Achieving the Next Level of Independence

College LIFE is a new collaboration with Upstate Cerebral Palsy and SUNY Polytechnic Institute. This program is for students with developmental disabilities that would like to explore career options and gain life skills to map their future goals and help them achieve their highest level of independence. Students' goals may include volunteer work, participating in a community day program or paid employment.

College LIFE gives students the opportunity to learn skills based on their abilities and interests while learning in an inclusive environment. Everyone in the program will have full staff support as they participate in learning in the classroom, on campus and in the community. SUNY Poly's Community and Behavioral Health Program in the College of Health Sciences and Management has fully embraced this collaboration, giving both SUNY Poly and College LIFE students a diverse college experience.

According to Dawn Gentile, Director II of Vocational Services at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, "This is a unique program in that we are partnering with a bachelor's level university in our area, which will provide a training ground and social and learning experience for our students, many of whom have the desire to learn and spend time on a college campus. We can now make that desire a reality with this new partnership."

Potential students must be:
- 18 years of age or older
- Eligible for OPWDD Waiver Services
- Motivated to engage in life and work skill activities
- Interested in learning more

For more information about College LIFE or to be considered for rolling admission, please contact Dawn Gentile at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, at 315.725.2181 or 315.738.0794.

Utica College
The Kelberman Center, Tradewinds Education Center and Utica College are piloting a one-year work based learning internship program on the college campus for students with autism and other disabilities. Students, in their last year of high school, are building the necessary skills to achieve more successful integrated employment. This program immerses students into the workplace through a series of internships, blending person centered instruction with hands-on application of skills. This college based opportunity allows participants to experience a collaboration with instructors and job coaches that are fully integrated into the program day, for a seamless transition to work and adult life. For more information about this new collaboration, please contact The Kelberman Center at 315.797.6241.

Mohawk Valley Community College
The ASPIRE Day Program at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, a program which encourages people to learn about job opportunities in the community through experiencing them firsthand, has partnered with Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) on a unique volunteer experience. From working in facilities management, helping with campus landscaping, setting up for concerts, as well as assisting in dining services with food preparation, participants learn about an array of job options while on the MVCC campus during the year. Ultimately, participants gain skills to transition to other volunteer or paid employment in the future. For more information on the ASPIRE Day Program, please contact Rachel Harter at (315) 325-2730 or rachel.harter@upstatecp.org.
Message from Louis B. Tehan
President and CEO

I am so proud of the varied activities illustrated in this newsletter that our great agencies provide in so many settings for so many people…of all abilities.

Clearly the common thread of these life enriching opportunities are the staff that support and enhance every individual they encounter with their contagious and consistent enthusiasm, expertise and passion.

As I struggle to find meaningful ways to recognize and thank them for their outstanding work, I am reminded of the confusion and totally illegal politics of the New York State Government.

While the minimum wage adjustment is an admirable attempt to recognize the hard work of our Direct Support Professionals, this public relations gesture is meaningless because at the same time New York State continues to impose rate reductions and 0% increases for funding of those programs that employ these Direct Support Professionals.

I have taken the liberty to include an excerpt from a CP of NYS article suggesting ways you can get involved:

On Tuesday, November 8th, every seat in the NYS Legislature is up for election. It is vital that each of us vote and consider the position of candidates on the issues that are important to us.

Do the candidates in your community support increasing state budget funding to provide a living wage for Direct Support Professionals and other direct care workers? Will they fight for the funding to be included in the next state budget on April 1, 2017?

To assist you with determining the position of candidates, the #bFair2DirectCare Coalition and CP of NYS have sent a questionnaire on increased state funding for our workforce to every candidate for State Legislature. You need to make sure that you, your families and friends are registered to vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8th.

The legislative survey was created as part of the #bFair2DirectCare coalition’s “300 Days to Better Pay” campaign to convince the Governor and state Legislature to provide funding in the next NYS budget to increase the pay of direct care workers so that a full-time employee can earn a living wage.

As someone who cares deeply about people with developmental disabilities, you are part of a community of more than 200,000 New Yorkers. It is no secret that we are disappointed in the actions of New York State government in providing the resources we need to support the people whom we love and care for. We must mobilize our community.

Every vote counts and we need you to vote on November 8th. The last day to register to vote for this Election is Friday, October 14th. If you, or the people that you love and support are not registered to vote, please contact your county Board of Elections and get registered to join us in voting for candidates who support people with disabilities on November 8th.

We need your help, your advocacy, your voice for those who are so privileged to serve.

Thank you.

Don’t miss the 4th Annual Gallery of Expression art exhibit & sale featuring works from Upstate Cerebral Palsy artists & several area artists. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

Register at the door or contact Alexa Aiello at 315.724.6907 ext. 2276 or alexa.aiello@upstatecp.org For more information visit upstatecp.org
Congratulations to Rodger Pape, Recreation Program Coordinator at The Root Farm, who was recently awarded the ‘Pride of Workmanship’ Award from the Greater Utica Sunrise Rotary Club. The award recognizes nominees who demonstrate outstanding competence, a commitment to excellence, professionalism and a willingness to go above and beyond their job description. Rodger is an outstanding employee and person who always puts the people that he supports at the center of his day. He is a patient, caring and motivational instructor whose main focus is to provide hope to the people with whom he works. Thank you Rodger, for your dedication to the children and adults we support.

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Seventeen students working with Cornell Cooperative Extension through the Oneida County Summer Youth Employment Program spent time volunteering at The Root Farm this summer. The students were part of the YouthFEAST Program (Food, Education and Agricultural Solutions Together), an education program aimed at empowering teens to make themselves and their communities healthier. Once a week, the group assisted The Root Farm staff in harvesting and preparing produce, flowers, and eggs for local farmer’s markets – all while being introduced to the many different aspects of farming. In addition, the teens each tended a plot within a community garden in Utica utilizing the new skills they learned at the farm to grow their own vegetables.

“We appreciate the hard work and endless enthusiasm that the Cornell Cooperative Extension students had all summer. From planting to harvesting flowers and vegetables to assisting in the production of honey – the students had a hand in every aspect of our agricultural program” said Jeremy Earl, The Root Farm Executive Director. Earl continues “we were happy to be a part of their learning and hope that they continue to share the importance and the positive impact that healthy locally grown food can have.”

Contact The Root Farm if you are interested in purchasing maple syrup, eggs, honey or produce at 315.520.7046. For more information on volunteering at The Root Farm, please contact Alexa Aiello, Volunteer Specialist, at 315.724.6907 ext. 2276.

Pride of Workmanship Award

Horseback Riding

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Horseback Riding


Horseback Riding this fall... daytime, evening & weekend lessons are available. Whether you are new to riding or have been a lifelong rider - call 315.520.7046 to schedule your session.
Upstate Caring Partners recognizes and celebrates the hard work of Direct Support Professionals! You celebrate the achievements, share the dreams, encourage the milestones and make smiles everyday... Thank you for everything you do!

Snacks at the Tracks, Upstate Cerebral Palsy’s first social enterprise venture, has recently opened at the historic Union Station in Utica. The café helps to support programs and services currently being offered at Upstate Cerebral Palsy and provides a place for travelers to grab a quick cup of coffee, sandwich or snack while waiting for their bus or train.

What makes Snacks at the Tracks special are the people who are involved in the day to day responsibilities of the business. People from the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Aspire, Upstate Employment Associates and Tradewinds Education Center programs work hard to help with everything from stamping logos on bags and coffee cup sleeves to using the café as a training ground for future employment.

According to Upstate Cerebral Palsy President and CEO Louis B. Tehan, “This collaboration between Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente and his staff and Upstate Cerebral Palsy is tremendous as we welcome this opportunity to provide training and employment options for individuals with barriers to employment and to help provide a much needed service to the hundreds of people who enter Union Station each day.”

Recognizing the need for ongoing training opportunities for incoming and existing Snacks at the Tracks employees, The Bank of America Charitable Foundation has recently granted $7,500 to provide workforce training and development to prepare workers for careers and employment opportunities.

According to Carleen Stewart, Vice President of Strategic Development at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, “This funding for vocational training and employment will be an asset to Snacks at the Tracks. This will allow us to thoroughly train and equip staff with the knowledge and skills needed to work at the café.”

Stop by Snacks at the Tracks soon for a cup of coffee and a snack! We can also provide breakfast and lunch for your next meeting, please call ahead with any large orders. The café is open Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 3:00pm, featuring local honey and maple syrup from The Root Farm and offering an assortment of breakfast, lunch, snack and beverage options. To order or for more information, please call 315.765.6842 or visit upstatecp.org.
Upstate Cerebral Palsy Community Health and Behavioral Services is committed to providing quality healthcare to the children in our community. This September, a new School Based Health Center (SBHC) located in Martin Luther King Elementary School in Utica has joined our family of School Based Health Centers, including those at Kernan Elementary School and Donovan Middle School, within the Utica School District. The SBHC is a unique venture between local school districts and Community Health and Behavioral Services, a program of Upstate Cerebral Palsy. With services offered at no cost to the families, School Based Health Centers provide comprehensive primary health care services exclusively to enrolled students in participating schools.

A SBHC is a full service doctor’s office that is conveniently located inside area schools. The practitioners at the SBHC diagnose and treat acute illnesses or injuries similar to an urgent care and also provide physical examinations, nebulizer treatments, immunizations, first aid and other services. For those children with a primary care provider, the SBHC staff works with that provider in caring for the healthcare needs of the child. For children without a primary healthcare provider, the School Based Health Center is capable of becoming the primary source for health care.

According to the parent of a child receiving services, “The School Based Health Center has been a great asset to my daughter. She can receive medical care during school hours without having to leave school. We are so privileged to have this resource available. I encourage all parents to enroll their children today.”

For more information about any of the School Based Health Centers, please contact Wanda Schmidt at wanda.schmidt@upstatecp.org or at 315.507.2081 ext. 226.

On the first Monday in June, for the past 22 years, local businessmen and women have come together to make a difference for the children of Upstate Cerebral Palsy. The Charity Golf Invitational is presented each year by Scalzo, Zogby & Wittig Insurance, Inc. Through their leadership and support, we raised nearly $90,000 this year that will directly benefit children with special needs. From early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays, to education, residential and recreation programs for older children, this tournament assures that we can help children reach their fullest potential. Thank you to all of our golfers and the sponsors who support this event each year. A great day on the golf course translates into differences that will last a lifetime.
The Kelberman Center attracts its professional, doctoral level clinical staff from among the best and brightest in the country. Dr. Leah Welchons, PhD, BCBA-D, originally from Clinton, recently moved back to the Utica area from Boston to join the Kelberman Center as a Senior Psychologist. This migration back to the Utica area is a recent trend among staff with advanced degrees, citing the well-known and prestigious reputation of the Kelberman Center on a local, state and even a nationwide level. “After I completed my doctoral training and spent several years working in a demanding academic medical setting in Boston, I was looking for a challenging position at one of the most reputable autism centers in the country that would also allow me to be closer to my family in Central New York. I feel extremely grateful that the ideal position at the Kelberman Center was located right in my hometown!” Leah is one of a number of other Kelberman Center professional staff who have recently moved to the Utica area, attracted by opportunities at the Kelberman Center.

Most recently, Dr. Welchons held a clinical position as an Attending Psychologist in the Developmental Medicine Center at Boston Children’s Hospital as well as an academic appointment as an Instructor in Psychology through Harvard Medical School. In addition to her clinical work at Boston Children’s Hospital, Dr. Welchons served as the chair of a committee dedicated to providing training on Autism Spectrum Disorders for hospital personnel. Dr. Welchons also holds the Board Certified Behavior Analyst credential at the doctoral level. Her clinical and research interests center around early assessment, behavioral intervention, and regulatory issues (i.e., feeding, sleeping, toileting) in young children with developmental and behavior disorders, with a particular area of expertise in children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Dr. Welchons’ work in the Kelberman Center’s outpatient clinic primarily focuses on psychological evaluations, developmental monitoring, and long-term follow-up care for children and families with ASD and other neurodevelopmental disorders.

According to Robert Myers, Kelberman Center Executive Director, “We are thrilled to have another well-respected psychologist join our clinical team. Dr. Welchons comes to us with diverse professional, research and clinical training from some of the top academic centers in our field. She has been working directly with children and families in various clinical settings and will bring a wealth of knowledge to complement the already exceptional staff at The Kelberman Center.”

The Kelberman Center continues to provide quality residential opportunities for individuals and families within our community with the opening of a residence in Sylvan Beach, New York. This new four bed residence is expected to open in early 2017 and will be home to three people aging out of school-age residences. According to Tia Beckwith, Kelberman Center Director of Independent Living, “This house will support and assist these young adults in achieving their goals, through working on their strengths as well as their weaknesses. The Kelberman Center will support them in enjoying, utilizing and contributing to their new community and we are very excited about this new opportunity.”

The Kelberman Center currently operates two residences in Chittenango, New York. Staff receive specialized autism training and are supported by a team of experts who can help to create an environment that promotes personal choice and individual goals. For more information on Kelberman Center residential services, please contact Tia Beckwith at 315.272.9277.
Cerebral Palsy Association is the Foundation for the affiliate agencies of Upstate Caring Partners, Inc. Its mission is to assure that resources are available to support the individuals and families that we serve through life-enriching opportunities. One way that we do this is through special funds that are established within the Foundation to support a specific or unique interest. These include PAWS (Pets Add Warmth and Support) to provide for pets within our homes, and Annette’s Kids Club for Tradewinds Education Center students. Through these funds, Bingo has brought lots of love, comfort and even a sense of responsibility to the children at our Dimeo residence. With the support of Annette’s fund, our students can participate in typical activities such as scouting, being on a basketball team, or attending the annual Tradewinds Prom.

The Make a Difference Fund was created by staff as a way to provide for those they know best, and to make a lasting difference in their lives. This fund is available all year for the creation of innovative programs and initiatives that will enhance life experiences. The Kelberman Center residence in Chittenango now has a basketball hoop, something the young adults that live there all wanted for their home. The “Vobots”, the Tradewinds Education Center robotics team, was able to build a special sign to bring with them to regional competitions. The Root Farm provided scholarships for therapeutic horseback riding for those most in need. Groups of adults have gone camping, a young woman was accompanied on a trip out of state to see her ailing mother, and one of our older residents, a huge Yankee fan, finally got to fulfill his lifelong dream of seeing them play at Yankee Stadium. These opportunities are what add to a person’s life and create a lasting memory.

For more information, please contact Kathy Hartnett, Executive Director of Cerebral Palsy Association at (315)724-6907, ext. 2308 or kathy.hartnett@upstatecp.org. Visit upstatecp.org/ways-to-give for details and online donations, and together we can all Make A Difference.
Please visit www.upstatecp.org to find out how you can make a difference in the lives of the people we support through participating in our fundraising events, becoming a volunteer, or making a donation. Together, we can help create everyday miracles in the lives of people with differing abilities.