

THE OPEN DOOR

PROVIDING QUALITY CARE TO DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY LIVING

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September 2015

DANCING WITH THE CLC STARS!

ONE, TWO, CHA CHA CHA!

Friday nights just aren't the same anymore for a group of consumers. For the past few months, CLCers have been gathering at Westchester Ballroom for a variety of dancing lessons and an evening of socializing.

After giving the dancers a chance to relax and talk a bit, instructor Evangeline pairs off the students and cranks up the music. The lesson begins, "Step, touch, together, step, touch, together..."

A missed step, some giggles. A few daring couples try fancy spins and flourishes. The music ends and the chatter begins. "That was a great turn!" "How do you spin like that?" "Fancy footwork!" Everyone is in a good mood and eagerly awaiting the next song.

Conveniently located across the street from CLC offices on Radio Circle Drive in Mount Kisco, Westchester Ballroom offers group and private instruction in Ballroom, Salsa, Latin, Swing, Hustle, Disco, Tango, Country, Zumba and Hip Hop, and a host of special events.



Westchester Ballroom owner & Director Barbara Antes and Danny.



Owner and director Barbara Antes came up with the idea of dancing lessons for consumers. "CLC was right across the street and I knew they would enjoy it," says Barbara. Instructor Evangeline is thrilled with her class, "I have taught every age and kind of group, but the CLC folks are by far my favorite," she says. "This class makes me smile every time I see them," she adds. "They are such an enthusiastic group!"

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DANCING WITH THE CLC STARS !



At left:
Michoal
proudly
shows off
his dancing
shoes!



At right:
Husband and
wife team Joe
and Mary try
their hands at
a fancy twirl -
success!



Bottom left:
Anthony and
social work
intern Joan
prefer a slower
dance.

Bottom right:
Swing was
definitely in
Louise and
Ron's steps!



MESSAGE
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Forcing developmentally disabled individuals into dispersed community settings that don't meet their needs is as much a violation of Olmstead as forcing them into institutions.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg

Dear Friends,

Last month, *Atlantic Magazine* published an article titled: *Who Decides Where Autistic Adults Live?** The author, the parent of a young adult with a developmental disability, takes the reader through an elaborate examination of exactly what is occurring here in New York, as well as all across the entire country. She chronicles the recent history of how our society has chosen to care for and treat people with disabilities and how the entire field is being upended by the federal government via the CMS (Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services).

The article is focused clearly on people with autism, but the actions and steps taken by the government are completely attributable to every consumer here at CLC. The driving force behind this reform is the fact that "10,000 baby boomers are entering Medicare and Social Security every day and 500,000 autistic children will become adults in the next ten years." Both of these groups draw their funds from the same pool of money.

Given the sheer number of baby boomers and the enormous increase in the incidence of autism, we are all faced with solving the problem of how to not only provide reasonable care, but to define what reasonable care is, and who should have the last word on defining all of the terms and language describing it.

How to define the term *community* takes on a major role in this discussion and has great implications in how services will be provided going forward. We have already seen mandates to eliminate what was called "sheltered workshops" accompanied

by the demand to place people in independent employment earning at least minimum wage. A wonderful idea, and most humane – but how is this possible?

Many people with I/DD are not able to reach this goal and we all ask what will become of them? There is no "one size fits all" in this debate. We have much to ponder in the upcoming months.

Many of the new federal regulations are already passed. I urge you all to download and read the article as a means of understanding what is happening to us and to the hundreds of thousands of disabled individuals receiving care right now. The link can be found at the end of this article.

Switching gears now, it is finally summertime and many of our consumers are planning their vacations, attending barbecues and simply enjoying just being outside without freezing! Gardens are being planted and more and more of our consumers are participating in horseback riding at our Winslow affiliate.

Watching the progress some of our consumers have made in just a few months has been amazing. It's so gratifying to see someone improve from being frightened of his or her horse, then befriending it and finally showing real confidence and enjoying the ride. It won't be long now before our chickens begin laying eggs. We've completed our art show at the Mount Kisco Public Library and everyone is excited about our *Hidden Treasures* Show on June 17. It promises to be our best one yet. See you there!

*Lutz, Amy, *Who decides where autistic adults live?*
The Atlantic Magazine. May 26, 2015
Found at: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/05/who-decides-where-autistic-adults-live/393455/>

John Porcella

**A WALK FOR
MY BROTHER VINNIE**

On Friday, May 17, charitable forces from all walks of life gathered at FDR Park in Yorktown Heights to help support the work of a local not-for-profit. CLC's Pound Ridge consumers were right in the middle of the action, walking with area military, police and even a local Zumba group at the annual event for *My Brother Vinnie*.

Based in Yorktown and volunteer driven, *My Brother Vinnie* focuses on veterans' advocacy, animal advocacy and the good work of *Special Olympics*. Their mission: *Helping Mankind One Good Deed at a Time!*



CONSUMER REPORTS

By Joanne Contillo, Kitchawan House

(This feature is created and written by consumers.)

My trip to the Florida Keys was one of the best vacations since I've lived at CLC. I went on an airplane and I was scared at first. I felt better after we were in the air. I went swimming in the pool, and I danced outside of the pool and we were all having fun. We went to a lot of different shops to buy souvenirs.



I almost couldn't wait until they cooked the crab!

I shared a room with two other ladies and we had our own bathroom and the master bedroom.

Delores, Devika, Patrice and Jack took very good care of us. We ate a lot of delicious foods and had a big barbecue. We even caught a baby lobster, crabs, and fish from the water. We ate dinner one night while watching the sunset. I had my first pifa colada. Of course, there was no alcohol in there. It was really good.

I really liked being away and I hope I can go on more nice trips. They are a lot of fun!



I loved to go crabbing with my good friend Scott

CHRISTINE JOHNSTON JOINS CLC BOARD

Christine Johnston joined CLC's Board of Directors as of January 1, 2015. A longtime Mount Kisco resident, Mrs. Johnston is a semi-retired interior designer who is well known in the community for her fine work and artistic flair.

She resides with her son Anthony, who has worked for CLC for over 20 years performing maintenance work at the main offices. The new Board member has a history of volunteerism, having donated her time to the Ombudsman program for the disabled, the March of Dimes, Northern Westchester Hospital and the now closed St. Agnes Hospital.

Of her new position, Mrs. Johnston comments, "I was honored to be asked to serve on the CLC Board, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to help further the mission of this wonderful agency."



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Roger J. Cooper, President; Sandra Dammann, R.N., Secretary; Robert Brody, Treasurer; Hon. Leonard Eaton; Robert Heller; Christine Johnston; Leo Kaytes; Priscilla Orr; Mina Sallis
John E. Porcella, Ph.D., Executive Director

MBIA DONATIONS A WINDFALL FOR CLC

MBIA, a Westchester-based financial services firm, was moving from its offices in Armonk and needed to downsize its furniture stock. CLC had just relocated to its newly built headquarters across town that was much larger than its former building and, for the most part, empty. So how did this donation come about?

Christine Johnston, a new CLC Board member, was asked by Valerie Brown (her husband Jay Brown is CEO at MBIA) if the agency that her son Anthony works for could use any of the furniture. She and her husband then made the connection to donate to CLC.

Moving day was Feb 12th and it took many hands and several moving trucks to haul the five loads of furniture from MBIA's Armonk corporate offices to CLC. By the end of the day, all the desks, chairs and miscellaneous items arrived in Mount Kisco in good condition.



The MBIA donation included office furniture, tables, chairs, filing cabinets, mini fridges, lamps, artwork, office supplies, patio furniture and more. "We'll be able to use these items in many of the residences as well as in our new main office," says CLC Executive Director John Porcella. "If you walk around the building, you'll find that we've already furnished the upstairs reception area with couches, loveseats, tables and lamps that were all donated by MBIA."

CLC sends a special thank you to Jay and Valerie Brown and MBIA staff Kimberly Osgood and Jean McGovern, who coordinated the donation. Kudos to Whalen's Moving Company for all their help. This is the first donation from MBIA to CLC, but hopefully not the last!



Above: The MBIA furniture donation included hundreds of pieces of furniture and office accessories. All will be put to good use at CLC.

At right: CLC Board members gather around a new conference table, compliments of MBIA.



**WINSLOW:
THERE'S MAGIC IN THOSE HORSES**

At a recent Administration Meeting our eminent Clinical Director Dr. Delores Lulgjuray boldly pronounced, "I have been replaced by Mr. Ed," when she was asked to describe the impact the riding program has had on her clients.

Although Delores may have been using a bit of hyperbole, the positive impact on the consumers seems to have been in many cases nothing short of a small miracle.

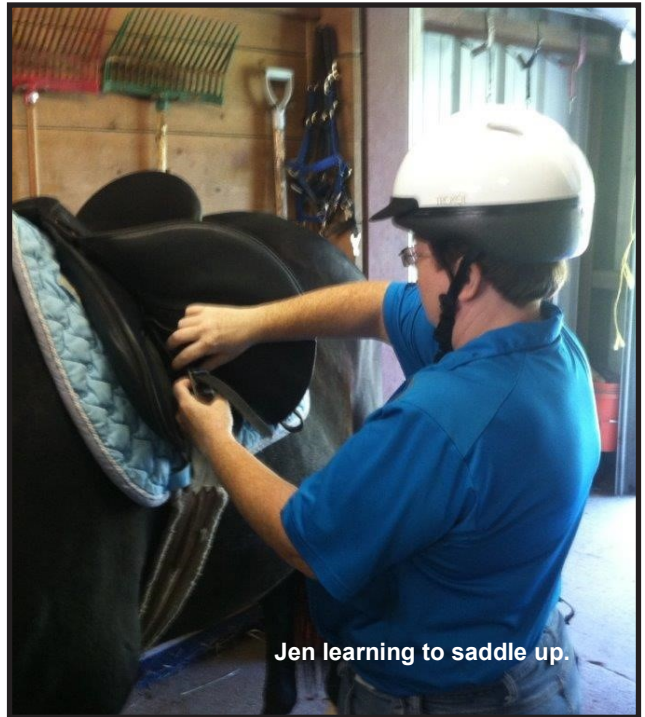
Our Executive Director Dr. John Porcella was equally amazed when he saw a normally melancholy consumer excitedly dashing about at the barn, eager to take on a new task. "What's gotten into her? he exclaimed. My answer, "She is undergoing "four-legged therapy!"

So what is it about horseback riding, and specifically the Winslow Program, that is responsible for all this positive change? Is there a mystical bond that exists between horses and disabled people? Maybe.

After spending several Sundays at the Winslow Therapeutic Riding Center in Warwick, NY, I believe the answer is more fundamental. Horses are beautiful, intelligent animals that despite being prey animals can readily learn to trust those people who treat them well. They have soulful, soft eyes that have a human quality which attracts people to them, including our consumers.

The Winslow program is ingeniously designed to teach a variety of riding and ground skills that will eventually enable each consumer the opportunity to become the complete horsemen rather than merely going on a *pony ride*. The consumers are challenged each week by caring and professional staff that encourage them to overcome their fears and limitations through a gentle and persistent approach.

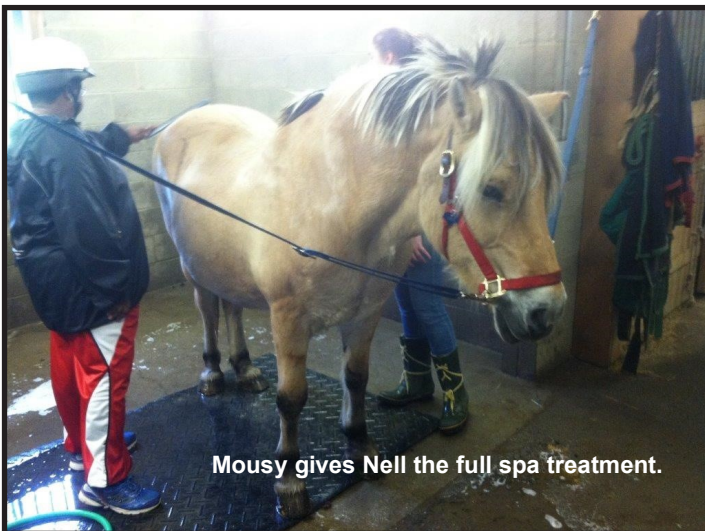
On any given Sunday, consumers leave the program feeling a sense of awe through their bond with their equine friends. They gain a sense of personal mastery in being to be able to rise to each challenge, whether it is on the ground or on the horses back. I guess it really could be magic after all!



Jen learning to saddle up.



Round Penning at Winslow



Mousy gives Nell the full spa treatment.



Joyce cleaning Duke.

EILEEN!

BUSY WOMAN, SAVVY SHOPPER

I first met Eileen at CLC's dancing session at Westchester Ballroom, located across from CLC's new Radio Circle Drive headquarters. She and other consumers were learning ballroom dance moves. "It's really fun and I get a good workout," she said enthusiastically as she and her partner glided around wood floors with the others. The group certainly seemed like they could have danced all night.

Fast forward a week to our interview. Eileen opened her door and a broad smile lit up her face. "Come in, come in. I'm Eileen," she said, extending her hand. After chatting for a few minutes and taking a tour of her home, we decided to go outdoors, where a bright sun was trying to warm the early spring air.

Eileen lives at a very lovely apartment complex on a quiet cul de sac in Mount Kisco, situated within walking distance to her work and the local shops. "I've been with CLC for twenty-two years," she says. "And nine years ago I married Jim. He's a great guy. For our five-year wedding anniversary, Jim and I went to the Bahamas. We took a Canadian cruise for our honeymoon," she says shyly.

After working the night shift at Marshall's Department Store for eight years, Eileen got tired of evenings out. "So I got a good job at TJ Maxx. I help manage the fitting room four or five days a week from 9:30am until 1:30pm."

Since it's only an eight block walk, Eileen doesn't have transportation expenses. It's nice to have afternoons and evenings free," she says happily, "And I get the employee discount!"



Eileen enjoys sitting in her front yard and relaxing with a good book.

But Eileen is not all work and no play. She has traveled extensively and is planning to visit more sites his summer. This August, Eileen has booked a spot with her travel agency and will explore the rocky seashore of Maine.

Closer to home, she's visited the Jersey shore's jewel, Cape May. "I really liked that town. The old houses were so beautiful!"

Historic Philadelphia was another holiday destination, and Eileen remembers sampling the city's legendary cheese steaks. "They were the best I ever had!" she recalls. Eileen has also traveled to the West Coast. "I stayed in Hollywood, California and went to Universal Studios and walked the Santa Monica Pier. It's famous, you know."

When not exploring the country, Eileen spends time reading. Her current favorite is Robert B. Parker's *Trouble in Paradise*. She's also fond of several TV shows.

"I really like the cooking show *Pioneer Woman*, and I try to watch *Murder She Wrote*, *Law and Order* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*. Oh, and the *I Love Lucy* reruns are sooo funny! I can watch them over and over."

A savvy shopper, Eileen doesn't care much for movie theaters calling them expensive and uncomfortable. "Have you seen the price of movie theater popcorn? I'd rather rent a DVD and make my own snacks at home."

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Highlights from the
Hidden Treasures
Annual Talent Show and Art Exhibit

Will be featured in the next issue!

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from you!

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