with every step, from the click of the shutter to the chemical baths of the darkroom, the artists we support explored new ways to express their unique perspectives and share their stories through a classic lens.

The event served as a beautiful reminder of the power of creative expression. We are incredibly proud of our artists and grateful for the support of our community in making this gallery showing a reality.



# CELEBRATING LOVE AND COMMUNITY: BRAIN INJURY SERVICES VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY



Love was truly in the air this month as our Brain Injury Services Program hosted its highly anticipated annual Valentine's Day party. Events like these are more than just a celebration, they are vital for fostering a deep sense of community and connection among our participants. Tables were "dressed to the nines" with festive Valentine's decor, creating a vibrant and welcoming backdrop for the day. Attendees stayed active and engaged with themed activities, including a spirited Valentine's bean bag toss. Between rounds of music and dancing, everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch. The dessert table stole the show, featuring a crowd favorite—plenty of decadent chocolate-covered strawberries.



# COMMUNITY VOICES: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COLUMBIA GREENE DCOP NEWSLETTER



The start of 2026 has brought a wave of inspiration and creativity to our Columbia Greene Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP). They have their very own newsletter where supported individuals can share their thoughts about life and their program. The latest newsletter is a beautiful tapestry of personal stories, artwork, and reflections from the individuals we support, showcasing the vibrant community spirit that defines Living Resources.

A major theme this month is the excitement surrounding our local horse farm in Kinderhook. Stephen shared his deep admiration for horses, noting their beauty and

intelligence. He is eager to learn the "right way" to communicate with them and is looking forward to hands-on experiences like brushing their coats and feeding them hay. Mary-Ellen also expressed her joy in visiting the farm, specifically how much she enjoys getting to pet the horses.



The newsletter also captures the profound sense of belonging felt by our members. Jade gave a special shout-out to the staff who make these activities possible. Kimberly reminded us all of the simple joy of connection, stating her favorite thing is simply "to see everyone" and spend time with her family. Leigh contributed a moving piece titled "Working Together," urging us all to make good choices and find the truth in one another to "be the best friends" we can be. Aryiana shared a bit about her daily companion, Marshall, a "fire dog" she is currently working to get certified. Joel summed up the winter blues perfectly, noting that while he loves basketball, bowling, and laughing with staff, he definitely "hates the snow and loves the sun".



Whether it is through Alana B.'s love for the gym at the Youth Center or the beautiful "Spring Time" artwork featured on the cover, our individuals continue to inspire us with their unique perspectives and goals.