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*Proud to be Accredited by CQL | The Council On Quality and Leadership  
Working toward a world of dignity, opportunity and community for all people*

# Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Semi-Annual Report

## CQL Accreditation

Dear Families, Friends and Staff,

As always, I hope this letter finds you safe and well. So much of our success and strength as a community comes from our shared mission. I'm so pleased to share with you that AHRC Nassau and affiliate agency, Citizens Options Unlimited, were re-accredited and again hold the Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation With Distinction from CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership. Such accreditation

reflects our high standards of operation, but also our commitment to evolving toward the most inclusive, person-centered practices possible. Of the 11 agencies that hold this international accreditation, two are from our family of organizations.

Such distinctions are possible because of your continued partnership in advancing inclusion and person-centered outcomes. Together, we are creating a world where people of all abilities are valued and fulfilling the promise of our founding families, seventy-three years ago. As you read our summer newsletter, I hope you will share our pride in the development of our fully inclusive community center Wheatley Farms & Arts Center, community news, and thoughtful leadership.

We are realizing our agency's vision—and more importantly doing so as a community.

Best Regards,  
Stanford J. Perry



We are proud to have received the Person-Centered Excellence Accreditation, With Distinction from CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership. This four-year accreditation recognizes that the organization embraces person-centered solutions to improve the quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

When Citizens first partnered with CQL to pursue accreditation, eight years ago, it undertook a rigorous process to review and improve supports and services. The efforts of Citizens were focused on empowering the people who receive supports to pursue what really matters in their lives, and achieve personally defined outcomes.

This accreditation is a testament to our exceptional staff and culture of empowering people with developmental disabilities to be active stakeholders in every aspect of our agency.





## Mission Statement & Management Plan Annual Review

Each year, Citizens reviews the agency's Mission Statement and Management Plan. It began with the Council and Compass committee reviews in the fall. Recommended changes will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for their review in early 2023.

We are thrilled to share the new Citizens mission statement poster shown on the right. If you haven't received the new poster for your office or site, please contact us at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org).

**Vision Statement**  
A world where all people  
are valued.



## Validation Visit 2022

The annual OPWDD COMPASS recertification validation visit was held the week of May 9, 2022. COMPASS related activities were completed throughout the week. This included interviews with staff, advocates, families and Board members, in addition to standard COMPASS related activities, (house and family meetings, Council meetings, empowerment training etc.).

The validation visit was completed remotely and documentation (COMPASS minutes, Board minutes, Councils minutes, IRC/HRC minutes, survey results etc.) were provided and reviewed by DQI in advance.

The validation visit was a great success with much, much praise offered and no formal citations given. These results are a testament to the daily dedication, hard work and efforts of all. Congratulations everyone!



## Fall Fun at Shoreham!

Fall foliage and crisp weather was the inspiration for crafts and trips to Bayberry Park, Holtsville Ecology Center and of course eating out!





# Mission Statement in Action

## POM Recognition Award - Farah Paillant

By Michelle Rudoff

Farah is the program coordinator for the Virtual and Respite programs for Citizens. Farah's workday doesn't end when she leaves Plainview. She logs onto Zoom and hears the laughter from the individuals who attend the Virtual Connections program while doing a brain game or is in Brookville or a bowling alley with the respite program. When she isn't on zoom or in running site respite, she is on the phone and computer answering calls or emails from parents or the individuals themselves.

Farah helps build the confidence in the people supported through the virtual connections and respite programs. She helped them learn skills that they couldn't do before like taking control of the zoom sessions.

Words cannot express how much Farah means to her staff and the people supported in the respite and Virtual connections programs



**The Best Birthday!**  
**Celebrating 40**  
**with Family and Friends!**



## Mission Statement in Action



The Giving Tree Family (TGTF) members helped clean up Citizens' Camp Loyaltown in preparation for campers in the summer!

We finally got to visit after 2 years and had a lot of fun helping out! [@camployaltown](https://www.instagram.com/camployaltown)



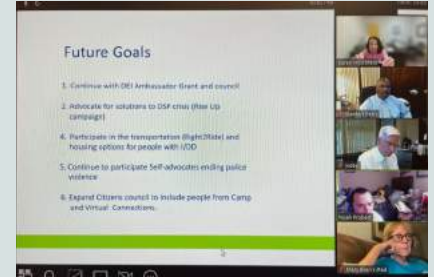
## Council Annual Presentation to the Board of Directors



On August 24, 2022, Noah Probert, a member of the Executive Council, joined the Board of Directors meeting virtually to share the Councils' accomplishments with Citizens Board of Directors. The accomplishments were highlighted in a video.



The annual presentation continues to provide 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. Thank you Noah!



## The Sibling Group Stays Connected



The annual Sibling BBQ was held on September 7, 2022. It was wonderful to be together again in person for the first time since 2019!

In 2022, the Sibling Group met quarterly and more frequently as needed. Sandy Gumerove, President of the AHRC Nassau Board of Directors, joined to discuss current agency endeavors and hear from the siblings.



### 2022 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us!

Sibling Group Virtual Meetings at 5:00pm.

Contact Colleen Tapia at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org) for details on how to connect.

For more information, please call 516-293-2016 extension 5492 or email [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org)

## Board Physical Plant Inspections by Colleen Tapia

The annual Physical Plant Inspection meeting was held virtually in March of 2022.

It was agreed that the Board Inspectors could assume in-person inspection if desired if the site was Covid free. Some Board inspectors have continued with virtual inspections. Whether in-person or virtual, the Compass criterion remains an invaluable tool.

Sue Dowling has coordinated this initiative since it started. Her oversight and management has been nothing short of outstanding. Sue will retire this Fall and be sorely missed by this committee. Thank you Sue for all your professionalism and expertise on this subject.



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

## Commissioner Neifeld Town Hall event



On May 17, 2022 a select few got chosen to attend a town hall event and meet the new Commissioner of OPWDD Kerri Neifeld. It was a great honor to be invited to meet the commissioner.

Coleen Mackin led the event along with Stanford Perry.

There was about 25 more people there which included the East Meadow Art Hub-site whose art was displayed in the Mansion. Richard Infante presented the Commissioner a painting that he made of her.



After the Commissioner spoke, we all had snacks and cold drinks and took pictures with the Commissioner and her staff. It was a pleasure to have her come to our agency and we hope she will visit us again soon.

## Citizens Council by Tessa Guillaume-Lewis

- Rights Training is reviewed at every Council meeting and further explains what rights mean as well as responsibilities related to exercising rights.
- Steven reviews the COMPASS agenda at every Council meeting and provides an update on upcoming events.
- Council members discussed demonstrating staff appreciation and how best to show their appreciation.
- The return of in person meeting and how members are handling the lifting of COVID-19 precautions was discussed as well as a hybrid meeting concept for the people if that feels safer and better on zoom.
- The Council is updating Citizens presence in Plainview with pictures and art.
- The Council hosted a virtual Bingo event along with a bowling event that were very successful
- Council members discussed various fundraiser ideas for possible initiatives in the coming months and year.



## Executive Council

- A weekly Executive Council Zoom meeting continues to be held every Wednesday at 10:00a.m.
- Farrah Paillant-Richardson attended the Council meeting in July to discuss a possible BBQ event for people that would have gone to Camp for Session 2.
- SANYS – OPWDD Feedback session- Coleen gave an update at the SANYS/OPWDD session held in July with the Commissioner of OPWDD.
- The Long Island Regional conference was held July 21<sup>st</sup> and was virtual. Many advocates from our Agency were in attendance.
- Monthly Rights training was completed and included, Dignity of Risk, Complaints and Grievances, Money, Sexuality, Advocacy.
- A list of Pride activities was developed for the month of June so people could celebrate and support each other.
- The Council reviewed the Governor's plain language budget and discussed advocacy opportunities.
- Goals for 2022 were established and are as follows:
  - DEI and Self-Advocacy
  - Advocate for solutions to DSP crisis (Rise Up campaign)
  - Supported Decision Making as a legal option for people with I/DD
  - Transportation (Right2Ride) and housing options for people with I/DD
  - Self-advocates ending police violence
  - Health and Wellness
- Anne Miller attended a council meeting to review trends and held a discussion on recommendations to address.



## On the Road to Self-Direction By Susan Gill Orange

I had a chance the other day to talk with Vicki Hawley, the F.I. Coordinator for Self Directed Services which is part of Citizens Options Inc. I learned how far reaching the service is in helping people supported to achieve the goals and dreams of their lives. I asked Vicki to describe the type of service Citizens offers to people who are seriously following their dreams. She said:

“People who self-direct choose to accept the authority to make decisions over some or all of their supports and services. They take a direct leadership role in managing these supports and services. Our department supports these participants to help them be successful in self-directing their lives. It’s all about having choices. We will guide them and provide the oversight they need or want.”



This process certainly is ambitious and offers exciting opportunities for a journey like no other. I then asked Vicki to share some success stories. Vicki enthusiastically told me about a woman who had always wanted to be a mental health counselor but never thought she could manage to achieve that goal. Yet with the assistance of self-directed services, she now is a Certified Mental health counselor! One of the more challenging situations concerned a young transgendered person of high school age who was finding it almost impossible to link to a network of support. By accessing services through self-direction she now is active in a nurturing community that is sustaining and forward thinking. Other people accessing their services through Self-Direction are finally reaching their fitness goals with the greater flexibility of staffing and availability of regular community access. A very encouraging story concerns a young man with cerebral palsy who longed to be independent. With the backing of self-direction, he was able to move into his own apartment in Rockville Centre where several times a week, he takes the Long Island Railroad to Manhattan. Because he is an artist, he loves to be inspired by the many art museums in the city and even has become a member of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## Personal Outcomes Measures Update By Bridget Cariello

Personal Outcome Measures interviews continued to assist people to attain the outcomes they desire. To date, 300 interviews have been conducted by the three AHRC-Citizens CQL Certified POMs interviewers (two full time and one part time). The number of people supported that were interviewed that have rights restrictions is 49.

In 2022, the POMS Department expanded the University of Personal Growth Series to provide weekly classes on health, safety, money management, choice, artistic expression and so much more! The Personal Outcome trainers/interviewers also continued to provide support to people at their Life Planning meetings as requested. They have also provided meaningful opportunities to celebrate people’s achieved outcomes at the “Show Us Your POMs,” event. This initiative celebrates both staff and people on their personal journey. Empowerment training also continued to be offered for people on various topics: voting, mask wearing, how to make a complaint, what happens if you get sick and social distancing.

In terms of POM data, Agency “supports” remained diligent with many outcomes met in 2022 and/or stable in most of the 21 related areas. There are however, downward trends in the following indicator areas:

**Participate in the community:** the percentage in 2021 was 45% outcomes met and 75% support shown. This declined in 2022 to 30% outcomes met and 40% support shown. This trend is indicative of the shortage of staffing which in turn impacted the availability of supports needed to provide transportation and opportunity into the community. The residual restrictions in a post Covid-19 world may have also factored into this data. Many people have reported the type and frequency of community outings and visits with friends to be less than desired. There is a wish to return to the pre-Covid frequency of these activities.

**People choose where to work:** In 2021, the percentage of outcomes met was nearly 50% and the support shown for the same indicator was slightly over 60%. This same indicator area saw a significant reduction in the first half of 2022 as outcomes met are just slightly over 20% and the support shown is at 25%. This trend is also representative of the statewide staffing crisis. This lack of adequate staffing and the backlash of COVID have impacted People’s opportunities. During the pandemic and its immediate aftermath, many opportunities for work vanished as did existing jobs. Mobility to volunteer and work were greatly affected by the COVID precautions existing then so it made a huge impact on where a person chose to work. While this trend is notable our teams continue to support education, choice and opportunity to engage in social enterprises. This included an increase in education related to day options.

**People choose personal goals** also saw a marked decline in outcome and supports met. In 2021, over 60% of outcomes were met and 60% of supports were shown. However, in 2022, outcomes met had gone to 45% and the supports shown declined to a 30% success rate. This could be the result of staffing and the slowing of community participation. There is a wish to return to the pre-Covid frequency of community activities. Our organization continues to develop interest based opportunities based on a match related system that creates opportunity for people supported, their staff and community organizations that share similar interest to partner on event/experiences. It is our organizational belief that education, experience and exposure supports choice. Thank you to all for supporting people to achieve their personal outcomes!

**People choose where to Live:** In 2021, the outcomes met in this indicator area were at 50% and the supports shown were at 60%. In 2022, these numbers have declined to 37% outcomes met and 40% support shown. Again, the decline could be attributed to the staffing crisis, transportation issues and post Covid-19 related barriers.

## POM Department Rolls Out New Interview Process:

### Meet Evette, Melissa, and Vince By Kate Zimmerman

The Personal Outcome Measures© department began its regular practice of meeting with people who are new to receiving services from our organization. A POM interview serves as an opportunity to introduce people to the POM process, self-advocacy, and person-centered services at its best. The POM interview is the foundation of a person's discovery process. Baseline interviews are completed by one of the organizations CQL certified interviewers within the first 90 days of the person joining the Citizens family. As with all interviews, it is completed at a date, time, and place of the person's choosing.

The POM interview is a vehicle for people to use their voice, inspire self-advocacy with the person receiving services and help their support team discover **what matters most to the person**. The purpose of conducting interviews early is to establish person-centered supports as soon as possible and is identical to the regular POM process. The POM department receives an interview request from Enrollment. The interview request is then assigned to one of the organizations certified CQL interviewers to be completed. The interview is conducted as well as the follow up conversation with staff. Just as with all interviews conducted, the interviewer will then use the CQL decision making process to identify opportunities for growth. Recommendations are made to highlight **what matters most to the person** so it can be brought to their Life Plan meeting and incorporated into their person-centered plan. During their baseline interviews, Evette, Melissa, and Vince became empowered to direct their own lives for the first time.

#### Meet Evette!

Evette is a young woman who is seeking to further her independence, Evette is also blind. During her discovery process, Evette expressed a strong desire to be as independent as possible and was already being supported by staff to learn to navigate her new surroundings by counting the steps she took to get from one location to the next. Evette shared the step counts she had already memorized and which ones she wanted to learn next. Evette advocated for other services she'd like to have and the supports she would like to help her to become more independent. Staff shared that in the short time Evette had been receiving services, she had shown great determination towards establishing what she wants and finding ways to communicate to staff exactly what they could do to assist. Staff shares:

**"As we continue the trainings and experiences she seeks, we see that Evette will be able to live a very independent life".**

*Having experienced the POM interview firsthand, Evette speaks up for what she wants and needs!*

#### Meet Melissa!

During her discovery process, Melissa shared that she would like to be more involved in her community as independently as possible while maintaining her health and safety. Melissa advocated for a wider variety of volunteer options so that she could gain the education, experience, and exposure she needed to make an informed choice about how she would like to spend her time. Some of the opportunities that may be available to Melissa include volunteering at the food pantry, animal shelters, and food shopping for seniors. Melissa recognized the POM interview as an opportunity to make her new support team know exactly what she wants to accomplish. Staff shared:

**"We see that Melissa clearly has the ability to accomplish whatever she sets her mind to. Given time and support, anything is possible."**

#### Meet Vince!

During his POM interview, Vince recognized the opportunity to advocate for himself and seized the day! Vince talked about being interested in space and NASA, learning to budget and spend his own money and exploring a wide variety of opportunities to volunteer and begin to develop relationships in his community. Since joining the organization staff shared that Vince has been very open to new experiences and everyone is excited to see what he is able to accomplish in the future. Staff shares:

**"We discuss what's possible; Vince chooses what works and what doesn't."**

*We are so excited to see Evette, Melissa, and Vince speak up for themselves and look forward to celebrating all their successes!*

The Sharks welcomed the Beautiful Lives Project to Bethpage Federal Credit Union Stadium on October 3, 2022 and the team, along with Noah Probert, (shown below) enjoyed every moment of it. Thank you to Beautiful Lives and the Long Island University football team for an incredible event.

The "Beautiful Lives Project creates immersive events aimed at defeating isolation within the disabled community and sparking deeper conversations about the value of integrating individuals with disabilities into the workforce. The organization works with companies, sports teams, and community organizations to host these custom events to help to defeat isolation today, break down social biases tomorrow, and generate long-term actions that will create a better quality of life for people with disabilities and special needs in the future. We invite people with disabilities of all ages to participate in our free community events. Each unique event provides the opportunity to experience sports, performing arts, visual arts, nature, or wellness in an inclusive environment".



For more information go to:  
[www.beautifullives.org/](http://www.beautifullives.org/)





## SHOW US YOUR POMS! Enjoy the Magic of the Day!

“Show Us Your POMS” is the newest initiative from the AHRC Nassau/Citizens POM Department designed to celebrate peoples amazing accomplishments, both big and small. Each quarter, the department recognizes people supported working towards and achieving their dreams by sharing the person’s story from POM interview to success.

Since success is all about teamwork, the staff members the person identified as avid supporters on their journey are then given the spotlight. The team is recognized for their dedication during each step of the journey.

Honorees are all presented with a certificate and gift in recognition of their hard work. Each “Show Us Your POMS” is hosted by a self-advocate. The first “Show Us Your POMS” aired in March of 2022 and was hosted by Michael Costa.

Eric Ross, Andrew Deely, Donna Nowakoski, Cheryl Cohen, Blossom Cole, Sharita Moore-Wills, Karim Sims, Lisa Moosmueller, Roseann Vaia, Anthony Kinsey, Deb Morrocu, and Megan Seligman were all recognized for their part in making dreams take flight.



## It Was Great to Meet the Commissioner!

Hi All,

This past Tuesday, I had the best time at the Brookville mansion hearing the Commissioner of OPWDD speak about how they are helping us. They are putting a lot more money into the cost of living adjustment (cola) all across the Island. They also are giving staff a big bonus. Which is much deserved. She continued by saying the new Governor is very much involved and it is the first time in a little over a decade that the budget has risen.

After she gave the update and speech I was just about to leave and said to myself..."I only got 1 shot!" I saw she was thirsty and I found my chance!!!! So I asked her if she wanted a drink. Then I said let's walk and talk. After I spoke to her about some of my concerns, I had to go but before that I was lucky enough to speak to her secretary Dixy. I have spoken to her over the phone quite a few times while being on the Board of Directors for SANYS. She told me that she was now able to put a face to the voice she heard over the phone...after laughing for a few. The Commissioner was passing by and I had the pleasure to take a picture with her and Dixy. After that I found the President of the AHRC Board, Sandy, and took a selfie with her!!

I found that this Commissioner is very much involved with the work she does and you have a "good vibe" type of feeling when I was talking to her. I feel that she has our back and has good intentions to help us in our lives and be the best we can be!!

Ever since being apart of AHRC and Citizens I have felt a strong compassion for helping people like me...people with special needs. Over the years, I have become a stronger and stronger advocate for us. I have made it a mission to get what we all deserve....which is to be treated equal! And like everyone else in the world...

WE ARE PEOPLE TOO!!! I hope to meet her again.





## Thank you for being "you," Noah, and an amazing part of our community.

I was born with cerebral palsy. When I was very little, I had to be confined to a wheelchair because it was very difficult to walk. I have certain challenges. I was made fun of when I was younger. I was teased and picked on because of my disability. But cerebral palsy doesn't stop me from being me.

Now I'm a volunteer for many different organizations across Long Island. I was recognized by the Town of Hempstead with the Make A Difference Award in 2014 for what I have done and achieved. I have recently started to advocate for the J-1 visa program, which allows foreign students to come to the U.S. to work with special needs young adults and then go to school to study special ed. I have also worked for the Marty Lyons Foundation, which, like Make-A-Wish, grants wishes to special children. I have to make sure that when the child comes to New York, everything is in place for their wish and stay. As a Make-A-Wish alumnus, I see the importance in helping others.

This past year, I raised over \$6,000 for the AHRC Foundation at their annual walkathon. It made me feel very special and proud that I accomplished that goal because it was not easy to do. The walkathon was one of my proudest moments because I didn't even know I raised that much money until that morning. Everybody congratulated me, and it was just such a great moment!

I'm also big into sports. I play baseball with the League of Yes. It's a special needs league for kids with disabilities. I play wheelchair lacrosse for Garden City. It's a challenger division because everyone has special needs. I do a lacrosse tournament every summer in Massapequa called Shootout for Soldiers, and I'm the only one in a wheelchair that plays in that game. Everyone else walks. So, to me it's very special. I want everyone to know that people with special needs, especially the ones who use a wheelchair like me, need to be heard.

We must all learn and become aware of people's needs and treat everyone equally and with respect. I think that it's very important that everybody understands my story. Never let a disability get you down. You can do anything you set your mind to. Nothing will stop me, not even a wheelchair."



## Virtual Connections Stride

By Noah Probert and Michelle Rudoff and the Virtual Connections program

During the winter session of Virtual Connections Noah Probert came up with the idea to bring Diversity Equity and Inclusion to Virtual Connections and came up with the name Stride because we at Virtual Connections strive for Diversity Equity and Inclusion. We at virtual connections look out not just for each other but we also look out for the staff as well.

Our recent project with Stride is learning and researching what other countries are doing for Diversity Equity and Inclusion.

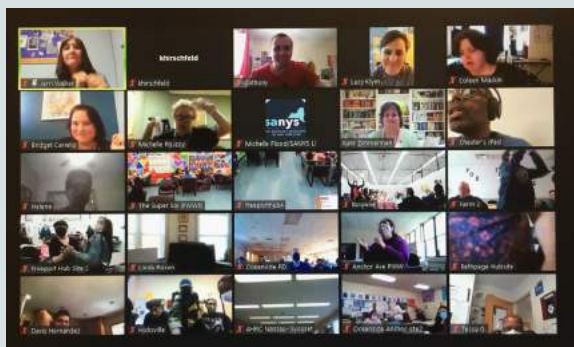




## 2022! It's All About You! POM Rally 2022 By Susan Gill Orange

The official motto for this year has been 2022! It's All About You!! This was our anthem as we held our Second Annual POM Rally Day on May 11, 2022. This virtual event was just what was needed to get everyone in gear for a year full of creative fun and new directions.

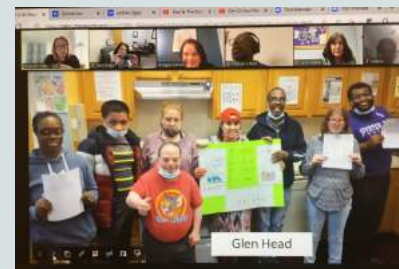
The rally began with our keynote speaker, Executive Director Stanford Perry, introducing the mission and the importance of the Personal Outcome Measures process as it relates to our dedication to person centered planning. He emphasized that with the focus on meeting the outcomes on some very specific indicator areas, we, as an organization, are in a position to provide the most effective supports possible. The rally then featured four people, Eric Ross, Donna Nowakoski, Andrew Deely and Cheryl Cohen, who personally shared their stories, through video discussion and photographs, of how their personal goals were met beginning with the personal outcome measures process. We called this segment "Show Us Your POMS" and it was so popular that it has become a regular department feature. What was so impressive about it was the way it showed how powerful the personal outcome interview process can be. Because of the methodology behind what matters most to people receiving services, a plan of action can be developed dedicated to achieving desired outcomes.



Our rally was fortunate to include our friends, Elizabeth Sites and Lucy Klym from the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) who provided an opportunity for viewers to share how they fill valued social roles in life. To highlight this presentation, people had sent posters and photographs supporting the dreams they each have. We also were happy to have the participation of Marisol Getchius and Michelle Flood of SANYS (Self Advocacy New York State) who talked about the importance of advocacy in the private and political sphere.

The POM Rally contained some of the most important pathways we are supporting people on their journey to realize dreams but it also had quite an infusion of entertainment. Chester Finn, NYS Disability Rights advocate and Special Assistant to OPWDD (Office for People with Developmental Disabilities) showed his musical talents by performing for us on the keyboard. And of course a rally is always more exciting with a "dance out" as viewers enjoyed music by DJ Justin who gave us a dynamic interlude.

The POM Rally of 2022 was a successful, fun and informative presentation of what the personal outcome interview can achieve for people we support. It was a terrific way our organization was able to declare that we had emerged from two years of pandemic urgencies into a new journey filled with hope, light and limitless possibilities.



## Staff Recruitment and Retention: Kathleen Graham

We love to show our employees how much they are valued and appreciated. The following initiatives were implemented over the last quarter to show our staff how important they are to the organization:

- We were excited to hold a virtual celebration to honor the Employees of the 2nd Quarter of 2022, recognizing 14 employees across all companies, of which 4 are employed by Citizens. The honorees, management teams and invited staff all enjoyed a delicious meal prepared by Wheatley Farms Catering. The honorees were also provided a framed certificate and \$100 deposited to their account to commemorate the event. Be on the lookout for our nomination form in the coming weeks. Please take the time out of your busy day to distinguish one of your well deserving colleagues!
- Our Diversity Committee held several events including three DEI conversation hours. During the month of July, the DEI committee sponsored ice cream socials and a July 4th trivia quiz, 5 winners received gift cards for having all the correct answers. The DEI August topic was "Getting to Know You", as we feel that getting to know one another is part of developing a strong and inclusive cultural work experience.
- The Citizens employee handbook was updated & available on June 1<sup>st</sup>. The changes to the handbook and a complete Citizens Employee Handbook can be viewed on Ulti-Pro on the Home screen under the Citizens Communications and Manuals (on the right-hand side of your screen).
- Hopefully you joined us for our 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Staff Appreciation Day which was held on Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, at the Brookville Mansion Campus. It was a fun and wonderful day!
- Unfortunately, due to Covid, we were unable to formally recognize employees with momentous anniversaries. We can't wait to show our appreciation to these valued employees.
- An Employee Open Forum was held in June. The next open forum will be held in the Winter 2023, get ready to share your views.



## Happy Campers Team!



On National Walking Day we celebrated with a Shout Out to the Happy Campers team!

After meeting virtually for over a year and a half, the Happy Campers were finally able to see each other in person at the 2021 AHRC Walk.

Check out those smiling faces! The Happy Campers took home awards for the Largest Team and #2 Fundraising Team!

You can join us on October 16th for the 2022 #AHRCWalk by registering at [ahrcwalk.org](https://ahrcwalk.org)



Check it out the last week, our Virtual Connections crew Celebrate Saint Patrick's Day in their finest green attire with trivia, games and a virtual dance party! Fun! 🍀 🌈



Great to re-connect and see all the opportunities ahead for Wheatley Farms & Arts Center. Check out images of Savita, Michele and Paul of Citizens Options Unlimited at the opening ceremony as well as Noah (center), Savita and Paul taking a moment to catch up.



Direct Support Professional appreciation week may have come to a close, but we will strive to show our appreciation & gratitude to our dedicated DSPs every day for their continuous efforts in making the lives of the people we support rich with opportunity, quality supports and services.





On May 2, 2022 Camp Loyaltown and Respite/Recreation staff spent some time at Shoreham ICF doing various crafts such as tie dying, making flowers and making bookmarks . Everyone had a great day with music and laughter!



## Come Experience the Beautiful Sensory Garden and Trails At Shoreham ICF!



## Citizens Options Unlimited & Long Island University's Center for Community Inclusion Events Come Join the Fun! By Paul MacMillan

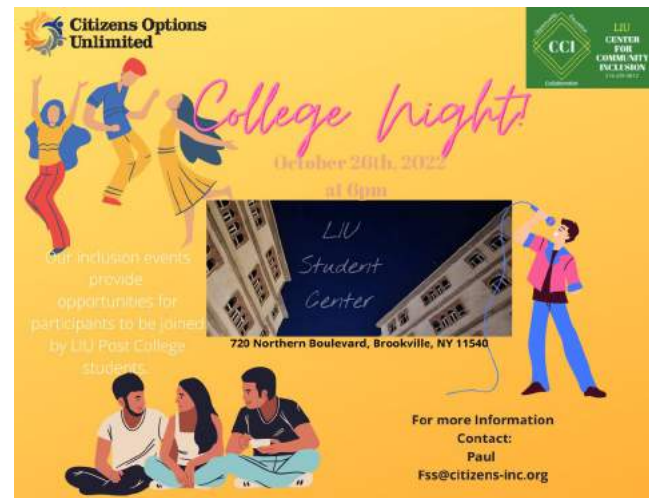
Citizens Options Unlimited and Long Island University's Center for Community Inclusion has organized three upcoming integrated, inclusive events that we hope you can join.

- September 28<sup>th</sup> at 6pm. Sip and Paint .
- October 26<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, College Night at Long Island University's Student Center. A night of socializing, games etc.
- November 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm, Dinner at 6:30 at the campuses Hillwood Commons. Then over to the Tilles Center to see Cirqua Musica Holiday Wonderland.

Please see the flyers for more details.

These events are all the result of Citizens new partnership with LIU Post's Center for Community Inclusion. The Center for Community Inclusion (CCI) provides multi-faceted assistance and enrichment through a variety of resources, services, events, programs, seminars, and workshops. With this collaboration, Citizens will establish a partnership with CCI to assist people to achieve their personal outcomes as well as educate people from all over Nassau County to learn about Citizens. A graduate student is also part of this collaboration and will host other events, as well as have LIU students attend some of Citizens events and have other colleges, universities and High Schools involved as well.

Come join the fun! We hope to see you there!





## EMPOWERMENT TRAININGS

**For information or registration:**

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

### **TOPICS FOR 2022**

- **SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING—COMPLETED**
- **HOW TO MAKE A COMPLAINT—COMPLETED**
- **FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE SERIES—COMPLETED**

**COMING SOON—REP PAYEE - INFORMED CONSENT AND DUE PROCESS PLEASE CONTACT COLLEEN TAPIA AT [CTAPIA@AHRC.ORG](mailto:CTAPIA@AHRC.ORG) FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

- **DEI TRAINING SERIES—ONGOING**

**EMPOWERING YOU IS AN ONGOING SERIES OFFERED THROUGH FULL DAY FRIDAY VIRTUAL SERVICES.**

**AND IT IS FACILITATED BY SUSAN GILL, POM TRAINER/INTERVIEWER. PLEASE CONTACT SUSAN LIMITI OR JUSTINE LITRAS AT (516)-293-1111 FOR INFORMATION ON HOW TO JOIN.**

## Empowerment Training

There are several opportunities for empowerment training including a weekly training offered through virtual day services which include various topics. At least quarterly, an empowerment training is offered, primarily virtual this past year. Topics have included, Respectful Interactions—DEI, Technology training and On-line Etiquette. Several trainings have been offered during Council meetings such as “Understanding the Covid-19 Virus, Safety and Vaccines.” A larger amount of people have enjoyed the Empowerment training due to the transportation barrier not being present with on-line offerings. Such training will continue to be offered virtually in 2022.

A Rep Payee: Informed Consent will also begin in November—Stay tuned!

### **For More Information on Family Seminars**

**For information or registration:**

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

**Visit [AHRC.org](http://AHRC.org)**

## 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**

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Completed**

**Presented by:**

**Colleen Tapia, QI Administrator**

**Bridget Cariello, Day Service Administrator**

**Pam Boyle, MS/Socialization and Sexuality Specialist**

**Join us for discussions on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion within our AHRC Nassau and Citizens Options Unlimited communities.**

**Virtual Technologies and Platforms**

**TBA**

**Presented by:**

**Bridget Cariello, Day Service Administrator**

**Join us to gain a working knowledge of new virtual technologies and platforms. We'll discuss some of the ways you can use these tools to connect with others, develop your network and more!**

**Guardianship, Wills and Trusts**

**TBA**

**For information or registration,**

**please visit our website at [AHRC.org](http://AHRC.org)**

**or email [lfanuzzi@ahrc.org](mailto:lfanuzzi@ahrc.org) or**

**Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5492**

## Citizens Respite

**For more information please contact [Respite@citizens-inc.org](mailto:Respite@citizens-inc.org)**

2022 offered families the opportunity to attend seminars such as Respectful Interactions and DEI virtually. The seminars remained vital and helped to make the information accessible to more families. A Technology Seminar is also planned based on our DDPC grant, and will be led by Bridget Cariello. The training department will also plan a seminar on Guardianship, Wills, and Trust. For more information, please contact Leigh Fanuzzi at [lfanuzzi@ahrc.org](mailto:lfanuzzi@ahrc.org).



## The Compass Committee & The Quality Enhancement Process

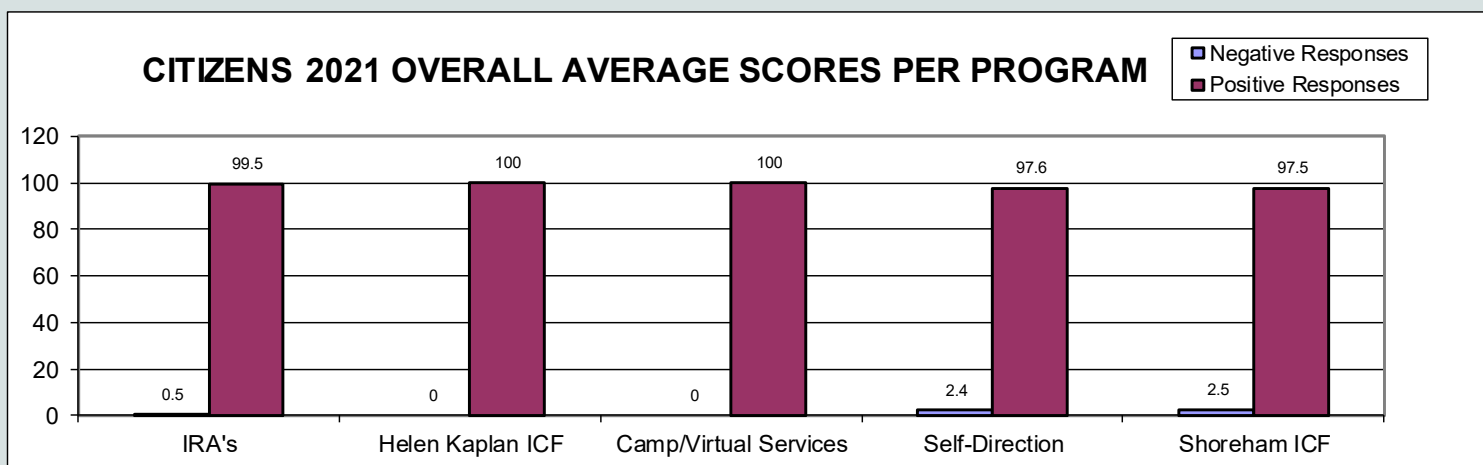
The Compass Committee continued to meet virtually each month. A quality enhancement review of a CQL Factor is completed at each meeting, as well as a review of Compass management plan items. The fall means we begin the process of review of our mission statement and management plan. Our Compass status means that the plan is evolving and committed to continuous quality improvement.

As always, at our core, quality remains defined by the people supported by the agency. It is the driving principle and goal for the Compass Committee. In May, we welcomed our colleagues from OPWDD to review our Compass systems and practices and were validated.



In August, CQL four year accreditation occurred with the agency achieving the highest level, that of Person Centered Excellence with Distinction. This means the bar on quality is once again raised and we will rise further to this challenge. We invite all interested to join in this endeavor. It takes all stakeholders to make quality happen and the agency to thrive. If you would like to participate at a Compass meeting, please email us at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org).

## Individual Questionnaire Results 2021



Citizens provided people who receive services with a questionnaire to obtain their individual feedback regarding program services. An agency wide trend is noted if more than ten percent of those surveyed identified a concern to a particular question. Individual advocates assisted people who requested or required support completing the questionnaire. No agency wide trends were identified. The results across programs were excellent, with each program scoring 97.4 percent and/or above. An agency wide score of 98.9% satisfaction was reported. This is consistent with previous years. A trend is noted when a score is below 90%. Program trends are noted at the Shoreham ICF:

- **Are you given options as to where you live and with whom you live (i.e. apartment, another house, own apartment)?** (47.5% answered no)
- **Do you feel a part of the community if so desired?** (13.6% answered no)

Corrective action for the above trends is taken by the program and the corrective action form is maintained on site for review during self-survey.

Camp Loyaltown did not offer in person services during 2020 and 2021. During the past two years, camp offered virtual services for people which was very well received. Only one person from virtual services completed the questionnaire and reported 100% satisfaction.

Program follow-up is completed for all individual comments requiring follow-up/or question that were answered "no" with individual corrective action maintained on site.



## ***Camp Loyaltown reopens after 2 years***

By Michelle Rudoff

Sadly, due to the pandemic counselors and campers couldn't be at their home away from home and Camp Loyaltown had to be virtual for the past 2 summers with just 3 counselors on camp sleeping in the health center running virtual camp.



In 2020 we had Simone Lewis, Dahlia Cole, and Paloma Contreras

Paloma returned in 2021 this time she had Maria Tejeda and Joseph Codlin joining her in the health Center and with virtual camp.

Well for the first time in 2 years Camp Loyaltown reopens for counselors and campers to enjoy a fun exciting summer at their home away from home.



There are a few familiar returning counselors who I am sure the campers are going to be excited to see along with some new international friends that are waiting to meet them.

Counselors and Campers can't wait to finally see each other and enjoy their home away from home their very special place for the first time in 2 years. For counselors and campers Camp Loyaltown isn't just a camp but it is our home away from home where you leave with happy memories and lifelong friendships.

Now thanks to Zoom we can set up cabin reunions and stay connected and see each other all year long instead of just seeing each other for only 2 weeks.



## **Regulatory Affairs** by Eric Rosen

During the timeframe between March 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 and September 30<sup>th</sup> 2022; twelve (12) site-based surveys were completed (all small IRAs). A version of OPWDD's site-based protocol continued to be utilized for these site-based surveys. In addition, person-centered reviews were completed for a sample of people receiving services from Citizens Options Unlimited, Inc.

Good practices noted during these reviews include staff encouraging independence, observed supportive & respectful interaction, nicely decorated houses including bedrooms and overall satisfaction.



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**New York, 11545**

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