



A Communication from Human Resources

EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

April 2023

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Message from the CEO

Dear Fellow Employee,

I hope this email finds you safe and well! The strength of our programs and advocacy always comes back to you – our valuable staff. As we recognize and celebrate the passing of March as National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, we turn our attention to Spring and all the good things that come with a renewal of the earth, temperatures gradually rising, planting and growing new crops, and exploring new opportunities and destinations.

The New York State legislature has approved an 8.5% COLA in their one-house budget proposals. All we need now is for the Governor to support this increase to make it a part of the 2024 Budget. The one-house recommendations represent a significant increase from the 2.5% COLA proposed by Governor Hochul in her Executive Budget. This is a huge victory, and it could not have been accomplished without your hard work and diligent advocacy. Thank you!!!

We are disappointed that neither house included the [Direct Support Wage Enhancement](#) in their budget proposals, despite vocal support from advocates and lawmakers. However, we thank our dedicated advocates and legislative champions who positioned us to negotiate for the entire 8.5% COLA with the Governor and Division of Budget (DOB). The Assembly and Senate are expected to adopt their respective budget resolutions this week. The Conference Committee process will begin once the Senate and Assembly pass their individual One-House Budget Resolutions.

New Call to Action!

We are not yet over the finish line and need your help! Please reach out to legislators to thank them and tell them anything less than 8.5% is non-negotiable and send a message to Governor Hochul that she must adopt the 8.5% COLA in the Enacted Budget. **Participate in our [updated online campaign](#) to quickly send both these messages simultaneously with just one click!**

I continue to meet with our elected officials at the county, state, and federal level to advocate for funding and supports to enhance our programs and services. Your support by taking advantage of the one-click campaigns goes a long way in getting the attention of those who decide how services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are funded in NYS and the nation.

Call your elected officials to update them on your support of the 8.5% COLA. Find their contact information [here](#). Also, re-post our advocacy social media on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, tagging your elected officials.

Thanks for all you do to personify our Mission, Vision, and Values on a daily basis.

As always, your feedback and comments are welcome.

Best, Stanford

Executive Appreciation



- Thank you Colleen Tapia, Karen Hirschfeld, and Chris O'Connor for their hard work on putting together the COMPASS OPWDD PowerPoint presentation.
- Thank you to Barry Donowitz and Nicky Faranda for their hard work in engaging and building corporate partnership opportunities in NYSID.
- Thank you to Mary Gilleran, Posney Gilles, Jennifer Bonarrigo, and Justin Moskowitz, for their consistent effort in the staffing of the Medford house.
- Thank you to Dr. Hassan Abdulhaqq, Jim Stock, Denise Lamb, Narary Tulice, Laura Betancurt, Brandon Lyons, Rita Cruz, and Nanette Muzante for organizing and executing a successful Hero's Recognition Award Dinner.

As we recognize April as Autism Acceptance Month, we wanted to take this opportunity to share an important update regarding our advocacy efforts. We recently encouraged our employees to participate in "Blue Fridays" by wearing blue on all Fridays in April to show support for people on the autism spectrum. However, after careful consideration, we have decided to shift our focus and ask our employees to wear red instead.

This change reflects a growing movement within the autism community to shift the focus from awareness to acceptance. While awareness is undoubtedly essential, acceptance is the next step in promoting a more inclusive society. Acceptance means recognizing and celebrating the diversity of people with autism and embracing each person's unique strengths and abilities.

By wearing red instead of blue, we hope to draw attention to this shift in focus and encourage our staff to learn more about the autistic community's perspective on this issue. We also aim to promote a more inclusive and accepting workplace culture where everyone feels valued and supported.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in our advocacy efforts. Let's work together to create a more inclusive world for all.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH
BY WEARING RED EVERY FRIDAY IN APRIL

IN APRIL WE WEAR RED

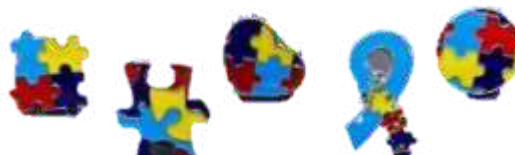


AUTISM ACCEPTANCE

AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MERCH IS ALSO BEING SOLD @

ONE STOP *Gift Shop*

STOP BY AND GET YOUR AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MERCH TODAY!
PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO AUTISM ACCEPTANCE



*A Huge Congratulations to the Outstanding
Employees chosen by their peers as*

**“EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER”
Fourth Quarter 2022**

Congratulations!



Victoria Hawley, Program Coordinator, Citizens

Rasahn Woon, Maintenance Supervisor, Administration

Hazel Duke , Executive Assistant, Advantage Care

Rachel Ryan, Speech Pathologist, BCCS – Marcus Ave

Alexander Amiruddin, Special Education Teacher III BCCS- Silver Building

Shaquasha Irby, DSP, Citizens Residential

Danielle Boben, Asst. House Manager, CLS

Evonne Bolanos, House Manager, CLS

Prince Porter, House Manager, CRP

Julie Giordano, RN, Day Hab

Jana Lichtenthal, Employment Training Specialist, Vocational Program

Connie Buckhannon, DSP, Helen Kaplan

Martha Masone, DSP, Shoreham

Nick Weber, BIS, Shoreham

*Please join us in congratulating these employees on their
exceptional and outstanding work every day!*



Reminder:

**All School Programs are closed for Spring Recess
from April 6th - April 14th**

Barbara C. Wilson

The Barbara C. Wilson Program is so happy to be adding a new music instructor, Annette Stamatelatos, to our staff.

We have all been attending training for the Kindermusik Curriculum. Kindermusik is a comprehensive developmental music curriculum that aligns with the state standards and the Creative Curriculum.

It incorporates auditory, visual and kinesthetic modalities to reinforce goals and objectives for all of our preschool students. We have been busy preparing our music room and look forward to our first day kick off.



The children were so excited during Read Across America Week.

Each class had their parents participate in our Mystery Reader Event. The children were so excited to find out who the reader was for the day and especially excited when it was their parent.

Thank you to our parents for sharing their time with us.

"Sister Act" on a Medical Mission



Pictured: Michele Villani, RN, Dr. Mark Shikowitz, Dr. Angela Cao, and Joanna Kilkenny.

Joanna Kilkenny and Michele Villani are identical twin sisters. Joanna Kilkenny is the Controller for Brookville Center for Children's Services and Michele Villani, RN is the Director of Operations System Sterile Ops for Northwell Health System. Both have two teenagers at home. And both give their time and professional expertise every March, leaving their families behind to go on a medical mission to the Dominican Republic.

Mark Shikowitz, MD, Vice Chairman of Otolaryngology and Communicative Disorders at Northwell Health, has been assisted by Michele Villani, RN on these Medical Missions since 2010. Having his nurse there to assist in the operations was essential to his mission's successful outcomes, but something was missing - someone with the mind to organize the OR and its schedule. Michele could only think of her twin sister Joanna to assist. In 2013, Dr. Shikowitz invited Joanna to join the mission and the ENT (Ear, Nose & Throat) team, and she accepted.

"Operating conditions there [in the rural towns of the Dominican Republic] can only be described as ungodly", said Dr. Shikowitz, a veteran of many medical missions. "There are no ENT surgeons in the vicinity, so our patient list is twice as long as the other surgeons". They perform many tonsillectomies, on children and adults, operating from dawn to sometimes midnight. They also remove thyroid and other tumors, repair cleft palates, and do cancer screenings.

Joanna is in charge of managing the OR, patients and assisting Dr. Shikowitz and Nurse Michele, which includes creating patient lists, check in, walking patients into the OR, assisting the families in the waiting room, preparing for the next procedure, etc. With hundreds of patients lining up around the block the ENT has little time to prepare and get the next patient on the table. Joanna has been able to get the turnover time down, which in turn allows the ENT team to treat more patients. The teams goal is to treat up to 40 patients in 4 days.

The sisters can't say enough about the rewards of a medical mission. "The patients - even the very little ones - are so brave and uncomplaining. A few hours after surgery, they are up and dressed and ready to go home, and always so grateful for our help", said Michele. "It makes me grateful for all that we have here, even simple things like Tylenol." "The Dominican Republic is a second home to us. We have made such great friends on these trips and seeing the difference we make for these families is so rewarding". said Joanna.

Another Medical Mission is planned for March 2024. Will the sisters travel to the Dominican Republic with Dr. Shikowitz, on what will be the eleventh trip for Michele and Joanna's eighth? They answer with one twin voice: Yes!



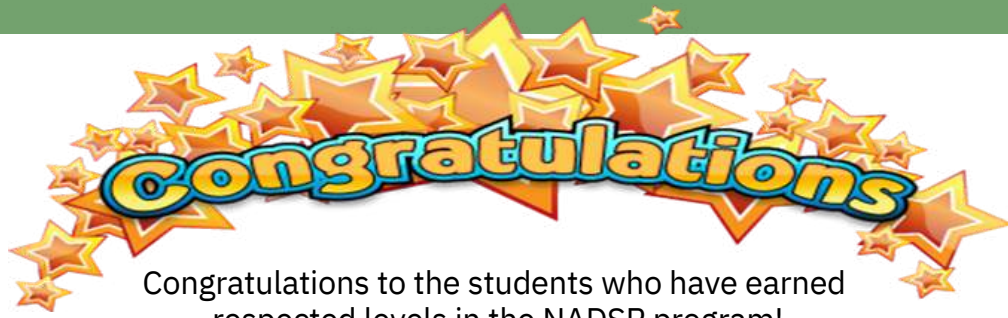
The Story Behind Our Shop

The One Stop Gift Shop values giving as a way to spread kindness throughout the world. That starts with how we're run. The One Stop Gift Shop gives people with developmental disabilities supported by AHRC Day Services an opportunity to participate fully in the running of the gift shop. People supported create and craft handmade items, answer the phone, take online orders, package and deliver merchandise, and keep track of inventory.

<https://one-stop-gift-shop.square.site/s/shop>

Use Code "ahrcn" at checkout to save an additional 15%





Congratulations to the students who have earned respected levels in the NADSP program!



The National Alliance of Direct Support Professional (NADSP) Program tests the ability to provide services in line with NADSP Code of Ethics; giving you the chance to earn recognition for all work you do in supporting our individuals and nationwide certification.

Agata Wlodarczyk

Paula Reinertsen

Pat Andreaci

Amanda Darbouze

Sophia Blackett

Frances Gotterbarn

Francois Saint Cyr

Sonia Montenegro

Debbie Perez Escalante

Dexter Gill



Internal Mobility Job Announcement



Teacher Aide

Job Req #2022-4752

Schedule: Mon-Fri 8:30a-3:30p

Program: BCCS

Location: Brookville BCCS Cissy Birnbaum Building

Salary Range: \$16.50

Job Profile:

Primary duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Under teacher supervision, assist with students
- Attend staff and parent meetings as assigned
- Appropriately participate in daily planning sessions with teachers to understand the educational interventions
- Help with the preparation of snack and clean-up activities
- Provide adequate bus, hallway, and playground supervision

Requirements:

- High school diploma or equivalency required
- Criminal background check (CBC) clearance required
- Within six (6) months of hire obtain NYS Teacher Assistant Certification required
- Ability to communicate and work effectively and cooperatively required
- Experience working with children and special education students preferred
- Warm calm demeanor required

Physical aspects may include but are not limited to lifting and transferring of students.

To be considered for a transfer, orientation must have been completed and you must be in good performance standing.

We are an Equal Opportunity Employer, Proud of Workforce Diversity

Submit your application by going to:

ahrc.org/careers

Click the link for CURRENT EMPLOYEES



Brookville Center
for Children's Services

HR'S RELIAS COURSE OF THE MONTH

Below is information you will need to login to the RLMS and the Relias Mobile App.

When using a desktop or laptop computer. Please log into Relias following the directions below:

Log onto Ulti Pro at <https://e13.ultipro.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2f>

Click on “Menu” which can be found in the top left corner

Click on “Myself”

Once on Myself, click on “Relias Learning”

If you are unsuccessful logging in through Ulti Pro or for those accessing training on a mobile device, please download the Relias App. The name of the app is Relias, not Relias Learning.

URL: <https://www.relias.com/clients>

Click on Relias Learning

Username: your current Ulti Pro Username

Password if this is your first time logging in: welcome

When prompted please enter the Organization ID for the company you are working for.

Organization ID

14023

14022

14024

14020

Organization

Advantage Care

Brookville Center for Children’s Services

Citizen’s Options Unlimited

AHRC Nassau

You will then be prompted to update this upon your first log in. Your password is private and unique to you! Please follow the directions on the login screen to reset your password.

POP UP BLOCKERS MUST BE DISABLED IN ORDER TO ACCESS YOUR TRAINING

Once Logged into Relias, please follow the steps below to access: **“Employee Wellness -Importance of Physical Fitness”**

- Click on “assignments” on the left side of your screen
- Click on “Browse Course Library”
- Type “Conflict Resolution” in the search bar.
- Click “Enroll”
- Click “Back to My Learning”
- Scroll down to electives – Click **“Employee Wellness - Importance of Physical Fitness”**



CONGRATULATIONS!!!

VALENTINA YANCHAK

**"BURNING IT UP"
2023 CHALLENGE WINNER!!!**

On behalf of the Employee Health & Wellness Team, we want to thank everyone who has participated in the IncentFit challenges thus far. For those who haven't had a chance to participate, there will be plenty more wellness contests to join. Please check your IncentFit account regularly for your progress and challenge updates.

Great job to the team members below for completing the IncentFit "Simple Steps Challenge"

Valentina Yanchak	Pamela Sessoms
Michael Lisse	Joanne Cush
Janet Stack	Danielle Persichilli
Karla Koukiotis	Inna Mozil
Deanna Allen	Sandrina Francis
Nancy Bourne	Jill Rubenfeld
Sukhwinder Kaur	Deborah Francis-Ojo,
Ellen Koreff	Judith Bresler
Jennifer O'Brien	Althea Mowatt

Thank you for your participation!

Employee Assistance Program



**LIFE HAPPENS.
WE UNDERSTAND.
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

Even when we have our day planned out, life can sometimes take us by surprise. No matter what, it's always good to know you have support to help you move forward.

YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

24/7/365 access to EAP counseling services and online resources for you and your immediate family members.

- ✓ Mental health and wellbeing
- ✓ Child care, elder care, and family support
- ✓ Work and career growth
- ✓ Grief and addiction
- ✓ Legal and financial needs
- ✓ Pre-qualified referrals to providers, specialists, and resources



U: AHRC
PW: AHRC
www.nationaleap.com

Need Help?
TOLL-FREE: 1-800-624-2593
Just call or log on to get started