



CWI IS CELEBRATING ALL OF OUR TEAM MEMBERS AS PART OF NATIONAL DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS WEEK: SEPTEMBER 12-18, 2021

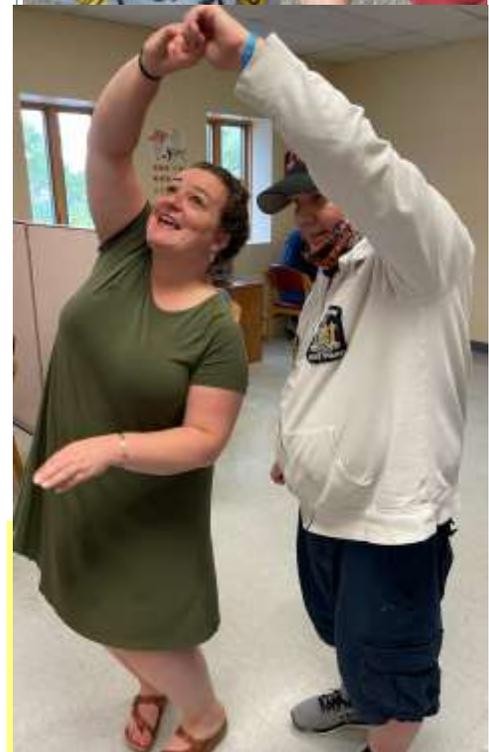
This is a time for all of us to say "thank you" to the staff who continue to rise to the challenge each day to keep the people we support, along with our friends and loved ones, safe and healthy. We have been in the midst of a global public health crisis that was new to all of us and threatened both our well-being and our way of life. And while the COVID-19 crisis continues to this day, much of the progress we've made is due to the professionalism and know-how exhibited by our staff members whom were right there on the front lines, working around the clock to do what needed to be done. This experience has shined the spotlight on our staffs' ability to work under extreme pressure while showing compassion.

The heroes who make up the I/DD workforce provide critical supports making it possible for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live, work and thrive in their communities. As many of you know, this work requires specialized skills and competencies that are not reflected by the low wages, limited access to benefits, and lack of professional recognition for our direct support staff. At no time in our history has the value of this workforce been more clearly demonstrated than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As members of this select team of staff, these staff are the backbone of the service delivery system. They are a group of dedicated people who are in the field every day helping people with developmental disabilities to live independent, productive lives. They not only provide assistance with someone's day-to-day needs; they serve as a role model, teacher, mentor and friend.

*On behalf of CWI Administration and Board of Directors, we would like to extend a special thank you to all our staff who have made it their mission to serve the people with developmental disabilities we support. We continue to need you more than ever. Please know how grateful we are for what you do every day.*

***For everything you do that no one sees, but makes a world of difference, we thank you.***



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## OUR FABULOUS STAFF.

In preparation for the Annual Staff Appreciation Week, we have been busy :

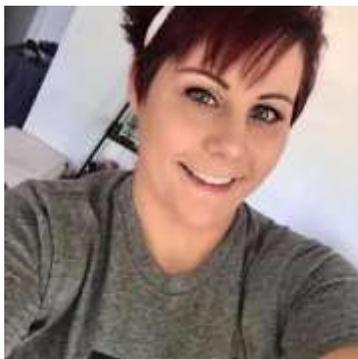
- seeking sponsorships to offset the costs of a gift to our staff. With the generosity of Stored Tech and input from various departments, we hope you will enjoy the backpack selected.
- Partnered with the Adirondack Balloon Festival Organizer (our own Mark Donahue) to ensure that CWI is included in the



Rainbow Project where this year Essential Workers will be honored in the Saturday Flight of Balloons . A random draw will select FOUR (usually we can award 1 ride) CWI staff to participate in this Balloon Ride. (NOTE: Warren Co. Public Health is requiring all participants to be fully vaccinated.)

- submitting nominations of some of our team members to be recognized by NY ALLIANCE during DSP week. The stories of Our Everyday Heroes include:

## Our Everyday Heroes



Heather Mattison is a DSP at Faxon IRA. She has played a key role in promoting physical and emotional well-being to the ladies that she supports. Over the past year, Heather has shown a tremendous amount of dedication to the ladies at Faxon IRA. This includes working in a COVID positive home. During this time period, Heather supported the ladies who receive services to remain engaged and healthy with creative ideas and an upbeat & positive attitude. Heather has taken a lead role in scheduling medical appointments as well as supporting the ladies at home, who typically attend Day Programs. These ladies thrive on routine and Heather has done well to be sure that they remain active, engaged and happy. Heather is an asset to the individuals that she supports and to CWI.

Victoria Minick is our most senior behaviorist with CWI and has been with us going on three years. She goes above and beyond to enrich the lives of those we support with enthusiasm and authenticity. Victoria is a great support to our staff during behavioral challenges, and is very much appreciated for what she does to support our individuals.



In July, Schenectady ARC and Assemblyman Santabarbara sponsored a rally to raise awareness about the critical need for more funding for DSP wages and the current crisis. The rally was on July 29, at 4 pm in Proctor's Arcade in downtown Schenectady. CWI's Kristen Sanchez-Himmelblau , Day Services Manager and Jared Himmelblau, Applied Behavior Specialist participated and reported back that it was informative and worthwhile.

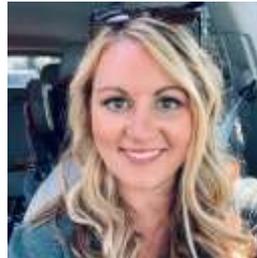
**For doing your job with excellence and persistence, we thank you.**

## Our Everyday Heroes, Cont.



Our Operations Team is AWESOME!  
 They worked closely with our Ryan Ave. team to support the transition of one of the Big Bay residents to their home. This gentleman enjoys the outdoors but benefits from the protection of a fenced in yard. While exploring options to have one put in at Ryan Ave., it became quite apparent that the wait list for fencing and contractors to install it was going to be problematic. Our operations team researched how to move the fencing at Big Bay to Ryan Avenue and within a couple of weeks had it installed looking like it had always belonged there!! Well done! THANK YOU! Kevin Elms, Larry Hall and Mark Deyette.

Cara Catone, Residential DSP at Men of Moreau, once again invited Ted Abel along on her family vacation. Ted enjoyed vacationing for four nights/five days in Wildwood, New Jersey in September, 2021. Ted spent time going out to eat, walking the boardwalk and relaxing at the beach. Upon returning to his home, Ted was heard saying, "I had a great time and cannot wait to go back next year!" Thank you Cara for being such a great advocate for Ted and ensuring a safe and fun time for him!



CWI is pleased to welcome Maxwell Prier as our new Transit Director. Maxwell is originally from Missouri, and holds a B.S. in Environmental Sciences. He has held a position with the U.S. Army over the past several years as a Training Administrator/Logistics Coordinator, along with other leadership roles, and has been stationed at several bases across the United States. Max enjoys travel and hiking and currently lives in Queensbury. He has delved quickly into his role at Transit, managing multiple tasks in re-organizing the shop, maintaining our fleet of vehicles to ensure safe transportation, and supporting our drivers/monitors. We are glad he has chosen to be a part of the CWI team!



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# COVID-19 AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

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Worries and anxiety about COVID-19 and its impact can be overwhelming. Social distancing makes it even more challenging. Learn ways to cope during this pandemic.

[By Mayo Clinic Staff](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has likely brought many changes to how you live your life, and with it uncertainty, altered daily routines, financial pressures and social isolation. You may worry about getting sick, how long the pandemic will last, whether you'll lose your job, and what the future will bring. Information overload, rumors and misinformation can make your life feel out of control and make it unclear what to do.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you may experience stress, anxiety, fear, sadness and loneliness. And mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression, can worsen.

Surveys show a major increase in the number of U.S. adults who report symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression during the pandemic, compared with surveys before the pandemic. Some people have increased their use of alcohol or drugs, thinking that can help them cope with their fears about the pandemic. In reality, using these substances can worsen anxiety and depression.

People with substance use disorders, notably those addicted to tobacco or opioids, are likely to have worse outcomes if they get COVID-19. That's because these addictions can harm lung function and weaken the immune system, causing chronic conditions such as heart disease and lung disease, which increase the risk of serious complications from COVID-19.

For all of these reasons, it's important to learn self-care strategies and get the care you need to help you cope.

## SELF-CARE STRATEGIES

Self-care strategies are good for your mental and physical health and can help you take charge of your life. Take care of your body and your mind and connect with others to benefit your mental health.

### Take care of your body

Be mindful about your physical health:

Get enough sleep. Go to bed and get up at the same times each day. Stick close to your typical schedule, even if you're staying at home.

Participate in regular physical activity. Regular physical activity and exercise can help reduce anxiety and improve mood. Find an activity that includes movement, such as dance or exercise apps. Get outside in an area that makes it easy to maintain distance from people, such as a nature trail or your own backyard.

Eat healthy. Choose a well-balanced diet. Avoid loading up on junk food and refined sugar. Limit caffeine as it can aggravate stress and anxiety.

Avoid tobacco, alcohol and drugs. If you smoke tobacco or if you vape, you're already at higher risk of lung disease. Because COVID-19 affects the lungs, your risk increases even more. Using alcohol to try to cope can make matters worse and reduce your coping skills. Avoid taking drugs to cope, unless your doctor prescribed medications for you.

Limit screen time. Turn off electronic devices for some time each day, including 30 minutes before bedtime. Make a conscious effort to spend less time in front of a screen — television, tablet, computer and phone.

Relax and recharge. Set aside time for yourself. Even a few minutes of quiet time can be refreshing and help to quiet your mind and reduce anxiety. Many people benefit from practices such as deep breathing, tai chi, yoga or meditation. Soak in a bubble bath, listen to music, or read or listen to a book — whatever helps you relax. Select a technique that works for you and practice it regularly.

***For spending time supporting the dreams, visions, goals and ambitions of others, we thank you.***

## COVID 19 AFTERMATH, MENTAL HEALTH, CONT.



### Take care of your mind

#### Reduce stress triggers:

Keep your regular routine. Maintaining a regular schedule is important to your mental health. In addition to sticking to a regular bedtime routine, keep consistent times for meals, bathing and getting dressed, work or study schedules, and exercise. Also set aside time for activities you enjoy. This predictability can make you feel more in control.

Limit exposure to news media. Constant news about COVID-19 from all types of media can heighten fears about the disease. Limit social media that may expose you to rumors and false information. Also limit reading, hearing or watching other news, but keep up to date on national and local recommendations. Look for reliable sources, such as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Stay busy. A distraction can get you away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression. Enjoy hobbies that you can do at home, identify a new project or clean out that closet you promised you'd get to. Doing something positive to manage anxiety is a healthy coping strategy.

Focus on positive thoughts. Choose to focus on the positive things in your life, instead of dwelling on how bad you feel. Consider starting each day by listing things you are thankful for. Maintain a sense of hope, work to accept changes as they occur and try to keep problems in perspective.

Use your moral compass or spiritual life for support. If you draw strength from a belief system, it can bring you comfort during difficult times.

Set priorities. Don't become overwhelmed by creating a life-changing list of things to achieve while you're home. Set reasonable goals each day and outline steps you can take to reach those goals. Give yourself credit for every step in the right direction, no matter how small. And recognize that some days will be better than others.

***For being the rock to us all, we thank you.***

### Connect with others

#### Build support and strengthen relationships:

Make connections. If you need to stay at home and distance yourself from others, avoid social isolation. Find time each day to make virtual connections by email, texts, phone, or FaceTime or similar apps. If you're working remotely from home, ask your co-workers how they're doing and share coping tips. Enjoy virtual socializing and talking to those in your home.

Do something for others. Find purpose in helping the people around you. For example, email, text or call to check on your friends, family members and neighbors — especially those who are elderly. If you know someone who can't get out, ask if there's something needed, such as groceries or a prescription picked up, for instance. But be sure to follow CDC, WHO and your government recommendations on social distancing and group meetings.

Support a family member or friend. If a family member or friend needs to be isolated for safety reasons or gets sick and needs to be quarantined at home or in the hospital, come up with ways to stay in contact. This could be through electronic devices or the telephone or by sending a note to brighten the day, for example.

## RECOGNIZING WHAT'S TYPICAL AND WHAT'S NOT

Stress is a normal psychological and physical reaction to the demands of life. Everyone reacts differently to difficult situations, and it's normal to feel stress and worry during a crisis. But multiple challenges daily, such as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, can push you beyond your ability to cope.

Many people may have mental health concerns, such as symptoms of anxiety and depression during this time. And feelings may change over time.

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling helpless, sad, angry, irritable, hopeless, anxious or afraid. You may have trouble concentrating on typical tasks, changes in appetite, body aches and pains, or difficulty sleeping or you may struggle to face routine chores.

When these signs and symptoms last for several days in a row, make you miserable and cause problems in your daily life so that you find it hard to carry out normal responsibilities, it's time to ask for help.

## COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH, CONT.



Get help when you need it  
Hoping mental health problems such as anxiety or depression will go away on their own can lead to worsening symptoms. If you have concerns or if you experience worsening of mental health symptoms, ask for help when you need it, and be upfront about how you're doing. To get help you may want to:

- Call or use social media to contact a close friend or loved one — even though it may be hard to talk about your feelings.
- Contact a minister, spiritual leader or someone in your faith community.
- Contact your employee assistance program, if your employer has one, and get counseling or ask for a referral to a mental health professional.
- Call your primary care provider or mental health professional to ask about appointment options to talk about your anxiety or depression and get advice and guidance. Some may provide the option of phone, video or online appointments.

Contact organizations such as the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for help and guidance.

If you're feeling suicidal or thinking of hurting yourself, seek help. Contact your primary care provider or a mental health professional. Or call a suicide hotline. In the U.S., call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255) or use its webchat at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat).

Continue your self-care strategies

You can expect your current strong feelings to fade when the pandemic is over, but stress won't disappear from your life when the health crisis of COVID-19 ends. Continue these self-care practices to take care of your mental health and increase your ability to cope with life's ongoing challenges.



***For working tirelessly....or sometimes tiredly....at your job, we thank you.***

## Moving On

The Retiree Club has again expanded. Peggy Rowley, Bus Driver for the past 16 years, Don Smith and Trudi Smith, Day DSPs here 29 and 20 years respectively have all officially retired. Enjoy the life of leisure!

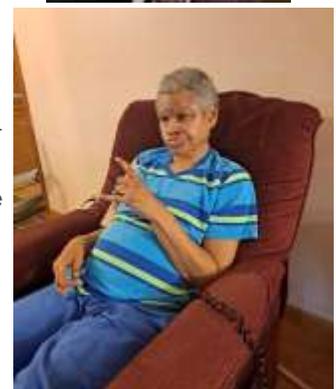
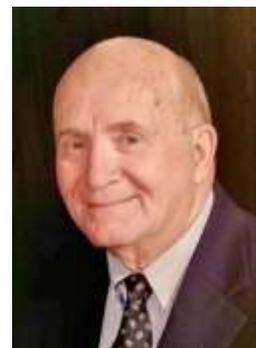
Also of note, Rick Schnurbush who lead our Adirondack Fulfillment department for the past few years as his part time retirement job, has left to be retired full time!

## In memorium

### Dr. William E. Carroll

GREENWICH - If you were to look up the phrase "small-town doctor", you might just see a picture of Bill Carroll. He had an office on Main Street in Greenwich for 25 years, but you could just as easily find him paying house calls, or consulting with a patient after church. His patients always knew they could reach him if they needed help. He had an unmatched work ethic – rarely taking vacations – and only retired from his part-time job as Medical Director at CWI, in February 2021. He was a pillar of the local medical community for the last 40 years and an integral part of the Greenwich Medical Center fund-raising committee, among other contributions.

We here at CWI are saddened by this loss and very grateful for all his years with us. Huge thanks go to him and his family. As Dr. Carroll's children are clearing out his home, they have offered/donated many items in the hopes that "his stuff be put to good use by an organization he was so involved with. This would've made him very happy."



*Thank you Dr. Carroll and family! Peter loves his new chair!*



## Grants/Donations—

PPP—Payroll Protection Program—we are so relieved to have received official notification that the loan we received to keep our employees employed during the COVID-19 pandemic has been “forgiven”. This means that the funds borrowed to help meet payroll related expenses in 2020 does not need to be paid back. This is a huge relief as the funds were critical to help with this part of our expenses during an extended period of reduced income and increased expenses. Without PPP the organization would have suffered even deeper catastrophic losses.

### *HOW CAN OTHERS HELP.....*

Fund Development Committee is working on a number of “events” including:

Kiwanis Duck Race—October 30<sup>th</sup> (100% of tickets sold by CWI is awarded to CWI—buy your tickets from us!!)

Brooks BBQ - **Friday, NOVEMBER 12, 2021**

Annual Appeal in conjunction with Annual Giving Tuesday—targeted to begin in November 2021

South Glens Falls Marathon Dance—targeted for March 2022

**Dancing With the Adirondack Stars-March 26, 2022**



Wish List: We appreciate the ongoing donations to our “Wish List” including items to support activities with many of our individuals to help them participate in a hobby they enjoy.

Below is our updated wish list. If you can help by supplying any of the items below, please call Noel Granger, Division Director of Day Services at 518 793-4700, ext. 12114 or email at [ngranger@cwinc.org](mailto:ngranger@cwinc.org) and we can pick up from you or arrange for you to drop them off. (We can also let you know in case the item has already been purchased.) Thank you in advance for your support during this critical year! Those we serve are so excited to be resuming their usual activities.

- ◆ Foam peg board, pieces are light and cost about \$15 for the set. **REQUEST 3 sets**



- Sorting bears can be used with cups provided or on paper, foam, or with Velcro to corresponding rulers etc. They cost about \$20 for the set. **REQUEST 3 sets**

- Foam pieces are for us to make additional boards, etc. as well as to make a game of dominoes. The set shown is thick and costs about \$20. **REQUEST 2 sets**



- A laminator. We use it for many things including schedules and communication boards throughout the buildings. Desktop ones are \$40 and up. We would like to get one and a few packets of the laminating film ( \$26 )
- Dining canopies (a total of 8) for some of our sites to provide outdoor shade.
- Skip Bo cards
- 2 Roku Players
- Assorted craft supplies: glue sticks, poster board, colored markers, crayons, colored paper, glitter
- Hand held vacuum
- Corn hole set
- Basketballs and basketball pump
- Gift cards to Dunkin Donuts or Stewarts
- Gift cards to Joann Fabric or Hobby Lobby for craft supplies



*For all the times you have not received a thank you, we thank you.*



## Recruiting New Staff

Our HR Department has continued to aggressively recruit for our open positions. We now have signage in front of high trafficked buildings, on vehicles that are frequently out and about in the region and work with traditional media outlets to inform job seekers of our opportunities.

**NOTE:** CWI employees continue to be eligible for the Referral Bonus where the referring employee will receive a \$250 taxable bonus per each qualifying employee referred.



## Property Closures

As reported in the last issue, we have successfully supported the 4 men who lived at the Big Bay IRA in their moves to new homes. Now, it is time to sell the property. It will soon be listed in the Multiple Listings and we are hopeful for a sale soon given the housing market at this time! What will we do with the proceeds? Since the funds used to purchase the home came to us via state funds under the auspices of OPWDD, we are obligated to use the funds to pay off the debt on the house and to address physical plant needs in other CWI owned homes or to return the funds to NYS. Our Residential team and our Operations team has a lengthy list of property work that needs to be addressed. These are being prioritized and will be reviewed with OPWDD personnel to obtain their support/approval before we can move forward.

As you may recall, just prior to the pandemic hitting, we had also worked with the people we supported at our Eastpointe Day Services in Granville to relocate to other service options. This site has been officially closed. Since it too was purchased through funding mechanisms associated with OPWDD services, there are parameters set by the state as to how we could reinvest the proceeds of this property. Given that this beautiful facility is in a rural area of Washington County, how long it takes to sell is less predictable than a home is these days. We are strategizing on the physical plant needs in other CWI owned locations to review with the state so that we can gain their approval to reinvest the proceeds into other properties.

## Happy Direct Support Professionals Week 2021

### HOW CAN OTHERS HELP, CONT.

**AmazonSmile** is a simple and automatic way for you to support CWI each time you shop, at no cost to you! When you shop at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to CWI. Amazon donates .5% of your purchases to the charity of your choice. It's free to use and makes a donation for purchases you were going to make anyway.

Log into your Amazon account and enter Smile.Amazon into the search bar, click on "Change your Charity," and enter CWI

**Targeted Donation** For over 50 years, CWI has been enriching lives and empowering people to discover their potential. We have been able to significantly impact lives through innovative supports and services. Contributions have become a more important source of revenue for human services organizations as we have endured significant reductions in government funding. With your help, we can continue with our mission of empowering people and enriching lives throughout our community. We gladly accept: Cash, Check, or Money Order Donations. Go to [www.cwinc.org](http://www.cwinc.org) and click Donate.

Community, Work & Independence,  
Inc.  
PO Box 303  
16 Pearl Street  
Glens Falls, NY 12801  
  
Phone: 518-793-4700  
Fax: 518-743-1061  
E-mail: [dgrace@cwinc.org](mailto:dgrace@cwinc.org)

