



Just look what our staff have been up to!

This edition highlights our staff and the wonderful people in various programs and services. As they have throughout this pandemic, our team continues to develop creative, enriching and fun experiences for and with the people we serve. Our staff's dedication to our mission and ensuring that people live the life they envision is commendable. They are true examples of what have been referred to particularly these past 2+ years...as Heroes. We do not use that term lightly. (see many photos on pages 3-4)

Hovey Pond—some of the ladies from Flat Rock IRA took advantage of a beautiful spring day to have a few laughs at the park. Besties Ashley and MaryLynn were just glowing.

Earth Day—our pre vocational services group got a jump start on gardening. They set up their plot at Sagamore Street, Glens Falls community garden.

Some of the men from Everts enjoyed the warm weather with a walk on the bike trail

Fred from Schroon thoroughly enjoyed visiting the Adirondack Buffalo Co. farm! Jen was a big fan of the petting zoo at Nettle Meadow.

Cram the Van—in honor of the late Mike Dubrey, his friends invited us to participate in a food drive to cram his DJ van full of food for the local food shelters. The people at Pathways and Quaker Road were more than happy to help.

Talk about creative! When Helping Hands participants had an interest in community helpers, specifically law enforcement, the staff team reached out to CWI's friend, Sheriff Jim LaFarr. He was more than happy to participate in an informative chat via zoom.

Holidays continue to be celebrated in joyful ways. St. Patrick's Day found many people turning into leprechauns or eating something green (Quaker Road), Easter was colorful and at times included the big guy himself—huge thanks to the Easter Bunny who paid a visit at Ryan Ave. IRA. Cinco de Mayo is definitely about the cultural food and drinks—as demonstrated by the ladies at Bay **Road's** celebration. And, everybody loves a birthday—or at least the smiles and cake that come with it!

Giving back to our community—we receive so much so—it is always heartwarming to be able to “give back”. The people in our pre-vocational group once again supported the American Red Cross in a blood drive on 4/15. They surpassed their goal and collected 44 much needed pints!! Jim Ladd from our Ryan Ave. IRA was honored by the Gansevoort Fire Department for his volunteer work with them! Way to go Jim!

Spirit Week at Quaker Road looked like a lot of fun! Beach Ball Day, Hawaiian Day. Mismatch day is always a laugh and Blue Day really shows the spirit!!

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LOOK WHAT OUR STAFF HAVE BEEN UP TO, CONTINUED

Staff and Participants at CWI's Quaker Road Site completed projects to show support for people in Ukraine. Jon, Paul, Olivia, Kathy, and Tom of Helping Hands transferred individual messages of Art from their Heart on to their banner. Rooms 1 and 3 made

butterflies of blue and yellow, and New Ventures followed up with their blue and gold sunflower banner! Our Community Habilitation worker supported a young man to take in the beauty at water's edge in Lake George!

The work that you do may not always be seen...but it is ALWAYS valued!

Life Unlimited

Congratulations to Tom Johnson! Tom is part of SUNY Adirondack's Spring Graduation Class and walked across the stage May 2022 to receive his Associates in Applied Science Degree in Media Arts. The Life Unlimited Team has supported Tom since September 2015 in the pursuit of this life goal. He is the 27th person to have attained his degree with the support of the Life Unlimited team!!



Retirees

We wish Karl Smoczynski, Corporate Compliance Officer well in his retirement and thank him for sharing his expertise and humor with us.

In memoriam

I love the people I work with and people I take care of.



Naomie Lynn Rosebrook, Flat Rock IRA Oct. 6, 1976 - April 2, 2022
Naomie loved life and could be described as a spit-fire of a person. Once you met Naomie, you would never forget her sweet smile, her infectious giggle, and her sweetspirited personality. If there was music playing she was the first to start dancing, she especially enjoyed going to Fridays at the lake in Lake George, and concerts in Saratoga. She loved to laugh and always had a witty reply. Naomie loved everything to do with animals and going to the parks and the zoo were some of her

favorite things to do. She will always be an amazing soul. Naomie will be lovingly missed by her family, her friends, her housemates and the staff from both her house and day program. We all love you Naomie, have all the peace and joy dancing up in heaven. A Celebration of her Life was held on 5/14/22.

***I enjoy the staff and individuals we serve.
Working for CWI is a fulfilling career.***

Employment Services

CWI was in attendance as an Exhibitor, highlighting our products sold through NYSID, at the 2022 Office of General Services (OGS) GovBuy Expo 5/4 & 5/5/2022. 2022 marks the return of this annual event at the Empire State Plaza after a two year pause. This conference draws NYS procurement personnel from across the State to stay informed about relevant procurement-related issues and learn to effectively meet fiscal challenges and the opportunity to visit Exhibitor's booths.



There were close to 200 Exhibitors in attendance. During these two days CWI staff Sally Hawley, Erin Dashnaw and Tori Losey were able to have conversation with many attendees to promote our products. The Sick Kit drew a lot of attention this year to the CWI booth. It was a very successful event.

In other areas, the ADK Fulfillment Team has been busy expanding their work with Hennings Hardware (you may recall our ability to lease out space at Everts to help this company expand their business and CWI increase our income to offset operational costs). They have been in a flurry getting the Sick Kit products ramped up for distribution and exploring other areas to build sales.

NYSID (New York State Industries for the Disabled) products/contracts are another large portion of our employment focus. Extensive work has been done to preserve and potentially expand contracts. These efforts not only benefit the people who are employed as part of the contracts but CWI as a whole.

Justice Center Code of Conduct Award Nominees—due 7/1

Jordan Feliciano is a full time DSP at Flat Rock IRA and has been vital to maintaining consistency and support to the ladies here. Throughout the last two years, Direct Support Professionals have had to navigate so many changes and new challenges. Jordan Feliciano has overcome these changes and accepted these challenges with the confidence and integrity of a professional. In times of short staffing and limited



resources, she has worked diligently to maintain consistency for the individuals and provide continued support of their physical, emotional and personal wellbeing. She always starts her shift with a positive attitude and outlook for the day. Jordan has taken on a lead role during her evening shifts and has spent time creating training tools used to support and train the relief staff assisting at the residence. She has been key support during the COVID pandemic in providing consistency and care at an IRA with great emotional needs. The pandemic has caused obstacles with outings and family visits. Jordan helped ensure that these family and community relationships were maintained while respecting the health and safety of the individuals. Jordan provided support through socially distanced outings, supported visits in safer settings and has assisted people to gain access to and learn how to use technology, such as FaceTime, to stay connected with friends and family during a time when gatherings were more difficult.

Through these trying times Jordan is always on time and maintains an exceptional attendance record. Her reliability and flexibility has been so important, not only the program she works at, but also for the individuals she supports. She has acted quickly and provided critical supports during multiple medical emergencies that occurred at the residence over the last year. Jordan provided advocacy during these emergencies while at the hospital and on follow-up appointments. Jordan truly upholds and exemplifies the Justice Center Code of Conduct through her ongoing dedication and the admirable supports she provides every day.

I love the people I work with and people I take care of.

I enjoy being with the people we serve. I find there is gratitude in servitude.



Yeanda Tracy is a Direct Support Professional at Quaker Road Day Services. We have been very lucky to have Yeanda as a Day Services DSP for 18 years. Yeanda's positive insights, proactive input and gentle demeanor is most valuable in her DSP role. Yeanda has developed knowledge of and positive relationships with the people attending program. She has great feedback and considerations for each person that show remarkable, person-centered perceptions. Yeanda's helping nature makes her flexible towards meeting both individual and programmatic needs. Her person first approach has given program staff and team members insight into each person's life, preferences and abilities. This also makes her a strong advocate. She works alongside her team to offer meaningful and fun activities. During COVID and any time of need, Yeanda does not hesitate to offer help anywhere help is needed. Yeanda's goal in every day is to make it a good day. She tackles this goal by ensuring everyone who leaves her presence does so with a smile.



I love feeling like I am making our friends lives better and I love helping them grow





eFMAP/WORKFORCE STABILIZATION FUNDS UPDATE

We began to issue the first Longevity Bonus checks to eligible employees on **Friday, April 15th** and subsequent checks every two weeks through 6/10. NOTE: we originally planned for 6 checks; however, after review and participation in an OPWDD webinar held in late April, this was changed to a 5 check distribution in order to assure we met all requirements for distribution. Letters were provided to eligible staff which included the full amount that they would receive as part of this Longevity Bonus. Staff whose check totals \$1000 or less, were paid out in one check on 4/15.

For more specifics on the eFMAP bonuses for employees in the "200 Series job codes", please access the documents in V drive>Everyone>eFMAP Appendix K Workforce Stabilization Topics

- ⇒ CWI did not determine eligibility for these bonuses
- ⇒ CWI had no discretion to distribute these bonuses to employees outside of the 200 series
- ⇒ CWI had no discretion to reclassify employees into the 200 series to make them eligible.
- ⇒ IF CWI had the discretion to distribute these bonuses differently, we would have chosen a more inclusive path.
- ⇒ CWI does not have the resources to provide similar bonuses to those not included in the FMAP funds.

Once the Longevity Bonus distribution process is complete, the Accounting team can then review their work on the Retention Bonus –the second 20% of base salary bonus for qualified staff employed during that second specified time period. Any "incentive payments" that CWI has provided/is providing for a short period of that time period are repaid to CWI from this allotment. CWI has 180 days from receipt to issue these funds to eligible staff employed during that designated period.

NOTE: there are significantly more staff eligible in this round of funding, so the bonus/person will be different than in round 1. We are also required to have the board approve our distribution plan and then share with all employees. We will provide an update once we get closer to that distribution.

We also recognize that this "windfall" of income may pose challenges for some of our staff. There are tax implications as well as potential impact on other Dept. of Social Services benefits that some of our employees rely upon. CWI personnel are not tax and benefit experts; however, if you have concerns about how best to manage this cash influx, please feel free to reach out to Melissa Houghton, HR Director. She has been compiling contact information on potential experts who can assist you in how best to manage your personal situation. In addition, our statewide provider agency has worked to provide guidance:

The New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation and the Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation are pleased to present another Direct Support Professional (DSP) Incentive Payments Webinar entitled ***Financial Literacy***.

In this webinar Tom McGrath, a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ Professional from Ballston Spa National Bank joins Ryan Cox from the New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation and Anthony Ismael from the Regional Centers for Workforce Transformation to discuss the various ways that individuals who are receiving the workforce incentive payments might utilize these funds. Tom will offer suggestions and best practices when it comes to paying down debt, saving for the unexpected, college education planning, investment options, as well as general financial options.

When it comes to your finances everyone has a different situation. This 30-minute webinar is intended to provide DSP's with an understanding of what your financial options are and some best practices to help you plan for how to make the most of the workforce incentive payments <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IBASd9rEBs>

Of note: The Vaccine Incentive and COVID Bonus funds still have not yet been received from NYS.



The support from coordinators and managers here is fantastic.

NYS BUDGET 2022-2023

NYS 2022-2023 Budget specifics—there still aren't many at this time... The budget was passed in early April. We understand that the following is included in the final budget but we await guidance on each topic:

- A 5.4% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for human service agencies including CWI. (no specifics are yet available as to any strings attached to how these new funds can be utilized)
- A healthcare worker bonus program that will deliver \$3,000 for full time employees that work in a healthcare-related field. It is anticipated that the majority of employees who work with individuals with disabilities will be eligible for this bonus, but the budget language leaves that discretion to the Commissioner of OPWDD. We asked for specifics in our meeting with OPWDD Commissioner Neifeld and were advised that the bonus will NOT apply to all of CWI's essential workforce—certainly to DSPs and Clinicians but likely not beyond those groups. We await specifics on when this bonus funding will arrive and how it is to be dispersed, hoping it follows suit with other bonuses and is pro-rated for part time staff.
- Statewide Health Facility Transformation Fund - Language has been added in the final bills that create a specific designation for community-based funding associated with the Statewide Healthcare Facility Transformation under the auspices of the office for people with developmental disabilities. Again, we need more information to understand what this means to CWI.
- Nurses Across New York Loan Forgiveness Program – Language has been added that would allow for nurses that work in “non-profit diagnostic and treatment centers” to be eligible for this program if they meet the criteria of working in an “underserved area” as determined by the Commissioner. We have advocated for this! We await specifics to see how this truly applies.

***I like being part of a team,
the individuals, having a great boss***

COVID QUICK FACTS

- ◆ OTC COVID-19 Test distributed Year to Date:
1,275 (this includes CWI employees, service recipients and community partners.)
- ◆ We have partnered with Warren and Washington County Public Health Depts. to assist in administering the second booster to eligible residents of CWI IRAs.
- ◆ OPWDD Updates:
Daily Health Attestations are no longer needed for CWI Employees or service recipients. If someone in a congregate care home tests positive, Health Assessments must be completed on the residents in that home and documented.
“OPWDD provided clarification on DOH Guidance for quarantine/isolation periods for people who reside in congregate care settings. Regardless of vaccination status, people who reside in a congregate care home must quarantine for 10 days if they meet the definition of an exposure. If someone in a congregate care home tests positive, they must isolate for 10 days.”
- ◆ 83% of CWI staff wanted a vaccine, 100% of them received one.
- ◆ 42% of CWI staff have received a booster (NOTE: OPW considers you an exposure if you are eligible for a vaccine booster and have not gotten one—thus have to isolate when exposed.)
- ◆ No data as yet for eligible CWI staff and the second booster.
- ◆ 100% of Residents in a CWI IRA wanted and received a vaccine. 97.8% have received the first booster
- ◆ Positive Case Totals Year To Date

	January	February	March	April	Totals
Staff	29	7	11	22	69
Service Recipients	8	6	7	26	47
Total	37	13	18	48	116

FUNDRAISING, GRANTS, & DONATIONS

Fundraising

We have closed out the work associated with our largest annual fundraiser. The Dancing with the Adirondack Stars event is a huge organization and community wide undertaking. We are ever so grateful to all who had a part in putting on this event. The tally is complete and we have raised over \$37,000.

This year, more than ever, it was vital to our operational costs to secure additional funding! Thank you all! As important as the funds raised, our friend raising was hugely successful. We were able to meet new supporters in our community, to highlight our services and the people we represent receiving those services. The CWI Stars who performed in this event all received spontaneous standing ovations. It was clear to all that they were fulfilling life dreams that night. Their impact on our new friends will be a lasting one. Please be sure to access the photos, videos, posts, etc.

Brooks BBQ was Friday 5/13/22. In addition to our efforts to raise funds, some of the new friends of ours bought multiple dinners to donate back to CWI staff. They were raffled off to the lucky winners. MANY THANKS!!

SAVE THE DATE—we have partnered with the Kiwanis Club to host a Putt Above Golf Tournament on 8/19 at Cronin's Golf Course in Warrensburg. We are very grateful to the Kiwanis group for inviting us to share in this fundraiser. They've had great success in prior years and we aim to raise that bar! We are looking for GOLFERS and SPONSORS for this event...and down the road some...auction/raffle items. For sponsorship opportunities and/or golf registration go to www.cwinc.org and select the "Support" tab.

(NOTE: we were not chosen to be a recipient of South Glens Falls Marathon Dance funds this year. We appreciate Board Member, Julie Leonelli's efforts in nominating us.)

Grants/Donations

Our request for funds to help offset private pay costs for assessments at Foothills Clinic was partially funded by Stewarts Match Grants.

We have recently been notified that the federal government is expanding the eligibility for the FEMA grant we applied for in 2020. We are diligently working through the maze to see if more PPE supplies can be funded.

***I like the friendships I have made with the individuals.
I'm here to support them but I've learned a lot from them as well.***



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: Venmo, Cash, Check, or Money Order Donations. Go to www.cwinc.org and click Donate.

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, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as 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 into the search box, we are the fourth one down.

STAFFING RECRUITMENT EFFORTS

Please join us in welcoming and supporting our new staff:



New in April, L-R:

Deborah Dufore, CSP, Emily Tisdell, DSP Quaker, Kristin Royce, DSP, Community Helpers, Marie Taylor, CSP, Morgan Ham-mill, DSP Flat Rock IRA and Virginia Heidorf, HSS



New in March, L-R

Courtney Jaffe, DSP Schroom, David Fuller, Shop Manager, Jacqueline Ehle, DSP Schroom, Kia Hicks, Residential Relief, Madeline Daniello, CSP, Toni Miller,

CWI is a fantastic place to work! I go to work excited for every day. There is healing in helping.

Aggressive efforts continue to recruit and fill our array of job openings. Please help with our efforts and refer good people to apply.

CWI Employees continue to be eligible for the Referral Bonus. Upon hire of qualifying referrals, the referring CWI Employees will receive a \$250 taxable bonuses per each qualifying referral. When in doubt, reach out to our HR department with any further questions.

All areas are in need of staff, none more so than residential. Filling 24 hours/week 7 days/week shifts at 11 homes equates to **2812 hours of staff coverage/week**, 90% of these hours are considered needed to meet safety minimums. We have incentivized all staff to pick up hours, set expectations for exempt personnel with some service based experience and extended our requests to all corners of the agency. Safety first. The best, long term solution is the recruitment of more staff. Please be our Public Relations eyes, ears and voice—lets get you all some new co-workers!!

We recently solicited feedback from employees on employee engagement and our efforts to recognize and appreciate staff. An anonymous survey was sent out with the hope of hearing what staff truly value about their positions, and where we may be able to improve recognition efforts. We asked for but did not require identification of what department they worked in so that we could review topics affecting departments differently. Once results are in, they will be shared. THANK YOU all for your candid and helpful feedback.

The individuals that we serve make it enjoyable.

Update on our current incentives to entice and reward our team for working the hardest to fill shifts in our IRAs—weekends. We are providing stipends to work these hours. We continue to provide this incentive at almost total cost to CWI because we continue to experience alarming shortages of staff. We are using a variety of approaches to ensure the safety of our residents:

- ♦ Exempt staff that pick up residential shifts outside their regular work schedule get paid those hours.
- ♦ \$3.15/hour add on incentive in weekend hourly rates remains in place.

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