



The LIBERTY ADVOCATE 2010

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Hearts Set on Achieving Success!



JOSEPH PERSONEUS

“At CEN, we are always impressed to see individuals transition from the shelter of a loving and protective family into the sometimes daunting world of “the community.” This year, we were re-introduced to **Joe Personeus** who participated in Liberty programming many years ago, following high school. Although he really enjoyed his experience, Liberty’s supported employment program was not fully operational at that time, and his father thought he would derive greater benefits from working with him.

For more than 20 years, Joe and his dad cut lawns, and worked at snow removal and odd jobs. As most of us will agree, family teaches hard work and dedication better than a job coach can. After a few life changes, Joe has had to take a few steps toward independence. One of those steps was his first “real job” in the community. He now works for the contractor who provides janitorial services to the Target Distribution Center. That building is so huge that he needed a coach to be his road map until he felt comfortable finding his way around and holding his own communicating with co-workers and supervisors.

Joe’s personal work ethic is obvious every day. He is doing great work, and is well-liked by his co-workers, who are now friends. He is also enjoying the parties, picnics, and social events by being a part of the Liberty Family.” ♦ —*Marie Gavry, CEN Assistant Manager of Supported Employment*



JOE PERSONEUS

JOEY THEN



JOEY THEN

Joey Then, who lives at the Stewart Street residence, has been very busy. “Last year, Joey and I started a tradition of baking, frosting, and decorating cookies to fill a couple of large Christmas cookie platters. This year various staff and I helped Joey complete this project, because it is very important to him. He loves to bake and then deliver the cookies to the Ronald McDonald House, as a gift to the families who are staying there. His smile could not be broader! Thanks for your holiday generosity, Joey!” ♦

—*Amanda Mnally, Residential Manager*

Joey also loves to participate in Liberty’s art program. “Joey recently painted a festive holiday tree which was displayed at the NYSARC convention’s art show in Albany. His work was appreciated by Bailey, Haskell & LaLonde, a national insurance agency that requested permission to place Joey’s artwork on their annual holiday card. The card has been printed and Joey is very happy and proud of his accomplishment.” ♦

—*Brandon Dietrick, Senior Habilitation Coordinator*

LIBERTY

43 Liberty Drive
Amsterdam, NY 12010
518.842.5080

“People are
at the center
of all we do.”



*New Year's Greetings to all!
Our Best Wishes for 2011
from everyone at Liberty!*



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

ISSUE 2 • VOLUME 20

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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A Message from the President

As we enter a New Year, I would like to begin my 'message' by thanking my fellow Board members for their service and support. I would also like to express my appreciation to our friends in the community. We truly appreciate the generosity of those who have supported our efforts by providing individuals in program with relationship-building opportunities, giving a gift to our foundation or by participating in events and other activities. Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank our employees. They truly are the core of our organization. Without their ongoing commitment to our values we could not move forward in our journey from 'very good to excellent'.

If I have to point to one 'happening' that eclipsed all others in 2010, it was the announcement of the retirement of our CEO for nearly four decades, Frank Capone. We knew it was coming, but the public declaration of his intent made it real. We will savor our relationship with Frank over the coming year. Fortunately, Mike Decker's appointment as the CEO-elect took some of the sting out of the reality of Frank's impending departure. We know that Liberty will continue to move forward in a positive way with Mike at the helm.

This past November, our Board met to review and approve Liberty's strategic objectives for the coming year. We will be summing up progress toward 2010 goals and our 2011 goals in a report early in 2011. The report will provide specific information on all that Liberty achieved during 2010 and pinpoint areas we

want to improve. As always the primary focus will be on assuring that individuals have the support they need to realize their personal outcomes. We will also concentrate our efforts on developing better ways to communicate with individuals in program, families and our staff in 2011 and the years ahead.

We expect that there will be challenges to meet in 2011. Yet, I feel confident that Liberty is well positioned to move forward on the initiatives and goals we have set for the coming year and beyond. As always we welcome your feedback and suggestions.

In closing, I would like to remember Board members and friends we have lost over the last two years. It seems like only yesterday that we said goodbye to Joel Silvernail and Gemma Vigliotti. Sadly, I just learned of the untimely passing of another friend and colleague, Mike DiCaprio. All of these people gave freely of their time and expertise to Liberty as Board members and supporters. They will always be in our thoughts and prayers.

I wish you a Very Happy New Year. ♦



Letah Graff, President

Michael Decker Named CEO-Elect

Liberty's Board of Directors President Letah Graff announced that Michael Decker has been selected as chief executive officer to replace the retiring Frank Capone. Decker has been an



Mike Decker, CEO-Elect

administrator at Liberty since 1989, serving as chief operating officer since 2007. He will transition to the CEO position by January, 2012, when Frank retires after 38 years as head of the agency.

Mrs. Graff said the choice was made after an "extensive five-month national search" and interviews with many well-qualified applicants.

Mike Decker's past accomplishments include developing the manufacturing operation at Liberty to the largest, most diverse, state preferred source provider in the New York State Industries for the

Disabled (NYSID) system while he was Director of Industrial Operations. Mike also spearheaded Liberty's out-of-state business development, helping to establish Choices for Community Living in Delaware.

In looking ahead to his new position, Mike said, "I'm very excited and proud to be named as Liberty's next CEO. I'm fortunate to be part of Liberty's rich and successful history and to work with a very committed Board, dedicated coworkers and to have Frank's support and guidance as he prepares for his retirement over the next year."

Mike is a graduate of Union Graduate College, and received a Master's in Business Administration in Healthcare Management, a Bachelor's degree from the State University of New York at Plattsburg in Business Administration, and an Associates degree from Fulton-Montgomery Community College.

"The Board of Directors made an excellent choice in appointing Mike Decker as my successor," said Frank Capone. "I have every confidence that the individuals in program, their families and staff will find Mike to be a dynamic, committed leader who is dedicated to Liberty's mission and to our community." ♦

Liberty Board News



Bob Quick



Mike Bucciferro

Liberty welcomed additional Board members in 2010. Our organization is honored to be the recipient of the expertise and guidance of these talented individuals.

Robert “Bob” Quick joined Liberty’s Board in April, 2010. He has served on the Choices for Community Living Board since 2009. Since October, Mr. Quick has also served as a member of the agency’s finance committee. An Amsterdam native, he is a graduate of SUNY Buffalo. He is employed by Tailwind Associates, an IT and engineering consulting firm with locations in Schenectady, NY, and Charlotte, NC. Mr. Quick has been a volunteer for several area organizations, including: Amsterdam Industrial Development Board, St. Mary’s Hospital Advisory Board, and the Board of Albany Chapter of Missing and Exploited Children. When asked what he would like to accomplish as a Board member, Mr. Quick states, “I would like to help Liberty keep the quality of care and organization that it has become recognized for.”

Michael “Mike” Bucciferro also joined Liberty’s Board in April, 2010. He served previously as a member of the Liberty Enterprises’ Production Committee. A native of Amsterdam, Mr. Bucciferro graduated from Hudson Valley Community College. He has been employed by Amsterdam Printing for over 30 years. He is affiliated with a number of local organizations, including: Perth Youth Commission, Cranesville Youth Commission, and the Facilities Committee of Greater Amsterdam School District. Mr. Bucciferro would like to “contribute to the continued success of all of the Liberty programs by volunteering my particular strength in the areas of construction and facilities management.” ♦

Liberty Board Members Honored

Two long-time board members were honored recently at a meeting of Liberty’s governing board. **Bob Fetterly** was appointed to emeritus status and **Frances “Fran” Gargiulo** was appointed to emerita status in recognition of their more than 40 years of combined service. In looking back at her service on the board that began in 1984, Mrs. Gargiulo said, “Liberty has always and will always have a special place in my heart. I humbly accept this new role as Director Emerita.”

Mr. Fetterly commented on his board tenure that began in 1990 by stating simply, “It has always been my honor to serve on Liberty’s Board.” He served as president of the board in two separate terms: from 1994 to 1996 and again from 2000 to 2002. He served at the state level on the NYSARC Board of Governors from 2001 to 2010. “Bob Fetterly is a leader and a visionary,” said Frank Capone, Liberty’s CEO. “He gives freely of his time and is always looking for what is best for our agency.”

Mrs. Gargiulo served as president of the board from 1988 to 1990 and also simultaneously served on the ARC, NDL and CCL boards.

She chaired the Diversity, Program, and Guardianship committees at the same time and served as a member of the Family Support Services Committee. Mrs. Gargiulo was catalyst behind the formation of the Spirituality Committee and was instrumental in assisting people with disabilities to join the congregation at St. Mary’s Church. “She served on the Montgomery County Community Services Board for 12 years and received the highest honor for volunteer services from the New York State Special Olympics of which she was a board member for many years. “She is quick to give positive feedback and looks at a negative or problem as an opportunity to improve,” said Frank Capone.

Both have had close family members in programs at Liberty. ♦



Fran Gargiulo
Director Emerita



Bob Fetterly
Director Emeritus

Capone Receives National Honor, Decker Honored by an Alma Mater



Frank Capone, CEO

Liberty’s Chief Executive Officer **Frank Capone** was honored by a national organization September 13. He was inducted into the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) inaugural Legacy Leaders Circle along with 25 others from around the country. The award was part of the 2010 ANCOR Governmental Activities Seminar conducted in Washington, D.C.

According to the web site, “The ANCOR Foundation’s mission is to build the commitment and capacity of providers and communities to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities.” The award ceremony was in concert with ANCOR’s 40th anniversary, and celebrated “the accomplishments of the men and women who have paved the way in making ANCOR the premier trade association representing more than 800 private providers for nearly 500,000 Americans with disabilities.” ♦

Liberty’s Chief Executive Officer-Elect **Michael Decker**, FM Class of ’81, was named a Fulton-Montgomery Community College Distinguished Alumni and received the Excellence in Not-For-Profit Management Award at a ceremony on November 19.

FM cited that, with Mike Decker’s assistance, Liberty has been named one of only 200 agencies in the world to be accredited by the Council on Quality and Leadership. He is Board Treasurer/Secretary for ANCOR, the nation’s developmental disability provider association, and a Board Member of New York State Industries for the Disabled, a statewide board supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities.

Mike Decker has served on the board of numerous local organizations including the Montgomery County Industrial Development Agency, Greater Amsterdam Board of Education, Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, and the YMCA. ♦



Mike Decker, right, accepting the award from FM President Dustin Swanger; Cheryl McGrattan, Special Events Chair of the FM Foundation Board stands by.

Liberty Foundation Donations



Our sincere thanks to the following individuals, families and businesses who contributed to Liberty Foundation, Inc., since June, 2010. We truly appreciate your support.

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If your name has been omitted we apologize. Please let us know so we can acknowledge your gift in our next newsletter. 518.954.3203

LIBERTY FOUNDATION'S



We welcome our newest members—

- ✿ **Mr. & Mrs. Ken Adamowski**
- ✿ **Mr. & Mrs. Charles Burling**

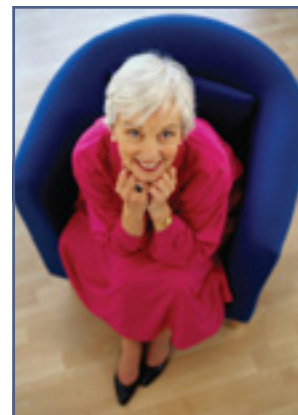
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Personal Financial Planning: KRAFT...with a "K"

William Pfeiffer, JD, from the law firm of Girvan & Ferlazzo, LLC, was guest speaker at the Liberty Fall dinner in November. He presented an important overview of personal financial planning. Here is a summation of his unique presentation.

"KRAFT" represents the wise crafting and strategies to assist you in keeping up-to-date with your estate and financial plan. You may employ strategies available under current tax law plus utilize special tools to benefit you, your loved ones, and charities you favor. Let's look at the essentials of what I call "KRAFT" and what it means:

K—Know your objectives. What are the most important family and personal planning objectives in your life and in future years, when you are gone. Focus and list them for discussion with advisors. Consideration today may avoid family conflicts, protect assets, provide for family members who will receive assets, determine when beneficiaries are to receive assets, and whether asset distribution should be outright or in trust, focus a plan for liquidity/cash to meet expenses, protect assets from creditors, keeping assets "in the family" and reduce income and estate taxes. An estate plan should also identify your personal values including the importance of giving back to the community and creating a permanent legacy through your financial resources.

R—Record your plan. Having identified your assets and objectives, and considerations for family, begin discussions with your legal advisor to record your plan. A qualified estate and probate attorney will prepare the appropriate documents to finalize your plan. These may include: wills, revocable and irrevocable trusts, powers of attorney and health care proxies.

A—Advisors who work as your team. There are professional advisors who assist you to finalize your objectives. The estate attorney is considered the team "captain" who brings all aspects of your plan together and to place it in final written form. Accountants and financial planners help evaluate assets and liabilities which must be considered in determining a true value to your net worth. Some may suggest how assets may be held (ownership/title) to minimize any possible state and federal taxation or undue expense in the transfer of assets.

A quality life underwriter can help determine liquidity requirements for payment of estate costs or other expense and liabilities, and help plan funding of important trusts. A trust officer may serve to discuss any issues of trust administration and investment management.

F—Fund your plan.

For your plan to properly evolve and function, it is vitally important to plan your assets and life insurance to fund any trust arrangement. Charitable plans must be keenly focused upon and funded at an appropriate time to benefit family and special organizations such as Liberty Foundation.

T—Tell your beneficiaries, including charities. Your planning is critical to your family, and you should share your objectives with them, helping them to understand how you have planned, and what personal values it reflects. Share your personal concerns and that your estate plan is a manifestation of love, caring for family, friends, and charities you favor.

Communication of all aspects of **"KRAFT"** is the over-arching theme. Your plan will benefit you, your loved ones, friends, and favorite charities—including Liberty Foundation, Inc. Please feel free to contact me at 518.462.0300 with your questions. ♦



*Liberty and Liberty Foundation Board member **Joel Kaplan**, left, and **Attorney Bill Pfeiffer** at Liberty's Fall Meeting on November 17. Attorney Pfeiffer gave a succinct presentation on crafting an estate and financial plan using the acronym **"KRAFT"** to accentuate the essential points.*

Michael DiCaprio



On Saturday, January 8, 2011, Mike DiCaprio passed away suddenly. Mike was a member of our Board of Directors since 2006 and chairman of our residential committee since 2007. At age 52, he was man in the prime of his life, who enjoyed his family and took great pride in the accomplishments of his children.

Mike's parents were active in our association from the beginning and he followed in their footsteps. His brother, David, attends our day program. Mike was respected by his fellow board members for his kind, compassionate manner and quiet good humor. He took his responsibilities to his family, the community, and Liberty very seriously.

Mike will be greatly missed by his immediate and extended family as well as by his friends and colleagues within the Liberty family.

We offer our sincere sympathy and prayers to Mike's family at this difficult time.

NYSARC Names Schuppenhauer as President

At a meeting of NYSARC's Delegate Assembly, held on October 15, 2010, John A. Schuppenhauer was elected the organization's 18th President. Mr. Schuppenhauer succeeds Katharine Wilson Conroy from Westchester County who served for four years. Liberty joins its sister chapters throughout the state in welcoming Mr. Schuppenhauer to his new role with the organization.



John A. Schuppenhauer
President, NYSARC, Inc.

Mr. Schuppenhauer is a parent of an individual who has a developmental disability. He is an attorney in private practice and also serves as a part-time City Court Judge in Canandaigua, New York, where he resides with his wife Betsy and two daughters.

Mr. Schuppenhauer has been active the NYSARC organization at both the statewide and local levels for nearly three decades. He has served on the NYSARC, Inc. Board of Governors representing the Ontario County

Chapter, served as Senior Vice President and Vice President of the Western Region, Chaired the NYSARC, Inc. Legal Committee and Chaired the Committee to Review the NYSARC, Inc. Structure. Mr. Schuppenhauer

has served in the past as the President of the Ontario County Chapter of NYSARC, Inc. and is currently a member of the Chapter Board of Directors.

The Executive Director of NYSARC, Inc., Marc N. Brandt, upon the election of Mr. Schuppenhauer stated, "I have known Jack for many years and feel he clearly understands the volatile political climate we are now in and the many issues confronting our Chapters."

In his acceptance remarks, Mr. Schuppenhauer stated that he looks forward "to fostering and building upon relationships with our colleague organizations and continuing to impress upon the State the importance of our Organization and our cause." ♦

Did You Know?

Some Facts About NYSARC, Inc.:

- NYSARC is the largest not-for-profit in New York and the United States serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families
- The 55 Chapters comprising NYSARC, Inc. are located in every County in NYS
- The organization supports over 60,000 individuals
- Member chapters of NYSARC employ 26,000 people
- There are nearly 82,000 NYSARC members
- Call 518.954-3203 to find out how you can join Liberty, the Montgomery County Chapter of NYSARC in 2011!

Liberty Through the Arts

Artists **Doug Small**, left, and **Joey Then** man the Liberty Through the Arts display at the 2010 NYSARC convention in Albany. The program is held at various day habilitation program locations throughout the county and involves 66 individuals. Staff **Amy Defendorf** proudly reports that several individuals have been recognized for their artistic creations.

More importantly, the artists are deriving personal satisfaction and enjoyment from their efforts. The program will expand in the coming year to include basketmaking and pottery. ♦



2011 Sollecito Scholarship

This scholarship fund was established in 1968 in memory of Christopher Sollecito, son of Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Sollecito, Jr. of Amsterdam, NY.

Its purpose is to aid Montgomery County residents majoring in Special Education or Human Service fields such as Social Work, Rehabilitation, Psychology, Physical Therapy, and Occupational Therapy.

You are welcome to apply if you are entering your third or fourth year of college or if are a graduate student. ♦

Please see www.libertyarc.org.

There is a link to the Scholarship poster and Scholarship application from the Home page.



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Recognizing Good Workers and Outstanding Employees

by Marie Gavry, Assistant Manager of Supported Employment

The effort to educate the American public about issues related to disabilities and employment began more than sixty years ago. In 1988, Congress took an important step by designating October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

Each year, employers and organizations such as Liberty use this annual observance as an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities. Even more importantly, it provides a chance to develop partnerships with businesses and individuals to help to meet the ongoing challenge of expanding employment opportunities, and ultimately greater independence for people with disabilities.

In October, the Career and Employment Network (CEN), the supported employment program of Liberty Enterprises, marks this national observance by hosting an annual luncheon. As part of the program an Employer of the Year is selected from the many businesses in Montgomery County which partner with CEN to provide employment opportunities.

This year, Hannaford Brothers, a valuable and supportive partner to CEN for nearly 15 years, was recognized. Nearly 20 individuals have been employed at Hannaford since the relationship began. They have had an opportunity to learn job skills, earn a good wage, and become a part of the community through their interaction with customers and staff. Hannaford also earned recognition in 1997.



*This is the second time that **Hannaford Brothers** has been selected as Liberty's Career & Employment Network's (CEN) Employer of the Year. The organization has partnered with CEN for more than 15 years by providing meaningful employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities in our community. L to R, **Patricia Cherico**, HR Manager for Hannaford; **Tony Strazza**, **Mitch Kraft**, and **Susan Angelo** (CEN participants); **Jackie Becker** and **Alison Burke**, Hannaford supervisors.*

Being part of a supported employment program means that individuals will have an advocate who can provide on-site job training, reinforcement, and follow-up services to ensure continued success and employer satisfaction. For many, it also means taking the first step toward achieving independence. For the employer it means eligibility for hiring incentives, and immediate access to a pool of qualified individuals looking for work. ♦

17th ANNUAL LIBERTY FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT

SAVE THE DATE: THURSDAY • JUNE 9 • 2011

Wells Selected as Outstanding Worker

Robert Lee Wells has been selected as a 2010 Joslin Outstanding Performer by New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID), a statewide organization that oversees preferred source contracts for agencies serving people with disabilities. Wells is one of 50 New Yorkers acknowledged for their work achievements. The awards are presented in October in conjunction with the nationwide observance of Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Robert was nominated by Liberty Enterprises' vocational program staff. He has been enrolled in the program since 2004 and presently works for the in-house janitorial area at Liberty's Day Support building. In the nomination, Robert is recognized as being, "a very conscientious and diligent worker regarding attendance, completing assigned tasks and cooperating with his supervisor and peers."

A check for \$250 and a certificate was awarded to Wells by Ron Romano of NYSID at the annual luncheon of Liberty's supported employment program, the Career & Employment Network, held on October 26.

"Robert Wells exemplifies what an outstanding worker should be," said Bill Sikora, Director of Manufacturing Operations at Liberty. "He is committed to quality work and goes above and beyond what is expected. We are very proud of his well-deserved selection. ♦



Robert Lee Wells, left, accepts the 2010 Joslin Outstanding Performer award from Ron Romano of New York State Industries for the Disabled (NYSID). Wells is one of 50 individuals statewide recognized by NYSID for their outstanding work achievements. Wells is employed on the janitorial crew at Liberty's Day Support facility at 47 Liberty Drive in Amsterdam.



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More...Hearts Set on Achieving Success!

MELISSA THOMPSON

Melissa Thompson has been interested in writing and sharing poetry with her family and her friends at Liberty for many years. Several months ago, with the encouragement of staff in Liberty's Family Support Services program, Melissa joined a poetry reading group at Barnes & Noble bookstore in Mohawk Commons.

She has become a regular and accepted part of the group and has been invited to participate in other poetry forums in the area. Melissa is enjoying her new friends and the opportunity to share her passion for poetry with like-minded artists. ♦

Melissa Thompson, right, and Doug Blanc review the poem Melissa will read at the next poetry group. Doug, now a member of the HR team, was previously employed in the Family Support Program and was instrumental in helping Melissa connect with fellow poets and artists at Barnes & Noble.



Success stories large and small happen daily at Liberty. These stories illustrate the accomplishments of so many individuals in Liberty programs who accept challenges and experience joy when they make strides towards their goals.

DAN GRECO

Dan Greco recently completed a 2011 calendar which he is selling to raise money for Alzheimer's programs and to provide information about the disease. He is doing this in honor of his grandmother Jenny who has Alzheimer's. Staff at Dan's residence assisted him in developing the content and producing the calendar. It's a useful calendar with plenty of room to insert appointments. In addition, the calendar provides facts about Alzheimer's and tips for family members caring for loved ones who have the disease. Dan reminds the community that there is hope and no one has to deal with the illness by themselves.

Dan Greco added another life accomplishment during 2010 when he and friends **Jim Jesenski**, **Breanna Theobald**, and **Jessica Romano** attended classes at Fulton-Montgomery Community College during the spring and fall semesters. All enjoyed the experience and did very well. In 2011, Dan, Jim, and others hope to expand their involvement by joining college organizations or clubs and participating in FM activities. ♦

Pictured below are Jim Jesenski, left, Wendi Kirk, center, and Dan Greco. Incidentally, when this photo was taken, Jim and Dan had just presented Wendi with her award as September 2010 Employee of the Month. Wendi played an instrumental role in facilitating the college experience for Jim and Dan.

