

Embracing Change:



Creating Opportunity

Herkimer ARC
Annual Report 2012



Our Finances

2012 Income by Source

Total Revenues \$22,022,637

Program Related Services	\$17,949,807
Herkimer Industries Sales	\$3,087,663
Fund Development	\$352,972
Goodwill / HARC Store	\$271,442**
Other Revenues	\$360,753

2011 Income by Source

Total Revenue: \$21,934,713

Program Related Services	\$19,129,646
Herkimer Industries Sales	\$1,831,663
Fund Development	\$443,858
Goodwill / HARC Store	\$230,906**
Other Revenues	\$298,640

** Herkimer ARC's share of the retail store revenue. Store opened in April 2008.

2012 Total Expense by Program

Total Expenses: \$22,278,200

Wages	\$10,878,463
Employee Benefits	\$3,507,020
Program Related Expenses	\$7,273,278
Other Expenses	\$619,439

Net Deficit: (\$255,563)

2011 Total Expense by Program

Total Expenses: \$21,875,495

Wages	\$11,048,001
Employee Benefits	\$3,583,803
Program Related Expenses	\$7,006,951
Other Expenses	\$236,740

Net Surplus: \$59,218

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www.herkimerarc.org

Herkimer Industries:
www.herkimerindustries.com

New York International Wine Auction:
www.nyiwa.com

Advanced Technology:
www.advancedtechsafety.com



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Our Mission

"HARC enables people with disabilities, and others in our community, to achieve full potential and enriched lives."

Embracing Change: Creating Opportunity

Dear Friends and Supporters of the Herkimer ARC:

Hope and Optimism. Those words cannot be underscored enough as we transition into a new era of delivering services and support to people with disabilities. There is a tremendous amount of anxiety being felt by providers in the industry as we move away from the familiar way of conducting business into a new world of Managed Care.

We all need to be as creative as possible: not only to face the challenges that lie ahead, but to ensure that what we have built over the last 60 years as an industry does not become compromised by New York State budgetary concerns.

We, at the Herkimer ARC, will continue to diversify our revenue streams—in an effort to become as self sufficient as possible—and so as not to be held hostage to the whims of state government. This is not an easy task, but one that we are steadfast in our commitment to pursuing.

Entrepreneurialism exists, perhaps even more so in difficult times. While many spend their days figuring out their next move, others will assess the landscape and take action in an effort to determine their own destiny. We choose the latter, and know that you all are with us as we embark on this new journey together to ***Embrace Change and Create Opportunity!***

Sincerely,



Kevin Crosley
President/CEO



Harrison Hummel IV
Board of Directors Chair



Kevin Crosley



Harrison Hummel IV

Creating Beautiful Artwork & Friendships



Rachel Polansky, a reporter from WUTR-TV, spent the afternoon with the Gentlemen's Group to share their wonderful story. Those welcoming Polansky included, front from left, Abby Hnydowitz, Michael Lamphere, Rachel Polansky, George Ogalo, Robert Erb, and Michael Dodge. Rear, from left, Melissa Douglas, James McCauley, Joseph Lubey, and Jeff Perlanski.

Six artists participating in the Herkimer ARC's Bridges to Success day program brought the idiom, "One man's trash is another man's treasure" to life when they began selling their artwork in 2012 at a local tourist and retail center. In other words, they are turning trash into artistic treasure and in the process are creating their own beautiful stories of friendship, acceptance, and independence.

The Gentlemen's Group is comprised of six men: Michael Dodge, Robert Erb, George Ogalo, Michael Lamphere, Joseph Lubey, and James McCauley, all having developmental disabilities and struggling with issues of communication, acclimating in public settings, and socializing in groups. The goals are to get the "guys" out each day to interact in the community to give them opportunities to learn social cues, gain greater independence, and to help them to learn to cultivate friendships. With the support and supervision of Abby Hnydowitz, classroom lead, and Jeff Perlanski and Melissa Douglas, direct support professionals, staff noticed commonalities: the guys not only enjoyed participating in classroom crafts and hands-on activities, they also loved checking out discarded items left on the roadside during their community walks—often chatting and visualizing how they could transform trash into something more useful.

The Bridges to Success Program reinvents the traditional brick and mortar classroom into a blend of Day Habilitation and Pre-vocation services, which allows individuals to receive the supports needed to achieve success in the environment of their choosing. The program consists of training modules such as daily living, recreation, pre-vocational skill, social, emotional, and health development.

Individuals are provided with new opportunities and through this exposure, glean new skills.

"I think the best part of this classroom is that the guys have become such a close knit and trusting group. When we visit our kiosk and they put barcodes on artwork and then realize they are selling their creations for money, the guys are so proud of themselves," Hnydowitz said. "They are constantly thinking and creating, which brings excitement to each day. We can be driving along in the van and they are constantly on the lookout for materials. Even a rusted bolt along the roadside can spark imagination and conversation!" she added.

If you visit the classroom today, you'll think the guys are a band of brothers working together to create treasures such as a sunflower out of discarded railroad metal pieces, refurbishing an old dollhouse, complete with homemade furniture, drilling holes and sanding an acorn post bed headboard to convert into a bench, and thinking of new ideas to transform their roadside finds and garage sale bargains into beautiful art for others to love. All proceeds from sales are returned to Day and Community Supports to purchase supplies.

To visit the gallery of their artwork, which changes based on sales, visit the Herkimer ARC kiosk at Gems Along the Mohawk, 800 Mohawk Street, in Herkimer, NY. The group is always looking for donations of old furniture and tools. For more information, contact Abby Hnydowitz at (315) 574-7790.



Herkimer ARC Helping to Embrace Change and Lead Reform

The Herkimer ARC was chosen by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to participate in a statewide Case Study initiative that will identify best practices to assist with reshaping the developmental disabilities service industry from the current fee-for-service system infrastructure to a managed care model. The agencies chosen, amongst the approximate 700 statewide, were identified based on their exceptional systems and practices.

"In being part of the Case Study, the Herkimer ARC was selected to assist OPWDD to gain knowledge about how services for individuals with disabilities could be provided under a managed care initiative," said Herkimer ARC Vice President - Compliance and Quality Lorene Hartmann. "We are hoping that being part of this process will give our agency the ability to learn and lead culture change versus reacting to the reforms when presented. The Herkimer ARC has always focused on individuals' wants and needs and, in the end, we work to fulfill those needs based upon existing quality services. Under managed care, the state is requiring services to be more individualized for people to meet those needs. In a managed care model, individuals will receive comprehensive information about a range of community service options and self-direction from which to create, choose, and plan for supports to meet their needs," Hartmann said.

Seventeen individuals who are currently supported by the Herkimer ARC have been selected to be part of the Case Study. The Herkimer ARC has completed Personal Outcome Measures (POM) interviews to assess individuals' quality of life and to outline opportunities that have been identified by the individuals, their family members, and staff, which will be utilized to create a "Life Plan." That plan will replace the traditional ISPs (Individualized Service Plans) for the next year for those participating. The outcomes of the seventeen POMs were assessed and then sent on to OPWDD for review.

The next step requires each individual in the study to complete a Coordinated Assessment System (CAS) evaluation by an OPWDD trained assessment specialist. The

new and revamped assessment tool and process has been designed to feel like a conversation among the individual, his or her family, the assessor, and others who are the most integral to that person's life. Like the Personal Outcome Measure (POM) process, information collected from individuals participating in CAS will be used to assess personal support needs and to enhance the person-centered planning process.

As part of the Case Study initiative, the Herkimer ARC is also pursuing OPWDD COMPASS Certification, which recognizes provider agencies that have progressed beyond minimal regulatory compliance and achieved excellence in their service delivery. COMPASS agencies engage their entire organization with goals of promoting and achieving valued outcomes for people.

"I think it is important that families realize although we are looking at connecting people with individualized and more integrated community services, we'll have to do that with less money as New York State has cut budgets over the past several years of those agencies that support people with disabilities," said President/CEO Kevin Crosley. "We were selected to be a part of this process because we have an outstanding, compassionate, and creative staff. We continually look for avenues to embrace these changes and to provide the best quality of supports, services, and opportunities for individuals within our community."

From left, Herkimer ARC Quality Assurance Specialist Craig Cureau and Classroom Lead Tim Whaley were part of the team that met with John Geloso and his mother, Dolores, as part of a Personal Outcome Measures interview to assess John's quality of life and to create a "Life Plan." Geloso was selected to participate in the statewide Case Study initiative.



Herkimer Industries Banner Sales Offset New York State Funding Cuts

“Not-for-profit is a tax status, not a business strategy,” said Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley. “We must continue to diversify funding streams, create partnerships, both with for-profit and non-profit companies, to bring business and job opportunities to our area and to remain an area leader in providing support for people with disabilities and others in our community.”

Herkimer Industries (HI) plays a dynamic and key role in generating non-Medicaid revenue, which assists the bottom line to offset government cuts and to keep individuals employed. HI had a banner year of sales, up 64% in 2012, thanks to joint collaborations with Fiberdyne, Inc.; sub manufacturing and assembly sales at the HARC Business Park; sewing and packaging uniforms and safety equipment for New York State contracts; a 19% growth in sales at the Goodwill-HARC Store & Donation Center; and product sales at Advanced Technologies, a division of HI,

Motorists on the New York State Thruway can now actually visualize the detailed technical labor of Herkimer Industries workers as they drive through E-Z Pass lanes with messages on the Driver Feedback Signs such as: “Go,” “Call E-Z pass,” “Buckle Up,” among others. Valerie Postiglione, an HI worker, has been a team member working on replacement parts and other LED video screens projects with Fiberdyne Inc. of Frankfort, NY over the past year. Postiglione cuts ribbon wires and jumper cable, trims LEDs to correct lengths, snips off excess mass from soldered LED boards, and is part of the quality check process. Once the LEDs are deemed up to standard, HI workers pack and ship the parts to locations.

Herkimer ARC Vice President - Industrial Operations Michael Lamb, commented, “When we go out and sell our services, company heads are reassured that individuals with disabilities are quality workers and they are able to perform detailed and technical work. Our work on LED projects, from parts for the Thruway Authority, building additional billboards, to the Video Display Screen at the Times Square Armed Forces Recruiting Station—all require attention to detail and individuals who are focused in a busy atmosphere. Fiberdyne is very impressed with our workers, who help to strengthen our partnership to bring quality LED products to market,” Lamb said.

Projects such as the Time Square Video Screen installation in 2012 were awarded based on the outstanding past performance. The Fiberdyne partnership also flourished with the installation of LED billboards with six school districts throughout New York State. Exciting

new ventures also include building and installing Custom Theater Stage 20mm LED Video Screens in 2013.

Contract work at the HARC Business Park, a 120,000 sq. ft. industrial facility, continues to thrive and maintains employment for 63 individuals with disabilities. Work includes shrink-wrapping and packaging tissue and assembling and packaging gun boxes for TimBar, a leader in services and specialty packaging. Additionally, sub contracting work continues with refurbishing and packaging spools for Albany International, a global advanced textiles and materials processing company.

Herkimer Industries’ sewing and packaging services divisions were busy fulfilling orders for New York State government contracts for various agencies. In fact, state sales for 2012 equaled sales from the previous three years combined to make it an outstanding year. Work included projects such as sewing on patches and buttons on various uniforms such as for New York State Troopers to packaging and distributing rain gear for the New York State Department of Transportation.

Finally, Advanced Technologies Inc., a local safety equipment company, generated sales of nearly \$425,000 in 2012. Advance Tech is a full service supplier of safety equipment for fire, rescue, EMS, law enforcement, commercial and industrial customers, as well as to all public service agencies, private, commercial, and industrial organizations.

Advanced Technologies also partnered with top-rated safety equipment suppliers and went live with an e-commerce site—www.advancedtechsafety.com—to supply the best quality safety products at competitive prices, backed by Advanced Tech’s long experience in the industry, for industrial, commercial, and residential needs.



A third LED screen project was completed at the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square, New York City in December 2012.



Valerie Postiglione, a Herkimer Industries worker, snips LEDs for a E-Z Pass Driver Feedback Sign.

Renovating a Community Asset While Creating Opportunity

Diversifying revenue to offset several years of New York State cuts has become imperative to assist the Herkimer ARC in continuing to provide quality services for individuals with disabilities. To further reduce the agency's dependence on government funding, the HARC Business Park met expectations in 2012 with the creation and maintenance of community jobs, completion of infrastructure upgrades, and the continuance of commercial and business development.

Although renovations of the 120,000 sq. ft. former industrial facility are ongoing, several floors were refurbished to meet the needs of industrial projects. Currently, contract work for three companies, which includes industrial packaging and spool refurbishing, occupies 70,000 sq. ft. and maintains 63 jobs. Projects include shrink-wrapping and packaging tissue, refurbishing and packing industrial spools, and building, gluing and packaging boxes for a local gun manufacturer. Additionally, a small section continues to be utilized to bale clothing donations from the Goodwill-HARC Store and Donation Center, which are unsalable but can be reutilized for other industry uses. Baling raises thousands of dollars each year in revenue.

Locating and designating work projects to different floors was also made possible by the installation of a passenger elevator at the facility, which was funded in part by a \$75,000 grant from The Community Foundation of Herkimer & Oneida Counties, Inc. The Community Foundation has been an outstanding partner at the Business Park assisting with grants to help with the purchase of a baler, and partially funding a parking lot paving project. The new elevator ensures accessibility for all individuals who work and visit the East German Street building. Additionally, the elevator gives access to small business tenants, who now occupy over 10,000 sq. ft. of commercial space. New 2012 tenants renting space include EMS Global, Oak Ridge Free Methodist Church, and Larzelere Cabinet Company.

"We have a professional looking

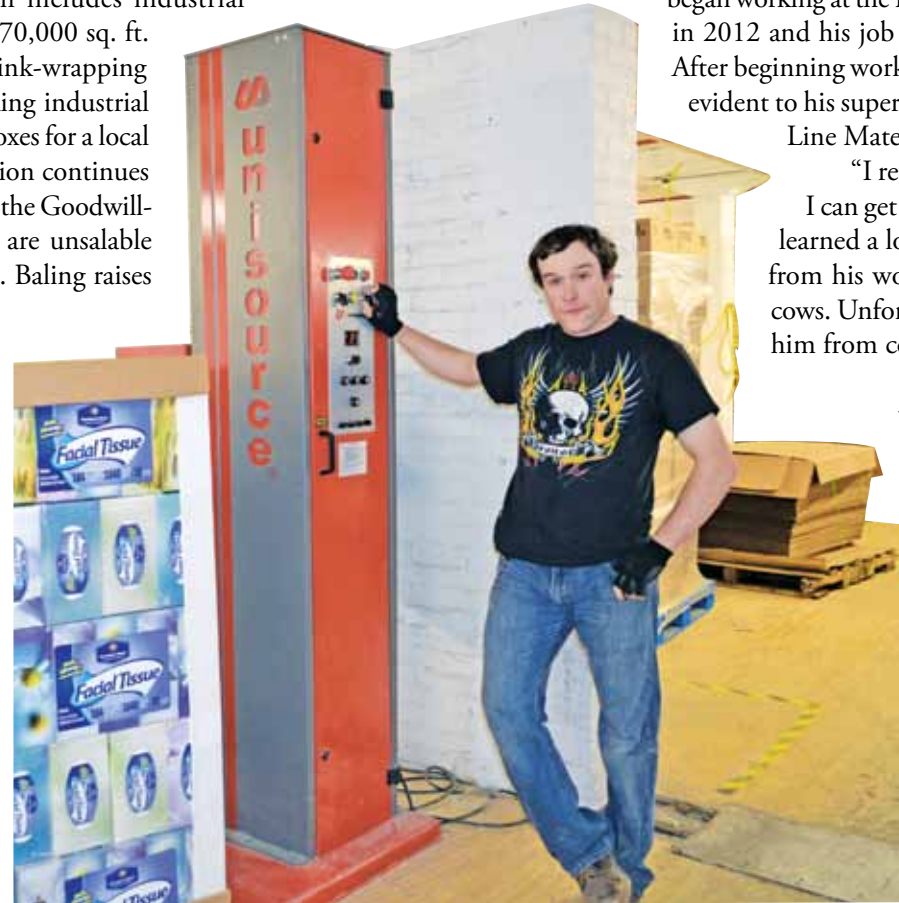
incubator space, comprised of approximately 8,500 sq. ft., which takes on the historical charm of brick walls, wood beams, and new attractive windows," said Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley. "With the Herkimer County Chamber of Commerce as our anchor tenant, we truly believe it would be advantageous for businesses to utilize their many services geared toward boosting small business by literally crossing a hallway and knocking on a door. The Chamber is a wonderful resource."

The real proof of the success of the building is watching the over sixty workers, all of whom are success stories in obtaining and maintaining employment. Kyle Windecker began working at the HARC Business Park in the tissue packing division in 2012 and his job has become a very positive influence in his life. After beginning work shrink-wrapping tissue boxes, it quickly became evident to his supervisor that he had the aptitude to become a Tissue Line Materials Handler to run the stretch wrap machine.

"I really like my job," said Windecker, "and as long as I can get stuff done, I am happy." Windecker explained he learned a lot about completing jobs and feeling satisfaction from his work on his family farm: from haying to milking cows. Unfortunately, dust in the barn and allergies prevented him from continuing his work there.

"We have many individuals just like Kyle, who flourish when Career Connections supports and links workers to the right jobs based upon their needs, desires, and abilities," said Career Connections Assistant Program Director Robin Mattox. "Kyle has done such a good job that our Maintenance Manager noticed and invited him to join the maintenance team in 2013—which will ultimately offer him opportunities for higher pay and competitive employment. Most importantly, he'll increase his work experience which will give him further advantages as he continues with his work career."

When asked about his recent promotion, Windecker smiled and said, "I am looking forward to learning new things such as mowing lawns and helping to fix things. I think my time driving tractors and four-wheelers on the farm really paid off!"



Kyle Windecker started work at the Business Park as a line worker shrink-wrapping tissue. His supervisor noted his work skills and put him in charge of the stretch wrap machine. In April 2013, Windecker was hired by the Herkimer ARC Maintenance Department.

Home Is Where You Hang Your Heart

For Alissa Griffith, home is where she hangs her heart...a white paper doily heart with photos she carefully cut out by hand of the people and places she has loved through the years: her Dad, a favorite staff member at the school, past roommates, friends, and the Herkimer Burger King, among others. She re-hung that heart over her couch in her new apartment in November 2012 after a long journey to learn self-determination and to leave Herkimer ARC Supported Apartment services to move into her own place.

"Alissa has overcome many obstacles and she has had intensive help throughout her journey to get her own apartment," said Medicaid Services Coordinator Stacy Buhaj. "She hit many bumps in the road initially, but she's done a complete turnaround—and now I don't think she'd want to go back and live with roommates." Buhaj and other Herkimer ARC staff have worked countless hours helping Griffith to set up her home: from moving, buying and placing furniture, and setting up utilities, to identifying and obtaining paid and community supports. In fact, to further facilitate the move, Griffith also depended upon other community partners such as the Resource Center for Independent Living, which offers an OPWDD funded program to help with startup costs for living independently.

While the Herkimer ARC staff has always tried to coax and work with Griffith to think about getting her own apartment, new reforms published by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), aptly named "Putting People First," set forth goals of placing individuals into the most integrated community setting—making the move seem somewhat predetermined.

"Alissa has really grown with the help of residential services throughout the years to reach the point of living on her own. The only thing that prevented that was her own reluctance—which we respected," said Herkimer ARC Vice President - Residential Shawn Schultz. "She is on that borderline of individuals who perhaps do not need support from living in one of our agency apartments, but who cannot live independently in the community without supports such as medical, employment, and Medicaid service coordination, among others. Through new directives from the State, we realized OPWDD would be looking at individuals like Alissa and a few others in our programs with a new assessment process, and we knew she would ultimately be deemed capable of living on her own. We felt a bit like a mother bird teaching her young bird to fly—hoping she could soar on her own. I am so proud to say she did, along with a few others we've assisted over the past year, on this flight to independence."



"I'd also really like to commend Residential Supportive Apartment staff, Wendy Herringshaw, residence manager, and Jason Marlowe, a direct support professional, for caring so much about Alissa and helping her with her move. To this day, although Alissa no longer receives Residential Services—they stop by and visit and spend time with her. They are no longer Alissa's staff—they are her friends," Schultz added.

In the end, Griffith's move was ultimately facilitated by her choice and sharing and voicing a dream to one day live independently. Only over the years, she said, that thought of the unknown held her back. "I have my own job working at Burger King and I always dreamed of living by myself, but I never could take the chance," Griffith said. "Now I love doing my own thing. I can eat when and what I want. I feel more relaxed when I come home. And everything around me is mine. I am really thankful for the people who helped me."

When Griffith celebrates her first year living in her own apartment in 2013, she'll also commemorate a 15th anniversary in a job she loves—both are part of her journey which the Herkimer ARC has taken alongside her.



Alissa Griffith, who moved out on her own in 2012, and Herkimer ARC Medicaid Service Coordinator Stacy Buhaj take a moment to talk about how a move can be a positive change a person's life.

Creating New Programs to Continue as an Area Leader in Autism Education

The Herkimer ARC serves as a community leader by continuing to provide an innovative Day Supports program for adults with autism, and by hosting training and therapy programs for professionals, area families, and individuals on the autism spectrum. Workshops in 2012 included a free, two-day workshop in March which welcomed Joanne Lara, creator of Autism Movement Therapy (AMT). She is the architect of the dance and music program that "wakes up the brain." Lara's visit blossomed into the Herkimer ARC being selected as a partner to serve as the only licensed agency on the U.S.'s East Coast to certify instructors in Autism Movement Therapy. The Herkimer ARC also began offering Autism Movement Therapy Saturday classes in January 2013 for various age groups.

In April 2012, Kari Dunn Buron, autism education specialist, provided a free workshop: "When My Autism Gets Too Big! Addressing Social Cognition and Emotion Regulation Using the Incredible 5-Point Scale." Buron is a noted author and creator of an Autism Spectrum Disorders Certificate Program. These two workshops were funded by the Herkimer ARC and the Central New York OPWDD Family Support Council.

"Other agencies charge for workshops," said Herkimer ARC Vice President - Day and Community Supports Susan Streeter. "We provided them free of charge in 2012. With budget cuts and the economy, we are providing meaningful opportunities for professionals and families to bring specialized therapies to their workplaces and homes."

In September, area ARCs along with Lockheed Martin sponsored the workshop, "Ziggurat Model and Hidden Curriculum: Understanding Rules in Social Situations," with Dr. Brenda Smith Myles. Dr. Myles' resume is impressive. She is an author, international speaker, member of numerous national boards, and world-renowned authority on Asperger Syndrome and autism.



Autism Movement Therapy workshops and classes are led by certified Herkimer ARC staff, Lisa Gifford and Kaylan Combs, who combined have over 30 years of experience in the area of developmental disabilities. AMT Saturday classes involve music and dance for children, teens, and adults. After the first session was completed in 2013, parents were impressed with the results from classes. Deborah Horner said, "My son Zach loved the classes. He really learned to trust Kaylan and to interact with the other children in the class." AMT is fun—and appeals to all ages. While this therapy was designed with Autism in mind, it's used for individuals with Down syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder, and intellectual disabilities. Whether it's following simple movement sequences or moving to their own beat, individuals will energize mind and body—all while having fun dancing! Class sessions are six weeks at a cost of \$60.

From left, Deborah and Zach, play a floor clapping game, an AMT exercise, with Kaylan Combs, a Herkimer ARC certified instructor of Autism Movement Therapy.

The Herkimer ARC became licensed in 2012 to provide Certification Workshops in Autism Movement Therapy (AMT). Certified Herkimer ARC staff provides professional instruction and tools to certify professionals and family members to teach classes in AMT. Each attendee also receives an Autism Movement Therapy Handbook and Aut-erobics DVD and CD. Workshops are \$250 per person. Organizations and schools can also host or sponsor the workshops for a fee.

AMT is an empowering integration strategy that connects both the left and right hemispheres of the brain by combining patterning, visual movement calculation, audile receptive processing, and rhythm and sequencing into a "whole brain" cognitive thinking approach that can significantly improve behavioral, emotional, academic, and social and speech language skills. For more information regarding AMT classes and workshops, contact Lisa Gifford, assistant director of Clinical Services, at (315) 574- 7826.

Fifty participants from around New York State participated in and enjoyed the March 2013 Certification Workshop, which was held in the incubator space at the HARC Business Park.



Creating Opportunity in Community Partnerships

In September 2012, the Herkimer ARC and Herkimer County Community College (HCCC) teamed up to offer a Higher Education Initiative, a new and innovative educational opportunity for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), to take a Medication Administration Course for three college credits.

Traditionally, the Herkimer ARC offers the Office for People with Development Disabilities (OPWDD) 32-hour mandated class in Medication Administration course taught by Wendy Knox, RN, for staff members. Through collaboration with the college and by adding a five-week (15 hour) online session, eight Herkimer ARC Direct Support Professionals have earned three college credits to put toward a college degree. The agency also gives staff 90% tuition reimbursement for completing and passing the 47-hour course.

"The opportunity was great and the price was wonderful," said Brianna Stevens, who is a full-time Direct Support Professional working in Herkimer ARC's German Street residence and a first-year student studying psychology at Herkimer Community College.

Stevens became interested in working for the Herkimer ARC because she commented many of her family members work with individuals with disabilities. "My Mom is a social worker and has always inspired me to work with people," Stevens said. "I thought getting a job in a residential home would give me a look into working with and understanding more about people. Taking the course and gaining knowledge about medicines will enhance my overall learning experience as I'd like to become a psychiatrist someday. I really like learning about medicines and what they are prescribed for and how they are used to help individuals with developmental disabilities and psychiatric issues."

Nonprofit human services agencies, such as the Herkimer ARC, have been putting forth concerted efforts throughout the last several years to enhance the status of Direct Support Professionals. Goals include providing better access for all Direct Support Professionals to high quality educational experiences (e.g., in-service training, and continuing and higher education); strengthening the working relationships and partnerships between Direct Support Professionals, self-advocates, and other consumer groups and families; promoting systems reform which provides incentives for educational experiences, increased compensation, and access to career ladders through the promotion of policy initiatives (e.g., legislation, funding, and practices); and supporting the development and implementation of a national credential process for Direct Support Professionals.

Herkimer ARC Vice President - Human Resources Karen Peterson explained the agency seeks out all avenues to encourage staff to seek higher education and to raise professionalism. "Our Direct Support Professionals are the backbone of our agency," Peterson said. "The opportunity to partner with our local community college is a win-win for both entities. The DSP Education Initiative increases the college's enrollment, supports the development and education of our Direct Support Professionals, and encourages lifelong learning—all which enhance competency. We will continue to work together with the college on the next steps in the initiative, which include discussions on the creation of a certificate program and other credit bearing classes that meet the Herkimer ARC training requirements for DSPs. In the end, the initiative recognizes the critical role of DSPs and better prepares them for that role, while providing them with a tangible benefit: college credits. Our Direct Support Professionals make a tremendous difference in the lives of the individuals we support," Peterson added.



Brianna Stevens, a direct support professional working in Herkimer ARC's German Street residence and a college student at HCCC, took advantage of the new DSP Higher Education Initiative in 2012 to earn three additional college credits.

Creating Internships to Embrace New Employment Expectations

Career Connections, Herkimer ARC's employment division, teamed up with the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to offer an Employment Training Program (ETP) program for individuals with developmental disabilities. Billie Jo Dennis, Todd Bennett, Brian Wedemeyer, and Jovany Nunez began traveling to employment classes in 2012 to hone their job skills for paid internships—which will ultimately lead to community employment.

The four prospective employees and Job Coach Staci Chrisman have attended classes with individuals from other area agencies to learn subjects such as customer service, time management, and honesty in the workplace, among many others.

“The classes have been outstanding,” Chrisman said. “We participate in class, they enjoy lunch with their peers, and then we return to Career Connections in Herkimer to discuss and review the materials. The monthly classes give our participants opportunities to meet others who share how they’ve secured a job or have overcome some of the obstacles that prevent community employment. We also come back with great ideas as to how we can make our group’s strengths fit with area employers.”

Career Connections embraced ETP as an important step to accommodate New York State's assertive plans to put new programs in place to recognize that employment plays a significant role in supporting people with developmental disabilities to experience community engagement, personal growth, and pride. OPWDD's system transformation over the next several years will *dramatically* change the expectation individuals have for themselves, providers have for those they support, and the expectations communities have for their employers and for community members with developmental disabilities.

Career Connections has always had a strong connection with the local business

community, working with companies such as HMSHost, Walmart, Lowe's Home Improvement, Ponderosa, Fiberdyne, Inc., among others. Embracing the components of the ETP training program seemed advantageous because interns are paid by the New York State for their hours at the internship site, while Career Connection provides intensive one-on-one job coaching. The program is designed to assist qualified individuals with documented developmental disabilities to seek, acquire, and maintain competitive employment once the internship period is over.

“Some of our local employers have been wonderful in allowing job seekers to ‘tryout’ specific jobs to see how they fit in the workplace, what type of jobs they would like, where they excel, and perhaps where they might need some fine tuning,” said Herkimer ARC Vice President - Day and Community Supports Susan Streeter. “The beauty and uniqueness of ETP is that there is currently no other program that allows us to pair a prospective employee with intensive job coaching for a year or more—free of cost to the employer—all while the intern gets paid. Of course, the expectation is that if individuals complete internships and meet companies' job requirements—they will be hired as employees. Our goal is to place the right individual at the right business so that everyone is happy,” Streeter added.

Chrisman has been working over the past several months with the four prospective employees in business settings to assess their aptitude and abilities. Billie Jo Dennis learned that she loves to organize “things,” she is customer service oriented, and she is excellent at keeping schedules. She and Chrisman recently finished a job assessment at a local floral shop. “I really liked working at the florist,” said Dennis. “There was a lot to organize. I learned more about time management and I really think I'd like this type of job. I got a lot from classes and I know more what to expect when I get a job in the community.”

Career Connections has several programs that link prospective employees with employers. Currently, more than 60 individuals are supported in community employment thanks to the assistance from the employment division. For more information regarding community employment for individuals with disabilities, contact Catherine Loomis, Employment Services supervisor, at (315) 574-7893.



Job Coach Staci Chrisman, background, watches as Billie Jo Dennis organizes ribbons to assess her interest in interning at a local florist—with hopes for eventual community employment.

Fundraising Exceeds Expectations to Support Meaningful Programs

Wine Auction and Golf Tournament Break Records



The Herkimer ARC's major 2012 fundraisers: The New York International Wine Auction (NYIWA) and the Enabler Golf Open broke records for raising funds with proceeds supporting underfunded/unfunded programs for people with disabilities.

In October, NYIWA raised over \$250,000 and exceeded expectations in gross revenues and securing sponsorship dollars. The Enabler also attracted record sponsorship to raise \$42,550.

Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley commented, "Our events depend upon great leadership and generous supporters. We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful community made up of businesses and individual donors, who understand our mission and support our events. Now more than ever, we will depend upon their generosity so that we will be able to continue to offer meaningful programs not funded by traditional sources."

Dominica and Frank Annese, sitting, were the highest donors at NYIWA 2012. Standing, from left, congratulating the Annesees on winning an auction lot are Herkimer ARC President/CEO Kevin Crosley, Sommelier Johannes Neckermann, Wine Model Bill Bergen, and Auction Director Tony Vennera. The Annesees have been great supporters of the wine auction and the Herkimer ARC for many years. Photo courtesy of Marrone Photography.

2012 Annual Appeal Supports Lift-free Workplace



The 2012 Annual Appeal, chaired by Marc and Susan Butler, exceeded the goal of raising \$40,000 to purchase portable minimal lift equipment to be used to safely transfer people with disabilities—those who require multiple transfers on or off various pieces of furniture or bathroom fixtures. Additionally, the agency is in the process of purchasing several pieces of equipment that will offer support in the areas of exercise. The standing and raising aids are designed to help with balance, stepping, and walking training.

"We were honored to lead the 2012 Life Is Beautiful Annual Appeal and to contribute to the dedicated and loving care provided for so many individuals," wrote Marc and Susan Butler.

A piece of equipment that the Herkimer ARC 2012 Annual Appeal purchased was demonstrated for Chairpersons Marc and Susan Butler. Those on hand to view the SARA Plus, from left, included President/CEO Kevin Crosley, Board of Directors member Marge Reese, Occupational Therapist Yvonne Kovits, Marc Butler, Kitty Smith, Susan Butler, Fund Development Committee member Donna Goodbread, and Vice President - Fund Development Dominic Frank.

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