

## Learning to THRIVE

*THRIVE – Technology as a Helpful Resource for Individuals in Various Environments*

**E**arlier this year, Liberty was awarded a grant in the amount of \$184,845 provided through the NYS Balancing Incentive Program Transformation Fund and administered by the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). The program, known as THRIVE, will enhance Liberty's ability to support individuals in achieving their employment outcomes by combining the use of assistive technology with a specialized instructional framework known as TEACCH. The TEACCH model includes pre-testing, observations, specialized staff training, curriculum building, improved goal designing methods, and outcome measurement.

There are 23 individuals at Liberty who expressed an interest in employment and will be participating in this innovative approach. In addition, four agency leaders have begun the training to become Certified TEACCH Practitioners from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These leaders will conduct regular observations and assessment of each individual and work alongside them, their support staff, team members, and a technology specialist to customize the technology to address their greatest barriers to community employment. The technology, primarily iPads, provides creative ways not only teaching individuals fundamental skills but also promotes ongoing independence in the workforce. "Employment services are undergoing a significant transformation and program standards are

rapidly changing," said Employment Services Director Erin Abele. "We are all thrilled to learn these new techniques that will ultimately help individuals, even those with more significant barriers, to develop skills and independence that will better prepare them to enter the workforce."

So far, these 23 individuals have received training on the use of computer tablets through a highly-successful two-month certificate course at Fulton-Montgomery Community College (FM). The curriculum for the 11-day training program was developed by FM in conjunction with Liberty Employment Services staff. ♦

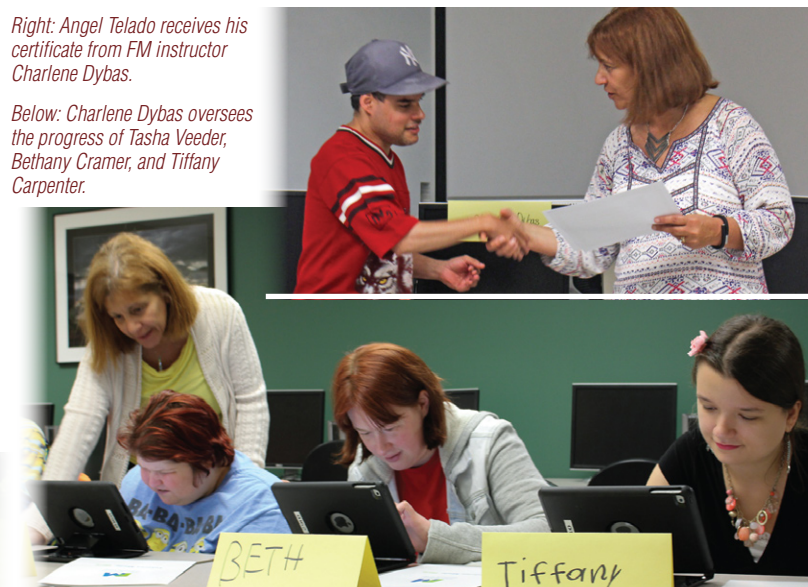
*Right: Angel Telado receives his certificate from FM instructor Charlene Dybas.*

*Below: Charlene Dybas oversees the progress of Tasha Veeder, Bethany Cramer, and Tiffany Carpenter.*



*Front row: Valerie Lennebecker, Allan Szala, Angel Telado, Samantha Togalia, Adobi Woods, Luis Alvarado, and instructor Charlene Dybas*

*Back: Sam Basilio, Anthony Battisti, Jennifer Saunders—CEO, Calvin Jennings, Frank Rivera. Missing from photograph: Josh Race*



*Front: Erin Shamansky. Middle: Maggie Rodriguez, Colleen Irish, Jennifer Saunders—CEO, Jessica Romano, Breana Theobald, Tasha Veeder. Back: Erin Abele—Staff, Stephen Jackson, Ryan Whitehouse, Ryan Howell, Shane Shaut, Tiffany Carpenter, Bethany Cramer, and Danielle Whelley.*

# LIBERTY

43 Liberty Drive  
Amsterdam, NY 12010

518.842.5080

**Caring About Each Other. Committed to the Community.**



affiliated with The Arc, a national organization on intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

## VOLUME 24

The Liberty Advocate is a publication of Liberty, the Montgomery County chapter of NYSARC, Inc. Its purpose is to provide relevant information and maintain on-going contact with parents, members, staff, and the community.

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## Incoming President's Letter



Lisa Vander Wal, President

It is with great pleasure that I assume the role of President of the board of this amazing chapter of NYSARC known as Liberty. I have followed other officers in other roles, but the stellar quality of the presidents who have preceded me on the parent board of Liberty makes my job both easier and more challenging in that I have very capable shoes to fill.

A special thank you to Ken Adamowski who very energetically and faithfully filled this role in the previous two years.

I would like to repeat the gist of a few words I spoke at the Annual Meeting on April 23. These two words are "thank you" and "team." First, thank you. Thank you to each and every consumer whom Liberty serves. In effect, you are Liberty, and I am thankful for who you are and what you teach us all about what is truly important in life. I also thank family members who support us and challenge us to be the best we can be for the people we serve. Thank you also to the staff at Liberty, from Direct Support personnel to the CEO and COO and including everyone in between. You all make Liberty the fine organization it is, one that is well-respected and emulated in our field. Finally, I thank the board members and advisory committee members who oversee everything from strategic planning to day to day operations. Thank you all for your good work. Second, team. We are a team together, and every person's contribution is important for this organization to achieve its goals in a manner that not only fulfills regulations, but also an excellent quality of service. "What matters to me" intrinsically includes "what matters to us." May we all continue to work with enthusiasm and cheerfulness as we seek to be the best that we can be for the people we serve. ♦

## Celebrating Joel Kaplan's 94th Birthday

It was a joyous celebration as Liberty staff marked longtime board member Joel Kaplan's 94th birthday! Joel, who has served on Liberty's boards for 35 years, was treated to a cake and a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday." Thank you Joel for your many years of selfless service. Liberty wishes you many more 90s-and-beyond birthdays! ♦



## Pam Sherman's Office for Aging Award

Liberty individual Pam Sherman was awarded the Senior of the Year by Montgomery County Office of Aging. Pam was selected for this prestigious award because of her commitment to her community. She volunteers in many capacities that touch our elderly population, including delivering meals for Meals of Montgomery, cooking for St. Mary's Church, cleaning for the elderly, assisting with the Soup Kitchen at the Salvation Army and the Amen Soup Kitchen at St. Luke's Church, and has been known to help hang clothes at Goodwill. Pam loves to help and she is able to say that she has learned many new skills over the years, skills to which she should be proud. Her relationship with the folks she serves has been a true testament of a win/win situation for all. ♦



**\$14,000 in Cash Prizes!**

**Only 300 Tickets Sold! \$100 Per Chance**

**Grand Prize = \$7,500**

**Drawing: Wednesday, November 4, 2015**

**Tickets: Call 954-3203 or purchase online at [libertyarc.org](http://libertyarc.org)**

## Liberty Foundation Notes



### Would you like to help the programs support by Liberty Foundation, Inc, but can't right now?

**C**onsider being part of our **Bright Futures** Program by including a bequest to Liberty Foundation Inc. in your will or living trust.

It is simple. Here is some sample language you can include in your will to provide an unrestricted bequest to Liberty Foundation Inc.

**"I give to Liberty Foundation Inc., 43 Liberty Drive, Amsterdam, NY 12010, the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_% of the residue of my estate."** (Including a bequest of a percentage of your residual estate ensures that your gift will remain proportionate to other percentage bequests in your estate plan.)

If you have already included a bequest to Liberty Foundation Inc. in your will, please let us know. We want to acknowledge your generous intent to support our mission! ♦

## Liberty Appoints Foundation Board Member

**B**rett P. Harris was recently appointed to Liberty Foundation's Board of Directors. Harris has served on the investment committee since 2012.

Harris earned his MBA from the College of St. Rose and has a BA in Finance from Siena College. He has an extensive background in the finance industry and currently holds the position of Assistant Vice President at First Niagara Bank. In this capacity he oversees operations of nine branches and manages more than \$250 million in financial assets.



Brett P. Harris

"My goal in joining the Liberty ARC organization is to share my professional skills with a great cause that helps serve and give back to the local community and neighbors," said Brett. "My hope is to bring fresh ideas and new perspective to an already well-established board in hopes of further progressing our presence and maximizing the ability for Liberty to achieve a higher quality of life for the members they serve." Welcome, Brett! ♦

## Health Center News



### Carondelet Grant

On June 16, New Dimensions in Health Care received a \$1500 grant from Carondelet Community Fund to be used towards the 1-2-3 Smile program which focuses on children's oral hygiene education, the importance of dental visits, learning to brush and floss, and learning what foods are good for your teeth and which are harmful. ♦

### Dental Awareness Month/Open House

It's a bird, it's a plane, no it's Fidelisaurus! Fidelis joined the health center in celebrating Dental Awareness month in February. An informational table with dental coloring books, crayons, and toothbrushes were available for families. Fidelisaurus 'posed' for photographs with visiting children. ♦

### NCQA Recognition:

#### National Committee for Quality Assurance

New Dimensions recently received recognition from the National Council for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for becoming a Patient Centered Medical Home (PCMH). This team-based health care delivery system provides efficient, comprehensive, and continuous medical care to patients in order to obtain the best health outcome. ♦



Above Sister Joan Mary Hartigan, NDHC RN Tasha Blowers and NDHC Clinical Coordinator/Patient Services Medical/Dental Office Manager Amanda Gunther.



# Liberty Foundation Donations



We thank the following individuals and business for their support of Liberty's mission by making a donation to Liberty Foundation, Inc. The donations listed were received from January 2015 through July 15, 2015. If we have omitted your name from this list, we apologize for our error. Please let us know so we can include you in the next issue. 518.954.3203..

## ◆ GENERAL DONATIONS

Amsterdam United Methodist Women  
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Ms. Dorothy Danaher  
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Galway Lioness Club  
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Mrs. Margaret Lazarou  
Congressman Paul Tonko  
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

## ◆ ANNUAL 2015 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN GIFTS TO LIBERTY FOUNDATION

The following individuals or businesses gave a donation to Liberty Foundation with their annual membership.

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Received after 2014 Annual Report went to print  
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## IN MEMORY OF ROBERT J. VAINOSKY

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Klementowski

## Sadly, in 2015, Liberty lost two current and one former Board members

### Donald S. Austin

Don Austin passed away on January 31, 2015 after a long illness. Don served on the Liberty Board from 1994 until 2008. Throughout his time on the Board, Don provided Human Resources Department guidance and support. ◆

### Robert B. Quick

Bob Quick died suddenly on February 18, 2015. He was an active member of Liberty and Choices for Community Living boards since 2010. As a

well-respected and successful business executive, Bob brought a wealth of knowledge to Liberty. ◆

### John "Jay" Quatrini

On April 16, 2015, our friend and supporter John "Jay" Quatrini passed away suddenly. Jay was a member of Liberty Foundation Board of Directors since 2011. He truly understood Liberty's mission, and was well-acquainted with the impact the organization has on the Amsterdam community. ◆

*It was our privilege to know these gentlemen and to have been the recipient of their support and guidance as Board members. We extend our deepest sympathy to their families and friends.*

# Liberty Foundation's Golf Tournament



It was a beautiful for Liberty Foundation's 21st Annual Golf Tournament, held on Thursday, June 4, at Rolling Hills Country Club. Golfers were there to support Liberty Foundation and the individuals with developmental and physical disabilities who benefit from programs funded by the organization.

Following play, these on-course contest winners were recognized for their efforts:

**Low Net Category: 1st Place**—Jessica Smrtic, Dawn Jacksland, Brian O'Grady, and Bob Kuelzow with a score of 55.2; **2nd Place**—Tanya Papanier, Jeff Casey, Kevin Parks and Joe Ouder Kirk—55.2; and **3rd Place**—Larry Jordan, Dan Jordan, Joe Vanauskas, and Tony Mitola—56.

**Low Gross Category: 1st Place**—Bob Urban, Steve Urban, Rob DeSantis, and Jim Zambuto with a score of 63; **2nd Place**—Steve Brown, Robert Brown, Jeff Coon and Ron Limoncelli—63; and **3rd Place**—Steve Bauman, James Charland, Dave Dowling, and Joe Rackmyre—63; and Mike Schebel, Keith Plummer, Rich Frank, and Jim Phelps—64.

**Men's Long Drive on Hole #1**—Dan Jordan • **Closest to the Pin on Hole #2**—John Gilode at 1.1"

**Women's Long Drive on Hole #4**—Jessica Smrtic • **Closest to the Pin (Team Prize) on Hole #6**—Gary Leva, Stan Wilock, Ben Ziskin, and Jim Izzano at 10.8" • **Closest to the Pin on Hole #14**—Dan Jordan at 12.5" • **Men's Straightest Drive on Hole #18**—Joe Palmieri at 4" • **Women's Straightest Drive on Hole #18**—Jessica Smrtic at 4.3"



Ray Clapper, Joe Slater and Andy Hall are all smiles as they wait their turn to tee off.

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Rick Wolcott, PGA Pro,  
Rolling Hills Country Club

## Sincere Thanks to Our Sponsors and Golfers!

Liberty Foundation was founded in 1993 to provide funding for family support services offered by Liberty as well as other worthy projects benefiting people with disabilities in Montgomery County. Over the last 22 years, the Foundation has allocated over \$5 million to help underwrite the cost of unfunded programs such as after-school and school recess programs, evening and weekend recreation, transportation services, wages for individuals in training programs, and other programs designed to assist children and adults with disabilities and their families.

## Golfers

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Mr. A.J. Augustine  
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Mr. Karl Bach  
Mr. Tim Barker  
Mr. Steven Bauman  
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Mr. Scott Beckman  
Mr. Jacob Brett  
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Mr. Charles Yarnold  
Mr. Jim Zambuto  
Ms. Audra Zentner  
Mr. Ben Ziskin

## Liberty in the Spotlight



Anthony Battista gets a thumbs-up from NYSARC Executive Director Steven Kroll as he explains the exercise he is studying as part of his classroom work in Liberty's academics group.

### NYSARC Exec Visits Liberty

**S**teven Kroll, the newly-appointed Executive Director of NYSARC, Inc., recently visited Liberty for the first time. Mr. Kroll had an opportunity to tour Liberty's art program, New Dimensions in Health Care, and the training and employment program at Liberty Fresh Market. Liberty welcomes Mr. Kroll and looks forward to many productive and meaningful years working with him in his new position. ♦

### Journey Along the Erie Canal

**F**or the third year, motivational speaker and advocate for individuals with disabilities **John Robinson** has biked across NYS via the scenic and historic Erie Canalway Trail. John, born a congenital amputee, and his business partner **Doug Hamlin**, disabled as a result of an accident, stopped in Amsterdam with their families on one of the last days of their twelve-day journey. More than 100 cheered for John and 43 riders headed to Gloub headquarters in Schenectady. This year's ride raised awareness for quality access to employment and physical inclusion, and celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. ♦

### Musician Sawyer Fredericks Visits with Keller Drive

**T**he folks from Liberty's Keller Drive, Fonda, home brushed elbows with fame! Montgomery County's very own **Sawyer Fredericks** was in town to shoot a segment for *The Voice* TV show, which he won. He stopped and took time not only for some photographs, but to chat with the group. Congratulations, Sawyer! ♦

### Liberty Artist Wins Top Award

**M**ark Klug recently took home the first place award at the annual art show of NYS Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA). The 3-day state conference was held at The Sagamore Resort, Bolton Landing. Mark's winning piece, titled *Cityscape*, is a three-dimensional artwork made with layered scrap barn wood and colored glass fragments to fashion a starry night sky. Mark has participated for two years in the Liberty Through the Arts Program. ♦



Mark Klug with his award-winning artwork



John Robinson leads the pack of Erie Canalway bikers!



Sawyer Fredericks

### Follies Variety Show: A Three-Day Cruise...with

**G**illigan/The Skipper too / The millionaire and his wife / The movie star / The professor / and Mary Ann / Here on Liberty Follies Isle. This annual extravaganza was held in Canajoharie High School's auditorium with more than 120 performers! Show Director Alison Wallace remarked, "I'm sending out special thanks to everyone who helped support the show. It was a great success thanks to the many volunteers, staff, and participants. People put their hearts into supporting the individuals and I can't thank them enough. I am proud to be a part of such wonderful event and a part of a wonderful team which works hard to make dreams happen. Thank you so much for everything." ♦



The enthusiasm was contagious! The FOLLIES performers gave it their all!



## A Message from Liberty's CEO



Jennifer Saunders  
Chief Executive Officer

**J**uly is the month we celebrate our nation's independence, so with that in mind, I wanted to share information with you about two projects we have underway.

We are very excited to have been one of seven providers chosen to participate in a pilot program through the NYS Association of Community and Residential Agencies (NYSACRA). The pilot is focused on finding technologies that can be used to enable individuals to either remain independent in their own apartment or to assist them in achieving a greater level of autonomy that will ultimately assist each person in living with less need for supervision. We selected three individuals for the pilot who have previously expressed a desire to live more independently. Liberty staff are very excited to have the opportunity to learn through this process, which hopefully will enable us to expand the use of technology for the benefit of the individuals we support.

The second project is funded through a Balanced Incentive Grant from NYS and again involves an expanded use of technology to enhance employment opportunities.

(See our feature article on Page 1.) The 23 individuals selected for participation learned how to use an iPad at Fulton-Montgomery Community College. Through this class, individuals discovered how to access different apps both for fun and for work-related activities such as creating a résumé. The next stage of the project will involve utilizing the iPads and apps to overcome barriers to employment.

Liberty also recently completed our 18 month review with the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL). The agency was able to provide feedback on the connection of our CQL excellence report to our strategic plan and the systemic and individual progress that has been made. We focused on progress in several areas, including: increasing independence and decreasing rights restrictions, employment goals, staff engagement and individual success stories. At the conclusion of our review, the CQL representative stated the following: "It is obvious how hard you all have worked. As always, you want everything to be perfectly done and have demonstrated that."

It is exciting to witness and be a part of all the great things happening at Liberty. I wish you and your family an enjoyable summer. ♦

## Spring Banquet

**"Take Me Out to the Ball Game!"**

**A**merica's favorite pastime was the theme for this year's Spring banquet. More than 400 individuals dressed in their favorite team's garb and enjoyed a day of food, dancing, games, and keepsake photo opportunities. Thank you to all who made this year's banquet a success. You hit it out of the park... a GRAND SLAM! ♦



Staff Nancy Guyette and Liberty individual Sandy Becker wear "subway series" rivals in good spirit!

## Liberty's Annual Membership Dinner

**A**n evening of well-deserved recognitions and honoring of supporters was enjoyed at Liberty's Membership Dinner in April.

Special acknowledgment of individuals who have been with Liberty for 35 or more years included: T. Chester Bubniak and James Mullarkey for 35 years, Barbara Seeley for 36 years, and Manuel Castro and Ronald Kazda for 40.

Representatives of the Greater Amsterdam School District accepted Liberty's **2015 Community Partner** award. GASD's collaborative relationship with Liberty's supported employment program and its ongoing efforts to provide work-based experience and skills training for area students were key components of their selection.

The **2015 Community Commitment** award was presented to 11 members of Liberty's Facilities Management Department, recognizing their volunteer service in helping to build Montgomery County's first Habitat for Humanity home. Jim Burroughs, Jason Downing, Adam Fish, Chuck Hanson, Gary Hanson, Wayne Nellis, Joe Ouderkirk, Chris Porter, Tara Stanton, Mike Vooy, and Dennis Yacobucci collectively donated 400 hours of personal and vacation time to the project.

The last portion of the program was focused on paying tribute to and swearing in Board volunteers. Topping the list of long term Board members was Patricia Sherman, a member for 50 years. In addition, Joel Kaplan has served 35 years and Michael Bucciferro 5 years. Liberty Foundation Board member Jack Betz has served 10 years and Robert Purtell has served 10 years on the Board of New Dimensions in Health Care.

Rev. Lisa Vander Wal was elected and sworn in as the agency's Board president for the coming year. A parent of a daughter with developmental disabilities, Rev. Vander Wal has served on the Board for nine years and is an ordained Minister in the Reformed Church in America.



Other Board officers for the 2015–2016 term are: Michael Cinquanti, vice-president; Paul DiCaprio, secretary; and Joel Kaplan, treasurer.



Above: Liberty's Facilities staff—Director Dennis Yacobucci, Joe Ouderkirk, Tara Stanton, Gary Hanson, Wayne Nellis, and Jim Burroughs.

Below: Jennifer Saunders, Candy Opalka, Director of Employment Services Erin Abele, and Terry Dewey, Coordinator of Special Education (GASD).



# Fresh, Local Produce is in the New Cooler!



*Join us!  
Bring a Friend!*

*Liberty Fresh Market's  
One-Year Celebration*

*Saturday  
August 22 • 11-6*

*Enjoy Tastings  
See What's New!  
Meet Market Vendors*

*A Warm Welcome to our Neighbors, Korona Farm*



- Liberty Fresh Market is proud to be carrying fresh, seasonal produce from **Korona Farm!**
- Korona's Farm is less than three miles away—a local, trusted source
- A family farm since 1965
- Farmers Market every day at Liberty Fresh Market
- More than 15 varieties of fruits and vegetables
- Buy Liberty Fresh Market... Fresh from the Farm!

LibertyFreshMarket.com



## Delivered at the peak of flavor...

Yellow Squash • Zucchini • Cucumbers  
Radishes • Beans • Cabbage • Beets  
Tomatoes • Corn • Carrots • Eggplant  
Peppers • Potatoes • Onions  
Cantaloupe • Watermelon  
Pumpkins

## *A Market with a Mission*

Employing individuals with developmental and physical disabilities, we're committed to providing fresh, healthy, and affordable food



**FARMERS MARKET**



*Stop in Today!*

**4867 State Hwy 30 • Amsterdam**

**10-6 Tuesday through Saturday • 10-3 Sunday • Closed Monday**

*Corn has Arrived!*



**L**iberty Fresh Market is bustling with activity these days...it's produce time! The market has established a partnership with Tim and Debbie Korona, local farmers who will deliver local, fresh produce throughout the growing season.

With the market's one-year anniversary on the horizon, clerks involved in the training program have learned: employee/employer relationships; proper food handling and sanitary practices; measuring, weighing and sealing products; interpersonal communication; and other essential retail skills. Come to help us celebrate!

**Convenient hours:** • 10-6 Tuesday through Saturday  
• 10-3 Sunday • Closed Monday

*A Market with a Mission*