

# THE OPEN DOOR

PROVIDING QUALITY CARE TO DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY LIVING

## CC LIFE'S COOL CATS TAKE THE FIELD!

Louis stepped up to the plate with visible determination. Lydia on third and Jillian on second. Everyone was on the edge of their seats. *The Miracle League* was about to live up to its name once again. It had been a remarkable comeback, losing at one point 15-6. Now, with the Cool Cats down 20-17, an air of excitement ripped through our bench.

We know Louis can hit. Everyone stood up against the dugout fence. As the ball arced in the air, Louis cocked his bat and leaned his whole body into the swing. Whack! The aluminum bat gonged and all the heads in the dugout looked up.

Lydia and Jillian froze watching the ball. Higher and higher, far over the left field fence. The team screamed in ebullience. "Yeah!" Home run! Louis casually tossed his bat, his wry smile filled with pride and glee.

Lydia and Jillian leaped up. Joey and Tom fist pumped. David and Sonia high fived. Danny and Eduardo exchanged a triumphant look. Mousy and Jen laughed and, like a miracle, the game was tied.

"Wait a minute, wait a minute, hold on you guys! The game is not over yet," laughed Coaches Cay and Earl. "Let's go back in the dugout." Indeed, it wasn't over. The opponents were last up to bat and won 23-21. But nobody cared. A sense of accomplishment, of being part of something great, something all their own, permeated each breath.

*The Miracle League* is a baseball organization created and founded in 2005 by J. Stephen Madey. A baseball enthusiast, New York State Umpire, and ardent supporter of people with disabilities, Mr. Madey is now Executive Director of *The Pelham Children's Center*.



*The Cool Cats are members of The Miracle League of Westchester.*



A legacy grant from the Westchester County Executive and the County Board of Legislators built a baseball field of rubberized cushioned surface at Ridge Road Park in Hartsdale, NY. What started out as 120 individuals of all disabilities and abilities, including wheelchairs, turned into more than 700 participants today.

After the game, while sauntering off the field in pairs and triplets, the team's *mom* and *cheerleader*, Marjorie Tully, let out an explosive laugh. "Hehehehe, This is the life!" That's right Marjorie, this is *Community Connections Life*, centers for meaningful engagement.

J. Mungovan



## MEET JASON

D. Descloux

A vibrant young man in his early 20s, Jason K. has been a CLC'er for nearly three years. So far, he's packed quite a bit into his time here.

Jason is a part of CCL (Community Connections Life) and says the program offers many hours a week of learning and fun. "I go on bus trips to interesting places; some are business trips where we learn from store owners how to run a shop or make fancy coffees.

"I also really like *Fun Fridays*. Sometimes we go bowling or sing Karaoke - that's the fun-est night!" he exclaims!"

Jason is an excellent singer and dancer, and he is not shy about telling me so. "I sing a lot of different songs, and sometimes I even make up new words. I'm a big fan of R&B music; I listen to Chris Brown songs a lot. Of course, I always go to the dances here; everybody looks forward to them."

Last spring, Jason met Emily, who also attends CCL. They have been an *item* ever since. "She's really nice," he says with the first hint of shyness I've heard so far.

Jason has done some traveling and hopes to do more. Besides Oregon and Texas, he's vacationed with *Creative Escapes* to Cape Cod, parts of



Connecticut, Rhode Island and Delaware. "I always have a blast on these trips. Jack M. makes them so much fun. We laugh all day long."

In the near future, Jason may start going to Winslow Farm. "I'm looking forward to working with the animals."

Jason doesn't cook. However he "loves to eat!" He likes any kind of pasta, especially spaghetti and meatballs. "The staff does a good job of making it. I really like seafood, too, but Emily is allergic. If there's any seafood on the table, it's all mine!"

In his spare time, Jason is a big fan of *Marvel* movies and favors *Spider-Man*. He likes to play football with his bud-



dies, and video games like *Fortnite* and games with *Marvel* super heroes. "I have a PS4 and play when I go home to visit my dad and family in New Rochelle. It's always nice to see my Dad.

"I am both Christian and Jewish, so I celebrate Christmas and Hanukkah. I get eight days of gifts and then one day of presents on Christmas. I'm really lucky." (Wide smile)

Jason's big dream is to go to Europe and especially to Prague. "I hear it's a very beautiful and romantic city. I'd take Emily though," he says with a bit of that shy tone again. "She kind of hinted about it a few times. Well, maybe more than a few times!"

## GETTING REEL WITH STEPHEN



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

## Reagan PG-13



Main Cast: Dennis Quaid as President Reagan and Penelope Ann Miller as Nancy Reagan  
Nick Searcy as James Baker; Skip Schwink as Jimmy Carter

This is a biographical drama about President Ronald Reagan. The movie begins with his journey from a small town to Hollywood glitter. It then moves on to his presidency and struggles against communism.

This was a very interesting movie about the life of the 40th President of the United States, his family, friends and especially his White House life. I give it 5 stars.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

It's the fall, and we have finally received some good news. Namely – the long-awaited April 1, 2024 rates have been received.

It should be noted that these rates include the promised rate increase that our well-deserved, hard-working staff have been waiting for. The increase will be retroactive for all eligible employees and distributed through the Human Resources Department just as soon as the funds are deposited.

Getting to this position has been a long and complicated process. The snags, changes and negotiations spent most of the waiting time in Albany and OPWDD. When Governor Hochul announced on April 22, 2024 that the budget had (finally) been passed, our Governor also announced the COLA that was included for the benefit of DSP staff. What was not

mentioned was that it would again take months of waiting before the funds would reach the individual providers.

Please keep in mind that CLC has no control over when the rates will be approved. Waiting for months and months is simply unacceptable... especially in this current inflationary trend for everything from groceries to car parts. Five month waiting periods create confusion and do not build trust. Explanations and attempts to explain the rate setting process often make the situation even more confusing.

So, where do we stand right now? In February 2024 the Governor sent the budget for approval but did not include any increase for DSPs, this was in February 2024. In March of 2024, there was a rally of DSPs and the request was for a 3.2% increase. The

Governor countered with 1.5 %. The final increase was settled at 1.7% and includes a COLA and increases for the DSP.

While these increases are deeply appreciated, they are insufficient in the current inflationary arena. Without our direct line staff, we could not deliver the level of service that we do. Day in and day out, including nights, they deserve the best. Their work is amazing and deserving of everything we can provide them with.

All the best,

*John Porcella, CEO*



## CC Life Camp

This year's summer camp was an antique Connecticut home from the 1700's, nestled on the edge of Cockaponset State Forest and the flourishing Messerschmidt Pond. Over six weeks, a different group joined every week. Nearly 50 people enjoyed camp trips for free. A feature no DayHab we know of offers except CC Life.

Days at the beach, catching fish, hikes, tennis, BBQ's, bonfires, and of course smores. A mid-summer break that felt a million miles away. Free trips, free laughs, great experiences and greater friends.

CC Life went viral on *Instagram*! Ripples became a wave when we hit 305,000 views of our tennis camp exercises. See <https://www.instagram.com/p/C-DRTswOgKi/> The comments came from all over the world. This one from Malay, so we had to click translate, "So happy to see them practicing tennis with enthusiasm and joy." An Italian man noted, "Fantastico!"



Jason and Danny still aren't sure who shook their tent one dark and starry night. Was it friend or foe? We'll never know!





# CLC FOUNDATION NEWS

## CLC Foundation Gala / Sunday, November 17, 2024 / The Greentree Country Club 11 o'clock Cocktail Hour & Luncheon / Hidden Treasures Performance & Art Exhibit



Matthew Persanis, Esq. and Chrissy at Winslow's groundbreaking for their new wellness center.

On behalf of CLC Foundation, Inc and the Board of Directors, I am very pleased to announce that at our annual Gala, CLC Foundation will be recognizing two individuals that have shown exemplary commitment to the disabled community.

Our 2024 CLC Honoree, **Matthew Persanis, Esq.**, has been a part of the CLC family for over 30 years. He leads a successful law practice, is an avid rugby player and a devoted brother to Chrissy, a long time CLC resident. As CLC Group's Board Secretary, Matthew continues to advocate for the disabled community, program recipients, and also our devoted caregivers and staff. Thank you to Matthew, our Honoree for Influential Leadership & Dedication.

**Mark C. Harnett, CFP, AEP** will be recognized as our CLC Community Honoree for Outstanding Guidance & Service. With over twenty years in the field of trusts and estates, Mark and his team with Argent Trust Company partnered with CLC Pooled Trust almost ten years ago. Bringing expertise and providing mission driven support to the staff as well as over 300 beneficiaries of the CLC Pooled Trust.



Mark C. Harnett

This year's event marks the 19th anniversary and in keeping with tradition, we cannot wait to celebrate with our community partners, families and clients. See you on November 17th at Greentree Country Club! For more info, go to [www.clcfoundation.org](http://www.clcfoundation.org) & click "donate."

**Denyele Urciuoli, Executive Director, CLC Foundation, Inc.**

## CLC Exhibits at SeptemberFest!

To raise awareness in the community about CLC programs and services, the agency attended and exhibited at Mt. Kisco's SeptemberFest event on September 15th. *CLC Foundation* had a booth that featured *Hidden Treasures* art, as well as all job opportunities at *CLC Group*. Denyele Urciuoli, Kaylie Myers and Timothy Hickman were there representing CLC Foundation. Amy Berman and HR associates were there in their efforts to hire and recruit new talent.

*Community Connections Life* (CCL) also had a table at the event. CCL advertised their amazing day habilitation program, as well as *Creative Escape* trip itineraries for travel. Jack Mungovan, Program Director, headed up the table with some of the clients, who participated in handing out information and sweet treats made at the Pelham site location.



## The National Conference on Special Needs Planning and Special Needs Trusts

CLC Foundation will be attending the National Conference on Special Needs Planning and Special Needs Trusts in October 2024. This annual conference promotes best practice in trust administration, covering topics affecting the Pooled Trust and Special Needs Trust industry. In addition, CLC Foundation is a member of the Alliance of Pooled Trusts, a coalition of Pooled Trust providers establishing best practices for trust administration for the special needs community across the United States. CLC Foundation continues to strive for excellence in providing benefit protection and financial security to our community. <https://aptrusts.org/>

# HAPPENING AT WINSLOW

Vicki Wolfe

Winslow's Adult Day Program had a very busy summer! If you ask the group what their favorite part was, they would say it was moving into their new wellness center building and settling in. When asked what their favorite part of moving to the new building was, we received so many enthusiastic answers.

Sandy loves the arts and crafts, Karen and Chrissy like the greenhouse and being able to grow food inside soon. Nicole likes all of the activities and having more space. Tom and Adam agreed that the space to grow and expand was so important to them.

The 4000 square foot building has a commercial kitchen that they utilized to the fullest. Using ingredients that they harvested from their garden, along with some quality ingredients purchased locally, they prepared and cooked zucchini boats, tomato and cucumber salad, vegetable lasagna, fried green tomatoes, crab apple butter, apple cake, and more! This winter they will use the attached greenhouse to start growing fruits and vegetables for the spring.

The *Art with Pam* portion of the program has been educational and exciting. While they learned all about the color wheel and mixed their own paint, they also created an enormous painting that will be their first piece of art hung in the building.

After finding a 6 x 4 foot piece of cardboard, their artistic sides kicked in and they painted a tree trunk and used their



handprints to make leaves. A staff member's son is building the frame and we can't wait to see the final result!

Winslow has implemented two more programs for our clients. Winslow's Music Therapist, Jackie Sinclair, is bringing interactive musical fun to the group. In addition, Yoga has been introduced and is a big hit. Of course, they still get their daily dose of horsemanship, which the horses love as much as they do!



Winslow Therapeutic Center is an agency of CLC Group. *Healing with Horses* since 1974.

## Cookin' Good with Jenny



We are pleased to present another cooking column by our own Jenny M.



### Fall Favorite: Tilapia with Roasted Vegetables

serves 4

#### Ingredients:

- 4 pieces of tilapia fish (rinse and pat dry)
- 2 zucchini (1 yellow, 1 green) sliced
- 1 yellow onion chopped
- 1 celery stalk chopped
- 1 carrot peeled and chopped

Heat oven to 350F

Coat a 9"x12" cookie sheet with cooking oil spray. (Use aluminum foil for easy clean-up) Sprinkle each piece of tilapia with Lemon Pepper seasoning & add a light spray of oil. Wash, rinse and season vegetables with salt & pepper. Spray oil over vegetables & toss. Place each piece of tilapia on sheet and add vegetables along side.

Bake at 350F degrees until thoroughly cooked. When done, arrange fish and vegetable on a platter and serve. Enjoy!



# GET TO KNOW CLC's DEDICATED DSPs!

Annette Maksoud

## Meet Jakay Brown of Bedford Manor

Jakay is a Per Diem DSP (Direct Support Professional) at Bedford Manor in Mt. Kisco. She has worked at CLC for three years. Her responsibilities include, but are not limited to, cleaning the rooms of the persons being served, cooking, taking the persons being served to Program, money management for some of the individuals, and basic ADLs (Activities of Daily Living).

In her spare time, Jakay likes to read. Jakay would one day like to travel to Jamaica, but she has to figure out a way how to get over her fear of flying. She says maybe next year she will attempt to overcome her fears. When asked, "what is the best part of your job?" Jakay's response was "seeing the individuals smile when I come to work, which makes my day brighter." Thank you, Jakay for all your hard work and dedication at CLC!



## Meet Nicholas Hall of Seth Canyon

Nicholas is a DSP (Direct Support Professional) at Seth Canyon in Mt. Kisco. He has worked at CLC for one year. His responsibilities include, but are not limited to, taking the persons being served to appointments, administer medication, make sure persons being served have on clean attire, and takes the persons being served to Program. The individuals are Nicholas' main priority.

In his spare time, Nicholas enjoys listening to music and spending time with his family. Nicholas loves to travel. He has a scheduled trip to Dubai to celebrate his anniversary. The best part of the job for Nicholas is making sure all the individuals are good, and he always wants to do his best for them. Thank you, Nicholas for all you do for CLC and for being awesome with the persons being served!



## NEW PARENT GROUP LAUNCHES

If you are interested in joining a parents' support group that is currently being formed, please contact:

Maggie Pinsker: mlpinsker@hotmail.com or (914) 645-8499

Steve Gold: Stephen.gold@mailfence.com or (214) 448-2794

Debbie Fischer: debfisc2006@gmail.com or (914) 434-1104

(Please note: The Parent Support Group is run by CLC parents and not by the Agency.)



# DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS APPRECIATION WEEK

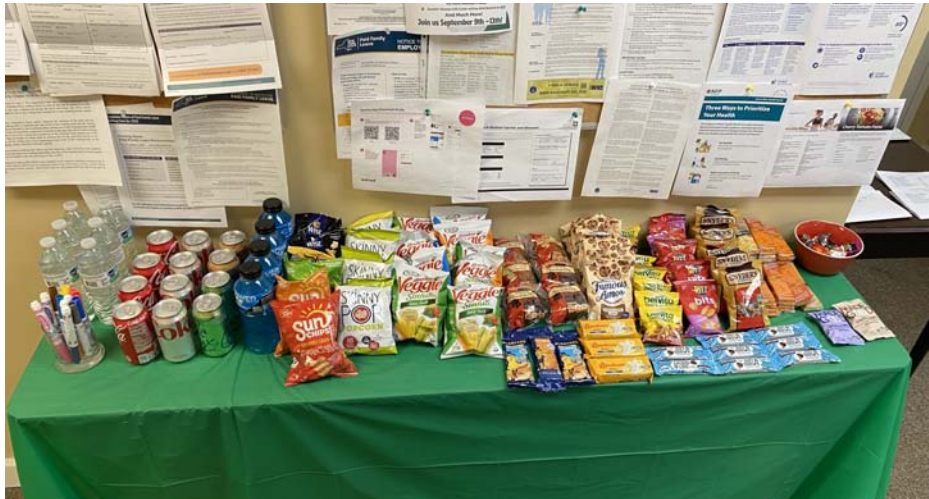
Patti Hurley

September 9th through 13th was Direct Support Professionals Appreciation Week 2024. In the CLC tradition, staff spent five days doing a little extra for our Direct Support Staff to show appreciation for all their hard work.

Celebrations began early Monday morning. A banner was hung outside of the Human Resources Department, where staff and clients were able to write messages of thanks and appreciation for all to read. Each day, six staff were selected in a random drawing to win either a \$50 gift card (Amazon, shopping, restaurants, Door Dash, etc.) a paid day off or a gift basket. Every Direct Support Staff member was also given a Dunkin Donuts gift card as a thank you. The goodie table was a popular spot all week. On Wednesday, our administration and office staff delivered assorted wraps and cookie platters to all our sites providing lunch or dinner to everyone. Thank you again, DSPs, for all you do!



Thank You! Gracias! Merci! Obrigado! Danke!



## GIFT CARD WINNERS:

KEVIN TECARR, JANTASIA PAYLOR,  
NORMA JONES  
CLAUDE FERDINAND  
MONICA BURNETTE  
JOSEPH STICKEL  
GAIL OSBOURNE  
FRANCINE ROSETTI  
SIMONE COACHE, NICHOLAS HALL

## GIFT BASKET WINNERS:

AMY BARBOSA  
VELVETT KENNEDY  
ALLISON GRANT, GJUELA RASHANI  
MARCIA WILLIAMS  
LISA RICE, TIMOTHY JONES  
MAYBELLINE BODDEN  
ARLENE LAWRENCE  
DIDIMA MARTINEZ

## DAY OFF WINNERS:

SUZETTE BARRETT  
RENEE ELEY, BRENDAN PRYCE  
CHASIDY THORNE  
LESFORD FOREMAN  
PAMELA MIDDII  
RITA MONTGOMERY  
SUZETTE MCKENZIE  
ALAN BEYER, REBECCA BONOMO

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## ***THE OPEN DOOR***

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Patti Hurley, Ajha Austria**

## **Got News?**

### ***Share It!***

**We welcome your CLC news!**

**Story suggestions,  
events and especially the name  
of someone you think would be  
a good interview candidate.**

**Email Deb, Annette  
or Irene (emails at left)**