

# In the Mainstream

The Newsletter of Community Mainstreaming

SPRING 2021

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## CMA's Newest Residence in North Merrick

A pandemic, construction delays, and finding the right staff were all challenges CMA faced opening our newest residence, Briar Road IRA in North Merrick. These challenges became history the first week in March when the six newest members of the CMA community moved into their new home.

It didn't take long for the house to become a home. The six women have quickly developed new routines and are learning to live together. They help staff cook meals, learn to take care of the house, and complete their own laundry. But more importantly, they are forging new friendships and getting to know their support team.

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## Announcing CMA eAcademy: A New Way to Learn, Shop and Support CMA

This Spring, CMA launched a new vocational training program, CMA eAcademy, to help individuals with developmental disabilities attain and build marketable skills that can be transferred to a competitive or supportive workplace utilizing ecommerce. Housed on eBay, the boutique's initial offerings include books and art at a great price while you are supporting the training and professional development of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

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## LONG ISLAND BUSINESS NEWS



Executive  
Circle Awards

**On May 6, Eileen Egan was honored by the Long Island Business News with an Executive Circle Award.**

The award celebrates Long-Island based C-suite executives and directors who consistently demonstrate remarkable leadership skills, integrity, values, vision, commitment to excellence, company performance, community service and diversity.

Honorees are nominated by others in the business community and are selected by an independent panel. Eileen has been the Chief Executive Officer of CMA since October 2012. Congratulations Eileen!



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## CMA's Family Seminar Series Announces 2021 Workshops

Responding to a need families have for resources to help them identify the best programs and services for their family member, CMA launched the Family Seminar Series. As families prepare for life after High School for someone with a disability, there is a wide range of information needed to obtain eligibility and make necessary connections.

These seminars have been created by listening to families to cover topics on which they are seeking guidance and understanding, while allowing for an open dialog with CMA professionals who share information and ideas and providing networking opportunities for the families.

### The goals are:

- To assist parents and individuals learn about ALL the current opportunities available regarding housing, employment support, entitlements, Care Coordination, OPWDD, etc.
- To demonstrate the most effective way to navigate program enrollments and prerequisites of desired programs/services.
- To shorten the transition period between graduation and selected program(s).
- Give parents an opportunity to use CMA as a point of reference for the future.
- Help families and individuals connect and socialize with peers during the process.

The next topic is ***“Vocational Services for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: How Can My Son or Daughter Find a Job and Keep It?”*** will be June 9<sup>th</sup>. The seminar will discuss the various challenges and resources to a family in assuring the individual has a job best suited for their interests and professional goals. Other topics to be covered include housing options, benefits of Com Hab and Respite, eligibility and entitlements, transitioning post school years, self-directed housing, self-direction and other programs.

**Due to COVID-19 protocols, there are a very limited number of in-person seats and everyone else is invited to join via Zoom. For more information, please check the CMA Facebook page or email Lauren McHale at [LMcHale@CommunityMainstreaming.org](mailto:LMcHale@CommunityMainstreaming.org).**

**EMAIL LAUREN FOR MORE INFO**

CMA received a Disability Opportunity Fund grant to support the series.



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## Employee Spotlight Jennifer Phillips

### Director of Innovative Programs

**Congratulations to Jennifer Phillips who is celebrating her 11th year at CMA. Back when Jennifer interviewed with CMA and was offered the position of Group Home Manager at the Tulip Ave. residence, she knew it was right. She felt at home with CMA and knew it was where she wanted to be.**



When Jennifer joined CMA, she worked with a number of strong women who all along the way have been supportive collaborators and mentors, inspiring and challenging her to work smarter. Jennifer notes finding this “empowering. It allows you the space, trust and permission to affect change and make things better.”

Working as a Residence Advisor (RA) in college, Jennifer had been introduced to people with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She had not set out to work with this community, but serendipity brought the two together and set her on her career path.

Jennifer has held various positions at CMA. Following the Tulip Ave residence, she moved to supervise Community Habilitation. A few months after CMA took over their first Intermediate Care Facility (ICF), Rainbow Commons, Jennifer was tapped to manage this new program. As this was the first ICF house in the CMA community, there was a tremendous learning curve for all. The team worked together with the residents and CMA leadership to create a successful residence, which was later moved to a beautiful ranch house in Dix Hills.

In 2019, Jennifer took on the challenge of starting a new program at CMA for Self-Direction. Self-Direction allows the individual and their family the flexibility to select and manage the services and caregivers that best meet their individual goals. In order to Self-Direct, one must have a Fiscal Intermediary and a Support Broker, both services which CMA provides. Starting from scratch, Jennifer and her team built out the program developing every policy and protocol, building a team and an external network of

resources. Self-Direction is a dynamic program that requires adaptability in a constantly changing environment

The goal under Jennifer’s leadership is to create a program within the larger CMA agency, that continues to imbed the person-centered philosophies that make CMA special. Currently, CMA supports approximately 85 people in Self-Direction, with 15 people pending who are working through the state approval process. The goal is to have 175 in the program by the end of 2021.

***“Jennifer brings a commitment to excellence, creative thinking, and emphasis on collaboration and teamwork to each of the homes and/or programs she’s touched,” says Eileen Egan, CMA Executive Director. “We are excited to celebrate her decade plus with CMA and look forward to her continued success in the years to come.”***

When asked what has contributed to her success, Jennifer is quick to highlight all the women at CMA who have been supportive collaborators and mentors.

***“It’s very empowering to come together to support our community and have the ability to help people find their best life. I am fortunate to be given the opportunity to make changes, and the space to try things and evolve,” commented Jennifer.***

In Jennifer’s spare time, she is an avid furniture restorer. She loves to see each piece of furniture achieve its fullest potential and beauty. Perhaps that is why she loves to have one of those tables in the Self-Direction office for the team to come together to work, support each other, brainstorm new ideas, and invent new ways to tackle any challenge.



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## In Conversation with Johnathan Lerner

### President, CMA Board of Directors

Johnathan Lerner was introduced to CMA by Rick Glossman through the long-standing legendary Golf Outing. That led to joining the Golf committee and attending various events. Johnathan was drawn to the work of CMA, as many are, through a family connection. His former sister-in-law is developmentally and intellectually disabled and supporting this community is important to Johnathan. As he got involved in CMA, he knew it was the right organization to devote his time and energy.



Johnathan joined the Board in 2011 and has served as President of the Board for the past 5 years. Johnathan is a partner at Lerner, Arnold & Winston law firm.

We asked him for his thoughts on what makes CMA special, and his thoughts for the agency going forward. Here is what he had to say.

#### What is CMA's best advantage?

CMA's strong operational abilities to effectively manage group residential homes, where the residents not only get by, but thrive is unparalleled. The population we support does as well as they do as a direct result of the support and care they get from CMA. The residents learn life skills to manage their day-to-day, but, if they want, can learn vocational skills, and receive support in finding a job, or

explore a hobby. The CMA Executive team and staff work tirelessly and long hours to create the environment and baseline for our residents to thrive.

#### What is a challenge facing CMA going forward?

The Board and Executive team have been looking very closely at the best strategy for the New York State mandated transition to a managed care system, which will result in an intermediary organization managing the care between the State and agencies for a percentage fee. This fee resulting in a shortfall of revenue for smaller agencies like CMA will significantly burden our budget. With an annual budget of \$12 million, this shortfall could total \$750,000 per year. How we make up that difference is a big question the board is tackling at present.

#### Last year was a difficult year for everyone. Is there something that stands out for you?

Getting through 2020 and the pandemic as we did is due to the amazing work of CMA's Executive team and direct support staff. They worked 24/7 to ensure the health and safety of our residents and our employees. They followed strict protocols, were creative in approaching their jobs to get the work done. Sadly, people still suffered.

Remarkably, even during a pandemic, the CMA team was able to open two new houses in Malverne (late 2020) and North Merrick (early 2021). It's a great sign of hope going forward that amidst everything, we opened the houses increasing the number of people we support and providing more jobs and opportunities.

CMA is very fortunate to have a smart, generous, board leader and supporter of our mission. We are extremely grateful to Johnathan for all he does.



You have the power to make a CMA group home and/or Day Habilitation’s wishes come true. Heading into summer, we asked CMA’s residences and programs for a list of items they would like to complete their home or augment their recreational activities.

**Here’s how it works**

Click on the house button below to take you directly to that list on Amazon. Then just click on the item you would like to purchase. From there it will be donated and delivered straight to CMA.

In addition, if you select CMA as your charity via Amazon Smile, Amazon will make a donation to CMA for each of your purchases. It’s a “win-win” for CMA!

IRMA

ARLEIGH

AVENUE C

CARLETON

DAY HABILITATION

HIDDEN LANE

KINGS POINT

MASSAPEQUA

NORTH MERRICK

PENN COURT

SUPPORTED LIVING

TULIP

Monetary donations can be made online here

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Thank you for your continued support of CMA and the people we serve.



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## CMA's 2021 Golf & Tennis Tournament Same Mission, New Friends!

For the past 27 years, CMA's annual tournament demonstrates the difference friends can make when combining efforts for a good cause. Together we are creating opportunity and changing lives.

The most important factor contributing to the success of CMA's outing is our planning committee. Chaired for the first 20 years by Mark Engel, Gerry Levy and Jerry Pinsky, and the last seven by their sons Matt Engel, Neil Levy and Jeff Pinsky, CMA's tournament takes almost a year to plan and – thanks to the tireless efforts of this committee – the tournament has weathered recessions, shifting business climates, and a pandemic. Thanks to Matt, Neil and Jeff, and the entire committee, CMA's 2021 tournament netted more than \$150K for CMA's services for men and women with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Especially important to this year's outing was our honoree: AJ Rexhepi of Century Management. His outreach on CMA's behalf made a powerful difference; it helped raise money and it introduced many new people to CMA's important mission. CMA is so, so grateful! AJ also took time to visit our Irma residence to see firsthand the important services CMA provides.

**“Century and I look forward to being long-term supporters of CMA and we'll do whatever we can to encourage others.” – AJ Rexhepi**

There are many people who contributed to the overall success of this tournament, including sponsors, honorees, volunteers, and, of course, our planning committee.



We have many people to thank, but most of all, we thank YOU. If you have supported our outing, please know how much we appreciate your support and what a powerful difference this event makes to CMA and its programs.

**We can hardly wait for May 2022!!**

## Save the Date



**CMA's 16th Annual Comedy Night  
 Wednesday, July 21, 2021  
 Village Club of Sands Point**

**Honoring James Slattery  
 of Slattery Energy Consulting Group**

More information to follow

## Individual Profile: Adam Garyn

By Christopher McMullan



Adam arrived at his first CMA residence, Hidden Lane, in 2017. He says he loved living there, formed several close friendships, and that he did very well for the first 2 years. In 2019 however, Adam started to have some challenges. He admitted that he needed a change of scenery, and luckily, CMA had the perfect opening.

In 2019, Adam moved into the Carleton residence, and for the past 2 years, Adam has truly thrived. At Carleton, sometimes lovingly referred to as “the frat house” because the five residents who live there are all men, Adam was able to share his biggest passion, sports. Adam loves all things sports and is a self-proclaimed fanatic! Although Adam loves many sports, his favorite sport is basketball, which he plays often and watches even more. He is a huge NJ Nets fan and has been since a child. Most people just love the NBA for their favorite players or teams...but Adam has a much broader appreciation. His favorite part of the NBA is the league’s diversity. Adam admires that a single team could not only have players from all over the United States, but from all around the world. He noted that some of his favorite players are from Africa, Asia and the Ukraine. He also said that he admires the marketing and business side of the NBA. In fact, one of Adam’s favorite hobbies is trading, selling, and collecting all sorts of sports memorabilia. From rare baseball cards to autographed basketball jerseys, Adam collects it all. Adam is also a huge music fan,

Most people who live in one of CMA’s residences have many shared experiences. Although there are similarities interwoven throughout everyone’s personal journeys, each individual story is unique. Adam Garyn’s story is one of perseverance and personal growth. Adam was born into a loving family and home in Dix Hills on September 2, 1994. Adam said that he had a great childhood.

He loved learning and school, especially high school. He is a proud graduate of Commack High School, where he consistently received good grades. Like most boys, Adam was extremely close to his mother, who sadly passed away when he was only 18 years old. A few years after this tragedy, Adam was introduced to CMA.

particularly Rock and Roll. He has taught himself to play guitar and has collected several that he plays regularly.

Adam is a very energetic and determined young man. His work ethic is unmatched. Adam says that he loves to work for three main reasons. Work brings a sense of fulfillment, economic independence, and the opportunity for many learning experiences. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the world was shutting down, many Americans withdrew into their homes in fear. Anxiety and uncertainty abounded. But it’s the choices that one makes, and how one faces adversity that defines us, and Adam would not let the pandemic slow him down. Instead of retreating, Adam confronted it head on. In fact, working at Stop and Shop, Adam was deemed an essential employee. Adam worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, often working long hours five to six days a week! Adam takes the COVID safety protocols extremely seriously. Because of his vigilant adherence to wearing appropriate PPE, and following a rigorous hygiene and handwashing regimen, Adam was able to remain COVID-free throughout this pandemic, even in such a high-risk job interacting with hundreds of people each and every day. In fact, Adam has made so many personal strides, that Adam was able to recently move out of the Carleton residence and join CMA’s new Launchpad program.

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## CMA's Newest Residence in North Merrick

Unfortunately, one of the ladies in the home had a family tragedy the first week the house was opened. The ladies in the house showed their housemate tremendous kindness and sympathy. During this sad time, it was comforting to see how the ladies supported each other.

The house manager, Tiffany Adams has worked at CMA for 11 years. She recently stated, **"I love this house! Everyone is so much fun together."** She noted how the women have a mix of planned activities, and time to do things together on their own. She talked about how sometimes the ladies "hang out in one of the bedrooms together, sitting on the



The ladies are young, social and very active. They enjoy Zumba, baking, and now that the weather is nice, they walk exploring their neighborhood and at local parks. They enjoy movie nights together and have already celebrated several birthdays.

bed or the floor and just being silly; chatting and laughing together."

Tiffany coordinated an activity where the ladies all went and airbrushed t-shirts that they will be wearing for an upcoming birthday party. Tiffany is planning lots of outdoor fun and is purchasing a giant outdoor Jenga, a basketball hoop, and other outdoor games for everyone to enjoy. Tiffany discovered a farm right down the road from the house that is on the list to go and check out. It's a good thing the six ladies are so active. They'll need lots of energy to keep up with Tiffany!



The families have taken on an active role in making the house a home. It is not uncommon for families to drop off treats for the ladies (good thing everyone enjoys Zumba!). Our families have been generous in their donations to the home as well. In preparation for Summer, the families donated an outdoor seating set and a grill for BBQs. Everyone is looking forward to outdoor dining on the patio.

On a recent visit, one of the women was asked if she is settling into her new home? Her response, **"Oh, yes! I love my new house!"**





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## **Announcing CMA eAcademy: A New Way to Learn, Shop and Support CMA**

The process is simple but innovative and effective. CMA solicits donated goods from our network and the broader community. Donations are processed in our work training sites at the main office in Westbury and at a donated classroom in the Bellmore-Merrick school district. Participants work with job coaches to receive, catalog, and sort donated items; describe, photograph, competitively price and list the items on our e-bay shop; monitor buyers; process payments; package, ship and track deliveries; offer customer support as well as provide personal thank you letters to both donors and buyers. The experience developed through participation in this program will prepare our constituents for paid employment in a number of competitive and fast-growing industries.

The initial response to the shop has been very encouraging. Initially five Day Hab members joined the program, and that number is expected to double in the next couple of months. The trainees have cataloged and posted over 250 books and are busy working on a steady stream of donations. As the program grows and sales expand, CMA plans to create paid positions for certain graduates.

**“The eAcademy is a wonderful learning experience for all involved,” notes Abe King, CMA Job Coach and founder of the program. “The eAcademy’s initial success is due to the caring CMA staff, motivated trainees, and benevolent donors.”**

**We look forward to “seeing” you in the shop!**

*Continued from page 7*

## **Individual Profile: Adam Garyn**

Through the Launchpad program, Adam can experience more opportunities for independence. Adam and his roommate share a third-floor, two-bedroom apartment attached to CMA’s Kings Point residence. They have the entire third-story apartment to themselves. The newly renovated apartment comes equipped with its own gigantic bathroom and fully functional kitchen. Here, CMA staff will help Adam learn the life skills necessary to live an even more independent life. Adam says that he is very happy to have this opportunity, and that he will put in the effort. Adam’s ultimate goal is to live entirely on his own, and he knows that this move is a big step towards that dream.

Adam says that he is looking forward to his future. He wants to get his driver’s license, take college courses, and get a job where he makes more money so that he can buy a car and eventually live on his own. Adam said that he loves CMA. When asked why, he said, **“CMA makes me feel secure. I feel safe. I have grown a lot. At Hidden and Carleton, I didn’t just learn skills, I learned how to get along and how to live with so many different types of people. Where I am right now, I just love it. I’m so happy. I feel like I am living my best life.”**

**SHOP the CMA eAcademy Store NOW**

