



**In The Mainstream**  
The Newsletter of  
Community Mainstreaming  
Winter 2019



## From the Executive Director Happy Anniversary CMA!

Dear Friends,

Forty-five years ago, when CMA's founder, Joan Brenner, could not find acceptable programs for her son Ricky, she forged a bond with other like-minded families and some amazing community leaders. Together they founded CMA with the mission of providing opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to live in beautiful homes in local communities and to achieve their goals in work, education, recreation, and friendship. After 5 years of fundraising, developing procedures, searching for property, and prevailing through multiple lawsuits, Community Mainstreaming Associates opened its first home in 1980 in Kings Point.

Today, CMA supports 75 men and women in 13 different homes, with two more homes being developed for 2020 opening (which will bring us up to supporting 87 people in certified residences). We provide Day Habilitation services to 30 adults, and Supported Employment services to another 26. Our agency Community Habilitation program has doubled in size this year, growing from 22 people being served to 44, with an additional 3 receiving in-home Respite Services. Our Self Direction/Fiscal Intermediary program finally kicked off this year and we anticipate we will be supporting almost 50 families by year's end.

Clearly, we are evolving from a single service organization (certified residences), to a more flexible, creative, multi-service provider. Our intention in the coming months and years, is to continue to listen to what families want and need, and work in conjunction with families to advocate and support their family members in the best ways possible. I anticipate we will continue to offer a great array of service options as time evolves. And the only way we are going to be able to receive continued government assistance to pay for these necessary services, is by banding together with families, other providers, and provider associations, to keep our state and federal representatives aware of the continued critical needs of individuals with IDD.

On behalf of CMA, I would like to thank you all for the tremendous community support you have given us along the way: founding and current families, professionals who have volunteered their time and expertise, Board members past and present, donors, and our amazing employees throughout the years. Each of you has contributed a brick to make our CMA houses homes, and enhance the lives of the people who become part of the CMA family.

I wish you all a Happy and Healthy Holiday season and thank you again for making CMA the wonderful organization that it is!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eileen Egan".

Eileen McDonald Egan, MA, MPH  
Executive Director

# Fashion Show

On October 15th, CMA took to the runway for our first ever Fashion Show, and it was spectacular! It was the final event in a series of workshops based on the fashion industry. People attending our Day Habilitation without Walls program learned how to dress for success during an interview, re-purpose old items into wearable art, how to confidently walk a runway, and how to express ourselves through the clothes we choose to wear.

Day Hab models had several fittings and rehearsals leading up to the event. Much of the clothes were donated! They created tie dye shirts and attended runway walking workshops. Staff worked individually with each person to help them choose their look, practice their catwalk and plan their hair and make-up. People worked on their confidence and overcoming stage fright.

The personalities and style of each person who walked the catwalk shined so brightly! Great fun was had by spectators which included parents, staff, and friends. Board member Joe DiMaggio was in attendance, as well as special guests Amy Bogatch, Patti Ann McDonald, and Cathy DiMartini. Thank you to The Orchard in Brooklyn for donating a beautiful fruit tray.

CMA thanks our staff and interns for putting their heart and soul into the event: KarlMary Johnson for being the lead organizer; Twyla Sommersell for singing; Telesha Harris, Dawnella Godoy, Rejina Daniel and Quentin Smith for supporting the models and all their hard work with planning and logistics; Mark Glosman for supporting the models and being the emcee; Tawanna De Souza for being the runway coach; Tiffany Adams for being the lead make-up artist. Thank you to Heather Deutsch and Jessenia Lara for overseeing the project. The designer wardrobe was provided by Jennifer Sutton, our Bookkeeper, as well as donations from others including Heather Aylward, Heather Deutsch and Jessenia.



# Self Advocacy Conference

On September 10, 2019, Harold Newman (Hal) and James Comer (Jamie) from the Avenue C Residence attended the Long Island Self-Advocacy Conference. This year's theme was "It's my life, my Life Plan" and centered around the transition from ISP to Life Plans. The keynote speakers explained why there was a change to the Life Plan, the process of developing the Life Plan, who should be involved in the plan and the implementation of the Life Plan, but most of all that it's your plan.



The big surprise was seeing Rachel Jerome from the Hidden Lane Residence performing with The FREE Players Drum & Bugle Corps. She looked like she was having so much fun dancing and playing the cymbals.

Hal and Jamie also met with the League Of Women Voters of Nassau County who explained why voting is important for self-advocates and that voting equals choice and voice.

The workshop Hal and Jamie attended was on the CAS Assessment which stands for the Coordinated Assessment System. The presenters discussed what the CAS is used for, how to prepare for the assessment, how the CAS assessment may impact people's services and what to do if the assessment does not accurately reflect the person's needs.

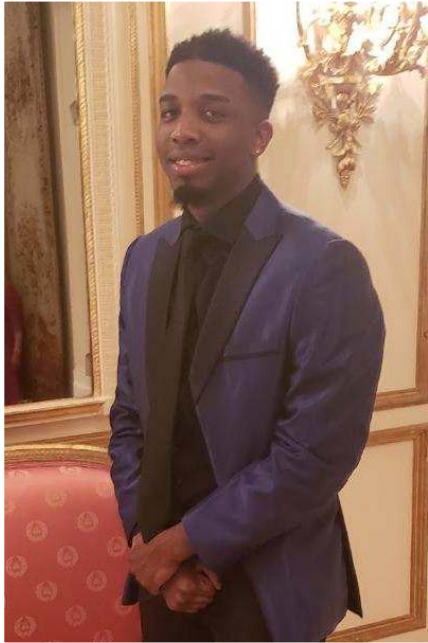
Jamie saw many self-advocates who he knows from AHRC. They spent time catching up and Jamie was invited to a self-advocacy event at AHRC. Hal enjoyed catching up with old friends.

## Voting - People Have Rights!

As part of our Council on Quality Leadership (CQL) accreditation, each month we take on a different theme to help people towards a goal for their quality of life. October's theme was "People Have Rights." The Community Mainstreaming team implemented a series of discussions and learning opportunities around voting and civic engagement, including reaching out to local politicians, discussing voting and helping people to register to vote.

Community Mainstreaming had a dinner and discussion event called Exercise Your Rights. During the first part of the event, we had a PowerPoint presentation and a video about voting and key issues to build a foundation for discussion. It was followed by a mock election that allowed people to practice and role play. People signed in and completed a ballot with their local political candidates. After participants completed the ballot, they discussed the experience and enjoyed a healthy dinner together.

## Staff Highlight: David Hyppolite



David recently became a Direct Support Professional at the Carleton Residence. A student at Queens College working towards his Bachelors in Economics, David originally took the job to earn a paycheck during nights and evenings. Now six months in, “It’s not about the paycheck,” he says, “and that was unexpected for me. I love the guys’ unique personalities.”

David works in a home in Westbury supporting five men. He enjoys the good relationship he has with each of them and being able to bond with them. He also loves seeing so much growth in the people who live at Carleton, specifically one of the men who has improved significantly in his taking initiative in doing his chores and other tasks. Little by little, David and his colleagues talked to the young man about his behavior and modeled taking responsibility. In turn, they used positive reinforcement and praise to increase the positive steps the young man was taking. It has been very rewarding for David to see the young man making changes in his actions and mindset.

David takes a trial and error approach, remarking that everyone learns differently. He enjoys driving around with the guys to get them out of the house and always do new things. He shares a vibe of warmth and approachability that is truly appreciated by the Carleton residents and the rest of the Community Mainstreaming staff.

## CMA Mourns the Loss of Joan Brenner, Beloved Founder



We are deeply saddened to say that Joan Brenner passed away November 24, 2019 at the age of 92. In 1974, she founded Community Mainstreaming Associates out of a dire need within the Long Island community and her unwavering determination to give her son the quality of life he deserved. Joan was the beloved wife of Everett Brenner (deceased), mother of Eric Brenner, Amy and Howard Mitz, Dan and Beth Brenner, and grandchildren Ben, Rebecca, Aden and Jack.

# Participant Spotlight: William Busher

By Geri Pesko

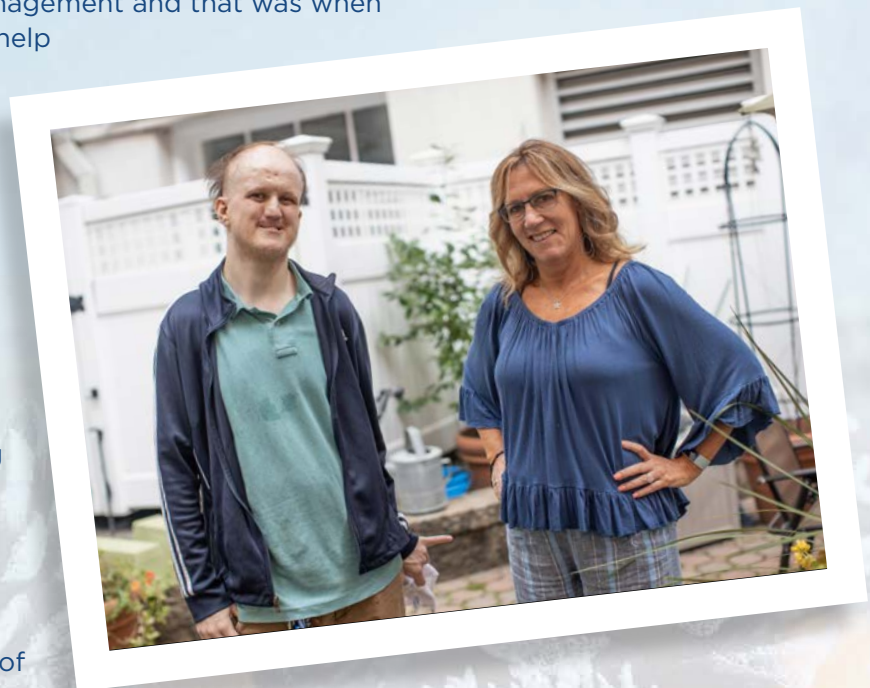


William is a very personable, compassionate person who is always willing to help others. He lives in a CMA Residence in Port Washington. I have had the pleasure of working with William on his employment skills and job-seeking for five years. He began at CMA with the willingness to make new friends, develop relationships with staff and his peers, and become a dedicated self-advocate. He was determined to find a job. That's when I really got to know the wonderful person William really was. He was approved through the office of ACCESS-VR (Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation) to receive support services from CMA.

William gained some work experience through the Corporate Source where he worked as a cleaning crew member, cleaning homes in Nassau County. Although he did fairly well with this job it required William to work at a faster pace. After about 6 months he was let go because they did not find he could keep up with the rest of the crew. Well this didn't upset William. Instead he looked at it as another great learning experience and his determination to continue job searching did not waver.

After a few months of job searching and a few interviews, we discovered the perfect job was right in front of him the entire time. I was leaving the Port Washington Public Library (where William and I usually would meet) and looked across at The Landmark on Main Street which is a theatre, pre-school, and residential housing. I reached out to Lauren at Harding Management and that was when the magic began. She stated she would love to help out CMA since she had met the staff and individuals at different events held at The Landmark. William was asked to come in for an interview the same week and met with Craig, Supervisor of the Janitorial department in the residential and preschool areas of the building. William was offered the job!

William has been working as a Janitor Assistant since July 1, 2019 and is doing a great job. His daily tasks include sweeping, mopping, dusting, emptying trash and recyclables and maintaining a clean and safe environment. Like always, he takes his job seriously and is always willing to take on new responsibilities and tasks. The staff and residents really enjoy talking and working with William. He is proud of the work he does each day. Go William! I am so happy and proud of you!



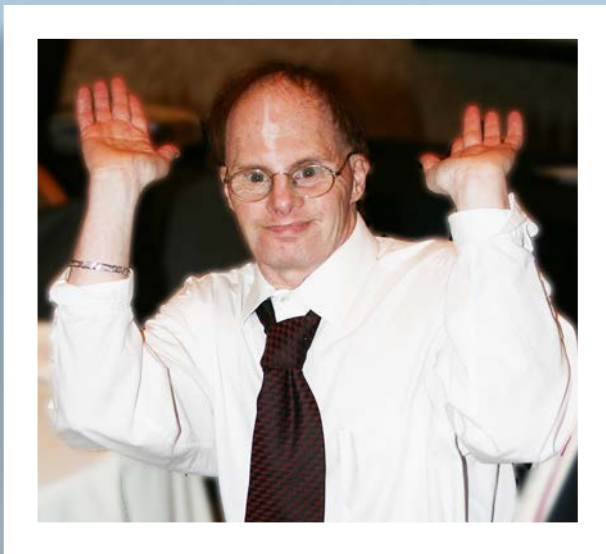
## My Boys Contracting Donates More than \$7,000 in Kitchen Renovations!



Thank you so much Kevin Myer and My Boys Contracting for donating the renovations for two kitchens. Your generosity is amazing!



## Donor Spotlight: The Wolinsky Family



Some years ago, Dan and Ruth Wolinsky set up the Wolinsky Family Fund to provide music and arts enhancements for CMA residents. Support for the Wolinsky Family Fund has totaled more than \$150,000 to date! We are so grateful for their continued generosity.

Dan and Ruth's son Marc has lived in CMA Residences for 33 years. Ruth remembers fondly when Marc was in his last years at Rosemary Kennedy School, and he learned to perform a magic show. He was hired to perform his magic (he earned \$5!) for a group on the North Shore and in attendance were residents from CMA's home in Kings Point. Through that introduction,

Marc was encouraged to apply for Housing with CMA. Recently, Ruth Wolinsky shared a beautiful poem she once wrote about raising her son, Marc, which we are thrilled to share with you.

### A mother's poem about her son, Marc

*By Ruth Wolinsky*

Alphabet, numbers, Sesame too,  
Puzzles, poems and rhyming review,  
Laundry to sort and dishes to set.  
All the above, but not finished yet.  
Reading by three, words on a card,  
Just proving a point, it wasn't so hard.  
Walking came late.  
We just had to wait.  
He soon began running  
Thought it was cunning.  
At five more activities along with his schooling  
And thus, came about the start of carpooling.  
Swimming and bowling, Hebrew and drums  
Special Olympics he did with his chums.  
Siblings had taught him so very much.  
Patience and caring all with a soft touch.  
How far will he go?  
We wanted to know.  
Never an end to teaching him more.  
Many a thing in his head did store.  
Catching and pitching with brother Joel.  
By eight sent a bowling ball on a roll,  
Card games like "war"  
This was his sister's chore.  
His magic show grew  
And we know from who (brother Fred)  
Drums and piano\* he learned to play.  
Could never be done some did say.  
Along came his dog, Buffy by name.  
With frisbee and ball they played fun games.  
In Newsday and Red Book, on CBS too.  
His story was told for many to view.  
His schooling completed.  
Now a job he needed.  
Succeeded at work.  
And this was no quirk.  
For two years walked each way.  
Continued going until came CMA.

*\*A special method taught by a teacher.*

## Thank You to All Who Supported Our 14th Annual Comedy Night!

Community Mainstreaming Associates, Inc. (CMA), hosted its 14th Annual Comedy Night Event at Caroline's on Broadway in NYC on September 25th. Close to two hundred friends and supporters came to celebrate the accomplishments of honoree Erica Lee-Benedetto, President and COO of Marquis Who's Who. Erica was first introduced to Community Mainstreaming when she signed up to volunteer doing gardening at the Arleigh Residence, as part of the Yale Day of Service. She has been a supportive friend ever since. Comedy Night started in 2005, and that first year we had forty attendees and raised \$8,000 in support of CMA's programs. To date the event has grossed over \$600,000, under the stalwart leadership of Matt Engel, Daniel Mickelson, and Ray Ellin. Comedy Night continues to be a wonderful night for CMA!



## 45th Anniversary Gala

On November 7, 2019, we were all decked out in blue, celebrating 45 years of joy, family and fun! We were proud to honor some phenomenal people: Patti Ann McDonald, Former Mayor of Malverne; Richard Glosman, Former CMA Board President; and John's Crazy Socks. Long Island radio personality, Steve Harper was a wonderful emcee for the evening.

Thank you to all that supported! The event would have not been possible if it weren't for Precision Pharmacy LTD, DeMartini Family, Rick Glosman, Patti Ann McDonald, Masters Exterminating & Pest Control, Lerner, Arnold & Winston LLP, Jack Turan, Valley National Bank, Meszaros Engineering, PLLC, TD Bank, and Vicki Imbarrato for sponsoring the event.



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## Remember CMA in Your Holiday Gift Giving

Community Mainstreaming relies on generous donors like you to provide a high quality of services.

Please visit [www.communitymainstreaming.org](http://www.communitymainstreaming.org) to make a donation. No gift is too small to make a difference for the men and women who call CMA home.

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