When it comes to medical care, children are among our most precious of patients. No one wants a child to have to experience a life threatening illness, live with a chronic condition or be impacted by emotional distress, but unfortunately this is the reality for some children right here within New York State. When this happens, Central New York Health Home Network (CNYHHN) is here to help. Not a traditional doctor’s office, CNYHHN is a care management model, now serving children, where all of a child’s providers, including medical, behavioral, social and school regularly communicate with one another so that a child’s needs are identified and addressed in a collaborative manner.

An experienced care manager is assigned to children and their families to provide the connection to services they require to insure they remain happy and healthy, to decrease emergency room visits as well as hospital stays. The Care Manager coordinates services that the child may already be receiving, and will bridge any gaps that may exist to promote communication between all providers. Care Managers work directly with children and their families to develop a relationship that can address their unique strengths and needs.

“As a parent of a child with both a chronic health condition and mental health issues, I didn’t know where to turn for the help that she needed. I was referred to CNYHHN and our Care Manager took a huge weight off of my shoulders. She coordinated all of her appointments and helped advocate for my daughter so that she receives the best care possible,” recounts a father of a child receiving health home services.

So that our children are able to receive the critical and often complex care that they require, CNYHHN has partnered with 26 agencies throughout our region and has been approved by the New York State Department of Health to provide Health Home services to children throughout a ten county region. We have formed a large number of network partnerships with hospitals, behavioral health and primary care clinics, government agencies and other community organizations that will assist the care management agencies in providing a continuity of care for all patients.

According to CNYHHN staff, “This wrap around approach allows the Care Manager to have access to information on each service the child is receiving, enabling them to work with all service providers, natural supports and families to promote communication and informed service with everyone involved... which means the child will receive optimum care.”
So many things to write about in this column in this crazy, volatile world around us, both at the state and federal levels. I’m sure you would agree with me neither Albany or Washington is a good place for our agency at the moment! So I thought it best to concentrate on the positive and boast about the extraordinary efforts of our staff in their response to Storm Stella....

It would be impossible to single everyone out and I’m sure I would miss too many deserving people so please enjoy the following:

Our area was recently faced with an unprecedented storm, causing much stress and upheaval but also bringing out the best in us. I’ve heard so many stories of staff helping staff, creating a positive and fun atmosphere for our individuals and stepping up to assure that everyone was safe. Many of our incredible staff stayed or traveled to make it into work despite the horrendous weather, to ensure that the care of our individuals was not impacted. Our maintenance team worked from the earliest of hours to make sure that each site was safe and cleared. Our residential staff went above and beyond as many people worked way past normal shifts, and in many cases slept over to ensure that our residents were safe and happy. Many of our incredible staff stayed or traveled to make it into work despite the horrendous weather, to ensure that the care of our individuals was not impacted. Our maintenance team worked from the earliest of hours to make sure that each site was safe and cleared. Our residential staff went above and beyond as many people worked way past normal shifts, and in many cases slept over to ensure that our residents were safe and happy.

Our residential programs were hit the hardest and had this to share:

“As I visited each home on the Armory Campus Tuesday evening and again on Wednesday morning, our staff went above and beyond in creating a warm, fun-filled environment for all of the kids. Many of the kids were elated at the thought of staff members staying with them through the night! Gabby (age 11) brought a pair of pajamas to one, along with her pink furry slippers. He made a point to wear the slippers on the shift, which delighted Gabby. Two of the children offered their beds to staff, and were willing to sleep on the floor! They were that excited about this adventure and this proves how comforting the staff were so that no one was afraid of the storm.”

“The Rome Campus employees worked as a team to cover call-ins, snow removal and stranded cars. All were eager to help in any way. It was all hands on deck, with many staying beyond their shifts to cover for those who were unable to make it to work. Despite this terrible storm it was apparent that the care and support for each other and the students was the priority.”

“Our staff all car pooled into and out of all shifts during the storm, and would immediately jump out of cars to help any and all people stuck in our travels. Staff were willing to get picked up early and to stay until there were others who could get in. Some even had ‘slumber parties’ for co-workers that lived distances away, offering clothes and food to their stranded friends. They all worked as a great team, helping each other and the people we support, having as much fun as possible in a bad situation.”

These are just a few of the many examples of “It’s Who We Are, It’s How We Work, It’s How Much We Care.” The consideration of not only the people we support, but of each other, was always at the forefront. Thank you to the many wonderful members of our Caring Partnership – for pulling together and making a difference!
When the Kelberman Center opened in 2005, Lucrezia and Scott Johnson of Boonville were excited to have a Center for autism services less than an hour away. Their son Brandon, then 11 years-old, has autism and they had struggled to find support over the years. They started attending Autism Support Groups and all trainings that the Kelberman Center held. It was from these meetings and the families they met that Lucrezia and Scott were inspired to hold the first Walk for Autism. They wanted to bring local families together and educate the community about people with autism. Lucrezia thought if they could help just one family…let them know there is hope, the walk would be a success. The first walk was more successful than they could have imagined, with over 100 people gathering to celebrate and share their stories. The day began with a balloon release, and one of the Walk for Autism balloons traveled over 100 miles, landing in a yard of a family in Ballston Spa. As fate would have it, the couple’s grandchild had recently been diagnosed with autism. The balloon gave this family hope, and they have joined the walk in Boonville ever since. This is just one of the many stories of families coming together that make the Walk so special.

Autism affects one in every 68 children in the United States, making awareness within our communities more important than ever before. Since the first Walk in 2008, the Walks have expanded to 5 locations throughout Central New York, with over 2,000 people supporting their family and friends, co-workers and neighbors each year. Join the Kelberman Center as we celebrate 10 years of Walking for One...Walking for All!

Visit the Kelberman Center’s website at kelbermancenter.org to download pledge forms or to create an online fundraising page. For more information on the Walk for Autism, contact the Kelberman Center at 315.797.6241 or visit us online at kelbermancenter.org.
Tomatoes, zucchini, corn, lettuce, basil, dill, and oregano...from our farm to your table every week this summer. Starting in June, the Root Farm will be offering its first Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) opportunity enabling members to enjoy fresh locally grown vegetables, herbs and flowers throughout this growing season.

According to Root Farm Executive Director Jeremy Earl, “This summer we are looking forward to sharing our harvest with more people in our area than ever before. We are branching out from our weekly farmers’ market stand to the Community Supported Agriculture program. We will be planting an even wider variety of vegetables, herbs and flowers than we grew last year. The changes to our agriculture program are exciting and we look forward to sharing the farm with you. We also hope that our members will take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about The Root Farm and experience all that we have to offer. Our CSA members are more than welcome to stop to watch one of our therapeutic riding lessons or take a hike on our trails!”

Enjoy a full 15-week share for only $450 each and a visit to The Root Farm to pick up your harvest share every Thursday from 3:00pm to 7:00pm. There are limited shares available which will go quickly! Applications are available at www.rootfarm.org. For more information or to sign up for the CSA or for riding lessons, please email info@rootfarm.org or call 315.520.7046.

TRADEWINDS EDUCATION CENTER ANNUAL SPAGHETTI DINNER SUPPORTS PROM

Support the Tradewinds Education Center Prom by attending the annual Spaghetti Dinner on Thursday, April 27 from 4:00pm-7:00pm at the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Armory Campus, located at 1601 Armory Drive, Building B, in Utica. Tickets are just $5.00 with eat-in or take-out available. According to Patti Carey, Vice President of School Age Services, “The Tradewinds Prom is an opportunity for our children to attend a prom just like any other high school student, complete with limousine rides, walking the red carpet, dinner and dancing. Parents join their children as they enter on the red carpet…..parents who never imaged that their children would be attending a prom. This is truly a special night for everyone.”

Proceeds from the spaghetti dinner will make the prom a night to remember, helping to fund tuxedo rentals, flowers and prom gowns for this special night. Tradewinds Education Center vocational students enjoy working at the spaghetti dinner, helping to cook and serve the spaghetti, as well as decorate the dining room. “Many of our children have family spaghetti dinner nights at their agency residences,” continued Carey, “so this is taking it to the next level. They are excited about preparing food for staff and community members and even more excited for the upcoming prom.”

Tickets for the spaghetti dinner may be purchased by calling 315.798.4040 ext. 234 or 315.533.1150 ext. 272. For information about volunteering or donating to the Tradewinds Prom, contact Patti Carey at 315.798.4040 ext. 268.
HEALTH CENTER OPENS ITS DOORS

The doors are open and services are being provided after the ribbon was cut at the Upstate Family Health Center, located at 1001 Noyes Street in Utica. This vital new addition to West Utica offers primary care services to people of all ages, including those who had formerly received primary care services through Upstate Cerebral Palsy Community Health and Behavioral Services (CHBS).

The health center staff provides the highest level of care to anyone in the community in need of primary care services, while ensuring that the patient’s needs come first. Upstate Family Health Center is equipped to offer a wide variety of services such as well child care and immunizations, treatment of chronic medical conditions including diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, physical exams, gynecological care, and laboratory, X-ray and preventive services.

Kathleen Dyman, Upstate Family Health Center Board President states, “Our offices are a tremendous asset for this community, providing access to quality primary healthcare services for families regardless of their ability to pay. No one should go without basic health care and we know that our services will make a difference for hundreds of children and adults.”

A Rome Upstate Family Health Center Office will be opening this spring at 205 West Dominick Street. For more information on Upstate Family Health Center or to enroll as a patient, please call 315.624.9470.

TECHNOLOGY RELATED ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Unfortunately, it is often during life’s difficult times that a person requires the help of the TRAID (Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities) Program the most. TRAID is an assistive technology information and referral service which provides device demonstrations and loans of equipment for people of all abilities. Whether a person has sustained a life-changing injury, has difficulty showering due to limited mobility, requires assistance communicating, or needs support with tasks associated with daily living, TRAID is here.

The equipment that TRAID lends, at no cost, can be as simple as a weighted fork for those with tremors or a magnifier that lets a person read independently again or as complex as an electric patient lift to bring someone home from the nursing home. Each piece can be life changing for families that may otherwise not have easy access to such specialized equipment. TRAID recently helped a family return an expensive ramp and wheelchair they were renting because they were able to borrow the same items from TRAID while their son recovered from an accident.

TRAID is here for people of all ages, including a little girl with a disability who is now able to ride an adapted tricycle independently just like any other child. Her mother is grateful for the program, “Thanks to TRAID, my daughter feels like any other four-year-old riding her trike with us through the neighborhood, “pedalling” it with special hand held grips. Her new adaptive tricycle has let her be a typical kid and for that we are forever grateful.”

The TRAID Program, which is provided free of charge as a service of Upstate Cerebral Palsy, is one of 12 TRAID Centers in New York State. TRAID serves the public in seven counties - Oneida, Herkimer, Fulton, Montgomery, Hamilton, Jefferson and Lewis – in need of adaptive or supportive equipment. There are thousands of items in the TRAID inventory and staff is extremely knowledgeable about the equipment available. TRAID is located at 675 Catherine Street in Utica and hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm. Call 315.292.1968 with questions or to arrange a meeting to discuss your needs with the TRAID staff.
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION DINNER

The Upstate Cerebral Palsy Employee Dinner recognizes agency employees who have worked for 14 or more years helping to further the mission of Upstate Cerebral Palsy. This year 259 employees were honored for their years of service, 17 of whom have been working at the Agency for over 30 years. According to Louis Tehan, President and CEO, “Our base of so many long-term employees is a testament to how committed our staff is to making life better for the people we support. We wouldn’t be able to do what we do each day without our incredible staff and this is one of the ways that we show our appreciation.”

Thank you for your countless hours of hard work and dedication to the children, adults and families of Upstate Cerebral Palsy. Together we make miracles everyday!

30 YEAR HONOREES

Pictured: Geno DeCondo, COO/CFO with Meg Weber, Bonnie Coluccio, Liz Hart and Executive Vice-President Lucy Rizzo

Terry Mahoney, Peg Hilborn and Kelly Nellis

25 YEAR HONOREES

Pictured: Shirley Spagnuolo, Victoria Orsino-Zalocha and Margaret Brenning

Julie Strzepek, Rod Pritchard, Joanne Marmon, Danielle Fay, Barbara Warney and Joseph Wallace

20 YEAR HONOREES

Pictured: Patti Carey, Denise Williams, Rita Sarasy, Lori Constantine and Loretta Luley

Ellen Sharpe, Rachel Harter, Francine Cardone, Catherine Kubica, Liz Taylor, Tammy Kidd, Candace Polmatier, Harold Anderson, Gordy Dunham, Cindy DeHaan, Tanya Renodin, Earlette Lighthall and Cynthia Ellis

14 YEAR HONOREES

Pictured: Gloria Garcia, Jennifer Malpezzi, Jody Kehl, Amy Stanford, Carolyn Hunter, Gene Burney, and Christine Zogby

Donaia Robinson, Mandy Dygert, Elaine Baldwin, Alicia Brigham, Zajnil Mehic, Alicia Ellis, Denise Morse, Joshua Skoler, Greg Slack, Terri Dalley, Diana Millick, Janina Edwards, Joyce Samson and James Atkinson

LEADERSHIP MOHAWK VALLEY • FOLLOW THE LEADER AWARD

Congratulations to Monica Stowell, a 2017 Leadership Mohawk Valley (LMV) Follow the Leader Award recipient. The Follow the Leader Award recognizes past LMV graduates who have exhibited outstanding leadership qualities and ongoing contributions to the Mohawk Valley community. Monica is a 2010 graduate of LMV and is currently the Associate Vice President of Total Compensation at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, where she coordinates benefits and safety awareness programs for agency employees. She is also a long-term member of the Mohawk Valley Society for Human Resource Management (MVSHRM) board, and is currently the President Elect. Monica is dedicated in her work and is a strong advocate for agency employees as well as the thousands of people supported in the community. Her steadfast work ethic and integrity make her a natural leader.

Congratulations and thank you for creating Everyday Miracles!
When considering your legacy, you may search for ways to continue the values you cherish, beyond your lifetime. By including a bequest to one of the affiliates of Upstate Caring Partners in your estate plans, you will benefit the children and adults we serve. Your legacy will support others for years to come...Be a part of the miracle!

If you would like to designate your legacy gift to a specific agency or program, or if you are interested in establishing a fund that bears your name or the name of a loved one, please contact Kathy Hartnett, Executive Director, Cerebral Palsy Association, at 315.738.0794 ext. 224 or kathy.hartnett@upstatecp.org.
Please visit www.upstatecp.org to find out how you can make a difference in the lives of the people we support through participation in one of our events, by volunteering, or by making a donation. Together, we can help create everyday miracles in the lives of people with differing abilities.