

THE OPEN DOOR

PROVIDING QUALITY CARE TO DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY LIVING



ZOOMing Forward!

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS LIFE (CLC's day habilitation program.) We've changed our name from Culinary Connections to Community Connections Life. The website will roll out soon.

In early spring, Covid-19 brought the world to a screeching halt. To say we were living in a world upside down was an understatement.

Here at CLC we had to recreate our view of things, change directions, and stick a finger into the air to see which way the wind was blowing. Not only did we change *with* the wind, we changed *like* the wind.

Prior to the closing of New York State Day Programs on March 17th 2020, we

were preparing individuals and staff for a new endeavor - ZOOM TV. We licensed ourselves up and began evaluating the strengths of our staff, as we needed a cadre of people to lead tutorials, demonstrations, and shows.

Very soon, however, we had that light-bulb moment—we realized that it should be CLC *individuals* who should lead the shows. Our instincts were correct, and our new ZOOM channel has been a pleasantly surprising hit!

The idea was to create online video conferencing content with a collegiate quality. We had an eagerness to connect, to stay engaged with one another. We knew we had to be physically separated, but we didn't want to be emotionally separated.

We started our shows with Covid-19 precautions repeated daily, but soon had to change our start time to earlier. This gave everyone time to say hello and chat, until we reached pinnacles of joyous chaos that had us all smiling and laughing at seeing each other on TV in our respective homes.

Official programming began with **Gino L.** making his famous home-made nachos from his Florida home kitchen. A week later he prepared apple turnovers. His mother and father served as camera operators (talk about supportive!) He made Rachel Ray look pedestrian.

Programs continued with **Jen F.** whipping up Chicken Caesar Salad from

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CELEBRATING OUR HEROES—Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week

Patti Hurley



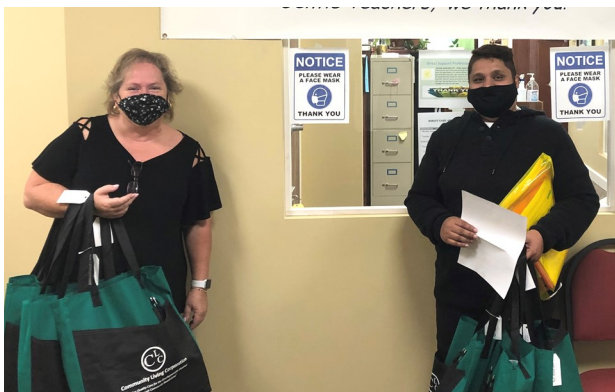
During Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week, CLC individuals plastered the walls at the 135 main offices with *Shout Outs* — heartfelt notes of thanks.

In recognition of Direct Service Professionals Week, the CLC Board of Directors and management team sends its thanks to all of our direct care professionals!

*The most therapeutic professionals in the field.
Gentle Teachers we thank you!*



Wayne Maxwell was a daily gift card winner.



Carol Smith and Devika Lallman picked up CLC tote bags filled with treats and a gift card for their staff.

Special thanks to Patti Hurley, Ashley Eudene and Amanda McDonald for organizing and executing this terrific event.

It's that time of year again! CLC spent a week, September 14 to 18, *Direct Support Professional Appreciation Week*, doing a little extra for our direct care staff to show our gratitude for all of their hard work. Besides being showered with thank you's, staff members were presented with CLC tote bags filled with goodies and a Dunkin' Donuts gift card. In addition, each day of this special week two staffers were selected in a random drawing. These winners received gift cards or paid days off. Heartfelt thanks go to all of you who are there for CLC individuals every day, and especially during this difficult time.

As part of the celebration, CLC individuals filled out appreciation *Shout Outs* to their staff, thanking them for everything they do. These *Shout Outs* were posted at CLC main offices all week to underscore how amazing our staff is and how thankful our consumers are to have these dedicated professionals with them.

To: Sueli Distadio, From: John
"Thank you for being a nice person."

To: Divine Williams, From: AJ
"Thank you. You are like a mother to me."

To: Trish Pina, From: Emily P.
"Thank you for being my favorite manager and bringing JJ to Moseman so we can play every day."

To: Joann Cerretani, From: Jay S.
"Thank you for all of the coffee."

To: Benniqua Coleman, From: Kitchawan Guys
"Thank you for making our weekends fun and beyond special with movie nights."

To: Diana Robinson, From: Scott D.
"Thank you for always taking me on outings and getting me coffee."

To: Sueli Distadio, From: Stephen M.
"Thank you for your help in being a good staff, talking to us, taking us to appointments and different places and helping in doing grocery shopping."

To: Lawrence Cherry, From: Robin C.
"Thank you for doing everything for us."

To: Joyce Price, From: Stephen M.
"Thank you for your help cleaning, talking, making a conversation with you, taking a ride to Target and for doing an overnight check in on us."

To: Monica Marvin, From: Louise B.
"Thank you for being a nice new staff to me."

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings Family and Friends,

First, I'm delighted to report that the long-awaited wage increase for our direct care staff has finally been implemented. We have received notification from OPWDD Rate Setting Unit that the newly calculated rates are revised and finalized. With this completed, the increase(s) will be reflected in the September 25th payroll period.

When this news was announced at the regularly scheduled House Managers meeting, it was met with applause and cheers. Remember that these increases were approved and ordered by the NYS Legislature months and months ago. While this was indeed good news, we must never miss any opportunity to lobby for greater and more appropriate compensation for all of our direct care staff. Simply stated: without them we have no programs.

Let's not lose sight of the fact that the State Aid to Localities Funding has already been cut some 20%. The effect of this particular type of funding cut is mitigated somewhat by the fact that we do not operate any of the specific types of programs targeted by this particular funding cut. We at CLC, and along with every other provider agency in the State, are anxiously

waiting for the announcement of the impending cuts to our funding stream.

As you can imagine, the rumor mill is busy grinding out its own thoughts and proposals on these impending cuts. Personally, I do not think the cuts will be announced before the election, but this is no time to put our storm gear away. We are going to face enormous fiscal challenges as Albany tries to struggle with the financial effects of the pandemic while simultaneously dealing with the regular state budget demands.

I'll close this with some observations that the New Normal is here and we're part of it:

In the pre-pandemic days I could look out over the parking lot from my office. It was full to say the least, and a parking spot for an afternoon meeting was at a premium.

Suddenly, sometime around April the parking lot was empty. It seemed that almost immediately everyone was working at home. We received the smallest gasoline bill I'd ever seen – and I've been here a long time!

Then there were one or two rescheduled medical appointments, then another and another. Vehicles were moving again. Our clients were



masked up and they were giving their absolute best to determine how far six feet really was. They talked enthusiastically of attending the Day Hab program and joked about all of us looking like masked bank robbers.

Slowly we saw the reintroduction of other day programs and the development of plans to attend the programs as they come back on line. If the program doesn't meet all of the published safety features, we simply will not allow our consumer to attend that program until corrected. We allow zero tolerance when safety is involved.

Be well!

John Porcella

WANTED! Full & Part-Time Staff

CLC has full & part-time openings, including for direct care personnel.
Positive attitude, compassion & experience preferred.
Required: High School Diploma/GED,
valid driver's license for past three years, own transportation,
background check, drug testing.

Fax resumes to (914) 241-0578 or email HR at resumes@communitylivingcorp.org.

Incentives available for employee referrals.
Contact HR for details.

Sarah Fiske

Profiting in a Non-Profit World

Meet Sarah Fiske, CLC Controller. Originally from Vermont, Sarah graduated with a degree in accounting from picturesque Bentley University in Waltham, Massachusetts, just outside Boston. Utilizing her degree to enter the investment world, she began her career at prestigious Brown Brothers Harriman in Boston, where she earned her way up to accounting manager for the old line investment management firm.

Although settled in a solid career, Sarah had a yearning for volunteerism; she felt there had to be something besides working in wealth management. So she decided to leave... for Archeology?

Sarah indeed gave notice and landed as Controller at the Archeology Institute of America in Boston, where her true passion for nonprofit work flourished. Fortunately for CLC, that was not to last forever. In 2008, Sarah married a New Yorker named Charlie, moved to the Empire State, and became Assistant Controller at CLC. Here, she learned the ropes from then Controller Priscilla Orr.

Shortly thereafter Priscilla retired and Sarah took over the reins. Twelve years on she remains responsible for all agency financial processes... Medicaid billing, finance, auditing, insurance. Besides managing the nuts and bolts of CLC's financial operation, she works in conjunction with

Executive Director John Porcella to set policy for financially impactful decisions.

In her personal life, Sarah is happily married to a high school math teacher — yes, that Charlie. Son Riley age 10 and daughter Kelsey age 7 keep the couple on their toes. As for hobbies, managing CLC responsibilities while devoting energy to two children leaves little extra time. “My kids are my hobby!” (as every parent instinctively knows).



Sarah's talented seven-year-old daughter Kelsey took this photo of her mom. Thanks, Kelsey!

“CLC is a wonderful family to be a part of. It is also so personally fulfilling to belong to this special world and to help navigate us through these changing times.” Sarah continues, “I think CLC is uniquely blessed to have such a dedicated, passionate congregation of employees—they are truly what make this agency the gem that it is.”

Some people are lucky to find their passion in life. Sarah is one of those fortunate ones, maneuvering from business studies to wealth management to a vibrant non-profit like CLC, where she continues to provide outstanding returns.

- D. Descloux

TRUSTS 101

New in 2020, this feature will inform and update consumers and their families about CLC Pooled Supplemental Needs Trusts.

In 1996, CLC Foundation, Inc. was one of the first non-profits in New York State to establish a Pooled Supplemental Needs Trust with the help of Community Living Corporation, Inc. Today, the Trusts are among the oldest and largest in New York State.

Did You Know...

CLC Foundation, Inc. and our pooled trust is under advisement. Investment advisement! *United Asset Strategies (UnitedAsset.com)* is the investment advisor to our trust accounts. They are located in Garden City, New York and run by Founder and President, Lee Delorenzo. Lee has been named by *Forbes* as a *Top Women Advisor* in 2020 and 2019, and was inducted into *Barron's Hall of Fame* in 2019. United was named as *Forbes Top 50 Wealth Advisors* in New York State. Our families and beneficiaries can rest assured their funds are in safe hands.

CLC Pooled Trust has over 300 beneficiaries and \$35 million in funds set aside for their use in order to improve their quality of life. Parents and other loved ones set-up trusts to ensure that funds can be used for the benefit of a disabled beneficiary without making them ineligible for entitlements such as Medicaid, SNAP, housing allowance, Social Security and others. Many of our families have already established a trust or a place holder trust. If you need additional information, please contact our office at (914) 241-2076.

Staff Announcements: Our team recently said farewell to our trust bookkeeper of 13 years, Kathy Neggie, and welcomed a new staff member, Barbara Lew. Our special needs trust team is now eight and a key part of *CLC Foundation*, which also manages the arts education program *Hidden Treasures*, and a therapeutic riding program and Dayhab on our Winslow campus in Warwick, NY.

THE CLC TRANSPORTATION STORY

Launched in 1991, CLC Transportation (CLCT) is an integral part of the CLC family of companies. CLCT is a leading provider of transportation services for people with disabilities, the elderly, those with chronic illnesses, and people living with brain injuries.



As one of the very first transport companies of its kind in Westchester, CLCT drivers safely bring people to and from kidney dialysis, chemotherapy and physical therapy appointments, Day Hab programs, doctors' appointments, hospitals and more. They are also authorized to escort brain injury patients to the grocery store and laundromat. Steady growth has enabled CLCT to service all of Westchester, Dutchess, Putnam, and Orange Counties and the Bronx.

MY HOSPITAL DISCHARGE PATIENTS ARE EXTREMELY HAPPY WITH THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY CLCT.
— CORPORATE CLIENT

"Other companies say they are a leading provider of these services, but we bring much more to the table," says Desiree Antonini, Executive Director of CLCT for the past three years. "Our drivers are hand-picked." Upon hire, drivers are given an intensive orientation with a special emphasis on sensitivity training. All drivers are commercially licensed and screened in accordance with the Department of Motor Vehicles Article 19A program. "Above all," says Desiree, "our drivers are well trained, professional, caring and most of all patient."

In an industry with high turnover rates, CLCT has an impressively low departure rate, with a majority of staff having 10

years or more of service. "We have a few who began driving when the company launched in 1991," she adds proudly. "I realized very soon after starting here that this was a special place, with extraordinary people who cared a whole lot more than the average worker."

CLCT operates 21 vehicles - 18 ambulettes and three large vans. Drivers typically walk with customers from the vehicle to the office door, or escort them in their wheelchairs to their appointments.

I LOVE CLCT! THEY ARE ALWAYS ON TIME AND THE DRIVERS ARE VERY FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL.
— INDIVIDUAL CLIENT

CLCT has been impacted, as we all have, during the Pandemic. And although the organization has always had the resources to transport people, many programs and medical offices were closed. Business has opened up recently, according to Desiree, and moving toward the old normal. "We hope to welcome back all our friends and clients soon!" she says.

Desiree Antonini is Executive Director of CLCT. She has 20 years of experience in management and medical marketing in the Westchester and surrounding areas and has developed business relationships with hundreds of medical practices, hospitals and nursing/ rehab centers. Her familiarity with local medical infrastructure is a good match with CLCT.



CLCT is fully insured and New York State DOT and Westchester County certified & licensed.
Contact CLCT at (914) 241-0112.

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SUCCESS IS BUT A CLICK AWAY

By Jonathan Lukens (with much help from Rebecca Bonnamo)

Positive reinforcement comes in many forms and works for humans and animals alike. In particular, clicker training has become increasingly popular training animals. The sound of the click serves as an acoustical marker, which notifies the animal when the desired behavior was performed correctly. After the click, the animal is provided with a reinforcer, usually food. Zoos around the world now utilize a clicker or similar marker to solve behavioral issues for animals in captivity.

People can also be taught very precise skills utilizing a clicker. Generally referred to as “Tag Teaching,” the use of a clicker is nearly identical.

At The New York College of Medicine, the clicker has become an effective tool in teaching Osteopathic Surgeons how to make precise incisions into bones. Airline pilots are taught to utilize the clicker during flight simulations, and sports and dance teams use the clicker to refine challenging skills.

Rebecca Bonnamo, CLC’s Winslow Farm Day Hab Coordinator, took clicker training to new heights (actually, down on the farm.) Drawing on her experience as an animal trainer and a zoo educator, Rebecca clicker trained three resident goats, and

created a unique educational program for Winslow Day Hab individuals via Winslow’s Zoom channel.

While participants watched and learned, she taught associative learning, pairing the clicker with delivery of licorice treats (who knew goats love licorice?!). Step one is to pair the “click sound” with the delivery of the treat. Once the relationship between the two is established, more complex behaviors are taught.

Participants are learning about important concepts that they can use in their own lives such as “cause and effect,” which is helpful in their understanding of why things happen when they behave in a certain way. They learn about reinforcement schedules and how separate behaviors can be linked together (behavioral chaining) by teaching the goats to ring the bell and jump on a bench sequentially.

Rebecca encourages participants to always end a tough task with something enjoyable “so you want to do it again.” This class helps participants reflect on their unique struggles and gain a greater understanding of themselves and each other.

Sometimes, big challenges can be overcome by a simple click.



Rebecca clicker training Lulu the goat. Lulu is learning how to station train - how to stand at an object and be patient.

“CLC Zoom participants watched a video of how to teach the behavior, said Rebecca. “Together we came up with a plan on what steps Lulu should take to do it successfully.

Knowing that the goat has difficulty being patient when food is involved, we also learned a bit about how to cultivate being patient with ourselves, families, staff, etc. We discussed what can trigger us and what we can do to learn the steps to becoming patient, like we did with Lulu.”

HIDDEN TREASURES ZOOMS BACK!

The popular arts education program for people with special needs is back for fall 2020 with online classes Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday evenings via Zoom. All three classes just \$99 for the semester. Questions? Call Lucille McCarthy (914) 439-5129 or Sharon Sinnott (914) 643-2943

17th Annual

CLC Foundation

Gala

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 2021

STAY TUNED FOR
MORE DETAILS



Continued from P. 1

ZOOMING FORWARD!

scratch, fish tacos, and zucchini lasagna. **Remy H.** composed a fabulous Japanese dish. **Jose A.** rolled mini-meatballs right before our eyes; his mother worked the camera. **Maliq S.** dished up Chicken Alfredo and **Alex D.** made flakey butter biscuits that we swore we could smell baking.

It was the authority with which these folks made and discussed their dishes that made it such a treat to watch. Seeing everyone cook from their kitchens had us salivating and we were effusive in our praise for our TV show hosts. For that's what we have become...TV show hosts.

Joseph B. is an exceptional bowler. He got out his bowling ball and gave a lesson to others, who got out their bowling balls and followed along with immense concentration.

We were doing it, and right in the midst of a Pandemic. We were building a platform to reveal our value through our capabilities, talents and natural ease - all in front of the camera and our peers.

"Remarkable" has been the word passed back and forth by the staff, expressing how impressed we've all been with the level of ability unbeknownst to all. Care managers, staff, parents and residential managers have joined to see our hosts perform. But most remarkable is the profound engagement displayed by CLC individuals. Everyone is so *into it*, that it has burgeoned into something truly special and connective. Just look at our channel guide...

ZOOM TV's Staff Channel Guide

TBF TV—Total Body Fitness channel – Led by Les “The Best” For-man.

Les developed physical exercises connected with breathing exercises connected to mindfulness and created Total Body Fitness. **The Residential Co-Director Allison McKay** leads a

yoga, breathing and mindfulness meditation class that takes place every Thursday.

DMTV – Dave’s Music Television Channel – Led by Dave “the Doc”

Chun. Dave developed several program seminars from “Name that Tune,” a game show based on the original, to the **Eenie Meenie Miney Moe Band.** A virtual band where all participants play the roles for a concert tour. This has become a phenomenal hit.

Auditions have been held every Friday for weeks.

The band is almost complete with **Hartley S. on**

bongos, Tammy L. on guitar, Crystal C. on electronic drums and Danny E.’s vocals. In addition, the EMMM band has an amazing group of backup singers, “**The Minettes**,” featuring the voices of **Phoebe M., Angela P. and Alma R.** There are so many positions to fill including producers, stage directors, and roadies to “**The Mojo Dancers**” led by Tom *the Mooch*. Tom won the spot with an amazing breakdancing audition on his bedroom floor.

FFB TV—Farming Fragrance and Bling – Led by Christine Somyk.

Chris’ group is exposed to the artistry of candle, soap, and jewelry making. Participants share their ideas on technique, and how they have and will continue to practice their craft.

BIZ TV– Business Channel —Led by John Sandoval. John covers the

gambit from explicating the procedures of running **JoJo’s Café and Markets**, to money management, menu design, restaurant cleaning, inventory and how to make teamwork into dreamwork. This extraordinary seminar also has smoothie demonstrations, espresso-based drink demonstrations and more.

CC TV—The Cooking Channel – Led by Jack Mungovan. This is a forum



Gino presenting his cooking show on CLC’s ZOOM channel. His mom told us that Halloween is Gino’s high holiday. (Note Gino’s iPhone camera leaning up against the paper towel roll. Ingenuity at its finest.)

where clients display their talents and present their dishes as they do on every cooking channel today. Carol Small started us off with a Shepherd’s Pie that looked amazing complete with whipped mashed potatoes squeezed from a frosting bag in a clever design.

LIT TV – Literature Television – Led by Jack Mungovan. This literary

forum spans genres, going from one of our team members’ **Terri Headington’s** children’s stories to classic short stories with a focus on moral and ethical development. A helping of fun is written into every show!

We are the editors and discuss Terri’s children’s books (as the author joins us on ZOOM from England!) as if we were the publishers. We review not only the themes in the book and how they apply to our lives, but if and how they would apply to others.

We have big plans for the future of our channel. We’ve squeezed the lemons of the pandemic into the tastiest lemonade imaginable. “There’s nothing we can’t conquer if we simply conquer together! Because we are not only better together, but now, we’re bigger than the sum of our parts.”

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**GETTING REEL
WITH STEPHEN**



**MOVIE AND PLAY REVIEWS
FROM CLC'S
IN-HOUSE EXPERT**

Since I have not been able to go to the movie theater due to COVID-19, I've had the opportunity to watch movies from the comfort of my home on television. I suggest everyone check their TV listings — plenty of good movies are free!

Beverly Hills Cop, 1984
Starring Eddie Murphy

I give this movie 5
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

What I like most about this movie is the music and especially the song, "The Heat is On," sung by Glenn Frey. I think this is really good music.

Overall, the movie was funny, and it helped me forget what's going on around me. Everyone should see it so they can feel better.

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