



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



**ELIZABETH MARTIN, CEO**

Welcome to the May 2026 edition of Sharing the Journey. As we look back on the incredible events of this past month, I am reminded of how our values guide everything we do at Living Resources.

We see empowerment so clearly in our College Experience Program graduates, who recently took the stage at a unified commencement ceremony with Russell Sage College. True

inclusivity is about belonging, and by giving our students the tools to build independent lives, we honor their potential and achievements.

That same spirit was reflected in our new volunteer partnership at Three Rivers Homestead and our annual “518 Day of Service,” where our leadership team worked side-by-side with our Facilities crew to refresh residential ramps. We also see dignity and purpose throughout every stage of life, whether celebrating a milestone 70th birthday for Bruce or providing lifelong, compassionate care to individuals like Brian as their needs evolve.

Like every season in life, this month brought both joyful moments and difficult ones. While we celebrated accomplishments and milestones, we also grieved the passing of longtime staff member Joe Morelli, along with other individuals who we were privileged to support for many, many years. Moments like these remind us that the work we do is ultimately about people, being there for one another with compassion, dignity, and care through every stage of life.

Thank you to our staff, families, and community partners for walking alongside us. Together, we continue to support one another through every chapter of life and transform lives.

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## OPWDD COMMISSIONER WILLOW BAER VISITS LIVING RESOURCES

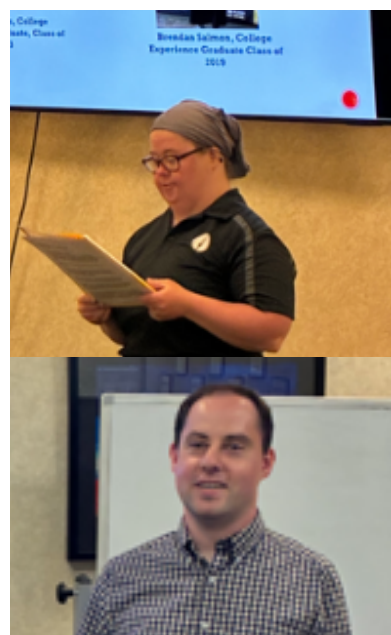
This month, Living Resources welcomed OPWDD Commissioner Willow Baer and members of her leadership team to learn more about the organization’s innovative programming and the life-changing impact of its College Experience and College-2-Life (C2L) programs. Joining Commissioner Baer were James Kaufman, Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Policy and Program Development, and Jennifer Morrison-Diallo, Deputy Director.

During the visit, the OPWDD team explored several innovative therapies and supports utilized by Living Resources, including virtual reality exposure therapy, and met with current students and graduates whose lives have been transformed through the organization’s educational and independent living programs.

One of the highlights of the visit was learning how virtual reality technology is helping individuals prepare for the workforce by allowing them to safely and interactively explore different career environments before making employment decisions.



Meghan, a graduate of the College Experience Program, shared how virtual reality experiences have helped her explore possible career paths. Meghan described virtually experiencing the role of a solar panel installer and quickly realizing that particular career was “definitely not for her.” Currently employed working with children, Meghan explained that she is now using virtual reality to explore whether working with elderly adults may also be a career path she would enjoy pursuing in the future. These immersive virtual environments are helping individuals gain confidence, identify interests, and make more informed decisions about employment opportunities.



The OPWDD team also heard firsthand from graduates of the College Experience program. Mariah, a 2013 graduate, shared her inspiring journey from student to successful professional and homeowner. During her presentation, she reflected on how the program helped prepare her for independence and career success. Mariah also shared exciting personal news, announcing her recent engagement.

Brendan, a 2019 graduate, spoke about his own path to independence following graduation. Brendan now lives independently with a roommate, who is also a graduate of the program, and is employed at St. Peter’s Health Partners. He described how the skills and support he received through the program helped him build confidence and achieve his goals.

## OPWDD COMMISSIONER WILLOW BAER VISITS LIVING RESOURCES

The visit also included a tour of the Russell Sage College campus, home to Living Resources' College Experience program. Commissioner Baer and her team visited two classes during the tour. One class included current College Experience students actively building academic, social, and independent living skills. The second was a College-2-Life (C2L) class, which focuses on helping students transition successfully into independent living and adulthood.



Students in the C2L program learn practical life skills such as understanding lease agreements, tenant responsibilities, household maintenance, and navigating the expectations of independent living.

Living Resources was honored to showcase the achievements of its students and graduates and to demonstrate the importance of innovative, person-centered supports that empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live independent, fulfilling lives.



**THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE**

Skills. Choices. Independence.



# BARBARA BOUCHEY – HONORARY CHAIRPERSON: WHY I SUPPORT LIVING RESOURCES



My name is Barbara Bouchey, and I am honored to once again serve as an Honorary Chairperson and premier sponsor for Living Resources’ annual “Tribute to Transforming Lives” event.

Last year, I shared the story of my family, the challenges we faced, and the journey that shaped us in so many wonderful ways. This year, I find myself thinking about what it means to continue that journey, how the need for care, compassion, and community doesn’t end, but evolves over time.

My brothers, Danny and Brian, have always been at the heart of that story.

Danny, who we lost, was a gentle and loving soul with a beautiful sense of wonder. He found joy in the simplest things like baseball, bowling, the New York Giants, and savoring one M&M at a time. He taught us so much about patience, kindness, and what it means to truly appreciate life’s small moments.



Brian, too, has always brought light into every room he enters. His warmth, engaging smile, eyes that twinkle, and his love for music, people, and movies (especially the Titanic), have always made him incredibly special to everyone who knows him.



Today, Brian is facing a new challenge. He has developed Alzheimer’s disease, something that is all too common among individuals with Down syndrome as they age. Watching this progression is difficult.

There are moments of loss, but also moments of connection that feel even more meaningful. I am cherishing every moment that we can share together.

Through every stage of both of my brothers’ lives, organizations like Living Resources have been there.

They were there for Danny, providing support, stability, and a sense of belonging that lasted a lifetime. And they are here for Brian now, meeting him with patience, dignity, and compassion as his needs change.

That consistency of care is something our family has never taken for granted.

When I reflect on how far we’ve come, I’m reminded that the work of organizations like Living Resources is not just about helping people once, it’s about walking alongside them for a lifetime.

# BARBARA BOUCHEY – HONORARY CHAIRPERSON: WHY I SUPPORT LIVING RESOURCES

That is what makes their impact so profound.

I am deeply grateful for the role Living Resources has played in my brothers' lives and in mine. And I am proud to support their mission as we gather once again for this special event to give tribute to these special individuals

I hope you will join us for the 5th Annual "Tribute to Transforming Lives" as we continue to ensure that individuals with developmental disabilities receive the care, can live a life of dignity, and support they deserve at every stage of life.



Scan to join Barbara and Brian at the fifth annual  
A Tribute to Transforming Lives fashion show & brunch

## A Tribute to Transforming Lives

A Day at the 1863 Club • Saratoga Race Course

Sunday, August 23, 2026

*Presented by*



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Thank You to Our Sponsors!



*Barbara J. Bouchey*  
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## EMPOWERING GRADUATES: A CELEBRATION OF INCLUSION



The energy in the MVP Arena was electric as the class of 2026 took their final steps as college students. For the remarkable individuals from the College Experience Program, this wasn't just a walk across a stage. It was a powerful statement of inclusion, hard work, and the boundless potential of every student, regardless of the challenges they may face.

Earlier this month, the journey toward this milestone began with an intimate graduation breakfast. Surrounded by their peers and the staff who have supported them, the graduates donned their caps and gowns for the first time, reflecting on years of growth and friendship. It was a morning of celebration and bittersweet goodbyes before break, but the true pinnacle of their academic career was yet to come.

On May 16, those graduates joined their fellow students from Russell Sage College to participate in a unified commencement ceremony. At its core, the College Experience Program is built on the value of empowerment. We believe that every individual deserves the tools and the opportunity to lead an independent, fulfilling life. Seeing the students in the program walk alongside the entire Russell Sage graduating class served as a beautiful, public realization of that mission.

Inclusivity is not just about physical presence. It is about belonging. These graduates have spent their college years immersed in a supportive community where they were encouraged to strive for their best. As they crossed the stage at the MVP Arena, the cheers from the crowd proved that the bonds formed here are lifelong.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Russell Sage College for their unwavering commitment to fostering an inclusive educational environment. By welcoming our students into the fold of the broader campus community, the college has demonstrated that education is most impactful when it is accessible to all.

To our graduates: You have shown what is possible when determination meets opportunity. You have empowered yourselves and inspired everyone around you. We cannot wait to see the incredible things you will achieve in this next chapter of your lives.

Congratulations to the Class of 2026!



THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE  
Skills. Choices. Independence.



## A MILESTONE TO REMEMBER: BRUCE CELEBRATES HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY IN STYLE

The room was packed, the energy was electric, and the guest of honor couldn't have been happier. Recently, the Living Resources community came together for a truly special occasion: a 70th birthday bash for Bruce, a longtime member of our residential program. It was a "standing room only" event, proving just how much Bruce is loved by his peers, staff, and family alike.

The celebration was a vibrant affair, with tables draped in deep blue and decorated with sparkling silver and gold accents. A custom "Vintage 1956" theme set the tone for the afternoon, complete with a commemorative backdrop where guests lined up to snap photos with the man of the hour.



From the festive balloons to the personalized centerpieces, every detail was designed to make Bruce feel like the VIP he is.

Beyond the decorations and the delicious meal, the true heart of the event was the sense of community. Friends from across our programs gathered to share a laugh, enjoy a slice of cake, and toast to Bruce's incredible journey. The joy in the room was palpable as Bruce, sporting a classic tropical shirt and a huge smile, celebrated alongside those who have become his second family.

Bruce's family was deeply moved by the celebration, expressing their heartfelt appreciation for the dedication shown by the residential team. They shared how impressed they were by the thoughtful support and the inclusive environment that allowed their brother to celebrate such a significant milestone surrounded by so much genuine affection.

Moments like these remind us all of the power of connection and the importance of celebrating every milestone, big or small.

Happy 70th Birthday, Bruce! Thank you for being such a wonderful part of the Living Resources family.

**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**



# ROOTED IN COMMUNITY: NEW VOLUNTEER PARTNERSHIP AT THREE RIVERS HOMESTEAD



The Columbia-Green Day Community Opportunities program at Living Resources continues to expand meaningful opportunities for the people it supports, most recently through an exciting new partnership with Three Rivers Homestead.

Individuals recently visited the Hannacroix, NY based homestead to get acquainted with what will soon become a regular volunteer site. Beginning this season, the group will return every Wednesday to contribute their time and energy in

These include building birdhouses, grooming animals, and assisting with trail creation across the property. These are projects that not only support the homestead but also offer engaging, skill-building experiences.

This new opportunity highlights the powerful role volunteering plays in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and brain injuries. Volunteer work fosters a sense of purpose, belonging, and pride. It allows participants to connect with their communities in meaningful ways while developing practical skills, increasing independence, and building confidence.

At Three Rivers Homestead, the natural setting offers a particularly enriching environment. Working outdoors and caring for animals provides therapeutic benefits while encouraging teamwork and responsibility. These experiences go far beyond the tasks themselves, they help individuals see the tangible impact of their contributions.



For the I/DD community, inclusion is not just about access, it's about participation. Volunteer programs like this one break down barriers, challenge assumptions, and create spaces where everyone's abilities are recognized and valued. Partnerships with community sites such as Three Rivers Homestead are essential in making this vision a reality.

Living Resources remains committed to creating opportunities that empower the individuals it supports to lead fulfilling, engaged lives. The Columbia-Green program's newest volunteer site is a testament to that mission, and a reminder that when communities come together, everyone benefits.

## A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AND ART: DCOP EXPLORES BETHEL WOODS



The rolling hills of Sullivan County became a giant classroom for the Living Resources Day Community Opportunities Program (DCOP). The group took a special trip to the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts. This famous spot is where the original Woodstock music festival happened in 1969. Today, it is a museum that teaches people about the history and music of that time.

For the group, the trip was like stepping into a time machine. They learned all about the 1960s, a decade that changed America forever. As they walked through the museum, they saw cool outfits, old posters, and art from the festival. There were also interactive screens and stations where they could learn more about music history. They even got to listen to the famous songs that people loved back then.

Standing on the exact grass where the festival took place felt very special. It helped everyone understand how thousands of people came together to celebrate peace and music. The museum made history feel exciting and easy to understand.

This journey was more than just looking at pictures. The group used their eyes and ears to experience the art and music. These moments started great conversations as everyone shared their thoughts with their friends and staff.

After seeing the museum, the group explored the beautiful outdoor grounds. The wide-open spaces and fresh air made the day even better. By the time they headed home, everyone felt closer as a team. They left with big smiles and a new love for art, history, and the spirit of their community.



# LIVING RESOURCES CELEBRATES “518 DAY” WITH A DAY OF SERVICE

This month, Living Resources leadership traded office desks for paint brushes as part of our annual 518 Day of Service, a special tradition inspired by the Capital Region’s 518 area code and rooted in community, teamwork, and pride in the homes we support.

On May 18, executive and leadership team members spent the day at four Living Resources residences, two in Albany, one in Clifton Park, and one in Niskayuna, working alongside our Facilities team to complete household improvement projects. This year’s focus: painting residential ramps.

While painting a ramp may sound simple, anyone who has tackled one knows it’s detailed, hands-on work. Between railings, spindles, edges, and weather-worn surfaces, the projects required patience, teamwork, and plenty of determination. But throughout the day, teams rolled up their sleeves with one shared purpose: helping make the homes of the people we support safer, brighter, and more welcoming.

518 Day is about more than maintenance projects, it’s a chance for leadership to step outside of our daily routines and directly support the homes and environments that mean so much to the people we support.

The annual event reflects Living Resources’ commitment to community involvement and servant leadership. It also provides an opportunity for departments to connect in a different way, working side-by-side, sharing laughs, and seeing firsthand the impact of collective effort. By the end of the day, fresh coats of paint and renewed ramps stood as visible reminders of what can be accomplished when people come together with purpose.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this year’s 518 Day and to our Facilities team for leading the projects and supporting our crews throughout the day.

