

Community News

A Newsletter for Friends of Residential Resources, Inc.

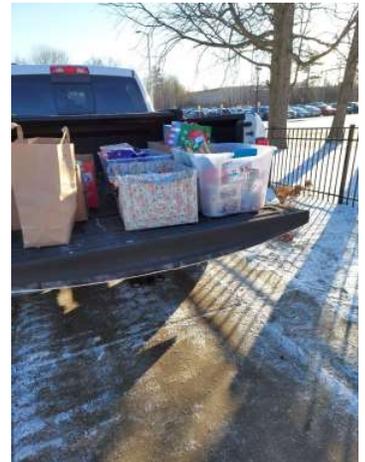
January 2021

Bringing Cheer

Amanda O'Kusky, FI Team Lead
Plattsburgh, NY

The holiday season is a time full of gathering, giving, and holiday cheer, and that is what Janell Seymour and her staff Nicole Tedford brought to the season this year. Over the month of December Janell and Nicole collected for a holiday toy and food drive for the community. Nicole stated, "With COVID-19 there isn't much to do with our clients. So, I asked Janell if she'd like to do this with me this year". They raised thousands of dollars in food and toys. They painted signs and set up baskets in different locations. Janell and Nicole collected the food, toys, and monetary donations. They got lists together and went shopping. Janell and Nicole labeled, bagged, and delivered the items. Nicole said, "It was lots of hard work!". Nicole called BOCES, as Janelle was a former student. A teacher nominated students that would benefit from the toy and food drive. Between BOCES and some local families they were able to help 25 families!

One of the more well-known benefits of volunteering is the impact on the community. Volunteering allows you to connect to your community and make it a better place. Nicole said, "Janell got to learn that not everyone is as lucky as her. Janell felt great about our work. She loves helping the kids". Janell and Nicole decided to partner up every year. They already have a donation of \$1,000 promised for next year!



Inspiration

Pebbles Agoney, FI Team Lead
Plattsburgh, NY

I had the wonderful opportunity to have a conversation about Self Directed Services with a phenomenal person named Alberta Baker. Alberta is a 64 year old woman LIVING INDEPENDENTLY. Now I highlight those words because it was Alberta's goal in life to be able to do this.

Alberta had lived in and out of an assisted living facility most of her adult life with only a dream of moving out on her own, making her own choices and doing things for herself. 2 years ago, Alberta made a decision that would change her life forever and help make those dreams come true. Alberta decided to get involved with Self Directed Services. With her Support Circle by her side, Alberta worked tirelessly on plans, budgets, finding staff, and independent living skills to prepare herself for finally achieving that dream.

Now 2 years later, Alberta has her own apartment, does her own shopping, meal prep, cleaning, and lives INDEPENDENTLY. I wanted to know how Alberta would describe her personal experience to someone considering SDS.

The following is from an interview I conducted with Alberta Baker about her Self Directed Services:

What does SDS mean to you?

"I am able to live on my own...", "go swimming...", "go into the community...", movies and bowling!

What are your favorite parts?

(Laughed while answering), "everything I just told you..."

What would you change about SDS?

NOTHING

What would you tell someone that is thinking about SDS?

"Everything is your choice"

What goals have you reached?

"Live on my own", "Cook certain things without help", "I opened a savings account"

What are your final words to anyone considering SDS?

"SET GOALS BECAUSE THEY CAN BE MET!" "YOU GET TO BE YOUR OWN PERSON"

Thank you, Alberta, for Inspiring us all and reminding us to set goals, dream big, and make things happen!

Making Cards For People

Shirley Rogers, Participant
Emerald St., Keene, NH

I like making cards for people I know. I made one with an ice cream cone for my cousin-in-law who lives in Florida and got Covid at work. I hope he can eat ice cream soon! I made one with a watering can for friends I met at the yard sales I did with family.

I stay far away from people and we all wear masks. They are so nice. I miss them and want them to know I think of them and hope to see them in the springtime.

It is important to keep in touch with people if you want to be a good friend. Don't wait for people to write you - they may think about you, but they might be too busy, sick, or sad. You might make someone's day. You don't have to have a reason to send a note. People get so much bad mail



A Very Merry Elvis Christmas From Hampshire Drive

Gina Ocasio, Program Manager & Larry Johnson, Participant
Londonderry, NH

My name is Larry and I love Elvis! The staff and Santa Claus brought me a lot great things for Christmas. I got an Elvis mask to wear in public to protect myself and others. I got an Elvis apron for when I'm making magic in the kitchen with my staff. I got these really cool Elvis slippers to wear around the house because I don't like to wear socks all the time. I got another picture to hang on wall and a coffee mug to go with it. The best gift I got was my life-size cardboard cutout picture of Elvis Presley. Christmas is my favorite holiday. I love to decorate the house. This year I got to pick out a new Christmas tree for my house, too.

Then the end of the month is my birthday - I turned 64 years old - can you believe it! I got to have chocolate sugar free cake for my birthday and Chinese food. It was the best day! I hope this year gets better for everyone! HAPPY NEW YEAR!



New Year, New Hope

Ellis Baum, Regional Director
Westbrook, ME

As 2020, unofficially the longest year on record, came to a close I think it is safe to say that many of us hoped that 2021 would start us down a more positive path. Sadly, that does not seem to have been the case so far in the admittedly very early stage of this year. On January 6, 2021 an event occurred at our nation's capital that will be marked in history for the rest of time.

I am not writing this article to cast judgement on how or why this event happened, and I am certainly not intending to cause offense to anyone reading this. I do not claim to have the answers to all of the questions this event has raised, but I do see a country that is divided and is hurting. However, after being a social worker for over 20 years, I cannot help but focus on one question: How do we heal from this?

The reality could be that the answer to that question is incredibly complex, bordering on the line of being overwhelming, but I'm going to choose a much simpler approach. I believe the answer is to care. I recognize that 'caring' is perhaps attributable to the event that happened on the 6th, but more specifically, I believe the secret to healing our collective wounds is found in the very work that we do here at Residential Resources: care for people.

Our work at Residential Resources is to ensure and provide care to those that need help. It is hard, hard work and yet everyone of us knows that providing care to the people we support in whichever role that we all play, is in itself healing despite its difficult nature. Whenever a new person is taken into our support at Residential Resources, we gather an astonishing amount of information about that person. None of that information is used to judge that person, it is used to care for them. Amongst all of this data, there are also things about a person that we do not ask or care about, such as: what is your political affilia-

tion. The intent is to gather all of the information that helps us know what makes this individual human... a characteristic we all happen to share.

Sadly, the event that occurred on the 6th is a reminder that we as a nation have spent far too much time and energy focusing on our differences when the reality is that what we all have in common is far greater. We are all human and we all need to be cared for in some manner. If we so choose, this mindset can be our roadmap to healing, but it will not be an easy path. Our society is fortified with outlets that constantly point out our differences such as TV/news and social media, but there are outlets that point to our common ground as well. Your family, your friends, your neighbors... your work are all examples of commonality that show our ability to care despite whatever differences may be present.

Some of you reading this article may have sat through a Mandt class (or several) with me, where one of the concepts I would touch on was that when working with an escalated person, we must "invite" that person to de-escalate... simply telling the person to calm down will be ineffective. We are undoubtedly an escalated nation and I very much doubt that will change until we begin to invite each other to de-escalate. My hope is that by focusing on our ability to care for other people we will in turn send out that invitation.

In closing, my hope is that the message in this article is helpful. As I noted in the beginning, 2021 is off to a shaky start, but it is very early and there is still reason to be hopeful that we will have a better year. Like many things in life, the outcome of 2021 will be largely determined by our collective choices and as we are all finding our way forward, I invite you to do so by paying less attention to our differences and more on the things that unite us. Be safe. Be well. Care.

Who needs a health care advocate? You do!

Jennifer Boisvert, Health Services Director

I can hear some of you saying – Jen, really? Why? And maybe you are even thinking – Jen do (even) you need one too? The answer is a resounding yes!

And this is why – health care has become so complex – on every level.

Let me give you a couple examples - Your prescriber orders some routine lab work. You do all the right things: fast (don't eat) before you go, you go to your appointment as you should, and the labwork is processed. Your prescriber then calls you and says there was a mistake, sorry, you will need to go do it all again. You don't love it, but you do it. Once again, your prescriber calls you and says, well, hmmm.... maybe there wasn't a mistake – looks like there are some new challenges, and we need to talk together to see what needs to happen next.

The prescriber knew from the lab work that you would be at more risk of infections – because your white blood count was very low. He tells you that you need to stay as healthy as possible because you are more likely to get sick – so be sure to keep your distance from anyone who is sick – with colds, flu, anything contagious.

Reasonable, right? But when the prescriber does not know your personal lifestyle or what is important to you, he probably didn't know to ask (and you didn't know to say!) that you are the primary pet caregiver (think cat litter management, chicken coop care management, cleaning off fresh chicken eggs).

A person who knows you well may have helped remind you of these kinds of different details. We must not forget, when 'you' are in the center of taking in new health information, sometimes it is hard to consider some of these other kinds of things!

Another example of how a health care advocate could be helpful:

Your friend developed a rash with hives today – it's some kind of allergic reaction – it's really bothering her, she can't do anything without wanting to scratch and she can't concentrate on anything – the prescriber got back to her after 4pm with a prescription for Prednisone (a steroid) that she knows will help – BUT, she also knows that if she takes it this late in the day, it's going to keep her awake and totally disrupt her sleep pattern. Should she take it tonight? Or wait until tomorrow morning? What is the best choice for her? (My answer – take the prednisone – I assure her that she is going to be up scratching anyway and the sooner it gets in, the sooner she will get some relief!). Sound advice, right? This isn't the only answer and it's not even necessarily the "right" answer for every situation – and ultimately, she didn't have to make the decision on her own. She sought out a trusted 'advocate' to talk and think it through. That's the point of health advocacy. Not being alone in important decision making.

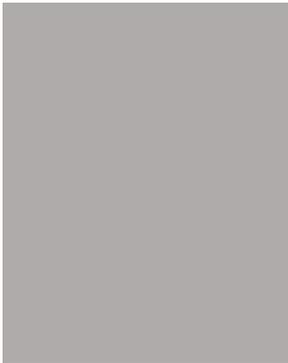
To me, having a health advocate means having someone who knows you, knows what is important in your life, knows how best to help you succeed with something new and difficult, and most important of all – asks questions – if there are questions to be asked, until you understand the choices. It in no way suggests that you aren't smart enough or capable enough to make decisions for yourself. It is really giving yourself the gift of having someone else hear the important stuff so that you can be sure to have all the information you need to understand and perhaps make health care decisions.

Having a health advocate does not mean that your health will be perfect, that you will follow a prescribed regimen perfectly, etc. It means that you may have a better opportunity to understand what your choices are and what the consequences of each option will likely be. Think about it! I encourage you to consider how this might help lessen your own health care situations!

Christmas 2020

Chelly Leger, Participant
Emerald St., Keene, NH

My housemate, David, and I were excited to wake up on Christmas morning this year to open gifts! I got a sweatshirt, boots, a new blanket, pants, and some other fun things. David got a new winter jacket, a hat and pair of gloves, boots, and a new blanket, too. We both got Dunkin Donut gift cards which we both really like and they are our favorite gift this 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 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

Edited by Diana VanAlstyne
Layout by Mary Lynch

Residential Resources, Inc.

39 Summer Street
Keene, NH 03431
P: 800-287-2911
F: 844-281-0423
www.resresources.com

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.