

# Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Semi-Annual Report

## Advocacy in Action!

A huge shout out to Citizens' Self-Advocate Matthew Hofele for attending the March Staffing Crisis Impact Forum and Rally at the Albany Capitol. Hundreds of advocates from across New York State filled the Legislative Office Building for this statewide rally.



Coalitions and nonprofits rallied together to urge lawmakers to demand Governor Kathy Hochul includes an 8.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) for direct support professionals in the 2023-2024 Executive Budget.

Thank you to Senator John W. Mannion and Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright for sponsoring and New York Disability Advocates for hosting the event.

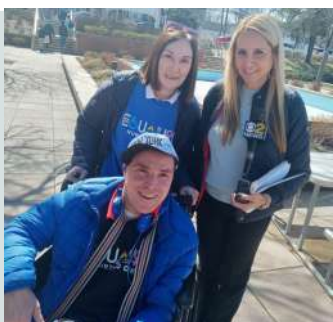
Thank you Matt for stepping up and advocating for this critical need!



On March 22, 2023 self-advocate Noah Probert rallied outside Town of Hempstead calling on New York legislators to support increased wages for DSPs be included in Governor Kathy Hochul 2023-2024 Executive Budget.

Noah was interviewed by CBS 2 News which was shown on the evening news. To read more about this rally and see Noah on CBS2 news go to: <https://www.cbsnews.com/.../families-of-developmentally.../>

We're happy to see so many people in the community come out to support this needed 8.5% COLA addition to the budget. Way to go Noah!



Self-advocates, in action at the rally at the Town of Hempstead calling out for increased state funding services and staffing.

## Mission Statement & Management Plan Annual Review

Each year, Citizens reviews the agency's Mission Statement and Compass Management Plan. It begins with the Council and Compass committee reviews in the fall. Recommendations are forwarded to the agency Board of Directors for their annual review in March. The Board of Directors are in agreement with the Council and Compass Committee that there are no recommended changes to the Mission Statement. The recommended updates to the Compass Management Plan were approved and are shown below.

Please contact us at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org) if you haven't received the new poster (shown on the right) for your office or site.

Vision Statement  
A world where all people  
are valued.



### SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN CHANGES:

- A. Council Recommendations: None at this time.
- B. COMPASS Committee Recommendations are shown below:

#### ***All Criterion:***

Update document to include administrative title changes.

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

Continue: Board of Directors hybrid approach (remote or in-person) to physical plant inspections given success of both methods.  
Continue: To assess and possibly add a second advocate as a board member.

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

No recommended changes.

#### ***Criterion #3 – Empowerment:***

Add: DEI Council and Ambassadors.

Add: Decision making supports and alternatives are provided to people as deemed necessary.

Add: A Personal Outcome Measures Rally is held each year to share successes and celebrate achievements.

#### ***Criterion #5 – Self-Survey:***

Pending: Continue to assess possible changes to self-survey to include OPWDD Risk Stratified Survey Process. Upon receipt of system and protocols, Regulatory Affairs will assess and obtain all stakeholders input regarding possible changes to the self-survey process.

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

Continue: To assess and possibly revise Personal Outcome Measures Quality Reviews to strengthen support of each person's desired personal outcomes.

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



## Mission Statement in Action

### We celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day



A special thanks to all who marched and participated in 39th Annual Commemorative Program honoring the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Sponsored by The City of Glen Cove and Glen Cove City School District, this event remains one of the nation's longest running, continuous celebrations of Dr. King's legacy.

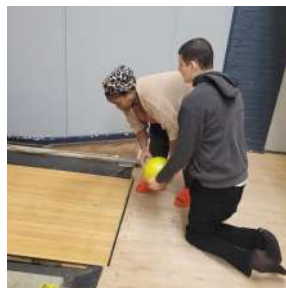
The program began as a march through the town of Glen Cove which led to a lovely program featuring music, dance and readings. Self-Advocate, Matt Hofele spoke about inclusive volunteering and addressing food insecurity. There were over 250 people in the audience



What an outstanding celebration! From left to right are pictured: Master of Ceremony, Glen Cove High School Principal, Allen Hudson III, Councilwoman Marsha Silverman, Matt Hofele, Mistress of Ceremony Sheryl Goodine, and AHRC Nassau's CEO, Stanford Perry. #MLKDay2023 #MLKDay #mlkinspiration

### So Happy to be Bowling and Dancing

Living the life you choose can sometimes include, you guessed it, bowling! Not being able to roll 'em during the pandemic made it that much sweeter to be back in the game. Nicholas, Charles, John, Gordon, Michael, & Alexander of the Kirkland Residence enjoy going to Larkfield Lanes in East Northport. Meanwhile, Noah has been busy getting people up and dancing at Brookville each Friday—now that the dance party is an in-person weekly event.



## Mission Statement in Action



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: NYLE MOHAN

Nyle Mohan began working at Camp Loyaltown in 2016, traveling from Ireland to New York to work as a cabin counselor for the summer. His positive experience inspired him to return each year, eventually becoming a music teacher at camp and taking the lead in teaching Performing Arts sessions for the Virtual Connections sessions this year.

During his experience volunteering with Virtual Connections, Nyle shared, "Now more than ever, I am motivated to ensure that campers feel supported and engaged in the virtual programming we provide."



## Council Annual Presentation to the Board of Directors

Annual board of directors Compass training was completed on March 15, 2023 by Susan Gill Orange CQL certified POM Trainer and Bridget Cariello, Assistant Director of Project Development on Natural Supports and the Value of Social Roles.

The duo developed a presentation that stressed the importance and value of a natural support network and accompanying social roles. The main theme of the discussion was the interconnectedness of natural support systems with the establishment of crucial social roles. This was demonstrated by the linking of natural supports, i.e., family, friends, with the introduction and instruction of the types of expected behavior that is culturally established for any given social role in the community. The point is that the more familiar a person is with what is expected of them in the world at large, the easier it will be for them to acquire the kind of social capital that affords people with disabilities a place at the table so to speak. Understanding the meaning of social roles and the expectations within them is the way human beings create the social capital needed to navigate through life.



The importance of emphasizing the need to promote the retention of natural supports and the creation of social roles is a vital part of the lives of people we support. We hope we have accomplished this in a productive and interesting way.

## The Sibling Group Stays Connected

In 2023, the Sibling Group plans to meet quarterly and more frequently as needed. We look forward to discussing advocacy, agency endeavors and hear from siblings!



### 2023 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us!

- 5/25/23 – Sibling BBQ -In Person- Brookville 6pm-8pm
- 9/28/23 - Meeting 5pm-6:30pm –Location TBD
- 12/14/23 – Holiday party – In Person – Brookville 6pm-8pm

Sibling Group Meetings are held in-person or virtually at 5pm.  
Please contact Colleen Tapia at [ctapia@ahrc.org](mailto:ctapia@ahrc.org)



## Board Physical Plant Inspections by Colleen Tapia

The annual Physical Plant Inspections meeting was held virtually on February 16, 2023.

The total number of completed inspections in 2022 increased slightly from 2021. Inspections were suspended for a substantial amount of time, impacted by the presence of COVID-19 among our staff and people supported. Of the inspections completed, there were no egregious safety and health issues noted.

The committee agreed that a hybrid approach to inspections (virtual and in person) will remain in place going forward as both types of inspections have been highly beneficial and effective. Whether in-person or virtual, the Compass criterion remains an invaluable tool.



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

## Matt Advocates and Speaks at Albany Rally

Good afternoon, my name is Matt Hofele. I'd like to share a little bit about myself. One of the things I like to do is help people in need. I do that in many ways. One of them is by volunteering. I also like to knit, crochet, and donate to various charities along with going to concerts, plays and more. I like to keep busy just like many other people in the world.

I am a self-advocate and former SANYS Statewide Board Member. Speaking up for my needs and the needs of others is an important part of who I am. When I was 11 I had an accident that caused a traumatic brain injury. Today I need the support of my staff to accompany me to do these various activities, essentially wherever I want and need to go. My medical challenges impact my daily living without my staff I would be living a more restricted life, even at home.

My challenges are not unique, what I mean by that is many other people supported all across this state need their staff too. One colleague shared how on Christmas Day he was unable to leave his bed because he had no staff. His neighbors had to come help him complete his simple bodily functions like eating, washing and using the rest room to get through the day. Why is this happening you ask? Lack of staffing.

The staffing crisis affects us all, staff, people supported and even families. Policymakers need to value our lives as People receiving services as much as their own by making a livable wage for our staff. Since the pandemic disability providers have struggled to hire and maintain staff causing the worst staffing crisis in human service history.

Our staff are taking care of us, and do so much yet get paid so little, for example the price of food, fuel, rent is so high. Sometimes they are doing tasks that are similar to a nurse, a secretary or even a teacher combined! They do one, if not the most important jobs in the world. They take care of people's lives. Yet do not get recognized for it.

Help policymakers value our humanity, and care for us as much as our staff do. Please help me ask the governor to raise the pay for our staff and make it livable wage. Please raise the cost of living adjustment or cola to 8.5 or higher. Please help me to speak up myself and others by letting our voice be heard, vote yes to the cola. Keep people with disabilities safe and living a life just like you by supporting those who support us. Our staff. Things are getting pricy madam governor. We need your help. Vote yes for staff increases.



## Citizens Council by Tessa Guillaume-Lewis

The Citizens residential council is looking forward to this New Year. Starting in March the council will resume meeting in person at which time a new council board will be voted into office.

The members are also looking forward to voting on their council representative and liaison. At our last meeting the council discussed their goals and dreams for the new council and ways to improve attendance and participation by all its members. The members believe that having hybrid meetings, is one way of increasing the membership. A hot topic in most meetings are ways to volunteer in the community and ways of helping their staff earn a livable wage. Fundraising and knowing their rights are also spirited topics of discussion.

The council is looking forward to new faces and a revamped agenda and policies for 2023.

### Open remarks

- Self-Survey in May
- Improvements and New Board for 2023
- Review of last meeting
- Individual Questionnaire
- Review of POM
- Supported Decision Making: do you feel heard or is your decisions and feelings being taken into account when issues affect your life.
- Wants to know about fundraiser and when we can do things in person again. Having a hybrid meeting
- Increasing membership and participation

### Open discussion

- Helping more in the community
- Helping our staff get more money

## Executive Council



- A weekly Executive Council Zoom meeting continues to be held every Wednesday at 10:00a.m.
- Stanford Perry attended in September to engage the council in a Q&A.
- Pam Boyle provides council members with weekly inspirations, positive affirmations and healthy coping concepts
- Michelle Rudoff provides weekly Health and Wellness tips
- Savita Sharma came to the Council and spoke about 2022 camp and to request ideas for summer 2023
- Voter training was completed in September and October and “people making a “Voting Plan”
- Michelle and Coleen started planning bake sales to raise money for tablets for advocates so they can get connected with the councils and other events
- Anthony Rossi shares weekly community events with the council
- Coleen Mackin and Michelle Rudoff shared the DEI guide developed by the DEI council at the Compass state providers meeting
- Paul MacMillan came to the council and spoke about events happening with the Recreation Services
- Chris Williams came to the council meeting and took questions about staffing and news from day services.

## Personal Outcomes Measures Update By Bridget Cariello

Personal Outcome Measures (POM) interviews continue to assist people to improve their quality of life by identifying what outcomes are most important to each person. In 2022, 242 interviews were conducted by CQL Certified POMs interviewers. In 2022, the POM Department also 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 person growth and independence for the people supported. The new “Show Us Your POMs,” initiative continued to celebrate both staff and people supported on their personal journey. These opportunities aide people in expanding expressions of their own personal goals, plans and dreams for their lives. Empowerment training is now offered virtually every Friday by the POM Department to people receiving supports on various topics. While our supports remained diligent, and many outcomes were met in 2022, our data remained stable in most of the 21 related areas. There are however, downward trends in the following indicator areas:

Participate in the community: Declined in 2022 to 30% outcomes and 40% support met. This appears 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. People have expressed a wish to return to the pre-Covid frequency of these activities.

People choose where to work: This same indicator saw a significant reduction in the first half of 2022 as outcomes met are 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 efforts 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 2022, outcomes met decreased to 45% and the supports declined to a 30% success rate. This also 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 engagement. Our organization continues to develop interest based opportunities as 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.

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.

Looking ahead in 2023 POMS Rally, Empowering You Classes, “Show Us Your POMs,” Personal Discovery Event to increase people awareness of choice and the personal planning process, Life Model Meeting, and UPG. All of these initiatives will take place in 2023 to expand everyone's knowledge and exposure to the vital importance of the CQL's 21 Personal Outcome Measures. Together we will continue supporting people to live their own best lives, their own way!



## The POMs Department Presents “Show Us Your POMs” by Kate Zimmerman

Show Us Your POMs®” highlights real people’s stories of success and, how the POM Department takes the information gathered during a Personal Outcome Measures® interview and uses it to inspire personal outcomes from POM® to plan. Throughout the year, stories of people achieving their outcomes are submitted to the POM® Department by people supported and staff. Whether successes are great or small working towards a goal is just as important as achieving it. This fall, the awards ceremony was hosted by Self-Advocate of the Year Noah Probert, and Robert Behrendt, Tammy Vallancourt, Tina Rodriguez, Noah Ackereizen, and Louis Dorsainvil.

### The Honorees - Fall / Winter2022

During his POM interview Robert Behrendt shared he would like to get together with his family. This summer he attended a wedding where he spent the day celebrating and reconnecting with family!

Tammy Vallancourt, the house manager at Ontario Ave said “Robert was so happy to receive an invitation to his cousin's wedding. We took Robert shopping for a completely new suit which he was very excited about and could not wait to wear. Robert and I went to the card store where he picked out the perfect card and gave them money as a gift. Staff took Robert to his family's home so that he could go with them to the wedding.... Robert truly loved being with his family and watching his first cousin get married!”



Tina Rodriguez, the site manager at the Bethpage Hub site said “When Robert came back to work after the wedding, he was excited to share pictures and tell everyone about the day. We made sure Robert had the opportunity to share his excitement with everyone he wished.”

When Noah Ackereizen shared his dreams during a personal outcome interview, it was clear that he was looking forward to learning how to cook. Noah did not simply want to throw together a peanut butter and jelly sandwich but was hoping to really be able to make healthy and tasty recipes for himself and for his housemates.

Noah is eager to learn new recipes but that the next phase of his cooking lessons is learning about the equipment he would need to cook and learn how to make a whole pan of buttermilk biscuits by himself. Louis Dorsainvil, long term employee at Citizens, also enjoys cooking and is helping Noah become familiar with the culinary Arts. Louis has familiarized Noah with the way an oven works and has assisted Noah to use the outdoor grill which is something Noah really enjoys.

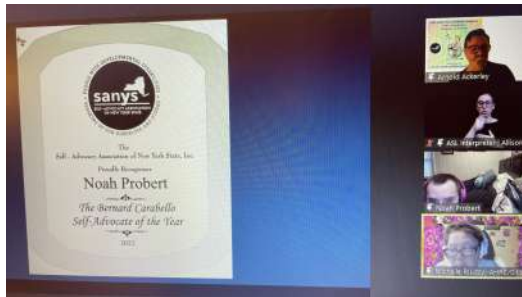
To nominate a staff member who has helped you achieve your dream, we want to hear all about it! Send us your story, with photos to Kate at [KZimmerman@ahrc.org](mailto:KZimmerman@ahrc.org), Susan Gill-Orange at [SGill@ahrc.org](mailto:SGill@ahrc.org), or Bridget Cariello at [BCariello@ahrc.org](mailto:BCariello@ahrc.org).



## Noah Probert Receives Dual Honors

### Self Advocate of the Year Award from SANYS and Citizens Inc.!

Noah received Citizens “Advocate of the Year” award at organization’s annual Rights Rally in October and then received the “Advocate of the Year” award at the statewide SANYS conference on December 3, 2022. **Outstanding!**



## Annual Rights Rally



On October 26, 2022 the annual Rights Rally was held in person for the first time since the pandemic. The event was an open house with various advocacy councils and departments hosting a rights table. Over 130 people attended. People talked about and received information on the Right to Socialize, Choices, Voting, All Rights, Privacy and many others. Opening the event was AHRC Nassau’s Chief Executive Officer, Stanford Perry. There was also an “Ask the Exec” table. Welcome back all! It was wonderful to reconnect in-person!



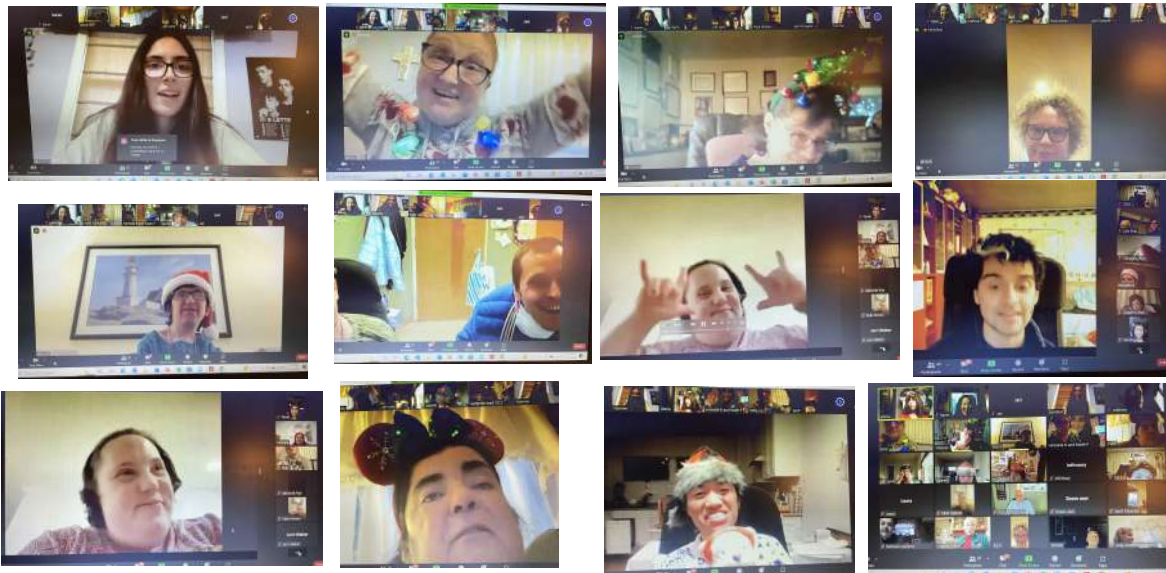
## Person Centered Virtual Connections Music 3 years later.

By Michelle Rudoff

When the Virtual Connections program first started almost 3 years ago the people supported by the program needed guidance from the music director and host when it came to running the session and putting on concerts. The host and musical director did basically everything from routines telling everyone when it was time to do their solos and playing the music. We couldn't even sing our songs without looking at the lyrics on the screen.

Now, with Virtual connections getting ready to celebrate 3 years of existence, the people supported by virtual connections are basically running the program on their own. Michelle Rudoff and Kelly Kildare assist with the introductions and putting together for the group songs and putting routines together for the group songs. They lead the way, getting everyone up and moving! We have come so far that now the host just opens up the room and lets us do our thing! Sometimes when the host has tech issues or hosts from Plainview, Michelle shares her sound and does the music.

### Virtual Connections Holiday Spectacular Was held on December 21, 2022 We hope you were able to join and enjoy the show!



### Virtual Connections by Summer Sherrard

There have been a lot of fun, exciting, and new things on Virtual Connections. As Activity Leader for Virtual Connections, I, along with everyone who joins, enjoys such a great time together!



We decided to begin doing some “acting classes” while on Virtual. I found many scripts for us to read during the session, we all had a part or two, and all got into our characters! The last one we did was Annie—but we didn’t quite finish. I know that we all want to continue right from where we left off !

We have also been doing a fun activity during Affirmations and Meditation. We each write out our name and write down something positive about ourselves using those letters! For example: for S, I can be Studious, U can be Unique, M can be Motivated, and so on. They were all getting into the activity and helping each other come up with words. One last thing we did recently that was exciting was getting more active on Zoom! We recently did yoga which was nice because we were able to get out of our seats, stretch, relax, etc.

Everyone has been so excited with all of the activities recently, but nothing can beat their excitement for the Spring Showcase! Everyone has been working so hard on it for months and looking forward to performing for everybody! The date of the showcase is TBD, but no matter when it is, it is going to be amazing! Be sure to look for the date for the Showcase!

Congratulations to Theresa Pandullo, a cook at Shoreham ICF, for winning the Certificate of Heroism!

Last night, Citizens Options Unlimited co-hosted a Hero Recognition Dinner, catered by @WheatleyFarmsli, to award staff for their life saving efforts this past year. The honorees received a Certificate of Heroism, a gift bag courtesy of WheatleyFarms LI, and a merit award that will show in their next paycheck.

Thank you to each of the Everyday Heroes that make up our organization.



## Virtual Connections Welcome Back Summer by Michelle Rudoff

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022, felt like Christmas day for the Virtual Connections program because after about a month of asking when Summer is coming back when is Summer come back after Summer left Camp Loyaltown and Virtual to returned to college. Summer Sherrard returned to the virtual program as the new musical director. The smiles on all the faces spoke for themselves in how happy everyone was to have Summer back on Virtual Connections. Summer also had the biggest smile on her face herself.

From the first moment we interviewed Summer there was an instant bond with her and the virtual connections crew we welcomed her as part of our Virtual Connections family with opened arms when she joined Virtual Connections as part of the Camp team and immediately thought of her as one of our sisters. Every time we are on Zoom with Summer, we have tons of fun and laughs, and we love her more each day and the smile doesn't leave our faces. All we talk about when we see people including her dad Patrick is how much we love Summer and how amazing Summer is and how much fun we have with Summer on Virtual programming Summer Sherrard totally fills our lives with lots of joy and happiness. Summer is truly an angel sent to the Virtual Connections program. We love you, Summer.

## Staff Recruitment and Retention by Jim Stock

The labor market continues to provide many challenges with recruiting talent for our DSP roles. The Talent Acquisition Team (TAT) continues to encounter many non-driver candidates as well as candidates with previous unlawful infractions that require a safety assessment. We thank the programs for their flexibility in reviewing staffing patterns on a case-by-case basis to accommodate non drivers. The TAT candidate pool continues to be sourced from Indeed, social media posts, new hires and we have seen a slight uptick in employee referrals. We continue to see a trend of no show/calls for orientation however there has been a slight decrease in this trend. The TAT continue to send out welcome reminder text messages leading up to the first day of orientation. In December we added a message about "lunch on us" to entice new hires to show for day one after a long holiday weekend. The TAT provided a pizza lunch to new hires on their first day and this was well received by the new hires.

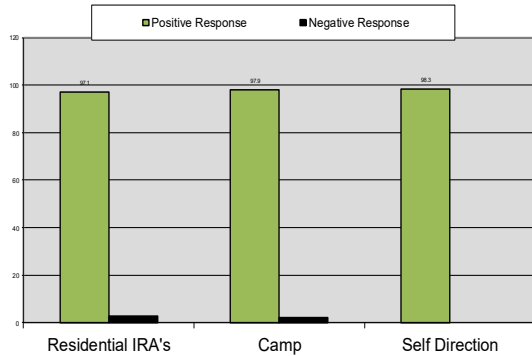
The TAT worked hard to fill positions to successfully open the Medford home. Our focus has now shifted to staffing the new Bay Shore home. Sr. Talent Acquisition Specialist, Mandi Morrone will be overseeing all recruiting efforts for Bay Shore. In the beginning of March, Mandi held a Saturday open house at the American Legion Hall in Bayshore and will be hosting another event for east end homes at the VFW Post 2913 in Patchogue. This event will focus on Medford, Shoreham and Lake Grove and for DSPs, LPNs, and RNs.

In partnership with the Learning & Professional Development team, we have developed a new, revised "Employee Perks Guide for our valued employees. This book contains over 25 discounts on appliances, furniture, gym memberships, adventure parks, cell phones, tech supplies and much more! Additionally, the TAT spent the month of February visiting local food establishments in the Plainview area. We are proud to report that 9 local food establishments will now be offering all employees a minimum of a 10% discount off their food order. This is a great perk to offer new hires on day one of orientation. These discounts will be available online, via QR scan and hard copies in the Learning and Professional Development office in Plainview. Additional, exciting opportunities for our valued employees included Wear RED day in February which raised awareness about cardiovascular disease, Yoga at work and walking clubs which began this month. The Plainview team had a strong start with 26 participants!

Citizens is proud to be a part of the NADSP program. The National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals (NADSP) launched The NADSP E-Badge Academy, which offers Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and Frontline Supervisors the ability to earn national certification through stackable electronic badges. These badges demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and values that these professionals utilize every day, recognizing the professional development that might otherwise go unacknowledged. Our program is facilitated by Ms. Vanessa Wright, Learning and Professional Development Specialist alongside our Learning and Professional Development Manager Mike Cannet. To date we have 50 staff enrolled who continue to work on completing their required badges over 2-3 hours per week during work hours. There are three levels, DSP I (50 hours), DSP II (additional 50 hours), DSP III (hours vary). Staff are currently working on DSP I which is to be completed by 3/31. Due to the success of this program, NADSP has offered our agency an additional 50 seats beyond the original contract agreement of 50 because of our demonstrated leadership and progress in the program.

## Family Questionnaire Results 2022

2022 Family Questionnaire Citizens Overall Scores Per Program



The family questionnaire is a vital component of Citizens Options Unlimited COMPASS Management Plan. The overall response rate for this year is 24.9% compared with 31.7% in 2021. The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain family feedback, assess level of satisfaction and improve services. A trend is defined as a score of 89% or below. There is one agency wide trend, “Is your family member able to connect virtually to services and activities they like?”

There is one program “trend” within the Residential IRA’s, “Are you satisfied that your family member's nutritional needs are met and consistent with what they desire?” There are two trends noted with Camp Loyaltown/virtual services, “Are you kept informed of

your family member's ongoing health (*i.e., weight loss, emergencies, test results, illnesses, and consents*)?” and “Are you satisfied with the services and supports offered to your family member?” Camp Loyaltown and virtual services are now two separate and distinct services offered through Citizens. Virtual services was offered initially an alternative to Camp during the pandemic. In 2022, Camp resumed some in person services. Therefore, moving forward, Virtual services and Camp Loyaltown will not be grouped together as one service. There is one trend noted for Self-Directed services, “Is your family member able to connect virtually to services and activities they like?”

Corrective action forms are completed for trends noted and maintained by the program with a copy provided to the COMPASS Department. A site-by-site analysis of the residential program is also completed to assess for trends in a particular home. No trends were noted. In addition, program personnel will address individual concerns/requests noted on comment sheets once provided. A corrective action form will be completed for each concern noted and maintained on site for review during self-survey with a copy provided to the COMPASS Department.

These results are provided for Board of Directors review and Agency planning purposes.

**MY PERSPECTIVE**

“Thank you to everyone who has helped me become a self advocate.”

NOAH PROBERT  
SELF-ADVOCATE

## In honor of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

We would like to highlight Noah Probert, one of Citizens’ Self-Advocates. Noah prides himself on helping others & being a leader in the local I/DD community.

“My goals are to teach others what it means to be a Self-Advocate and to be a role model.”

How to Become a Self-Advocate:

- Understand your personal needs
- Know what kind of support is available to you
- Communicate those needs to others

**Thank you Noah for being an amazing part of our community.**

**FSS/ Citizens had a great night at Vintage Canvas in Farmingdale. Long Island University students joined the group to continue the newly established relationships. Everyone had a great time making their Fall pumpkin paintings.**



## Put on your Chef Hat!

**Matt & Neal hosted a private cooking class in their house in Greenlawn.**

**They partnered with Long Island company  
Cooking With Stars to create a Tasty Dinner**



## Hakuna Matata Means no Worries.

**And there were absolutely no worries  
while Donald, Joseph, Brian & Thomas  
saw their first Broadway show  
The Lion King - Musical**



## Regulatory Affairs by Eric Rosen

Between October 2022 and March 2023; site surveys were completed for six (6) Citizens IRAs. These reviews consisted of five (5) small IRAs and one (1) large IRA.

Best practices identified during surveys completed during this reporting period include respectful and supportive interactions, people being encouraged to participate in the routine of their home and overall satisfaction. Additionally, houses / bedrooms were decorated to reflect the preferences and interests of the people living at the location.



## Inform Me Series

**Empowering You** airs virtually at  
**11:30am every Friday.**

Join for information and ideas to assist you  
to live the life you want!

For information or registration:

Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5362

### TOPICS FOR 2023

- April 7 Developing social capital.
- **DEI TRAINING SERIES— CONTACT MICHELLE RUDOFF AT 516-293-1111 EXT 5235 OR MRUDOFF@AHRC.ORG**
- **COMING SOON—REP PAYEE - INFORMED CONSENT AND DUE PROCESS PLEASE CONTACT COLLEEN TAPIA AT CTAPIA@AHRC.ORG FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.**

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

## Citizens Respite

**For more information please  
contact Respite@citizens-inc.org**

## FAMILY SEMINAR SERIES

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

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

**July 18, 2023 5:00-6:00pm**

**Guardianship Evolution. Supported Decision  
Making, Wills and Trusts**

Join us to learn about Guardianship, Wills and Trusts for people  
with intellectual and developmental disabilities

—

**October 26, 2023 5:00-6:00pm**

**Systems Advocacy**

Join us to gain a working knowledge of systems advocacy.  
We'll discuss some of the ways you can make positive changes in  
attitudes, policies, systems and laws that impact people with intel-  
lectual and developmental disabilities.

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**For information or registration,**  
**please visit our website at AHRC.org**  
**or email lfanuzzi@ahrc.org or**  
**Call:516-293-2016, ext. 5369**

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.

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

**For information or registration:**

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

**Visit AHRC.org**



## The Compass Committee & The Quality Enhancement Process

### AHRC Nassau and Citizens: 2022 QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS

In 2022, there were 15 quality improvement goals as well as enhancements, with 27% of the goals/objectives met. As we enter the New Year, it is wonderful to look back on all the efforts set forth and share some of the successes of 2022! Citizens looks forward to an extraordinary 2023!

#### All Factors

- Strategic Planning for a 2023-2026 Plan was completed in the fall of 2022 for Citizens along with stakeholders developed organizational Strategic Plans to help guide improvements over the next three years. The first step in the process began with all stakeholders engaged in a broad-based SWOT analysis of each corporation. The SWOT analysis method was used to determine and identify our organizations' Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The process concluded at a stakeholders' retreat where the results were shared, discussed and an optimal plan was developed for the organizations.

#### Factor 1: Rights Promotion and Protection:

- We held our first Rights Rally "in person" in October of 2022 after two years of joining together remotely. It was an "open house" event, with tables exploring different types of rights hosted by all agency councils. There was even an "Ask the Exec. table".
- Citizens will adopt, as policy in 2023, that all people are presumed to have capacity for Financial Decision Making.
- Financial Decision-Making training is now offered quarterly as part of the monthly training activities.
- Human Rights Committee approval and informed consent is now provided for people who wish to maintain financial decision making.
- Policy and a plan developed for people to explore their desire to make financial decisions review of the annual Money Management Assessment. A plan for Rep Payee will be developed according to what a person wants, if indicated
- Supported Decision Making legislation passed and now is a legal alternative to guardianship. We are very pleased to have been part of this pilot.

#### Factor Two: Dignity and Respect:

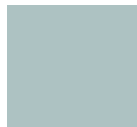
- Person Centered Planning training is completed quarterly as part of our monthly training activities.
- Choice training is completed quarterly as part of our monthly training activities.
- Financial Decision-Making training is now offered quarterly as part of the monthly training activities.
- Our individual questionnaire was revised and will revert back to a "pen and paper" method as requested by the people supported through the agency – new question added, "If you were Stanford, what would you change or do?"
- A DEI Ambassador Council was formed in 2022 and a DEI manual developed. Ambassadors shared this manual at the May 18, 2022 "Beyond the Comfort Zone" conference and with OPWDD and state Compass providers.
- Wellness education is now part of the weekly Executive Council meetings.

#### Factor 3: Natural Supports – Quality Enhancements

- 2022 brought a renewed sense of community and in person gatherings for all people, along with their friends, families, and staff. This included many people hosting holiday and seasonal in person gatherings as well as enjoying outdoor summer concerts, spring and fall fairs as well as parades and town sponsored events.
- Recreation and respite have expanded to include partnership events in the community with Long Island University, Suny Old Westbury as well as local businesses.
- Virtual friendships made during the pandemic continue to be fostered through virtual connections events. In addition, people who are not yet comfortable with in person gatherings, were able to also enjoy music and time with friends.
- Volunteerism is again on the rise at Citizens fostering opportunities for people to volunteer with local organizations, providing a variety of community based natural supports.

#### Factor 4: Protection from Abuse, Neglect, Mistreat Exploit

- The 2022 goal for reducing the number of falls with injuries by 5% was met with a 9% reduction in the number of falls. A Fall Prevention Committee was formed, and a new fall reporting form was initiated. The Fall Prevention Committee will continue to meet in 2023.
- The Quality Assurance Dept. successfully investigated and managed a total of 450 incidents in 2022 as compared to 374 in 2021.
- The 2022 goal for Minor Notable incidents to be completed within the regulatory timeframe 100% of the time was not met, however improvement was noted since last year. A separate Incident Review Committee was formed to review only Minor Notable incidents with a greater focus on the timeline to complete an incident and hold the program investigators accountable.



**Factor 5: Best Possible Health**

- All people supported and their families have been educated regarding Covid vaccination and been vaccinated to the level that they desire. This is an ongoing mission of the nursing team as recommendations for updated vaccines change. Vaccine clinics were also held in large programs, we coordinated with CVS to provide in home vaccination of the two initial vaccine series for folks who are medically compromised, and our long-term care pharmacies assisted us in administering the vaccine to both staff and people supported in an effort to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- Mass education on infection control safety is being completed in light of ongoing concerns with Covid infection and influenza. Trainings are completed quarterly for all staff and people supported as well as any time that there is a change to the guidance from the CDC or OPWDD.
- RNs in all residential programs began and continue to provide on-site testing for people supported who have been exposed to Covid-19 to limit their infection risk of traveling to an MD office or pharmacy to receive this testing.
- Committee formed to increase staff knowledge of guidelines and create a cheat sheet for staff who float/cover in alternate locations due to the staffing crisis affecting all agencies at present.

**Factor 6: Safe Environments**

- This year OFPC Inspectors increased the focus on gaps in doors to eliminate possible smoke escaping in case of fire. The agency Preventive Maintenance process was adjusted to inspect fire doors every quarter and supplies were purchased to promptly address needs.
- We continue to experience active COVID cases. To help support cultivating safe environments maintenance mobilized a team to quickly assist individuals with moving if needed when isolation is recommended.

**Factor 7: Staff Resources and Supports**

- The goal to increase new hires by 10% in 2022 was met for Citizens.
- On-going Indeed (organic/ sponsored). Ads have been focused on “Immediate openings”
- Created and successfully implemented “5 for 5” Referral/Sign on Bonus for DSP positions, Start working in days” “\$5,000 referral bonus”. “Text us for immediate consideration” “Earn up to” (depending on program) Offering both in person and virtual options to interview on a weekly basis
- E- blasted DSP opportunities to 50,000 people in the Shoreham and surrounding communities
- DSP jobs posted in local publications that promote diversity. e.g., La Tribuna Hispana, La Noticia, Caribbean Times and other local community print papers.
- Posted QR scan recruitment flyers in targeted communities showcasing career ladders. These flyers were posted in houses of worship, grocery stores, libraries, and bus stops.
- Increased social media posts by TAT on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn and joined social media groups in black, brown, Hispanic, Indian, and Asian communities and posted opportunities.

**Factor 8: Positive Services and Supports**

- Methods for tracking the need and justification for rights restrictions have been enhanced to ensure people’s rights are maintained and respected. More detailed fade out plans have been implemented for those with a rights restriction as part of their Behavior Support Plan.
- Progress has been made regarding fading and removal of rights restrictions when progress is made toward learning alternative/safer behaviors and skills.

**Factor 9: Continuity and Security**

- Citizens did renovations on several homes to accommodate changing needs, as well as new generators began to be installed at Shoreham residences to ensure continuity and security of services during power outage emergencies.
- Direct support staff received monetary bonuses throughout the year to recognize longevity and support retention of staff to ensure continuity of support to people. In addition, all staff received a cost-of-living increase to their base compensation in 2022 which further supports retention in the workforce.
- Trainings were done with staff to review the pre-life planning meeting process and support staff to appropriately support people to direct their services. We anticipate developing trainings and mentorship for the people receiving supports in 2023 to further assist people with directing their life planning process.
- Personal interest and match surveys continue.
- Citizens continues to develop residential opportunities for young adults as they graduate affiliated children's residential programs to adult services.

**Personal Outcome Measures (POM)**

- A new initiative “Show Us Your POMs” began in 2022. It highlights personal stories, videos, and pictures from Citizens to celebrate people achieving their outcomes and the staff that support them. This initiative provides a wonderful opportunity for people to share their personal goals and the progress made in achieving them. The staff supporting these efforts are formally recognized at the event as well.
- An annual POM Rally was held to inspire and celebrate people’s successes. In 2022, the POMS Rally was held in collaboration with the Caffeine Academy, SANYS, and CQL. Self-advocates across the organization and their staff were in attendance. The event was titled, “2022, Is All About You.” The highlighted theme of the day were stories of people living their best lives and how they achieved their goals, plans and dreams in a fun and interactive workshop
- In 2022, the “My Choices Are All About Me,” was developed for people to review their service options. An additional training was developed to assist people to learn and identify changes in services and choices that they wish to make. Development will continue into 2023 with the addition of short vignettes and filmed discussions on how to make choices and evolve their services. People’s progress will be tracked and presented to CQL in August 2023 as part of agency accreditation with distinction.
- The University of Personal Growth virtual sessions continued to offer people exposure and access to new and exciting experiences.

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**TO:**

As the cold and snow descended upon Camp Loyaltown, people attending weekend respite were warm and happy inside. Hanging together, along with everything there is to do, makes for winter memories! No matter the season, Camp Loyaltown is the place to be!

