

# THE OPEN DOOR

PROVIDING QUALITY CARE TO DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY LIVING

## WALKING TALL WITH MAYOR GINA PICINICH

*Terri Headington, a Community Connections Life recruiting staffer, contacted the office of the Mayor of Mount Kisco and was immediately granted an interview for CLC individuals in the program. On Monday, November 16th at 10:30am, we were on! Our group had carefully prepared questions and checked them twice. And... we wowed her! (We kind of wowed ourselves, too.)*

CLC's Community Connections Life DayHab participants got the scoop of the year, a ZOOM video conferencing interview with the Mayor of Mount Kisco, The Honorable Mayor Gina Picinich. In the case of our Mayor, honorable may be an understatement. Her humility and generosity of spirit was infectious, and together the group

laughed and learned in a uniquely inclusive environment.

Each of our CC Life participants thought of and wrote down their own questions. They challenged her and surprised her with their civic mindedness and competence as interviewers.

Tom led us off with a surprise one out of the gate. "Do you know any famous people?" It was priceless. Mayor Gina commented that she only knows local politicians, if that counts!

Sonia was up next with, "What steps did you take to become Mayor?" We were surprised when she replied that initially she had no intention of becoming Mayor, just the desire to solve problems with a group of people she knows and trusts, to see if they can make the town

better. It sounded like us, a group of people who together, know and trust one another, helping to make our lives better.

Mousy asked "What does a Mayor do?" and "Why did you want to become Mayor?" Patsy asked if the new housing development by the train station would accommodate people with disabilities? The answer was a resounding yes!

The Mayor went on to tell us all about it and that stores would accompany the project. Lois, Patsy's wife of 30 years, asked when the Shoprite was to be moved from Bedford Hills? (don't know yet). The Mayor couldn't believe the quality of questions. We weren't joking around!

Then we got personal when someone asked, "What do you like to eat?" She said, "spaghetti and meatballs for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

*Continued on P. 7*

## HOLIDAYS AT HOME



London Road



Moseman Avenue

On Christmas day, folks at London Road and Moseman Avenue celebrated with festive holiday traditions— bountiful dinners, posing in holiday pajamas and watching classic movie like "Home Alone 2: Lost in New York." Photos thanks to Ana Hiraldo and Trisha Piña.

*More on P. 4*

Next issue: March 2021

# CAN I VOTE IN THE U.S. IF I HAVE A DISABILITY?

SOURCED FROM FINDLAW.COM UPDATED OCTOBER 20, 2020



Voting laws in the U.S. have been changing since the U.S. Constitution was signed in 1776. At the time, only a small group of individuals could vote. This group included white males who owned land and were at least 21 years old.

Now, voting laws are much different. The right to vote is given to all U.S. citizens who have not been disenfranchised (or stripped of their right to vote). But what about those with mental and/or physical disabilities? Can you vote if you've been diagnosed with a disability?

The answer is maybe. Since voting laws are still partially determined by each state, your best resource is your local election website. The information below, however, may help determine your eligibility.

## Americans With Disabilities Act

According to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), anyone with a mental disability who has an understanding of what it means to vote is allowed to vote in federal elections. Being diagnosed with a short or long-term disability does not directly impact your right to vote as a U.S. citizen, but your ability to vote could be affected by the state you live in.

The word "disability" can have numerous connotations. but many definitions include the idea that a disability is a condition that limits an individual mentally and/or physically, and may affect sensory, movement, and processing skills. A disability could be anything from a short-term injury to long-term impairment.

## Help America Vote Act (HAVA)

Passed by Congress in 2002, HAVA created standards and procedures that states follow for federal elections.

Some of the programs and procedures started by HAVA:

- States must keep databases for statewide voter registration (except in North Dakota where registration is not required).
- States must have processes for proper voter identification.
- Voter information must be readily available.
- The Election Assistance Commission (EAC) must conduct research to help improve elections.
- Voter equipment must be tested and certified.

HAVA is meant to help with all aspects of voting and requires that states provide accessible voting locations for people with disabilities to participate in federal elections. If there isn't a fully accessible location, voters must be given an alternative location they can go to. Or, voters must be given another option for voting on or before election day.

Source: Findlaw.com

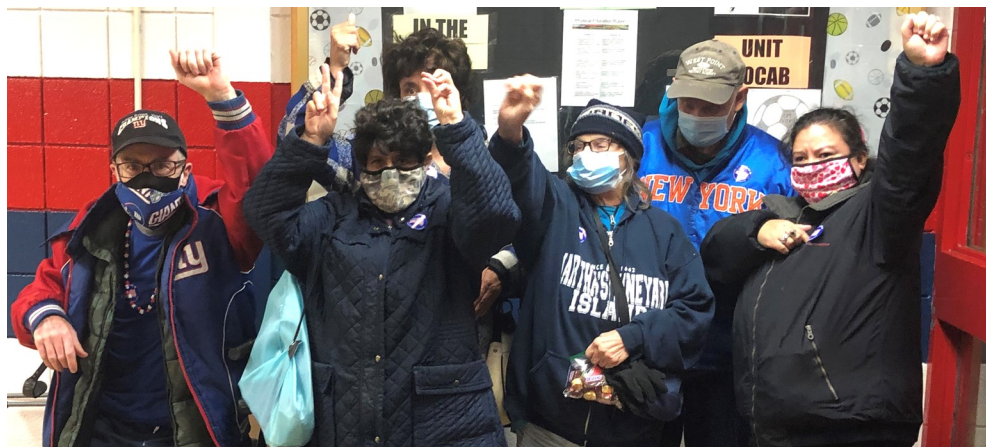
# WE GOT OUT OUR VOTE!



Even the Pandemic couldn't stop these CLCers from voting!

Masked up and ready to go, CLC made sure those who could vote got to the polls safely to support the candidates of their choice.

Thanks to Joanna Raynor for submitting this to The Open Door.



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## In the Era of Change and Challenge

Greetings Family and Friends,

Last year, around this month, I noticed there began a sudden interest in using the word “so” to begin nearly every sentence. Would you like to make some pasta? So... begin with some hot water. Did you enjoy the movie? So... it was a little too violent for the children. Are you a democrat or a republican? So... that is a very hard and possible dangerous question. Need air in your tires? So... you need to get to a service station.

So... what is the point of all this? The point of all this is the recognition that how we act, the way we respond to things, indeed the way we all live, is constantly changing, remaking itself. “So” as a sentence starter might be weakening. Possibly because it doesn’t add much to the sentence it is starting.

To be honest, I’m not quite sure that the word “so” is really gone as a sentence starter. However, I do think I hear its replacement.

The new buzz of the month is the word “challenge.” It is there; all over the

linguistic landscape. Just focus a bit and you will hear it, too. And yes, we are all being challenged.

Things to do, or should be done are now challenges. The economy is a huge challenge. Sadly, the challenge of deciding to pay rent or buy food this month is a challenge that no one should ever have to face.

In the course of the day, I often run into some of the CLC consumers and many staff members. The question I hear most often is “When are we going to go back to normal?” It is amazing that such a simple question can be so challenging.

**The question I hear most often is “When are we going to go back to normal?”**

Everyone has been affected by this - the rich, the poor, the young and the old. Surgical masks have become a fashion accessory. Anxiety and sometimes fear can easily be found. Many people are simply scared. There used to be schedules and routines that were enthusiastically followed. Return-



ing to “normal” might fix all or some of this, but just what is “normal?”

CLC consumers are asking the same questions that heads of state ask. Most of the time we simply don’t know where normal is, or where it is going to be.

The challenges facing us are manifold. We need to look honestly at what is before us and weave it into the new routine, one in which all people feel the comfort of knowing where their next meal is coming from.

Be well, and stay well!

*John Porcella*



## NOTES FROM THE HEART



**Each year around the winter holidays, family and friends send notes of gratitude to CLC staff. Here are a few received this year:**

*Thanks for all that you do for our sister.*

*Thank you so much for always caring for my daughter.*

*Thank you all for all your hard work, dedication and caring.*

*Thank you for all the help and kindness you give to our son.*

*Thanks to Irene Quill*

# THE 2020 HOLIDAYS AT TODD ROAD



Photos thanks to Natarsha Wynn.

## 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 pays out \$3,000,000 in distributions each year on behalf of our trust clients. These disbursements afford beneficiaries greater independence, comfort and personal fulfillment.

CLC participants in the trusts utilize their pooled supplemental needs trust accounts for a variety of approved expenditures, including to fund vacations with *Creative Escapes* and to join recreational activities such as *Hidden Treasures*.

CLC Foundation currently employs three trust officers. Our officers are responsible for maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations; building strong relationships with the beneficiaries and most of all, maintaining participants' eligibility for all public entitlements such as Medicaid and Social Security benefits. Beneficiaries should reach out to their trust officer to discuss individual needs and concerns.

If you have any questions, please call us at (914) 241-2076.

# PUMPKIN PARTY!

Halloween. Could it be the perfect Covid-19 holiday? Everyone wears a mask anyway!

Folks at Kitchawan secured plenty of pumpkins for their October house party. Decorations and a bountiful buffet were must haves.

*Special thanks to Devika Lallman and Benniqua Coleman for organizing the event and for this submission.*



Benniqua Coleman was photographer extraordinaire at the Kitchawan party.



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Email us your CLC photos & news!

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IT WON'T COST YOU AN EXTRA DIME!

ENTER THE LINK BELOW AND CLICK. AMAZON WILL  
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PASS THIS ON TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS!  
(YOU MUST DO THIS EACH TIME YOU SHOP)

**[HTTPS://SMILE.AMAZON.COM/CH/13-3563609](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/13-3563609)**

# THANKSGIVING WITH THE HIGHLANDERS



Robin C.

**Even with the Pandemic still with us, the Highlanders had plenty to be thankful for.**

The Highlanders (as CLC folks from Highland Avenue call themselves) celebrated Thanksgiving in style this year. Thanks to a generous benefactor (thank you!), the group enjoyed a bountiful spread of roast turkey with all the traditional trimmings. Plenty of delicious desserts topped off this abundant buffet. Thanks to Devine Williams for submitting these photos.



## CAKE AND PIE, OH MY!

## ARE THEY CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL? CLCERS THINK SO.



Community Connections Life's Hospitality Project whipped up a dazzling assortment of pies and cakes this Thanksgiving. Offerings included *Troy Oh Boy He's Back Oreo Cake*, *Pierre's Perfect Ginger Snap Pumpkin Pie with Maple Whipped Cream* and *Jen's Coconut Strut Cake*.



Instead of an agency-wide cake and pie sale (as was held in the past), this year the majority of desserts were delivered to CLC residences all over Westchester

County in time for their Thanksgiving feasts.

In the spirit of the season, chefs also cooked two turkeys and made turkey sandwiches on Portuguese rolls topped with lettuce, cranberry-mayo, turkey stuffing and cranberry sauce. These delights were enjoyed by Day-Hab participants. Many thanks to all those who baked, bought and delivered.

### 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](mailto:resumes@communitylivingcorp.org).

Incentives available for employee referrals. Contact HR for details.

**NEW DATE!**

17th Annual

CLC Foundation *Gala*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2021

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES



### HIDDEN TREASURES *ZOOMS* ALONG!

The popular arts education program for people with special needs continues on *Zoom* with online classes for just \$99 a semester.

Questions? Call Lucille McCarthy (914) 439-5129 or Sharon Sinnott (914) 643-2943

## SERVICE AWARDS

**Executive Director John Porcella presented years of service awards to staff. Congratulations!**

**20 Years**

Linda Van Dorn

**10 Years**

Rennett Gordon  
 Patricia Hurley  
 Renee Janvier  
 Lester McCarthy  
 Patrice Thompson  
 Chasidy Thorne

**15 Years**

Moses Osafo  
 Olanrewaju Oyekola

**5 Years**

Rebecca Bonomo	Laure Lachaud
Gullivers Edobor	Jillian Linhardt
Deneta Griffith	Michele Pirre
Anairovis Hiraldo	Akiba Whitely



Rebecca Bonomo



Patrice Thompson



Linda Van Dorn

Story and photos thanks to Patricia Hurley.

Continued from P. 1

### WALKING TALL WITH MAYOR GINA PICINICH



We said that we could do that, too!

Abby asked if she had any pets, and we learned about her daughters' parakeets and hermit crabs (the crabs may or may not be still with us.)

**The Honorable Gina Picinich  
 Mayor of Mount Kisco, NY**

Tammy asked about favorite music, to which her Honor replied, "*Fleetwood Mac* and *The Who*. My daughters introduced me to Rap, which I appreciate, but I can do without the foul language."

Gino then asked if she was single! We all burst out laughing as she spoke about her great husband and his *all in* support when she told him she was thinking about running for Mayor. Jackie found out her favorite activity was walking, and Jen learned she likes one cup of dark roast with half and half very early, before everyone, including her two daughters, wake up.

Ellen discovered her term is up next year, and her brother Tommy found out her top commitment is getting this vaccine out as soon as it's ready and trusted. Hartley asked

about her favorite plays, which turn out to *Les Miserable* and *Kiss Me Kate*.

Mayor Gina even recognized Angela when she asked if the great concerts will return to the library lawn after the Pandemic. "Yes!"

Then the tables turned and she expressed a heartwarming interest in us! Kate from Highland told the Mayor how much she loves the *Zoom* program, and that Jen and Gino were so good on the cooking show, they now have their own shows. Everyone excitedly explained all that they do and love about the program. Her Honor had questions for us, and we were happy to answer all and then some.

The *Zoom* interview couldn't have gone any better. The Mayor was so kind and genuinely interested in us. We felt as if we were her peers, and on that day and perhaps forever-more, we are. She certainly has some devout supporters in our group.

We talk quite a bit around here about edification and building one another up. Our discussion with Mayor Gina had us feeling like giants walking past the Empire State Building as if it was a blade of grass. Now that's walking tall.

J. Mungovan

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**GETTING REEL  
WITH STEPHEN**



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

*Since I still 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!*

***The Dukes of Hazzard, 2005***  
PG-13 2005

*I give this movie 5*  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

This is a great movie with great stars. The characters are Bo, Luke, Uncle Jessie and Daisy Duke, who is played by Jessica Simpson. It's a funny film everyone should see. It's only one hour and 45 minutes long.

I love this film because it helps me cope with the Pandemic.

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