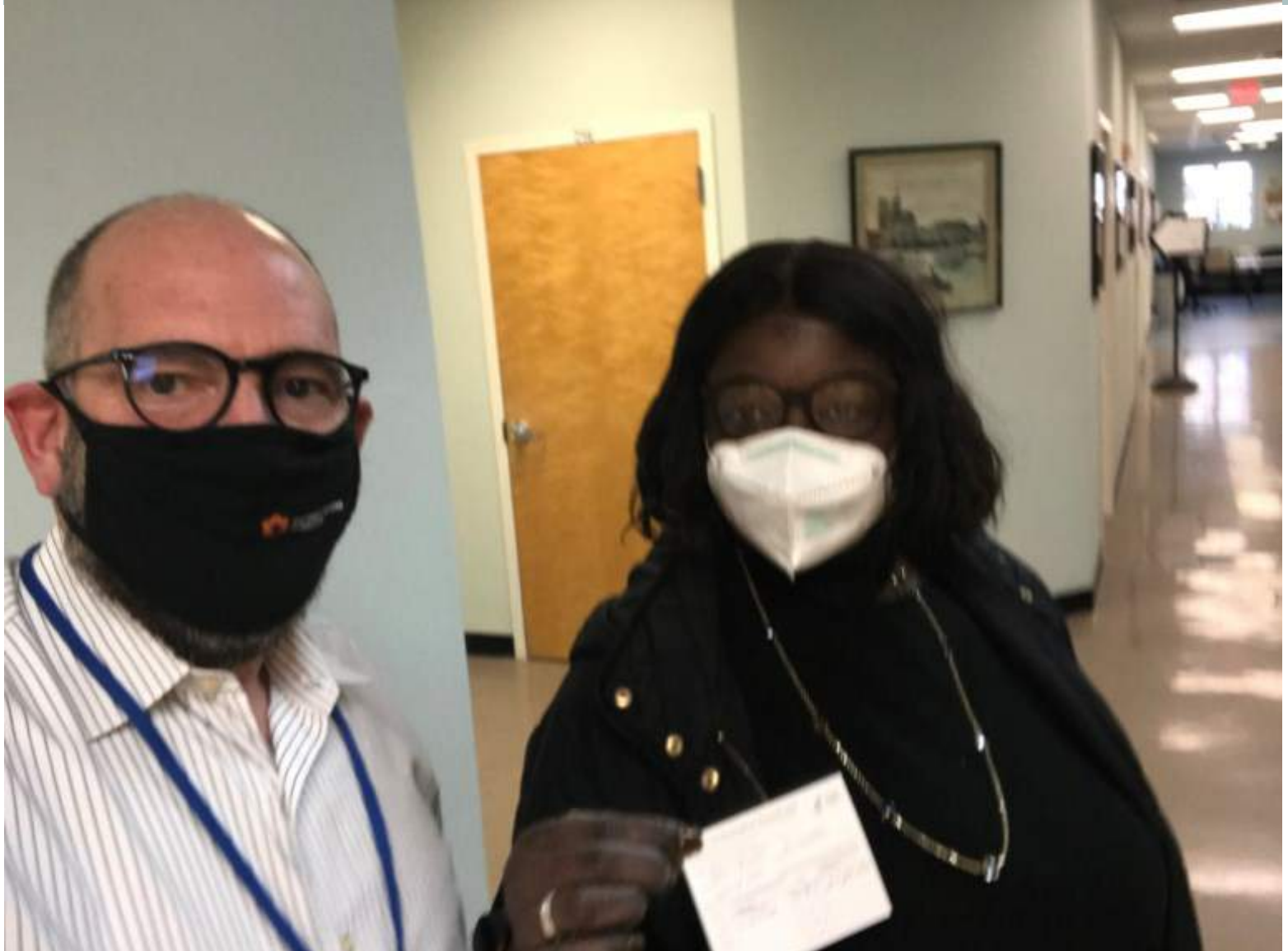


## Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Annual Report

### Vaccinations—Moving Forward



Vaccinations are now our greatest defense for protecting ourselves and those we support against COVID-19. "I got vaccinated to protect my health and to protect the health of my family and all who I care about" shared Margaret Jean Pierre, a Direct Support Professional on the Citizens Residential Services team. Pictured here with Jerry Powers, Director of Citizens Residential Services, Margaret has worked tirelessly on the front line during the pandemic. We are very grateful for our direct support staff who are protecting and helping people to cope and grow during this challenging time.



## Personal Missions



### Matt Hofele- *Growing Dreams*

By Susan Gill Orange

When Matt Hofele was an 11 year old boy, he grew tomatoes in his backyard on Long Island. This was something his mother taught him to do, and part of his routine was to deliver the red, ripe tomatoes to his grandmother who was also a gardener, although her expertise lay in her beautiful flower garden. The love of gardening and the study of horticulture is something Matt has cherished over the years, but had little opportunity to explore. The early exposure he received from both his mother and grandmother to the gardening bug seemed to never translate into an experience since he was not given much support to follow that desire in the programs he



had accessed in the ensuing years. However, it was at a Life Plan meeting a few years ago, that he shared with the team his desire to one day have his own garden. The staff at the Citizens house he lives at were enthusiastic about his dream and said “Why don’t you start your own garden here?” That was all Matt had to hear. He began his garden that spring in Greenlawn.

Since that time, Matt has been growing tomatoes, cucumbers and pumpkins with success but would love to learn more about the formal science of horticulture. He shared that he is beginning to explore YouTube videos on the subject and from the education he is receiving by delving into the wide selection of growing tips, he hopes to start a rose garden in the coming year.

It is an awesome thing to witness a person following his dreams. For people we support, the Life Plan meeting can elicit so much of what matters the most to people and that converts into making things happen. For Matt, the seeds of his imagination were watered by encouragement and opportunity and grew into a real garden of his own. That, after all, is what quality in a life well lived is all about!



### Four Years of Self-Direction By Michelle Rudoff

This December 29th I will be living a self-directed life for 4 years now and I’m loving it. I have been able to do more stuff than I did when I lived in the group home; like doing more than one night of bowling and also saving up for my own birthday parties and my own room at the conference in Albany. I also have been keeping up with my doctor appointments and making my own ride arrangements for those appointments. I want to thank everyone who supported me in my goal of living a self-directed life. I also want to thank my parents for giving me independent skills to help me live on my own.





# Mission Statement

3

## Mission Statement & Management Plan Annual Review

The annual review of the Mission Statement and Management Plan began in September 2020 by Citizens Council. This is completed each year as part of our COMPASS commitment and execution of the COMPASS Management Plan. On March 10 2021, Citizens Board of Directors reviewed and approved the Mission Statement (which did not change) and Management Plan.

Below is a summary of changes to the management plan approved with changes in red.

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

1. Add: Periodic Strategic Planning

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

1. No recommended changes

### **Criterion #3 – Empowerment:**

1. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): The residential has a council which all people supported are eligible to participate on
2. Virtual options are made available for people to attend.
3. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Citizens residence has house and family meetings, which all people are eligible to participate in. Virtual options are made available for people to attend.
4. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Citizens will further empower families, people supported and members of the community by offering periodic educational seminars. 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. Virtual options are made available for people to attend.
5. Add - Virtual options (shown in red): Sibling group meetings will be held on a quarterly basis to provide education and support for siblings. A virtual option is made available for people to attend, if unable to be physically present. A holiday party and annual BBQ are also held.
6. Add: Virtual Capability: Each house will be equipped with the technology that enables each person, as desired, to connect to virtual activities including council meetings. Efforts to assist those that live in a family home who wish to connect virtually will be initiated upon request.

### **Criterion #5 – Self-Survey:**

1. Add: Self-survey data provided to OPWDD as required.

### **Criterion #6 – Valued Outcomes:** No recommended changes

### **Criterion #7 – Quality Improvement:** No recommended changes



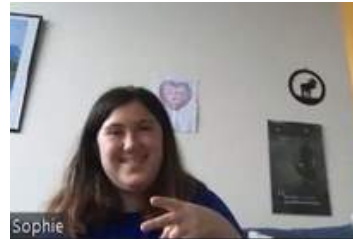
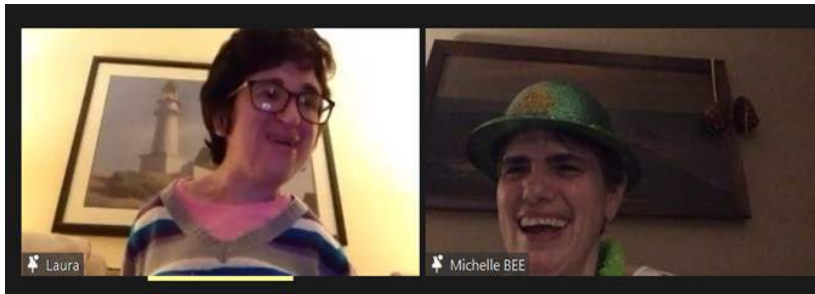
### Vision Statement

A world where all people  
are valued.

## Mission Statement in Action: Namaste by Jerri Walker

*Citizens Mission Statement is, “Citizens supports people to live the life they choose.” Activities, supports and services help to put this mission in action.*

Over the past year, Virtual ComeUnity Connections provided recreational fun, and each night concluded with a meditation led by an instructor. As our program began to change, and less staff were available, members became leaders. Members rotated as the host and helped to select the background music for their reading of a guided meditation. Pictured are Laura Tantillo and Michelle Bontempo leading peers in their guided meditation. Meditation helps to reduce negative emotions, increases imagination and creativity and reduces anxiety. Members hope to incorporate this skill into their daily practices.



## The Sibling Group Stays Connected

The Sibling Group began holding virtual meetings at the onset of the pandemic that have proven to be an invaluable way to come together, share information and support their siblings. During the past years, siblings from Citizens have provided meals, encouragement and support to the people living in the residences. Their efforts are much appreciated.

Paul Giordano, AHRC Board President and founder of the group, encouraged all in attendance to remain involved. As parents age, the role and responsibilities of siblings increases and becomes one of the strongest natural supports for their brother or sister. Citizens strongly encourages these long lasting, positive, loving relationships, and enjoys working with so many engaged siblings.

During the past six months, the Sibling Group met at least every two months. Guests have included Chris O'Connor and Barry Donowitz, Associate Executive Directors; Karen Tanzillo, Senior Director and most recently Tom Schinkel of Care Design NY and Karen Lukas of the Entitlement Department to discuss ABLE accounts.

### 2021 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us for virtual meetings!

Contact [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org)

Meetings are held at 5:00pm. Contact Colleen Tapia at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org) for details on how to connect.

## Board Physical Plant Inspections by Colleen Tapia

At the present time, inspections remain suspended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The annual Physical Plant Inspections (PPI) meeting was held in March 2021. Policy and procedures were reviewed, sites assigned, and questions or concerns addressed. The PPI process remains an integral component of our success as a COMPASS agency. Thus, during this time of social distancing, the PPI committee has determined that a Board PPI "check in" with sites would be beneficial. Beginning in May, Board members will "check in" via a virtual platform with House and Site Managers to touch base and address any glaring concerns.

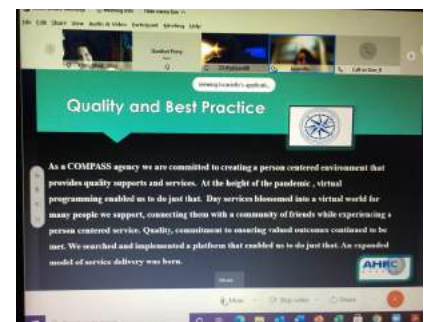


Members of the Board of Directors and management staff during the annual Physical Plant Inspection meeting.

Thank you to Sue Dowling who coordinates this process.

## Annual Board COMPASS Training

The Annual COMPASS Board training was given on March 10, 2021 by Bridget Cariello, Program Administrator - Day Services, who discussed Virtual Service Opportunities and Technology. Thank you to Bridget for her thoughtful and informative presentation. It included information on new opportunities for remote learning. We look forward to the Spring when Wheatley Farms will come alive and be bountiful. It is hope, a strong commitment for continuous growth, and adaption as a COMPASS agency that has made us strong through the adversity of this past year.

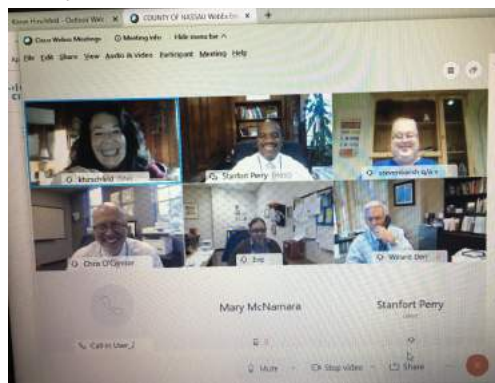




## Steven Barsh Presents the Annual Council Presentation to Citizens Board of Directors



Steven Barsh, Council Member and Stanford Perry, Executive Director shown above.



On November 4, 2020 Steven Barsh represented fellow advocates from Citizens to review the Council's endeavors during the past year. The annual Council presentation to Citizens Board meetings is part of the COMPASS Management Plan and continues to foster a strong bond between the Board of Directors and the people supported through Citizens. It was a fun and engaging presentation with a slide show of pictures shown. Thank you Steven!

## Validation Visit 2021

We are happy to report that the COMPASS recertification validation visit is scheduled for the week of May 17, 2021. An on-site visit is planned, if possible. A hybrid review (part virtual; part in person) will be completed if COVID warrants limited contact. This would include virtual interviews and involvement in activities.



## Leading the Way in Fighting Systemic Racism

### Understanding & Eradicating the Roots of Systemic Racism

#### Expert Panel

**Fredrick K. Brewington, Esq.**  
Board of Directors, ERASE Racism

*"Understanding Our Basic Civil Rights in the Workplace."*

**Elaine Gross**  
Founder and President, ERASE Racism

*"Combating Systemic Racism in the Long Island Community"*

**Cornell Craig**  
Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO), Hofstra University

*"Embracing Diversity in the Workplace and Creating Inclusive Environments."*

**Alonzo Kelly**  
Founder, Kelly Leadership Group

*"Understanding and Recognizing Systemic Racism and its Lasting Impact."*

#### Facilitated Discussion

Citizens, along with staff from our family of organizations, joined a panel discussion on "Understanding & Eradicating the Roots of Systemic Racism." This was a thought-provoking program.

Thank you to the engaging and insightful speakers, including Fredrick K. Brewington, Esq., Board of Directors, ERASE Racism; Cornell Craig, Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO), Hofstra University; Alonzo Kelly, Founder, Kelly Leadership Group; and Elaine Gross, Founder and President, ERASE Racism.

The panel's meaningful insights were followed up with a virtual breakout session led by agency clinicians and members of the Joint Diversity | Equity | Inclusion Committee. Staff were given the opportunity to come together to discuss materials presented by the panelists as well as share their own experiences, insights and questions.

Thanks to our speakers and staff for engaging on these important issues!

## Jonathan Drexel Featured on CBS News

Jonathan was featured in February on CBS news for his involvement with “Luv Michael.” Luv Michael is a non-profit organization that produces high-quality organic, gluten-free and nut-free granola. Founded by Lisa Liberatore, MD and her son Michael, the goal is to provide meaningful employment and on the job training for people diagnosed with Autism.



## POM Department Launch Party by Kate Zimmerman

Like the rest of the world, the Personal Outcome Measures (POM) department underwent several changes in 2020, aside from the Covid-19 pandemic. POM interviewer Joyce Guarnieri retired, department supervisor Kevin Wilber accepted a new position and interviewer/trainer Susan Gill returned. Kate Zimmerman, interviewer, and Bridget Cariello, department supervisor, joined the team. And through it all Helene Ramer worked to keep the department stable during the changes.

Once the dust settled, our department wanted to find a fun and inspiring way to reconnect with people regarding their services, wants and dreams as well as support/educate their dedicated support staff. To reenergize our department and delve into the person-centered process, we wanted to give people supported the opportunity to showcase their talents by designing a logo for our department. We held an art contest from December 2020 into the first half of January 2021 with the theme “What does POM mean to you?” The department sent informational materials regarding the 21 personal outcome measures to contestants involved in the logo development. Our hope was to support people receiving services and their staff to connect more deeply with the foundation of the department’s work.

The POM department received over a dozen entries - some drawn by hand, some painted, and some computer generated. We received group entries as well as entries from individual artists.

In strategic planning sessions during our department retreat-leadership day, we planned a launch for our team. This would be an opportunity to not only announce the winner, but create a platform to reintroduce our department and reinvigorate educational awareness regarding the POM department and its culture at AHRC and Citizens. What better way to connect during tough times than with a party!

The Personal Outcome Measures Launch Party was created to provide an engaging virtual opportunity for people supported and staff to reconnect with the POM department and the importance of the POM interview experience. During the party, we will travel back in time to reflect on disability history, and celebrate how far we’ve come. We’ll talk about what a POM is and why they are so important and discuss the role of the POM department. Together we will learn more about the 21 factors discussed during an interview, how the POM are used, the role of the person supported in speaking up and how staff support is vital to its success. This session will wrap up with some interactive activities and party games! We’ll start off by learning who each person’s assigned interviewer is, then switch places so YOU interview US in a game we call “Interview your Interviewer!” Then we’ll move on to a game called “3 Wishes”, where you get to share a place you would like to go, something you wish you knew how to do, and something you wish you had. Then it’s time to dance! We’ll end the party by announcing our logo contest winner and revealing our new logo.

We look forward to seeing you there on May 18, 2021! Watch your email for information on how join. “Personal Outcome Measures focus on the choices people have in their lives. This means that for all of us there is a possibility of choices and opportunities that did not exist yesterday and cannot be predicted for tomorrow.” - CQL Manual



## Self-Direction: A Great Way to make POM Happen By Roberta Romano

Self-Direction is a powerful choice that allows a person to maintain control over their life. Increased independence, inclusion, individualization, and productivity are the goals for each person who has self-directed services through Citizens Options Unlimited. Our primary aim is to provide each person with the supports needed to be able to achieve independence while maximizing their ability to realize their own potential to achieve their personal desires. By basing services on each individual's person-centered plan, and an ongoing evaluation of their needs and strengths, Citizens is able to customize services that assist in fostering independence for each person through their self-directed budget and goals.

Citizens Self-Direction Department has been working in the Long Island region to provide services and assistance to the people supported and their family in a manner that provides them with a true understanding of self-direction and its benefits. The Self-Direction Department, the person and the family work together to help the person decide on a mix of supports and services that will work best for their needs. It is explained that supports and services will help them get and keep a job, learn new skills, navigate through their life as safely as possible, learn about and enjoy activities in their community, and learn about how to make choices independently to maintain a healthily lifestyle throughout their life. At Citizens, we firmly believe that self-direction gives people supported and their families greater control over the services they receive, how they receive them and who provides them. It is our belief that through self-direction, people have more control and flexibility to live as independently as possible in their home and community. Below are two success stories that are a direct result of self-directed services and what it has to offer:

**Example # 1:** A young man came to us in 2017 for self-directed services to assist him in finding ways to participate in the many activities he enjoys; his activities were limited due to two working parents unable to provide transportation and assistance. He is a very capable young man with so many goals that he wants to achieve. Once this young man and his Circle of Support completed his budget and hired the staff he chose, he began to make those goals a reality. He is currently a student and will graduate in the spring of 2021 with an Associates Degree in Computer Science. He has a fascination with electronics and also attends a class called Game U where he is building his own video games. Recently, at his LP meeting, he stated "If I could go to this class every day, I would". He has his driving permit and is in the process of taking driving lessons supported through his budget, so he can get his license and then work to get a car of his own. He works with his Comm Hab staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle when making his meals and eating out. He works out every day and utilizes a personal trainer twice a week to work on his strength training. When Covid occurred, he and his Self-Direction Circle of Support team made sure his progress continued. Through virtual communication, he continued to take Game U classes, personal training sessions, and worked with his Comm Hab staff a few times a week to plan his menu and daily activities. He was so thankful that he was able to keep moving forward, because he had started to become depressed about being stuck home and watching all his progress and dreams wash away! He is looking into the future and has stated that he would like to work towards eventually moving out on his own. His parents are very pleased with his progress and stated that they are so proud that he has built a great deal of confidence from doing things he never thought he would be able to accomplish and that he did not have prior to having self-direction. Watching their son grow and do all the things he was meant to do with his life has made his parents so relieved

**Example # 2:** "Bob" is a young man who came to us for assistance with self-directed services as well as a housing subsidy to be able to get his own apartment in December of 2018. He struggles a great deal with anxiety and will at times have to leave stores, restaurants and other public places due to panic attacks. His father was offered a new job that would move them all to Florida. He was very upset about moving and was determined to stay in NY. Due to his needs, his parents were very concerned about him staying in NY, even with grandparents and other family members who offered to help. Through self-direction and housing, we assisted them to obtain self-directed services and to hire his best friend (family friend) for Comm Hab. We worked with his best friend and together "Bob" was able to obtain his license and an apartment. His friend also agreed to be his neighbor and was paid to be available to him any time he felt the need (e.g. in an emergency, etc.). His family all chipped in and bought him his own car. With assistance, he began to shop for himself, make and follow up on doctor's appointments and maintain his apartment as independently as he could while utilizing the supports that have been set up for him. He started to date a girl that he is still with today. Here we are two years later and he is living his best life and is thrilled to have been given this chance. He helps out his grandparents with work around their house and has taken a few trips with his girlfriend to Florida to visit his parents. He is very happy and is great example of why self-direction works.

## Looking for the Best! From the Best!

In 2021 and beyond we continue our efforts to ensure that each person supported is empowered to live a self-directed life. This of course includes each person hiring the best staff to support their hopes and dreams.

**\$5,000  
NEW EMPLOYEE  
REFERRAL BONUS!  
\*for 5 hires**

By now we hope you have seen or heard about our new \$5K New Employee Referral Bonus. Refer 5 qualified candidates to our agency and you will be paid taxable \$5K after the new hires have been employed for a minimum of 4 months. This recruitment strategy encourages all employees, through monetary rewards, to refer qualified candidates for Direct Care Professional (DSP) positions. Someone just like you! We know that employee referred new hires tend to be better performers and more dedicated. So please network (become an informal recruiter!!) and support people to have the most qualified, supportive DSP staff to enhance their lives.

We hope you start to take immediate advantage of this exciting new referral program and refer candidates that are just like you!





## University of Personal Growth by Helene Ramer

University of Personal Growth is so successful that we have changed our monthly virtual meetings to weekly, as of January 2021. The class is still on Tuesday, but the time is a little earlier, at 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Every week is a different topic.



We started off the new year with WORDS OF WISDOM from the very inspirational Pam Boyle. We have had programs on Personal Health, Money Management, Hope Fitness, Art with ALEX, Fire Safety, Yoga and Meditation. The Music Academy and the Caffeine Academy have also volunteered their services and will be providing games like Name that Tune.

At the end of March we had a professional DJ spinning tunes for a dance party. Cooking demonstrations, self-advocacy, nutrition classes, games, and gardening will also be on the agenda. Please join us every Tuesday to learn something new, socialize with friends, and have a good time. Classes are open to all people in day hab, residences and living at home. I welcome any suggestions for classes that interest you. Thank you for participating!!!

## Spreading Cheer



Joshua Minessali and Esther Shea deliver baskets filled with handmade thank you cards and cookies from Wheatley Farms to community heroes at local hospitals and fire departments as a token of our continued appreciation for their essential service.



## Executive Council

- The Executive Council continued to meet weekly during the pandemic.
- Pam Boyle provided weekly inspiration and support during this uncertain time.
- Stanford Perry, Executive Director, Chris O'Connor, Associate Executive Director and Shaun Weathers, Senior Director, attended Council meetings over the past six months to facilitate direct connection to agency leadership, and discuss changes to services, visitation policies, day hab re-opening, etc.
- Weekly updates were provided by the POM Interviewers on POM initiatives/celebrations.
- Hassan Abdulhaqq, HR Director of Staff Recruitment and Retention, met with the Council to discuss his efforts regarding his new position.
- Virtual Voter Registration/Mail in Ballot Assistance meeting was held in September.
- The Rights Rally was held on September 23, 2020 with over 75 advocates and staff in attendance.
- Rights training continued monthly.
- Members of the Executive Council attended the Long Island Zoom Rally to Save our Services.
- Members of the Executive Council attended the SANYS Statewide conference in December.
- SANYS NYS Board member Matthew Hofele (Suffolk Rep) will continue as Board Member for 2021 due to the pandemic as elections will not be held for 2021.
- Ongoing COVID-19 information, including vaccination, safety etc. was provided to all advocates.
- The Council is working on gathering all inspirations shared by Pam Boyle, creating artwork and placing it in a publication which will be shared with everyone.





## Happy Days!

### Vaccines Arrive at Shoreham

Feeling the love at Shoreham! Citizens' Shoreham team made important health outcomes happen – 30 people supported and 21 staff received the Covid-19 vaccination. People with disabilities are disproportionately more vulnerable to the virus. "Getting the vaccine is so important," shared Jean Marie Smith, Director of Nursing at Shoreham. It also can pose a unique set of challenges. "Getting ready and traveling with the people we support requires a professional team, and even so it was an all-day affair," shared Program Director, Mary Gilleran.

The Citizens team came prepared. Senior Director Karen Tanzillo was at the vaccination site to ensure any issue that might prevent a person from receiving the shot could be immediately addressed. "Every person who had an appointment today was here on time and was able to receive their shot. I am so proud of this team."



## Citizens Council

- Council continued to meet monthly. Each month additional people join this virtual forum to connect with each other and learn about continued advocacy.
- Monthly rights training continues via a virtual platform.
- Members of Citizens Council participate at Executive Council meetings (see picture on the right) to enhance communication and create unity between Councils.



## Autism Awareness Month

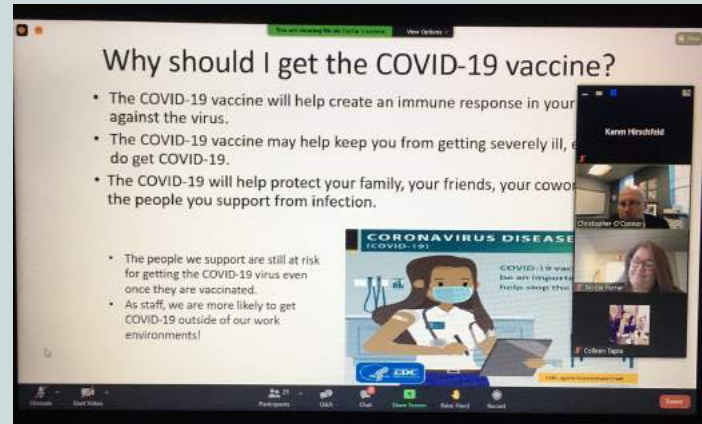
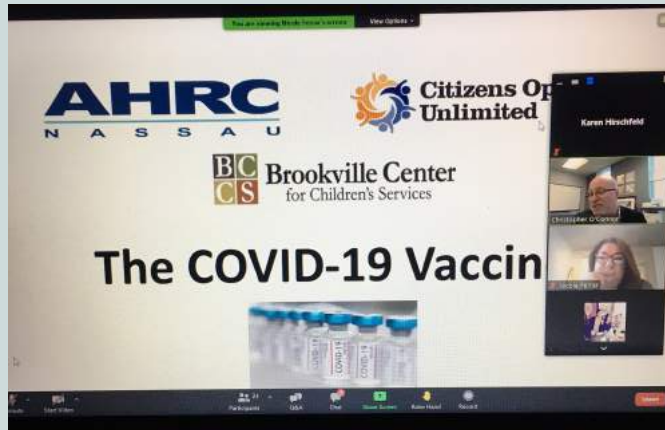
Staff members and people supported at Shoreham dressed up in their finest blue attire for some fun and festivity to celebrate [#Autism Awareness](#) and [#AutismAcceptanceMonth!](#)



## Family Seminar

On February 8, 2021 Chris O'Connor, Associate Executive Director and Nicole Ferrar, Senior Director of Health Services hosted a Family Seminar on the COVID-19 Vaccine and COVID-19 related information. Over forty families joined this informative seminar.

### VIRTUAL FAMILY WEBINAR COVID-19 Vaccine & COVID-19 Related Information



## Family Questionnaire Results 2020

The family questionnaire is a vital component of Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Management Plan. The response rate for this year is 35.7 % compared with 22 % in 2019. The average national response rate to surveys is 32%.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain family feedback, assess the level of satisfaction and improve services. A trend is defined as a score of 89% or below. There are no Agency wide trends. New this year were questions directly related to the Agency's response to COVID-19. **The overwhelming response from families was extremely positive and a testament to the exceptional services provided by our Leadership, Nurses, Managers and Direct Support Staff.** There are two program "trends" within the residential IRA's.

### SUMMARY OF RESULTS

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Residential IRA's	2	4	1	1	2	4	4	2
ICF Helen Kaplan & Medically Frail	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Camp Loyaltown	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	0
Melville ICF	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1	0*
Self-Direction	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5	0
Shoreham ICF <i>New 2020</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	0
AGENCY WIDE TRENDS	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Total Trends</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>

A Quality Improvement Plan is under development to address individual program trends shown below.

#### Residential IRA's:

Is your family member's personal appearance satisfactory and consistent with what they desire? (No 13%)

Is your family member's home/program site, clean, comfortable and well maintained? (No: 13%)

\*The Melville ICF had a low response to the questionnaire. Thus, if one person answered no to a question the overall positive response was greatly affected, indicating an inflated trend. Therefore, it does not appear as if any true trends are present at the Melville ICF.



## Staff Appreciation Day



On October 15, 2020, the important work of team members across our family of organizations was celebrated and recognized. This year, staff appreciation took on a more significant definition. This was an inspiring and socially-distanced event that ran all day long. The enthusiasm to celebrate staff never stopped. Associate Executive Directors Chris O'Connor and Barry Donowitz greeted cars with some creative dance moves as they cleaned windshields. Thank you to the agency's Staff Appreciation Day Committee and volunteers for another amazing Staff Appreciation Day!



## Personal Outcome Measures Update

The Quality Improvement Department developed a policy and procedure to utilize Personal Outcome Measures (POMS) to develop meaningful, person-centered valued outcomes in order to help people improve their quality of life. When feasible, POMS interviews are to be completed 1–2 months prior to a person’s Life Plan meeting and if possible, every two years.

In 2020, **260** interviews were conducted. POMS are typically conducted every two years or as requested, with the exception of people with formal Rights Restrictions who are interviewed annually. It is noteworthy to mention that the POMS Department continued to interview the people we support during the COVID-19 pandemic via phone or virtual interview. During this time of pause due to COVID-19, interviews have been completed remotely in order to assist people to understand CQL and Personal Outcomes. POMS trainers/interviewers attend residential/house, day program and family meetings.

*In 2020, the POM data indicated a strong increase in rights (+21%) and choosing services (+39%).*

Even during 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant challenges, our agency teams worked diligently to create weekly activity packets, delivered activity boxes and binders, and ultimately created new and varied activities by way of virtual and blended face-to-face services. Virtual content includes: “A Day Around the World,” a “How It’s Made Series,” self-advocacy meetings, yoga, music and movement, Spanish classes, ASL classes, SANYS rights trainings, integrated social opportunity with Prep Academy, “Zen Tangle Meditative Artwork,” “Bollywood Dance Spectacular,” personal health/Covid safety, technology training classes (“How to Zoom, Teams, and Web-ex”) gardening, book club, virtual art shows, talent shows, and holiday contests.

The POM Department expanded the University of Personal Growth Series to provide weekly classes on health and safety, money management, choice, artistic expression and other virtual opportunities to support personal growth and independence for the people we support. 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. And they have provided meaningful opportunities to experience self-development and explore the 21 Personal Outcomes Measures by encouraging the people we support to participate in the “I Am the Expert” initiative and a POM Department logo contest. These opportunities aid the people we support in expanding their artistic expression of their personal goals, plans and dreams for their lives.

## CQL Third Visit



On March 15, 2021 CQL’s third visit was completed virtually. Agency executive staff and goal and BA leaders were present to review the status of the report submitted for the third visit. All PCE goals continue with progress noted despite the pandemic. We welcomed Elizabeth Sites from CQL on this day. The conversation

focused primarily on POM data and outcomes. The third visit was a welcome touch base of where we are since Accreditation with Distinction was awarded in March of 2018. Despite the challenges of the past year, excellent progress is noted in all areas. We look forward to our reaccreditation in March of 2022.

## Regulatory Affairs by Eric Rosen

Between October 20 and March ’21; site surveys were completed for eight (8) Citizens IRAs. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic; surveys were suspended from 12/19/20 through the end of this reporting period; to parallel DQI’s suspension of routine surveys.

Exceptional practices identified during this reporting period include the encouragement of independence, high satisfaction with services, homes/bedrooms nicely decorated to the individual’s preferences and positive/respectful interactions between staff and the people supported.





## EMPOWERMENT TRAININGS

**For information or registration:**

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

### RESPECTFUL INTERACTION

10:00 A.M.

MAY 6, 2021

### SELF-CARE

1:00 PM

MAY 19, 2021

### INFORMED CONSENT

11:00 A.M.

JUNE 16, 2021

**For information or registration:**

**Please visit our website at [Citizens.org](http://Citizens.org) or email [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org). Or call 516 293-2016 ext. 5492**

**We are excited to share that the  
Empowerment Series trainings  
& many activities have gone virtual!**

For many people, getting connected with friends and doing activities “together” is now possible through TVs, tablets and phones. Classes such as music and movement, yoga and fitness are now offered through Zoom.

**Please visit [AHRC.org](http://AHRC.org) for more details on how to join these fun and exciting activities.**

## FAMILY SEMINAR SERIES

**Join us for future webinars via WebEx  
right from your own home!**

**Open to members of the community,  
family members and advocates**

**For information or registration,  
please visit our website at [AHRC.org](http://AHRC.org)  
or email [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org) or  
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5492**

## UNIVERSITY OF PERSONAL GROWTH 2021 Spring Schedule

**All classes are from 10:30-11:30**

*For more information contact [hramer@ahrc.org](mailto:hramer@ahrc.org)*

- April 20 Country Line Dancing
- April 27 Songbirds of Long Island
- May 4 Meditation and Art of Jin Shu
- Relieves stress and pain
- May 11 Healthy Mind and Body
- May 18 POM Launch Party
- May 19 Pop Earth Music and Dance
- May 26 Here Come the Monkees
- June 1 Literacy Nassau
- June 8 Self Advocate - Nalia
- June 15 Healthy Habits
- June 22 Zumba with Elise
- June 29 LGBTQ Advocacy

## Empowering You!

As we continue to make our way towards the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, the Personal Outcome Measures (POM) department continues to expand and grow its presence in the world of virtual programming with the creation of the webinar series Empowering You for the new microsite.

Each Friday at 1:30 starting on April 16, members from the POM department will be presenting interactive online sessions discussing a wide range of topics, including what is discussed at a Personal Outcome Measures interview and how to use the information gathered during the interview at the person-supported life plan meeting. Our introductory class, aptly named “Empowering You: An Introduction” opens up with some fun ice breaker activities where we learn about each other and what makes us feel proud. After that, we’ll work together to define empowerment and why it is so important to be empowered. Then we move into the information session where we learn about the keys to becoming empowered, or as we like to call them, the 3 E’s. We’ll talk about what they are, how they empower us, and why they are important. When the presentation is done, we go interactive and talk about what happens when someone feels empowered? Have a story you want to share? We’d love to hear it! The next time we meet will be the POM department’s Launch Party!!! You’ll get to meet the team, learn about what we do, and how your POM interview plays a key role in empowering you to decide your own life! From that session forward, we will use the CQL interview guide to design interactive presentations to help people with developmental disabilities and others become more empowered to create a life of their choosing.

Join us, every Friday from 1:30pm to 2:30pm for Empowering You! Starting April 16.



# The COMPASS Committee & The Quality Enhancement Process

**In 2020, there were 14 quality improvement goals as well as enhancements, with 36% of the goals/objectives met.**

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was limited ability to fully implement all Quality Enhancement goals in 2020 (state closures, surveys/visits suspended to limit the spread of the virus, etc.). Thus data was not available for a majority of the year for all goals and results were not able to be determined.

However, quality enhancement was different this year. It was a year with challenges and heartache but also collaboration, progress and innovation. 2020 taught us all to try new things, to embrace technology and to evolve. There is no doubt that with dedication and energy we will continue to innovate and improve, to meet whatever the new normal will be.

## ALL FACTORS

- Communication was enhanced across all people and domains to unite, education, support and enrich coordination (i.e. executive director ongoing emails to all stakeholders, etc.).
- Policy and procedures were developed in every area to promote each person's health and safety as well as to ensure compliance with regulatory and fiscal/billing changes due to the pandemic. This was preemptive (visitation to residences, reopening day habs, etc.) and as warranted.
- There was a reallocation of resources across all domains to address essential pandemic items (PPE source – purchase, distribution, etc.)
- There was an extensive shift to virtual services and environments (i.e. staff, board and council meetings, COVID questionnaires etc.) which helped emphasize priorities (people supported, families, and staff) and served to bring us together and provide focus during a time of extreme change in needs, priorities and resources.
- MIS creation of platforms to support virtual activities and remote work (LogMeIn, WebEx, etc.).
- Day Habilitation staff and services was very successfully shifted to people's homes (IRAs). In addition, creative and fun weekly activity packets were prepared and delivered to people's and family homes (i.e. rainbow initiative, arts/crafts, masks made, gift baskets created and donated for local essential workers, etc.).
- Remote work was initiated and implemented to ensure uninterrupted and continuous daily operations.
- A virtual camp connection was formed for people to enjoy alternate camp activities (camp fire, songs, arts/crafts, etc.) during the summer months.
- Agency commemorative events were refashioned and hosted virtually (Rose Ball etc.).

## RIGHTS

- 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 2020.
- Advocacy never stopped during the pandemic (i.e. letter writing campaigns, SANYS engagements, advocates participation on statewide reimagining day services committee, family and advocate TV and print interviews, etc.).
- Everyone rallied to advocate for the right to visit with family and friends.
- Many people enjoyed a more relaxed pace, remaining at home when the pandemic shut down occurred. Sleeping in, not driving to day activities, etc. brought some rest and relaxation along with home activities.
- Council meetings were held virtually weekly.
- A COVID questionnaire was distributed to obtain input from people and provide individualized supports.

## DIGNITY & RESPECT

- AHRC hosted a virtual rights rally.
- There was an increase in people feeling respected by 5% in 2020 by providing only necessary supports and supervision. Thus supports and services continue to enhance dignity and respect.
- Virtual Family Seminar were offered on various topics.

## NATURAL SUPPORTS

- People's satisfaction with natural supports remained very high and in the 90th percentile based on the 2019 individual and family satisfaction questionnaire results. All scores for satisfaction levels remained in the 90th percentile.
- Unfortunately everyone's interactions with family and friends has changed and become more limited due to COVID-19. In addition, the agency is required to follow guidelines issued by OPWDD which restrict visits, day activities, and other in-person activities based on the positivity rate of the virus. This separation has been understandably challenging for people. Creative ways to alleviate these stressors have been initiated, including virtual visits through FaceTime and Zoom, as well as telephone calls and letters. Although we know it is not the same as time together, the hope is to support relationships until we are all able to resume more typical activities and spend time together.
- AHRC began hosting virtual Sibling Group meetings during the pandemic to promote connections and provide support as well as information.

## FREEDOM FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT & EXPLOITATION

- In 2020, the goal to reduce the number of substantiated allegations of neglect by 5% was met by AHRC.

## BEST POSSIBLE HEALTH

- Systems were implemented to promote the best possible health for people during the pandemic with a daily heightened focus on each person's medical safety (PPE, monitoring of pulse ox, etc.).
- A crisis response nursing team was created to enhance people's health and safety as well as to provide education and support in COVID-positive homes.
- The use of tele-med increased to promote the best possible health and limit the potential exposure to COVID.



## Quality Enhancements continued from prior page

### SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- Physical plant modifications were made to promote health and safety, including the upgrade of HVAC systems to MERV 13 as recommended by the CDC, creation of more single bedrooms, sanitation/fogging spray, social distancing/spacing reconfigurations and the use of plexi glass, etc.
- An Assistant Director was hired this year, to provide increased oversight of the day-to-day operations of facilities maintenance. This has allowed for increased focus on the maintenance team's attention to preventative maintenance and providing prompt responses to needed repairs.

### POSITIVE SERVICES & SUPPORTS

- New virtual activities and support groups were created and offered to assist people in remaining engaged and healthy.
- 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 2020 was met with a 15% overall reduction noted. This far exceeded the original 2020 goal of a 5% reduction! As this goal was initiated in 2019 and spanned a two year period, the total percent reduction from the start of the goal resulted in a 32% reduction in the number of BSP's containing one or more of the five presenting behaviors.

### CONTINUITY AND SECURITY

- The goal to increase satisfaction in people choosing personal goals by 5% in 2020 was not met; outcome data remained the same, which given the pandemic is a stable result.
- During 2020, with the pandemic's significant challenges, our teams worked diligently to create weekly activity packets, delivered activity boxes and binders and created programming related activities virtually and with face to face services. Virtual content includes: a day around the world, a "how it's made", self-advocacy meetings, yoga, music and movement, book club and virtual art shows, talent shows and contests.
- In 2019, a cross program interest survey was utilized to capture people's interests, desires, and talents regarding how they wish to spend their time and direct their services throughout the day. In 2020, we have continued these efforts and captured data to create programming that is aligned with the interest of the people we support. Some of the most popular categorical activities requested were more opportunities for dining-cooking, travel, shopping and recreation specific to community related classes. As our teams continue to analyze the data, we will work to develop the top 25 categories requested by the people we support first, and connect people with activities of their choosing.
- In 2020, Citizens opened a new residence located in Greenlawn. Three people from the 904 Melville Estates ICF transferred to Greenlawn, along with three people from the State's priority list. Development plans continue for five homes in 2021.

### STAFF RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS

- The 2020 QI goal to increase new hires by 10% was unfortunately not met this year, but a desirable 5% increase in new hires was achieved for AHRC.
- The agency held a drive-through Employee Appreciation Day on October 15, 2020 with over 500 employees in attendance.
- A virtual Direct Support Professional of the Year Luncheon was held in 2020.
- A COVID questionnaire was sent to all employees to assess and address employee concerns.
- Enhanced communication was also established to stay in regular contact with employees during the pandemic (i.e. using Constant Contact software). In addition, a COVID hotline was created to support and guide employees and management about what to do in the event they become ill.
- The agency has also secured and continues to distribute PPE to employees who need it for their job. Additionally, the agency formulated a return to the workplace committee who worked to get offices reassembled so employees could safely return to the workplace in our Brookville, Freeport and Plainview locations.
- During the pandemic, the agency, through MIS services, quickly offered effective ways for employees to remain engaged with colleagues and people supported, through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams, WebEx and other necessary technology to keep us operating.
- To address childcare needs for our employees during the pandemic, the HR Division continues to research and communicate resources to employees such as OCFS and EAP. We also partnered with the Nassau and Suffolk County Childcare Councils to provide webinars on the services they provide along with access to available subsidies.
- To address Health/Mental Health/Wellness concerns, the agency continues to offer resources through our Behavioral Supports Team, promoting our EAP, and through our medical provider CIGNA (& OMADA).
- Implementation of a new robust learning management system, Relias, was completed in June 2020.
- Partnership with SUNY Stony Brook to offer Masters Level Programs – In 2020, 17 employees were admitted to the HR Management Track and 19 for the Liberal Studies Track. The cohorts began in March of 2020 and began their fourth semester on 1/4/2021.
- NADSP Frontline Supervisor Curriculum has been purchased and a trainer session has been completed. We will be working with each of the programs to develop a protocol for implementation.
- Enhancement of the agency-wide wellness program, Project You. Program utilization continues to increase each year. Total participation year to date (12/31/20) is 1,510 employees up from 1,289 employees last year.
- Total Rewards statements were issued to all full-time employees in 2019 and will resume again in 2021.

### PERSONAL OUTCOME MEASURES

The goal to increase satisfaction in people choosing services by 5% in 2020 was met based on Personal Outcome Measures interviews (62% in 2019 and 75% in 2020)



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# **CALLING all Advocates!**

## **Respectful Interactions Seminar**

**Date: May 6, 2021 from 10:00-11:30 a.m.**

**Virtual - Zoom Meeting ID: 829 8922 3378 Passcode: Respect**

**Key Note Speaker: Shameka Andrews**

Please join Shameka and others as we learn about “Respectful Interactions” and building an agency that promotes awareness, kindness and an environment that values everyone. Shameka is the Community Outreach Coordinator for SANYS, an author and woman of many accomplishments. Shameka is proud of her children's book "Butterfly on Wheels" and her role in organizing and speaking at the Women of Color Rally in Albany.

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