

Liberty's on the Road

On August 11, a ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the grand opening of the **Lock E-13 Living History Rest Area along the New York State Thruway** which includes a new **Taste NY** store operated by Liberty Fresh Market that had officially opened at the end of May.

The expansion of the Liberty Fresh Market into the Taste NY venue is a unique growth opportunity for the individuals we support at Liberty. We are able to offer a variety of employment choices in a competitive yet nurturing environment for persons with developmental and physical disabilities. Opening the door to new employment opportunities such as these is essential for the population we support. This partnership with the Governor's Taste NY initiative, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the NYS Thruway Authority and Canal Corporation contributes to the growth of employment training programs such as Liberty Fresh Market.

Currently, 12 individuals are working in various capacities at Lock E-13. The following are store clerks: Bethany Cramer, Jonathan Lieber, John Minckler, Frank Rivera, Maggie Rodriguez, Ed Romeyn, Matt Summerfield, Breauna Theobald and Adobi Woods. In addition to operating the market, Liberty is also heading up facilities management with Brian Cope and Harold Isabel working in that capacity.

Located on the NYS Thruway (I-90) westbound at milepost 187 between exit 28 (Fultonville) and exit 29 (Canajoharie), the Lock E-13 Living History Rest Area encourages New Yorkers and visitors to explore the scenic venue and to purchase items from 30 New York-based



producers, many of whom are from the Mohawk Valley and vendors who do business with Liberty Fresh Market.

In addition to Lock E-13, Taste NY products are offered at nearly four dozen locations, such as rest areas and travel plazas along New York's highways, Taste NY cafés, concession stands, and bars. The new store will be open on a seasonal basis. ♦



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 25

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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President's Letter



*Lisa Vander Wal, President
Liberty Board of Directors*

Dear Liberty family and friends,

One of the distinct pleasures of serving on the Liberty Board of Directors is to be able to see what is going on in the lives of the people we support from a bird's eye perspective. Each month the Board receives a presentation regarding some aspect of Liberty's operations, and we are continually amazed by what is being done by and for the individuals for whom Liberty exists. Whether it is the care being taken by our Finance Committee and staff to ensure financial stability; the stellar quality and ingenuity of the IT staff and the videos they are producing to chronicle "What Matters to Me" for individuals we support; or the nursing and support services being offered to our participants—all of these, and more, tell the story of an organization working hard to do the very best job possible to fulfill its mission statement: We work together to support people with disabilities and others in need to achieve a quality of life each person values.

The Liberty Board has recently begun the practice of asking this question at the conclusion of each of our Board meetings: "Who would we like to acknowledge and affirm for their hard work and contribution to Liberty and the people we support"? There are so many who fit this description, from individuals to committees, staff to people we support, volunteers to community partners.

Finally, if you haven't had a chance to visit, I encourage you to stop in at the Taste NY market at mile marker 187 between exits 28 (Fonda) and 29 (Canajoharie) on the NYS Thruway. It features many of the wonderful products from Liberty Fresh Market and some great Liberty employees. ♦

**To all of you
who work hard to
make this a truly
great organization,
we say a big
"thank you."**

Lisa P. VanderWal



An overview of the Taste NY market inside the new Lock 13 Living History Park Rest Area.

Taste NY store manager Michelle Melendez, market clerk Maggie Rodriguez (Liberty individual), market clerk Owen Smith, and market clerk John Minkler (Liberty individual).



Adobi Woods is a successful graduate of the Liberty Fresh Market training program and now is focused accomplishing great things in her new position at the Taste NY location.



A Message from Liberty's CEO



Jennifer Saunders
Chief Executive Officer

"bFair2DirectCare"

Liberty ARC's workforce is the key to providing quality services in our homes, our day programs and throughout the agency. In 1996 John F. Kennedy Jr. wrote, "Quality is defined at the point of interaction between the staff member and the individual with a disability" and this concept holds true today. And yet, despite the acknowledged critical role that **Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)** play in the lives of the individuals we support, they are not receiving the recognition they deserve from New York

State, NYSARC and several other advocacy organizations have joined together to drive forward the "bFair2DirectCare" campaign. The campaign's goal is to compel the Governor and the Legislature to approve appropriate budget funding for these dedicated professionals when the 2017-18 state budget is finalized April 1, 2017. This campaign is focused on ensuring our direct care workers receive the compensation they deserve for the incredible work they perform each day. Liberty, a member Chapter of NYSARC, strongly supports this campaign.

Recently we saw the minimum wage for fast food workers raised to \$15.00 an hour by 2021, shortly followed by a state-wide increase in the minimum wage for all other industries to \$12.50 by the year 2020. While we support the increase in minimum wage, we are left wondering how this aligns with the Governor's approved 2016-17 cost of living increase of a mere .002 percent or approximately \$.02 cents for the majority of Liberty ARC's workforce. Our greatest asset at Liberty ARC is our employees—from our DSPs working one-on-one with individuals we support, to our facilities department personnel maintaining our homes, to our IT department supporting our software needs and keeping us connected—each one of our employees contributes to our mission.

We are committed to advocating for fair compensation and adequate increases for our workforce. Please join us in advocating for our Liberty staff members by visiting our website, libertyarc.org or Liberty's Facebook page for more information and a sample letter. Liberty's workforce needs to be paid wages that recognize their role in lives of individuals with disabilities.

Please help us in advocating for our DSPs and say a special "Thank you" to the DSP in your life who makes a difference. ♦

Health Center News

New Dimensions in Health Care Receives Two Grants

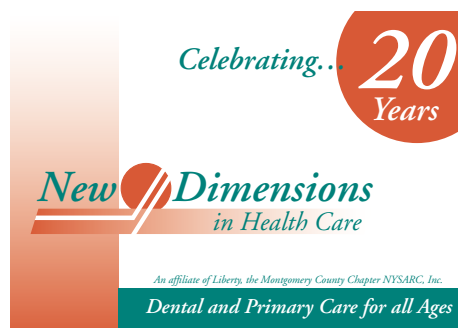
Carondelet Community Foundation

This past spring, the health center was awarded a grant in the amount of \$1,000 to provide partial funding of our **1-2-3 Smile** program, an educational/outreach program for children from low income households in Montgomery and Fulton counties. The primary objective of the program is to provide children and adults with the education, training and tools they need to make informed decisions regarding their dental health.

Community Foundation of the Greater Capital District

In August, the New Dimensions in Health Care received notice from the Community Foundation of the Greater Capital District of a grant award in the amount of \$6,662. The funds will be used to purchase an Aribex NOMAD hand-held x-ray unit. This equipment will allow clinicians to safely stay in the operatory and assist patients in maintaining his/her position as the x-ray is taken. It is often difficult to generate a usable dental x-ray on a patient with a disability, particularly if he/she is in a wheelchair. It is frequently the case with some younger children as well.

Thanks to the Carondelet Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of the Greater Capital District for helping New Dimensions improve the level of dental education and care available in our area. ♦



Liberty's health care center, New Dimensions in Health Care, is now on Facebook! The page has useful health and dental information as well as the latest news on what's happening at NDHC. Please visit and like!

Direct Care Coalition Kick-off Event



On June 8, the **#bFair2DirectCare Coalition**, including NYSARC, conducted an inspiring kickoff event ("300 Days to Better Pay") at the State Capitol in Albany to launch a new year-long workforce funding campaign. The news conference featured remarks from Direct Support Professionals from Capital Regional NYSARC Chapters, the people and families they support, Chapter executive directors, and key legislative leaders.

The "300 Days to Better Pay" campaign is a statewide series of events to constantly repeat for legislators and the Governor that direct care not-for-profit agency workers need a fair rate of pay which is commensurate with their vital support responsibilities. ♦

Liberty individual Bre Theobald speaks to the crowd on the importance Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play in her life and how much she values them, "just like family."



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 March through September 15, 2016. 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.

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Details at libertyarc.org



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Thanks to all sponsors, golfers, and volunteers who helped make the tournament a resounding success!



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

Consider 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! Call 518.954.3202. ♦



MARCH 10

Santabarbara Press Conference

On March 10, Liberty ARC participated in Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara's announcement regarding the unveiling of his proposed new legislation...The Autism Action Plan. The Plan is aimed at creating services and supports enhancing the quality of life of New Yorkers living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and supporting their families and caregivers.

Liberty's COO, Candy Opalka, was on hand to speak on the importance of meaningful and long-term employment as well as the great need for housing options.

Also taking part: Schenectady ARC, Autism Society of Albany, New York, NYSID, Preferred Source Solutions, Puzzles Bakery & Café and GRASP.

Enjoying Spring Fever at the Spring Banquet



Nancy Guyette and Sandra Quinion take a quick break to pose for a party picture.



George Jagielski and Bill Petruccione proudly show off their fancy top hats.



MAY 7

9th Annual Liberty Follies

The 9th Annual Follies Variety Show was once again a huge success for Liberty individuals as well as staff and community members who participated. The show, themed "Liberty's Got Talent," included more than 120 performers with approximately 200 audience members on hand to enjoy the show.

Judges Anthony Battisti, Andy Stegeland and Michelle Michaels had nothing but positive and encouraging things to say to those who sang, danced, and acted. There was a great variety of musical genres performed at this year's show—from rock 'n' roll to country.



The Liberty Choir inspired the crowd with their moving renditions of several patriotic tunes.

JUNE 4

First-time performer Sydney Vanderbilt croons to the tune of "My Town."



Frank Rivera gets the masses pumped up with his performance of "Jukebox Hero"!



Uplifting scenery complements the Liberty Dancers as they boogied to the tune of "Uma Thurman," which thoroughly entertained the crowd.



It was a "throw down" at Liberty with "The Dynasty" WWE associated professional wrestlers making a surprise visit on July 26. Family Support Services arranged the meet up during a Friday dance because many Liberty individuals are huge wrestling fans.



- 1 Happy faces were all around as Liberty individuals met some wrestling idols!
- 2 Melissa Thompson channels her inner tough guy with some of the "bad guys"
- 3 Some of "The Dynasty" wrestlers pose with big fans Joe Cleary and Angel Noack

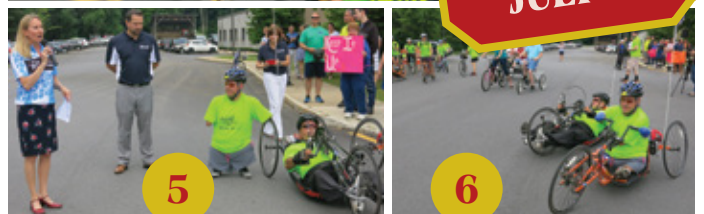
Celebrating Summer with Picnics!



Liberty hit the diamond on June 23 as we once again supported the local collegiate baseball organization, the Amsterdam Mohawks. It was an enjoyable night out for all as they participated in activities, threw out one of the first pitches and had a relaxing time visiting with friends.

Top Photo: The gang's all here! Liberty CEO Jennifer Saunders and Liberty individuals get together for before the game.

In the Circle: Nicole Bellamy poses with an Amsterdam Mohawks player as part of their "baseball buddies" event during pre-game activities.



Journey Along the Erie Canal

For the fourth year in a row, Liberty hosted John Robinson and Doug Hamlin on their inspirational bike trek across the State. They were greeted with an enthusiastic crowd and a beautiful day as they began the 30-mile, 11th leg of their 365 mile journey. Sister agencies Schenectady ARC & Saratoga Bridges joined Liberty in cheering John and Doug on their way. A group of riders from each Chapter joined the entourage.

- 4 Liberty staff, individuals and guests gathered with uplifting signs as more than 20 bikers left Liberty Drive headed for Niskayuna.
- 5 Liberty CEO Jennifer Saunders and NYSID Representative Corey Heritage shared a few words of thanks and appreciation for John Robinson's and Doug Hamlin's dedication to raising awareness for individuals with disabilities.
- 6 And they're off!

Holiday Season Events at Liberty Fresh Market. Stop by!

Activities for kids!

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