

# 2011 Staff Reporter

January • February   March ★ April   May • June   July • August   September • October   November • December

## Liberty Introduces New Product Website

### News from Sales & Marketing: Open for business!

Liberty has recently launched a new commercial website illustrating each of the products manufactured in our LE and LIC buildings. Our electronic catalog includes up to 175 items consisting of commercial and regular household products. The website, [www.libertycleanproducts.com](http://www.libertycleanproducts.com) is designed not only as a tool to purchase Liberty's products, but to demonstrate the vocational opportunities offered to individuals. All products can be purchased through the website utilizing our distributor, NYSID's website (New York State Industries for the Disabled), that is effectively and conveniently linked to our own site—[www.libertyarc.org](http://www.libertyarc.org).

When touring the new website, you will notice Liberty offers environmentally friendly products to all of our customers. These products are sold with the mark of environmental responsibility and certified by EcoLogo™ and Green Seal™. This initiative began in 2005 when Governor George Pataki issued New York State Executive Order, No.134. The order mandated all state agencies to use green cleaning products. Because Liberty now offers green cleaning and environmentally friendly products in all categories—our services and products are extremely valuable to New York State. ■



If anyone has questions regarding our products, please contact Chad Hartwig at extension 3205 or [chadh@libertyarc.org](mailto:chadh@libertyarc.org).

## Liberty Welcomes Luis Lozado

On May 9, the IT department welcomed Luis Lozado as a student intern. Luis is a senior at Amsterdam High School and is earning credits for his work in Liberty's IT department for the next two weeks. Luis is very well versed in PC hardware and software and will be assisting in answering support calls and configuring and installing equipment on the Liberty campus. After graduation, Luis plans to attend college at HVCC where he will study Computer Science. Don Whiting, Director of the IT Department said, "It's nice to be able to reach out in our community and impact a young life. Luis is very motivated and extremely knowledgeable about computer systems. He's off to a great start in his career." If you have an opportunity, stop into the IT department and say hi. Welcome Luis! ■

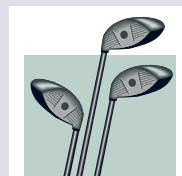


*Luis and Don in the IT Server Room.*

## June – July CALENDAR

### ◆◆◆◆ June

- 9 Annual Liberty Foundation Golf Tournament, Rolling Hills Golf Course
- 14 Bassett Health Care Screenings, LE Conference Room  
*Contact Melissa Lasher for information*



### ◆◆◆◆ July

- 15 Annual Health and Benefits Fair  
9 AM to 1 PM • Day Supports Cafeteria



## Opalka Named COO



Candy Opalka

In April, Mike Decker announced the appointment of Candy Opalka to the position of Chief Operating Officer. Candy has more than 25 years of experience administering supports for adults and children with a total of 15 years in supervisory and administrative roles within Liberty.

Candy's past accomplishments include supporting Liberty in establishing our relationship and accreditation with The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) while she was Residential Director at Liberty from 2001-2006.

She left Liberty for a short while in 2006 to assume a role of Regional Director at our sister chapter, Lexington ARC. Candy was welcomed back in 2010 to her current position as Director of Residential Programs and Medical Services where she became a key contributor in the agency's new planning process, "What Really Matters." Candy also oversees the Day and Residential programs at Liberty's Choices for Community Living in the State of Delaware. Candy received her Bachelor's degree in Counseling at the State University of New York Empire State College in Saratoga, and is currently working towards her Master's in Forensic Mental Health at Russell Sage College.

Mike said, "Liberty is lucky to have Candy in this pivotal role. She brings a balance of enthusiasm, commitment to excellence, and teamwork to the pursuit of Liberty's critical mission."

We congratulate Candy and wish her great success in this new role at Liberty! ■

## Mohawk Day Hab Staff

Members of the Montgomery County and Canajoharie Palatine Chambers, campaign donors, and Liberty representatives celebrated the opening of the first project of Liberty's Building Bright Futures Capital Campaign at a Ribbon-Cutting/Business After Hours mixer on April 21. The new facility, known as Mohawk Day Hab, is located at 91 West Main Street, Canajoharie. ■



After a long day of helping to prepare the new facility for the ribbon cutting event, Mohawk Day Hab staff took a few minutes to relax. (Back row) Suzanne Field and Wendi Kirk; (Front row) Stacy Parrino, Caribeth Wolfe, Debra Battisti, Tammy Rouse, and Crystal Soto.

MARCH 2011

## Stephanie Wilson

Employee of the Month



Stephanie Wilson began working for Liberty's Residential Program as a Direct Support Professional in March, 2006. She has been truly committed to the individuals at Carlisle Road and reports for work with a

positive attitude and a smile. She energetically tackles each assignment and is a role model for staff. Stephanie plays an essential role at the residence, which is considered a training home. She ensures that all components of training are carried out in a responsive manner.

Stephanie is also responsible for medication orders (which is no small task). Her co-workers and the residents at Carlisle are very proud and fortunate to call Stephanie part of the Liberty team! ♦



LIBERTY Montgomery County ARC 518.842.5080

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## Revamping Recognitions

The Values Recognition and the Employee of the Month programs have been combined into new and improved Employee of the Month and Leader of the Quarter awards!

### Differences from the "old" program:

- A "Leader of the Quarter" Award has been added to recognize our management staff. Nominations can be made at any time and a winner will be selected each quarter.
- Any (non-management) Liberty employee from any department may be nominated for Employee of the Month. Recognitions will no longer be rotated between departments. In addition, individuals who receive services at Liberty can now submit nominations for Employee of the Month and Leader of the Quarter.
- The Employee Recognition Committee (which consists of a cross-functional team of Liberty employees and Mark Bentz from the Self-Advocacy Group) will review monthly nominations and continuously look for ways to improve recognition efforts.
- Anyone who submits a qualified nomination for either Employee of the Month or Leader of the Quarter will be entered into a raffle to win a \$50 gift card.

The Employee Recognition Committee is now reviewing the first group of nominees using the new nomination and selection process. The announcement is coming soon! ■



## Safety Corner

### Earth Day!

April 22 marked Earth Day 2011. If you have not as of yet made plans with your Liberty and personal families to do something for the environment in honor of Earth Day—year-round—I hope you will consider some of the following suggestions:

- Plant a tree
- Go for a hike or just a walk
- Clean up litter and bottles in your neighborhood
- Volunteer to clear trails in your area
- Commit to using filtered water from home, rather than purchasing bottled water
- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! Batteries, light bulbs, paper, water and other resources

The **Safety-Go-To Committee** would like to congratulate **John DiMezza** as our Earth Day Award Winner! John works with individuals in the OPTS program and assists with outdoor maintenance and landscaping throughout the community.

Thanks and congratulations, John.



**Heather Vecchio**  
*Safety Manager*



*John DiMezza*

**Jesse Markes is the Chairperson of the Safety-Go-To Committee** and a familiar and friendly face to many of us here at Liberty! For those of you who may not know Jesse, along with being head of the Safety Committee, he also helps out with Staff Training, Peer Interviews and keeps track of the internships over in Day Hab.



*Jesse Markes*

Jesse is a valuable member of the Liberty team and always willing to help out wherever he can. Make sure to introduce yourself next time you see Jesse around! ■

## Personnel Personals

### • Births •



A grandson, Gerard  
born March 21, 2011  
to **Bonnie Murphy** (Residential)

A granddaughter, Camryn  
born March 23, 2011  
to **Loretta LaPorta** (Residential)

## Farewell to Sandy Scott

After 12 years of employment with Liberty, Sandy Scott retired from her job as a floating supervisor for the CEN enclave program on April 1, 2011. A group of her co-workers and individuals in program gathered in the LE cafeteria to wish her good luck and say farewell to their long time friend.

In addition to working in the CEN enclave program, Sandy would fill in as a supervisor during staff absences at Amsterdam Print, Amsterdam Recorder and Brown's Bus when needed. On occasion, Sandy filled in as a direct care professional during staff absences in the OPTS/Community Connection program. Her person-centered approaches and overall upbeat personality made working with Sandy something everyone enjoyed.

With her newfound free time, Sandy plans to enjoy the retired life by spending time with family and eventually traveling with her husband Bob. ■



*Pictured from left to right:  
Tiffany Macan, Steve  
Cannizzaro, Sandy Scott, Jessica  
Romano and Michele Michaels.*

## Trash 'n' Treasures

- **Geo-Track children's train set with remote controls** – over \$400 value, slightly used. Asking \$150. Contact Janet in the Business office – JanetZ@libertyarc.org
- **Goose Gossage autographed baseball**, never used – includes case. Will be sold at highest offer, contact Gary in the Sales office – 954-3215
- **2 large Samsonite suitcases** – only used twice, 1 black/1 hunter green. \$50 each – Contact Barb in Sales office – BarbRe@libertyarc.org or by phone at: 657-9074

### Carpool to the LE Building

Anyone living in the Fonda/Johnstown area who would be interested in carpooling to the LE building with an 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM shift please call Pauline. Flexible with arriving early and/or staying late. 954-3272

## Benefits Corner

### Farmers' Markets and Health & Wellness Fair

Once again, beginning on May 20, Liberty will be hosting a weekly **Farmers' Market** every Friday from 9 AM to Noon outside the Day Supports building.

**Liberty's Health & Wellness Fair** will be held on July 15 at the Day Supports building in Amsterdam. The Wellness Committee, in conjunction with the Human Resource and Staff Training Departments, will be selling a "Liberty Family" themed healthy recipe cookbook with proceeds from the sale directly benefiting Amsterdam's homeless shelter.

### "Liberty Family" Recipe Book: Recipes Needed

We are asking you to help out by submitting your favorite family recipe and/or healthy recipes for inclusion in the cookbook. If you do not think your favorite recipe qualifies as "healthy" please submit it anyway as the wellness committee will assist in offering healthy options to traditional ingredients. In order to allow time to compile the recipes and produce the book – please provide your name and recipe submissions to Melissa Lasher in the LE building by Friday, May 27.

### Healthy Lifestyles Program

The following Liberty employees have completed their requirements for the 2011 first quarter HEALTHY LIFESTYLES PROGRAM. A deposit of \$240 was placed in their HRA accounts on Friday, April 1. Congratulations!

Robert Agresta  
Arlena Biechy  
Deborah Carroll  
Michael Decker

Constance Dulysz  
Linda McIntyre  
Doreen Perretta  
JoAnn Piurek  
Barbara Renda

Elizabeth Rosado  
Vanessa Rulison  
Catherine Unislawski  
Heather Vecchio

To those not listed: keep working towards completion of your activities. The next submission deadline will be June 15 for a July 1 deposit date. ■

## Successful Membership Dinner

Liberty's Annual Membership dinner was held on May 5, 2011, at Crystal Ristorante. In addition to the routine Board recognitions and annual awards a couple of new items were added to the program, including a Community Commitment Award and the recognition of individuals who have been involved with Liberty for 35 years or more.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Salsa Picante Group for winning the first-ever Community Commitment Award! Everyone truly appreciates the work you do to help others and better our community!

THANK YOU to all of the direct support staff who helped in assisting the individuals in coming to the dinner for their special recognitions—your hard work is truly appreciated! ■



The dinner's co-hosts for the evening. (Left to right) Tiffany Macan; Frank Capone, CEO; Breaunna Theobald; and Mike Decker, CEO-elect.



Congratulations Salsa Picante on winning the Community Commitment Award! (Left to right) Debbie Figueroa, Salsa Picante; Tiffany Macan, Self Advocacy Group; Carmen Irizarry, Salsa Picante; and Breaunna Theobald.

**Liberty's  
2nd Annual  
Farmer's Market**

Every Friday,  
from 9am to 12 (noon)  
May 20th through  
October 21st  
outside the Day Supports  
building.

**Healthy  
Living  
Going from  
Good to Excellent!**

**Liberty ARC  
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