

# Citizens Options Unlimited Compass Semi-Annual Report

## Citizens Re-Designated a Compass Agency by OPWDD

In May 2023, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) - Bureau of Certification and Division of Quality Improvement conducted their annual Compass validation visit.

We kicked off an action-packed week with a full review of the Compass Management Plan and partnership surveys. Highlights included a Person-Centered Excellence Experience and Personal Outcome Measures Rally: Destination: My Life Discovered!



Auditors actively engaged our entire organization connecting with people supported, board members, management, and staff to determine whether Citizens operates in a person-centered environment focused on the goal of promoting and achieving valued outcomes for the people served.



Following many meetings and visits across the agency, Citizens is again one of four New York nonprofit agencies with Compass designation. Compass recognizes provider agencies that have progressed beyond minimal regulatory compliance and have achieved excellence in service delivery.

We will continue to celebrate the people we support and share all the ways people embrace advocacy, establish decision making in their own lives, and promote dignity and respect!

## Mission Statement & Management Plan Annual Review

Each year, Citizens reviews the agency’s Mission Statement and Compass Management Plan. It began with the Council and Compass committee reviews in the fall. Recommended changes will then be forwarded to the Board of Directors for their review in early 2024.

**Our Mission is clear and thriving!**

**Citizens’** mission statement clearly defines our purpose, core function, and goals. In other words, it tells everyone who we are, what we do, why we do it — all in a just a few words.

**Citizens Options Unlimited**  
**Supports people to live the life they choose.**

Vision Statement  
A world where all people  
are valued.



## OPWDD Visit

On August 3, 2023, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities joined us in Brookville to discuss ways to better strengthen person-centered services and support choice, independence, and opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We welcomed Megan O’Connor, Brian O’Donnell, Mary Ellen Moeser, and Mary Jane Vogel from OPWDD.

OPWDD shared information and insight on emerging trends and best practices in the field.

We valued the opportunity to also share some of our ideas and our best practices regarding quality improvement, innovations and planning, which are the hallmarks of our Compass status and CQL with Distinction accreditation.

The afternoon concluded with a catered lunch from Wheatley Farms in Freeport and then a visit over to Wheatley Farms and Art Center.

The time spent was informative and valued. Our thanks to OPWDD for visiting and for their partnership with our family of organizations.





# Mission Statement & ADVOCACY in Action

## Matt Advocates and Speaks at the Commissioner's Open Forum

My name is Matthew Hofele – I would like to thank the Commissioner and OPWDD staff for this forum and listening to people. This is very important. I, myself, have complex health needs and am lucky enough to be a part of Citizens who work with me to make my dreams come true and help me to live the life I deserve.

So often, there are risks involved when I seek out opportunities to live and work independently. I am often reliant on traditional services such as living in an IRA which I sometimes need for my complex health conditions, but not always. I would like to someday live independently, in my own apartment and not be as reliant on staff as I am. I am very capable but do have some conditions which could cause medical issues. This can interfere with my independence. There is not a concrete solution if there is an emergency, but I am interested in learning more about technology and the role it can play in living independently. Will OPWDD pay for technology to replace staff in certain cases? Are pilot independent living situations being considered? I Matt Hofele would love to be part of the committees that the Commissioner may put together to brainstorm this type of solution.



There are not enough Self-Direction opportunities available in the state right now for my friends that also have intellectual and developmental disabilities. This should be an option available to anyone that wants it.

I am not saying I want to live outside of my agency's support right now but I would like a self-direction budget that allows more options to stay within my organization.

## Mission Statement in Action

All her life, Christina Paz, 28, from Huntington Station, has dreamt of working for the F.B.I. She hopes that finally having Self-Direction staff will help her to begin a career in criminal justice.

"I wanted to combine my two loves – criminal justice and computer technology," Christina said.

The former Manhattan native has Cerebral Palsy and uses a wheelchair. With a goal of increasing independence while navigating her community, Christina applied for Self-Direction through Citizens Options Unlimited two years ago.

In that time, Christina has struggled to find community habilitation staff. As a result, she has only been able to take advantage of portions of her Self-Direction budget, like a gym membership at her local YMCA, camp, physical therapy, software related to her disability, staff advertising/recruitment costs, and publicly available training courses.

"I recently used Self-Direction to pay for a crash course on Python coding," Christina said.

The main support Christina needed was a Community Habilitation Direct Support Professional (DSP). After months of searching online and hanging up flyers across town, Christina finally found someone to support her —a young woman named Suzy.



## Council's Annual Presentation to the Board of Directors



On August 24, 2023, Matt Hofele shared the Citizens Council's accomplishments and goals for the year. Establishing an important link between the Council and the Citizens Board of Directors is the main goal of this Management Plan criterion, facilitating a direct connection and relationship.

Matt provided the following speech and the Board enjoyed a video depicting many of the endeavors accomplished by people this past year.

"Good evening, My name is Matthew Hofele. I am very happy to be with you to share the council accomplishments this past year. Thank you to Stanford Perry, CEO, Hallie Klein, Board President, and the entire Board of Directors for their support! Our council creates an environment that respects voices, that educates and empowers people. The video which will be shown highlights our many activities to include:

Advocate of the Year for Citizens  
Advocates of the Year SANYS Long Island  
MLK Celebration  
Advocacy in Action"

## The Sibling Group Stays Connected

In 2023, the Sibling Group remained connected mostly via Zoom meetings. Our annual Barbeque was held on May 25th and a great time was had by all. We look forward to discussing the future of this group and how it can further evolve.



### 2023 SIBLING GROUP

Please join us!

- 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)  
for details on how to connect.



## Board Physical Plant Inspections by Colleen Tapia

Twelve Physical Plant Inspections were completed in the past six months by Board Inspectors. Some of the positive comments from the Board Inspectors are shared below.

Front Street, Hempstead—the staff are wonderful.

Carol Street, West Hempstead—lovely house, very well kept, clean and no clutter. Staff very friendly and enthusiastic.

Great job everyone! Whether in-person or virtual, this Compass initiative remains an invaluable tool.



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





## CQL Personal Outcome Measures Interviewer Co-Certification

*"When we talk about dream jobs.  
I feel like I am doing my dream job with this."  
-Matt*

In September 2023, Matt Hofele, advocate, and Leigh Fanuzzi, trainer, made history by becoming the second team in NYS (and perhaps the country), to achieve CQL Personal Outcome Measures interviewer co-certification. In preparation, Matt and Leigh worked through the certification process under the coaching of the POMs Department. They trialed interviews, data collection and decision making to get ready and set the stage for their CQL exam.

And what a success they were! Matt Hofele and Leigh Fanuzzi met with CQL Auditor/Trainer Lucy Klym, to demonstrate their interview and decision making skills to make the move from agency trained interviewers to **Certified CQL interviewers**! Matt and Leigh will continue their roles as trainers in the training department, and will also support POM efforts agency wide by completing POM interviews and sharing a lived perspective on the POM process in their data collection.

This team certification approach is being used by only one other team to date. Co-certified teams work together to share the responsibility during the interview, data and decision making process ensuring that it is possible for all people to take part in the CQL Personal Outcome Measures interview process.

## Sibling Spotlight: Sister-Advocate Publishes Memoir

On April 3<sup>rd</sup>, sister-advocate Ali Carbone published her first memoir entitled *What Are You Looking At?*. Following the Carbone family from adolescence to adulthood, the memoir explores Ali's personal experience as the sibling of three brothers with autism: Michael, Anthony, and Luke, who she refers to throughout the book as "the boys".

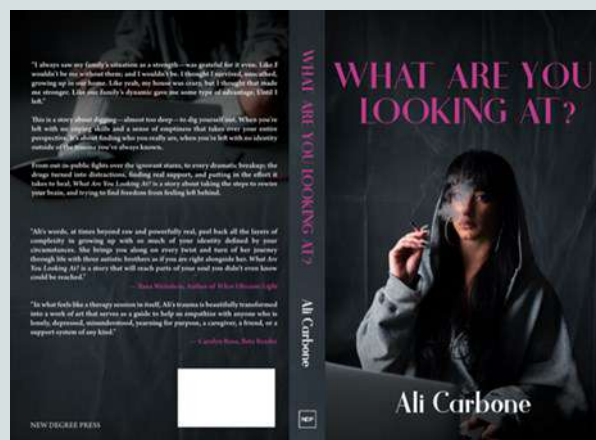
"No one ever really talks about us—the siblings," Ali said. "Even though we're the ones who will be here, caring for our siblings, long after our parents are gone. Our perspective is always overlooked. How we feel, how our role in our family has affected us, and how that shows up in life outside of the homes we were raised in. The inability to put yourself first, or deal with emotions like a normal adult. The confusion and resentment, but the deep knowing that at the end of the day, this is the way it has to be."

Throughout the book, Ali touches on topics like self-identity, sibling guardianship, growing pains, moving the boys into a children's residential program, bullying from a community that doesn't understand disability, finding a way out of depression through a supportive community, and learning to let go.

"I wrote this book because the stories of siblings are usually untold," she continued. "And when we do hear them, the story is always about our relationship with them. They're the main characters, even in our own story. *What Are You Looking At?* details the experience of growing up with so much of your identity being defined by your circumstances."

The three Carbone brothers recently transitioned from a children's residential program to Citizens Options Unlimited's adult group homes: Michael in Massapequa and Anthony and Luke in Lake Grove.

"Everything changed when the boys went into the group home. It was like the blinders came off after being on autopilot and we realized we'd been living in survival mode for 20-plus years," Ali said. "The group homes make it possible to have some quality of life—for the entire family. My brothers started eating and doing things we'd never thought. My parents got their lives back, and the help they deserved. And I got freedom. From the pressure of having to care for them by myself, and from the fear that they'd never live a meaningful adult life."



## Citizens Council by Tessa Guillaume-Lewis

The Citizens residential council is looking forward to this new board accomplishing its goals of community inclusion and a more robust membership. The members have resumed meeting in person and for the people not able to, or ready to come back, we have kept the Zoom links going. The new council board was voted into office. 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. This has been the topic at a few of the meetings as the current members would like to see more participation by the other Citizen residents. The members believe that having hybrid meetings is one way of increasing the membership. This has produced a little more participation in the meetings. Topics discussed are

- What we can do to improve people's morale after COVID.
- Community inclusion and how to become more involved in our community. What can we do to be more recognized?
- Events & Activities: what can we do to improve our community?
- Rights Training and how to express our rights.
- Decision-making for our lives and who is better equipped to assist with that decision, especially medical?
- POM follow-up in the houses, do you feel supported in attaining your dreams? If not, what would you like your staff to do to assist you?
- Increasing membership and participation campaign.
- Individual Questionnaire.
- Staff Appreciation.

### *Please join in welcoming the new Citizens Council Board!*

*President: Bonnie Lerhinan*

*Vice President: Devon Rivera*

*Secretary: Steven Barsh*

*Treasurer: Gabriele O'Brien*

*AD representative: Justin DeNigris*

*Citizen Council representative: Mathew Hofele*



## Executive Council

- Barry Donowitz came to the council and spoke about what his job with the agency is and what he does. Barry also took questions from the council about staffing and community jobs.
- Michelle Flood and Marisol from SANYS spoke about a group that they have on Fridays at 1. Michelle spoke about voting and the right to vote and the importance of a voting plan.
- Joseph Damiano came to the council and spoke about what he does as a peer specialist.
- HCBS training was completed.
- Voice for Choice-POM department Susan Gill spoke about how she is going to have a council table at the POM Rally. Anyone who would like to attend the Voice for Choice can attend it after the council meeting that week.
- We started thinking and planning a fundraiser to raise money to help an advocate attend the SANYS statewide conference.
- Nikki Katz came and did meditation and yoga with the council.
- Anthony Gionfriddo from The Beautiful Lives Project came and spoke about what the project is and what his role is and that they are looking for more members.
- In June, groups from AHRC Nassau was at LIU post for The Beautiful Lives' projects field of dreams. John and Elise were featured in a story on the news
- Coleen is making and selling pride buttons for PrideAbility.
- We hosted a bingo fundraiser on June 30<sup>th</sup> to help raise money for an advocate to attend the SANYS conference.

## Personal Outcomes Measures Update By Bridget Cariello

Personal Outcome Measures (POM) interviews continue to provide people with the tools to improve their quality of life by identifying what outcomes are most important to each person. In 2023, approximately 50 interviews have been conducted by CQL Certified POMs Trainer/Interviewers (Kate Zimmerman, Susan Gil-Orange). In April, a third interviewer, Samantha Rodonis, was added to the roster who will go through the CQL interviewer certification process before the end of the year. In 2023, the POM Department created the *“Discovering You,”* series of workshops which focus on the concerns of students transitioning from the high school to the adult world. The Department also hosted their annual **POMs Rally**. Earlier in the year the POM department has concentrated its efforts in ensuring that each person supported understands that they have the right to choose services. A presentation entitled **“A Voice for Choice”** was developed in order to provide people receiving services a way to understand that they are able to choose their day option. The goal for our CQL objective, ***Goal 2D to increase People’s knowledge of supports and services, enhance dignity and respect receiving the education that supports their knowledge about choices.*** For the first time, The POM Department provided a workshop that incorporated the cultural expectations inherent in our organization along with an explanation of what the personal outcome process consists of **Camp Loyaltown** personnel. The Personal Outcomes Department is preparing for the opportunity to create a duo of Co-Certified CQL Certified Interviewers comprised of a staff member and a person supported. This initiative is designed to enlarge the capabilities of people supported in our organization, giving them a more substantive role in the agency structure. ***Looking ahead in 2023:*** POMS Empowering You Classes, “Show Us Your POMs,” Personal Discovery Event to increase people’s awareness of choice and the personal planning process, Life Model Meeting, and more of “Discovering You.” 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!

**Citizen’s Data:** The outcome data for Citizens residences has been met more significantly than it was last year. In many areas, the numbers doubled from 2022. In some instances, as in the Rights indicator, the results quadrupled. This may be attributed to a more concentrated effort in 2023 to the numbers of interviews conducted. The indicators of choice in where people live and work declined in the number of outcomes met and supports shown. Again because of the increased attention this quarter on Citizens ICFs, it is not unusual to see a slight decline in numbers. The trend for the indicator of integration continues to be at 0%. Most likely the reason this has not changed is due to the interviews being primarily conducted in the ICF homes where many people whose needs are medical reside.

## Bonnie’s Employment Success

Bonnie Lerhinan knew what she wanted – a job that would bring her joy and a paycheck.

This accomplishment took a little over four years, a network of coordinated supports and services to get there, but today she is right where she wants to be.

It all started in the fall of 2019 when Bonnie decided she wanted a job. With the help of her Seaford team and family, Bonnie advocated for her future and set out to achieve it.

In February 2021, Bonnie began as an intern at Panera Bread as part of the Employment Training Program (ETP), services provided by The Center for Developmental Disabilities (CDD). Then in February 2022, Bonnie was hired at Panera Bread as a store associate!

Bonnie responsibilities include dining room maintenance, dishwashing, minor food prep, and customer service. Her favorite task at work is organizing and stocking the beverage station.

Bonnie initially worked three shifts a week but after a few months she found the schedule challenging to maintain on top of her other obligations. Bonnie once again advocated for herself and reduced her hours.

When asked what her favorite part about working is, Bonnie beamed. “Money,” she said, matter-of-factly. Having money is independence. Her favorite things to spend money on are potato chips and soda, and the occasional stuffed animal as well as gifts for family and friends.

Bonnie’s staff and family were a super support. This included supporting Bonnie every Thursday night to attend her reading group, getting her library card, as well as her hair colored and cut, assisting her to be sure her uniform is ready and prepped and using Able-Ride to and from work with the My Transit Manager (MyTM) App on her phone.

**Next time you’re at Panera Bread in Massapequa, try ordering Bonnie’s favorite post-shift meal: broccoli cheddar soup with a side of bread and a large, iced tea (extra sugar).**







## Citizens Receives Dual Honors Steven Barsh and Mathew Hofele Receive Self Advocate of the Year Award from SANYS Long Island

We would like to congratulate Matthew and Steven for receiving the Self-Advocacy Association of NYS (SANYS) "Self-Advocate of the Year 2023" for the Long Island Region. We are so pleased for all the work they have done for others this past year.



## Self-Advocates Making a Statement: Meet April Kloepper

**My name is April Kloepper**, and I am 31 years old. I was born in New York City and currently live with my parents in Setauket. I have also lived in Connecticut and Ohio. I have participated in OPWDD's Self-Direction program for many years.

I got to know Citizens Options Unlimited when I went to Camp Loyaltown for the first time in the summer of 2019, and fell in love with it. Jerri Walker worked at camp at that time and Jerri was the first person to introduce me, first to Camp Loyaltown and, later, to all the other services offered by Citizens Options Unlimited and AHRC Nassau.

Camp Loyaltown relies on young adults from other countries to staff the camp each summer. In 2021, I led an effort to increase awareness for J-1 cultural exchange visas — which are the visas that need to be issued to international students and others to come to the United States

and work at camp. I made over twenty T-shirts that said, "Save J-1 Visas, Cultural Exchange," and also wrote letters to President Biden, Senator Schumer, Senator Gillibrand, and Representative Zeldin requesting the reinstatement and faster processing of these visas.

In recognition of my efforts, I was awarded the Citizens Options Unlimited 2021 Self-Advocate of the Year and received a plaque from Citizens, which now hangs on my bedroom wall.

For almost two years, I have been volunteering with Jerri. I help her with office work, organizing documents, making flyers, signing people in, and sometimes making phone calls. With my mom and dad, I have attended volunteer events to fight food and clothing insecurity on behalf of needy families on Long Island — including the January 16, 2023, Martin Luther King Day event in Glen Cove.

Volunteering is one of my favorite activities. I also enjoy horseback riding and detective and mystery series on TV, such as "Vera," "Morse," "Endeavor," and "In the Dark."

When I was asked to make a "Voice for Choice" presentation for Compass on May 10, 2023, Lynne Brewer shared some of the topics she thought people would be interested in. With the help of my mom and dad, I wrote down some notes that I used when I presented at the Compass event. It was exciting to make a presentation in front of so many people and I was glad that it went well.

To me, self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself and also speaking up for others who need your support. Through self-advocacy, I have grown more self-confident.

My goals are to get a part-time job; continue my volunteering with Jerri; do some more traveling, especially to Europe (my family really enjoyed our trip to Ireland a few years ago); make some new friends; and have some different and better life experiences.

My support team includes my mom and dad; my Aunt Sue; my horse-trainer and best friend, Lisa Zimmerman; Allison Lee, my care manager; and Kelly Wallace, my broker.







## Voice For Choice Lets Talk About Day Options!

The room was jam packed with energy and enthusiasm for the POM Department “Voice for Choice. Exploring Your Day Options” educational forum and rally on May 10, 2023.

What an excellent way to learn about and consider different day opportunities and choices.

Now just may be the time to try something new!  
The possibilities are endless.



## Summer-Themed Dance on June 30, 2023!

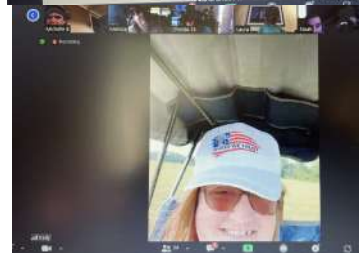
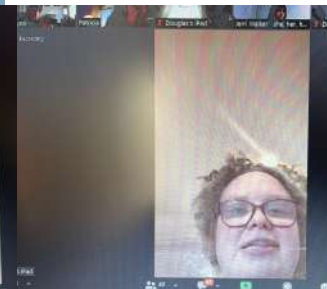
Everyone had a wonderful time dancing and meeting new people.

Some people there were on dates and some people there found out about it from their friends. All great!



## Virtual Connections Spring Concert Was held on May 31, 2023

We hope you were able to join and enjoy the show!





## <sup>10</sup> Growing Up Together: Childhood Friends Move To Their New Home

In July 2023, Citizens welcomed six ladies into their brand-new home in Bay Shore, NY. Four of the ladies have been living together for years. Congratulations on your new home!



### Felt So Good to have a normal 2 weeks at camp

By Peter Hadfield and Michelle Rudoff

After only being able to attend camp virtually in 2020 and 2021 and only for a week and having to take a rapid Covid test last year, it felt so good to be able to attend camp for an actual 2 weeks session this year and not having to do the Covid test and being able to do the things that we enjoy doing such as being a dining assistant helping out in the dining hall, being in the rec hall most of the time rehearsing for both of the camp show which were Grease for week 1 and Mamma Mia in Week 2.

Peter was able to play softball, which he enjoys.

After only seeing them on virtual Michelle was able to see and spend time with Simone Lewis and Joseph Codlin.

Peter and I both got to hang with friends like Luis Hernandez and Jonathan Beimer who we have not seen since 2019.

Peter and I really enjoyed our 2 weeks at camp doing the things we love and enjoy doing and messing and joking around with our friends like saying Not the Momma which is a catch phrase from an old tv show Dinosaurs. We both can't wait until we can go back next year.



## THE SIXTH ANNUAL STAFF APPRECIATION DAY

This year's Staff Appreciation Day was held on August 2, 2023 and featured activities from volleyball games to massages to tug-of-war to relay races to henna to virtual games and much more. Whether stopping for Mister Softee or a high five from a co-worker, the event was a heartfelt thank you to staff.

Over 900 employees from our family of organizations experienced a day of fun, diverse foods, sports competition, exciting games and comradery with their fellow employees. Staff Appreciation Day was once again a huge success. A time spent reconnecting with colleagues while enjoying fun in the sun!



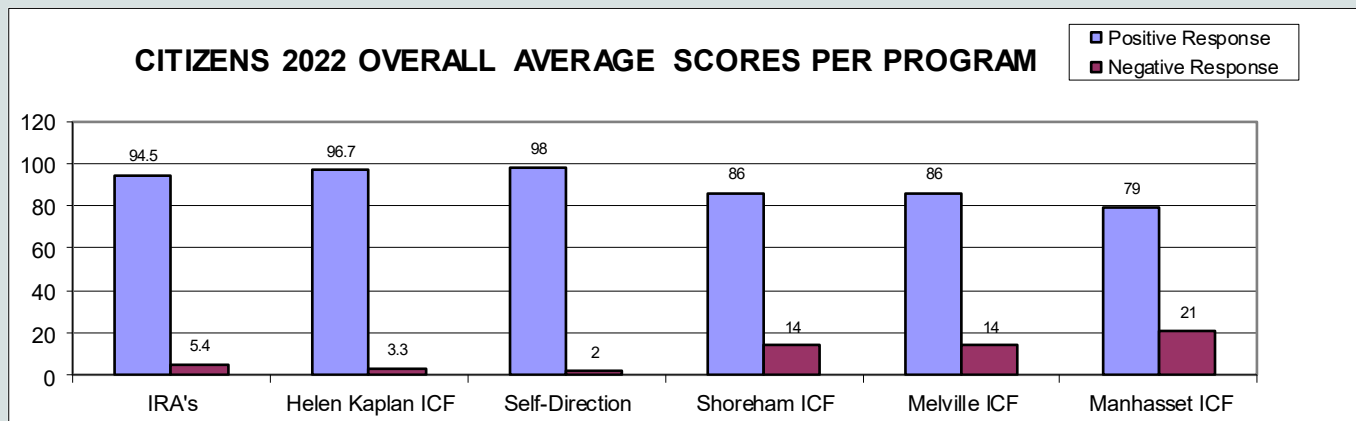


## Individual Questionnaire Results 2022

Citizens Individual Questionnaire results per program are shown graphically below. Overall satisfaction/program trends (i.e., a score lower than 90%) are noted at the Shoreham ICF (86%), Melville ICF (86%) and Manhasset ICF (79%). The results across programs noted the agency wide score to be 90% satisfaction.

This is a decrease compared to previous years and likely due to the inclusion of new questions related to HCBS Waiver requirements. This was also the first year Scantron was contracted for the completion of the Individual Questionnaire. Additionally, questions such as, “Do you manage your own finances” or “Are you satisfied with your Rep Payee”, was asked for the first time this year. Historically, most people have an organizational Rep Payee and thus we did not expect to score high in this area as we have just begun our journey in this area.

Overall, we are pleased with the results and will continue to strive to provide high quality supports and services.



## Matt Hofele Shares His Story with Newsday



Matt Hofele, a resident of Citizens' Greenlawn residence, was recently featured in *Newsday*, after being interviewed for the “Faces of Long Island” column. In the poignant interview, Matt discusses his journey that began with a traumatic brain injury as a child. “My parents were told I would be in a vegetative state for the rest of my life. I never gave up,” Matt said.

Check out the full “Faces of Long Island” interview (links at Citizens website). It's a powerful story and message.

Thank you Matt for sharing and advocating for others.

## Thomas Attends Sister's Wedding



For Thomas Rosenthal, attending his sister's wedding was an important milestone — and one the Shoreham ICF team partnered with his family to assist Thomas to make a reality. It was a wonderful day filled with joy, love and family connections.

## Shoreham Sluggers 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Baseball Season Begins

Opening day for the Shoreham Sluggers was a success as people supported and staff played an inclusive game of baseball on April 21. The parking lot outside Magnolia House at the Shoreham ICF was transformed for the event. Nearly 50 people partook in the game. The Shoreham Sluggers aim to host one baseball game a month and begin competing against the other Citizens Options Unlimited group homes and ICFs.



The ladies from Saddle Rock enjoy a gorgeous day in the summer sun!



## A Great Time at the Riverhead Aquarium

## Summer Time Fun At Splish Splash



## Regulatory Affairs by Eric Rosen

During the timeframe between April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 and September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023, eleven (11) 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 supportive and positive interactions, the promotion of independence, and the continued overall satisfaction with supports and services.





## Inform Me—Integrated Seminars Series

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

Join in Fall 2023 to learn how to direct your life plan meeting or for information and ideas to assist you to live the life you want!

For information or registration:  
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5362

### OTHER TOPICS FOR 2023

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

**Citizens Respite**  
**Join the fun!**

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

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

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

**Fall 2023 Date TBD 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 intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For information or registration,  
please visit our website at  
[www.citizens-inc.org](http://www.citizens-inc.org)  
or email [lfanuzzi@ahrc.org](mailto:lfanuzzi@ahrc.org) or  
Call: 516-293-2016, ext. 5369

## Congratulations Jonathan on your Birthright Trip to Israel



**Taglit-Birthright Israel** also known as **Birthright Israel** or simply **Birthright**, is a heritage trip to Israel, Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights for young adults of Jewish heritage.

*Taglit* is the Hebrew word for 'discovery'.

During his trip, Jonathan visited Israel for the first time, to discover new meaning in his personal Jewish identity and connection to Jewish history and culture. A fantastic outcome realized. Congratulations and Mazel Tov Jonathan, we are so proud of you.



## The Compass Committee & The Quality Enhancement Process

Citizens was certified by OPWDD as a Compass organization in 2010. **Wow, 13 years as a Compass organization!** It's been a great, great journey and partnership.

The requirements for acceptance into Compass are very stringent. It signifies that an agency has developed good internal quality systems that effectively monitor regulatory compliance and provide services that exceed regulatory standards and excel at promoting and supporting people to achieve the outcomes they desire.

A fourteen-year commitment to plan and deliver quality, person centered supports and services is truly outstanding. Congratulations on this year's recertification as a Compass organization. **Outstanding!**

### Welcome Back to Camp Loyaltown!

Camp Loyaltown was back in full swing with sessions running from June to September — after a few years on pause due to the pandemic. On July 16, we said goodbye to Session 2 and welcomed Session 3!

Every day is different here at Camp Loyaltown! Not only do we have an amazing time creating friendships and memories, we also learn and try new things!

Each day at camp, we host different events like Loyaltown's Got Talent, Loyaltown Olympics, Loyaltown on Broadway, the Street Art Festival, treasure hunts, karaoke, game shows, and campfires. Each day also has a fun theme like 80's Day, Tie-Dye Day, Science Day, Fashion Day, Flag Day, Sports Day, and Crazy Hair Day.

*It was a summer to remember! Filled with amazing experiences and memories.*



This isn't goodbye... Just see you later!  
We hope to see you during the off season.  
Learn more about our fall and winter sessions





## Personal Outcomes Measures

### Sharing Person-Centered Culture at Camp Loyaltown By Kate Zimmerman

The POM Department traveled to Hunter Mountain to bring The POM a person-centered experience to Camp Loyaltown. Kate Zimmerman, CQL-certified POM Trainer/Interviewer, and Bridget Cariello, Assistant Director of Project Development and POM Team Leader, hosted several interactive training sessions for counselors from all over the world.

The session began with an overview of the Personal Outcome Measures® process and how AHRC Nassau and Citizens Options Unlimited use the information gathered to help the people we support live the lives they choose. The presentation continued with introducing the organization's mission statements and accreditations that define the person-centered philosophy at the heart of everything we do.

The groups discussed ways to implement personal interests to create activities at camp. After the presentation, *it was time to put people in the forefront of the person-centered experience.*



During the first interactive activity in session 1, counselors were asked to volunteer to join a member of the POM team to act out a skit scripted by the POM department. The scene depicted 2 counselors, one with experience and one new, talking about Danielle, a camper at Loyaltown. The group then discussed the do's and don'ts of active listening and respectful interactions.

For the first activity in session 2, the counselors were divided into groups and tasked with learning 3 things about each member of the group: Who am I, what is something I like, and what is something I hate. Each group came together to create a team name and present what each member had shared. The exercise demonstrated that even though everyone had come from different cultures in different parts of the world they all shared many of the same values. Counselors practiced active listening for people's interests and communication styles, building skills that will help in their role as counselor when supporting people.

The final activity for both sessions involved the counselors breaking into groups to create Leadership Pizza. Each group was given a flip chart and art supplies to create a pizza pie that depicted what qualities they thought a leader or counselor should have in order to be effective. Once the pizzas had been fully baked, each group had the opportunity to present their pie. While each pie was unique, they shared common "toppings" such as empathy, active listening, respectful interactions, and positive attitudes. The common theme throughout: everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect.

The sessions wrapped up with heartfelt thank you's from the POM team, participation giveaways, and a challenge: to take something they had learned during the session and use it throughout the summer.

The opportunity to go visit Camp Loyaltown to share our agency's mission and passion was fast-paced fun and inspiring. Each session had its own unique mix of characters and personalities, all of whom worked together to have a good time and learn more about person-centered culture. They were warm and receptive, and quickly embraced the idea of being a friend and colleague rather than a care giver to the people we support. It was inspiring to see people from different countries and cultures come together seamlessly and learning that at the heart of each culture lies the same belief: ALL people deserve to live life with dignity and respect.



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## RESPIRE CONNECTIONS

### OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT, CREATE AND ACHIEVE!

We are excited to offer activities during the week and on weekends that are fun and engaging! There are various activities including Arts & Crafts, Music and Games to name a few. Both in person and virtually. For additional information, please contact us at (516) 293-2016 ext. 5142, or via email at [FSS@citizens-inc.org](mailto:FSS@citizens-inc.org)



We are thrilled to share that we officially opened our doors to 2 new locations. Shown are pictures from the Wantagh grand opening which included a ribbon cutting, some snacks, and painting. Watch for many exciting new opportunities coming soon!

