Mental Health Services Expand to Meet Growing Need

Community Health and Behavioral Services has recently assumed operation of two mental health clinics located at 1500 Genesee Street in Utica and at 1002 Black River Boulevard in Rome, that had formerly been operated by Human Technologies Corporation as Mental Health Connections. Both clinics are licensed by the Office of Mental Health and provide critical support needed to understand and manage mental illness, including those symptoms associated with anxiety, depression, psychotic disorders and anger issues. Specialty services will also include anger management, dual recovery and an LGBTQ group.

According to Executive Vice President Laura Eannace, “CHBS looks forward to providing health care services to even more children and adults within our community through the addition of these two clinics.” Staffed by highly trained, experienced medical professionals, these new clinics are for anyone in need of services and accept Medicaid, Medicare, other major insurances and HMOs. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact 315.735.9501 in Utica or 315.337.0773 in Rome.
This is an exciting time at Upstate Caring Partners, our family of agencies that has formed to provide enhanced life changing services to children and adults of all abilities. We are realizing amazing growth and expansion, on all levels, from a new location for the Kelberman Center on Genesee Street in Utica, to a new Upstate Cerebral Palsy adult residence in Boonville, to the opening of two new mental health clinics – one in Utica and one in Rome. Our agencies are constantly expanding, in large part because we are the experts in the health and human services field, leading the way at the state and national levels in service provision to thousands of individuals each year. However, the backbone of our existence are the men and women, boys and girls, who receive our services each day. We exist to support this often vulnerable population of individuals who have a range of abilities and work tirelessly to ensure they are able to reach their fullest potential.

To that end, the impending state minimum wage increase for human service organizations is something that is desperately needed in order to retain a qualified, enthusiastic and dedicated workforce. Fast food workers receiving a higher rate of pay than people caring for other people as if they were family is unsettling to me. That is why we need to advocate strongly to our State and Federal Officials, calling for New York State to fund the minimum wage increase for all Direct Support Professionals and on a federal level for Medicaid to increase our rates in order to compensate for this increase. We cannot be left behind – we need strong advocacy for our staff and for the people who we are so privileged to support each day.

Message from Louis B. Tehan
President and CEO

A press conference was recently held at Upstate Cerebral Palsy in conjunction with The Arc of Oneida and Lewis Counties and the Cerebral Palsy Association of New York State. Its purpose was to raise awareness and support for the jobs that Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) do on a daily basis and for the inadequacies in pay rates that they receive compared with other minimum wage positions. Lobbying for a higher pay rate for these skilled positions and for government funding for impacted agencies to support this new rate, Louis Tehan commented, “The work that our Direct Support staff do on a daily basis is phenomenal and well beyond that of minimum wage positions. They are dedicated, hardworking and responsible for caring for our individuals’ lives, many of whom cannot speak or care for themselves. Our Direct Support staff deserve pay commensurate with their job responsibilities, which are crucial to the health and well being of hundreds of children and adults, and thus should be adequately funded.” Help join in the fight for fair wages for Direct Support Professionals! #bFair2DirectCare

Pictured: Upstate Cerebral Palsy Direct Support Professional Donna Goss (right) who advocated for DSPs with Megan (person Donna supports) and Megan’s mother Gail (left) at the press conference.
Partnerships with community organizations have always been a critical component to the services provided at Upstate Cerebral Palsy. Collaboration brings excitement and experience for the people we support, who benefit from the resources and insight of our partners. Recently, 12 artists in the Pieces of HeART creative art expression program of Upstate Cerebral Palsy had the unique opportunity to visit the Hamilton College Wellin Museum for a tour and creative workshop. Our artists enjoyed a short presentation about the emotions and interpretations associated with art and then toured the current exhibits, examining the different color and shape elements of the pieces of art on display.

“The Wellin staff and students were just exceptional,” reflected Upstate Cerebral Palsy Recreation Specialist Susan Macrina, “They were so hands on and gave our people such a wonderful experience. The Wellin staff and Hamilton students are extremely talented and went above and beyond to ensure that we had a memorable day.” One of the highlights of the day was the creative session, where our artists had the opportunity to make collages out of tissue, origami paper, paint and other textured items. They relished in the new creative environment and enjoyed working in collaboration with the Wellin staff and Hamilton students.

Creative expression provides artists of all abilities an outlet to present their thoughts and feelings and can improve overall well-being. Thank you to Hamilton College and the Wellin Museum for hosting our artists and for making this creative expression possible. This wonderful experience will always resonate with our artists as they continue to explore and express themselves through art.

For more information about the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Pieces of HeART Program, including upcoming exhibits or art events, please contact Sue Macina at 315.941.4783, susan.macrina@upstatecp.org, or visit our website at upstatecp.org under programs and services.
New York State Senator Charles Schumer visited Upstate Cerebral Palsy to promote the Disability Integration Act, which is civil rights legislation introduced to address the fundamental issue that people who require long term care should have the option to have community-based services and care. Every individual should be able to live in his or her own community and lead independent lives. This act will require states and insurance providers to pay for supports that provide for integration and choices in long term care. Many of the individuals from Upstate Cerebral Palsy were present to take part in this monumental gathering to support this worthwhile and life-changing bill. According to President and CEO Louis Tehan, “As an agency that advocates for civil rights for children and adults with a range of abilities each day, we are so thankful for Senator Schumer’s support.”

ABLE Accounts Available

If you or a loved one with a disability is interested in saving money for future expenses, consider opening an ABLE Account. These are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, created as a result of the passage of the ABLE Act. This account will allow people to save up to $14,000 tax free without affecting their eligibility for SSI, Medicaid and other public benefits. The money may be used to cover expenses such as education, housing, transportation, employment training and support, assistive technology, personal support services and health care expenses.

According to Upstate Cerebral Palsy Vice President of Community Services Mary Beth Redmond, “The ABLE Account is a tremendous resource and benefit to the adults who receive our services and their families. They can now use the accumulated assets to plan for their futures without affecting their governmental benefits, something that had not existed prior to the passing of this act. For more information about ABLE Accounts, please contact Upstate Cerebral Palsy Community Services at 315.738.0794.
We all take pride in and cherish our independence - our ability to make decisions, to play an active role in choosing our activities for the day, our job, friends and the food we eat, etc. Everyone has opinions and preferences, and at Upstate Cerebral Palsy we honor these personal choices for the hundreds of people who come through our doors each day.

We take a proactive approach to supporting people in the way that suits each person most effectively. The Personal Outcome Measures (POMS) assessment workshop, the National Council on Quality and Leadership’s tool to ensure that our services are defined by the people we support, teaches skills which impact everything that we do. This 4-day intensive workshop focuses on empowering staff to learn the skills required to conduct thoughtful interviews with the people we support, eliciting feedback that has changed people’s lives. According to Dawn Gentile, Director II of Vocational Services and certified POMs trainer at Upstate Cerebral Palsy, “The POMs program teaches direct support staff at all levels how to have meaningful conversations with the people we support, finding out preferences such as who cares for them, what they like to eat, what activities they enjoy, how they prefer their room and even some things that bother them. It has a profound and positive affect on both our staff and the people they support.”

Results from this assessment have been life-changing. People have expressed a variety of desires and preferences, some of which include the fact that they would like to be involved in the hiring of the staff who work with them, or that they would like to play a more active role in choosing and preparing their meals. The goal of POMs is to teach staff to ask the right questions of the people we support, their family and friends or people close to them, to receive a full picture of experiences and preferences for the future, and to develop a plan for each person based on his or her preferences.

“We take a person-centered approach for people receiving our services,” said Kathy Klosner, Senior Vice President of Community Services. “Everyone is entitled to have their options heard in all aspects of their lives. This is an important part of who we are as an agency and we will continue to progress in that direction in the future.”

Eric Bentz, Director of Quality and POMs, Dawn Gentile, Director II of Vocational Services, and Sharon Daktor, On Call Administrator, are all certified POMs trainers and offer regular training sessions. They, along with all of our staff, work hard to empower people at Upstate Cerebral Palsy every day.

**IT’S WHO WE ARE!**

**IT’S HOW WE WORK!**

**IT’S HOW MUCH WE CARE!**
Upstate Caring Partners Recognizes Outstanding Staff and Supporters

Staff and community members from across the affiliate agencies of Upstate Caring Partners, Inc. were honored for their commitment to the children and adults who we are so privileged to support each day.

CONGRATULATIONS TO
WARD JONES AND PEG HILBORN

Welcome Lucy Rizzo

Upstate Cerebral Palsy recently welcomed Lucy Rizzo, Executive Vice President of Administrative Services, to its executive team. In this position, Ms. Rizzo is responsible for oversight of the Human Resources, Compliance Information Technology, Payroll and Purchasing departments. She earned a BS in Finance from Binghamton University and an MS in Health Services Management from SUNY Polytechnic Institute.

CARING PERSON OF THE YEAR
DR. D. CHRISTOPHER CLARK

Dr. Clark’s history with the agency began nearly 30 years ago and spans over many programs, providing excellent medical care to people of all ages and abilities.

Congratulations on Ward and Peg’s retirement after a combined 80 years at Upstate Cerebral Palsy! They are pictured with Geno DeCondo (center), Executive Vice President and Kathy Kissner, Senior Vice President (right).

The Caruso family embodies what it means to be giving and generous, having been active participants in agency programs and services for over 25 years. Pictured: The Caruso Family, along with Kathy Hartnett, Cerebral Palsy Association Executive Director (right).

Board of Directors

John Buffa (left) received a plaque from Louis B. Tehan (right) on behalf of fellow Upstate Cerebral Palsy Board members for his years of service as Board President. John will continue on the agency and Upstate Caring Partners boards.

Community Partners of the Year Award
The Caruso Family
In recognition of his time and talent leading the Tradewinds Education Center Robotics Team (The Vobots), teacher FJ Wadnola recently received the E. Q. Carr Award for “lifelong contributions in the field of engineering in Central New York, and a dedication to passing this knowledge to our region’s students.” This award was presented by the Mohawk Valley Engineer’s Executive Council at their annual banquet. FJ works very closely with the Vobots team, preparing them for local and regional competitions, coaching them in their robotics builds and most importantly, teaching them the importance of teamwork. Congratulations to FJ on this wonderful achievement!

INSPIRATION AWARD
TRADEWINDS VOBOTS

The Tradewinds Education Center Robotics Team is composed of students with unique talents and abilities, who recently came in 12th place out of 25 teams at the regional robotics competition. They are a true inspiration and we are very proud of their accomplishments.

FJ WADNOLA RECOGNIZED WITH E.Q. CARR AWARD

UPSTATE CEREBRAL PALSY SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION SERVICES, NANCY SELLER, NAMED LEADERSHIP FELLOW

Upstate Cerebral Palsy Senior Vice President of Education Services, Nancy Seller, was recently among 36 individuals who graduated from the 2016 Health Foundation for Western & Central New York class of health-leadership fellows. Launched in 2005, the health-leadership fellows program seeks to produce a network of diverse, highly-skilled leaders that will lead collaboratively from both within and outside of their organizations and become advocates for improved health-care delivery, particularly for vulnerable older adults and children impacted by poverty. This intensive 18-month program covers topics including personal leadership, leading change, communicating as a leader and results-based leadership and collaboration.

NANCY SELLER NAMED LEADERSHIP FELLOW

The REHAT Team has gone above and beyond in helping individuals in need of housing and other medical services, treating everyone with dignity and respect. Pictured left to right: Laura Eannace, Executive Vice President Liz Pritchard, Kurt Johnson, Shelly Northrup, Dana Petrillo, Jamie Strobel and Tara Costello.

TEAM OF THE YEAR
THE RAPID ENGAGEMENT
HOMELESS ASSISTANCE TEAM (REHAT)

The REHAT Team has gone above and beyond in helping individuals in need of housing and other medical services, treating everyone with dignity and respect. Pictured left to right: Laura Eannace, Executive Vice President Liz Pritchard, Kurt Johnson, Shelly Northrup, Dana Petrillo, Jamie Strobel and Tara Costello.

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AMY CLAIR & MARY HOLT

Amy Clair (left) and Mary Holt (right), both long term employees, have built strong relationships with the people they support and have made a lasting difference in their lives every day.
New York State Education Department realizes the benefit of integrated preschool programs. Because of our long history as the premier provider in our area, The State Education Department Regional Associate serving our program has asked us to consider offering services from our New Discoveries Learning Center in Madison County for preschoolers with disabilities. We are pleased to be able to answer the call for needed supports for the youngest in that region and as a result, plan to open two special education classrooms this fall.

The proposed classrooms will be within two Madison County school districts, one each in the northern and southern part of the county, to reach as many children as possible. The program is designed to integrate children with disabilities with typically developing peers from the Universal Pre-K program. It is a wonderful collaboration with New Discoveries Learning Center and the school districts of Madison County to allow children to learn side by side, and share in our commitment of quality education for all children.

The need for education services for children with disabilities extends beyond the preschool years. Early intervention is important for children with developmental delays and so too is the continuum of supports and services as they grow. As a result of the steady increase in referrals to the Tradewinds Education Center from local schools for children in the early elementary grades, we are pleased to announce the opening of two additional classrooms for students with disabilities at the Utica campus this September. Students, ages 5 through 9, from area school districts will benefit from the specialized services that they will receive at Tradewinds Education Center. It is our mission to support learning and behavior management for children so that they can learn and grow in an environment that is dedicated to their needs, while offering the next level of independence.

For information about education services, visit our website at upstatecp.org.

The children who attend the Tradewinds Education Center are just like other children who enjoy physical fitness and being outdoors. Mentor Chris Jones, Recreation Therapist at Upstate Cerebral Palsy (pictured at right with a Tradewinds student) encourages everyone to go outside and walk, run, play games or do any activities that they enjoy. This year, Chris is running the Boilermaker as a Charity Bib runner for Upstate Cerebral Palsy, raising $500 so that all children, regardless of ability, will be able to experience activities through enhancements to the outdoor sensory trail on the Armory Campus in Utica. According to Chris, ‘We can see the direct benefit that physical fitness has on the students at Tradewinds, including better health, greater self-esteem and a notable increase in performance in the classroom, in addition to building team work and socialization skills.’ Chris would like to help all of the students to live a healthier more active lifestyle and knows that running as a charity runner for Upstate Cerebral Palsy will make a big difference. Visit our website for more information on our Charity Bib Program at upstatecp.org.

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NEW RESIDENCE IN BOONVILLE

As an agency constantly on the move, Upstate Cerebral Palsy is continually expanding our services and growing at an exponential rate. We have recently expanded our caring partnership and opened our newest certified Individual Residential Alternative (IRA) in Boonville, New York. Five people have moved into their new home and have begun to settle in, adjusting to the transition while incorporating their own personal styles into their living space. Some of these people are aging out of our Children’s Residential Program (CRP), while others are moving from existing residences to allow them to live closer to their families.

According to Senior Vice President of Community Services Kathy Klosner, “Our goal is to create a typical home atmosphere for our people in the least restrictive environments possible. This new home will allow five young adults to practice independent living in conjunction with working or volunteering in the community.” Thank you to the Boonville community for making this possible and for being a part of this wonderful opportunity for the people we support!

RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

At Upstate Cerebral Palsy, we offer residential options in a caring and supportive environment. We have a number of residential alternatives in both certified (Individualized Residential Alternatives-IRA and Intermediate Care Facilities-ICF) and non-certified settings (apartments and houses that are not regulated by the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities-OPWDD). We also have residential options for children in our Children’s Residential Program (CRP), approved by the New York State Education Department and licensed by the NYS Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

For information on adult residential services, contact Kathy Klosner, Senior Vice President of Community Services, at 315.724.6907 ext. 2476 or kathy.klosner@upstatecp.org. For information on children’s residential services, contact Patti Carey, Vice President of School Age Services, at 315.798.4040 ext. 257 or patti.carey@upstatecp.org. For information about residential services of the Kelberman Center, contact Tia Beckwith, Director of Community Living at the Kelberman Center, 315.797.6241 and at E. John Gavras Center, contact Rebecca Reese at 315.255.2746 or rebeccar@gavrascenter.com.
The Root Farm is well into the swing of honey production this summer with over 30,000 honey bees and Root Farm staff working each day to prepare honey for late summer. The process of making honey is an interesting one, starting out with boxes called “deeps” or “supers,” which becomes the framework of the hive. When the deeps are full of honey and bees, a small box is added to store more honey to harvest. Once this box becomes full, the honey is extracted by using a tool which spins like a centrifuge so the honey is pulled out of the cells. According to Jeremy Earl, Root Farm Executive Director, “Our honey production has really been quite successful so far this summer. We are learning more and more each day about this art and are fascinated by all that goes into the production of honey, our bees and their behavior.” Honey will be ready for purchase at The Root Farm and at local farmers markets in late July or early August. For more information on our honey or on any of our agricultural products or horseback riding opportunities, contact The Root Farm at 315.520.7046 or at info@rootfarm.org.

The Farm is A-Buzzzzzz

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Our honey, maple syrup, eggs, produce and flowers are available every Tuesday from 3:30pm until 6:30pm at the West Utica Public Market this summer. Stop by for a taste or to take some home!

Horseback Riding this summer...
daytime
evening & weekend sessions are available. Call 315.520.7046 to schedule your session.
NEW LOCATION
Over the summer the Kelberman Center will be moving administrative offices to a beautiful new location. Through a partnership with the Community Foundation of Herkimer and Oneida Counties, the Kelberman Center is relocating to the ground floor of the Community Foundation’s building at 2608 Genesee Street. This location will not only house offices but will also allow for an expanded clinic.

For more information about autism services in our community, please contact us at 315.797.6241 or kelbermancenter.org.

COLOR VIBE FUN RUN
Ready to get colorful? Join the Kelberman Center for The Color Vibe 5k fun run on Saturday, August 6th at 9:00am and help support autism services for children and adults in our community! The event will be held at FT Proctor Park and is for children and adults of all ages. The Color Vibe is a unique 5k fun run where participants run, walk, or dance their way through color stations, where colors tie-dye their outfits and costumes. This is a wonderful way to support the Kelberman Center while having a blast! For more information or to register, please visit www.thecolorvibe.com or email support@thecolorvibe.com.

Save the Dates...
August 6th • FT Proctor Park, Utica
October 2nd • Hanna Park, Utica

October 7th • Stanley Theater, Utica
November 13th • Turning Stone Resort, Verona
Pottery created by adults in the Upstate Cerebral Palsy Studio Art Program

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.