



As we move into the warmth of summer, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and extend our thanks for everyone who participated in the bFair2DirectCare effort. Thousands of direct care workers, as well as, parents and participants from across the state spoke in a clear and unified voice. That voice was heard by both the governor and state legislators. The result, was the approval of a NYS budget that included funding for a 3.25% wage hike for direct care workers starting in January 2018, and an additional 3.25% wage hike for direct care workers starting in April 2018, for a total of 6.5%.

We would also like to update you on the agency’s new Transitional Community Habilitation program, for individuals between 14 and 22 years old. To date, the program has received approximately 60 referrals and has added 8 new staff positions, including a program director, Jaclyn Schwanz. Programming will include working on developing skills needed to explore future options including employment, secondary education, volunteer opportunities, and community habilitation.

We would also like to extend our congratulations to April Kirby, who was promoted to Director of the agency’s I-LEARN program, and Anna Jones, who was promoted to Senior Program Director of the agency’s Community Habilitation Program.

LDA Giving Campaign



The LDA of WNY wrapped up its 2017 Campaign, which put staff and board members on four teams: the White Cheddars, Blue Ribbons, Chum Cohos, and Yellow Team, with a goal of raising \$10,000 by May 31st. Teams accepted the challenge, and not only reached the goal, but surpassed it, raising almost \$11,000! The Chum Cohos raised an impressive \$5,000, and team member Cathie Kujawa raised more than \$1,200!

In addition to donations by several businesses and community organizations through cash donations, employee match programs, and dress down days, teams collected empty cans and bottles, held soup sales, hosted events at Flying Bison Brewery, Kaz’s Pub, and Shannon Pub, and did other fundraisers.

The winner of the Jackpot 50/50 worth \$1,353 was selected via Facebook Live from the staff-packed LDA conference room on May 26th (the video can be seen on the agency’s Facebook page). Congratulations to Jordan and Skyler Bailey (below with prize envelope) of Cassadaga, NY, who started out the Memorial Day weekend with an extra \$676.50! The winning ticket was purchased from Savy Hair Salon in Cassadaga.



Proceeds from the campaign will go toward agency projects to be voted on by staff and board members.

Thank you to all of the staff, board members, family members, friends, businesses, event attendees, ticket sellers, and everyone else who helped make our inaugural campaign a success!

There are still some LDA pint glasses available for purchase for \$5, and we’re ordering LDA t-shirts, polos, fleeces, and sweat-shirts. Please contact us if you’re interested, for pricing, or for more information!

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Developmental Disabilities Day

The 29th Annual Developmental Disabilities Day (DD Day) was held Thursday, May 18th at The Conference and Events Center in Niagara Falls. This year's conference theme, "My Hopes, My Dreams, My Future" encouraged individuals to take a role in the course of their own lives and in being a force for change in their own communities.

The event brought together local and regional agencies, industry-related vendors and suppliers, direct support professionals, and the individuals and families that these groups support.

This year, the LDA of WNY presented a workshop on Special Education Rights and Responsibilities. LDA's Phylcia Brown, Special Education Advocate for Urban School Districts, and Carol Pearce, Director of Family Support Services and Intake, lead the panel discussion, which advised audience members on the special education process, as well as the legal rights and responsibilities of students and guardians. Board members Camille Jarmusz and Darlene Boeck, along with legal counsel Patrick McNelis, Esq., contributed their expertise and anecdotes to the discussion.

At right (from left to right): Phylcia Brown, Patrick McNelis, Esq., Darlene Boeck, Camille Jarmusz, and Carol Pearce discuss special education at DD Day.



Self Advocate Receives Voice Buffalo's Ntosake Award



Marie Malinowski (with Jewell Snedden and Colleen Rozanski, and with Marc Hennig) was honored by Voice-Buffalo on May 4th, for her work as Chairwoman of the Disability Rights Task Force. She received the Ntosake Award, which literally translates to "She who walks with lions; she who carries her own things."

This is the third award Marie has received for her advocacy work. Last year, she received the Chris Burke Award for Excellence from the Museum of DisABILITY, as well as, the Inaugural One Buffalo Community Award.

According to Marie, "I do all of this because I'm a person with different abilities who was told that I couldn't, or wasn't smart enough to do the things I do. I also like to fight for the people who can't."

Special Education Mini Conferences

The LDA of WNY is planning Special Education Conferences, day-long mini conferences geared toward parents and guardians of children with disabilities in WNY. The free events, to be hosted at four different sites during 2017, will include one-on-one support to parents, assistance in understanding the Special Education process, help obtaining and maintaining Special Education services for a child, a separate workshop for transition-aged youth, and activities for younger children.

The first conference is slated for July 29, 2017, from 9AM—3 PM at the Niagara Community Center, 530 66th Street, Niagara Falls, NY 14304. Breakfast and lunch are included. A tablet donated by BAK USA will be raffled off to event attendees.

The other mini conferences are slated for the City of Lockport, and at community schools on the east and west sides of Buffalo. For more information, contact Phylcia Brown at (716) 874-7200, ext. 167 or pbrown@ldaofwny.org

LDA Receives Grant from TEGNA Foundation, Invited to Submit Applications to Tower, Community Foundations



The parent company of WGRZ-TV, TEGNA, awarded four area non-profits, including the LDA of WNY, a grant during its most recent cycle.

The LDA will use the funding to buy new equipment, reading pens and tablets, for its Learning Center Program, which provides adult continuing education for individuals with learning and developmental disabilities.

Heritage Centers, EPIC, and the Erie County SPCA were also awarded grants from the TEGNA Foundation. LDA's COO Marc Hennig (above, with other grant awardees) attended the check presentation and reception event at WGRZ-TV.

The LDA of WNY was also invited to submit full proposals to the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation and The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo for its Learning, Education, & Academic Development (LEAD) Program. The program is a multifaceted outreach/education plan that uses a home-based school readiness, family support, community-based partnerships, and referrals to address the social/educational, medical, and environmental needs of lead-exposed children in Erie County. Grants will be awarded later this year.

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Thank You for Your Support!

Thank you to Southeastern Recycling, Paula Chameli, Mad Hatter and More, Paramount Lodge No. 57, and Henry Mosher Post No. 638, who recently donated to the LDA of WNY.

Thank you to Patty Castellano, who recently donated to Starlight Studio and Art Gallery.

Thank you to Straight Up Wines & Liquors and Hector's Hardware for supporting the agency with cash donation boxes at their business locations.

Sweeping Action is Needed to Deal with Lead Crisis

Reprinted from Buffalo News's Another Voice, 10/10/2016

The crisis in Flint, Mich., wasn't as isolated as we'd like to believe. Cities around the country have dealt with their own public health threats stemming from elevated levels of lead in drinking water and in homes. In fact, the level of lead in the City of Buffalo, and the possibility of poisoning from it, is greater than that of Flint.

Even low levels of lead exposure can cause learning disabilities, intellectual impairment, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and behavior problems. A learning disability is a neurological condition that interferes with an individual's ability to store, process or produce information.

Testing for lead poisoning and, if needed, removal of lead from children's bodies is only the first step. Any plan for dealing with this health crisis should contain the following:

- All 2- to 4-year-olds testing positive for lead poisoning be periodically assessed for early warning signs of a LD/NI
- All 7-year-olds testing positive for lead poisoning be given a comprehensive evaluation
- All children testing positive for lead poisoning be assigned a special education advocate/parent trainer to help secure the right services at the right time.
- Recognition by the state that many children identified with neurological impairments will need an ongoing system of supports as adults.

LDA offers assessment, evaluation, family support, special education services, legislation and advocacy. For more information, visit our website at ldaofwny.org.

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Looking to Make a Difference?

Join Our Team!

LDA of WNY has Full and Part-time Openings in our Erie and Chautauqua County Offices:

- Residential Counselor
- Employment Specialist
- Habilitation Specialists
- Medicaid Service Coordinator

Great Employee Benefit Package, Including:

- Flexible Paid Time Off
- Health, Vision, Dental, HRA, and Life Insurance

To apply, email employment@ldaofwny.org, with the job position as the subject title. Please include your resume and cover letter.

For more information, visit our website at www.ldaofwny.org, or email employment@ldaofwny.org

Program Spotlight: Prevocational Services

LDA's Prevocational Services provide the foundation for career success and job retention through vocational counseling, career exploration, and volunteer placements, which together provide an understanding of the workplace environment.

Job coaches assist individuals to help identify their strengths, skills, and interests. Individuals may choose from a variety of volunteer positions available through an extensive network of non-profit organizations. Career choice examples include shipping and receiving, child-care, clerical, maintenance, food preparation, and retail.

Through non-paid work experience, individuals can increase their independence, gain self-confidence, and develop relationships in the community. Individuals also receive daily life skills training (time management, personal hygiene, stress management), work skills assessment, work readiness training (social skill development, ability to learn new tasks, workplace literacy), travel training, job coaching, interview preparation, and on the job training.

The program is designed for individuals who have little or no work experience or who have not defined a career goal. Individuals must qualify for the Medicaid Waiver through the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). For more information, contact Corey McClure at cmclure@ldaofwny.org.

I-VOICE Shoe Collection Update

Thanks to everyone who donated new and gently used shoes to the LDA's self advocacy group's, I-VOICE, fundraiser. According to Sophia Roberts, supervising coordinator at Self Advocacy Association of NYS (at right with Starlight Artist and I-VOICE member Andy Calderon), the group collected more than 1,500 pairs of shoes, worth about \$600! The I-VOICE group, led by Janet Harrison, collected more than 250 pairs.

Funds raised will be used for to charter a bus to transport 36 self-advocates from agencies in WNY, including the LDA of WNY, to the annual self advocacy conference in Albany. The I-VOICE group holds fundraisers throughout the year to offset the costs of attend self-advocacy based trainings and conferences. The shoe fundraiser will supplement those funds raised.

Collected shoes will be sold to micro-enterprise vendors, small businesses in developing nations, usually operated by one person, or family and friends. These vendors fix the shoes, if needed, resell them, and use the profits to start their own businesses.



On the Job



Congratulations to Carmela (left, with plaque), from LDA of WNY's Supported Employment Program. She recently reached a job milestone—she's been employed at Walmart for 5 years!

Carmela is a very hard worker and takes great pride in her accomplishments. She also has a great circle of friends and coworkers, with whom she goes out to dinner once a month! Job coach Lisa Morales has worked with Carmela throughout her career, with great success for both!

Inclusion, Awareness, Visibility

Western New York Independent Living, Inc. Family of Agencies

Disability Pride Parade & Festival

FREE!

SATURDAY, JULY 22, 2017

PARADE: 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. City Hall/Niagara Square to Coca-Cola Field. Route & details online at disabilitypridebuffalo.com.

FESTIVAL: 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Coca-Cola Field, 275 Washington St., Buffalo, NY 14203. The first 125 people at the door will receive two free tickets to the Bison's home game on ADA Day, July 26, 2017 at 7:05 p.m.

BY SEA: 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Canalside* with Adaptive Water Sports
*To RSVP with Adaptive Water Sports, please call 716-364-8219.

Western New York Organizations invite you to join us to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act and Disability Pride with **FREE** food, fun, and games will be provided. We look forward to having you celebrate with us!

In the Community

The agency's I-LEARN groups have been out and about enjoying the weather. The Fredonia group recently tested their driving skills on a go-kart track, and took in a couple of baseball games, including one at SUNY Fredonia.

The gardening club (including Angela Robb, at right) has also been hard at work weeding, planting, and getting the flower and vegetable bed in front of the Main Office in Kenmore in order. Their efforts, along with some recent rain has paid off! The tomatoes, basil, radishes, cilantro, peppers, broccoli, cucumbers, sunflowers, roses, Sweet Williams, hollyhock, geraniums, and other plants are starting to bloom and the garden is really coming to life!



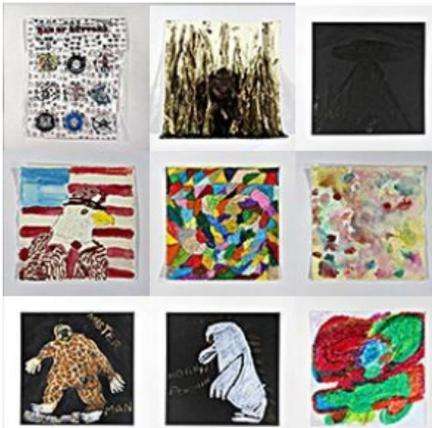
Janet, Margaret, and Sheila from the Community Hab program, took a field trip to Marineland. They had close encounters with turtles, beluga whales, and bears, fed deer, had lots of laughs and a great time. Check out our Facebook page for pictures of their outing, and to see more of our adventures In the Community!

Starlight: Woolly Mammoth, 6x6, and The Bold and The Beautiful

The Woolly Mammoth is now complete, and ready for visitors! Inspired by the artwork of Starlight Artist Chace Lobley, and fabricated by Jonathan Casey, with generous donations from area companies, it stands at 34 Helen Street in the City of Buffalo. Starlight will be hosting a series of one hour long sketching and clay sculpting sessions at the exhibit on July 5th, 19th, and 24th from 10:15-11:15 AM. On July 11th, Starlight will be hosting a Woolly Mammoth Party from 10 AM—1 PM. Chace will be on-site to pose with visitors. Hotdogs and Prehistoric Ice Age Punch will be served afterward at the gallery.

The events are free and open to the public, so make sure to tell your friends and bring your sketch pads! If you can't attend any of the sketching trips, but still stop by, please take a picture and send it to Starlight's Facebook page!

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Starlight artists recently participated in the Rochester Contemporary Art Gallery's (RoCo) 6x6 show. Artists, including a volunteer at the studio, Billy, entered 15 works in various media (at left).

The event features thousands of artworks made and donated by celebrities, international and local artists, including Starlight Studio, designers, college students, children, and others. Each artwork is 6 by 6 inches or mounted to a 6-by-6 inch board. All artworks are displayed anonymously, and on sale to the public for \$20 each to benefit RoCo. Artists' names are revealed to the buyer upon purchase.

For more information, go to <http://www.roco6x6.org/6x6x2017.php> (Starlight art is on the page with art #1808-1854).

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Starlight Studio and Art Gallery's latest exhibit, *The Bold and The Beautiful* is a collaborative effort between Starlight Artist Andy Calderon and James Marino and Benjamin Brauen from Autism Services, Inc. (see picture on back cover)

Though the subject matter has shifted over the years, Andy Calderon's work finds continuity in flamboyant color. What might be, in a more straightforward depiction, subdued and dull is substituted with stronger, more essential hues. And as his color choices avoid digression, so do his compositions. For this exhibition, Andy is showing two exuberant portraits and a small series of plant and foliage drawings. James Marino's color choices are notably more restrained than Calderon's, opting typically for a few colors hovering around a green/blue palette. The contour line work is looser, as if only marginally obligated to the image. Benjamin Brauen's work goes between image and abstraction, but each is handled with similar patchwork structures.

The exhibit will be on display through September 1st. For more information, or to purchase artwork or merchandise, email starlight@ldaofwny.org, call 842-1525, or stop by 340 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202, Monday-Friday, 9 AM—4 PM.

Upcoming Events

July

- 18** Outreach Table, Buffalo & Erie County Library 12—1:30 PM
- 22** Disability Pride Parade and Festival, Coca-Cola Field 11 AM—3 PM
- 29** Special Education Mini Conference, Niagara Community Center, Niagara Falls 9 AM—3 PM

August

- 15** Outreach Table, Buffalo & Erie County Library 12 —1:30 PM
- 17** Community Family Fun Day, Dunkirk 1—3 PM
- 18** Community Family Fun Day, Jamestown 1—3 PM

September

- 19** Outreach Table, Buffalo & Erie County Library 12—1:30 PM

TBA

Special Education Conferences
Co-Art-In-Fact Event

*Events are subject to change. Check our website or Facebook page for updated events and information.

Starlight Studio and Art Gallery 2017 Calendar

- June 23** **Andy Calderon with Autism Services**
(on exhibit through September 1)
- September 8** **Bob Budin with John Price**
- October 13** **Billy Huggins with Janet Harrison**
- December 2** **Holiday Open House**

All Shows are Free and Open to the Public.

Starlight Studio is a part of the Allentown First Fridays Gallery Tour. Stop by every First Friday evening of the month to see our current exhibitions!

For more information, go to www.starlightstudio.org

Starlight Artists Lisa Kobis, Laurell Potter, Debbie Medwin, Steve Robinson, Lloyd Rung, and John Montedoro are now represented by 1120 Projects, 1120 Main Street in Buffalo. Find their artwork on ARTSY at www.artsy.net!

Want to get our news directly in your inbox? Go to www.ldaofwny.org and subscribe to our website!

Trainings, Workshops, and Conferences

There are a number of upcoming trainings, workshops, and conferences for individuals, parents, and professionals, on topics ranging from parent and peer support to an introduction to OPWDD and special education. Costs vary based on the event. For more information, visit Parent Network's website at www.parentnetwork.org/workshops-and-events/event-calendar.

Our outreach table is at the Downtown Buffalo and Erie County Public Library the third Tuesday of each month, across from the Launch Pad. We will also be at fairs, events, conferences, and community centers throughout WNY.

In addition, the LDA of WNY is currently planning its Special Education Conferences, day-long mini conferences to parents of children with disabilities in the WNY region. The goal is to provide parents with information regarding rights and responsibilities in the special education process, information about psychological evaluations, and the process through which families can receive support from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), among other things. The four conferences are planned at four different locations in Western New York in the City of Lockport, Niagara Falls, and the east and west sides of Buffalo. The first conference is scheduled for July in Niagara Falls. See page two for more information, or to register.

Remember to check out our website or Facebook page to see if we're attending an event near you. Be sure to stop by our table if you have any questions, or to say hello! If you're hosting an event, and would like the LDA or Starlight to attend, please let us know!

At the LDA of WNY, our mission is to provide high-quality individualized, comprehensive, and innovative services, which support, educate, and empower all individuals with learning and/or developmental disabilities.

By supporting LDA of WNY's programs and services, you support the dreams and needs of the individuals we serve.

Thank you for your Support!

Dear Friend of the LDA of WNY,

Did you know that **20,000 students in Western New York receive Special Education services?** That's **1 out of every 5 students.**

Most students receive the services and supports they need to be successful throughout their educational careers. However, there are times when students don't receive all of the help they need, causing **parents to have to fight for their child's right to a free and appropriate public education.**

I'd like to introduce you to Kaitlynn. Kaitlynn is a 15-year-old girl who has been diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder and depression.



Kaitlynn loves theater and attended a public school where she was able to grow her love for the fine arts, while receiving special education services. **However, as Kaitlynn's needs grew, the services and accommodations that the school could provide did not.**

Phylicia met with Kaitlynn and her mother, Jennifer, to ensure that she would receive the services and accommodations she needed to be successful throughout her high school years. Phylcia attended Committee on Special Education (CSE) meetings, accompanied the family on tours of alternative placement settings, and answered all of Jennifer's questions.

"Phylicia is awesome. She understands and is willing to go the extra mile. She's been amazing helping me work with the school system, to make it work the way it's supposed to."

All Kaitlynn wants is the public education she deserves. With Phylcia's help, she was moved to a day treatment setting that is better able to meet her needs. Kaitlynn is thriving, and hopes to finish school and move on to post-secondary education. **The help of an educational advocate will make this possible.**

At the LDA of WNY, we believe that every individual, even those with disabilities, can be successful at school, at work, in relationships, and in the community. Our goal is to ensure such opportunities exist.

We have made progress, but our journey isn't over. As long as students like Kaitlynn are in school, we won't stop advocating for them. **Please help us give children opportunities to succeed by donating to our Education Fund today.**

Thank you for your generosity.



Yes! I want to support the LDA of WNY's Education Fund , by making a donation in the amount of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 Other _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I wish to remain anonymous. Please do not publish my name as a donor.

**Please make checks payable to LDA of WNY Education Fund. All gifts are tax-deductible. Secure online donations can be made at www.ldaofwny.org*

Thank you for your support!



LDA of WNY
2555 Elmwood Avenue
Kenmore, NY 14217



The Bold and The Beautiful (review on page 5),
featuring original artwork from Starlight Studio's Andy Calderon,
and Autism Services' James Marino and Benjamin Brauen

On Display through September 1st

Starlight Studio and Art Gallery
340 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202

Contact Us

For more information about
our programs, services, and
upcoming events

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2555 Elmwood Avenue
Kenmore, NY 14217

(716) 874-7200
information@ldaofwny.org

Visit us on the web at
www.ldaofwny.org

