



2013 Staff Reporter

January ★ February ★ March ★ April ★ May ★ June

July • August • September • October • November • December

Annual Dinner and Awards

At the **May 9 Annual Dinner**, Liberty announced the recipients of the agency's 2013 awards. **Fulton-Montgomery Community College (FM)** was recognized as this year's **Community Partner** and **Alpin Haus** received the **2013 Good Neighbor Award**.

FM received the award for its ongoing dedication and enthusiasm for Liberty's involvement with the Community Garden project and other endeavors at the college.

Alpin Haus was recognized in acknowledgement of the friendship and employment opportunity they have provided to a small work crew that helps out at the company's 5S facility.

Other individuals and businesses nominated were: Cyndi Tracy, nominated by individuals and staff at Liberty's 66 Church Street, Canajoharie Day Habilitation Program; Lorraine Larbell, nominated by Tammy Collins from Liberty Staff Training & HR department; Handy Ups and Downs, nominated by Nora Pavlak; and Beech-Nut Nutrition Corporation, nominated by Bill Sikora and Bernie Masterpolo. ■



Liberty also honored 14 individuals involved in the agency's Church Street Day Habilitation Program, citing their many contributions to the local community resulting from nearly 5,000 hours of volunteer service. Liberty's Community Commitment Award recognizes individual and group dedication to volunteerism and making their community a better place. Congratulations!

Spring Banquet at Amsterdam Elks

Mike discusses his favorite 80s hair band... Hey, Mike is that a leisure suit?!



A good time was had by all.

Staff and individuals partied on...like totally...at the Spring Banquet held at the Amsterdam Elks. The 80s-inspired-event was a good time and made fond memories for many!



Thank You! to all Volunteers!

Traves Bethel and Adam Fetterly "putter" around on a golf cart, tending to golfers' drink and snack needs.



Roxanne Vecchio, Liz Decker, Mike Decker, Betty Clough, Kathy Foster, and Renee Sapia grill up goodies at Hole 16.



Joan Silvermail and Dorothy Danaher were eager to take golfers "green" at the 50/50 and poker run table for those who wanted to take a chance!



Golfers stopped at the popcorn booth to greet Beth Francisco, sporting her lovely smile, and get their bags of popcorn!



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Church Street's 10th Anniversary



One of Liberty's Up-County Day Hab sites celebrated a milestone recently. The Church Street site marked its 10th Anniversary with a Hawaiian luau! Family and friends enjoyed the fun with festive food and a little karaoke. Congratulations Church Street and here's to MANY more years! ■

2nd Annual Winter Softball

The 2nd Annual Winter Softball Tournament was held on February 23 at Shuttleworth Park. All proceeds from the event benefited Liberty Foundation and the United Way. Thank you to all who braved the snow and cool temps. It was a fun day! ■



Calvin Jennings warns everyone that he's going to strike them out.

This motley crew puts on their best game "face," hoping to scare the competition!



FSS Winter Festival

Family Support Services's first ever Winter Festival was a resounding success! Held on February 21, it featured hands-on, interactive activities for children and the opportunity for parents to network with one another in an effort to share ideas and information. The highlight of the night, for many children, was the face painting and caricatures done by Doodles the Clown. Great job, everyone! ■



Above: Samantha Togaila spends some time on an iPad. The iPad can be used in speech language therapy session for a variety of receptive and expressive language activities. Other people even use it as a communication device. Samantha uses it in therapy for language activities.



Below: A young man gets his hand painted.



These two guys show off the fun caricature they had done.

FSS Recess



The FSS department has been busy this year, also hosting a Winter Recess program for school-age children. Recess activities were held in the Day Support building. The children were able to choose from structured activities as well as having free time.

Daily outings, such as bowling and the movies, were a favorite for the participants. ■

Ethan joins his free time by sharpening his basketball skills in the gym.

Personnel Personals

■ Births



- **Stacy Stafford** (Canal Street Day Hab) and fiancé Toby Lamphere welcomed their son Ethan Lamphere on December 29. He weighed 6 lbs. 15¼ ozs. Welcome, Ethan!
- **Loretta LaPorta** (DeStefano) is the proud grandma of Gemma Camille Callander who was born on April 21 at 7 lbs. 12 ozs. Enjoy your time with your new granddaughter!
- **Justin Krueger** (Business Office) and his wife Christine celebrated the birth of their first child on May 9. Jayson Xavier weighed 7 lbs. 4 ozs. Congratulations!
- **Chad Hartwig** of Manufacturing/Sales and his wife Danielle are also first-time parents! Their baby girl Brynn Elizabeth was also born on May 9, weighing in at 8 lbs. 2 ozs. Enjoy your new bundle of joy!
- **Sarah Carter** (Residential) and husband Mike are celebrating the June arrival of their daughter Alice, who weighed 8 lbs. 12 ozs. Congratulations and many happy wishes!

■ Wedding Anniversaries

- **Dan Harrison** (Residential) and his bride Claudia are celebrating 40 blissful years together. They marked this wonderful milestone on July 3! Congratulations on their time together.
- **Janice Sheckton** (Staff Training) and her husband David celebrated 30 years of marriage on April 9. They marked the occasion in Key West, FL. Congratulations!
- **Debbie Kowalczyk** (Business Office) and her husband Dan celebrated 30 years of marriage on April 16. Looks like it was a great year to tie-the-knot! Here's wishing you many more years of happiness!



■ Congratulations

- Liberty's Personal Outcome Manager **Andy Stegeland** was asked to meet with OPWDD Commissioner Burke and with New York State Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Shah. Andy was asked to demonstrate how he performs a personal outcome interview using the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL) principles. He met with Commissioner Burke since he is one of 12 people who serve on the direct support advisory committee. "This is an incredible honor," said Mike Decker, Liberty CEO. "While I'm very proud of Andy, I'm also very proud of all the work that everyone has done to make Liberty one of only a couple of CQL accredited agencies in our state and 200 internationally. Please join me in congratulating Andy!" OPWDD is planning to integrate CQL personal outcome measures in providers' service delivery. Andy's expertise and insight will play a valuable role. ■



NYSACRA Art Show

The art program's very own **Maggie Rodriguez** and her artwork titled "Looking through the Window" was chosen to represent the NYSACRA art show on April 18. Her work was seen on promotional brochures and posters. It was created to look like stained glass and Maggie says her favorite part is the people at the bottom who remind her of close friends. ■



Proud artist Maggie, right, and Amy Devendorf beside Maggie's artwork on display at the show.

Sue Schulz and Kojak



Taken at the Basenji Club of America National where Kojak won in his class!

Sue Schulz and her dog **Kojak**, a Basenji, recently competed in a couple of AKC Conformation Dog Shows in Suffern, NY.

They competed in the Rockland County Kennel Club Shows held the weekend of February 23 and 24. Kojak did a wonderful job. He won his Breed Championship, winning a 3 point Major!

On February 24 he competed in the Best of Breed Class, going Select Dog for a 3 point Major win towards his Grand Championship. Kojak and Sue have done this together, as he is exclusively shown by her as owner/handler. This is not an easy feat for amateurs to compete against professional handlers. Way to go Kojak, Ch. SunDiat's Pickwick Edition (that's the dog's "official" name)! ■

Sales and Marketing



Both Manufacturing and the Vocational Training programs are working with Breton Industries of Amsterdam to manufacture and supply Humvee Cover Kits to the United States Military through a Federal program called AbilityOne. We have supplied over 1300 cover kits year to date and are currently working to produce another 250 kits. The work is being done at the LE Building, the LIC Building, and at both Breton warehouses. When completed, the kits are shipped to military bases in California, Georgia, and Pennsylvania. Thank you to everyone involved with fulfilling our contracts. ■

From the Help Desk

Storing Old Email

An option to storing old email in your Inbox is to move the email into a separate folder. This is a process that can be done manually or automatically by following the following instructions.

You will need to create the destination folder either first or at the end of the rule creation, usually in your Inbox (right click on the Inbox, click New Folder and give it a name). Then, create and activate the rule which will move the email from the Inbox to that folder.

A word of caution: Rules are very literal, if you choose to base your rule on a sender's name or email address, everything from that sender or email address will be moved out of the Inbox and into the new folder before you see it in your Inbox...every time...until you stop the rule from running. [Click on the + before a folder to see subfolders and look for (numbers) at the end of the folder name which indicate you have unread mail in that folder.]

If you choose to base your rule on any content in the email, every message containing that series of words will be moved. As always, please call extension 3285 if you need additional assistance with this topic or other computer/phone needs. ■

Safety Corner

New NYS Penalties for Texting-While-Driving

By Heather Vecchio

Governor Andrew Cuomo recently announced actions to strengthen penalties for texting-while-driving to protect New Yorkers on the road. The Governor has directed the state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to implement tougher penalties for texting-while-driving for all drivers and proposed new penalties for texting-while-driving for young and new drivers. In addition, the Governor has directed the New York State Police to increase enforcement of the texting-while-driving ban during the summer. This will mean more checkpoints and troopers patrolling on the roads across the state throughout the summer when more drivers are on the road.



Heather Vecchio
Safety Manager

In July 2011, Governor Cuomo signed a new law to strengthen enforcement of texting-while-driving violations which made using a handheld electronic device for activities such as texting while driving a primary traffic offense, giving law enforcement the power to stop motorists solely for engaging in this activity. Additionally, the penalty for using a handheld device while driving was increased from two to three points.

In New York State, the number of tickets issued for texting-while-driving (30,166) approached the number of DWI/DWAI arrests (43,954) in 2012. In fact, between 2011 and 2012, there was a 234% increase in the number of tickets issued for texting while driving. In the same time period, there was a 4% decrease in the number of DWI/DWAI arrests.

- Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds which is the equivalent—at 55 miles per hour—of driving the length of an entire football field while blind. (Virginia Tech Transportation Institute)
- There are three main types of distraction while driving: Visual (taking your eyes off the road); Manual (taking your hands off the wheel); and Cognitive (taking your mind off what you are doing). Texting-while-driving involves all three types. (Centers for Disease Control)
- Texting while driving caused 11 teen deaths every day in 2012.

The Governor is also proposing legislation that would establish tough new penalties for young and new drivers convicted of texting-while-driving. Under the Governor's direction, DMV will increase the number of points earned against an individual's driving record upon conviction for texting-while-driving and cellphone related infractions from the current three points to five points.

Be safe and have a great summer! ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- July 25 – Amsterdam Staff Chicken BBQ by Brooks BBQ
- August 8 – Up County Staff Chicken BBQ by Brooks BBQ

Center Welcomes New Doctor

New Dimensions in Health Care (NDHC) recently announced that **Dr. Jun Lei, MD**, has joined the practice as a Primary Care Physician. Dr. Lei is board certified in Internal Medicine. He completed his residency training in 2008 at St. Luke's Roosevelt Hospital, New York, NY. Dr. Lei received his Doctor of Medicine and Masters of Science in Pharmacology from Henan Medical University in China in 1989. Upon completion of his medical training, Dr. Lei practiced as a Primary Care Physician for four years in the New York City area.



Dr. Jun Lei, MD
Primary Care Physician

His duties at the health center will include seeing patients on a daily basis for primary care needs. Medical appointments will be scheduled Monday through Friday, 8 AM to 5 PM.

"I'm eagerly looking forward to providing excellent quality health care while serving the Amsterdam community," said Dr. Lei. "It's very important to me to build trust and form a long-lasting relationship with my patients. Keeping my patients healthy and giving them the option of an office visit instead of going to the hospital makes a difference to their overall health and is cost-effective."

While NDHC has contracted with part-time physicians and specialists for many years, Dr. Lei will be the first full-time, on-site primary care physician at the health center. The decision was made after a survey was conducted with existing dental patients at the center. They were asked if they felt there was a need for a primary care physician and, if so, would they use the services. The positive responses led to hiring Dr. Lei in order to meet the growing need in the community.

"We are fortunate that we can now support the community by expanding Primary Care services to Medicare and Medicaid eligible patients at NDHC," said Dennis Yacobucci, Liberty Director of NDHC and Facilities Management. "Dr. Lei is known to be articulate and compassionate in providing care to his patients. Dr. Lei will complement the quality services provided by the New Dimensions team."

The health center provides dental and medical care to those who are both Medicare and Medicaid eligible. Dr. Lei is currently accepting new patients. Appointments can be made by calling 518.843.2575. ■

Staff Retirement

The Health Center's **Cece Alexander** recently celebrated her retirement. Cece served as Continuous Quality Manager / RN Manager for 15 years. Enjoy your much deserved "time off"!

The following poem was written by Dennis Yacobucci in honor of Cece:



Health Center Highlights

■ Successful implementation of new Health Center software, Electronic Health Record.

- All patient medical records will be electronic vs current paper charts.
- The software will enhance the monitoring of patient outcomes, quality initiatives, and financial reporting.
- In addition, patient lab results and referrals will be expedited with the new software.

■ Successful 2013 patient satisfaction survey (PSS).

- The Health Center recently compiled results of its 2013 PSS. More than 60 current patients were asked, on a scale of Great, Good, Fair & Poor, how they felt about certain aspects of the Health Center services and staff. Below are some questions and results.

■ Ability To Be Seen

- 83.1% surveyed said Great, an increase of 17.8% from 2012

■ Time In Exam Room

- 65.1% said Great, an increase of 9.4% from 2012

■ Staff Listen To You

- 90.8% said Great, an increase of 17.6% from 2012

■ Staff Takes Time With You

- 80% said Great, an increase of 15.2% from 2012

■ Comments about

• What do you like best about the Health Center

- Everyone is very friendly.
- The doctors and staff "remember" us and always say 'hi' — My boys love to come here!
- All employees are sincere and concerned.
- Patient with me. Have had bad dental visits in the past.
- Good with 'special needs.'
- I love Dr. Buyck.
- It is very clean and neat. The staff is very professional.

Amazing Race Clean-Up at FM



A happy (and tired) group after a long and successful day.



Team HR in action! Doug Blanc and Deanna Young are ALL business (and seem very happy) as they make their way through the race.



Clean-up Day "Supervisors" Lisa Thatcher and John Glode cheer on participants. Or, are they making sure no spots are missed?

Liberty hosted its 2nd Annual **Amazing Race Clean-Up** on the campus of Fulton-Montgomery Community College. The beautification effort held on April 26 pitted teams against one another based on time, amount of trash picked up, and over-all finished look of their "zone." Teams of volunteers brought their competitive spirit which led to a lot of fun and a beautiful-looking campus. ■

What's New in HR

July 2013 – June 2014 Employee Benefits

- Effective 7/1/2013, the **CDPHP Plan is moving from a \$30/\$30 Plan to a \$30/\$50 Plan. (see details below)** As a reminder, the plan year runs from July 1st thru June 30th, so this is an open enrollment period where any insurance eligible staff or family member can be enrolled.
- **CDPHP** is a community rated HMO plan – meaning you will incur office and prescription co-pays to pay at time of service. Effective 7/1/2013 expect to pay these co-pays:
 - * **PCP Office Visit co-pay \$30** (waived for annual well care visits)
 - * **Specialist Visit co-pay \$50**
 - * **Urgent Care Co-pay \$40** * **ER co-pay \$100**
 - * **Outpatient co-pay \$150** * **Inpatient co-pay \$1,000**
 - * **Lab / Radiology co-pay \$50** (waived if provider is a preferred provider)
 - * **Prescription co-pay \$10 generic ~ \$30 tier 2 ~ \$50 tier 3**

As stated during the annual Town Hall meetings, for those staff insured prior to 8/31/2013, the following employee contributions will increase effective 7/1/2013:

Election	Previous Year	7/1/13
Employee only	\$25 per month	\$60 per month
2 person	\$105 per month	\$200 per month
Family	\$125 per month	\$250 per month

Wounded Warrior Project



Andy Hall, Mark Klug, and Alan Szala show Candy Opalka, COO, a poster they made that represents all the volunteer work they accomplished in 2012.

One venture they were very passionate about was raising money for the Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). Even though this is a nationwide initiative, these guys were put in contact with a local organization. The focus of WWP is to raise money for veterans and their families after they've been injured. Many of these wounded warriors find themselves in trouble with finances after numerous medical procedures, hardship finding jobs, and adjusting to an altered life back home. Andy, Mark, Alan, and others from Hobart wanted to bring a little light to their lives this past Christmas. They sent Christmas cards to some of the wounded veterans in the hospitals overseas. They also gave \$228 to the local WWP and made 65 Christmas cards that were sent to a Veterans Rehabilitation Hospital in Brooklyn. This was a long-term project where tables were set up at both Liberty buildings and at dances for monetary donations. There were also opportunities for individuals to design or make their own card with a message written by staff. The response was great! It was wonderful experience for Andy, Mark, and Alan, so much so that they plan on doing it again next year. ■

Amsterdam's City Wide Clean-up



Thank you to those who participated in **Amsterdam's City Wide Clean-up** on Saturday, April 20. The weather was a bit dreary but the spirits of those who volunteered weren't. Everyone did a fantastic job and your hard work made a big difference in the City!



Effective Lobbying Efforts

Earlier this year, Governor Cuomo had proposed substantial cuts in the OPWDD budget. These potential cuts would have affected all ARCs throughout NYS. Over the course of a month and a half Liberty staff and individuals helped lead a lobbying effort to restore any and all cuts. Due to their persistence, along with other ARCs, all proposed cuts will be restored. Fantastic work, everyone! A special thank you to Alison Wallace and Andy Stegeland for not only accompanying self-advocates at numerous events but for being great representatives for Liberty as well! ■



L to R: Liberty Board Member Carl Pucci, Self Advocates Tiffany Macan and Alan Szala, Assemblyman Santabarbara, Liberty Staff Alison Wallace, and Self Advocates Maggie Rodriguez, Adobi Woods, and Breanna Theobald.

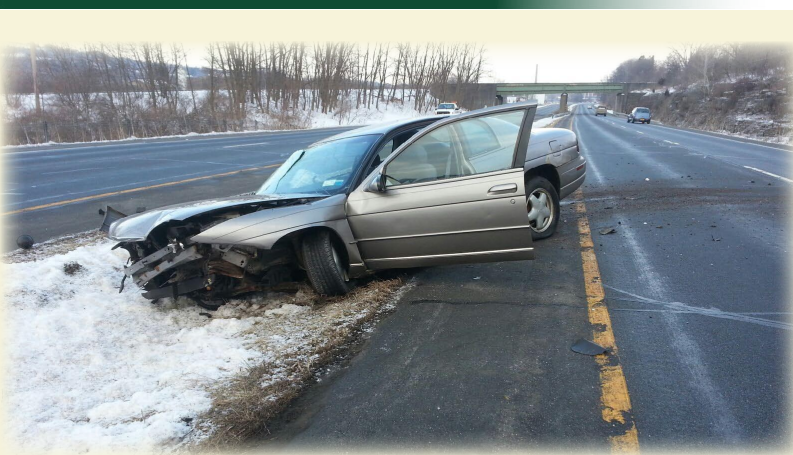


Mark Brandt and Alison Wallace also had the opportunity to talk with the Senator.



Breanna Theobald talks with Senator Cecilia Tkaczyk at a press conference held at Schenectady ARC.

Act of Kindness



This past March, Liberty staff **Matt Richards** not only witnessed a car accident but jumped into action to help the victim. Here's Matt's recollection of what occurred:

"I was on my way back from taking (an individual) to work. I was on Rte. 5 coming towards Amsterdam when a car seemingly fell from the sky. I couldn't believe my eyes. It was about a football field away. I pulled over and ran to the car and an elderly woman was inside, not moving. I broke the door open and all she could do was mumble at me. I smelled gas and could hear the fluids running out of the car so I pulled her out and dragged her about 20–30 ft. away. She was breathing, so the only first aid I provided was the rescue blanket in the van. Other people stopped by to help, luckily one was a nurse. I waited until paramedics and the police came, then gave them my statement. It turns out, she came from a side road that was above Rte. 5 and didn't stop for the sign, sending her airborne across the road."

Great job, Matt! ■

It was **March Madness** at Liberty on March 7! Liberty and St. Mary's Healthcare teamed up for a fundraiser aimed at supporting the Montgomery County Homeless Shelter. Great food cooked up by Liberty's own Salsa Picante. The mouth-watering food was themed after NCAA basketball teams. All proceeds benefited the Homeless Shelter. ■

"Forever in Our Hearts"



Individuals in the **Liberty Through the Arts** program collaborated to create an inspiring work of art for the survivors of Sandy Hook Elementary School. The piece, titled "Forever In Our Hearts," was created in memory of the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy. Eighteen individuals participated in painting the scenic mural with the hope it could be hung in the new school. The mural was created over a period of five days and depicts 26 vibrant stained glass trees (six large and 20 smaller trees), symbolizing the adults and children who lost their lives. ■

Upper photo: Liberty artists prepare to send their painting, in memory of the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy, to Newtown, CT. (Left to right) Heather Purtell, Pam Sherman, Adobi Woods, Breanna Theobald, Tiffany Carpenter, Ryan Whitehouse, and Irene Kinard. Missing from photo: Maggie Rodriguez, Steve Cannizzaro, Kelly Coluni, Tiffany Bottomley, Betty Lyall, Angel Noack, Richard Horton, Lisa Bubniak, Angie Murray, Sharon Hutton, and Sammy Togaila.

Habitat for Humanity's Rally in the Valley



On June 1, Liberty staff and individuals participated in the **Habitat for Humanity Rally in the Valley** held in Fort Hunter. Liberty folks participated in the run, as well as volunteering before and on race day. Volunteers included **Traci Sarabia** and her son **Lucas**, **Lisa Thatcher** with her niece **Maggie**, **Paula Hawkins**, **Roxanne Vecchio** with daughters **Rachael** and **Carly**, **Amy Sterns**, **Tom Johnson**, **Jim Burroughs**, and other members of the Facility Department.

Fresh from his deployment, **Adam Fish** finished an impressive 2nd in his age group in the 5K. **Meghan Russell** ran the 5K and **Catherine Mowery** and **Deb Carroll** participated in the relay. ■

Left: Darlene Elwood, Amy King, Jeanne Hallett, and Kristin Silvernail look refreshed and still raring to go as they crossed the 5K finish line. Way to go!