

## Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Annual Report

### We Give Thanks for the Exceptional Citizens Staff -Our Heroes

#### A Message from Stanford Perry/Executive Director

Now more than ever, our ability to support each other matters. This value has always been central to Citizens, but over the past few weeks, I've been inspired again and again by how in these challenging times so many families and friends have reached out to ask how they can help.

Our programs continue to rigorously support the residential and health care needs of men and women with developmental disabilities. COVID-19 has touched our community. I can report a number of recoveries and that our team is actively working with families and staff members on how best to memorialize the people who succumbed to the virus. As we work to honor these relationships and lives, we also remain committed to the health and emotional well-being of everyone who is grieving.

The exceptional care that all receive is because of dedicated staff members — they are our foundation. At this critical time, your questions, kind words, creativity and donations have made an important impact throughout Citizens. Donations have been made for houses to take a night off from cooking and enjoy a meal knowing that their essential work was being thought of and recognized. If you're able, please join our COVID-19 Fund. This is a way we can show our thanks to our extraordinary residential staff for everything they are doing and sacrificing during this health crisis.

Sharing your support on Citizens [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) is another way to say thanks to our team. Please show your virtual applause with the hashtags #NewYorkTough #ApplaudDirectSupport and #WeAreEssential. Doing so also educates lawmakers on our community. Congress may not be back in session until May 4, but we must continue educating lawmakers on pressing COVID-19 disability issues so that disability funding is included in the next stimulus package. You can also assist our team further by signing the advocacy letter to your U.S. Senator on the Citizens website.

Thank you for your support and trust in us as we move forward and through this health crisis. I send you all my best wishes for good health.



**Thank You !**



## Citizens Continues to Excel and Grow in 2019 Shoreham ICF Added to Agency

Building on the momentum of a successful 2019, Citizens Options Unlimited remains focused on a future of greater self-direction, community connections and opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities. The agency currently provides family supports, recreation and respite services, self-direction and residential services.

In spring of 2019, Citizens Options Unlimited, working alongside AHRC Nassau's team, welcomed the opportunity to assist an outside program in need of a new direction. The residential facility, Shoreham ICF, supporting 82 people, had faced ongoing compliance issues identified by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH). These New York State agencies tapped AHRC Nassau leadership and program administration of Citizens Options Unlimited to set a new course after the program was decertified.

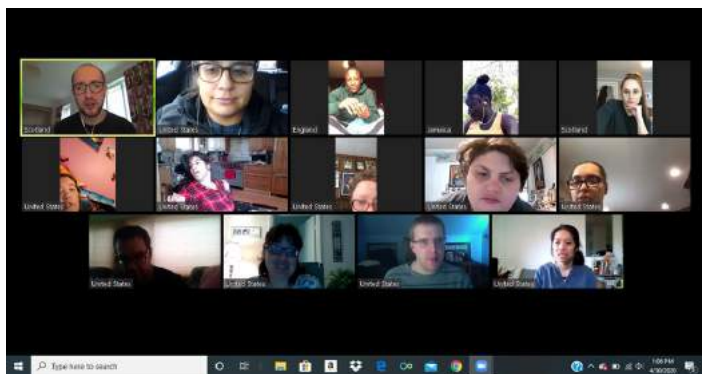
Administrative leadership from Citizens developed and implemented a "turn-around" plan to support Shoreham's 300-staff team of nurses, clinicians, direct support professionals and other roles. The leadership team navigated weekly monitoring visits by OPWDD, the NYS DOH, and fire marshal. An open-door policy and ongoing forums with staff and families were essential in building a strong team.

"There were a number of very dedicated staff, who have worked at the Shoreham ICF for many years, some, whose tenure 15, 20, 30 and even is 35 years," said Karen Tanzillo, Senior Director. "The support of staff and families were key in this transition and serves as a foundation for our future success."

The program officially transferred to Citizens in July of 2019 and Citizens achieved re-certification by all oversight agencies in September, six months after walking through their doors. "Moving forward, we're now focused on meeting CQL and COMPASS standards of excellence. It's an ongoing process involving the people we support, their families, staff members and the community," said Karen Tanzillo, Senior Director. "Through this transition and addition, we are strengthening our culture which empowers our community to create the most meaningful results."



## Camp Connections! By Jerri Walker



For over 40 years, Camp Loyaltown has brought people together from all over the world to form everlasting friendships. During these days where we are spending so much time in our homes our friendships and relationships become even more precious to us.

For the past two weeks friends from near and far have been connecting to enjoy fun activities together! Learning new songs, creating art projects, playing fun games, exercising, learning sign language and Spanish, learning about each other's culture and at times just chilling have been our highlights. There have been countless smiles and laughs!

We are thrilled that this pilot program has had so much success that it

is being expanded to serve all of our enrolled Camp Loyaltown campers.

Above is a picture of (world) Culture Club! It is hosted by Unit Leader, Jake White and includes friends from New York, Scotland, England and Jamaica! On this day they took a tour of the home and farm of Nature Counselor, Dahlia Cole. They had the chance to compare our nature program with the farm that Dahlia lives on. What an amazing opportunity!

No matter where we are in the world one thing is very clear, we are all in this together!

## Mission Statement and Management Plan Annual Review

The annual review of the Mission Statement and Management Plan began in September 2019 by Citizens Council. This is completed each year. After the Councils' review, the COMPASS Committee completed its review followed by the Citizens Board of Directors as well as a comprehensive Strategic Planning Committee. Below are the results.

### **MISSION STATEMENT REVIEW:**

**Councils Review:** Feedback on Citizens Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Values was provided. The Councils are in agreement with the below changes. Some advocates were not in agreement that family and community be removed from the Mission Statement. The Council also understands the Mission Statement Poster has, or may change, and would like to see the changes. In relation to the values statement, the Council was in agreement but commented that in the future, the words used should be easier to understand as some people may not understand these statements.

**COMPASS Committee Review:** In agreement; no changes recommended.

### **2019 Strategic Planning Recommended Changes Shown in Red**

**Vision:** A world where all people are valued. ~~Maximizing potential throughout a lifetime~~

**Mission Statement:** Citizens supports people to live the lives they choose. ~~through family and community engagement~~

~~Empower—Enrich—Elevate~~

### **Value Statements:**

~~At Citizens~~, we believe that...

Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect

Supports are best provided around people's needs, desires and choices

A ~~dedicated, compassionate, talented, caring~~ and well-trained ~~team workforce~~ provides exceptional supports

Open and honest communication builds trust

There is strength in diversity ~~and inclusion~~

~~Ethical~~ Sound business practices, ~~promote~~ financial stability, and ~~innovation promote organizational~~ success

~~Innovation is essential~~

Relationships with people and their families are vital to our success

**MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW:** Council and COMPASS Committee Recommendations: See list below of changes.

### ***Criterion #1 - Board and Management Commitment:***

Add: Periodic Strategic Planning

### ***Criterion #2 - Mission Statement and Commitment to the ISE:***

Life Plan initiatives to support person centered planning as well as persons responsible (The specific changes recommended are shown below in red.)

- The COMPASS Department re-designed the format for recording ~~the annual Pre- Life Plan Pre Planning Meeting form~~ in order to reflect the Mission Statement. People receiving supports and services from Citizens have the opportunity to design their own personal mission, naming their own choices, dreams, and valued outcomes.
- ~~Senior Director of Residential~~ will review the ~~Life Plan Pre Meeting~~ format to ensure format reflects current agency mission.
- ~~Pre-Life Plan~~ Process is held and/or Personal Outcome Measures "interview" is completed prior to a person's ~~Life Plan~~ meeting. This "interview" will be held to explore and assist the person in identifying his/her personal outcomes and creating a person centered plan that reflects his/her interests, and supports his/her dreams.

### ***Criterion #3 – Empowerment:***

Add: A Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an advocate who is recommended and meets the following criteria: 10 plus years of distinguished service to advocacy and participation on an advocacy council. Distinguished services means at least two significant contributions to the agency's advocacy efforts.

Change: Citizens will further empower families, people supported and members of the community by offering periodic educational seminar(s). Based on its mission, Citizens will offer education to family members, advocates and community members which will enable them to assist in further empowering all and enhancing community engagement.

### ***Criterion #5 – Self-Survey:***

Add: Self-survey data provided to OPWDD.

### ***Criterion #6 – Valued Outcomes:***

Add: Implement initiatives that support Supported Decision Making as a legal alternative to Guardianship which will ensure people have and maintain their legal rights.

# Citizens

Citizens supports people to live  
the lives they choose.



## Sibling Holiday Party



### 2020 SIBLING GROUP *Please Join Us!*

For more information, please call (516) 293-1111 extension 5492

- **June 2, 2020** – Annual Sibling BBQ 6:00-8:00pm Brookville. *Please bring your brother or sister. Tentative*
- **September 3, 2020** – Sibling Meeting, 6:30-8:30pm, Plainview
- **December 3, 2020** – Sibling Holiday Party, 6:00-8:00pm Brookville. *Please bring your brother or sister.*



On December 5, 2019 over 100 people gathered for the annual sibling holiday party in Brookville. The Sibling Group meets three to four times a year. Paul Giordano, founder of the group, encouraged all in attendance to remain involved. As parents age, the role and responsibilities of siblings supporting siblings usually increases and they become one of the strongest natural supports for their brother or sister. Siblings also provide long lasting, positive and loving relationships. Citizens strongly encourages this natural support and enjoys working with so many engaged siblings.

## Annual Council Presentation



On November 6, 2019, Bonnie Lerhinan a member of the Citizens Council, shared the Councils' accomplishments with the Citizens Board of Directors. The accomplishments were highlighted in a video which showed pictures of advocates carrying out these accomplishments.

This annual presentation provides a vital link between the Board of Directors and the Councils, enabling the Board of Directors to learn of the Councils' endeavors and share in their goals.

## Board Physical Plant Inspections by Colleen Tapia

The annual Board Physical Plant Inspections (PPI) meeting was held on March 11, 2020. Karen Hirschfeld, COMPASS Director, acknowledged the Board inspectors for their diligence and commitment to the COMPASS physical plant inspection process. The thoroughness of the inspections continues to ensure that people live and work in lovely, enjoyable and safe environments. The physical plant inspection process remains an integral component of our success as a COMPASS agency.



Four physical plant inspections were completed since September 2019. A total of zero new work orders were generated. There were zero hazardous citations. There were zero physical plant deficiencies that remained open after 60 days.

Thank you to Susan Dowling, RA who coordinates and oversees this process.

## Board of Directors Annual Training

Thank you to Jessica Campbell, Advocate and AHRC Board Member, for her thoughtful and informative presentation on Supportive Decision Making on March 3, 2020 at the Citizens board meeting.

It included Jessica's personal journey with Supportive Decision Making which made it a very interesting and inspiring training.



## Janeisha's Dreams Fulfilled with Trip to Disney

Story submitted by Shevoneese Buckle



After a life-changing diagnosis, Janeisha moved to Plainview to live at the Helen Kaplan ICF in March of 2018. Janeisha's views on life and the potential of her dreams were dampened by the struggles of this rare condition, but after moving to her new home, she saw the potential for a greater quality of life.

A longtime dream of Janeisha's was to visit Disney World and meet Mickey Mouse in person. Despite the struggles of her condition, her team wanted to make this possible for her. Janeisha's medical issues prevented her from flying or driving long distances, but a Disney cruise caught the eye of her support team. This option would allow Janeisha not only to go to Disney, but also the Bahamas.

Through the support and cooperation of Janeisha's Direct Support Professional team, ICF team and Citizens Senior Director Karen Tanzillo, Janeisha recently completed an 8-day cruise and fulfilled her dream of meeting Mickey Mouse and many of her favorite Disney princesses!



## KINDNESS ROCKS AT CAMP LOYALTOWN



The "Kindness Rocks Project" has made its way to Camp Loyaltown! This project prides itself on the art of connection and was created to spread inspiration and happiness to passersby through randomly placed decorative rocks. After a visit from Nassau County Girl Scout Troop #3537, a trail of colorful inspiration remained along the walking paths of campgrounds in Hunter NY, catching the attention of any camp visitor with short but sweet words of encouragement, reassurance, and motivation.



Camp Loyaltown's 2020 season provides the opportunity to continue this project, embracing the already strong camp family dynamic and encouraging each member to push past their limits and find happiness.

## Campers Give Back



When the opportunity to give back to the local community presented itself to the Camp Loyaltown family, Session Three campers were happy to join together in a group effort to see the benefits of a garden to table system. Throughout the 2019 camp season, campers spent time tending to the garden beds, watching vegetables grow, and now, donating these resources to the local community.

In a program run by the Catholic Charities of Columbia and Greene Counties in Hudson, NY, where nutritional food is often difficult to come by, providing participants of the WIC Program (Women, Infants and Children) with fresh, nutritional food is top priority. One of Camp Loyaltown's goals has been to cultivate a system through which campers can give back to the local community, and see their hard work and dedication pay off.



Camp Loyaltown Director, Savita Sharma, hopes to make these donations weekly. The long term goal is to have a small farm stand at a farmer's market within close proximity of camp grounds, where campers can offer the fruits and vegetables grown in the garden beds to the local community. Garden beds were added over the course of the 2019 camp season to ensure that each camper has the opportunity to be a part of the process. Over the course of their stay, campers will be able to take part in planting, watering, and harvesting fruits and vegetables.



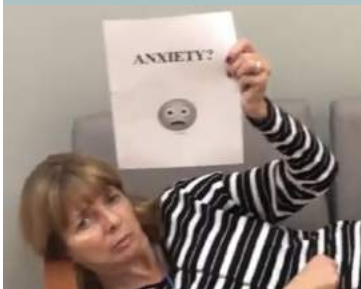


### Valentine's Date Night 2020 By Pamela Boyle

For the eighth consecutive year, men and women supported by Citizens and other agencies enjoyed the opportunity to invite a date to have a great meal and good conversations in a wonderful atmosphere at the annual Valentine's Date Night event. The sold out dinner was held at The Main Event in Farmingdale. Couples came "dressed to impress" with many in clothing of pink, purple and red. Numerous couples came bearing stuffed animals, candy, flowers and other gifts for their dates, all of which were received with great pleasure and broad smiles. Guests enjoyed a fabulous buffet dinner of chicken fingers and fries, beef burgundy with rice, stuffed filet of sole, chicken parmigiana, rigatoni al vodka, bread and salad. Festive Valentine's themed decorations on scrumptious cupcakes, beautiful Italian pastries and chocolate dipped strawberries and Italian cookies and mugs of coffee rounded out a wonderful evening. The evening passed much too quickly for everyone and it was difficult to say good night. Here's to many more dates for each of these couples between now and Valentine's Date Night 2021!



### Help is Here!



While the Personal Outcome Trainers are conducting Personal Outcome interviews remotely, we also want to take this time to acknowledge our clinical team for the support they are offering to the men and women living in Citizens' homes. They are all working effortlessly to assist people with coping and growing during this time. Special binders with activities were provided to each home and individual and group meetings created.

Please see "Need Someone to Talk To" on page 15 of this newsletter for more information and staff to contact.



### A New Challenge for STARZ ComeUnity Athlete, Rajab Williams



Congrats to Rajab Williams, the first member of the ComeUnity STARZ Ski Club to join without any prior skiing experience. His big smile and can-do spirit have made him an energetic new club member. When his mother Nora shared the idea of joining the STARZ Ski Club, Rajab agreed to give it a try. Rajab mastered the basics of ski etiquette and technique, with the support of the STARZ coaching team and Adaptive Sports Foundation. Rajab can now safely enjoy himself on the bunny slopes and is working towards skiing independently and racing with his peers. The STARZ Ski Club is a competitive racing team that meets each year in January and February to train and prepare for a race in March. Starz coaches and team members work together to compete in the NASTAR Slalom course in March.

### A STORY ABOUT Bonnie Lerhinan by Chantal Joseph



Bonnie resides in Seaford. Over the years she has worked on her skills to enhance her life so that she can be more independent. She sought the help of her house staff to guide her as to where she can start and she is happy to say that their guidance was priceless.

Bonnie had some challenges she wanted to improve upon. Bonnie is able to talk about her feelings, and developed strategies to cope with feelings such as maintaining a journal and by simply using all the skills taught to her by others. Using these strategies, Bonnie has stated that her support system, which includes her family, friends and staff, allows her to be a good friend to her roommates, to assist with Council meetings and achieve all her other accomplishments.

Bonnie patiently applied for employment training and has been attending The Center for Developmental Disabilities. She volunteers at the One Stop Gift Shop and, with continued supports, enhances her employment skills working with the public as well as advocating for herself. She has attended pre-employment trainings as well as several internships and is now waiting for job placements. Through this process Bonnie has learned how to develop self-advocacy skills, money management skills, and how to travel independently. There is nothing but great things upon the horizon for her.

## Robyn's Life Journey by Helene Ramer



I had the pleasure of meeting with Robyn Lipschutz at her home in Seaford and conduct a Personal Outcome Measure interview in January. She has been supported by the agency for many years. Robyn will tell you that she has a great life and has great plans for the future.

Robyn originally lived in Pickwick for 10 years, and 2 years ago, she moved to another Citizens' house located at Seamans Neck Rd. in Seaford. She has her own room upstairs and shares a common living area with her good friend, Bonnie.

Robyn started working in commercial cleaning, and for the past 10 years she provides clerical support at Barbara C Wilson Preschool in Woodbury. She does copying, shredding, laminating, and any other office work that is needed. She works 2 days a week from 10AM-3:30 PM. On her off days, Robyn is supported by her Com Hab workers. They do banking, errands and go to the gym.

Robyn is very social and has lots of friends. Robyn has a fiancé, Louis that she met at an AHRC Speed Dating event. They love spending time together, and enjoy going to the Long Island Ducks games, movies, dinners and shopping. Their care managers, Victoria Hawley and Jasmine Walker, are looking for a supported apartment for the happy couple. Once they have a place to live, they will plan their wedding. Robyn will be a beautiful bride.

Robyn is very close to her family. Her mom and step dad live in East Norwich. Her dad and his wife live in Bayside. Her twin sister Ellen lives in Rugby Rd. Her brother Lee is married, and lives in Connecticut. Robyn has a 15 month old nephew Cooper that she adores, and tries to see as much as possible.

Robyn has a very full life and a wonderful future. She plans to travel to Germany and Israel with her future husband. We wish Robyn a lifetime of health and happiness.

## A Profile of Self-Directed Success: Bernie Medrano

Bernie Medrano has a job he enjoys and a home he is proud of. His everyday life exceeds what he and his family thought were possible. After Bernie graduated with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) diploma from high school, he took a job at Home Depot. He felt limited and felt he could do more.

Bernie's family knew he had great potential, but even with the supports provided, Bernie's stepmother worried about a lack of steady supports as he continued to grow into adulthood. "We were slow to realize that Bernie is an overachiever with a powerful work ethic," said Bernie's stepfather, Doug.

Bernie's consistent dedication to his work enabled him to move up from his position at Home Depot into an opportunity at American Maintenance, a company that subcontracts cleaning and maintenance jobs.

The relief that came from Bernie's success at work was quickly met with concern as his increased earnings reduced his Supplemental Security Income (SSI) considerably. This development put his dreams of living independently at risk, as his earnings alone would not allow him to afford the cost of living.

Through the Individual Supports and Services (ISS) Housing Subsidy program under Citizens' self-direction program, Bernie was supported toward making his dreams of greater independence possible. The ISS Housing Subsidy program provides financial support to people with developmental disabilities for home and apartment housing costs in the community.



## University of Personal Growth by Helene Ramer



We are very proud of the success of the University of Personal Growth classes, that have been held once a month since April 2019. Classes are held in Plainview on the second Tuesday of the month from 11 a.m.-12 p.m.. The program has been so well received that as of January 2020, we will be in Conference Room D and will now be able to accommodate more people. Our first class for the new year was Yoga and Meditation taught by Nicki Katz.



Every month the topic is different. Subjects range from health and nutrition to money management, relationships, safety, and personal and emotional health. Flyers are sent out by email to the hub sites and group homes monthly. Signing up is easy; just a quick email to Helene at [hramer@ahrc.com](mailto:hramer@ahrc.com). Participants do not have to attend all classes. They can choose the ones that interest them.

## Sending a Message of Safety by Jonathan Drexler, Advocate



Johnathon Drexler Above

Jonathan Drexler is “doing his part”, staying home and staying safe. He is using social media to help spread the word, demonstrating his strong advocacy skills. Due to the “stay at home” requirement Jonathan shared what his life has been like, doing his part. He has been remotely enjoying day hab activities during the day. He connects with clinicians and family via Zoom meetings as well as joining staff meetings for his job at the JCC (Jewish Community Center.) Jonathan stated, “I am doing really well. I take daily walks around the property so I can remain fit. During the evening we are cooking meals and desserts. We all pitch in to do our part and assist with household chores such as loading and unloading the dishwasher and keeping the house tidy. My friends are doing well too! We are all getting used to wearing masks as a way so we can remain healthy. We are all doing our part to remain safe and encourage everyone else to do so. My family is doing well and for that I am very grateful.” Jonathan is also trying to connect with council meetings via Zoom when it does not interfere with his day hab activities. He looks forward to going to an evening council meeting soon. Jonathan’s message to others is, “Be safe and stay well, we will all get through this!”

## Citizens’ Strategic Planning Kicks Off Seeks to Achieve Better Agency Outcomes

Citizens Options Unlimited renewed its commitment to its mission, vision and values, following the start of the new Strategic Planning Process for 2020-2023. Citizens’ Strategic Planning is a three-year process where nonprofit stakeholders evaluate how to best meet the needs of our community in the short and long term. Below we’ve shared the vision we are working toward with our mission, as well as the values informing the goals we are seeking to achieve.

**Our Vision:** A world where all people are valued.

**Our Mission:** Citizens supports people to live the lives they choose.

**Our Values:** At Citizens, we believe that:

- Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect
- Supports are best provided around people’s needs, desires and choices
- A dedicated, compassionate and well-trained team provides exceptional supports
- Open and honest communication builds trust
- There is strength in diversity and inclusion
- Sound business practices, financial stability and innovation promote success
- Relationships with people and their families are vital to our success

**Goals:**

1. Strengthen brand awareness internally and externally and build consistent communication with key stakeholders of Citizens using social media and other platforms
2. Improve recruitment, training and engagement to maintain committed staff through innovative strategies.
3. Build organizational capacity to support quality and growth:



## Citizens Council by: Sean Pelc - Assistant Director

The Citizens' Council had its second meeting of 2020 on February 12th, 2020. The Citizens' Council is a great way for all the people who live within Citizens to advocate



for themselves, their peers and come together as one to share all of their ideas on how to better their everyday lives and the agency.

There was a great turn out for the meeting, filling up the conference room in Plainview. The Council received a visit from Stanford Perry, Executive Director who spoke about the agency's progress, future projects and the importance of the Citizens' Council. Mr. Perry answered all questions from the Council members.

There was also an introduction of the new Citizens' Council Board: President- Stephen McConnach, Vice President- Devon C. Rivera, Treasurer- Kristen Watson, spokesperson-Noah Ackereizen, and Secretary- Steven Barsh. Also on the agenda during the meeting was the introduction of the New Assistant Director- Sean Pelc, transition coordinator Carmela Melendez and Keith Lewis assistant director of operations support; as a follow up from the January Council meeting; rights training (self-advocacy and medication refusal); review of the COMPASS meeting; and ideas for Citizens Options Unlimited re-branding. Even with the successful turn out for this meeting, we hope to continue to grow and continue to add new members; all are welcome. The Executive Council has hosted weekly ZOOM meetings weekly since mid March. Stay tuned for more!

## Self-Advocacy!

Matt Hofele took the initiative to send an email to OPWDD to clarify how best to support his own medical needs. Way to go Matt!

MATT: Hi...this is Matt Hofele. I recently got a letter (see attached) saying that anyone can swipe my vagal nerve stimulator because it is not a medication. Right now only an amap certified staff can swipe it because it is considered a medication with a magnet. Then i presented the letter to the director of my agency which he presented it to the director of nursing for my agency....then she asked the director of quality assurance. Who then told me that it was an old letter that was from years ago by the opwdd nursing director named Kathleen Keating. Forgive me if i spelled it wrong.....it....i also was told that i cannot have the vns magnet swiped in self direction....i cleared that up by asking my lieson Ashley C. About it and she told me that the self direction statlff are able to swipe it be cause it is not a medication..My question is is of it is NOT a medication why is it that ONLY amap staff are able to swipe it.....



This whole concern came to mind after i had a siezure during my lifeplan meeting and i was tild that i was in it for 5-7 min. While they could only waatch and wait for the ambulance ti arrive was unaware thT self directionstaff are able ti swipe. Until now....if anyone cam swipe then i wouldnt have go limit myself when going places. And can u give me an updated policy stating the requirements of a vagal nerve stimulator (vns)

please clear this up for me!

OPWDD: Hi Matt,

I sincerely hope this email finds you well! I have been asked by Margaret Stadnick (Director) and Sandra Jones (Administrator at of Long Island Regional Office) to respond to your email below that you sent to Margaret.

You are right that a VNS (Vagal Nerve Stimulator) is not a medication, but that it is a medical device. Since VNS is critical to the welfare of some people with seizures, non-med certified staff can be taught to swipe the magnet to activate the VNS in both certified and non-certified sites. There is no requirement that staff be medication certified to activate it.

What the agency does need is that staff must be trained by an RN (Registered Nurse) on the specific individual's seizure pattern (what they look like), when the device should be activated, how to activate, when to call 911, etc. RN must write a plan of nursing service to include details listed above plus other instructions given by the prescribing physician. There has to be documentation that staff have been trained on the policies and procedures, and know where the trigger (commonly called the magnet) is on the person, follow up (such as when to report it to the RN), what to observe for/ document post-activation, how often/ long to observe (e.g. every 15 minutes for 2 hours), what signs and symptoms need to be reported to the RN ASAP, what to do if it does not work, etc.

Hope this information is helpful to you.

## Rights Rally 2019

On October 15, 2019 the Executive Council hosted its annual Rights Rally. Jonathan Drexler of Citizens was the Master of Ceremonies. The guest speaker this year was Shameka Andrews, SANYS. The FREE Singers performed at the event and were phenomenal. Many people took the opportunity to speak and share the rights that are most important to them. It was a fun, moving and inspirational event!



## Executive Council Update

- The Executive Council provided input into agency strategic planning at the November Council meeting.
- In September the Executive Council created a petition, which spoke to the concerns regarding the CAS (Coordinated Assessment System). The petition was forwarded to OPWDD.
- A safe driver training was completed by Executive Council members on September, 4, 2019.
- The Executive Council celebrated Direct Support Professional recognition week September 9– 13th by planning and completing many recognition activities.
- The Executive Council will spearhead a “Re-Branding” of the Councils in 2020. Presently Citizens council is voting on a new name/brand.



## Strategic Planning Kick Off

As Citizens prepared to kick off another three-year strategic planning process, our community of leaders came together for a kick off presentation on October 8 from Alonzo Kelly, CEO of Kelly Leadership Group, who inspired us to evolve our critical thinking and leadership skills.



## Advocates Input

On November 23, 2019 advocates from throughout the agency came together at the Executive Council meeting to share with Strategic Planning Facilitator Sofiya Chayenne Perez from Penn Creative their thoughts on agency strengths and weaknesses.

The advocates enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the strategic planning process and offer their input. It was a win-win.

Sofiya: Thank you! This will be such a treat for us and I hope for Executive Council AS WELL! Their thoughts and views can be included in our analysis which will be a huge help!



After meeting with the Executive Council, Sofiya commented “Thank you. I had a fantastic time getting to know the self advocates and I think we found some great trends for our data collection. Thank you!”

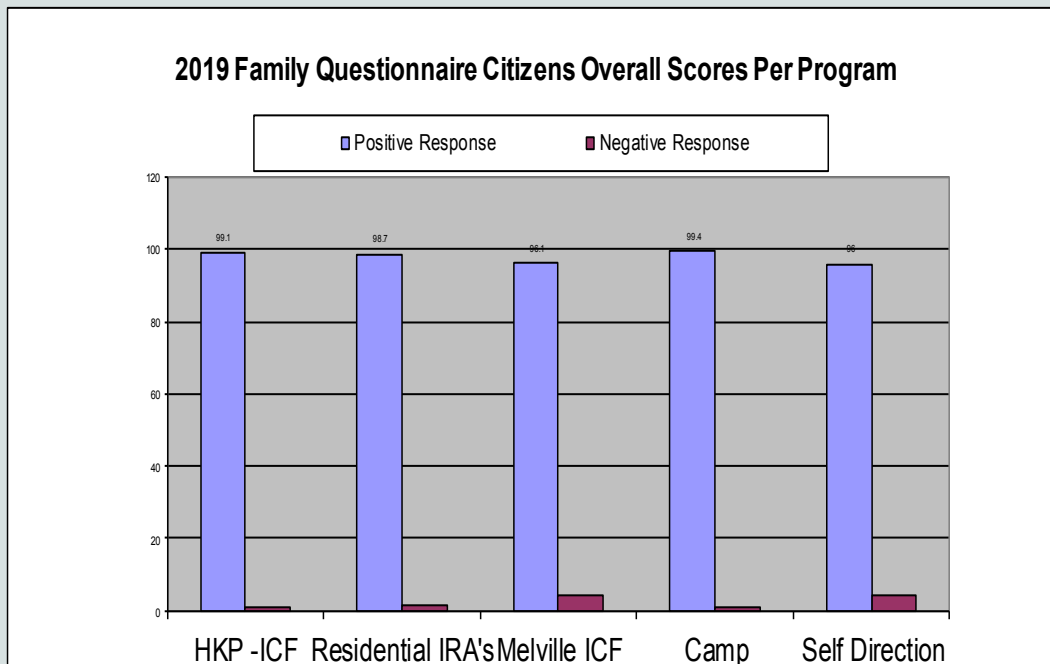




## Family Questionnaire Results

The family questionnaire is a vital component of Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Management Plan. The overall response rate for this year is 22.0% compared with 22.7% in 2018. The average response rate to surveys is 32%. The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain family feedback, assess level of satisfaction and improve services. A trend is defined as a score of 89% or below. There is one agency trend. There are four program “trends” within the residential and self-direction programs and one program trend for the Melville ICF. \*It is challenging to label these four issues as trends as 15 IRA families in total responded to the family questionnaire. Thus one person not satisfied will inflate negative responses. However, as a best practice, corrective action will be completed.

A Quality Improvement Plan is under development to address the agency and individual program trends shown below as a “best practice.” The terms “trends” is used lightly as they are inflated based on the programs low response rate: (Residential IRA's 15% response, Melville ICF 3% response and Self-Direction 6% response.)



## At Annual Reception, ComeUnity Sports Athletes Reconnect; Hofstra University Volunteer of the Year Awarded



Another year of Starz ComeUnity Sports was celebrated at the program's annual reception on November 18, 2019 at The Main Event in Farmingdale.

ComeUnity is a competitive training and exercise program for about 100 adults with developmental disabilities – the Starz – who participate in basketball, bocce, bowling, skiing, softball and track and field.

At the annual reception, Starz athletes and coaches from the different sports came together to catch up and share a meal. This year, athlete Noah Ackereizen presented Casey Petrone with the Hofstra University Volunteer of the Year Award. Casey is a Hofstra University graduate student. She first volunteered at the STARZ track meet in June with a classmate and returned in September with a group of friends for STARZ Softball at Eisenhower Park.

For more information or to register, visit Citizens' website [www.citizens-inc.org](http://www.citizens-inc.org)

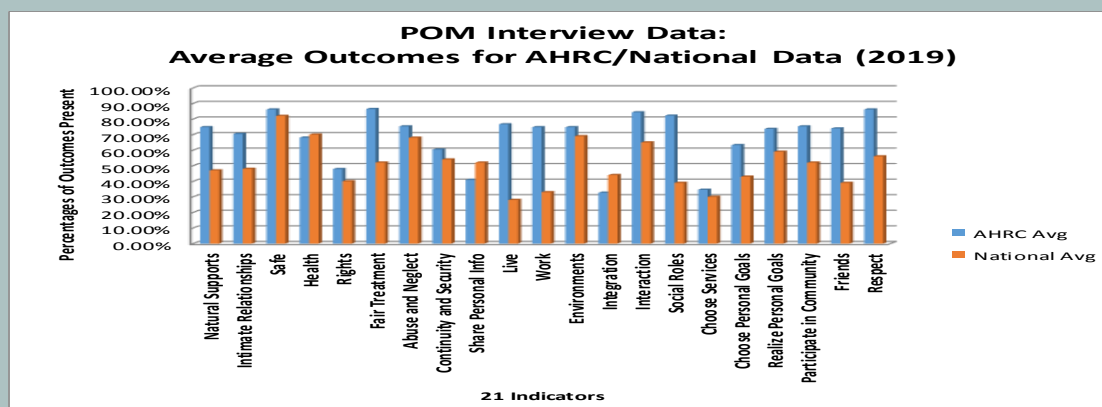
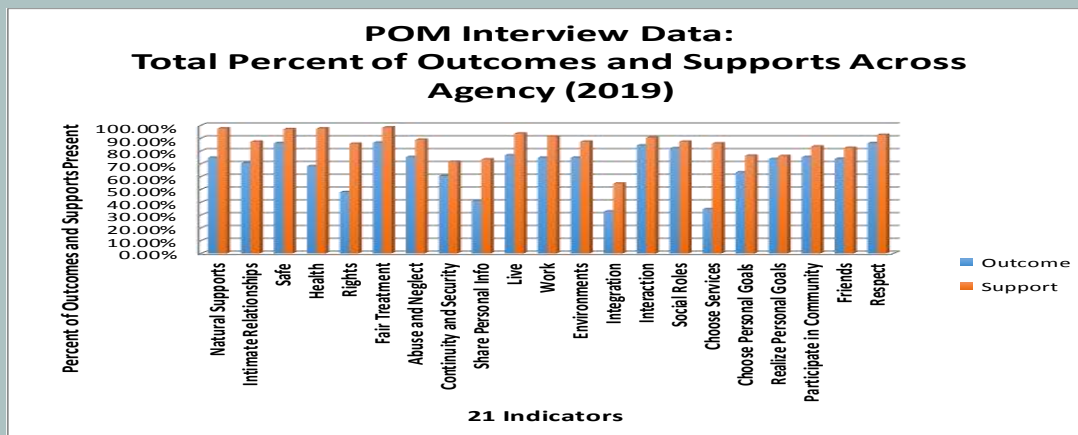
## Personal Outcome Measures Annual Report

The Quality Improvement Department developed a policy and procedure to utilize Personal Outcome Measures to develop meaningful, person centered valued outcomes in order to help people improve their quality of life. When feasible, POM interviews are to be completed 1 – 2 months prior to a person's Life Plan meeting and least every two years. The Personal Outcome Trainers/Interviewers continue to track all data for the individual's outcomes and the agencies' supports in order to implement improvement initiatives. In order to assist people to understand CQL and Personal Outcomes, POM trainers/interviewers attend residential/house, day program and family meetings. The POM staff continues to participate in Council meetings and COMPASS meetings. Personal Outcome trainers/interviewers provide supports to people at their Life Planning meetings as requested. They also provide support to staff members at reviews. The COMPASS initiative set forth for staff in both the day and residential settings continues to offer monthly training to people supported on specific individual rights.

Advocates are members of the Board of Directors, COMPASS, Human Rights, Incident Review and Guardianship Committees. People supported attend Human Rights Committee meetings as they wish, with support staff, as needed, to discuss the current rights restriction in their plans and/or medications. They are involved in the discussion about the need for continued or discontinued use of it and the process of fading it out of their lives in a safe and healthy way if indicated. POM interviews continue to be conducted prior to referral for a psychiatric evaluation.

Empowerment training is offered to people receiving supports on various topics: employment options, living options, funding sources, running my own ISP, diversity, computer classes, community safety, obtaining a driving learner's permit, voter registration, fire safety, public speaking, appearances and personal hygiene, cooking and kitchen safety, relationships and boundaries, and first aid. Training on POMs continues to be provided at New Hire Orientation. Staff also signs an attestation to indicate their commitment in facilitating that people supported work on and attain their outcomes. POM training is offered through the year to existing staff. Each year the POM department interviews a different set of people supported by both AHRC Nassau and Citizens through various services (Residential, Day Program, Supported Employment, Community Habilitation, Self-Directed Services). For 2019, 377 interviews were conducted (compared to 477 people interviewed in 2018). POMs are typically conducted every two years or as requested, with the exception that people with formal Rights Restrictions are interviewed annually. Therefore, while it is useful to compare data for 2018 with 2019 to reflect larger trends within the agency (as well as trends influenced by OPWDD), each year's data represents a different group of people with different wants and needs that can change over time.

*"The Council on Quality and Leadership recently conducted a study<sup>3</sup> which analyzed over 1,300 Personal Outcome Measures® interviews with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to examine the impact DSP turnover had on different aspects of people with disabilities' quality of life. Major Findings: DSP Turnover Negatively Impacted Every Area of Quality of Life People with disabilities were significantly less likely to have almost every quality of life indicator present when they experienced DSP turnover." (CQL 2019)*





# The COMPASS Committee & The Quality Improvement Process

## AHRC Nassau and Citizens: 2019 QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS

In 2019, there were 13 quality improvement goals as well as enhancements, with 54% of the goals/objectives met.

Outstanding! Below is a summary of some of the quality enhancements.

### RIGHTS

- An enhanced Supported Decision Making training initiative took place in 2019 for all stakeholders. This included participation in the SDMNY pilot study to include training facilitators, training decision makers, identifying people interested in restoration of their rights, supporting people in restoration if desired.
- There was an increase in people exercising their due process rights via education and guardianship/rep payee action plans. As a result, people feeling supported to exercise their rights was increased by 5% in 2019.
- There as was an increase in satisfaction in people feeling they are treated fairly and supported to make their own decisions by 5% in 2019. The goal remains to be sure people are not over supported and are supported to make their own decisions.

### DIGNITY & RESPECT

- There was an increase in people feeling respected by 5% in 2019 by providing only necessary supports and supervision.
- In 2019 there was an increase by 5% in personal outcome measures outcome data for “people choose where they work”. Thus supporting that more people have the authority to direct supports/services & have opportunities based on people's choices, interests and desires.
- A Representative Payee and Guardianship/SDM (Supported Decision Making) action plan is in place for each person.
- A Family Seminar on Supported Decision Making (SDM) was held in April 2019. SDM training was also completed by COMPASS Trainers directly in Hub Sites. SDM and Personal Finance training was also added to Monthly Rights Training in 2019.
- In 2019, a Rights Ambassador was hired and sits on the Human Rights Committee/ Dignity in Life and completes Complaint Training.
- In 2019, a Financial Training Series was completed (10 week series) to support and educate those with interests in this area.
- A full day seminar was offered to all stakeholders on SDM.
- SDM NY pilot was joined (Facilitators training & Decision Makers trained). AHRC also hosted a statewide SDM pilot training for NYS.
- A Rights Restoration seminar/action day was hosted in 2019.

### NATURAL SUPPORTS

- People's satisfaction with natural supports remained very high and in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile based on the 2018 individual and family satisfaction questionnaire results. All scores for satisfaction levels remained in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile. Fabulous!

### FREEDOM FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION

- A new policy/procedure clearly defining levels of supervision was implemented to assist staff with understanding the level of supervision people need. A Committee continues to review IPOPS to be sure people are provided with only the level of supervision needed.
- A training on completing minor notable incidents was presented twice to Assistant Directors over the past year to ensure timely and comprehensive incident investigations. A tracking form was also initiated to track the timeliness of the reports and identify late reporting. The form is reviewed by the Program Directors on a monthly basis. The QA Director attends New Hire Orientation to address new staff regarding their reporting responsibilities. The Director of QA also attends Council meetings to address incident trends and answer questions and solicit recommendations from the Council members.
- The topic of choking continues to be discussed at Council meetings to enhance both staff and peer awareness. Posters depicting food size and consistency were posted in Day Hab dining rooms. In all instances of choking staff implemented the Heimlich maneuver properly. Additionally the Training Dept. is made aware of all incidents of choking so they can use the scenarios as examples for the training curriculum.

### BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH

- Increase in the use of Tele med.

### SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- A new work order policy/procedure was implemented in 2019 to clarify the process for processing and escalating maintenance requests.
- A review of data overall reflects a high level of safety in residential environments despite a small increase in fire safety citations.
- The goal to decrease the total number of employee injuries related to personal supports in 2019 by 5% compared to the total in 2018. In 2019, the total number of employee injuries related to personal supports across AHRC Nassau and Citizens was 12 compared to 13 in 2018, representing a decrease of 8%, exceeding our goal of 5%. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that there were 18 fewer employee injuries not related to personal supports, representing 26% decrease.

### POSITIVE SERVICES & SUPPORTS

- The goal to reduce the number of Behavior Support Plans that include 1 of 5 target behaviors (yelling, cursing, crying, threats, teasing) by 5% in 2019 was met with an 25% overall reduction noted. This far exceeded the original 2019 goal of a 5% reduction!
- Throughout 2019, data was also collected on the total number of Behavior Support Plans (BSP) within the agency. Total number of BSP's in AHRC Nassau and Citizens Options Unlimited has decreased as a result of this Factor 8 goal and represents a 22% reduction in total number of Behavior Support Plans in place.
- In 2019 behavioral staff are actively utilizing the Behavior Support Services Survey with DSP/ Management staff to obtain feedback on the person's strengths and needs as well as Behavior Support approaches during the revision process of each Behavior Support Plan. The results of each survey are assessed and relevant approaches incorporated into the Plan at time of revision.
- RBT program continues with 19 employees participating to date and 4 sitting and passing their exam. The 40-hour Registered Behavior technician (RBT) training program also continued with 19 employees participating to date and 4 passing the national RBT exam in 2019.

- In 2019, AHRC & Citizens conducted a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threats) analysis to set strategic goals for the next 3 years for service and support improvement soliciting input from a variety of stakeholders including people supported, family members, community members, vendors and supports, and agency personnel and board members. Data points captured from SWOT sessions were reviewed by agency leadership to create strategic goals for the upcoming 3 years implementation and evaluation of progress.
- In 2019 one most notable efforts was the recent implementation of a cross program interest survey utilized to capture people's interests, desires, and talents regarding how they wish to spend their time and direct their services throughout the day. Data capture through this survey will be compiled and categorized for popular interest groups (2020). With the data the hope is to identify existing integrated community based opportunities & explore potential new integrated opportunities for each person based on data analysis and reassess satisfaction.
- Also in 2019 there have been a number of new opportunities made available to people. As of 7/1/19 the Wheatley Farms and Arts program commenced offering interested people the opportunity to engage in a variety of equine and horticultural activities throughout the day. This program has a plan to expand throughout 2020 and 2021 to also offer yoga/movement, arts, music & a variety of different wellness activities.
- Efforts continue to be successful in supporting people to work and/or participate in activities of their choice. A strategic planning goal remains in this area as we continue to shift the focus from purely volunteerism to a variety of interest based activities. Some successes are: 1.) The “One Stop Gift Shop”, which provides experiences in retail and focuses on skill development for resume building. 2.) The rotating arts program as well as the East Meadow Art Gallery are very desired activities. 3.) A ‘surf for all’ program continues to be offered in the summer to interested participants. Although participation remained small this year it can lead to other opportunities in this interest based activity.
- Each year, the satisfaction questionnaire is completed by people supported by AHRC Nassau & Citizens. The 2019 surveys revealed that people feel that there is continuity and security in both their home and work. The results were excellent, with scores above 97% overall.
- In 2019 rehabilitation of homes continued in an effort to be sure people can age in place. In 2019 there were 9 single bedrooms created in AHRC Nassau residences. For Citizens, there were no rehabs that resulted in an increase in single beds; however, Citizens opened a new IRA; six people from the 904 Melville Estates ICF moved to this house, which resulted in an increase in single beds by 4.

### STAFF RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- The agency held its Employee Appreciation Day in June 2019 with over 700 employees in attendance.
- The agency now communicates with employees through Constant Contact allowing for timely distribution of email blasts on pertinent employee issues.
- The Plainview facility was secured in early 2019 and the ICF scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2019. Training on Preparing, Preventing and Responding to Acts of Violence is now accessible to all employees via the LMS.
- A Diabetes Peer Support and Awareness Group was established in 2019.
- Four cohorts of Leadership training were completed in 2019.
- NADSP Frontline Supervisor Curriculum has been purchased and a train the trainer session has been completed. We will be working with each of the programs to develop a protocol for implementation.
- The goal to increase employee retention by 5% in 2019 for Citizens was met. The number of voluntary separations reduced by 21% in 2018 and 16% in 2019.
- Enhancement of the agency wide wellness program, Project You. Program utilization continues to increase each year.
- Total Rewards statements were issued to all full time employees in 2019.

### PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES

- The goal to increase satisfaction in people choosing services by 5% in 2018 was met based on Personal Outcome Measures interviews. (58.07 in 2018 and 51.92 in 2017).

## Home & the Holidays by Tessa Guillaume-Lewis Assistant Director



Having a fun and safe home is one of the things that we all aspire to have. The ladies of Pickwick palace all demonstrate this commitment to their enjoyment and contentment every day but especially at their annual family holiday party. This year the holiday party color scheme was burgundy, white and silver with the ballroom at the Mansion decorated by the ladies to reflect their taste. Everyone did a fabulous job with the food. Jenny, Jamie, and her band of singers did a great rendition of “Joy to the World” and “We Wish you a Merry Christmas” to entertain the crowd. A good time was had by all. I would like to thank Wanda Shorts, House Manager for always encouraging the ladies to do their best. This was so evident on this evening and in the fun had with their families. I would also like to thank Chantal Joseph and Phyllis Keller for assisting Wanda with cooking; the food was great. The ladies of the palace— Jamie, Amanda, Melissa, Sarah, Elizabeth and Jennifer— would like to say thank you to all who made the event a great success, “We love and appreciate all that our staff does for us”.



Executive staff enjoy Pickwick holiday party.





## EMPOWERMENT TRAININGS

### ZOOM ComeUnity Class Schedule

**DOWNLOAD THE ZOOM APP TO JOIN THE FUN!**

Join our weekly Virtual Exercise classes with the Zoom app. ([www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us))

The schedule is:

#### MONDAY

4:45 p.m. | ZUMBA

5:30 p.m. | Yoga Practice

6:45 p.m. | Yoga Meditation

#### TUESDAY

4:45 p.m. | ZUMBA

5:30 p.m. | Yoga Practice

6:15 p.m. | General Cardio

6:45 p.m. | Yoga Meditation

#### WEDNESDAY

5:30 p.m. | Yoga Practice

6:15 p.m. | General Cardio

6:45 p.m. | Yoga Meditation

Join us **Friday, April 17 at 8:00pm** for the **Zoom version of the St. Aidan's Dance.**  
Contact Heidi at [hklewicki@citizens-inc.org](mailto:hklewicki@citizens-inc.org) to receive invitations to classes.

## Need Someone to talk to?

### We are here for you.

As we face these difficult times together, there are many areas that we all think about and are concerned about. Caring for our families, checking in on friends, supporting people who need us and missing our "normal" lives can take a toll. If you need someone to talk with to help yourself be well, please contact one of the below clinicians and they will arrange a time for you.

For staff:

Lauren Loyal, LMHC, Asst Director of Psychology  
[lloyal@ahrc.org](mailto:lloyal@ahrc.org)

Michelle Gladstone, LMHC, Coordinator of Psychology  
[mgladstone@ahrc.org](mailto:mgladstone@ahrc.org)

For People Supported:

There are many Zoom group offerings, social and support. Please contact Pam Boyle at [pboyle@ahrc.org](mailto:pboyle@ahrc.org) for more information.

## FAMILY SEMINAR SERIES

**March 18, 2020**

**Supported Decision Making**

**10:00 a.m.—12 Noon**

Location: Plainview Old Bethpage Library  
999 Old Country Rd.

Plainview, NY

*Cancelled—To Be Rescheduled*

**June 2020**

**Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease**

TBA

**October 7, 2020**

**The Importance of Community Involvement/Engagement**

Wheatley Farms

2:00 pm

**Guardianship, Wills and Trusts**

TBA

**For information or registration:**

**Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5362**

## Regulatory Affairs By Eric Rosen

Between October 2019 and March 2020; agency self-surveys were completed for six (6) Citizens IRAs as well as for the Citizens Site-Based Respite Center. Additionally; person-centered reviews were completed for a random sample of individuals receiving supports from the agency.

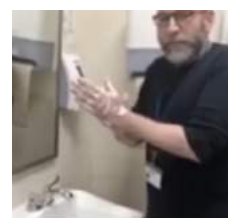
Exceptional practices identified during surveys included the promotion of independence, satisfaction with services delivery and respectful/supportive interactions.

## Empowerment Series

The Empowerment Series for 2019 wrapped up with a Drivers Learners Permit Prep class. Everyone was given a learners permit booklet so they could study for the test. The importance of paying attention to the road while driving, and no phones or texting was discussed in detail.



Leigh Fanuzzi also provide Heimlich and CPR training, which was well received by all in February.



During this new time of learning we have provided the homes with "easy to read" and video trainings to help keep everyone safe.



**Citizens Options Unlimited, Inc.**  
**189 Wheatley Road**  
**Brookville (Glen Head)**  
**New York, 11545**

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**TO:**

## **Join us for Virtual ComeUnity Recreation!**



While we can't be together to take part in our ComeUnity programs right now, we are doing our best to take our yoga practice, guided meditation and cardio exercise sessions led by STARZ coaches online with Zoom Video Communications!

There's also Bingo! on Thursdays at 6:30pm and Dances on selected Fridays at 8pm.

For additional information about ComeUnity activities available on Zoom contact Heidi Klewicki at [HKlewicki@Citizens-Inc.org](mailto:HKlewicki@Citizens-Inc.org) Join the fun!



## **Spring off the Couch Dance Party!**

**On April 3rd at 8:00 p.m. ComeUnity members hosted a Zoom 'Spring off the Couch' Dance Party! It was a time to connect with ComeUnity friends to the tunes of DJ Party Marty Mitchell from the comfort and safety of their own homes.**

**If you are a current ComeUnity member and are interested in attending future events, contact Heidi Klewicki at [hklewicki@citizens-inc.org](mailto:hklewicki@citizens-inc.org) for more information. #staysafestayhome**

