

# Community News

A Newsletter for Friends of Residential Resources, Inc.

December 2019

## Thank Goodness!

Chris Cotton, Program Manager  
Emerald St., Keene, NH

"Don't be a turkey!" was the joke at the table. What a wonderful Friendsgiving meal we got to share. We were blessed with all sorts of support to create, in celebration, to remember the blessings we have and gratitude to and for all. Friends at the table, even some who had other places to go, helped by contributing dishes for our meal. Once the table was set we all reflected on our blessings and enjoyed a wonderful traditional Friendsgiving. Thank you.



## Empowering Employers

Kelly Shadrick, Support Broker Team Leader  
Plattsburgh, NY

Self-Direction (SD) is a service in New York that puts individuals and families in the driver's seat and allows for much more control over their services. While hired staff may have an employer of record or FI, it is the participant that is truly the supervisor of the staff and services. Individuals and families work with a Support Broker and a planning team to individualize their program, supports, and staffing needs.

Simon Davison has been self-directing his supports with the assistance of his planning team for a couple of years. He graduated high school, moved into his own apartment, and enjoys spending his time with his SD staff, Paul Miller. Paul and his wife were in the process of buying a house and needed to have his employment and number of hours worked verified by his employer.



Simon worked with me, his Agency Support Broker, and his planning team to figure out how we could give Paul what he needed to be able to purchase his home. We sat down together to craft a letter for Paul verifying his employment and hours worked each week. It wasn't the easiest letter to craft; we wanted it to be on official letterhead but would need to provide some explanation as to why the letterhead did not match the employer on his paystubs.

Simon was able to give Paul a letter, cosigned by me, that Paul could provide to his lender. Paul was able to purchase his house and moved in last month; Simon was able to make it happen! Although he required assistance from his planning team, Simon was given a true supervisory experience that has empowered him immensely.

## Saying Goodbye

Ellis Baum, Regional Director  
Westbrook, ME

Sadness. That is what I'm feeling as I write this article. While I'm no stranger to this part of our work after nearly twenty years of supporting people, it remains one of the hardest things to face when one of the people we support passes. On November 30, 2019 Jerome Gonyer passed away in his sleep at his home on Highland Ave in Scarborough. He will be sorely missed...



However, I need to face some facts here: if Jerome knew I was writing a newsletter article about him that was doom and gloom, he would be PISSED! So let's change lanes and focus on what made Jerome one of the most interesting people that I, and I would venture most people who knew Jerome, have met. To start, Jerome had one of the rarest of the rare diagnoses that you'll find. This diagnosis created a myriad of limits for Jerome that included being wheelchair bound, restricted movement with his arms and legs, and some communication barriers to name just a few. He was also armed with a "lively" (to say the least) personality and mindset that instigated an endless amount of colorful conversations and interactions. The thing that always stuck out to me was that Jerome used that personality and mindset to push past his limits and do the things he wanted to do regardless of the challenges. There are endless stories of Jerome conquering things that might have seemed nearly impossible for him. Riding horses, going down a log flume ride at an amusement park, being a Special Olympics athlete, going backstage and hanging out with his favorite band KORN, sending an endless array of emails, driving a wheelchair van (Yikes!), having a job at the office, and I could go on.



Jerome was inspiring because he was a living testament to "Can do" versus "Can't do". While he was the one that was in services, he gave every one he encountered the type of life lessons that are truly priceless. When we think we cannot succeed, we can. When we think our limits hold us back, there is always a path. We waste so much time and energy focusing on what we can't do but the list of things we can do is so much greater. These are the lessons that Jerome has taught me, and I know for a fact that his reach went far beyond me.

As you have read, this article has been more about saying thank you to Jerome than goodbye. I would like to take this opportunity to thank some others, as well, who were part of Jerome's journey of ability. Dan McAllister - Dan was with Jerome from day one when he joined the Residential Resources family and they remained partners (in crime) until Jerome's final day. Dan's patience, understanding, and equal willingness to tackle what "can't be done" is something I have the utmost respect and appreciation for and cannot thank him enough. I would also like to thank Jen Bradbury who was also with Jerome from the beginning. She made a promise that she would not leave, and she kept that promise. I have the utmost respect for her. I also want to thank all of the people that have worked with Jerome over the years. There are too many to name, but I would like to convey my gratitude and respect for all of them.

Lastly, I would like to thank Jerome's mother Amelia, and his brother Jeremy. Their love and support for him was also a huge part of Jerome's ability to conquer all. They also offered tremendous support to everyone who worked with Jerome and while they were his family, they have and always will be part of our Residential Resources family.



## Emerald Street's Annual Holiday Party

Sharon Cleary, QA Specialist  
Emerald St., Keene, NH

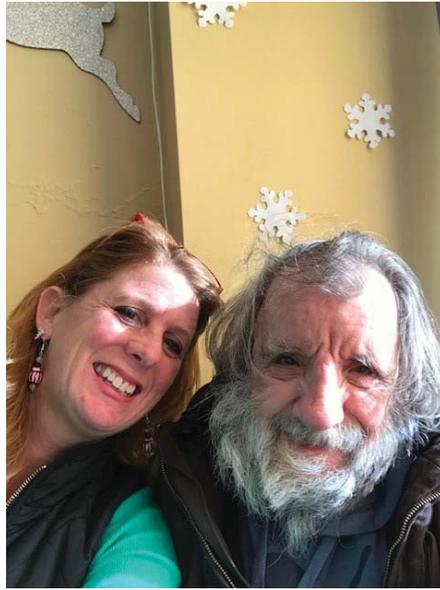
The Emerald Street crowd celebrated the holidays at The Flight Deck Restaurant on December 12. It was a beautiful day with lots of sunshine coming in the windows and lots of great positive energy filling the room. Everyone enjoyed a delicious chicken dinner and great conversation.

All participants received a hand-knitted lap blanket donated by Feeding Tiny Tummies, a local non-profit agency that some of our participants volunteer their time at, along with a 2020 calendar. Everyone joined Bill Schofield, Diana, and Angela in singing Christmas carols, which everyone greatly enjoyed.

We wish everyone has a wonderful holiday and that all enjoy a peaceful 2020.



## More pictures from Emerald Street's Annual Holiday party



## 13th Annual Festival of Trees

*Christmas tree raffle helps people with developmental disabilities*

Dale Anderson, QA Specialist  
Plattsburgh, NY

The holiday spirit is taking over the Champlain Centre Mall in Plattsburgh, NY. Dozens of decorated Christmas trees are lined up for this year's Festival of Trees. More than 40 trees are covered with handmade ornaments, scratch tickets, superheroes, and more.

The Festival of Trees has become a North Country holiday tradition. Area businesses and organizations decorate holiday trees to put on display at Champlain Centre Mall and then they are raffled off to raise money for the Advocacy and Resource Center in Plattsburgh. "It's really not just a fundraiser for us but a friendraiser. It gets us out in the community. Everything raised here stays right here in Clinton County," said Jared West of the Clinton County Advocacy and Resource Center.



All the trees at Festival of Trees are winners! And in the spirit of friendly competition, we asked Champlain Centre Mall's General Manager Lisa Getty and Marketing Director Emily Moosmann to pick out a few of their favorites.



## Exercise With The Stars

Rahmee Gerjes, Program Manager  
Londonderry, NH

Three times per week here at Hampshire Drive we do chair exercises with the gentlemen. We work on getting our heart rates where they should be for an adult and that is 60 to 100 BPM. These are very simple exercises for them to do. They stretch their arms, legs, and back; they toss a ball around; and use 2-pound weights as well. They love this as they can stay active while being cooped up in the house during the winter months. They have a playlist of music that they listen to as well that helps them get moving. The guys look forward to the days we have this.

So let's give them a great big hand and start each day with a grateful healthy heart!



## A Goal is a Dream with a Deadline

Christine Townsend, RN, Nurse Trainer  
Londonderry, NH

I have this sign at my desk in the office. Today it made me think about New Year's resolutions.

Every year we are asked by friends and family, "have you made any New Year's resolutions?" Of course we have... To eat better, exercise more, lose weight, save money, and on and on and on. Statistics say that fewer than 25% of people will stick with their resolutions for more than 30 days, and fewer than 8% will actually achieve any of them.

In the profession that we are in, we all are under a lot of stress, some beyond our control, and some very much in our control. We, as staff, sit in ISA meetings for our clients every year and set goals for them, and then we submit monthly statements outlining whether or not we (staff and clients) have made any progress with meeting the goal. I've heard many a program manager agonize prior to an ISA "I can't think of any different goals, or other ways of wording this one." Many of the

staff I work with are perfectionists as well and put stress on themselves to do their reports as though they are Shakespearean plays or sonnets.

Of course, we want our work to be the best it can be, and of course, we want our individuals to be the best they can be. Sometimes the best we can do for ourselves, and them, is to relax, choose patience and kindness, grace under pressure, and just enjoy the moment. No, none of us is perfect, as I tell students in my medication authorization classes, none of us will ever be. So, let's strive for excellence, not perfection. Let's not worry about New Year's resolutions. Let's just enjoy the New Year, take each day as it comes. Of course, we need to make goals and strive for improvement. Just try to make your goals something we want to do, not something we have to do. Make them reachable and fun, not stressful, and every little achievement a reason to celebrate the day.

To everyone at Residential Resources, clients, staff, families, and friends: Take care of yourselves, take care of each other, and have a HAPPY, SAFE, and HEALTHY NEW YEAR !!!

*Thank you to everyone who contributes articles and pictures to the newsletter.*

Articles are due by the second Friday of each month for that month's newsletter. The newsletter will be posted at [www.resresources.com](http://www.resresources.com) on the last business day of each month.

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy of the newsletter mailed to you, please contact your local Residential Resources office to make arrangements.

### *Community News*

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### *William K. Schofield, Ph.D*

Founder and Owner

## Our Guiding Principles

**Creativity** We foster creativity by exploring and learning, embracing change, and pursuing best practice. We always ask ourselves, "Is there a better way?"

**Truth / Honesty** We foster an environment where open and honest feedback and sharing are expected, encouraged, and supported. We honor commitments; and we share feelings, opinions, experiences, ideas, and information in order to optimize each individual's personal and professional growth and development.

**Empowerment** We empower people through a process which includes giving them the opportunities, the authority, the information, and the examples necessary to become successful decision makers.

**Diversity** We welcome and value different perspectives, contributions, and capabilities. We promote growth, opportunity, and experience.

**Quality** We continually improve our services by: Promoting positive change; Increasing knowledge and skills; Encouraging personal growth; Valuing individual differences; Learning from our experiences.

**Respect** We believe that respect is a right, and we conduct ourselves accordingly. Our standards include the exercise of human dignity; the honoring and valuing of self and others; and communication that is clear, direct, and honest.

**Trust** We create trust by being consistent, stable, honest, and reliable. Trust also requires sincerity, knowledge, and capability.



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